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The Most Disturbing Definition

Are Extreme Cinema Films Part of One Big Genre?

Abstract

In this essay I have looked at how the term extreme cinema should be categorized. Should it be categorized as a genre, a subgenre, an umbrella term or something else. To find this out I have divided the essay into three chapters, one long and two short. The first chapter is about how style and narrative affects the way extreme cinema is categorized. The second chapter looks at how reception and awards affect the way extreme cinema is categorized. The last chapter looks at how production, distribution, festivals and marketing all play into the way that extreme cinema is categorized.

The essay then concludes with what I think the proper term for categorizing extreme cinema is and why I think so. I also comment on what aspects of extreme cinema is important when categorizing, and which aspects after having written this essay I don't feel are very important when categorizing these types of films.

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Introduction

Sex, rape, violence, death, torture and other controversial subjects have always existed in the world of cinema to a larger or lesser degree. As early as in the late 1800s there were movies that were deemed offensive because of their sexually explicit content, one of these movies for example is *The Dolorita Passion Dance* (1897)¹ that was banned from viewing in Atlantic City, USA, for being deemed a “dirty movie”². This is not the only movie to have caused controversy in the early years of cinema, movies such as *The Kiss* (William Haise, 1896)³ and *Electrocuting an Elephant* from (1903)⁴ were seen as controversial for their depiction of physical intimacy and graphic violence respectively⁵. Another example of graphic violence in early cinema can be seen in the movie *Un Chien Andalou* (Luis Buñuel, 1929), where a very graphic scene of an eye getting cut with a razor is depicted⁶. In the 1930s foreign films were imported to America and marketed as sexy and taboo, a way to make moviegoers want to see them because of their provocative nature⁷. Nowadays things like this are nothing out of the ordinary when it comes to cinema, but when all of these films were released they were considered extremely controversial and shocking, because what was considered acceptable to show back then was not viewed in the same way as it is today. Skipping forward to the 1970s, where lots of controversial and provocative art films are being made as a way to compete with mainstream movies, because of their sexual content and sometimes the depiction of violence⁸. Moving forward to the 2000s there’s been a number of movies that’s been deemed offensive for their depiction of sex and violence, examples being *Irreversible* (Gaspar Noé, 2002), which features a 12 minute rape scene⁹, and *Antichrist* (Lars Von Trier, 2009), which features one of the main characters’ testicles being crushed and then made to ejaculate blood¹⁰. As we can see, movies with depictions of sex, violence, and sexual violence have caused controversy since the inception of cinema.

¹ *The Dolorita Passion Dance*, Edison Manufacturing Company, USA, 1897.

² Frey, Mattias, *Extreme cinema: the transgressive rhetoric of today's art film culture*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 2016, page 4.

³ *The Kiss*, Edison Manufacturing Company, USA, 1896, William Haise.

⁴ *Electrocuting an Elephant*, Edison Manufacturing Company, USA, 1903.

⁵ Frey, Mattias, page 4.

⁶ *Un Chien Andalou (An Andalusian Dog)*, Les Grands Films. France, 1929, Luis Buñuel.

⁷ Frey, Mattias, page 4.

⁸ Frey, Mattias, page 6.

⁹ *Irreversible (Irreversible)*, Eskwad, France, 2002, Gaspar Noé.

¹⁰ *Antichrist*, Zentropa Entertainments, Denmark, Germany, France, Poland, Sweden and Italy, 2009, Lars Von Trier.

In this essay I am going to focus on the films that present these subjects of violence, sex, and sexual violence to extreme levels. The current term to describe these sort of movies is extreme cinema. The purpose of this text is not to make a big recommendations list of these movies, the main reason I do this research is to find out if these movies are part of one big genre of movies, a subgenre of another bigger genre, or if the term extreme cinema is more of an umbrella term for movies that take controversial subjects to the absolute extreme. Maybe extreme cinema is something completely different from these terms all together and some other term should be used to describe these sort of movies.

This is where things get more complicated, because it's not very clear if extreme cinema is a genre of its own, or if it's something else. Mattias Frey, professor of film, culture, and media at the University of Kent, writes in his book *Extreme Cinema: the transgressive rhetoric of today's art film culture* that to his mind, extreme cinema films exist on a spectrum because of the different criteria that the films must fulfil to a larger or lesser degree¹¹. To use the word spectrum to describe extreme cinema is actually a very fitting one, because these movies do vary from one another quite a lot. There are many movies that are classed as extreme cinema, but many of them don't seem to have much in common with each other on the surface. A movie such as *The Human Centipede (First sequence)* (Tom Six, 2009) and *Antichrist* may not seem like they have a lot to do with one another, but that's where the criteria that Mattias Fray listed in his book becomes very important. In his opinion he thinks that the main criteria for a movie to be considered as extreme cinema, is that it must "Explicitly depict and/or primarily thematize sex, violence, or sexual violence."¹². Since the main criteria to classify what an extreme cinema movie is, this is where it becomes a problem, because lots of different movies in different types of genres can fill the criteria of explicitly depicting violence and sex and also primarily thematize it. Things like this can be depicted in genres like Action, Drama, Horror, Comedy, Thrillers and more. Which makes me ask if extreme cinema really is a genre or something else.

So the question I want to see if I can find an answer to is if extreme cinema is a genre on its own, or not, and if it's one or the other, why is that? The reason I want to know if this is the case is to see if these movies have anything in common that's not only their depiction of violence and

¹¹ Frey, Mattias, page 7.

¹² Fray, Mattias, page 7.

sex, but if there is a bigger connection between these movies. Examples of what that could be are themes in narrative, style, marketing, reception, reputation and other things that could connect these movies on a deeper level. If they do in fact have more in common than the extremity then maybe there will be a new way to view these movies since by finding more and other things that they have in common viewers can get a new and different perspective on what they are watching and analysing.

Research

There is definitely not a lack of research when it comes to extreme cinema, there has been some books and texts written on the subject which is an advantage for me since I'm writing about it. To my knowledge and what I've found is that there are two books that has to do with Extreme Cinema as a genre, which will be very useful for the essay that I'm writing.

Other research that I've found on the subject is not as much about extreme cinema and if it's a genre or not. The other research is more about these movies and how and why they were made the way they are, how these movies are produced and distributed, and how sex and violence is portrayed in classic Hollywood and mainstream movies.

The way my work in this essay will relate to this prior research is first of all to see if what I find in my research is the same as the people that have written about this subject before me. Just because we research the same field won't necessarily mean that we will come to the same conclusions. If it were to be that I come to the same conclusions as the previous research that's been written, that would make an even stronger argument for what I've found out is valid in this field of research since I wouldn't be alone with that conclusion, and it would also solidify the earlier research as reliable since there now would be another piece of research that came to the same conclusion as the ones before.

Material and Sources

Before I mention what literature I'll be using I'm going to go through the movies that I will be watching and why I've chosen these particular movies. There are many different reasons why I've chosen these specific movies, and there are quite a lot of them, and that is because I want to

have as broad a picture of the subject in question as I can within reason. Unfortunately I can't view every movie that's ever been called extreme cinema, so I'll have to pick a number of them to watch. The way I've decided to select what movies to watch is by: what region they're from, what type of extreme content they feature, if it's a big budget or low budget production, if the movie is categorised as an art film or an exploitation film, and what year they were released. By having these different criteria I will hopefully get as broad of a perspective on these films as I possibly can. The movies I will be watching for this essay are: *Antichrist*, *A Serbian Film* (Srđan Spasojević, 2010) *Audition* (Takashi Miike, 1999) *Begotten* (E. Elias Merhige, 1989), *Blood Feast* (Herschell Gordon Lewis, 1963), *Braindead* (Peter Jackson, 1992), *Caligula* (Tinto Brass, 1979), *Cannibal Holocaust* (Ruggero Deodato, 1980) *Dogtooth* (Yorgos Lanthimos, 2009), *Funny Games* (Michael Haneke, 1997), *Guinea Pig: Devil's Experiment* (Satoru Ogura, 1985), *The Human Centipede (First sequence)*, *irreversible*, *Man Bites Dog* (Rémy Belvaux, 1992), *Martyrs* (Pascal Laugier, 2008), *Nekromantik* (Jörg Buttgereit, 1987) *Pink Flamingos* (John Waters, 1972) *Rambo* (Sylvester Stalone, 2008) *Saló, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1975), *Slaughtered Vomit Dolls* (Lucifer Valentine, 2006) *Sweet Movie* (Dusan Makavejev, 1974) *Thriller - A Cruel Picture* (Bo Arne Vibenius, 1973).

All of these movies fulfill at least one of the criteria that I have mentioned above, they also vary quite a bit when it comes to release year and country of origin. To show this, I will list the movies mentioned above together with the criteria which it fulfills.

Country of origin: *Begotten*, *Blood Feast*, *Pink Flamingos* and *Rambo* are American productions; *Audition* and *Guinea Pig: Devil's Experiment* are Japanese productions; *A Serbian Film* is a Serbian production; *Braindead* is a New Zealand production; *Cannibal Holocaust* is an Italian production; *Dogtooth* is a Greek production; *Funny Games* is an Austrian production; *The Human Centipede (First sequence)* is a Dutch production; *irreversible* is a French production; *Man Bites Dog* is a Belgian production; *Nekromantik* is a West German production; *Thriller - A Cruel Picture* is a Swedish production; *Antichrist* is a Danish-German-French-Swedish-Polish-Italian co-production; *Caligula* is an American-Italian co-production, *Martyrs* is a French-Canadian co-production; *Saló* is an Italian-French

co-production; *Slaughtered Vomit Dolls* is a Canadian-American co-production; and *Sweet Movie* is a Canadian-French-West German co-production.

Extreme content featured: *Antichrist*, *A Serbian Film*, *Begotten*, *Caligula*, *Cannibal Holocaust*, *irreversible*, *Nekromantik*, *Saló, or the 120 Days of Sodom* and *Slaughtered Vomit Dolls* feature extreme depictions of all three themes, violence, sex, and sexual violence; *Audition*, *Blood Feast*, *Braindead*, *Funny Games*, *Guinea Pig: Devil's Experiment*, *The Human Centipede (First sequence)*, *Martyrs* and *Rambo* features extreme depictions of violence; *Dogtooth* features extreme depictions of violence and sex; *Man Bites Dog* and *Thriller - A Cruel Picture* features extreme depictions of violence and sexual violence; *Pink Flamingos* features extreme depictions of sex and sexual violence; and *Sweet Movie* features extreme depictions of sex.

Low or big budget: *A Serbian Film*, *Audition*, *Begotten*, *Blood Feast*, *Braindead*, *Cannibal Holocaust*, *Dogtooth*, *Funny Games*, *Guinea Pig: Devil's Experiment*, *The Human Centipede (First sequence)*, *irreversible*, *Man Bites Dog*, *Martyrs*, *Nekromantik*, *Pink Flamingos*, *Slaughtered Vomit Dolls*, *Sweet Movie* and *Thriller - A Cruel Picture* are all lowbudget movies. While *Caligula*, *Rambo* and *Saló* are big budget productions.

Art or exploitation: *A Serbian Film*, *Blood Feast*, *Braindead*, *Cannibal Holocaust*, *Guinea Pig: Devil's Experiment*, *The Human Centipede (First sequence)*, *Nekromantik*, *Pink Flamingos*, *Slaughtered Vomit Dolls* and *Thriller - A Cruel Picture* are exploitation films, while *Antichrist*, *Audition*, *Begotten*, *Dogtooth*, *Funny Games*, *irreversible*, *Man Bites Dog*, *Martyrs*, *Saló, or the 120 Days of Sodom*, and *Sweet Movie* are artfilms. Both *Caligula* and *Rambo* are very hard to place in either of the two categories, but if they must be placed somewhere they lean more towards exploitation, even though they are big budget productions.

When the movies were released: *Blood Feast* was released in the 1960s; *Caligula*, *Pink Flamingos*, *Saló*, *Sweet Movie* and *Thriller - A Cruel Picture* were released in the 1970s; *Begotten*, *Cannibal Holocaust*, *Guinea Pig: Devil's Experiment* and *Nekromantik* were released in the 1980s; *Audition*, *Braindead*, *Funny Games*, *Man Bites Dog* were released in the 1990s; *Antichrist*, *Dogtooth*, *The Human Centipede (First sequence)*, *irreversible*, *Martyrs*, *Rambo*,

Slaughtered Vomit Dolls were released in the 2000s; and *A Serbian Film* was released in the 2010s.

Now that I've named what movies I'm going to watch, and what criteria they fulfill, I can get to the literature. As I said before there is not a lack of literature when it comes to the subject of extreme cinema. I've found three books on the subject of extreme cinema and will use them as my main sources when it comes to this essay. I've also found two books that are about the classic depiction of violence and sex in classic Hollywood. The reason I've chosen these two books, is as a way to compare the classic depictions of violence and sex, and how it differs from the way it's depicted in extreme cinema. The reason for picking these books is because of their research on the subject of extreme cinema, which will be very handy for me since that is what I'm writing about. The books about classic Hollywood will help me compare the movies I've chosen to watch, which don't follow this classical depiction of violence and sex, to movies that use this classical depiction and how it differs from one another. I'm also going to use internet resources and archived reviews from magazines as sources for this essay, and also a book about the film *Saló, or the 120 Days of Sodom* since the film will be mentioned a number of times throughout this essay.

Theory and Method

The theory I'll be using for this essay is what is called genre theory. What this theory proposes is that every piece of art has different themes, we can categorise the works of art based on the themes they have in common. A category of different works of art with the same theme is called a genre. The reason I'm choosing this theory is of course because the research I'm going to conduct is about whether or not extreme cinema qualifies as a genre or not, and if so, what it is. Now, the way I'm going to find this out is by watching the movies that I listed before, compare them to one another when it comes to a lot of different aspects, such as: style and narrative, reception and awards, production, marketing, festivals and distribution. This is what I'll be looking at to decide if there is a connection when it comes to the things listed and the different movies I'm going to watch.

Disposition

The way that I've chosen to structure my research is as three different chapters, the first chapter is Style and Narrative, the second chapter is Reception and Awards, and the third and last chapter is Production, Marketing, Festivals and Distribution.

What the Style and Narrative chapter will be about, is what different stylistic and narrative similarities there are between the different movies that I'm going to watch. Examples being how the three main themes of extreme cinema, violence, sex and sexual violence are depicted, both compared with mainstream film and between the different extreme cinema films. Also if there are any similarities in the way the story is structured and told, and if there are deeper messages in these films that are similar to each other.

The Reception and Awards chapter will be about what type of reception the films have gotten from viewers, audience and critics. This chapter will also present what the reviews say and why, what awards they've gotten, and how the reception and awards vary between different films.

Lastly, the Production, Marketing, Festivals, and Distributions chapter will be about how these movies are made and by whom, and how the creators decide to get their movies out to its viewers. I will look at how the movies were created, why they were created, by whom they were created, how they were marketed, what roles festivals play in these movies marketing, and how the distribution of these movies gets out to its audiences.

The reason I've decided to have it organised in this way, is because I think the most important way to know how to tell what genre something is a part of, is by looking at the stylistic and narrative aspects of the movies, because of this, this chapter will be longer than the other two. Then, I'll look at the other aspects to see if there is something else that makes a movie extreme. I'm going to see if reception and awards plays any part in what counts as extreme cinema, and if the movies are perceived differently from each other. Lastly I will look at the production, marketing, festivals and distribution, to see if I can find a new way to categorize this type of films.

Chapter 1. Style and Narrative

Violence is one of the most common themes in extreme cinema, so is sexual violence, and also sexual content. These themes recur in movies of all kinds of genres, the main difference is in how it is depicted in extreme cinema compared to classic Hollywood cinema. Finding out in what way these themes are depicted in extreme cinema could decipher if all of these movies are part of one genre. The books *Classical Film Violence* by Stephen Prince, professor of communication studies at Virginia Tech, and *Sex and Film* by Berry Forshaw, writer and journalist specialising in cinema and fiction, will be used as a way to compare how violence and sex have been depicted traditionally in film, compared to how it is depicted in extreme cinema. Important to remember is what Mattias Fray mentioned earlier, that extreme cinema's depiction of sex and violence is explicit and/or primarily thematized¹³. Simply being featured in a movie is not by itself the criteria, otherwise lots of films could be considered as extreme cinema. Stephen Prince writes about how today, even though the production code administration (PCA) and the nation's regional censor board are no longer active, there is a way of how violence is depicted in Hollywood film that is left from the PCA legacy. Instead of showing everything that happens, filmmakers choose not to depict the violence directly, but by using different image substitutions¹⁴. Prince claims that there are five visual codes that provides the foundation for the depiction of violence in the classic Hollywood cinema. These five visual codes are "spatial displacement, metonymic displacement, indexical pointing, subsituational emblematics, and emotional bracketing"¹⁵. Now what does these different terms mean? Spatial displacement means that instead of showing the violence that takes place on the screen, the camera will instead cut away to something else, a character, an object or even a new scene¹⁶. Metonymic displacement means that there is an object or action that stands in for the violence that is happening off screen¹⁷. Indexical pointing is similar to metonymic displacement, the main difference is that the object or action in indexical pointing is directly related to the violence that's off screen in some way¹⁸.

¹³ Fray, Mattias, page 7.

¹⁴ Prince, Stephen, *Classical film violence: designing and regulating brutality in Hollywood cinema, 1930-1968*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, NJ, 2003, page 205.

¹⁵ Prince, Stephen, page 207 - 208.

¹⁶ Prince, Stephen, page 208.

¹⁷ Prince, Stephen, page 220.

¹⁸ Prince, Stephen, page 230.

Subsituational emblematics means that wounds caused by weapons aren't shown or that there aren't any wounds at all after a weapon's impact, and if there are wounds shown, they are often not very graphically displayed¹⁹. Lastly, emotional bracketing means that there is breathing room for the viewer after a violent scene that is startling, intense or has serious consequences for the narrative. Because of this, it gives the violence shown a sort of poetic and moral value to be featured in the narrative²⁰. A film doesn't have to follow all these codes and just because they are in place, doesn't mean that violence can't still be depicted fairly graphic, but there is still a difference between this Hollywood depiction of film violence and the extreme cinema depiction. To show this, I will compare two torture scenes from two films, *Reservoir Dogs* (Quentin Tarantino, 1992) and *Guinea Pig: Devil's Experiment*. *Reservoir Dogs* is a movie I would consider violent for a mainstream American movie, or Quentin Tarantino's movies in general. In the film there is a disturbing scene where the character Mr. Blonde tortures a police officer, the officer gets cut in the face with a razor, he also gets one of his ears cut off by Mr. Blonde²¹. Something interesting about this scene is the fact that we never see the razor touch the police officer, it's filmed in a way so that our mind creates a picture of what happens without us having to see it. When Mr. Blonde cuts the ear of the officer, the camera pans away to the side and films an opening in a wall instead of the act of torture, this is what Prince called Spatial displacement²². So even without the PCAs censor codes in place, Hollywood movies still keep these rules to a certain extent. *Guinea Pig: Devil's Experiment* on the other hand does not do this at all. The film is about a group of kidnapping maniacs who kidnap and torture a young woman. The entire film is one long torture scene and we get to see everything in graphic detail. An example being how the kidnappers cuts the young woman's hand with a scalpel, the way this differs drastically from *Reservoir Dogs* way of showing this, is that in *Guinea Pig: Devil's Experiment* we actually see the scalpel make contact, cut the victims hand open, then how it starts to pour blood from the wound. In the film we also get to see the young woman's eye get pierced by a needle, we see as the needle enter through the skin next to her eye, then how it exits through the eye globe while blood pours from the eye socket²³. Editor and writer Magnus Blomdahl writes in his book *Äkta*

¹⁹Prince, Stephen, page 238.

²⁰Prince, Stephen, page 244.

²¹*Reservoir Dogs*, Dog Eat Dog Productions Inc. and Live Entertainment, USA, 1992, Quentin Tarantino.

²²Prince, Stephen, page 208.

²³*Guinea Pig: Devil's Experiment*, Sai Enterprise, Japan, 1985, Satoru Ogura.

Skräck (True Horror) that this film was made to shock even the most hardened viewers²⁴, and that the eye puncturing scene is still as shocking today as the first time he saw the film²⁵.

As seen when comparing these scenes there is a clear difference in how the violence is depicted and how graphic it is, even if both scenes are torture scenes (in the case with *Guinea Pig: Devil's Experiment*, the whole movie is a torture scene).

As mentioned before violence is not the only type of “taboo” subject that is often featured in extreme cinema, the other subject that is featured extremely often in these type of films is the subject of sex. Now you may ask yourself why sex would be considered that offensive since it's such a normal act, as long as it's consensual. I would argue that there is an extreme and “offensive” way to depict sex in film. To show this I will do a similar comparison as above, but now instead focus on depictions of sex instead of depictions of violence, but first I would like to share a quote from the director Tinto Brass which follows “Pornography is there to give you an erection. Erotica is there to give you emotions.”²⁶. The quote is in reference to his movie *Caligula*. The quote has a very good point and can be used when differentiating between how mainstream and extreme cinema depict sex. Since the quote was mentioned in the context of the film *Caligula*, it would be appropriate to begin with looking at how it depicts sex. In the book *Sex and Film: the Erotic in British, American and World Cinema* by Barry Forshaw, he writes that “In many films, the erotic impulse – either a direct physical expression or built into the DNA of a given piece – can transform the narrative, both illuminating and energising the films of which it is a part.”²⁷, this means that sexual content can and often is there to have a purpose within the narrative, the question then is what purpose the sexual content in *Caligula* brings to the narrative and also what emotions they want the viewers to experience, since that is what Tinto Brass was referring to in his quote. In the film, there are very explicit sex scenes between characters that could be considered pornographic, since there are graphic penetrations and ejaculations in the movie, and most importantly is that the scenes are unsimulated sex, not staged²⁸. An example of such a scene happens about one hour into the movie, where two men masturbate their genitalia until they ejaculate into a bowl. This scene is extremely graphic and

²⁴ Blomdahl, Magnus, *Äkta skräck: den nya vågen av extrem film*, Vertigo, Sala, 2011, page 141.

²⁵ Blomdahl, Magnus, Page 145.

²⁶ Forshaw, Barry, *Sex and film: the erotic in British, American and world cinema*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, Hampshire, 2015, page 79.

²⁷ Forshaw, Barry, page 5.

²⁸ Forshaw, Barry, page 79.

there is nothing left up to the viewers imagination, what was just described is exactly what happens and there are no compromises made in the film when it comes to hiding the sexual themes. This is not the only scene featuring extremely graphic sexual content, there are also lots of scenes featuring unsimulated sex between people, one of these scenes is an orgy scene that features both fellatio and penetration in the same pornographic fashion as the one mentioned before. In this scene there are extremely graphic depictions of sexual acts that are not just erotic, but pornographic in nature, both heterosexual and homosexual sex acts are depicted in this scene with nothing left to the viewer's imagination²⁹. This scene and many others feature the exact same type of sexual content you would expect from a pornographic film, so how come this movie isn't considered a pornographic film? That is because *Caligula* was marketed as a historical drama with political satire, not as a porno with an ancient Rome theme, if it did it probably wouldn't have faced the same controversy as it did³⁰. Because it depicts sexual content in this way, it definitely doesn't depict sexual content in the same way as mainstream film does, since mainstream film doesn't feature pornographic sex. This ties back to the Tint Brass quote "Pornography is there to give you an erection. Erotica is there to give you emotions."³¹, since the sexual depictions in *Caligula* is there to arouse the viewer.

After looking at the sexual representation in *Caligula*, it would be suitable to compare this to how sex is depicted in a mainstream movie, and how it differs from how it is depicted in *Caligula*. The movie that will be used in this comparison is *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1992) since it also has an orgy scene.

In this scene the character Jonathan Harker gets seduced by Dracula's three brides to have sex with them, in this sex scene the naked breasts of the brides are shown, there are closeups of naked body parts getting rubbed together, the brides lick Jonathans neck and arms, and we see one of the brides lick Jonathans nipple³².

The scene doesn't hold back everything when it comes to depicting the orgy, as described, it features naked breasts and licking of a nipple, but compared to the orgy scene in *Caligula*, it's not nearly as graphic. When looking at the techniques used in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* when it

²⁹ *Caligula*, Penthouse Films International, USA and Italy, 1979, Tinto Brass.

³⁰ Shah, Irfan, The great unraveling: or, the epic misproduction of *Caligula*, *Cineaste*; New York Vol. 44, Iss. 2, Spring 2019, FIAF International Index to Film Periodicals Database, page 26.

³¹ Forshaw, Barry, page 79.

³² *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, Osiris Films and American Zoetrope, USA, 1992, Francis Ford Coppola.

comes to the orgy scene, it's possible to use the rules mentioned in *Classical Film Violence* when it comes to sex depiction in movies, since the rules apply to all types of prohibited content during the PCA era of the American film industry, but the legacy of these rules still remain in the making of Hollywood movies³³. There are two of these rules that are predominant in this scene, metonymic displacement and indexical pointing. The brides of Dracula bite Jonathan multiple times during the scene. Of course they are vampires and naturally they would bite a human, but in the context of this orgy scene it seems like it's a representation of penetration. The teeth penetrating the skin of Jonathan is a symbolism for the sexual act of penetration with genitalia, or at least that's one way of seeing it. This is why metonymic displacement works in this context since it uses the action of biting as a replacement for sexual penetration³⁴. Why indexical pointing fits in here is because there is a part in the scene where one of the brides proceeds to give Jonathan fellatio, and at the same time bites his penis. Instead of showing this, the camera cuts to Jonathan's reaction where he moans in pain. This is why indexical pointing works in this context, because it shows the direct effect of the sexual act without actually showing it³⁵.

Same as with the *Reservoir Dogs* scene compared to the *Guinea Pig: Devil's Experiment* scene, we can see how the representation of sex in extreme cinema and mainstream film does differ quite radically, because in extreme cinema the taboo subjects are depicted in a very graphic way, while in mainstream cinema it's often depicted in a more careful way.

Now that we have a general understanding of how both violence and sex is depicted in extreme cinema, we can lastly look at the last common theme in these types of movies, which is sexual violence. The movies that will be compared are *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2011, David Fincher) and *irreversible* (2002, Gaspar No  ) and see in what way they differ in the portrayal of sexual violence. The rape portrayed in both scenes are very similar since they both contain rape by sodomy, which is done by a man to a woman. The first scene to be analysed is the one from *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. In this scene the main character Lisbeth Salander visits her new state-appointed guardian, Nils Bjuvman, who replaced her former guardian Holger Palmgren. When she visits and asks Bjuvman for money, since he is the one that controls her

³³Prince, Stephen, page 205.

³⁴Prince, Stephen, page 220.

³⁵Prince, Stephen, page 230.

finances, he knocks her out and handcuffs her to his bed. When Lisbeth regains her consciousness she starts to scream and cry while Bjuvan proceeds to undress her. Bjuvman then proceeds to aggressively kiss Lisbeth's buttocks while she is still screaming and crying, he then gets on top of her, opens a condom packet and says "I've got to ask you, you like anal sex?" He puts the condom on and begins to anally rape Lisbeth as she's crying³⁶. As described, this scene is actually quite graphic for being a non extreme cinema movie and doesn't leave much up to the viewer's imagination since it is all quite disturbingly depicted. But again, the film uses some of the visual codes, indexical pointing for example, because it's filmed in a way that the viewer doesn't see lots of physical contact between the characters³⁷. For example filming Bjuvman's upper body so that we don't see Lisbeth at all. Same goes the other way where Lisbeth's upper body is filmed without us seeing Bjuvman in the shot at all. Though there are moments where we see physical contact between the characters, they are cut very short. The act of penetration is fifteen seconds long and is filmed in such a way that you don't see physical contact between the characters in a clear way, except for about two seconds, but even then it's very out of focus in the shot. The scene then ends before we've seen much of the rape, so we as the viewers don't witness most of what happens, we just see the beginning of the act. That's where the next visual code fits in, which is emotional bracketing, because the scene that follows gives viewers time to emotionally absorb what they just witnessed³⁸.

In *irreversible* the rape scene is much more graphic and goes on for much longer. In this scene the character Alex decides to walk in a pedestrian underpass after leaving a party. Down in the underpass she sees a pimp, called Le Tenia, beating a prostitute named Concha. When Le Tenia sees Alex he turns his attention to her, and when she tries to run away he pushes her against a wall and threatens her with a knife. He then proceeds to pin Alex to the ground and anally rapes her while she screams and cries in agony in a scene that lasts for about nine minutes. When Le Tenia is done raping Alex, he begins to beat her to the brink of death and puts her in a coma³⁹. Again, extreme cinema depicts the subject in question even more horrible and disturbing than mainstream cinema does. Firstly, the length of the scenes is drastically different in length. In

³⁶ *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, Scott Rudin Productions, Yellow Bird, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, and Columbia Pictures, USA, Sweden, and UK, 2011, David Fincher.

³⁷ Prince, Stephen, page 230.

³⁸ Prince, Stephen, page 244.

³⁹ *Irreversible*, 2002.

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo the penetration of the rape is fifteen seconds long, whereas in *irreversible* the penetration takes up almost five minutes of screentime. When it comes to how physical contact is shown in the scenes, *irreversible* doesn't try to hide that there is physical contact between the rapist and his victim. The camera films how Le Tenia pins Alex down, lays on top of her and hold his hand over her mouth so she can't scream. It's also shown how extremely violent the rape is and how Alex struggles to escape but is being forced to the ground by Le Tenia. Another thing that differs from *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* is the extreme verbal abuse and the extremely violent beating. As mentioned earlier, Bjuvman asks Lisbeth if she likes anal sex, but in *irreversible* Le Tenia is much more abusive and foulmouthed, examples being "I'm gonna blast your fucking ass!", "You gonna shut up, little whore?", "Shut your trap or I'll strangle you!" and "Your old man fuck your ass?". As seen by reading the quotes, what Le Tenia says to Alex are direct threats, referring to Alex as a sexworker, and making references that Alex would have had sexual intercourse with her father, while the quote from *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* is perverse and degrading within its context. I would still argue that what is said during the rape in *irreversible* is worse, more disgusting, more abusive and also direct threats towards the victim.

Some examples of films that are considered extreme cinema have been compared to mainstream movies, to show what differentiates them as their own group and why they are called extreme cinema. It's now time to start analysing if this explicit way of depicting these themes is something that is consistent within all of these movies. All of the films that I have watched as sources for this essay do not primarily thematise all three of the main themes of extreme cinema; violence, sex and sexual violence, but all of them at least mainly thematize one of those themes. The films do not always depict the themes in the exact same way as the three movies that have been compared so far. An extremely violent movie doesn't have to depict the same type of violence as *Guinea Pig: Devil's Experiment*, but the violence should be depicted in the same graphic and explicit manner. First, let's take a look at the consistency of violence graphically depicted throughout these movies. *Guinea Pig: Devil's Experiment* have already been looked at when it comes to it's violent content, but what about other movies? Let's focus on

two more films and see if it's possible to see any sort of similarities in the graphic way the violence is depicted. The first film is *Man Bites Dog*.

The movie is filmed as a documentary, since the story is about a documentary team that films the everyday life of a serial killer. Because the movie is filmed in this way the violence depicted looks and feels very real. There are lots of examples of violent scenes in the film, but the focus will be on one scene. In this scene the character, Ben, and the documentary team decides to break into a suburban house to rob and murder the family who lives there. The first thing that happens in the scene is that Ben pistol whips the mother in the family, she falls to the floor and goes into a state of shock and begins to hyperventilate. They keep on moving throughout the house and find the father shaving in the bathroom. The fathers forehead leaves a big spot of blood when Ben smashes it into the mirror. Ben then proceeds to bash the man's head against the sink and then tells the sound recordist to put the microphone against the man's neck, Ben then snaps the man's neck and it makes a very loud cracking sound⁴⁰. The violence depicted here is very different from the violence seen in *Guinea Pig: Devil's Experiment*, but it's depicted in the same graphic manner, the violence in the scene is very realistic and the camera doesn't shy away from showing the violence that takes place.

The next film that will be looked at is the film *Blood Feast*, a film about an egyptian caterer that kills women and steal their body parts to use in a ritual to bring an egyptian goddess to life. In this film very graphic gore is depicted when it comes to the killings, such as dismemberment of a leg, the top of a woman's head getting chopped off and a tongue getting ripped out of a woman's mouth. The specific scene that will be looked at is the head chopping scene. In this scene the character Fuad Ramses, the films murderer, finds a young couple on a beach and proceeds to attack them. He first knocks the man of the couple unconscious and then grabs a machete and chops the top of the woman's head off. Fuad grabs parts of the woman's brain and puts them in a bag, he leaves and the camera pans over to the woman, the top of her head now being a big mess of blood and gore. In this scene the viewer never sees the machete make contact with the woman's head, but we see Fuad hold brain pieces in his bloody hands, the gore and blood is very graphic and in focus. What is also shown very graphically is the carcass of the

⁴⁰ *C'est arrivé près de chez vous (Man Bites Dog)*, Les Artistes Anonymes, Belgium, 1992, Rémy Belvaux, André Bonzel, and Benoît Poelvoorde.

murdered woman. Her brain matter and blood is spilled out all around her head and it looks extremely gory. So while the film doesn't really show a lot of physical violence being committed in a graphic way, the outcome and aftermath of these violent actions are very explicitly depicted⁴¹.

Now that the violence has been looked at, it's time to look at the depiction of sex and if it's depicted in the same graphic manner as in *Caligula*. The first film that will be looked at is *Pink Flamingos*. There are very many scenes in the film that feature sex and nudity; throughout the film there are scenes of fellatio, flashing, flexing of a prolapsed anus and footfetishism. The scene that will be looked at is the fellatio scene, which is also an incest scene. In this scene the character Divine and her son Cracker are inside of their rival's for the title of filthiest people alive, Connie and Raymond Marbel's house. They are there because they want to kill them, but when Divine and Cracker can't find them there, they instead decide to rub and lick everything inside of the house to spread their own filthiness. After a while, both Divine and Cracker get so excited when spreading their filth in their rivals house, that Divine decides to perform fellatio on her son⁴². Same as with *Caligula*, the sex in this scene is unsimulated and the fellatio we see on screen is actual fellatio being performed on the actor. Also the same as *Caligula* is that we do see everything in detail, nothing is censored, and this is something that is true for most sexual and nude content in the film⁴³.

The next film that will be looked at in the context of depictions of sex is the film *Nekromantik*, a film about Nekrophilia. In the scene that will be looked at, the main character Rob and his girlfriend Betty, have sex with a corpse. Since the corpse doesn't have a working penis, they saw off a piece of a broom and use it as an erect penis. They then proceed to have a threesome with the corpse in a very romantically shot scene with romantic music and slow motion effects⁴⁴. Interestingly, the way the sexual content is depicted isn't very graphic or extreme, genitalia is not shown and the scene is filmed in a very romantic fashion instead of a pornographic one. But of course the fact that these characters are having sexual intercourse with

⁴¹ *Blood Feast*, Friedman - Lewis Productions, USA, 1963, Herschell Gordon Lewis.

⁴² *Pink Flamingos*, Dreamland, USA, 1972, John Waters.

⁴³ Breckon, Anna, *The erotic politics of disgust: Pink Flamingos as queer political cinema*, Screen Vol. LIV, Iss. 4, Winter, 2013, FIAF International Index to Film Periodicals Database, page 529.

⁴⁴ *Nekromantik*, Jelinski & Buttgerit, West Germany, 1987, Jörg Buttgerit.

a dead body is in itself very disturbing. There is also a part of the scene where Rob is sucking on the corpse's eye, which was an actual pigs eye used as the eye of the corpse⁴⁵.

Lastly it's time to look at two different movies and their depictions of sexual violence. The first film out of the two that will be looked at is *Thriller - A Cruel Picture*, a film about a woman who gets used by a pimp as a prostitute against her will. In the scene that will be looked at, there is a montage where the main character Madeleine gets sexually abused by a lot of customers. One of the customers is a man that makes Madeleine masturbate while he takes pictures, another customer is a man that penetrates Madeleine with his penis and fingers in different sexual positions, and lastly the third customer is a woman who hits Madeleine repeatedly while she sits on top of her, then she begins to fondle and kiss Madeleine⁴⁶. This scene is extremely graphic in its depictions of the sexual content taking place, it's very pornographic. Visuals like Madeleine's genitalia getting penetrated by male genitalia, Madeleine's anus get penetrated by a man's finger, and Madeleine's genitalia being masturbated by herself. All of this in extreme closeups, in full detail, and of course everything against Madeleine's will. Interesting to know is that the penetration happening on screen was real sex performed by Swedish live sex couple Romeo and Juliet, something that makes the scene even more controversial⁴⁷.

The last film that will be looked at when it comes to depiction of sexual violence is *Saló, or the 120 Days of Sodom*, a film about how four fascist men of power (The Duke, the Magistrate, the Bishop, and the President), called the libertines, kidnaps a group of teenagers and put them through 120 days of physical, mental and sexual torture. In the scene in question the four libertines and their victims are about to eat breakfast. Four women, who are the daughters of the libertines, enter naked with the food, one of the guards trip one of the daughters and begins to rape her as the crowd laughs at her cries of anguish. This arouses one of the libertines (The president) and because of this, he runs around in the room and shows his buttocks to the victims, until he tells the guard who is raping the daughter, to anally sodomize him, which the guard proceeds to do⁴⁸. Lars Gustaf Andersson, professor in film at Lund University, writes in his

⁴⁵ Blomdahl, Magnus, page 15.

⁴⁶ *Thriller - En Grym Film (Thriller - A Cruel Picture)*, BAV Film and United Producers, Sweden, 1973, Bo Arne Vibenius.

⁴⁷ Ronny Carlsson and Nathalie Bergensträhle, Visiting Christina Lindberg, FilmBizarro, June 2009, (<http://www.filmbizarro.com/christinalindberg.php>), used 14/12 - 2019.

⁴⁸ *Saló o le 120 giornate di Sodoma (Saló, or the 120 Days of Sodom)*, Produzioni Europee Associate (PEA) and Les Productions Artistes Associées, Italy and France, 1975, Pier Paolo Pasolini.

book *Änglarnas barn* (*The Children of the Angels*) how Pasolini really shows the ruthlessness of the libertines actions by letting their horrible deeds effect even their own children and that they don't show any signs of empathy towards them⁴⁹, making the scene ever more disturbing.

Now that the three main themes in extreme cinema have been analysed in comparison to mainstream cinema, and how it is depicted between different films categorised as extreme cinema, there is one more thing that would be very appropriate to mention. There is one more theme that I've noticed by watching all of the films, and that is the depictions of excrement and vomit. Not only is it featured in these movies, but in some of these films there are depictions of coprophagia, such as in *The Human centipede*, *Pink Flamingos* and *Saló*. In the films *Audition* and *Slaughtered Vomit Dolls* there are depictions of vomit being eaten and drunken. Since excrement and vomit is considered as something filthy and something most people don't want to see or hear about, it's not very surprising that it's quite frequent in these films and depicted in a very graphic way. An example being in *Saló* where in one scene the Duke makes one of the victims eat his feces, one of the earliest examples where excrement has been graphically depicted in film⁵⁰. In *Slaughtered Vomit Dolls* there is a scene where the character Hank Skinny uses a dismembered arm to stick down his throat to make himself vomit, he fills a glass full of vomit and proceeds to drink it, then he repeats this process multiple times⁵¹. Lucifer Valentine, the director of *Slaughtered Vomit Dolls* explains that his reasons for having this type of depiction of vomit in his films is because he is an emetophile, meaning he gets sexually aroused by vomit⁵².

Lastly before looking at reception and awards, narrative will be looked at to see if that plays any role in what is considered extreme cinema. Here it's a bit more difficult to see just on a surface level what these films' narratives have in common, since most of the films don't have similar narratives or settings, but by looking a bit deeper behind the meaning of these narratives, it may be possible to see if there is any relation.

In the anthology *Horror to the Extreme*, Robert Hyland, film and media studies teacher at the Queen's University, writes that "Rather than simplistically viewing extreme cinema as a series of gory action and horror films, this chapter argues that extreme cinema is a contemporary

⁴⁹ Andersson, Lars Gustaf, *Änglarnas barn: en studie i Pier Paolo Pasolinis filmer*, Bokbox, Diss. Lund : Univ.,Lund, 1992, page 97.

⁵⁰ Andersson, Lars Gustaf, page 134-135.

⁵¹ *Slaughtered Vomit Dolls*, Kingdom Of Hell Productions, Canada and USA, 2006, Lucifer Valentine.

⁵² Blomdahl, Magnus, page 48..

radical cinema movement engaging in a political discourse that subverts the conventions and expectations of a cinema audience inured to conservative studio fare⁵³”. He argues that the underlying political discourse has a part in the way the narrative is presented in these types of films, using the film *Audition* as an example, Hyland writes that the film can be seen as a feminist allegory and critique against patriarchal systems⁵⁴. The main character Shigeharu falls in love with a woman by the name of Azami after tricking her that she will star in a new big tv-show after taking part in a staged audition, which is actually an audition for Shigeharu to find someone to date. After a while Shigeharu proposes to Azami. In the morning after the proposal Azami disappears, Shigeharu tries to find Azami and during his search finds out that there seems to be a darker side to her. In the end of the film Azami paralyzes Shigeharu and begins to torture him, until his son comes home and accidentally breaks her neck when he defends himself from Azami⁵⁵. Hyland suggests that this film is an allegory for a monstrous patriarchy not being able to face its own monstrosity, and instead projection this to the innocent woman, since in the film it’s hinted at that everything that Shigeharu experiences after his proposal to Azami is just a dream or at least not real⁵⁶.

This is not the only film that has some form of political or social commentary when looking closer at the narrative, an example being *Cannibal Holocaust*. The film is about a film crew that has been lost and killed by natives in the Amazon forest. When a rescue team finds their footage it’s revealed that the film crew burned down the natives’ villages, killed their animals and raped women in the tribes, making the character Dr. Monroe question himself at the end of the film who “the real” cannibals are⁵⁷. This film, underneath all of its brutality and gruesomeness, sends a message of anti-imperialism, symbolised as the film crew that comes from a civilised society but are still the ones causing terror to the native population⁵⁸.

⁵³Choi, Jinhee & Wada-Marciano, Mitsuyo (edited), *Horror to the extreme: changing boundaries in Asian cinema*, Hong Kong University Press, Hong Kong, 2009, page 199-200.

⁵⁴Choi, Jinhee & Wada-Marciano, Mitsuyo (edited), Page 205.

⁵⁵ *Ôdishon (Audition)*, Omega Project, Japan, 1999, Tekashi Miike.

⁵⁶ Choi, Jinhee & Wada-Marciano, Mitsuyo (edited), page 205.

⁵⁷ *Cannibal Holocaust*, F.D. Cinematografica, Italy, 1980, Ruggero Deodato.

⁵⁸ Blackford, James. Sight and Sound; London Vol. 22, Iss. 1, Jan 2012, page 85.

One last example is *Man Bites Dog*, a film that asks: at what point do the people documenting “real life” become collaborators of the acts taking place, by either not intervening or by taking part in what happens⁵⁹?

Seeing how the themes of social and political commentary is something that is recurrent in extreme cinema, it could be argued as Robert Hyland claims that extreme cinema is more than just gory action and horror films. But is there always a deeper meaning with the narratives presented in extreme cinema? That doesn't seem to be the case, an example being the film *Braindead*. The film does have a bit of social commentary, but it's not used in a way to engage in political discourse, but used to comedic effect instead⁶⁰.

Another example of a film that doesn't bring deeper meaning to its narrative is the film *The Human Centipede (First sequence)*, a film about a doctor that kidnaps three people and sew them together, mouth to anus, to form a human centipede⁶¹. The doctor in the film is a sort of caricature of the German Nazi doctor, Joseph Mengele, but the film doesn't use this as a way to critique anything⁶². Also, the concept of the film is based on a thought by the director of the film, Tom Six, when he tried to think of a suitable punishment for pedophiles, and thought that having their mouth sewn to the anus of an obese truck driver for the rest of their life was a suitable punishment. The idea of the film is based in some sort of social commentary, but when used in the film, it's used for shock value and not something that has anything to do with punishment for terrible people⁶³.

One last example is the film *Guinea Pig: Devil's Experiment* where there isn't a deeper meaning when it comes to its narrative, since the entire film is one long torture scene for the sake of being disturbing and grotesque. The director Satoru Ogura wanted to make the most disturbing film of all time by simulating real snuff, which are films where people are getting tortured or killed on camera for real⁶⁴. Daniel Dellamorte, writer of *Violent Italy* (2002) and *Svensk Sensationsfilm* (2003) comment on *Guinea Pig: Devil's Experiment*, saying “You want to balance on the edge of how brutal it can be, feeling like fuck yes I'm as close to something

⁵⁹ Rob Gonsalves, *Man Bites Dog*, eFilmCritic, 01/02 - 2007, (<https://www.efilmcritic.com/review.php?movie=1093&reviewer=416>), Used 19/12-2019.

⁶⁰ *Braindead*, Sight and Sound; London Vol. 3, Iss. 6, Jun 1, 1993, FIAF International Index to Film Periodicals Database, page 48.

⁶¹ *The Human Centipede (First sequence)*, Six Entertainment, Netherlands, 2009, Tom Six.

⁶² Blomdahl, Magnus, Page 77.

⁶³ Blomdahl, Magnus, Page 97.

⁶⁴ Blomdahl, Magnus, Page 141.

illegal as I'm allowed to be. Unfortunately that feeling doesn't last very long. The total absence of story makes it so you accomplish that goal quite quickly. Brutal violence in context has a more lasting effect, just look at *Cannibal Holocaust* and *Men Behind the Sun*."

So when it comes to narrative, there isn't clearly something that connects extreme cinema as a genre. The similarities in visual aesthetics are easier to see, but less so when it comes to the films narratives and stories.

Chapter 2. Reception and Awards

Naturally, with a controversial group of films such as extreme cinema, critics and audiences alike have very strong opinions regarding the subject. Fray uses a quote by Dr. Tanya Horeck and Dr. Tina Kendall that summarize the reception of extreme cinema, “Reports of fainting, vomiting and mass walkouts have consistently characterized the reception of this group of arthouse film, whose brutal and visceral images appear designed to deliberately shock or provoke the spectators”⁶⁵. When thinking of what type of content is featured in extreme cinema, these reactions aren’t very surprising, but is this always the case? As with all types of films, there are some that are considered “good” and some that are considered “bad”. Also, as with all types of films, audiences and critics subjective views play in when giving these films a reception, so one viewer might love a film that another viewer despises. But why have some of these films gotten great reception and others bad? To see if this is possible to figure out, the reception of two films will be compared, one of the films is *Dogtooth* which has overwhelmingly good reviews, and the other film being *The Human Centipede (First sequence)*, which has overwhelmingly bad reviews. By comparing the reviews and the awards between these films and see why they’ve gotten their respective receptions, then looking to see if this is something that is recurring in these types of films, may give some insight into if the reception and awards play any part in how these films are categorised.

At the time I’m writing this essay, *Dogtooth* holds a rating of 92% in critic score and 76% in audience score on Rotten Tomatoes, 7,3/10 on IMDb, and 73% on Metacritic, which are all good ratings on the respective websites. The film won lots of prestigious awards such as the Prix Un Certain Regard and Prix de la Jeunesse at Cannes film festival and Dublin Film Critics Award at Dublin international film festival. The film was also nominated for best foreign language film by the Academy Awards and best foreign film by the British Independent Film Awards⁶⁶. Both the ratings and awards reflect that in general the film is liked by both critics and audiences. Why is that? Unfortunately it’s not possible to read every review of this movie on all the websites mentioned, but by looking at some from the different sites, and looking at reviews closest to the websites rating of the film, then maybe it’s possible to get a broad picture of what it is that critics

⁶⁵ Fray, Mattias, page 30.

⁶⁶ IMDb, *Dogtooth* (2009) - Awards, IMDb (https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1379182/awards?ref=tt_awd), Used 27/12-2019.

and audiences like about this film. Rotten Tomatoes will be used for critical reviews since their rating system is based on different critical reviews from all over the internet, and IMDb will be used for audience scores since the websites rating system is based on audience ratings, not critics. I also found the reviews on IMDb to be more elaborate than the once on Rotten Tomatoes in regards of audience reviews.

On Rotten Tomatoes the critical consensus reads as follows “It’ll be too disturbing -- and meandering -- for some, but *Dogtooth* is as disturbing and startlingly original as modern filmmaking gets.” which sounds positive, and after reading some critics reviews, that seems to be the case⁶⁷. When reading through some critic’s review of *Dogtooth* that rate the film around the same as the critic score on Rotten Tomatoes, they seem to agree that the extremity and the disturbing themes featured in the film aren’t just there to shock the viewers, but it’s there as a form of satire and critique. In one review the critic writes that “*Dogtooth* could be read as a movie about parenting.”⁶⁸, which isn’t very surprising since the film is about two overprotective parents that don’t let their children leave their home, and then lie about what the outside world is like and how it works⁶⁹. Another critic mentions how it’s easy to read the film as a satire of fundamentalism, whether that is political, social or religious fundamentalism doesn’t really matter, but the fact that the parents are forcing their children to live an isolated life where the reality of the world is hidden from them. It’s quite easy to relate this to how some parents refuse to let their kids think or experience anything other than what their parents have taught them⁷⁰. This seems to be the critical consensus over all, the question now is if the audience agree, and when reading the reviews with scores closest to the audience score, that seems to be the case. One reviewer writes that the way the parents treat their children and lie about the outside world is very reminiscent of how the country of North Korea treats its citizens, which is one more way of viewing an authoritarian power, in this case governments instead of parents abusing their power over people⁷¹. Another reviewer writes that what happens in the film is very reminiscent

⁶⁷ Rotten Tomatoes, *Dogtooth* (Kynodontas) (2010), Rotten Tomatoes (<https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/dogtooth>), Used 27/12-2019.

⁶⁸ Scott Tobias, *Dogtooth*, AVClub, 24/6 - 2010 (<https://film.avclub.com/dogtooth-1798165315>), Used 27/12-2019.

⁶⁹ *Kynodontas* (*Dogtooth*), Boo Productions, Greece, 2009, Yorgos Lanthimos.

⁷⁰ Tim Brayton, *Dogtooth* (2009), Alternate Ending, 25/12 - 2010

(<https://www.alternateending.com/2010/12/movies-i-missed-in-2010-the-intense-depravations-of-the-greeks.html>), Used 28/12-2019.

⁷¹ Forlornnessickness, *Dogtooth* (2009) - User Reviews, IMDb, 14/6 - 2014 (https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1379182/reviews?ref=tt_urv), used 29/12-2019.

of the Josef Fritzl case⁷², which was a case about a father who had locked his daughter in his basement and sexually abused her for over 20 years⁷³. So when comparing the views between critics and audiences they seem to mostly agree with each other that the disturbing nature of the film is not just there to be disturbing, but is there to make a sort of statement or satire. Seeing this, it's not very surprising why the film has good reviews and won prestigious awards. Why isn't this always the case though?

The Human Centipede (First sequence), unlike *Dogtooth*, has not gotten very good reviews and while it has won awards, these awards are not as prestigious as the ones that *Dogtooth* has won. As I'm writing this, *The Human Centipede (First sequence)* holds a rating of 50% in critic score and 25% in audience score at Rotten Tomatoes, 4,4/10 on IMDb, and 33% on Metacritic. These ratings aren't very good on any of the respective websites, while 50% on Rotten Tomatoes isn't a terrible score, it's still not very impressive and the rating is still considered as a rotten rating on the site⁷⁴. The film has won some awards that are definitely worth mentioning, such as winning best picture at Scremfest, but at the same time it also won worst film at Fangoria Chainsaw Awards, it was also nominated for best feature film at Toronto After Dark Film Festival. As seen here the film both won a best film and worst film prize, and all of the awards were given by festivals that mostly or only feature horror films⁷⁵. Just because the festivals focus on a specific genre doesn't mean that the prize isn't worth a lot, but since the film didn't get more mainstream awards or mainstream prize nominees it seems like the film isn't held to the same regard as *Dogtooth*. So why is it that *Dogtooth* get lots of praise but *The Human Centipede (First sequence)* doesn't? Same as before, I'll be looking at what both critics and audiences think of the film and what they have to say about it. The critic consensus on Rotten Tomatoes read as follows "Grotesque, visceral and hard to (ahem) swallow, this surgical horror doesn't quite earn its stripes because the gross-outs overwhelm and devalue everything else." This doesn't sound very positive, and when reading the reviews of the movie, it's easy to see why this is the critic consensus. When reading critical reviews it seems like most of them think that the main problem

⁷² Tristan!-2, *Dogtooth* (2009) - User Reviews, IMDb, 14/6 - 2014 (https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1379182/reviews?ref=tt_urv), used 29/12-2019.

⁷³ Kate Connolly, Josef Fritzl trial: She spent the first 5 years alone. He hardly ever spoke to her, *The Guardian*, 19/3 - 2009, (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/mar/19/josef-fritzl-austria>), used 29/12-2019.

⁷⁴ Rotten Tomatoes, *The Human Centipede (First sequence)* (2010), Rotten Tomatoes (https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/human_centipede) used 29/12-2019.

⁷⁵ IMDb, *The Human Centipede (First sequence)* - Awards, IMDb (https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1467304/awards?ref=tt_awd) used 29/12-2019.

with the film is that even though it's shocking and disturbing, there isn't anything meaningful behind it. One critic writes that "What's a bit disappointing is that, after laying out this disgusting idea, Six doesn't really take it very far." when talking about the story of the film, he also writes that "underneath its centipede idea, the movie more or less plays out like any old "torture porn" movie"⁷⁶, something that probably wouldn't be said if there was any depth to the explicit nature of the film. Another critic writes that "This is the kind of film that attracts attention through its outlandish nature alone, but never provides anything beyond mere shock value." which is very similar to that of what the previous critic mentioned⁷⁷. So what seems to be the critic's main problem with the film is that the graphic content and disturbing nature of the film doesn't really have any meaning outside of being graphic and disturbing. But what do audiences think? Audiences seem to have the same problems with the films as the critics, which is that the film doesn't use its concept for anything more meaningful than just shock value. One reviewer writes that "if Tom Six focused on the story, characters, and social commentary more than trying to make a disturbing and graphic film, he would have had more success." when talking about how the film gets boring pretty fast since it's just disturbing for the sake of being disturbing⁷⁸. Another reviewer writes that "The director, to me, seems very full of himself and depends too much on the concept of the film and looks to shock people into remembering the movie.", something that also sounds like the person doesn't think that the concept has anything else to it except being disturbing⁷⁹. Now as we can see, the reception of this movie differs quite a lot from *Dogtooth* and it seems to have a lot to do with the fact that the use of disturbing themes aren't used in any real meaningful way, but is just there to be disturbing.

Before moving on to the last part of this essay, the Production, Marketing, Festivals, and Distributions chapter, it would be appropriate to also look at a film that has gotten more mixed reviews than the other two, to see if there is the same type of opinions as with the other two or if the mixed reception has to do with something else. The film chosen for this is *Saló, or the 120*

⁷⁶ Jeffrey M. Anderson, The Human Centipede (First sequence) (2010), Combustible Celluloid, 07/05 - 2010 (<https://www.combustiblecelluloid.com/2010/humancent.shtml>), used 29/12-2019.

⁷⁷ Matthew Lucas, Review: "The Human Centipede (First sequence)", From the Front Row, 03/05 - 2010 (<http://www.fromthefrontrow.net/2010/05/review-human-centipede-first-sequence.html>) used 29/12-2019.

⁷⁸ anythinghorrorcott, The Human Centipede (First sequence) (2010) - User Reviews, IMDb, 21/06 - 2011 (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1467304/reviews?sort=helpfulnessScore&dir=desc&ratingFilter=4>) used 30/12-2019.

⁷⁹ Smells_Like_Cheese, The Human Centipede (First sequence) (2010) - User Reviews, IMDb, 21/06 - 2011 (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1467304/reviews?sort=helpfulnessScore&dir=desc&ratingFilter=4>) used 30/12-2019.

Days of Sodom as its a bit more varied in the ratings it has received. As I'm writing this the film holds a rating of 75% in critic score and 63% in audience score on Rotten Tomatoes, and a rating of 5,9/10 in IMDb. While 75% is a good rating, neither 63% nor 5,9/10 are great or terrible ratings, they are somewhere in between. The film also didn't receive any awards when it was released, and to my knowledge has only won the Venezia Classici Award on the Venice Film Festival for the best restored film, which doesn't really have anything to do with the content of the film in itself⁸⁰. This is why it's interesting to look and see what critics and audiences think of this film. The critical consensus on Rotten Tomatoes reads as follows "Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom will strike some viewers as irredeemably depraved, but its unflinching view of human cruelty makes it impossible to ignore." When reading this it seems that there is a question if people think the graphic and explicit nature of the film is justified or not⁸¹. One critic talks about how the movie detaches us from the horrible things that happen in it so that we can analyse it intellectually instead of emotionally, it shows the viewer evil things while the film itself is not evil⁸². By seeing the film in a non emotional way it is possible to view the atrocities taking place in a very different way than it would if we were emotionally attached to the characters, reminiscent of the way one would when reading about horrible events in the news. Another critic states that "despite moments of undeniably brilliant insight, is nearly unwatchable, extremely disturbing, and often literally nauseous."⁸³, so even if the film is trying to say something deeper than just showing graphic and disturbing imagery, the explicit depiction of the events taking place makes it difficult to find that deeper meaning. Do audiences agree with the critics? One reviewer writes that a big problem with the film is that the viewer never gets any chance to emotionally reflect on what happens, which by the end of the film only leaves the viewer with a feeling of emptiness. Because of this the shock factor of the film disappears after a while and the film just becomes boring⁸⁴. This is almost the opposite of what one of the critics mentioned, since he said that the non emotional attachment makes the viewer see the film intellectually

⁸⁰ IMDb, Salò o le 120 giornate di Sodoma - Awards, IMDb (https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0073650/awards?ref=tt_awd), used 02/01-2020.

⁸¹ Rotten Tomatoes, Salò o le 120 giornate di Sodoma (Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom) (1979), Rotten Tomatoes, (https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/salo_o_le_120_giornate_di_sodoma_1979) used 31/12-2019.

⁸² Jeremy Heilman, Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom (Pier Paolo Pasolini) 1975, MovieMartyr, September 2001 (<http://www.moviemartyr.com/1975/salo.htm>) used 02/01-2020.

⁸³ TV Guide, Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom, TV Guide, 23/10 - 2007

(<https://www.tvguide.com/movies/salo-or-the-120-days-of-sodom/review/129758/>) used 02/01 - 2020.

⁸⁴ Quinoa1984, Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom - User Review, IMDb, 08/07-2004 (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0073650/reviews?sort=helpfulnessScore&dir=desc&ratingFilter=6>) used 02/01-2004.

instead of emotionally. It seems that these two people have seen the same things in the film but experiences the film very differently.

After doing these comparisons between films regarding their receptions and awards, is there any clear connection between how the films get categorised based on this? According to Mattias Fray's listing of criteria that was mentioned in the beginning of this essay, one criterion that categorizes extreme cinema is causing controversy through the depictions of violence, sex, and sexual violence, in their reception⁸⁵. Having looked at the reception of these films, it's quite clear that there is some controversy in the reception, to a larger or lesser degree. Otherwise the films wouldn't be described as disturbing and even disgusting. Even though I've chosen to look at reviews closest to the sites respective scores, there are of course negative reviews discussing how sick some of these films are. Since *Dogtooth* was the film used as an example of an extreme cinema film that's gotten great praise, it's appropriate to show a review that's negative toward the film because of its disturbing nature. One critic gave the film 0,5/5 in his review, stating that "while the frustrating absence of context - eg why are the parents doing this to their kids - indicates that Lanthimos has no loftier goal than to shock the viewer." when talking about the sex and violence depicted in the film. He also claims that "*Dogtooth* has certainly established itself as one of the most unpleasant and pervasively wrongheaded art-house flicks to come around in quite some time"⁸⁶, showing that even if the film got great praise, it still wasn't without controversy. Because of this, I would say that reception plays a part in how these films are categorised, but don't think that what awards the films have won is important when categorizing these films.

⁸⁵ Fray, Mattias, page 8.

⁸⁶ David Nusair, The Films of Yorgos Lanthimos, Reel Film Reviews, 25/03 - 2011 (<https://reelfilm.com/yorgos.htm#dogtooth>) used 04/01-2020.

Chapter 3. Production, Marketing, Festivals, and Distribution

It's very fair to ask the question what type of companies that would be interested in paying for the creation of these type of controversial films. There are of course more than one answer to this, since there are quite a lot of films that are classed as extreme cinema, but many of these films have been funded by their creators. Why is that exactly? Well since the content of these films are so extremely graphic and disturbing, the filmmakers need complete freedom if they want to be able to make these films without studio interference. *A Serbian Film* is an example of this, Magnus Blomdahl writes that "Contra film was founded around the same time as *A Serbian Film* was being made. Total freedom was the motto and having your own company was the only chance."⁸⁷ The director of the film, Srdjan Spasojevic, also talks about how no companies wanted to distribute the film, saying "We tried to get Serbian distribution in february of last year (2010) but nobody wanted anything to do with the movie". He then continues by saying that after the positive reviews and festival response things got a bit easier, but they still had to distribute the film themselves⁸⁸. The film *Nekromantik* was also funded by its director, Jörg Buttgereit, who mentions how he had to make films without studio backing, and that these types of films are extremely hard to get funded at all⁸⁹. Being that these types of films are considered very controversial, it's not hard to understand why they wouldn't get any studio funding, since that would be a risky business move for a studio. What about the films that are financed by major studios? There are some extreme cinema films that have been financed by major studios, so what makes these films different so that they get backing and/or financing by these major studios? Most of the time it's about the potential profit being made from the films in question. For example, *Rambo* is the fourth film of a very famous film series with potential to draw a large audience and make lots of money, while a film like *Begotten* doesn't have that same potential. What if the film isn't part of a franchise that would be able to draw a large audience and make lots of money that way, why still financially back it? Well there are other merits that are interesting as a way to draw audiences, such as the names associated with the films, examples

⁸⁷ Blomdahl, Magnus, page 176.

⁸⁸ Blomdahl, Magnus, page 177.

⁸⁹ Blomdahl, Magnus, page 26.

being *Antichrist* and *Saló, or the 120 Days of Sodom* having famous directors attached to them. Now all of this is speculation, but logically it would be of more interest to make films where there is some certainty of profit being made⁹⁰.

Once the film is finished, the filmmakers will have to get the film distributed. These types of films are already hard to get anyone to fund, so who would want to distribute them? Same as with the creators of the films often having to fund their own productions, they also often have to distribute them on their own. An example being *The Human Centipede (First sequence)*, which was distributed by its director's production company, Six Entertainment⁹¹. But there are some distribution companies that have taken an interest in the distribution of extreme cinema. Examples of some companies are Tartan Film (*Audition* and *irreversible*), Kino Lorber (*Funny Games* and *Dogtooth*)⁹², and Invincible Pictures (*A Serbian Film*)⁹³. In the case of Invincible Pictures, it's a company that specializes in distributing "edgy art-genre border-crossings that feature graphic depictions of violence and sex"⁹⁴. The reason for this according to the CEO of Invincible Pictures, Thomas Ashley, is because they want to distribute groundbreaking films that make people think, and because they already think that there are lots of distribution companies that do a great job of distributing more mainstream films⁹⁵.

Being that these films are aimed towards a specific audience, the films also need to be marketed in such a way. The arthouse cinema Film Forum in New York gets help when marketing extreme cinema, since the makers of the films often don't have a very large marketing budget. They use marketing in forms of social media and e-mails to reach out to the specific group of people that would find these kinds of movies interesting. By doing this, films that may never have garnered much attention, have screenings that get sold out⁹⁶. Another big factor in how these films are marketed is in the rumors and statements about authenticity in the films. Examples being how people were saying that the corpse in *Nekromantik* was real, something that wasn't true, but the idea of it being real was so outrageous that it drew people to see it⁹⁷. Another

⁹⁰ Jeff Tyson, How Movie Distribution Works, HowStuffWorks, 18/09 - 2000 (<https://entertainment.howstuffworks.com/movie-distribution.htm>), used 03/01-2019.

⁹¹ Blomdahl, Magnus, page 196.

⁹² Fray, Mattias, page 69.

⁹³ Fray, Mattias, page 71-72.

⁹⁴ Fray, Mattias, page 71.

⁹⁵ Fray, Mattias, page 72.

⁹⁶ Fray, Mattias, page 85.

⁹⁷ Blomdahl, Magnus, page 11.

example being how the marketing for *The Human Centipede (First sequence)* stated how the film was “100% medically accurate”⁹⁸, again marketing the film in a shocking way to draw attention.

Going back to distribution once again, the most important part when it comes to the distribution of extreme cinema is when it’s released for retail, such as DVD, Blu-ray and video on demand, this is the case for a couple of reasons. One reason is that audiences that are a bit too shy to watch films like this in the cinema, will be able to satisfy their curiosity in a private space⁹⁹. Another reason being that in general distribution companies make more money on retail releases than theatrical runs of the films, and this is not an exception when it comes to extreme cinema. Because most of these films don’t have long theatrical runs, having them released in home media formats will give more people the opportunity to see the films, and can also get the possibility to see bonus features and uncensored versions of the films¹⁰⁰. A great example of this is the case of *A Serbian Film*, a film that got censored because of its disturbing content¹⁰¹, and the film was only allowed to be screened in cinemas once a day, only around midnight, for a month’s time, which meant it wasn’t very easy to find a screening of the film¹⁰². But later the film got an uncensored release on DVD and Blu-ray, giving audiences reason to buy the film to see the complete version, and maybe even see the film for the first time¹⁰³.

Lastly, what role do festivals play in regards of extreme cinema and do they play any role in the categorisation of extreme cinema? Film festivals are extremely important for extreme cinema films, since these types of films are prominently featured at both big and small festivals. The festivals present these films as more than just taboo and gives the audience a chance to see the artistic merit these films have to offer. At the same time, these films bring media attention to the festivals and give the festival a reputation as a place where challenging and unconventional films are shown¹⁰⁴. Extreme Cinema has become so prominent at film festivals that the term “Shock film” is used by art critics when categorizing the different groups of films that are featured on the festivals. This shock label can help these films in different ways, drawing enough attention to

⁹⁸ Michael O'Sullivan, Movie review: 'Human Centipede' delivers slick, schlocky horror, Washingtonpost, 07/05 - 2019 (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/05/06/AR2010050602298.html?>), used 03/01-2020.

⁹⁹ Fray, Mattias, page 91.

¹⁰⁰ Fray, Mattias, page 90.

¹⁰¹ Fray, Mattias, page 74-75.

¹⁰² Blomdahl, Magnus, page 179.

¹⁰³ Fray, Mattias, page 90.

¹⁰⁴ Fray, Mattias, page 47.

them because of their shock value so that their chances to make more of a box office profit, chances to get nominated for awards, garner cult status and increased sales in retail are increased. Another factor of having them labeled as shock film that could be positive, is that critics also get drawn to see what the controversy is about, then write reviews about it, good or bad, is still a form of publicity that brings attention to these types of films¹⁰⁵.

How do all of these different factors affect the way that extreme cinema is categorised, if at all? To find this out, Mattias Fray's criteria list will be used once again to see if any of these factors are mentioned among the criteria. Criteria like: the films being played at different types of festivals; run theatrically at arthouse and independent cinemas; being distributed as "art" or "artsploitation" when being sold in home media retail; having the creators of the films claiming the films to be artistic, shocking, disturbing, challenging and similar such statements; and that the films have been regulated or censored in some countries when released, are all criteria that can be applied to what has been stated and written about in this chapter¹⁰⁶. Because of this, distribution, festivals, and marketing play rolls in how these films are categorised, though production doesn't really seem to play as big a part when it comes to what classifies what makes an extreme cinema film.

¹⁰⁵ Fray, Mattias, page 47.

¹⁰⁶ Fray, Mattias, page 8.

Final Thoughts

After having compared films to each other, both extreme cinema films to each other and extreme cinema films to mainstream movies, having compared reviews and awards, and having looked at the production, distribution and marketing of these films, it's time to answer the question that has been asked since I started writing this essay, is extreme cinema a genre, or is it some other category of film? The short answer to this question is that from the information that I have gathered, extreme cinema is not a genre, but an umbrella term. Now, that this question has finally been answered, let me explain why I've come to this conclusion. The main reason why I wouldn't call extreme cinema a genre, but an umbrella term, is because for something to be considered a genre, there needs to be more consistency in the stylistic elements between the films. Though there is a consistency that the films feature extreme depictions of taboo subjects, the subjects themselves vary greatly. To claim that *Dogtooth*, *The Human Centipede (First sequence)*, *Pink Flamingos*, *Caligula*, *Guinea Pig: Devil's Experiment* and *irreversible* are similar enough that they should be considered part of the same genre is quite a stretch in my opinion, since the films don't have much in common except for their graphic depictions of taboo subjects. But, if instead of genre, extreme cinema gets classified as an umbrella term, it would make more sense since an umbrella term is a broader term than genre.

But as I have found out when writing this essay, there are more aspects connecting extreme cinema than just the content features within the films themselves, but also outside factors such as reception. These movies have caused controversy in their reception, with critics and audiences pointing out how disturbing and graphic depictions of taboo subjects can be in these type of films. Same goes for the controversy the films cause on festivals where as stated earlier in the essay, they often are referred to as "shock film", also in the marketing tactic of hyping the films as disturbing so that viewers know that what they are about to see is going to be something different and shocking. Even if Mattias Fray's criteria list mentions that the distribution of these films matter in categorizing them, I don't really agree that it should play a part in how the films are categorized, because I don't feel that it ties these films together as much as style and reception does. So what exactly is it that makes up this umbrella term of extreme cinema? After having written this essay, I would argue what links these films together are three things, which

are: the graphic and explicit depictions of taboo subjects in these films, such as violence, sex, sexual violence, feces, urine and vomit; how through these different explicit depictions of taboo subjects, have caused controversy that have shocked viewers; and that the creators of these films knowingly decide to feature these taboo subjects in a graphic way, even if it may upset lots of viewers. Which, since I don't think this is enough to classify extreme cinema as a genre of film, is why I decide to call it an umbrella term, and by viewing it as such, maybe it's possible to instead of trying to figure out what kind of genre extreme cinema is, instead try to see if there are any specific genres that make up what is called extreme cinema.

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Begotten, Theatre Of Material, USA, 1989, produced by E. Elias Merhige, directed by E. Elias Merhige, written by E. Elias Merhige, cinematography by E. Elias Merhige, edited by Noëlle Penraat, music by Evan Albam, actors (Brian Salzberg as God Killing himself, Donna Dempsey as Mother Earth, and Stephen Charles Barry as Son Of Earth - Flesh On Bone), 72 minutes, Black and White.

Blood Feast, Friedman - Lewis Productions, USA, 1963, produced by David F. Friedman, directed by Herschell Gordon Lewis, written by Allison Louise Downe, cinematography by Herschell Gordon Lewis, edited by Frank Romolo and Robert L. Sinise, music by Herschell Gordon Lewis, actors (William Kerwin as Det. Pete Thornton, Connie Mason as Suzette Fremont, and Mal Arnold as Fuad Ramses), 67 minutes, Color.

Braindead, WingNut Films, New Zealand, 1992, produced by Jim Booth, directed by Peter Jackson, written by Stephen Sinclair, cinematography by Murray Milne, edited by Jamie Selkirk, music by Peter Dament, actors (Timothy Balme as Lionel Cosgrove, Diana Peñalver as Paquita Maria Sanchez, Elizabeth Moody as Vera Crossgrove, and Ian Watkin as Uncle Les), 104 minutes, Color.

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Caligula, Penthouse Film International, USA and Italy, 1979, produced by Bob Guccione, directed by Tinto Brass, written by Gore Vidal, cinematography by Silvano Ippoliti, edited by Nino Baragli, music by Bruno Nicolai, actors (Malcom McDowell as Caligula, Teresa Ann Savoy as Drusilla, and Peter O'Toole as Tiberius), 156 minutes, Color.

Cannibal Holocaust, F.D. Cinematografica, Italy, 1980, produced by Franco Di Nunzio and Franco Palaggi, directed by Ruggero Deodato, written by Gianfranco Clerici, cinematography by Sergio D'Offizi, edited by Vincenzo Tomassi, music by Riz Ortolani, actors (Robert Kerman as Professor Harold Monroe, Salvatore Basile as Chaco Losojos, Francesca Ciardi as Faye Daniels, and Carl Gabriel York as Alan Yates), 95 minutes, Color.

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Guinea Pig: Ginî piggu - Akuma no jikken (Guinea Pig: Devil's Experiment), Sai Enterprise, Japan, 1985, produced by Satoru Ogura, directed by Satoru Ogura, 43 minutes, Color.

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Kynodontas (Dogtooth), Boo Productions, Greece, 2009, produced by Yorgos Tsourgiannis, directed by Yorgos Lanthimos, written by Efthymis Filippou and Yorgos Lanthimos, cinematography by Thimios Bakatakis, edited by Yorgos Mavropsaridis,, actors (Christos Stergioglou as Father, Michele Valley as Mother, Angeliki Papoulia as Older Daughter, Mary Tsoni as Younger Daughter, and Hristos Passalis as Son) 97 minutes, Color.

Martyrs, Ekwad, Wild Bunch, and TCB Film, France and Canada, 2008, produced by Richard Grandpierre, directed by Pascal Laugier, written by Pascal Laugier, cinematography by Stéphane Martin, Nathalie Moliavko-Visotzky, and Bruno Philip, edited by Sébastien Prangère, music by Alex Cortés and Willie Cortés, actors (Morjana Alaoui as Anna and Mylène Jampanoï as Lucie), 99 minutes, Color.

Nekromantik, Jelinski & Buttgereit, West Germany, 1987, produced by Manfred O. Jelinski, directed by Jörg Buttgereit, written by Jörg Buttgereit and Franz Rodenkirchen, cinematography by Uwe Bohrer, edited by Jörg Buttgereit and Manfred O. Jelinski, music by Hermann Kopp, Bernd Daktari Lorenz, and John Boy Walton, actors (Bernd Daktari Lorenz as Rob and Beatrice Manowski as Betty), 71 minutes, Color.

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Pink Flamingos, Dreamland, USA, 1972, produced by John Waters, directed by John Waters, written by John Waters, cinematography by John Waters, edited by John Waters, actors (Divine as Divine/Babs Johnson, David Lochary as Raymond Marble, Mink Stole as Connie Marble, Mary Vivian Pearce as Cotton, and Danny Mills as Crackers), 93 minutes, Color.

Rambo, Nu Image, USA, 2008, produced by Avi Lerner, Kevin King Templeton, and John Thompson, directed by Sylvester Stallone, written by Art Monterastelli and Sylvester Stallone, cinematography by Glen MacPherson, edited by Sean Albertson, music by Brian Tyler, actors (Sylvester Stallone as John Rambo, Julie Benz as Sarah, and Matthew Marsden as School Boy), 92 minutes, Color.

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