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Risk addiction: reading heteromasculinity and orgasm in Basic Instinct 2

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ABSTRACT

A large body of critical work exists on the construction of femininity in *films noir* and erotic thrillers, yet little research examines similar constructions of heteromasculinity in these films. This dissertation deploys a poststructuralist theoretical lens to analyse how *Basic Instinct 2's* textual mechanisms construct and inflect heterosexual femininity and masculinity, with a special focus on masculinity. I argue that the erotic thriller's foregrounding of a sexually aggressive *femme fatale* and the seemingly uncontrollable sexual desire she excites in her male counterpart may function to elide unacknowledged queer desire in the masculine subject. While *BI2* presents an apparently heteronormative couple in the form of Catherine Tramell (Sharon Stone) and Michael Glass (David Morrissey), I propose that their engagement in sadomasochistic activities in which Glass is the 'bottom' leaves space for the spectator to interpret their sexual practices in queer terms.