

Coralie Fargeat's *Revenge*: An Analysis from the Perspective of Feminist Counter-Cinema

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Abstract

This paper examines the film *Revenge* (2017) in the light of feminist counter-cinema or oppositional cinema. The story and plot progression of the film are based on an annual hunting trip; three wealthy middle-aged men gather in a villa in the middle of a canyon. One brings his mistress along. In a series of dramatic events, the male counterparts abuse the female protagonist, who later retaliates. This article critically analyses the narrative nature and characteristics and its acceptance or rejection of Hollywood films' thematic and formal characteristics in the specific film. In addition, this paper investigates several research questions: 1) Can *Revenge* (2017), by French director Coralie Fargeat, be classified as an experimental feminist counter-cinema that challenges the ideologies expressed in any classical narrative? 2) How does the film subvert the notion of a classical film narrative nature and characteristics? The paper finds that though *Revenge* (2017) incorporates a feminist perspective, there are also a few counter-cinema narrative functions and a few subversions of cinematic codes and conventions through cinematic practices in the film precisely.

Keywords

Feminist Film Theory, Counter-Cinema, Narrative Nature, Feminist Perspective, Cinematic Codes

1. Introduction

The definition of counter-cinema is to question and subvert existing cinematic codes and conventions by using its own cinematic practices (Hayward, 2000: p. 75). *Revenge's* cinematic codes and conventions are examined in depth in this study. Furthermore, this study used textual analysis as its method.

According to Hayward (2000), counter-cinema has a distinct character and nature. Hollywood's hegemony was questioned by film theorists and filmmakers,

such as Jean-Luc Godard and Agnès Varda in France and the associated activist related to the underground film movement in the United States. Instead of merely retransmitting women's issues, feminists and alternative film activists explored counter-cinema as a way of challenging dominant cinema's representation of women as objects rather than subjects. The notion of counter-cinema emerges as resistance to Hollywood's stereotypes of female representation, which is directly opposing, unfixes stereotypes and reveals what has been concealed or normalised (Hayward, 2000: pp. 75-76).

To understand counter-cinema, it is also essential to understand dominant cinema or mainstream cinema and its nature and way of presentation. As Hayward (2000: p. 93) says, dominant cinema is generally associated with Hollywood, but it also has characteristics that can be found elsewhere. Film continuity is seamless, editing isn't noticeable. Lighting, colour, and mise-en-scene are appropriate to the genre. Shots adhere to the generic type's codes and conventions. On the ideological front, western film texts are dominated by the standardized plot of order/disorder/order-restored. Character-driven plots focus on central characters. After completing the oedipal trajectory, either by marriage or by refusing coupledness, narrative closure takes place. However, closure means the end of a heterosexual relationship. In most cases, this resolution takes the form of reintegrating the transgressive female into the social order (Kuhn, 1982: p. 34).

2. Justification of the Study

The objective of this article is to analyse a contemporary feminist film through the lens of counter-cinema. Regarding feminist and counter-cinema approaches, Coralie Fargeat's *Revenge* is one of the most influential contemporary films. Coralie Fargeat's debut feature film, *Revenge* (2017), depicts the distinct rape-revenge sub-genre in a contemporary context. Therefore, as a text, this article chose the film *Revenge* (2017) purposively to study and analyse. Moreover, a significant aspect of the film *Revenge* (2017) is its strong and solid contextual background. Research from Lemire (2018) shows *Revenge* (2017) has been inspired and made possible by the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements. As a result of participating in these movements, many women have been able to talk about their experiences of sexual harassment and assault. This contemporary movement of women from different countries may have influenced director Coralie Fargeat. Therefore, the movie *Revenge* (2017) is about women's resistance to violence.

3. Research Questions

Two research questions are explored in this paper. I have attempted to answer these research questions throughout the entire article. The research questions are as follows:

- 1) Can *Revenge* (2017) be classified as a feminist counter-cinema that challenges the ideologies expressed in any classical narrative?

2) How does the film subvert the notion of classical film narrative style and characteristics?

4. Background of the Film *Revenge* (2017)

In this film, Jennifer (Matilda Lutz) and Richard (Kevin Janssens) are on a weekend trip to a secluded house in the middle of the desert. Everything proceeds well, except for the arrival of Richard's two associates, Stan (Vincent Colombe) and Dimitri (Guillaume Bouchede). Richard left for a personal appointment the following morning while Stan forcefully raped Jennifer. Dimitri did not attempt to stop him from doing so. The situation became complicated after Richard returned. She wants to return home, and if Richard refuses, she threatens to tell Richard's wife everything. Jennifer is pushed down the hill by Richard and becomes severely injured. She escapes and transforms to take revenge on Richard, Stan and Dimitri. She kills three of them in the rest of the film. Thus, Jennifer accomplishes her revenge.

5. Theoretical Approaches

The term "counter-cinema" was first coined by Wollen to describe cinema that differs from mainstream productions (Wollen, 1972: pp. 74-82). A seminal piece in feminist film theory, "Women's Cinema as Counter-Cinema", by Johnston (1973), laid the foundation for feminist literature on the notion of "counter-cinema". Johnston (1973) describes counter-cinema as a cinema that opposes Hollywood cinema and its female representation in the narrative. In her writings on "Women's Cinema as Counter-Cinema", Johnston (1973) argues that women are presented as what they represent to men. According to her, cinema is an ideological form, and its apparatus can challenge and uphold dominant (patriarchal and bourgeois) values. According to Johnston (1973: pp. 24-37), feminist counter-cinema embraces both films as political and films as entertainment.

According to Johnston (1973), the film is an "ideological product" that disseminates bourgeois ideology and is dominated by men (Johnston, 1973: p. 33). Johnston (1973) suggests obstructing the structure of the male bourgeois cinema within a film's text to create new meaning. Women's representation in feminist counter-cinema differs dramatically from Hollywood cinema in terms of means of production and opposition to sexist ideologies (Johnston, 1973: p. 37). Johnston (1973) accelerated the idea that "Women's cinema could act as a counter-cinema".

In her article "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", Mulvey discussed the representation of females in dominant cinema and argued for the development of an alternative cinema, which would offer an opportunity for radical cinema to challenge mainstream assumptions (Mulvey, 1975: pp. 7-8). Mulvey (1975) also states that the monolithic system that constructed substantial financial investment demonstrated by Hollywood in the 1930s-1950s no longer exists. She also stressed that the technological advancement of filmmaking had changed the economic conditions of cinematic productions, and now cinema can be both ar-

tisanal and commercial simultaneously. Mulvey (1975: pp. 7-8) presents the case of “counter-cinema” emergence from historical and technical backgrounds. Moreover, Mulvey (1975: p. 8) claims that the Hollywood style is an artful and substantial manipulation of visual pleasure. To respond to the fascinations and expectations of audiences, counter-cinema must surface the formal obsessions of the society that produces the film (mainstreams).

Mulvey’s (1975) statement about alternative cinema also suggests a type of cinema that challenges the prevailing inference of mainstream films and can be reasonably related to *Revenge* (2017) due to its challenging and subverting style in a patriarchal bourgeois system. In addition, Mulvey stressed that counter-cinema is also a form of advanced representation that questions “unconscious structures” ways of seeing and the pleasure of looking. Dominant Hollywood films circulate this structure as a way of seeing and pleasure looking at their narrative. According to Mulvey (1975), dominant Hollywood cinema highlights males as active characters and females as passive characters through formal and narrative structures. Mulvey (1975: p. 11) argues that heterosexual active/passive divisions of labour have a similar narrative structure.

According to Mulvey (1975), Hollywood movies are geared toward a male gaze. In mainstream movies, men are typically the main characters and women are only included for erotic effect and visual impact. However, there are several mainstream films where women play a central role. But counter-cinema is not simply positioning women characters at the centre of the narrative. It is, however, a prerequisite.

White (1998) discussed the feminist film approach’s critical methodology, which is relevant to this paper. Gender hierarchy and gender categories are central to feminist inquiry and knowledge. For centuries, film and related visual media have emphasized the female image or the female as an image. Consequently, the theme of representation has been central to feminist film culture’s activist and theoretical projects of feminist film culture (White, 1998: p. 117). According to White (1998), “counter-cinema” challenges the supremacy of male representation in cinematic signifying systems. The feminist film theory has given the most credit to women’s films edited or synchronised with sound and image, narrative logic, and look structures (White, 1998: p. 127).

6. Textual Analysis of *Revenge* (2017)

Is *Revenge* (2017) a counter-cinema or an alternative film? Does it reject any particular thematic or formal features that differentiate it from commercially motivated films made in dominant film industries? Before discussing feminist counter-cinema, it is pertinent to define counter-cinema against what? Counter-cinema is distinguished from the films mentioned earlier due to its ideological difference. Initially, Coralie Fargeat’s film *Revenge* (2017) shows some close shots by presenting Jennifer (Matilda Lutz) as a kind of “sexual object” from the male character’s perspective, but soon the perspective changes dramatically. Coralie Fargeat uses it to create contradictions and conflicts between these two

conflicting ideologies. Thus, she depicted the male-dominated corporate and bourgeois ideology where women are the only tool for sexual enjoyment. On the other hand, the feminist ideology and perspective that each woman has the right to consent or not consent to sexual activity. To some extent, *Revenge* (2017) creates a counter-discourse to traditional Hollywood cinema ideology and practice.

The notion of “distanciation” is important and relevant to discussing counter-cinema. Classical film codes and conventions are challenged and questioned by this concept, resulting in the viewers’ sense of “distanciation”. According to Hayward (2000), Bertolt Brecht first coined the term “distanciation” in the 1920s and 1930s to mean alienation in theatre. Nevertheless, the principle of alienation first appeared in Soviet cinema in the 1920s. Taking a critical stance, Brecht sought to understand how theatre practices and characterisation actively reproduce society’s ideological and institutional constructions. By denormalising society, he intended to politicise his audience and change it. In avant-garde and counter-cinematic films, distancing is achieved through various visual elements, rapidly edited sequences, jump cuts, unmatched shots, characters talking right to the audience, unrelated titles, and non-diegetic inserts. As a result of these formal characteristics of film, the spectator is disoriented and distanced. Second, distanciation occurs when a narrative is over- or under-filled with meaning, resulting in distanciation. Lastly, the character is characterised by the anonymity of the protagonist, his or her two-dimensional nature, and an incomprehensible physical appearance (Hayward, 2000: pp. 89-90).

The jump cuts create confusing effects and disorientation to spectators regarding the temporal and spatial unity. *Revenge* (2017) uses a series of jump cuts at several points in its story progression. The film used intertextuality through jump cuts between Jennifer’s naked body and the car race on TV. During a montage scene, the director showed a half-bite of an apple containing insects, representing Jennifer’s body and Stanley’s physical greed for her.

Film *Revenge* (2017) differs in many ways from dominant Hollywood films regarding the representation of women characters, the narrative, and the style. Hollywood films are usually male-centric, and women characters usually play supporting roles where they support the main characters. The narrative does not focus on them. Coralie Fargeat’s *Revenge* (2017) is entirely different in this regard. Jennifer is initially portrayed as a “sexist” young girl through closeups of her private organs until just before the rape scene. In the aftermath of the rape incident, Jennifer undergoes an incredible transformation. As Mulvey (1975) discussed in her article “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” Jennifer transforms from a passive to an active character in *Revenge* (2017). She plays a vital role in the film’s narrative progression and course of action. *Revenge* (2017) challenges the conventional Hollywood narrative structure that emphasises males as active and females as passive through its plot structure. However, later, the whole narrative progresses through the character of Jennifer, and she defeats and punishes Dimitri, Stanley, and Richard. Hollywood films rarely depict this kind of

victory for females over males. *Revenge* (2017) uses this image to challenge the conventional predominance of a “male-dominated” narrative.

As described by Johnston (1973), this representation of women challenges “the fabric of the male bourgeois film”, creating a new narrative structure completely different from Hollywood’s (Johnston, 1973: p. 29). The last scene of *Revenge* (2017) is essential regarding counter-cinema. After avenging the males, Jennifer looks straight back at the camera. Her expressions tell us the notion of challenging the system, which always treats women as ordinary and submissive. This scene also interacts with the viewer of this film. This is exceptional regarding the representation of women in the entire movie. This is a symbolic gesture of Jennifer towards the whole patriarchy.

Furthermore, this point is significant because the director probably intended the viewers to be shocked by Jennifer’s drastic transformations. It is common for Hollywood films to be dominated by male characters, and women usually play supporting roles. As a result, they are not the focus of the narrative. In *Revenge* (2017), the narrative centres on Jennifer, the female lead. Surprisingly, Rape plays a pivotal role as an inciting incident in the film *Revenge* (2017), changing the narrative dramatically. Before the rape incident, everything was smooth and linear. To move forward with further analysis, it is necessary to define rape from a feminist perspective. According to Brownmiller (1975), rape manifests male patriarchal values and paternalism. Engaging in physical contact against one’s will is considered a severe offence under the law (Brownmiller, 1975: p. 6). Thus, Jennifer’s rape represents male patriarchal aggression and violence against women.

Jennifer discovers two strangers staring at her through the window after 8 minutes of the film, which is one of the most notable opening scenes. Jennifer leaves the room because she feels uncomfortable. Stanley and Dimitri, two of Richard’s friends, suddenly arrive at the house, and Richard introduces her to them. Jennifer was being looked at from behind with sexual desire at the time. They watch voyeuristically through the glass. The scene helps to understand Mulvey’s concept of “visual pleasure”. Mulvey briefly discussed that “Scopophilic” arises from the desire to use another person as a source of sexual stimulation (Mulvey, 1975: p. 10). Richard’s friends watching Jennifer from behind are entirely participating in sexual stimulation, which Mulvey (1975) defined as “Scopophilia” and has been used in *Revenge* several times. During the film’s first forty minutes, women are shown as passive raw materials for the (active) gaze of the male into the representation structure.

About 16 minutes into the film, there is another example of this. From behind, Stanley observes her undressed body voyeuristically while she changes her clothes. Jennifer gets a card from him, and he asks what she does not like about Stanley. In response, Jennifer says that Stanley is too small and not her type and prefers taller men. Stanley’s question regarding last night was, “Did he change his height yesterday?” He also argued that his height was not a question in the dance last night, and Jennifer did not seem to be bothered by it. In the twenty

minutes past the fifty-four-second scene of the film, Stanley rapes Jennifer, and Dimitri appears uninterested in stopping him. Within a short period after the Rape, things begin to change dramatically. As the film progresses, Jennifer's character changes from passive to active. When Richard returns from outside, Jennifer declares loudly that she wants to call his wife and tell her everything if he does not reach the helicopter. Then, he slaps her and calls her a whore. Another example of patriarchy is blaming women and seeing everything as a commodity. In addition, Coralie Fargeat's *Revenge* (2017) highlights another dark side of contemporary patriarchy: the extramarital relationship when already married and in a family. Claire Johnston describes the patriarchy as "male-dominated" and "capitalistic" (Johnston, 1973: p. 33). In the film, Richards continuously deceives Jennifer and his wife. Over the phone, Richard and his wife have several conversations where Richard tries to show his wife that he is a good husband. In reality, he is spending time with another woman. As Jennifer points out the gun to Richard, Richard's inner psyche towards women comes to light about 1 hour and 42 minutes into the film (1:42 minutes, *Revenge*). Richards unequivocally states, "Fucking losers... Women have to put off fucking". His statement represents patriarchal dominance. Jennifer is also treated as an object and a means of amusement by the other male characters in this film.

Throughout the film, Jennifer's trauma and transformation to take revenge on all the accused men play a pivotal role. The role of guns in this film is significant. Stanley and Dimitri hold guns at the film's beginning as a symbol of power and dominance. Richard also holds a gun later on. Following the Rape, Jennifer captures the weapon and can take revenge on the people responsible. In my analysis of *Revenge* (2017), this approach of a female character challenges male dominance, patriarchy, and women's representation.

Many metaphors and montages are used in this film, creating different meanings than straightforward visual ones. A metaphorical shot is Jennifer's healing process using the bird-embroidered beer can. The mythology of the Phoenix rising from the ashes of Greek mythology is similar to this. As a result of her Rape and Richard's murder attempt, she becomes an avenger. As the film progresses, we see shots of apples biting and spinning, and as Richard and Jennifer enter their bedroom in front of Stanley, we see a fire burning beside him. In this montage scene, Jen and Richard are physically close, representing Stanley's inner jealousy. In several scenes, Coralie Fargeat used half-bitten apples and apple shots within sects. The shot is entirely metaphorical as well. The half-bitten apple represents Jennifer. In the moments leading up to the rape scene, we see ants walking over a half-bite apple. It also seems like something is about to happen in these montage shots. More than an hour past fifteen minutes into the film, Jennifer aims her gun at Stanley. It is a sign of femininity and a sign of burn at the same time when a half-burned half-nailed polished finger triggers the trigger. After forty-four minutes of the film, Jennifer attacks Dimitri from behind with his empty bullet gun, and Dimitri tries to kill her. Jen suddenly stabs

his eyes with a knife. As well as being an excellent example of a metaphor, this scene is also highly symbolic. The fact that Dimitri watches Stanley rape her without taking action is also a role change in which the hunter becomes the prey, and the prey becomes the hunter. Symbolic meanings of women being raped and the close-up of mouth-eating chocolate can be seen as a montage scene. Furthermore, during the Rape, car racing was playing on television with excessive sound.

The last scene of the film *Revenge* (2017) is significant in terms of the “counter-cinema” concept. Again, about one hour past thirty-nine minutes into the film, Jennifer shoots Richard and wounds him with her gun as she stands in front of the house. The capitalist patriarchy, Richard’s male body, becomes wounded severally by a female. This is a woman’s victory over a man who tries to kill her earlier brutally. It challenges the “narrow convention” described by Johnston (1973) rather than the stereotypical representation of women since the early days of cinema. In my opinion, *Revenge* (2017) has the characteristics of alternative cinema due to its nature, and it dismantles the prevalent ideology of women’s representation in contemporary films. The lead character, Jennifer, challenges the “stereotype” and “shallow conventions” of women’s representation by engaging actively in the narrative against patriarchy.

According to a comprehensive analysis of *Revenge* (2017), there is a new addition to the rape-revenge film genre. Jennifer’s killing spree is not merely about vengeance, which makes it original. As in many other films from this subgenre, Jennifer is not afforded the time to heal and find strength, plotting and planning; she will murder or be killed in the desert. Rather than name the film “*Survive*”, Fargeat chose “*Revenge*” (Wolfe, 2019: pp. 1-3).

7. Narrative Nature Analysis

According to Wollen (1972), a counter-cinema notion was created by Godard, whose values oppose the values of conventional cinema. Using seven Hollywood-Mosfilm values, Wollen (1972: p. 120) contrasts them with their opposites and contraries. Here are seven differences between Hollywood narratives and counter-cinema narratives (Table 1).

Table 1. Difference between Hollywood narrative and counter-cinema narrative.

Hollywood Narrative	Counter-Cinema Narrative
Narrative Transitivity	Narrative Intransitivity
Identification	Estrangement
Transparency	Foregrounding
Single Diegesis	Multiple Diegesis
Closure	Aperture
Pleasure	Un-pleasure
Fiction	Reality

Note: Reproduced from Wollen (1972: pp. 120-129).

The Hollywood narrative and the counter-cinema narrative can be seen in **Table 1**. To understand counter-cinema narrative characteristics, **Table 1** is essential. There are seven distinct sections in Wollen's (1972) description of narrative traits.

Narrative Transitivity v. Narrative Intransitivity: (One thing following another v. gaps and interruptions, episodic construction, undigested digression). Narrative transitivity is based on a chain of causality. Wollen (1972) defines narrative transitivity as a sequence of events that follow one another. In Hollywood films, motivation is usually psychological. A causal chain is evident in the narrative construction: exposition, complications, and resolution. The establishment sets up dramatic tension at the beginning of the film. This is followed by a chain reaction that eventually restores equilibrium. In counter-cinema, the story is interrupted through separate areas (gaps, ellipses, digressions, episodic constructions, disjuncture, and excess). Unconnected events represent the variety and ups and downs of life. The hero in this kind of narrative is marginal to society. The film's principle is constructed rhetorically rather than narratively. The goal is to break the narrative's emotional spell to refocus the audience's attention and encourage thought and contemplation (Wollen, 1972: pp. 120-129).

Identification v. Estrangement: (Empathy, emotional involvement with a character v. direct address, multiple and divided characters, commentary). Through the recognition process, cinematic identification is recognised as a distinct phenomenon. In the Hollywood narrative, the spectator finds psychological and emotional connections to the characters they are watching on screen. Godard's mismatching of voice with character, his use of actual people in fiction, and his use of audience-facing characters directly create different dynamics. Through its narrative structure, counter-cinema offers distance by severing affiliation (Wollen, 1972: pp. 120-129).

Transparency v. Foregrounding: ("Language wants to be overlooked"—Siertsema v. making the mechanics of the film/text visible and explicit). Film is fiction because of the smooth flow of visuals, someone else's fantasy. Using various strategies, the dominant cinema ensures that movies do not reveal too much about how they are made in a way that would undermine the illusion and the viewer's enjoyment of the visuals and stories. The viewer has been sucked into the narrative flow and carried away. Contrarily, counter-cinema constantly pulls the audience's attention to the camera throughout the story; the technical team and set design impact how a spectator experiences and understands a film. Instead of using representations of the world, images start to serve as the foundation for writing; they have a semantic purpose and a real iconic code (Wollen, 1972: pp. 120-129).

Single Diegesis v. Multiple Diegesis: (A unitary homogenous world v. heterogeneous worlds. Rupture between different codes and different channels). Everything in Hollywood movies is a part of the same environment, and complex articulations inside it, like flashbacks, are subtly marked and positioned. An extreme kind of liberalised classicism rules the aesthetic. There have been a few

relaxations in the strictness of dramatic units, but it was mainly due to their overly restrictive and limiting nature. However, the basic principle remains unchanged. A consistent order must be maintained in time and space. The sole instance of multiple diegeses in which the second, discontinuous diegetic area is included in the first is traditionally a play within a play. Hollywood uses narration to create a unified environment. Everything in the movie is a part of this universe. This universe is destroyed by counter-cinema's narration. Instead of showing a homogeneous world, it depicts a heterogeneous one (Wollen, 1972: pp. 120-129).

Closure v. Aperture: (A self-contained object harmonises within its own bounds v. open-endedness, overspill, intertextually allusion, quotation, and parody). In contrast to Hollywood's innocent days, Wollen (1972) often points out that cinema has become self-conscious in recent years about closure. In film narrative, closure and self-consciousness are compatible. Quotes and allusions provide a surplus of meaning, a bonus for those who catch the reference. Hollywood films fold up. There is a resolution to the plot's conflicts. There is no closure to the narrative of counter-cinema. After the film ends, ambiguity remains unresolved. As a result of the juxtaposition and recontextualisation of discourses, meanings are confronted (not unified) (Wollen, 1972: pp. 120-129).

Pleasure v. Unpleasure: (Entertainment, aiming to satisfy the spectator v. provocation, aiming to dissatisfy and hence change the spectator). The prevalent cinema offers enjoyment and escape. It does not irritate, and its goal is not to make you wonder about the nature of reality. Instead, its objective is to please paying clients. It is Hollywood entertainment that enthralls and entertains its audiences, as opposed to irritation, provocation, dead or empty time, boredom, and discontent. There are three levels of revolutionary cinema: fantasy, ideology, and science. A compelling counter-cinema narrative provokes the audience and grabs their attention (Wollen, 1972: pp. 120-129).

Fiction v. Reality: (Actors wearing make-up, acting a story v. real life, the breakdown of the representation, truth). With Hollywood narration, the audience is transported into a fictional world that they have created for themselves. As a result of counter-cinema's identification breakdown and disruption, the audience is in the real world. An attempt to reveal the real face of the world instead of representing it. Movie audiences are unaware that they are watching a movie and analysing it critically. The purpose of Godard's attack on fiction is political: fiction means mystification equals bourgeois ideology. Language speaks through us, not through us through language. He has a similar poststructural mistrust of language. Fiction = acting = lying = deceit = representation = illusion = mystification = ideology, goes this line of reasoning. For a variety of reasons, Wollen's (1972: pp. 120-129) argument is fictitious. It is important to highlight that, in his opinion, the terms are not equal.

Revenge's (2017) narrative characteristics are shown in **Table 2**. The above section discusses seven distinguishing indexes Wollen (1972) suggested for differentiating Hollywood cinema narrative from counter-cinema narrative.

Table 2. Narrative characteristics of the film *Revenge* (2017).

Upon significant analysis of the narrative of *Revenge* (2017), narrative transitivity is evident. In addition, the plot follows the cause-effect progression of the storyline as in Hollywood classical narratives. According to Wollen (1972), counter-cinema relies on juxtaposing unconnected events in the narrative, something not found in the film *Revenge* (2017). Several unconnected shots have been used as montages to convey a deeper meaning in the film, which is an essential feature of counter-cinema. The film follows a classical Hollywood narrative (exposition, complications, and resolution), in which Jennifer seeks revenge. This film does not seem to adhere to the counter-cinematic concept of breaking an emotional spell by refocusing the audience's attention.

The narrative of *Revenge* (2017) provides the audience with a psychological and emotional connection to Jennifer after the rape scene. Empathy for characters is a crucial element of Hollywood narratives. Moreover, *Revenge* (2017) does not feature non-matching voices, does not introduce "real people" in fiction or contains characters who address the audience, as described by Wollen (1972). It is the last shot of *Revenge* (2017), where Jennifer looks directly at the camera as she stares directly at the audience, creating a dynamic relationship between the filmmaker through Jennifer and the audience.

Revenge (2017) provides a smooth flow of visuals, and it does not reveal how the visuals were created in such a way that would undermine the illusion and enjoyment of the visuals and stories, as in Hollywood films. Throughout the narrative flow, spectators are captured exclusively. The film served its semantic purpose by using metaphorical images as iconic code, such as juxtaposing images of Lizards eating apples, insects' eating apples, and eagles attacking Jennifer in the nighttime. In this way, *Revenge* (2017) attempted to introduce counter-cinema elements into its narrative.

There is a linear narrative structure in the film. Consistent linearity in time and space plays a crucial role in the story's progression. In contrast to Hollywood's homogenous world, counter-cinema offers a heterogeneous one. *Revenge* (2017) creates a world in which only one diegesis exists by creating an utterly homogenous world through the narrative. The film shows an integrated and coherent world.

The film's resolution has closure, just as in Hollywood films. At the clouser, there is no ambiguity. Jennifer's *Revenge* has resolved the plot's conflict, which was also the character's goal. According to Wollen (1972), the narrative of counter-cinema remains open after it ends, and ambiguity persists.

Revenge (2017) contains bloodshed and violent scenes, but it also entertains spectators. Unlike counter-cinema, it does not challenge, provoke, or irritate spectators through narrative. Nevertheless, this film makes the viewer aware of the dark side of bourgeois patriarchy that treats women as mere sexual objects.

The function of counter-cinema is the struggle against fantasies and ideologies. Various shots and angles in *Revenge* (2017) demonstrate breakdown and disruption. However, viewers still feel as if they are watching a film rather than in the real world. A significant part of *Revenge* (2017) interferes with fantasies and ideologies. Even so, the film narrative exposes the real face of the world; in a sense, it is political because it attacks bourgeois ideas.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, based on Hayward (2000), counter-cinema involves questioning

and subverting cinematic codes and conventions through cinematic practices, thus, challenging Hollywood stereotypes of female representation and classical film narratives, codes, and conventions. *Revenge* (2017) largely followed the Hollywood film narrative despite breaking some cinematic codes and conventions. However, do resist Hollywood's stereotypes about female representation. Nonetheless, *Revenge* (2017) challenges contemporary films' "narrow conventions" that portray women as objects and passive characters, as described by [Mulvey \(1975\)](#), which is the principle of feminist alternative films. *Revenge* (2017) also challenges "the fabric of the bourgeois film" as described by [Johnston \(1973\)](#), creating a distinct narrative structure and ideology that are entirely different from Hollywood ([Johnston, 1973: p.29](#)). In a sense, *Revenge* (2017) does not challenge the conventions and codes of dominant films, which is the essence of counter-cinema. This film, however, incorporates a feminist perspective. *Revenge* (2017) cannot be considered a counter-cinema since there is no distinctive narrative function completion described by [Wollen \(1972\)](#). The narrative functions followed Hollywood film conventions and did not suggest counter-cinema narratives. As a result, *Revenge* (2017) is not an excellent example of feminist counter-cinema, but it does exhibit a few counter-cinema approaches. However, Coralie Fargeat's *Revenge* (2017) can be considered a step in the direction of feminist counter-cinema as a work of influential literature.

Filmography

Revenge (Coralie Fargeat, France, 2017).

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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