

We Don't Need Any More 'Shades of Grey'

Last weekend, the final movie in the revolting *Fifty Shades of Grey* franchise hit screens. The third and last chapter of this sick soap opera is over. And we are left scratching our heads as we ponder why films that glorify sexual abuse and sadistic bondage are still popular.

We just watched the ugly Harvey Weinstein scandal unfold. We have listened to countless women tell how they were abused by film executives, movie stars and congressmen. Yet this new film, *Fifty Shades Freed*, made almost \$39 million at the box office last weekend.

Why, why, why are women attracted to films in which the main female character enjoys being abused?

When the novel *Fifty Shades of Grey* was published in 2011, critics described it as “dull and poorly written,” “depressing” and “a sad joke.” Yet, it sold 100 million copies.

Women were fascinated by the dark tale of a 21-year-old college student, Ana Steele, who falls in love with a handsome but mysterious billionaire named Christian Grey after she interviews him for a newspaper.

The book was accurately dubbed “mommy porn” because it is sexually graphic and full of crude language, and also because Christian expects his girlfriends to totally submit to his sexual tastes—which involve whips, chains, handcuffs and gray neckties.

It was not just mainstream porn. It was bondage porn.

The first *Fifty Shades* movie came out in 2015, and it broke

records for advance ticket sales. Mostly female fans lined up at the Cineplex to watch Christian abuse Ana in his bedroom, which is called “the red room of pain.” A second film, *Fifty Shades Darker*, came out in 2017. The third installment, *Fifty Shades Freed*, opens with the wedding of Christian and Ana.

Critics expected the films to be rated N-17. (After all, the actor who plays Christian, Jamie Dornan, visited a sex dungeon to prepare for his role.) But the Motion Picture Association of America gave the films an R rating because 1) the sex scenes were edited carefully, 2) teenagers can see it legally and 3) the movies can make a ton of money.

We Americans get really angry when oil companies spill toxic fuel in our oceans; so why do we applaud when Hollywood dumps a tanker of poisonous garbage like *Fifty Shades of Grey* on our country—with no offer to clean up the damage?

Here are three of the biggest reasons why we should urge everyone to cover their eyes and run from *Fifty Shades of Grey*:

1. **It encourages sexual deviance.** In the novel, Christian invites Ana to become his sexual partner, but he asks her to sign a document that spells out what he plans to do to her—and he demands that she tell no one about it. The contract says: “The Submissive shall accept whippings, floggings, spankings, canings, paddlings or any other discipline the Dominant should decide to administer, without hesitation, inquiry or complaint.” Ana finds out that Christian has had relationships like this with 15 other women—and yet she still pursues him, agrees to the painful sex and enjoys it.

There might have been some redemptive value in this movie if Ana called the police or ran out of Christian’s penthouse and refused his advances because she respected herself. But no—she submits to the abuse, and signals to women everywhere that

there is pleasure in pain. The film also tells women that it's OK to be mindless sexual slaves, especially if your boyfriend is rich, handsome and has his own helicopter.

2. **It glorifies violence against women.** A researcher from the University of Michigan did a study on the effects of the *Fifty Shades of Grey* novel on women readers. It showed that women who read the books were 25 percent more likely to have an abusive partner; 34 percent were more likely to have a partner who stalked them; and 65 percent were more likely to engage in binge drinking.

Just as there is a link between violent video games and violent behavior in teen boys, this study showed that women who read graphic porn novels tend to gravitate toward the types of abusive relationships depicted in books like *Fifty Shades*. The study also showed that these women were more likely to have eating disorders.

3. **It totally perverts the meaning of love.** In one scene in the book, Christian buys Ana a diamond bracelet so she can cover the bruises on her wrists—which she got after being tied to her boyfriend's bed. The message from Ana's lover: I will hurt you, but I will buy you nice gifts so you will stay with me.

That's twisted. And couples are going to see this movie on Valentine's Day?

One of the most bizarre moments in the first book occurs after Ana leaves Christian and then goes back to him. She says: "The physical pain you inflicted was not as bad as the pain of losing you." Any psychologist will tell you that is the mentality of an abuse victim, who is brainwashed to believe that the attention she gets from her abuser is better than no attention at all.

What is most hypocritical is that the same Hollywood executives and celebrities who covered up the Harvey Weinstein

scandal are strangely silent about *Fifty Shades of Grey*. How can they condemn Harvey Weinstein for abusing women and then encourage women to sit through a third installment of this garbage?

Don't buy it. There's nothing "free" about *Fifty Shades Freed*. We don't need to fuel the epidemic of abuse that is already destroying so many women's lives.