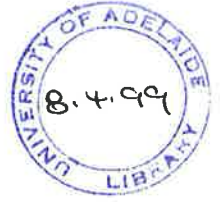


Deadly Seductions:

femme fatales in 90's film noir



Masters of Arts
(Women's Studies)

Deadly seductions:

femme fatales in 90's film noir

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Thesis Abstract

This thesis examines women in film noir in the 1990's. Specifically it studies how the femme fatales of the 90's are constituted as castrating, transgressive and seductive female subjects, who remain defiant, unrecuperated and unpunished. This characterisation differs from the femme fatales of film noir of the 40's and 50's where they are constituted as phallic women who are castrated.

To support this exploration the thesis utilises feminist psychoanalytical theories of castration, woman as fetish object and scopophilia. It also invokes theories of seduction and femininity as masquerade, which is informed by Riviere, Butler, Doane, Creed and the writings of Baudrillard and applied here to film analysis and the characterisation of the femme fatale in particular.

This thesis utilises feminist film theory techniques, coupled with specific psychoanalytical insights into the dynamics of castration, Oedipal desire and seduction to analyse two films. The films analysed are *Basic Instinct*, released in 1992, directed by Paul Verhoven and *The Last Seduction*, released in 1994 and directed by John Dahl.

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I want to thank my family, especially my mother and sisters, and friends who supported me, encouraged me, showed interest in my work and understood the isolation I required to complete this work.

Declaration

This thesis does not contain any material that has been accepted for the award of any degree of qualification in any university or other tertiary institution. To my knowledge the material herein is entirely my work, except where I give due reference to other authors.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being available for loan and photocopying.

Ingrid Hofmann

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