

Jayden Grant

Professor Kozwolski

Pulp fiction

20 November 2025

Reflection cover letter: Research Essay

Dear Professor Kozwolski,

In my research paper “ Gender and Power in Early Twentieth Century Fiction and Film,” I dive into how societal expectations around gender influences relationships and power dynamics in Raymond Chandler's “ *The Big Sleep*” ( 1939), *James M. Cain's “ The Postman Always Rings Twice”* ( 1934), and Ida Lupino’s film “ *Outrage*” (1950).

My analysis focuses on how the characters either embody, challenge, or fail to meet the prescribed gender roles of the early 20th century. By examining Marlowe and Carmen, Nick and Cora, and Ann and Bruce, I aim to illustrate how male dominance and female submission or rebellion shape the stories and their moral outcomes. I also use Janey Place's academic work to place these texts within a broader discussion about how women are portrayed in film and literature, especially when they seek independence and sexual freedom.

Throughout this project, I aimed to develop a strong thesis that links textual evidence, film analysis, and scholarly viewpoints. I included a detailed quote from *The Postman Always Rings*

Twice to emphasize Cora's fight for independence against societal limitations. Additionally, I used specific vocabulary like autonomy, ignominy, subjugation, and immutable to strengthen my analysis and show a clear grasp of gendered power structures.

This essay pushed me to balance close readings of the primary texts with critical insights from secondary sources, all while maintaining a clear and coherent argument. I found it particularly valuable to draw parallels between the literary works and Lupino's film, which highlighted how gender expectations and their effects across different mediums and historical periods. I also made sure to follow MLA formatting guidelines for citations and overall presentation to ensure academic precision and clarity.

Completing this essay has made me think about how societal norms continue to shape our perceptions of gender and power today. By looking at these narratives from the early 20th century, I've gained a better understanding of how literature and film both reinforce and critique cultural ideals. This has given me a deeper insight into how historical contexts influence character behavior and audience perception.

I appreciate your guidance and feedback on this assignment. I hope my essay effectively demonstrates careful analysis, engagement with primary and secondary sources, and thoughtful reflection on gender, power, and agency in literature and film.

Sincerely, Jayden Grant

