



# The Shift in Women's Good and Evil Roles in Hollywood Action Movies (1930-2012)

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### ABSTRACT

Adopting critical discourse analysis, this study investigated good and evil roles of women in 30 top-grossing action movies with the following objectives: 1) to examine the verbal and non-verbal elements in women's representation and 2) to trace significant changes in good and evil roles of female characters between 1930 to 2012. Findings indicated that good female characters were kind and gracious in the first two eras. They were allowed to fight on the battlefield in the new era. The classic good characters used imperatives while they showed their supporting nature by using modal verbs in the new Hollywood. Evil women appeared as sexy alluring spy in the second era. They got supernatural power in the last era. The post-classical villains preferred to use imperatives, but they used a variety of verbs to reveal their villainy in recent movies.

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### Introduction

Cinema is one of the most significant cultural touchstones. Movie has a significant role in society as a medium for the construction and perpetuation of the popular culture. Movie contains strong mediated messages and values related to gender. The term "gender can be defined as the cultural definitions of femininity and masculinity" (Bradley, 2007, p. 1). Portrayals of females in movies have been traditionally stereotyped in terms of roles and personality characteristics (Fischer, 2010).

This study deals with the messages of movies relating to the binary images of good and bad women. The concepts of good and evil are represented by the obvious conflicts between good heroes and evil villains. Good women are usually presented "as pretty, victims, martyrs, helpful and caring individuals. In the opposite direction, evil characters are hard, cold and aggressive, they are supposed to do crimes and hurt others" (Wood, 1994, p. 33). It is important to examine these images across the three eras of Hollywood to gain an insight of the past and the present and construct a set of patterns of women in the cinematic field.

### Literature Review

Filmmakers represented women as evil characters in various types of genre. In a critical feminist inquiry, Kaplan (1998) debated the centrality of women in the film noir in the 1940s. The interest in these movies was both in the use of bad and dangerous sexual women and good and virginal ones. Packer (2007) argued that all females in film noir are evil. The superficially nice women often had hidden evil intentions. They betrayed their lovers for money. These naughty sexual and demonic women enticed male character to his own destruction. Tasker (2013) evaluated the evil role of women in noir and neo-noir movies in which evil characters made a connection between sexual expression and danger.

In animated movies, Brown (2005) found offending images of evil characters in the popular Disney movies. Evil women destroyed and betrayed girls to maintain male desire. The power of these characters was derived from their cunning and deceit. These women had to stay nice, pure and look beautiful so that

they would be chosen by male characters. Brown (2005) also explored a deeply racialized message in these stories when women were shown dark and ugly with mysterious and magical power.

Representation of evil women was also common in the horror genre. Rhodes (2003) investigated the historical perspective of female monsters in horror movies during the war years (1942-1946). The number of these female villains had a dramatic rise in the 1950s and the early 1960s. These female monsters were sexually aggressive and attractive. The representation of these monstrous-feminine were symptomatic of conventional gender attitudes of the period when women's value was heavily dependent on her attractiveness.

Kaklamanidou (2009) discussed romantic comedies that included evil female characters. The basic stereotypes were obsessive mother, the manic workaholic, the conniving seductress and the manipulative teenager. In some of the movies, the evil females were transformed into good-nature companions through the love of the male.

On the contrary, a number of researchers investigated the stereotypical role of good women in movies. Henry (2006) confirmed that the vast majority of war-related movies produced in America are dominated by western concepts of femininity. She stated that women had positive and supportive roles in movies with war themes. They were waiting faithfully for their men to return and acting as caregivers of soldiers. These lovely and gentle women glowed with compassion and womanly strength.

Knight (2010) discussed women who were depicted as beautiful, angelic and powerful witches in television series and movies from 1964 to 2006. In the exploration of the American film industry, DiMare (2011) found that a vast of Hollywood melodramas centered long-suffering and self-sacrificing women who were forced to make difficult choices while maintaining their dignity.

What remained untouched in the previous studies is the investigation of good and evil roles in action movies across

three eras of Hollywood To fill this gap, this study aims to explore the verbal and nonverbal elements of good and evil women and the possible shifts in these roles.

## Method

### Sampling and Data Collection

This study is a textual descriptive research. The samples were selected from 30 Hollywood action movies. The sample selection was done based on the following criteria: (i) The movies must be top-grossing ones since they often have a worldwide appeal and can maintain limited attitudes about gender stereotypes; (ii) The focus is on specific time period between 1930 and 2012; (iii) If there are several movies in a series with a recurring lead character, only one of the top-grossing movies is chosen, for example, the *James Bond* movies; (iv) The movies have to include at least one female character.

In this study, list of top-grossing movies were collected from Internet websites such as [www.imbd.com](http://www.imbd.com), [www.worldwideboxoffice.com](http://www.worldwideboxoffice.com), [www.standTV.com](http://www.standTV.com) which included comprehensive data. The lists were checked in order to select only action movies (Appendix A). There was full and free access to Hollywood movies on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com), [www.megashare.info](http://www.megashare.info), and [www.retrofilms.in](http://www.retrofilms.in). The movie scripts were downloaded from the website [www.subscenes.com](http://www.subscenes.com) to analyze female characters' language.

### Data Analysis

This study used Fairclough's (1995) critical discourse analysis to find out the codes in movies and movie poster texts. CDA underpins the two key assumptions. The macro level is based on the analysis of the text production. on the macro level, the social phenomenon is understood in its social and cultural or political contexts.

This study focused on the micro level, At this level ,various analytical tools were employed to illustrate the verbal and visual textual signs and meanings. Lakoff's (1975) deficit theory was used to explore the style of speech of the female characters. This analysis investigated elements such as tag questions, expletives and types of lexical choice. The modal verbs were analyzed to explore certainty and strong obligation (must, should, definitely, always), as well as uncertainty and weak obligation (could, possibly, perhaps, may).

This study employed. Wood's (2009) elements of non-verbal communications to analyze females' non-verbal behavior. These categories include facial expressions, smile, proxemics (physical and personal territory), haptics (touch), appearance and paralanguage (voice).

## Results

Movies have created binary images of good and bad women. In movies, audiences will see characters faced with situations in which they have to make choices. These selections will determine inner good or evil nature.of female characters.

### Roles Depicting Good

The investigation of Hollywood movies revealed that manifestations of good characters could be based on specific categorizations. The most obvious good characters are those who played the roles of 'reconciler', 'patriotic lovers', 'sacrificing heroines' and 'sacrificing lovers'.

This study focused on movies such as *Red River* (1948), *Avatar* and *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (2003) to elaborate on female characters who play the role of being good people. Howard Hawks has an ambivalent and contradictory view of feminism in *Red River*. In the era of Code production, when most directors kept female characters virginal and pure, Hawks' female characters were openly sensual and

direct. They knew what they wanted and went after it (Girgus, 1998, p. 12).

In *Red River*, Tess acted as a reconciler. In a much-criticized scene, she reconciled Matt with his stepfather in a new relationship by having a sensible talk and an intervention. With a swift movement, she seized one of the cowboys' guns and shot Wayne while shouting at him with a trembling and crying voice. To hold a position that is equal to Wayne in determination, she used many strong commands such as "stop it... stay still". However, she was confused by the excessive anger and she said, "No, don't stay still. I changed my mind... Beat each other crazy". Tess scolded Wayne and Matthew to stop their fighting, saying, "every fool with half a mind would know you love each other". She added, "I put a sense in both of ya", this last statement revealed her role as reconciler. To Cohan (1997, p. 204), Tess was a typical madam; her femininity and heroines were offered for the liberal generation of America.

*Avatar*'s fictional storyline placed women in combat scenarios to make a holy image of a 'sacrificing warrior'. According to their own standards and rules, they acted as brilliant and empowered women. They were just and determined characters. Trudy Chacon was a rebellious soldier who fought against a strong evil army. She was a very attractive woman in the military uniform. She talked and walked confidently when she met Jake and other air force staff. The big smile on her face showed her kindness and confidence. She behaved warmly and with friendliness towards her colleagues. She affectionately touched her helicopter and called it 'Rogue One' or 'baby'.

It was evident that Trudy did not accept the orders that seemed irrational to her. As Jake and Grace's loyal friend, she rushed to free them from prison. She preferred to choose the critical role and switched loyalties from Colonel Quaritch. As a Na'vi member, Trudy painted her face to indicate her fight against Quaritch and his men. She played the role of an uncompromising and rebellious character.

Trudy's style of speech was much more like that of her male colleagues' in the helicopter squadron, so she frequently crossed the line of expected standard politeness. She often used expletives such as 'shit' or 'bitch' in the midst of her fast-speed actions. While attacking the army, Trudy shouted, "You're not the only one with a gun, bitch". This outburst represented her strong will and righteous decision to protect the native people.

Trudy verbally revealed her rebellious personality against the unjust attack of the army by saying, "I didn't sign up for this shit!" She declared the unequal powers of the army and native people when she said, "We're goin' up against gunships with bows and arrows." Trudy did not expect a happy ending, saying "I was hoping for some kind of tactical plan that didn't involve martyrdom." However, she knew that she had made a choice that might cost her life. She died in the combat and there was never a question of an ethical third-way.

Women played the positive role of 'sacrificing lover' in movie such as *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*. The movie provided a more detailed depiction of the devoted Arwen. On the verge of leaving Middle Earth with the other elves, she stopped and gazed into the far future where she saw Aragorn and her son, staring at them with tears in her eyes. She quickly rode back to her father to enquire about future. When he told her about an uncertain life, she slowly knelt beside her father and tenderly touched his face. She looked into his eyes and softly whispered, "Some things are certain. If I leave him now, I will regret it forever." She reassured her father that she had made her final decision.

In the next scene, audiences saw Arwen in a long dark blue robe walking towards a brightening light. She could see that Aragorn's sword was broken in his fight with the devil king. She weakly looked at her father and breathlessly asked him, "Reforge the sword." Porter (2005, 143) concluded that Arwen was "an inspirational hero who worked behind the scenes to provide counsel and motivated other characters to perform their own heroic deeds". Audiences witnessed this extraordinary power of insight.

As a self-sacrificing lover, Arwen decided to join Aragorn and help him when she said, "I choose a mortal life." She made a choice between being mortal and being immortal, and stepped over the line that separated the world of the Elves and the world of Man. Her choice had an important impact on Aragorn's fate in the war. She wanted to live with Aragorn and her fate was linked to that of the One King. Her sacrifice was shown in her growing weakness and impending death. Her pale make-up and cold body signaled the fact that the life of the Eldar was leaving her. In general, Arwen represented a pillar of calmness that was a source of strength to her man. Her face and gestures spread tranquility and serenity.

#### **Roles Depicting Evil**

In the new millennium, powerful and tough women were not always cast in positive roles. Portraying women as villains keeps them in the inferior and deviant categories. Kress (2004, p. 123) stated that a villain has a selfish motivation to injure, kill or rob another person. This character is exaggerated by depicting villains as having the blackest intention, the deadliest weapons and the coldest hearts. Hollywood represented some women as evil female characters in the roles of 'villainous agent', 'villainous wizard', 'cat burglar' and 'avenger'. Their characteristics were investigated in movies such as *The Dark Knight Rises* (2012) and *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2* (2003).

An evil woman with supernatural power might be construed as an attractive form of villainy. Bellatrix Lestrange was perhaps the most anti-stereotypical depiction of this type of characters in the *Harry Potter* series. She acted as 'the villainous wizard'. Her name suits her well because Bellatrix in Latin means "female warrior" (Kayser, 2011, p. 52). As a loyal servant, Lestrange was always by Voldemort's side. She was the complete opposite of a caring, sweet and vulnerable woman. Kayser (2011) added that her presence spread terror and fear throughout the wizard world. She was referred to with adjectives such as tall, dark and heavy-lidded to describe her vicious character. She wore a long black wig, a worn out black corset, a long black skirt and black boots.

Although Bellatrix's character was not given much to speech, she used all of her magic power to defend Voldemort's interests. As a humble creature, she always leaned towards Voldemort to demonstrate her longing for closeness. The movie was clearly dominated by evil characters, the majority of whom were males. Bellatrix Lestrange was the only woman who showed her faithfulness to Lord Voldemort when she addressed him as "my lord". Kayser (2011, P. 53) found some correlation with Bellatrix's blind love of Voldemort. Her cruel personality was displayed by her nasty laughter which also showed her black rotten teeth.

Women played a more complicated villainous role in *The Dark Knight Rises*. Selina appeared as a 'cat burglar' who was involved in multiple villainous actions. She acted viciously in unpredictable ways. She was a copycat of Cat Woman who created a new version of villainy. Miranda Tae revealed a nastier character as 'an avenger'. She wanted to avenge those who

killed her mother when she was a child and to kill Batman, who was responsible for her father's death. For this purpose, she gained access to a nuclear bomb that was powerful enough to destroy all of Gotham, but she was stopped and killed by Batman.

In the movie, Selina and Miranda were juxtaposed to display two complicated characters. Selina Kyle was a world-class burglar who was in flux between being a self-serving criminal and a moral character with a deep sense of honor. In fact, Selina's character is a modernized femme fatale who was heavily influenced by the traditional comic book myth of Cat Woman. Her costume bore a striking resemblance to Cat Woman's outfit and stiletto heels. Audiences were shocked by her complex and paradoxical intentions. In one way, she tried to ruin Batman and in another way, she served as his ally.

Selina was fast and furious in making decisions. When Wayne asked her to return his mother's fabulous pearl necklace, she slowly moved closer and kicked his walking stick. She climbed up the window, turned around to look at the prone Wayne, and then jumped out of the window. At the party, Selina crossed the line of politeness when Bruce Wayne claimed that he had the longest history in helping the needy. She lost her temper and replied, "Maybe you're being unrealistic about what's really in your pants more than your wallet." When Bruce asked Selina how she justified her theft, she replied, "I take what I need from those who have more than enough. I don't stand on the shoulders of people with less", however this excuse did not put her in a positive light. Selina confessed that she could be 'adaptable' about the future catastrophe that would be caused by bad people. She meant that she would be ready for more brutal actions and complicated criminal behavior. In a clichéd act, she used her attractive femininity to commit criminal activities. Selina gave Bruce a quick kiss for the chance to steal his valet parking and take his Lamborghini.

However, Selina also showed her interest in carrying out a few moral actions. She arrived on time to kill Bruce but she pretended that she did not have much enthusiasm for doing good deeds when she said, "I'm not sure I feel as strongly about it as you do." In the final scene, Selina showed a sudden transformation into Batman's ally. She took him on her motorcycle to the place where the bomb was. She furiously rode the motorcycle and shot her gun to open the main tunnel of the city which was sieged by Ben's men. She showed her affection and love to Batman and tried to persuade him to change his mind, saying, "Come with me... Save your life" because she thought Batman had given people everything and he did not owe them anything anymore. In action scenes, she was a powerful fighter and an expert in martial arts. She rode her special bike to escape in the crucial scenes. Her serious face did not show any emotions, and her rising and falling voice emphasized her malicious intentions.

In contrast, Miranda did not show any interest in transforming from evil to good. She acted like a devil and died as an evil woman. Miranda's last presence revealed her real identity as Bane's alliance. She appeared in a brown army-like coat to bolster her role as the villains' leader. To avenge her father's death, she slowly moved close to stab Batman with her knife. While she looked at him with a furious gaze, she pushed and turned the knife further as she whispered in Batman's ears, "The knife that waits years without forgetting... then slips quietly between the bones." In this scene, she expressed her ultimate hate.

Miranda's wicked role was revealed when she commanded her men, "Shoot them all... Keep moving forward... Flank them

on the stairs.” As an avenger, Miranda asked Bane not to kill Batman so that he would witness a million people’s deaths in the bomb explosion, saying, “I want him to feel the heat.” She revealed her sick mind when she addressed Batman, “Feel the fire of 12 million souls you failed.”

On the whole, the female character who played a role as villain was cunning, devious and cynical. She was independent in doing illegal actions and saving herself from risky situations. A villainous woman used her intelligence and physical power in criminal actions. Her assertive and aggressive behavior and words were matched with her wicked intentions. When a woman played the role of a burglar, she had flexibility between a bad and a good nature. As an avenger, she was ready to put millions of people in danger without any regret.

#### Changes in Roles Depicting Good and Evil

Hollywood movies represented women in both good and evil roles with some fluctuations in frequency. Table 1 presents some information about changes in the number of movies that represented female characters in good or evil roles.

**Table 1: Changes in Number of Movies Portraying Women in Roles Depicting Good and Evil across Eras of Hollywood**

Eras of Hollywood	Types of Roles	Classical Hollywood	Post-classical Hollywood	New Hollywood
		Percentage (Number of Movies)	Percentage (Number of Movies)	Percentage (Number of Movies)
Types of Roles	Good Roles	50% (5)	50% (5)	60% (6)
	Evil Roles	—	20% (2)	20% (2)

The table indicates that good women were presented in half of the movies (50%) in the classical era; this rate remains stable in the post-classical Hollywood era. As a slight change, women appeared in good roles in six out of ten movies (60%) in the new era. The depiction of women in evil roles also shows some shifts. In the classical era, women had no negative roles in movies. During the post-classical period, filmmakers started to show dangerous female villains in two movies (20%). Women had evil roles that came with fatal superpower and malicious plans in two movies (20%) of the new Hollywood era.

#### Changes in Verbal and Non-verbal Elements of Good Roles

Women in good roles had various iconic representations and meanings which were shown by means of their appearance, social rank and verbal mode. During the classical period, women in positive roles depicted common citizens in Victorian costumes. Tess was a dancer and singer in an entertainment coach, but with her good nature, she could reconcile the stepfather and his son in *Red River*. Dallas was a golden-heart prostitute who helped Mallory to have a safe delivery in *Stagecoach* (1939), although Mallory repeatedly insulted Dallas for her bad reputation.

In the late 1950s and 1960s, a few female characters acted in good and positive roles. In *Planet of the Apes* (1968) the good character was a truth-seeking scientist whose formulated morality showed her caring personality. Dr. Zira mixed human rights with her curiosity in her research plan. She had a noble rank and she spread calmness and simplicity among her colleagues with her gentle and dignified behavior. She appeared in her academic uniform that showed her equality with the male characters. In the new Hollywood era, good female characters became more active and assertive. As sacrificing warriors, they were equipped with strong bodies and minds. They were experts in working with computers, riding motorcycles and had martial arts skills. They were more athletic and had an attractive appearance. As the best example, Trinity in *The Matrix*

*Reloaded* wore a tight-fitting, shiny black body suit along with gloves and boots of the same color. She was fast and furious in battles against human enemies.

Women who were portrayed as being good had double identities due to contradictory representations. As an example, Eowyn broke the usual dress code. Her costume was a major signifier of gender difference that made her by far the most progressive female in *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*. On the battlefield, she had an armor and shield. To remind the audience of her female gracefulness, Eowyn also appeared in medieval dresses with long flared sleeves that touched the ground. Dawson (2008, p. 45) commented that “Eowyn appropriated and utilized the elements of masculinity when she adopted male disguise to fight on the battlefield”. As a sacrificing warrior, she showed her goodness by protecting Merry and her uncle in hazardous moments during the fight against the Witch King and his soldiers.

An analysis of the verbal elements in the movie scripts provided some information about the women’s uniqueness which categorizes them as good characters. A few examples of the movies showed significant changes in the good characters’ style of speech. In the classical movies, the peace-seeking nature of good women was shown by using the imperative mode. In the movie *Red River*, Tess tried to reconcile the two lead male characters by using a commanding voice. During the post-classical period, morality was the basic element in the speech of the female characters. In *Planet of the Apes*, Dr. Zira pointed to an ethical basis to defend Taylor in the court of the apes when she said, “This man has the right to know whether there’s a charge against him.”

In the new millennium, women who were portrayed as good had active physical roles, did good deeds and possessed strong wills by using modal verbs. As an example, Trinity in *The Matrix Reloaded* (2003) showed her strong intentions to help team members who were stuck in the Matrix by saying, “I will not wait and do nothing.” She showed further active support when she added, “In five minutes, I’ll tear that building down.” She showed her care about Neo and his team’s fate by using the modal verb ‘will’ in “I will not watch them die”.

Later, in *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*, Eowyn showed an active role when she threatened the Witch King with her strong and assertive voice that conveyed her warning by means of the modal verb ‘will’ in “I will kill you, if you touch him”. Galadriel, the princess of elves, represented a softer angelic nature by using the modal verb ‘may’ when she addressed Frodo, “I give you the light of Earendil, our most beloved star. May it be a light to you in dark places when all other lights go out.”

#### Changes in Verbal and Non-verbal Elements of Bad Roles

In contrast, female villains showed their power in different negative ways and their appearance underwent some specific changes in each era of Hollywood. However, their positive and negative images could not be easily told apart since they had mixed wicked and good traits in the last era. Movie-goers were presented with active and dangerous women as the promotional figures in the *James Bond* series. To Knight (2010, p. 112), the female character’s toughness remained paradoxical. Bond girls have been “notoriously alluring and voluptuous” since the early Bond movies in the 1960s. They mostly served to make male protagonists look more desirable. *Thunderball* (1965) cast the female character as an utterly bad woman instead of just a female villain.

Fiona Volpe indirectly attracted Bond with her sexual appeal that increasingly turned her into a potential femme fatale. Jutting (2007, p. 56) labeled Fiona a “henchwoman and a killer”.

The sexy and dangerous female characters in *James Bond* movies were changed into women with supernatural power in the hyper-real world of the *Harry Potter* series. Although female women had mystical power, they were under-represented for their submissive behavior. *Harry Potter* showed a female character who exercised her power over other characters in the wizard world. Bellatrix can be seen an evil character. Her villainous nature was shown through dark hair, black makeup, long black costume and arrogant nature. The dirty teeth and harsh laughter highlighted her frightening and disordered personality.

A shift in the Hollywood formula was seen in *The Dark Knight Rises* when the evil female character combined her evil power with a few good intentions to help people. The dominant villain gene reappeared when Selina Kyle had a collection of criminal activities. She paradoxically moved between her good and evil nature. This new female villain as a master thief used her sexual prowess, clothed in her fashionable dress, to cheat wealthy men. Selina showed her prowess in various ways. She was as expert at riding the motorbike as Batman was. She was skillful in martial arts and her bladed high-heeled boots aided her in the combat. She disguised herself in a form-fitting cat burglar outfit.

The villainy of evil characters could be distinguished by their verbal clues. In *Thunderball*, Fiona the villain secret agent, established her power over her male colleagues by using plenty of imperatives such as “go and get the car... go after him... stay with us”. In *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2*, Bellatrix the villain character was almost muted; she was not verbally threatening. In *The Dark Knight Rises*, Selina’s speech indicated her malicious intentions: “I would beat up a cripple”...“I sold his fingerprint”... “she took the pearls”. Near the end of the movie, she transformed into a good character when she helped Batman to finish his mission.

#### Concluding Remarks

Hollywood tends to make female villains and heroines more complex across different eras. Women that held a certain degree of goodness became more dynamic, competitive, assured and determined. Good female characters moved away from a passive figure to more active combatants. Those characters that served as evil women were not necessarily ugly. They started to exhibit traits that directly threatened the feminine ideal. These characters tended to be masculine in their intention for violence. However, findings indicated that good and evil women were guided by or served the interests of a dominant male hero, thus reinforcing gender stereotypes.

As Hall (1997) argued, representations in media are based on gender roles and values that are deeply embedded in people’s culture. This research provided evidence that women in good and bad roles are not operating outside the boundaries of gender restrictions. They acted inside socially constructed gender norms. They relied on the strength and guidance of a dominant male character that might lead to re-articulating gender stereotypes. This research had some limitations since it examined only female characters, therefore, it was unable to make a comparison between the depiction of male and female. Action movies are male-dominated and the roles of male heroes and villains may be changing along with the shifts in representation of good and evil women.

The focus of this research was on the top-grossing action movies across three eras of Hollywood, a larger random sample might provide different results. The focus of this study was on Hollywood action movies, a comparative research on Western and Eastern cinemas could result in various types of gender stereotypes.

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## Appendix

**Table 2: High-grossing action movies of classical Hollywood (1930-1948)**

No.	Year	Movie	Amount Grossed
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

**Table 3: High-grossing action movies of the post-classical Hollywood (1949-1975)**

No.	Year	Movie	Amount Grossed
1	1961	<i>El Cid</i>	\$26,620,000
2	1975	<i>Jaws</i>	\$260,000,000
3	1974	<i>Blazing Saddles</i>	\$119,500,000
4	1974	<i>The Towering Inferno</i>	\$116,000,000
5	1969	<i>Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid</i>	\$96,700,000
6	1959	<i>Ben-Hur</i>	\$74,000,000
7	1965	<i>Thunderball</i>	\$63,595,658
8	1971	<i>The French Connection</i>	\$51,700,000
9	1957	<i>The Bridge on the River Kwai</i>	\$33,300,000
10	1968	<i>Planet of the Apes</i>	\$32,600,000

**Table 4: High-grossing action movies of the new Hollywood (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 Hollows- Part 2</i>	\$1,328,111,219
4	2011	<i>Transformers: Dark of the Moon</i>	\$1,123,746,996
5	2003	<i>The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King</i>	\$1,119,929,521
6	2006	<i>Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest</i>	\$1,066,179,725
7	2012	<i>The Dark Knight Rises</i>	\$1,013,114,000
8	2010	<i>Inception</i>	\$825,532,764
9	1977	<i>Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope</i>	\$775,398,007
10	2003	<i>The Matrix Reloaded</i>	\$742,128,461