



# The shift in women's occupational roles in action movies across three eras of Hollywood

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the occupational roles of women in 30 action movies across three eras of classical, post-classical and new Hollywood. Employing critical discourse analysis as an analytical framework, the study investigates action movies from 1930 to 2012 to follow these objectives: (1) to find out types of women's occupational roles, (2) to examine verbal and non-verbal elements in women's representation, (3) to trace significant changes in occupational roles of female characters across three eras of Hollywood. Findings showed that female characters provided examples of positive and non-traditional role models. Women's new representations challenged stereotypical assumptions concerning the occupational roles of women in the classical and post-classical eras.

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## Introduction

Cinema is a significant cultural touchstone of American culture, and films have been important messengers of societal and ideological beliefs and values (Hylmo, 2006, p. 170). Movies help to perpetuate the unequal treatment of women by how women are shown on screen. The images of women establish various types of stereotypes. Social science theorists define stereotype as cultural, superficial beliefs or generalization about a specific group in a society (Kanahara, 2006). Mass media such as movies shape and reinforce gender role stereotypes in movies. Occupational stereotyping is an important factor which can result in significant social consequences for the ways that women are portrayed. Hollywood movies circulate some of the viewed images of women in the workplace or at home. These images give people a collective sense of what kind of occupations professional women might have (Steinke, 2005).

The focus of this study is on top-grossing action movies since these are among the most contemporary and most relevant to present-day Hollywood filmmaking. Top-grossing movies have a link to people's collective lives and are what Dyer (1993) termed "the utopian ideal of entertainment". In the evolution of action movies, there has always been a relationship between gender and genre in the Hollywood film industry. The dominant mode of narration defines fixed images and ideas about the professional roles of female characters. This study aims to answer the following questions: 1) what types of occupational roles were played by female characters? 2) How were these roles presented verbally and non-verbally? 3) How did the occupational roles shift across three eras of Hollywood?

The analyses of the portrayals of female are important for advancing people's understanding of the gender role to determine what occupational roles contribute to the socialization process and progress in the representation of women.

## Theoretical Approach

The primary theory guiding this research is stereotype theory. As a short introduction, Lippmann (1922) argued that stereotype helps to impose order into a complex world. According to him, the real environment is too big and too

complex for direct contact. People are not equipped to deal with so much variety. Stereotypes are like maps; they clarify people's journey in understanding social reality but they prove erroneous if used wrongly or with unwariness. That is what may happen in the construction of gender role stereotypes in movies. Entertainment programs such as movies continue to present certain depictions of stereotyped groups, such as women, in their content. These portrayals often show such "stereotyped groups as having less favorable characteristics than those members of the dominant society such as white males" (Brewer, 2005, p. 13). This theory can show how certain stereotypes are shaped about women's occupations and how new gendered stereotypical jobs are constructed in cinematic field.

## Research Background

There is a considerable body of research on occupational stereotypes in movies. Press (2003) investigated the feminist impact on the popular movies of the 1990s. She found that romantic comedies showed women who were willing to give up their career ambitions to find true love. Steinke (2005) studied the portrayal of women as scientists and engineers in popular movies between 1991 and 2001. She noted that professional women's knowledge and abilities were consistently questioned. They usually had to defend their experience and backgrounds.

In order to explore possible vocational roles, Hylmo (2006) examined female leads in the movies released between 2000 and 2006 which targeted teenage girls and found that the girls were presented with unimportant careers. The mother's line of work showed dependency and instability. King (2006) examined women in police movies released from 1967 to 2006. His research confirmed gender differences in the depiction of women in men's occupations. King (2006) found that policewomen were depicted as encountering many types of sexual harassment and derogatory comments. They were commonly deceived by criminals or fell in love with the criminals.

Lambert and White's (2011) investigation of movies produced between 1995 and 2010 showed that male and female characters were equally likely to be in managerial roles, but

females were more likely to have social interactions. Smith et al. (2012) examined gender roles in popular family films, prime-time programs (drama, comedy, children's series) and children's TV shows. Their analysis showed that half of the female characters were employed in family films and prime-time shows. Children's shows indicated that the absence of a job was not related to gender.

Prior research revealed the consistent stereotypic messages about the world of work over the past decades. Among the mentioned research, what remains unclear is the shift in the occupational roles and the verbal and nonverbal elements of women in popular action movies across the classical, post-classical and new Hollywood eras.

## Method

### Sampling and Data Collection Procedure

In a textual descriptive approach, this study, selected 30 top-grossing movies of Hollywood action movies since they can attract a large number of audience and maintain specific stereotypical gender roles. The sample selection was done based on the following criteria: (i) the specific time period between 1930 and 2012 covers American action movies; (ii) the movie footage must be available; (iii) movies have to represent at least one female character and (iv) in the case of the movie series with recurring lead characters, only one of the top-grossing movies is chosen, for example, the *James Bond* movies.

A list of high-grossing action movies was made from various websites such as [www.worldwideboxoffice.com](http://www.worldwideboxoffice.com), and [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com). The list was checked to choose only action movies. The movies were downloaded from websites such as: [www.retrofilms.in](http://www.retrofilms.in) and [www.YouTub.com](http://www.YouTub.com) and [www.megashare.info](http://www.megashare.info). The scripts of movies were downloaded from the website of [www.subsence.com](http://www.subsence.com) to analyze the verbal elements in female characters' speech.

The action movies were listed according to Monaco's (2010) classification of Hollywood eras. For him, Hollywood can be divided into three periods:

- (i) classical Hollywood (1927-1948)
- (ii) post-classical Hollywood (1949-1975)
- (iii) new Hollywood (1976-present)

The selected samples are shown in the Appendix.

### Data Analysis

As a useful analytical tool, Fairclough's critical discourse (CDA) was used to find out the codes of movie texts. CDA reveals the sources of power, dominance and inequality. It explores the discursive sources that are maintained and reproduced within specific social, political and historical contexts (van Dijk, 1988a). Fairclough (1995) suggested a specific notion of CDA that approaches and thinks about a problem such as discrimination and gender inequality. His two key assumptions underpin the practice of CDA. The first is the micro level that is related to the analysis of the text production and consumption. The second level, the macro analysis, is context-bound and analyzes the social phenomenon the social and cultural or political contexts. This study had a look at the first dimension of text practice which gives excellent insights about what is in a text (Fairclough, 1995, p. 2) that can make a relationship between gender and language. In micro analysis, the verbal and non-verbal meanings were illustrated via various analytical tools. Discourse scholars have challenged the style of talking to justify gender representation (Weatherall, 2003). This study focused on some of specific elements of Lakoff's (1975) deficit theory to explore the style of female characters' speech. These elements were lexical choice, expletives and super-politeness.

The other significant aspects of language analysis, such as modality and personal pronouns revealed some hidden gendered messages in the movie texts. The analysis of modality could explore various propositions. The words such as must, should, definitely and always represent high modality, certainty and strong obligation while the words such as could, possibly, perhaps and may show low modality, uncertainty and weak obligation. On the other hand, the use of personal pronouns could establish a certain relationship between the addresser and the audience in a speech or text or between the characters in the movies. Wood's (2009) communicative elements were considered for the analysis of non-verbal elements of female characters. These elements are: facial expression, smile, proxemics (physical and personal territory), Haptics (touch) and appearance and voice.

### Results

By examining the movies, two different professional and non-professional occupations were explored for female characters. The line that distinguishes professional from non-professional occupations is often not clear. Kokemuller (2012) found the distinction between non-professional and professional jobs to be fuzzy. He considered education and pay as basic criteria for making this distinction. In Hobbs and Rice's (2013, p. 77) critical review, they listed occupations in the natural sciences, engineering and mathematics as professional jobs, and "clerical, administrative and secretarial jobs" were classified as non-professional office jobs.

### Verbal and Non-Verbal Elements in Occupational Roles

The female characters played the two dichotomous categories of professional and non-professional jobs. They showed their strength and weakness through various types of verbal and non-verbal elements.

### Professional Occupations

The main focus of this study was on female characters in occupations such astronaut in *Planet of the Apes* (1968), professor in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2* (2011) and pilot in *The Matrix Reloaded* (2003).

Women in professional jobs were marginalized in some movies. By using a subtle strategy, the filmmakers of the post-classical era played down the special skills of women in professional jobs. Stewart was Taylor's only crewmate who died in the opening minutes of the 1986 movie *Planet of the Apes*. The camera focused on the skeleton of a space woman lying in a glass cabinet with a white wig. Taylor did not describe her as a skilled astronaut. He pointed to the space woman as an object that had been brought just to satisfy male desire. He called her "the most precious cargo" or "the new Eve". Taylor reduced her rank to a load.

*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2* treated female characters in a positive way. Professor McGonagall was the deputy headmistress at Hogwarts. She was the professor of transfiguration, one of the most complex and dangerous areas of magic. She was tall and severe-looking, and her dark hair was tied up in a bun. The long velvet robe enhanced her dignity. At the critical moment, she was shown in the big hall of the tower, surrounded by a crowd of students. She defended Harry against Snape's attack. Professor McGonagall's character was a mixture of seriousness and kindness. As she ordered the castle to be prepared for battle, she turned softly to Harry and showed her happiness at his presence, saying in a serious voice, "It's good to see you." Professor McGonagall, as a powerful school principal, confirmed her ability to support students when she said, "I'll secure the castle." The use of the modal verb "will" showed her bravery and determination.

Women played some critical roles such as a pilot in *The Matrix Reloaded*. Niobe did not practice her gifted martial skills but she was introduced as a strong black female captain of a small hovercraft with three crewmen. Her leather and vinyl outfit, flowing trench coat, and sunglasses distinguished her among the team. Niobe acted as one of the efficient main members. Her serious soft voice did not transmit any female emotions throughout the movie but her doubt about the truthfulness of Morpheus’ prophecy made her character weaker than the other members of the group. In the role of a strong combat pilot, she was represented as a responsible and obedient pilot who followed orders when she said, “We’re gonna do what Commander Lock ordered.”

Non-Professional Occupations

This study selected the roles of women as secretary in *North by Northwest* (1959) singer in *The Towering Inferno* (1974) and waitress in *Casino Royale* (2006) as the two common non-professional occupations across the three eras. In the case of non-professional jobs, *North by Northwest* introduced women in various types of ordinary jobs such as secretary. In a street scene, crowds poured out of the lift of a big building. The outgoing crowd parted to reveal Mr. Thornhill with his secretary. Maggie was a middle-aged woman in a simple dress. She held a pad and pencil in her hand and she had to rush to keep up with her impatient boss when they left the elevator and crossed the lobby to the entrance.

After a while, Maggie felt weak and asked Mr. Thornhill to take a cab. Her boss complained that she was starving herself: “You don’t eat properly, that’s your trouble, Maggie”. Mr. Thornhill introduced her as a weak person when he hailed a taxi, saying “I have a very sick woman here”, while they rushed to the cab. Maggie patiently wrote down all the orders that Mr. Thornhill dictated to her. From time to time, she looked at her boss kindly with a smile on her face. Her quick note-taking and short comments showed that she knew her boss well and she was expected to perfectly manage his weekly schedule of meetings with his mother, his mistresses and his office staff.

A female character played the role of a singer in *The Towering Inferno*. She was a tall young blonde dressed simply in a blue blouse and a long brown skirt. In her song, she invited the guests to follow the flow of love since they might not find another opportunity again to experience and express their love. Her soft sweet voice rang in the dancing couples’ ears. In *Casino Royale*, women played the role of waitress. The charming black girls carried the trays of food and drinks. They smiled to show their friendliness to the casino customers. Their long shiny and silky dresses did not reveal their bodies. They were silent in their soft movements.

Changes in Occupational Roles

The movie observations resulted in some challenging shifts in the categories of occupational and non-occupational roles. Women found the opportunity to perform more specialized occupations in the last two eras. Table 2 illustrates the shift in the number of movies that represented women’s professional jobs across the three periods of Hollywood.

Table 2: Changes in Number of Movies Portraying Women in Occupational Roles across Three Eras of Hollywood

Eras of Hollywood	Classical Hollywood	Post-classical Hollywood	New Hollywood
Types of Roles	Percentage (Number of Movies)	Percentage (Number of Movies)	Percentage (Number of Movies)
Professional Occupation	20% (2)	60% (6)	90 % (9)

In the classical Hollywood era, only two out of ten movies (20%) included female characters in the professional occupations. The post-classical era with 60% showed a significant increase in female professional roles. A rough increase of 90% indicates that women had more active presence in the specialized fields in the new Hollywood era. From the perspective of hegemonic patriarchy, it is not a surprise that Hollywood considered less prestigious occupations for women in the first two eras. Table 3 summarizes the variety of occupations that female characters held across the Hollywood eras.

Table 1: Changes in Types of Occupational Roles Played by Women across Three Eras of Hollywood

Eras of Hollywood	Occupational Roles
Classical Hollywood	nurse, actress, nun, servant, seller, prostitute
Post-classical Hollywood	secretary, servant, seller, prostitute, waitress, bartender, singer, dancer, hotel receptionist, hotel owner, tourist guide, nurse, scientist, astronaut, pilot, intelligence service agent
New Hollywood	secretary, servant, seller, waitress, bartender, nurse, actress, imperial senator, news reporter, newscaster, casino staff, architect, professor, space station staff, air force staff, intelligence service agent, scientist

Female characters were more limited to non-professional jobs in the first era of Hollywood while post-classical filmmakers started to provide new identities for female characters in the scientific field and in intelligence agencies. Movie narratives prescribed more professional jobs for women in the super-heroic and the fantasy world in the new Hollywood era. The new opportunities for female characters saw various designations in more prestigious occupations being assigned to them, signifying a change from the previous low depictions of women.

Changes in Verbal and Non-Verbal Elements in Professional Roles

Movies with women who had particular ambitions to achieve greater things were criticized for their contradictions and inconsistencies. The professional women in the classical and post-classical cinema cannot be compared with those in the new Hollywood. A few professional occupations such nurses, pilots and government agents were selected to discuss the differences in the representation of females across Hollywood eras.

In the nurses’ category, the movie *All Quiet on the Western Front* portrayed nurses who took care of soldiers. They were young and charming nurses with no complicated skills. They remained silent throughout the movie. In the post-classical era, some nurses were represented as sex objects.

In the post-classical era, some nurses were represented as sex objects. In *Thunderball* (1965) Patricia had no specific characteristics to place her beyond the realm of a nurse. Her blue skirt and blouse suggested that she was a nurse. Patricia attempted to give an impression of professionalism while Bond tried to open a conversation with sexual overtones. After Patricia had asked Bond to hold his arms above his head, he lowered them over her head and held her tightly as he kissed her. She tried to get free from this unexpected behavior. She walked unsteadily back and screamed, “Behave yourself, Mister Bond!” She showed her inexperience when she turned on the traction machine and left Bond.

Patricia’s authority over her patient quickly evaporated. Faced with her irresponsibility, she revealed her fearfulness when she asked miserably, “You won’t tell Dr. Wain? Please.

I'd lose my job." Bond quickly used this opportunity and replied, "I suppose my silence could have a price." He followed her into the next room. The transparent glass permitted audiences to see Bond removing Patricia's clothing and pressing her naked body against himself. Patricia was a complete stereotype of a submissive character. Caplen (2010, p. 153) believed that Patricia served her function as "a pure sexual conquest". She was used as a reminder of Bond's ability to take advantage of situations to obtain sexual benefits.

In the new era, the image of nurses once more became passive and weak. Although women were represented in surgery rooms as skilled medical staff, they were reduced to screaming nurses who ran away from a monster's claws in movies such as *Independence Day* and *Spider-Man 2* (2004). These characters did not have any significant dialogues.

In the late 1950s, women were represented as both sex objects and strong protagonists in the role of government agents. Eve Kendall in *North by Northwest* was a beautiful and enchanting woman. In the beginning sequences, she seemed to have superiority over the male lead because of her position as a spy and the use of her sexual charms as a tool. However, the final scene confirmed her dependent role when she was saved by Roger and received his marriage proposal. The verbal exchanges represented weak and strong parts of women's personalities across the different Hollywood eras. In the post-classical movie *North by Northwest*, Eve Kendall mixed emotions with duty in the role of an alluring agent. By using the intensifier 'so' in "you didn't get hurt; I'm so relieved", she revealed her sentimental nature. As a woman, modality was employed to show her personal interest – "I ought to know more about you" – but as an agent, modality depicted that she had an obligation to participate in the dangerous mission when she said, "I must get back to convince them."

In the new Hollywood era, female spies and intelligence agents began to reread their agency in the two different dimensions of physical power and influential authority. When women appeared as warrior, their physical prowess was more emphasized. Their impressive characters did not revolve around sexuality and their heroic actions were not spoiled by romance. They had commanding voices with more rising intonations. Natasha and Agent Hiller in *The Avengers* (2012) were the best examples of trained fighter and assassin.

Women had more noticeable characters in the new era when they acted as head agent or intelligence director. The best examples were found in *Casino Royale* and *Transformers: Dark of the Moon* (2011). Women were given an obvious change in their appearance in terms of more stylish clothing in this period. Female characters were distinguished by their mental capabilities rather than by their physical power. They were older and physically less attractive, and they had better control of their emotions. Audiences saw them as more dynamic female characters who performed tasks which were previously considered to be traditionally men's roles.

The dialogues in the movies revealed underlying aspects of women's characters. The verbal exchanges represented weak and strong parts of women's personalities across different eras. In the post-classical movie *North by Northwest*, Eve Kendall mixed emotions with duty in the role of an alluring agent. By using the intensifier 'so' in "you didn't get hurt; I'm so relieved", she revealed her sentimental nature. As a woman, modality was employed to show her personal interest – "I ought to know more about you" – but as an agent, modality depicted that she had an obligation to participate in the dangerous mission when she said, "I must get back to convince them."

Some agent women had paradoxical characters in the new Hollywood. *The Avengers*, revealed the negative and infamous background of Natasha when she confessed, "I've got red in my ledger." She killed countless people and she tried to make up her past. Natasha then tried to regain her reputation when she said, "I'd like to wipe it out." She found a new identity as a member of a team whose duty was to find a solution for global issues, stating, "I'm here on behalf of S.H.I.E.L.D." Natasha constructed the role of an empowered and determined character when she implicitly ordered Dr. Banner by saying, "I need you to come in." With a stronger commitment, she acted against the evil forces when she said, "We gotta stop him." Displaying the multiple traits of her character, Natasha played the role of a warrior; she did not remain just a simple agent like Eve Kendall.

In the new era, women articulated a greater degree of autonomy and intelligence in their occupational roles in *Casino Royale* and *Transformers: Dark Side of the Moon*. Women were not passive objects but found influential power in *Casino Royale*. M as an empowered woman had a place in the hierarchy of knowledge and skill. She played a relatively equal role to that of males in her profession by uttering "We're trying to find out how an entire network of terrorist groups is financed." As an integral part of the *James Bond* movie, M envisioned and conceptualized the current global and political issues when she uttered, "I miss the Cold War." In this way, she established her position as the boss who had enough information about the complexity of the war on terror and she wanted to reduce Bond's physical aggression as much as possible.

The movie *Transformers: Dark of the Moon* revealed another type of professional woman whose role was involved with global security. In carrying out the project under NASA's supervision, Mearing showed that she had an active directing role by saying, "We've linked it with a decommissioned shuttle to maintain military control until they're gone." Mearing's specific choice of lexical item represented her specialized information and unconventional power of supervision in the significant space programs.

In general, the passive nurses in the classical era turned into sex objects in the post-classical period while they were shown as timid and passive in the new era. Women in the role of pilot showed their aggressive character in defending innocent people. Females in the role of government agent or spy were portrayed as more complex characters in the last era. They were better equipped with mental and physical skills. The use of verbal exchanges and plural pronoun of 'we' showed Government agent women as having gained higher authority in directing missions and making political decisions than those in the classical and post-classical periods.

### **Changes in Verbal and Non-Verbal Elements in Non-Professional Roles**

The present study explores various changes in women's representation in non-professional jobs. To discuss the shift in non-professional roles, the job of secretary job was chosen as one of the most common jobs in the last two eras. The post-classical movies represented women in the role of secretary which could be classified into different categories that showed them as passive and supportive. The young blonde secretaries were efficient and confident in *Thunderball* and *North by Northwest*. Their close and intimate relationships with their bosses were not erotically charged. They were fully clothed and simply dressed. These active secretaries had a polite and kind manner and speech.

In *The Towering Inferno*, Mr. Bigelow's young blonde played the role of his love interest. In a romantic scene, she

made love with her boss, Mr. Bigelow referred to this as an "urgent personal problem". *Jaws*, the only post-classical movie, showed a fat, old and unattractive secretary who worked in the sheriff's office. During her short on-screen presence, she reported some of the local people's complaints.

The new Hollywood limited the classification of secretaries to supportive, clumsy and romantic groups. In *Spider-Man 2*, Mr. Jameson's secretary (Miss Brand) was a pretty dark-haired girl whose behavior was kindly and supportive. She addressed Peter Parker with a big smile and supportive words, "Chin up?" when she found Peter in serious financial problems. *The Avengers* developed the new role of personal secretary.

In a different depiction of a secretary, the movie *Transformers: Dark of the Moon* introduced Director Mearing's secretary as a clumsy and inept woman. As a secretary, she stood beside Mearing to follow her orders. She helped him to change his shoes when they entered the main military center. When the director asked for the bag in which they carried the important documents, she was confused because of all the bags in her hand. She asked, "Which bag?" with a puzzled expression on her face. She was clumsy and confused in responding to her orders.

In an unusual depiction of women, the new Hollywood developed the new role of secretary in *The Avengers*. Pepper Potts was Iron Man's personal secretary. She was a fairly slim American with strawberry blonde hair, blue eyes and Caucasian skin. As a professional secretary, she could work with computers and organize Stark's tasks according to schedule. She showed that she was trained and skilled in working with technological devices when she said, "I'm working on the zoning for the next billboard." The movie constantly hinted at some sexual tension between Pepper and Tony which was shown with a kiss.

In summary, secretaries had passive depiction in the post-classical era. A few movies represented charming secretaries who might mix romantic emotions with duties in this era. This depiction was replicated in the new Hollywood movies, although the secretary came equipped with the most recent technological skills to support her boss in recent super-hero movies. Audiences could see multiple images of secretaries in the new Hollywood era. In some cases, their supportive nature and empathy with their colleagues were more highlighted than their skills. When boss and secretary were both women, a clumsy secretary is juxtaposed with a very clever boss to give sense of the comical.

### Concluding Remarks

This study explored that traditional domestic roles are still linked to the movies. Female characters suffered from the imbalanced employment when the number of their depictions was limited to a few movies. The results also indicated that movies promoted the occupational roles of women. In the film world, women were as likely as men to be the boss. The positive changes in societal beliefs in the last era could be read as the rise of women's movements. As people became more aware of women's subordination in movies, liberated and non-traditional women have appeared on screen. In the present study, it is encouraging to note that male and female characters are now equally likely to have professional interactions. Professional women showed equality in intelligence and skills with male characters in the action movies of the new era. Although the blockbuster movies were seen to be largely male in structure, women were portrayed with more equal treatment after the peak of the women's rights movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Just as the Riot Grrls tried to pave the way to presenting alternative

images of strong and powerful girls (Banet-Weiser, 2004), it is quite possible that films similarly do present alternative stories which challenge the current conditions. However, as Sanchez and Stuckey (2000) pointed out, several alternative representations must be given space and visibility, even among those stories, if the dominant hegemonic code is to be replaced.

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### Appendix

#### High-grossing action movies of the classical Hollywood era (1930-1948)

No.	Year	Movie	Amount Grossed (Million)
1	1936	<i>Flash Gordon</i>	\$27,107,960
2	1941	<i>Sergeant York</i>	\$16,361,885
3	1943	<i>The Outlaw</i>	\$11,063,500
4	1948	<i>Red River</i>	\$9,012,000
5	1937	<i>The Prisoner of Zenda</i>	\$5,628,000
6	1935	<i>Mutiny on the Bounty</i>	\$4,460,000
7	1938	<i>The Adventures of Robin Hood</i>	\$3,981,000
8	1930	<i>All Quiet on the Western Front</i>	\$3,000,000
9	1933	<i>King Kong</i>	\$1,171,189
10	1939	<i>Stagecoach</i>	\$1,103,757

#### High-grossing action movies of the postclassical Hollywood era (1949-1975)

No.	Year	Movie	Amount Grossed (Million)
1	1975	<i>Jaws</i>	\$26,000,000
2	1974	<i>Blazing Saddles</i>	\$119,500,000
3	1974	<i>The Towering Inferno</i>	\$116,000,000
4	1969	<i>Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid</i>	\$96,700,000
5	1965	<i>Thunderball</i>	\$63,595,658
6	1971	<i>The French Connection</i>	\$51,700,000
7	1968	<i>Planet of the Apes</i>	\$32,600,000
8	1970	<i>Little Big Man</i>	\$31,559,552
9	1959	<i>North by Northwest</i>	\$13,300,000
10	1967	<i>In Like Flint</i>	\$13,000,000

#### High-grossing action movies of the new Hollywood era (1976-2012)

No.	Year	Movie	Amount Grossed
1	2009	<i>Avatar</i>	\$2,782,275,172
2	2012	<i>The Avengers</i>	\$1,481,585,111
3	2011	<i>Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows- Part 2</i>	\$1,328,111,219
2	2011	<i>Transformers: Dark of the Moon</i>	\$1,123,746,996
3	2003	<i>The Lord of Rings: The Return of the King</i>	\$1,119,929,521
5	2012	<i>The Dark Knight Rises</i>	\$1,013,114,000
6	1996	<i>Independence Day</i>	\$817,400,891
7	2004	<i>Spider-Man 2</i>	\$783,766,341
8	2003	<i>The Matrix Reloaded</i>	\$742,128,461
10	2006	<i>Casino Royale</i>	\$594,239,066