Masochistic Drive & Horror

Anne Farley

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Masochism, Drive, & Horror: Our Indulgence in
Self Infliction

Submitted to:
Ryan Engley

by
Anne Farley

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ABSTRACT

Human nature is inherently masochistic, meaning we self gratify through the means of some type of self-harm. The term masochism usually refers to sexual tendencies, but in this paper, it will be used as a reference to some sort of self-infliction of pain whether it be mental or physical. It is rare that we, as individuals, do not partake in masochism on a daily basis. When we engage in an activity or task that inflicts a type of pain, or stress on our bodies and mind, we are rewarded with gratification. This can be observed in gym-goers, individuals who thrive in high-stress environments, and more specifically, people who enjoy horror films. We are driven through our masochistic inhibitions when we indulge in horror films. These films allow us to engage in our psyche’s masochistic tendencies without having to experience the consequences of those masochistic desires. The genre of horror grants us access to live out our greatest fears while providing a type of safe haven. This paper will explore the masochistic psyche, as theorized by Freud in relation to media, our drive as a society towards horror and other masochistic behaviors in relation to media and film, and the specifics of horror films in regards to self-gratification.

Keywords: masochism, horror, film, Freud, Lacan, drive, Alfred Hitchcock
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## GLOSSARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERM</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNCONSCIOUS</td>
<td>The part of our minds that are responsible for our feelings, thoughts, urges, and memories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNCANNY VALLEY</td>
<td>An object's resemblance to human life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPEREGO</td>
<td>The part of the mind responsible for morals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SADISM</td>
<td>Deriving pleasure from inflicting pain on another being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REALITY PRINCIPLE</td>
<td>The ego's control of the pleasure-seeking activity of the id in order to meet the demands of the external world.¹</td>
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<td>PLEASURE PRINCIPLE</td>
<td>The instinctive drive to seek pleasure and avoid pain, expressed by the id as a basic motivating force which reduces psychic tension.²</td>
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<tr>
<td>MASOCHISM</td>
<td>Deriving pleasure from pain, usually self-inflicting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOUISSANCE</td>
<td>Physical or intellectual pleasure, delight, or ecstasy³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>The part of the mind that manifests instinct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FILM NOIR</td>
<td>Film categorized by fatalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EGO</td>
<td>The part of the mind responsible for personality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEATH DRIVE</td>
<td>The tendency inherent in all organic things to return to an inorganic state.⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONSCIOUSNESS</td>
<td>Awareness in self and space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CATHARSIS</td>
<td>The process of releasing emotion</td>
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CHAPTER I: MASOCHISM

Freud's Unconscious vs. Conscious Mind

Pain and pleasure determines human nature what to do and when to do it. They are the governance of our bodies and minds. We are inherently masochistic, meaning humans, by nature, are drawn to pain for a source of gratification. This pain can be observed as physical or emotional. Sigmund Freud, founder of psychoanalysis, theorized that pleasure is equivalent to displeasure or distress on the human body. He argues that displeasure corresponds to an increase, and pleasure to a decrease, in the quantity of free energy— free energy being the energy it takes to create demand for work or action. Displeasure corresponds to unsatisfied desire— so an unfulfilled libido, for example; and pleasure corresponds to conscious lust. Given that one is unconscious and the other conscious, it means that we, as humans, are conscious of our drive towards infliction, and unconscious of the dissatisfaction that causes us to desire and act upon that drive. Freud theorized that our mind is made up of the conscious and unconscious. The id is what makes up a person’s instinctual desires— which for the purpose of this paper, would be masochism. The rest of the mind, the ego and superego, which are preconscious and unconscious, subsequently, are what makes up a person’s reasoning and morality, and are repressed by our consciousness. The id is dependent on the ego and superego; the conscious is dependent on the unconscious, and the two must be dependent on one

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6 Dialectics, Freud, & Fight Club, Farley, Anne

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another in order to create a dialectic and conflictual whole. In order for one’s true masochistic desires to be fully satisfied, their conscious mind must give and act out their unconscious desires from their ego and superego. While Freud believed that human behavior is dictated mostly by our unconscious mind, it is our conscious mind that is responsible for acting out our desires generated by the drive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conscious</th>
<th>Preconscious</th>
<th>Unconscious</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Desire:</strong> wants &amp; needs</td>
<td><strong>Reality Principle:</strong> the mind’s ability to assess the reality of the external</td>
<td><strong>Id:</strong> instinctual desires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ego:</strong> Personality</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Superego:</strong> reasoning &amp; morality</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Masochism:</strong> deriving pleasure from pain</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sadism:</strong> deriving pleasure from inflicting pain</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Drive:</strong> instinctual behaviors that motivate desires</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Eros:</strong> Drive of life, love, sexuality, and self-gratification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Thanatos:</strong> Drive of aggression sadism, destruction, death</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Freud’s Masochism & Drive

The derivation of masochism, according to Freud, is sadism. For a primary masochism to be true in human nature, there must be an interpersonal contradiction between eros and thanatos instinct—eros being sexual instinct, and thenatos being the death-instinct. In Freud’s *Economic Problem of Masochism*, he takes a look at masochism through the lens of economics. Economic values are constant in our daily lives and remain consistent as our economy shifts. With this consistency, comes the regularity of the masochistic drive acted out by human nature in reference to our economic culture. We see this occur in our daily lives, as mentioned in the abstract. Take the avid gym-goer, for example, and label them as masochists, for the sake of this argument. These masochists go to the gym consistently throughout the week to put a strain on their bodies and minds. Working out physically tears muscle fibers and spikes cortisol levels to all-time-highs. So why do these masochists enjoy this consistency of self-inflicted pain? Because it leads to self-gratification both physically and mentally. Their muscle fibers repair, and cortisol levels drop back to normal, eventually being replaced with endorphins—the feel good hormone. However, not just your avid gym-goer is a masochist. So are individuals who prefer a busy schedule. Like the gym-goers, these individuals thrive in high-stress environments. With a high stress environment comes high cortisol levels, then eventually even higher endorphins. In Freud’s *Three Essays on Theory of Sexuality*, he concludes that “the libido has the task of destroying instinct innocuous, and it fulfills the task by diverting that instinct to a great extend outwards—soon with the help of a special organic system, the muscular

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This instinct that Freud describes, is in essence, the death-drive; our unconscious drive towards self-destruction. He also described in his metapsychological paper, *Instincts and their Vicissitudes*, that instinct is the true motive behind our behavior. He theorizes that humans indulge themselves in their own desires so far and often, until that desire is painful, and they must stop. This is called the pleasure principle. While the drive is what motivates us to act upon our desires, the pleasure principle is what tells us to stop, so that we can repeat that behavior for continued gratification. Through this logic, our unconscious mind uses the drive, or death drive, to motivate our actions in our conscious mind that are all inherently masochistic tendencies and behaviors. In order to fully understand why humans are driven to watch horror films, we must claim Freud’s theory of masochism as a truth.

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10 “Sigmund Freud Psychoanalytic Theory.” PMHealth
Freud & Fight Club

As mentioned previously, in my chapter on *Freud’s Unconscious vs. Conscious Mind*, the mind is dependent on the unconscious and conscious, while the unconscious and conscious are interdependent on each other. The conflict that occurs between the conscious and unconscious mind is what makes up the entirety of the mind. This conflict is called the dialectic. We must not look at the two entities as separate, but as two halves to a whole to understand the interdependence between the two. The conflict between the two parts, unconscious and conscious, id and superego, creates a dialectical relationship between the two and interrogates the interdependence on the opposition. This interrogation of interdependence of things on their own internal opposition is seen specifically in the film, *Fight Club*. Marx defined dialectics as “the grasping of opposites in their unity or of the positive in the negative”.11 We have to look at dialectics as a form of opposition in order to fully understand how it might interrogate the interdependence of things. Dialectics aims to challenge or push back against that thing— just as we see with the pleasure principle, the idea where we indulge ourselves just enough to the point where reality challenges (or pushes back) on that pleasure. We also must identify *Fight Club* as a dream in order to understand this correlation and conflict. If we look at *Fight Club* as a dream, we can then state that the Narrator represents the conscious mind and Tyler Durden represents the unconscious mind. The Narrator is the voice of morality while Tyler is immorality, or the id. Both the Narrator and Tyler seem to have oppositional agendas. In the beginning of the film, we see the Narrator ask Tyler if he could fight one person in this moment, who would it be, and Tyler responds, “I’d fight

my Dad”. We can see the Narrator challenging Tyler with this statement. He is creating a conflict, or interrogation of interdependence, when he challenges the id. As the film moves along, the Narrator seems to become less oppositional to Tyler, suggesting that there is some sort of unity between the unconscious and conscious. Towards the end of the film, we see that the Narrator is now very similar to Tyler in regards to his moralities. While we see an internal opposition between Tyler and the Narrator throughout the film, the interrogation of the interdependence seems to unify the two, bringing us back to the idea that the mind is dependent on the unconscious and conscious as whole, and not two separate entities. So when we take a step back and separate the unconscious and conscious entities of *Fight Club*, we can see that they directly correlate with Freud’s psychoanalysis of the mind. The two entities of *Fight Club* that make up the mind are Tyler and the Narrator, the unconscious and conscious and the interdependence of the two are what create dialectics. The internal opposition between Tyler and the Narrator is the dialectic. This relationship between the unconscious and conscious mind is observed in other cinema, specifically the genre horror— but we’ll dive into that later. But for now, let’s talk about the drive.
CHAPTER II: DRIVE

_Lacanian Film Theory_

Psychoanalytic film theory was first formulated by Christian Metz, Jean-Louis Baudry, and Laura Mulvey. These film theorists primarily focused on Lacanian theories for the formation of the psychoanalytic film theory. Based on Lacanian film theory, “there is a relationship between cinema and trauma that disrupts the functioning of ideology… Cinema remains a site for the dissemination of ideology, but it has also become a potential site of political and psychic disruption.”

Because cinema is expressed as a disruption in this instance, we can conclude that cinema can be categorized as something that is sadistic, meaning cinema causes some type of harm onto others, others being the spectator. We see throughout Lacanian film theory that he relies heavily on the gaze as a building block of his psychoanalysis of the cinema, but he also relies heavily on the spectator and their relationship with the screen. Lacanian film theory poses the idea that the spectator and the screen are conflictual, with the spectator being the perceiver and the screen being perceived. If there is a relationship between spectator and spectated, then there must be a motivating factor between the two— which we have established as the inherent masochistic drive. However, this statement is far too general to make a claim. Therefore, the key to understanding the filmic relationship between spectator and spectated, is through the Gaze— as posed by Lacan, but that’s an entirely different topic (See Appendix A, The Male Gaze). He continues to state that the
screen not only provides an imaginary world for us to experience, without having to experience the physicalities of, but that the screen acts as a mirror of our own self distinctions. By this logic, spectators not only go to the cinema as a reflection of their own self perception, but to also experience the imaginary escape of a sadistic world without the physical consequences.

Lacan’s Jouissance & Drive

Jouissance is a French term that translates as physical pleasure. Jouissance also quite literally means little death, or short lived. While the idea is that our psyche is masochistic first, driving us into situations that do some kind of injury, jouissance tells us that our actions not only take from us, but must give something back to us. Jouissance is a plus that is also a minus that we inherently seek out. Lacanian theory states that “an active desire mastering and possessing a passive object obfuscates a traumatic alternative, drawing the subject toward a traumatic jouissance.”¹⁴ This is referring to the gaze in cinema, but can be broken into two different parts. The first part is the gaze, which I won’t get into. The second part is the traumatic alternative. In simpler words, Lacan is saying when our desires are fulfilled by something passive, like cinema, it blinds our consciousness of the masochistic trauma that our unconscious receives. That trauma that our unconscious mind endures is overrun by the jouissance, or enjoyment that our conscious minds receive. Unlike Freud, Lacan argues that the purpose of the drive is to

come full circle, where we are met with gratification. He says that the purpose of the
drive is not to be fully satisfied, but to be able to repeat that driven action with reward.
Although Freud’s drive must be complete, and Lacan’s can be partial, both Freud and
Lacan’s drive and Jouissance are necessary to understand as to why humans partake in
masochistic acts, like watching a horror film.

Societal Drive & Media

Now that we have established that individuals are inherently masochistic, that
means their drive towards media is also masochistic. Some examples we see this in are
when young girls scroll through Instagram pages of models with unattainable bodies. We
see this behavior occur when young boys play video games for hours on end until their
fingers are in pain. We can also infer that these video games are usually sadistic, or
portraying harm to others. Does this mean that society as a whole is driven by their
individual masochistic desires? While those previous examples can’t offer a formal
answer, they give us insight into our behavior and how society consumes media through a
masochistic lens. Media, in essence, dehumanizes society as a whole (See Appendix A,
Chapter III: Behaviors & Attitudes in Relation to Film). When our society is so saturated
with media, it changes our perspective of not only that specific media, but ourselves as
individuals and society as a whole. This idea, that mass media dehumanizes society, is
masochistic. We can also note that our behavior in regards to media consumption is
masochistic. It isn’t uncommon to find ourselves scrolling through Instagram and TikTok
for hours on end or binge watching Netflix series from the beginning to the very last
episode. The sheer amount of time we spend on our televisions, smartphones, and laptops directly parallels masochistic behaviors, the pleasure principle, Lacan’s jouissance, and our overall societal drive to attain and complete these desires.
CHAPTER III: HORROR

Genre of Horror & Catharsis

According to Genre Theory in Rick Altman’s *A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film*, genre is largely shaped by and reflexive of the current societal trends and preferences (See Appendix A, Genre Theory). We also learn through Franklyn Fearing’s “Influence of the Movies on Attitudes & Behavior” that the screen is perceived by the unconscious mind of the individual.15 This was also expressed previously in Lacanian film theory when he concluded that the film is the perceived while the spectator is the perceiver. Therefore, we must conclude that genre is shaped by audience preference and film is perceived by the unconscious individual preference. Horror genre, specifically, reflects the theory of the uncanny. We hear the term “uncanny valley” often, when describing an object or person as seeming almost real. This can be observed in things like wax figures, or films like the polar express. This “uncanny valley” feeling elicits an off-putting feeling. The uncanny is said to come from our id, according to Freud. Therefore, horror films reflect our individual feelings of fears and desires, coming from our unconscious. When we, as individuals, are able to experience our unconscious fears and desires in our conscious mind, it gives us self-gratification. Because we cannot access our unconscious mind, and because horror films are capable of reflecting our collective unconscious on the screen, it drives us to consume the screen. It makes us capable of seeing into our own unconscious without two things: one being the realization

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and understanding of our deepest desires, and two the consequences that follow the hypothetical of acting out those said desires. The genre of horror offers catharsis to the spectator, meaning they grant the spectator the ability to purge or rid themselves of emotion. Catharsis is a term that is generally used in reference to art, whether it be physical or digital, and the emotional and physical response that the spectator experiences. The category horror provides the spectator with a protective notion to experience emotions found deep within their unconscious through two ways: the first being that the experience is not real, and a mere illusion of reality, and the second being that the experience is in the safety of a theater or a person’s home. So we have the physical barrier between the screen and spectator that serves as a protective boundary, and we have the contents within the screen, the imaginary reality, that also serves as a protective boundary. As stated before in my chapter on Lacanian Film Theory, the relationship between the spectator and the screen is conflictual, and inherently masochistic. Therefore, we can argue that the perceived screen is the spectator’s unconscious mind, and the spectator is the conscious mind. From this, we can conclude that the physical boundary between the screen (unconscious mind) and spectator (conscious mind) is the preconscious mind. Nevertheless, the relationship between screen and spectator is reflective of the mind as a whole. The act of watching the film is driven by our innate masochism in order to attain jouissance through catharsis.
Alfred Hitchcock

Alfred Hitchcock, English filmmaker, is widely recognized for his success in the film industry—specifically for his creation of horror films. This chapter will discuss the techniques Hitchcock uses to create such masterful films, and to manipulate the spectator. His films are consistently terrifying, unique, unordinary, enthralling, and exhilarating. In *Encountering Directors* ([See Appendix B](#)), a conversation between Samuel and Charles Thomas, Samuel explains that Hitchcock uses a jigsaw method to his editing, keeping anyone but him from knowing how his films are made.¹⁶ Samuels continues to interview Alfred Hitchcock asking questions about his films and techniques. Hitchcock expresses to Samuels:

> Cinema is simply pieces of a film put together in a manner that creates ideas and emotions… I don’t believe in mystifying an audience. I believe in giving them all the information and then making them sweat. It’s no good devising a film to satisfy only yourself. The subject doesn’t count either. You get satisfaction through your style of treatment. I’m not interested in content. It disturbs me very much when people criticize my films because of their content. It's like looking at a still life and saying, ‘I wonder whether those apples are sweet or sour.’ Cinema is form. I see many good films that contain very fine dialogue. I don't deprecate these films, but to me, they’re not pure cinema.¹⁷

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¹⁷ Samuels, Charles T.
It is quite obvious that Hitchcock’s idea of cinema is rather different from other directors. His main motivation is the audience, and in specific, drawing out the most emotion he can from the audience. It’s rather interesting to read Hitchcock say that he is non interested in the content of the film— but it makes sense in reference to his film style. Most of Hitchcock’s films are notable because of the thrill and emotion we feel while watching them, but not because of the cinematic mastery of the contents in the film. The interview goes on to talk about the specific techniques that Hitchcock uses in his filmmaking. Samuel notes Hitchcock’s objection toward using “weird angles” in his films. While Hitchcock tends to avoid these techniques, it is more often than not that we see “weird angles” in mainstream horror cinema. There are common modern camera techniques that filmmakers use to intensify the horror and thrill of the scene. The most common techniques we see in horror films are the close up, the handheld camera shot, an establishing shot, the POV push-in, and a zoom in shot. The handheld camera shot is usually used alongside the POV push-in and close up camera angle, which targets emotion as fear. The other shots, establishing, and zoom, are utilized to set the scene and drag out suspense. While Hitchcock’s films do incorporate these techniques, it is not his main focus. Hitchcock continues in the interview:

What Truffaut appreciated from my technique was the use of the subjective treatment. A typical example is from the film Rear Window. Where the central figure is a man in one position whose viewpoint we study. His viewpoint

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19 Liselotte, Heimdahl.
becomes his mental processes, by the use of the camera and the montage—and this is what I actually mean by subjective treatment. The objective treatment, however, is also used when necessary: but for me, the objective is merely an extension of the theater because you are the viewer of the events that take place in front of you, but you are not necessarily in the mind of that person. Subjective shooting puts the audience in the mind of the character.  

![Rear Window, 1954](image)

*Rear Window, 1954*

This idea that Hitchcock focuses on the subjective, rather than the objective, is brilliant—and plays with Freud’s theories on the unconscious and conscious mind. When the spectator is forced to be put in the mind of the character on screen, they inevitably feel

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that character's emotions. The subjective character in Hitchcock’s films are almost always the characters being antagonized; therefore, the spectator will not only feel their characters' fear and horror, but their own fear and horror from their unconscious. The use of focusing on the subjective, rather than the objective can be seen in all of Hitchcock’s films, but let's just focus on two films, which can both be categorized as film noir: The 1943 psychological thriller, *Shadow of a Doubt*, and 1958 thriller, *Vertigo*.

*Shadow of a Doubt*

1943 American psychological thriller, *Shadow of a Doubt*, tells a story of a teenage girl, Charlotte (Charlie), and her run-in with danger. Charlie’s Uncle, who she later suspects to be a murderer, comes to visit her and her family. Hitchcock magnificently creates a thrilling story of Charlie and her family, and the terror they encounter from their Uncle. This film noir puts the audience in the shoes of Charlie, evoking emotions of fear, distrust, and the feeling of suspense. Hitchcock does two fundamental things in his creation of this film. The first is the realism of this film. And the second is the inclusion of Freudian psychoanalytic theories. *Shadow of a Doubt* portrays an extraordinary ordinary American family—so it seems. The film introduces both Charlie and her Uncle with a camera shot through their windows, respectively. Then the camera cuts to a zoom towards their beds. The movement of the camera is rather simple, yet makes the audience feel like they are being watched—the audience feels uneasy. This introduction to the film makes it feel all too real. Hitchcock portrays an all-too ordinary family living in a small, quaint town, looking the same as every other family in America. As the film continues, we soon learn that Uncle Charlie is a prime
suspect of murder, and we, as spectators, start to feel the emotions that Charlie feels about her Uncle. As we spectate the subjective, we are thrown into the imaginary reality of their on-screen story. Additionally, Hitchcock plays with Freudian theories in his films. In the beginning of the film, we can infer that there is some sort of incestual relationship between Charlie and her Uncle, which Freud would argue is one of our unconscious inherent desires. It’s rather uncomfortable for the audience to watch the movie unfold, since their family is supposed to be representative of the ordinary American family. Hitchcock turns the audience’s imaginary real into a realistic terror.

As the film unfolds, the audience still isn’t quite sure of the incestual and abusive behavior of Uncle Charlie. The absence of the portrayal of incest and abuse parallels Lacan’s take on the spectator-spectated relationship. The audience’s inferral of incest is assisted by Hitchcock’s filmmaking, but it is ultimately the audience’s unconscious that comes up with the presumption. This presumption by the spectator’s unconscious is the id expressing their inherent desires.

*Shadow of A Doubt, 1942.*

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As the film draws to a close, the audience is met with the death of Uncle Charlie. This scene is immediately followed with a cross dissolve into a scene of a dancing couple, dancing to the Waltz. This use of juxtaposition also creates an uneasiness among the audience. One second, we witness the death of Uncle Charlie, then the next we are watching a happy couple dancing. One might argue that this dancing scene is strategically after Uncle Charles’ tragedy in order to assist the audience in feeling glad that the antagonist met his demise. However, I just think it’s Hitchcock’s artistic style, with no rhyme or reason behind it. The film closes with a conversation between Jack and Charlie. Charlie says to Jack, “He thought the world was a horrible place. He couldn’t have been very happy ever… You know, he said that people like us had no idea what the world was really like.” The camera then dissolves to the front of a church and the film comes to an end. It is at this moment that Hitchcock leaves us questioning our moralities. The audience is left with unanswered questions about Charlie. Did she end up marrying Jack or will she end up like her Uncle? Is Charlie’s average life too bleak for her? In essence, the relationship between Charlie and her Uncle is a reflection of Charlie’s own internal struggles. Her life was too bleak and ordinary, so she was inevitably caught up in the terrifying relationship with her Uncle. Hitchcock draws upon the Oedipus complex to toy with the audience’s emotions and moralities. He not only does this in *Shadow of A Doubt*, but another widely known film, *Vertigo*.

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Vertigo

1954 psychological thriller, *Vertigo*, is an exemplary example of Freud’s idea of the uncanny. As mentioned in my chapter on *Genre of Horror & Catharsis*, the uncanny is said to come from our id. When we look at *Vertigo* through a Freudian lens, we can identify that Scottie, played by James Stewart, experiences the dialectic interdependence between conscious and unconscious, meaning his behaviors and feelings throughout the film reflect the relationship between the id, ego, and superego. Scottie’s id, being his desire for pleasure, dictates his actions throughout the film—this becomes obvious when he obsesses over Madeline, who also falls into the category of the id. The superego can be identified as Midge, Scottie’s closest friend, acting as Scottie’s conscience and reasoning. From the beginning of the film, we can infer that Scottie experienced Oedipal trauma. *Vertigo* opens with a policeman’s death, at the fault of Scottie. In order to claim that Scottie experienced Oedipal trauma, we must claim that the policeman represented a father figure. Therefore, Scottie's motivations for his behaviors in the rest of the film are to satisfy that trauma—through his obsession with Madeline, and relationship with Midge. Karen Hollinger, author of *The Look*, states:

According to Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, the Oedipal trauma for the boy involves his progress from an original feeling of oneness with his mother in the realm of the Imaginary to an experience of lack that leads him to separate himself from the Mother, identify with the Father, enter the Symbolic realm of language and culture, and search out a mature heterosexual love relationship. Scottie's

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24 Journal of Film and Video, Fall 1987, Vol. 39, No. 4, Spectatorship, Narrativity, and Feminist Revision (Fall 1987), pp. 18-27
failure to resolve these problems can be seen clearly in the film’s second scene which reveals his relationship with his female ‘friend’ Midge.  

Vertigo, 1958.

Midge, who represents Scottie’s superego, also represents a motherly figure— which is yet another example of the Oedipal complex. As the film progresses, we see Scottie “break free” from his relationship with Midge and shift from Oedipal love to romantic love, with his obsession with Madeline. In essence, Vertigo is a masterful and complex story of how the id, ego, and superego play a role in our motivations, desires, and behaviors. Madeline represents Scottie’s unconscious— we can conclude this specifically from the scene of Scottie dragging Judy to the top of the stairs. Hitchcock uses the uncanny to create delusions within the subjective and illusions among the audience. By doing so, Hitchcock draws out confusion and fear from the audience— which are, as we have established, reflective of their own individual unconsciousness.

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CONCLUSION

Sure, there are many motivators that go into why we, as individuals, behave the way we do, but it is largely derived from our psyche. Our reasoning behind leaving our homes, driving to a movie theater, and sitting down to willingly watch a two-hour tragedy unfold on screen can be dumbed down to the simple idea that horror films are exhilarating. However, it is much more complex than that. While yes, horror films are in fact extremely exhilarating, it is that rush of fear, that feeling of adrenaline, and that intoxicating thrill that has us sitting on the edge of our theater seats that satisfy us. Fear, adrenaline, and thrill. By nature, these sentiments are masochistic. Alfred Hitchcock draws out our masochistic desires through his films, and strategically uses Freudian and Lacanian theories to amplify our perception of horror.
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APPENDIX A


CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

*Social Pandering*

There is a type of convergence that happens in today’s media industry, one in which people watch “progressive” Hollywood media and think it is reflective of social advancements; however, that couldn’t be further from the truth. In reality, Hollywood is pandering to its progressive audience, fronting its media with messages of support of social change while fostering further social unrest. This convergence occurs when society’s media preferences affect Hollywood’s media output, and when Hollywood’s media output reflects society’s media preferences. In this paper, I will explore the correlations between changes in film and TV as a reflection of society, and the piggy-backing on progressive movements to turn a profit. For the purpose of the paper, I will describe this as **social pandering**. In the first section, I explore *The Queen Gambit* and *I Care A Lot* explaining how they both embody this idea of social pandering. In subsequent sections, I explore theories that are applicable to these media examples and how society is, in turn, affected. Lastly, I discuss how these theories impact Hollywood and society, as a result of this social pandering. This social pandering is seen in LGBTQ representation and representation of women in Hollywood. Hollywood uses diversity to draw in wider and more progressive audiences but includes misrepresentations of real
problems in the film. The topic I will discuss further is the controversy that this convergence creates and the dichotomy of whether or not media is, in fact, reflective of society and if society is reflective of media, in specific the representation of LGBTQ individuals and women in film. This is important to the field of Media Studies, specifically Media Industry Studies because it discusses the controversial affect the convergence society and Hollywood have on each other. My goal is to find specific media examples that parallel this convergence and can help society understand the detrimental effects of media that they are consuming.

CHAPTER II: THE QUEEN’S GAMBIT & I CARE A LOT

The Queen’s Gambit

Let’s talk about Netflix. Netflix is constantly dealing with lawsuits regarding sexism, racism, and misrepresentation in their films and tv shows. In recent events, Netflix was sued by Nona Gaprindashvili, the first woman to be named a grandmaster in chess. Gaprindashvili’s lawsuit claimed that Netflix undermined and degraded her accomplishments through their show, The Queen’s Gambit. The Queen’s Gambit attempts to be an empowering story of a female chess player succeeding in a male-dominated sport. Although this may seem moral on the surface level, The Queens Gambit proves to be nothing but sexist, degrading, and misrepresented.

We witness this act of “undermining” in The Queens Gambit throughout the entirety of the mini-series. This limited Netflix series was supposed to be a trailblazing story about feminism in the 1960s. Elizabeth (Beth) Harmon, the main character, is one of the first
females to excel in the male-dominated sport, chess. She overcomes being orphaned and dealing with alcohol and drug abuse. She sets the tone as a key player in the sport of chess, teaching others that women can do just as a man can, and can do it even better than them. However, this trailblazing feminist story turned out to be the complete opposite. From a critical look, it is easy to spot the intention of the screenwriters. Beth is extremely overly sexualized throughout the entirety of this series while being one of the only female characters in the series. The writers of the series also romanticize Beth’s relationship with drugs and alcohol. Regardless of this first impression that this series is an empowering story of a young woman persevering through a male-dominated industry, the series in reality is overtly sexual, and in my argument extremely offensive to women. This film paints a rude and misrepresenting picture of what women are “supposed” to look like from a male’s perspective.

_Jolene As A Trope: The Modern Mammy_

To point out a few fatal flaws that the series incorporates are: 1) romanticizing drug and alcohol abuse to cater to the fantasies of escaping reality to a younger generation; 2) turning one of the only Black characters in the series into a harmfully familiar trope; and 3) overly sexualizing the main female lead, a common occurrence in most media today. Let’s dig into these three points, starting at point two. One of the only Black characters in the show, Jolene (played by Moses Ingram) can, unfortunately, be categorized under the trope of the ‘modern mammy’ in film, which can be mistaken by viewers for effective representation, “a trope that specifically relies on a Black female character doing the bidding of a white character.” The audience, at first glance, might see
Jolene as a great way for diverse representation, but the more we dig into the reality of her inclusion in the series, it becomes more apparent that she falls under this harmful trope more than she might be categorized as a diverse role with proper representation. This trope explains the idea of a southern stereotype of a Black woman who works for a white family and takes care of the white children. Jolene is first introduced in the first episode of *The Queen's Gambit*, then disappears from the screen until the very end of the series. She is portrayed as a support system and leader to Beth, showing her the ropes of the orphanage and being there for Beth as a friend to lean on. She then reappears in the series in the final two episodes to help save Beth from her crippling alcohol and drug addictions. In her appearances in the series, she is seen as a caretaker, sidekick, and stereotype; and by sidelining one of the few Black characters in the series, Netflix completely misses the mark on valid representation. This is a common occurrence in cinema today, overlooked by many viewers, and seen as a form of diverse representation.

Let’s look at the first on-screen appearance of Jolene in *The Queen’s Gambit* first—keep in mind that this series is set in the 1950s where racism and slavery were still glaringly apparent. Jolene appears in the first episode as one of the orphans, alongside Beth. The first episode chronologically portrays years in the orphanage and we witness Beth and Jolene forming a stronger friendship. As their relationship develops, so do the characters, but inversely. Beth continues to gain skills in chess while fostering her secondary relationship with a mentor and father figure, Mr. Shaibel (the orphanage janitor); and Jolene seems to constantly and more frequently stir up trouble within the orphanage. She makes sure to sneak Beth with more drugs than she needs, fueling her addiction, and
adoring calls her “Cracker”. Jolene is portrayed as a trouble-maker, while Beth is portrayed as a parentless victim. It almost seems as if Netflix immediately placed vilifying characteristics on Jolene—in a way, and guiltless characteristics on Beth. At such an early point in the series, it is hard to come to a conclusion that Jolene serves as a sidekick character, paralleling the elements of the modern mammy trope. After the first episode, Jolene is not seen until the final episode in the series when Beth is going through her downward spiral. This downward spiral was fueled by the death of Mr. Shaibel and intertwined with Beth’s drug and alcohol abuse. Jolene appears out of the blue to Beth’s home to try to pull her out of this spiral. Jolene then gives Beth thousands of dollars to continue her chess career in Russia, even after years of not speaking. Beth compares Jolene to her “guardian angel” and Jolene responds to this by saying, “I’m not here to save you. Hell, I can barely save me”. This was Netflix’s pathetic attempt at trying to dance around the trope of the Black sidekick saving the White protagonist. Netflix does a fantastic job at making it feel like Jolene had been by Beth’s side since the beginning, although in reality, she wasn’t. Her character was sidelined, seen as an underdog, and quite honestly feels like she was used as a token.

*Beth From The Lens of A Man*

Now, let’s look at points number one and three, which all have to do with the on-screen representation of women and the male gaze. First and foremost, the male gaze is a huge part of cinema across the world, so it is sometimes difficult to grasp what the male gaze is and how to differentiate certain parts of a film or series that might be catering to the male gaze. For the purpose of this paper, “the male gaze” will refer to the
cis-hetero stereotypical presentation of females. The female gaze, on the other hand, promotes a realistic portrayal of women, which is not recognized in *The Queen’s Gambit*. The beginning of the series starts strong, with Beth as a figure of feminism, but quickly turns away from that as it begins to overly sexualize her and romanticize her addictions.

Beth’s addiction to drugs stems from her time in the orphanage when she would be given sleeping pills by the nurses. These pills that she was given would essentially help Beth visualize playing the game of chess, resulting in her being a better player. As time goes on, she uses alcohol as a replacement, and then eventually uses both drugs and alcohol.

In the series, we see Beth becoming more mature and physically beautiful the worse her mental health gets. She also starts to gain more and more attention from the men around her as her mental health and addictions spiral. Although viewers may overlook this, it sends an inappropriate and completely wrong message to the audience, whether it be conscious or subconscious. This dramatization of substance abuse and overly sexualizing the female lead tells the audience that it is ‘sexy’ to be addicted and that men like women with mental health issues. One critic points out that Beth is overly sexualized not only throughout the entirety of the series but especially during the ‘oddest’ of times, like when her mother dies; the camera shows Beth undressing, addressing the male gaze and throughout the film, the angles are specifically focused on Beth’s chest and legs. There is also a point in the series where Beth hits her peak in her mental health issues. This scene shows Beth spiraling, binge drinking alcohol, and dancing around her house in her underwear. The camera angle focuses on her chest and legs, yet again. The soundtrack in the background is the song, Shocking Blue, by Venus, a 1968 upbeat song about beauty, sex, and desire; the song says “she’s got it… I'm your fire, at your desire…”

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making every man mad… got what no one else had, woah!”. This use of an upbeat song elicits a positive internal emotional response from the audience, while they watch a negative on-screen action, Beth’s unravel. The use of music changes how we think, feel, and respond—so when this specific song is used in this scene, it intentionally drives us to associate positive emotions with drug and alcohol abuse and mental decline. This juxtaposition, so clearly observed, is called soundtrack dissonance and can be found at almost every corner of Hollywood and its media. It indulges the audience and makes a commentary on the duality of human nature, allowing us to momentarily give into our fantasies and desires.

I find it particularly interesting that as Beth’s mental health seems to decline, her sex appeal, in turn, seems to increase. In addition to her sex appeal increasing, her brilliance also increases with the use of drugs— which she was introduced to during her time at the orphanage. Beth continued to take these drugs because they helped her visualize a chessboard and chess moves, fostering her skills. The more she took, the better she got at chess, and the greater her addiction was fueled. This entwinement of declining mental health with increased sex appeal, and increased substance abuse with increased genius, is, in my opinion, extremely detrimental to the audience. As viewers watch Beth’s story unfold, they are essentially being told that substance abuse will make you smarter, and mental health issues are sexy. Whether or not the audience is aware of this subliminal message from the storyline, it will still affect them negatively, which will be expanded on, when we discuss behavior in regards to film, in chapter II.
The Cis-heteropatriarchy

Furthermore, The Queen's Gambit was written by men, inadvertently taking away the validity of proper female representation—especially if the storyline was meant to be an empowering one. When a film is written and directed by a majority of men, specifically cis-heterosexual white men, it consequently falls bias to the male gaze. The portrayal of characters is no longer for the minority, but appeases the majority, catering to the desires of other cis-hetero men—feminist theory calls this the cisheteropatriarchy. While female representation in film is gradually becoming progressive, social pandering on these changes still exists. Feminist film theory suggests that parts of women in film are constructed by the perception of society. The perception society has on women is still overtly sexist, especially in media generated by men, proposing the parallels with social pandering. Our society forms the ideals of how a woman looks, speaks, and dresses; and this is reflected on screen, but through the lens of Hollywood—which is, majority controlled by cis-hetero men; and in turn reframed and reshaped as a tactic to not only conform to these ideals but to amplify them to satisfy the needs and desires of our society.

I Care A Lot

Another example that we see this ‘piggybacking’ on social change is in the use of lead female characters in film and television as an attempt to front as a progressive and empowering form of media. We witness this in Netflix’s original film, I Care A Lot. In I Care A Lot, the main character, Marla, vapes and wears traditionally male clothing while also succeeding in a portrayed male-dominated career, a con artist. Con artists are
usually seen as male roles in both film and reality. This use of traditional male tropes like smoking, blazers, alcohol and drug abuse, and career success are placed on these leading female characters to amplify the effect of ‘progressiveness’ and empowerment. In Corinn Columpar’s *The Gaze As Theoretical Touchstone*, she talks about the male gaze and how women function primarily as an object to look at while catering to specific male pleasures, like power. The male gaze in film is used to describe the idea that females are the object, and heterosexual men are the gaze. The object is used to drive the desire and needs of the gaze— therefore, women are used for appeasement for these cis-hetero men and their desires. In both films, we see Beth and Marla as one of the few females in the entirety of the cast. *I Care A Lot* is male-dominated on screen and on set, just like *The Queen’s Gambit*. The producers and directors for both films are majority male. The actors for both films are majority male. If these films are to encourage female empowerment, why are these films dominated by men both on-screen and off-screen— to turn a profit. By creating a miniseries or film that caters to societal needs, like the desire to see the inclusion of a lead female, draws in a broader and greater audience. The use of the male gaze in the contents of these television shows and films, not only caters to the other divided audience but stays aligned with traditional film norms and tropes that are deemed detrimental to societal progression regarding LGBTQ and Female representation in film.
Marla As A Trope: Bury Your Gays

Critics call I Care A Lot a copy of The Wolf of Wall Street, but with a lesbian main character— keep in mind The Wolf of Wall Street is a film that is littered with toxic masculinity, gender inequalities, drug and alcohol abuse, physical abuse (towards women), and so much more. Within the first six minutes of the film, we witness dialogue that undermines women. After winning a court case, Marla responds to her angry male opponent by saying “Does it sting more because I am a woman?”. This dialogue falls victim to the parallels of societal stereotypes of women, where women do not measure up to men; and if they do, it hurts the man’s ego. They have also pointed out that the movie ends with the all-too-familiar “bury your gays” trope after Marla is shot dead in the last scene. This last scene was completely unnecessary in critics’ opinions, and in mine. One critic said that “if the point was to show that karma caught up to Marla and that justice needed to be served, why did it have to be her dying to prove that?”. Because the film ends in such an abrupt and obvious trope, in my personal opinion, it takes away the validity of a pro-LGBTQ film. “Bury your gays” is essentially a presentation of the deaths of LGBTQ characters. These characters are seen as more expendable than their other cis and heterosexual counterparts. This trope began as a punishment for the portrayed villains in films. These villain characters either died or were punished at the end of the film, similar to the final girl trope, commonly seen in horror films. Sequentially, these villains are usually LGBTQ because their sexuality is seen as, and perceived as a negative character trait. However, in I Care A Lot, the two main characters were not suffering. They were living their dream after their con bloomed into a multibillion-dollar business. The death of Marla was unwarranted and did not represent
her struggles as an LGBTQ individual in a predominately male career. Although the film did vilify Marla through her corrupt and immoral character, her death was unwarranted and seemed to follow this “bury your gays” trope in order to cater to societal trends—once again, social pandering. The critic mentioned before continued to state that “If you look at the movie, it is easy to point out problematic representation. You have a queer woman as a villain, a plot entirely about dehumanizing the elderly and disabled for profit, and a Black judge who calls the shots (even though he has the best intentions). To top it all off, the ending uses a majorly problematic queer trope we’ve been calling for an end to for years now…. We do need more positive queer representation in media. And this is not it”.

Marla From The Lens of A Man

Secondly, I Care A Lot was written and directed by J Blakeson, a male screenwriter. Now I am not saying that men shouldn’t be writing films about strong female and LGBTQ leads. The problem is that while women are excluded behind the camera, that the brains behind the film inevitably accommodate the male audience. First and foremost, Marla and Fran’s relationship was extremely overly sexualized, playing into the stereotype that fetishizes lesbian relationships. Queer representation in media has declined in recent years, and although the film does a great on-screen representation of an LGBTQ lead character, the validity is from the representation is seemingly taken away because the story was written by cis-hetero men. According to GLAAD magazine in 2019, there was only 10.2% of queer representation in film, with only 38 characters on-screen being transgender. In 2020, queer representation declined to only 9.2% in film.
In essence, *I Care A Lot* is a representation of a male-dominated world, where men mask themselves as feminists creating a feminist film. The screenwriter uses a male perspective to portray an LGBTQ narrative but completely misses the mark, intentionally creating a film that does not successfully represent or benefit LGBTQ struggles but undermines them instead.

CHAPTER III: GENRE THEORY, BEHAVIORAL FILM, & REALISM

Now let’s dive into the theory as to why this social pandering seen in modern media may be detrimental to society's progressiveness and behavior. The three things I discuss are Rick Altman’s theory of genre, film in relation to individual behavior and attitude, and film realism. These three things are all key to understanding how *The Queen’s Gambit* and *I Care A Lot* negatively impact societal perceptions and actions.

**Genre Theory**

In Rick Altman’s “A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film”, he argues three points when describing his theory of genre. Firstly, argues that there is no definitive way to categorize film since it is a reflection of culture. The two categories that they can be placed into are exclusive and inclusive. However, since culture is ever-changing, so is genre. He also discusses the idea that semiotics and structuralism contradict the foundations of genre. Structuralism is an approach to analyzing culture that reveals the structures of film and television. It helps us understand how film and television are created and interpreted. Altman states, “either a relatively stable set of semantic givens is
developed through syntactic experimentation into a coherent and durable syntax, or an already existing syntax adopts a new set of semantic elements”. He is favoring the historical and developmental perception of genre and states that a semiotic approach to genre ignores the historical development of genre as culture is evolving. This is saying that since film moves in time, it must be analyzed in a framework dependent on temporality. The structure is therefore dependent on the time and currentness of our culture. Thirdly, Altman says that audiences shape genre. He argues, “by choosing the films it would patronize, the audience revealed its preferences and its beliefs, this inducing Hollywood studios co-produced films reflecting its desires”. By his logic, film does indeed reflect the current social state of society, and in turn, develops as audience preferences shift.

Since culture is always changing, and audience consumption is always changing, so will the preference and likeness of genre. According to contemporary genre theorists, a film or genre might lose its status in favor when “its thematic myth is no longer relevant to its audiences”. This is true in many cases. When a film is no longer reflective of modern or nostalgic American culture, it is for the most part no longer relevant or desired, because it might lack relatability. Therefore, shifts in film genre are directly related to shifts in audience preferences, paralleling shifts in culture. Harry M. Benshoff, a film theorist on multiculturalism, discusses in his *Film and Television Analysis* Antonio Gramsci, who theorized cultural hegemony, meaning the domination of a culturally diverse society by a ruling class. Benshoff says that when Gramsci theorized a cultural hegemony, he also brought up oppositional ideals that created commodification and incorporation:
incorporation meaning the perception of ‘mainstream’ and commodification meaning ‘turning an oppositional ideology into a product that can then be sold for profit’. In Hollywood, we see this directly and consistently. Films are labeled as ‘mainstream’ because of their dominating ideals; they often perpetuate the mainstream ideals as a result. Examples of this are race, inequality, toxic masculinity, female empowerment, and so on. By catering to the mainstream ideals in society, Hollywood effectively turns a massive profit.

Behaviors & Attitudes in Relation to Film

Just like genre-changing and evolving with culture, mainstream media does too. Interestingly enough, societal changes in genre and culture simultaneously affect the behaviors and attitudes presented in viewers of film. We learn this in Franklyn Fearing’s, “Influence of the Movies on Attitudes & Behavior”. He states that “the motion picture is not a fixed pattern of meanings or ideas which are received by a passive mind. Rather what the individual gets is determined by his background and his needs'; meaning that film is determined by an individual's perception and needs. He also states that film is a cultural product that affirms or negates the needs of the audience. Assuming that there is a functional relationship between the theme of the film and the needs of a mass audience, the viewer seeks an experience beyond just their immediate environment in order to understand their immediate environment. Franklyn Fearing used empirical testing to see if audience behavior and attitude would be amplified after watching certain films pertaining to societal times. He tested attitudes towards war, African Americans, and Asian Americans by showing each film to three different groups. The films were
anti-Black, anti-Chinese, and pro-Chinese. Directly after the film, the groups’ attitudes about those categories were directly amplified in alignment with the film’s message. These effects persisted up to five months later. The films used in this study were The Birth of a Nation (anti-Black), Sons of Gods (pro-Chinese), and Welcome Danger (anti-Chinese). This direct correlation between film contents and attitude in relation to culture successfully shows the relation between society and film as a whole. Film amplifies audience preference, understanding, attitude, and behavior. Relating this to The Queen's Gambit and I Care A Lot, one might watch the film and be directly affected in regards to their perception or behavior whether it be conscious or subconscious. Young women might watch The Queen's Gambit and think that it is sexy and fun to abuse drugs and alcohol. Another might develop fears and negative connotations around gay relationships after watching I Care A Lot.

Film & Realism

We see this understanding in American philosopher, Stanley Cavell’s, “Film and Skepticism”. He states that “human wish, intensifying in the West since the Reformation, to escape subjectivity and metaphysical isolation— in which for the power to reach this world, having for so long tried, at last hopelessly, to manifest fidelity to another”. With this quote, Cavell is saying that it is humankind’s wish to escape reality— and they are doing so through art. In this case, specifically, film. Realism is the information that the audience understands from what they see on a screen. Through realism, we are taught that a film is realistic when we as an audience view it as the events that formulate a story, not as the events that are filmed. Realism also brings up the idea that film displaces
people and objects from the world onto the screen, similar to Cavell’s quote on human wish and fidelity. By escaping the reality of the world into realism on screen, audiences can see the world at a distance. Films are capable enough to reaffirm societal participation in the world, similar to what Franklyn Fearing states about audience attitude and behavior. When a film is reflective enough of society to seem real, yet holds the power of an escape, the audience not only can experience this escape, but the affirmation and amplification of their prior knowledge, needs, and understanding of the contents of the film.

Just like Cavell said about realism in film, when we see something on the screen, we can transport ourselves into an alternate reality. We are able to live in a fictional world without having to deal with the consequences in our real lives. Once the lines between reality and fiction become blurred, which is apparent in a lot of films, it is difficult to draw the line between what is true and what is fed to us for the purpose of the narrative. These films shape our lives and our perceptions of society without us even realizing it. Our interpretations of film become somewhat irrelevant in a small sense, yet remain relevant in the larger sense paralleling society and culture. The intent of films becomes irrelevant because interpretations of the film are more important than the intent. Audiences dictate what a film means in a larger sense, and in turn, it gradually seeps into society’s perception of that interpretation and shifts our opinions unknowingly.
The Male Gaze

As a society, we continuously strive for equality, but our efforts are hindered by the media. In terms of film, we strive for more representation and diversity in women, LGBTQ, and race. However, the cis-heterophatriarchy in film continues to hold control over our media output, undermining these efforts. In Laura Mulvey’s *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, which I touched on in chapter I, she talks about a distinction between identity and desire, where desire is oppositional to identity. She says that as women identify with passivity (the object to be looked at), men’s to-be-looked-at-ness is compensated for by their activity in the film's narrative. She also notes that the active protagonists, in traditional films, are male characters, while passive characters are female. By her logic, both Marla and Beth are used as compensators for the male gaze with their activity in the film while being active protagonists. Although through identity, they are female, by desire these actresses are the male protagonists. Mulvey continues to argue that in film, “it is the movement that creates the sense of agency and activity associated with masculinity, and thereby also creates the male gaze… film creates the desire to possess. Voyeurism and fetishism produce the desire to possess”. Hollywood created the male gaze as a way to cater to the masses, and continue to use it while fronting social progressiveness, amplifying the use of social pandering.

Convergence Between Society & Hollywood

Film changes society and society changes film. While some changes are for the better, many are not. *The Queen’s Gambit* and *I Care A Lot* are both examples of media created to cater to mainstream society while sending wrong messages to the audience,
whether it be intentional or unintentional. Viewers see this misrepresentation of women, LGBTQ, and black characters and become accustomed to the familiar tropes that surround them. Because the tropes are used so often in media and film, it is hard for the viewer to understand that what they are seeing is intentional, and bad. Taking Fearing’s behavioral film theory into account, audience members’ behaviors and attitudes parallel with those in the films, meaning that after watching both The Queen’s Gambit and I Care A Lot, viewers overly sexualize women and gay relationships, while having unrealistic perceptions of mental health issues. While these films are fronted as empowering, diverse, representative, and progressive, in reality, they are succumbing to societal stereotypes that feed into the male gaze, to draw in a wider audience and, in turn, a greater profit.
Encountering Directors: Alfred Hitchcock

HITCHCOCK. As far as you were concerned, you
never think that was in any way referred to in the
photograph. It shows me with a group of empty
shops that you see over there. It was a scene I did
for the film "Sabotage," which was taken out of
context. I can’t remember that film at all. I never
told you that story.

FARLEY. It was in "Sabotage." I remember the
photograph. It shows you with a group of empty
shops that you think you had a scene in there.

HITCHCOCK. That was in "Sabotage." It was a
scene I did for that film, but I can’t remember it.

FARLEY. You never told me that you had a
scene there.

HITCHCOCK. That was in "Sabotage." I did a
scene for that film, but I can’t remember it.

FARLEY. You never told me that you had a
scene there.

HITCHCOCK. That was in "Sabotage." I did a
scene for that film, but I can’t remember it.

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