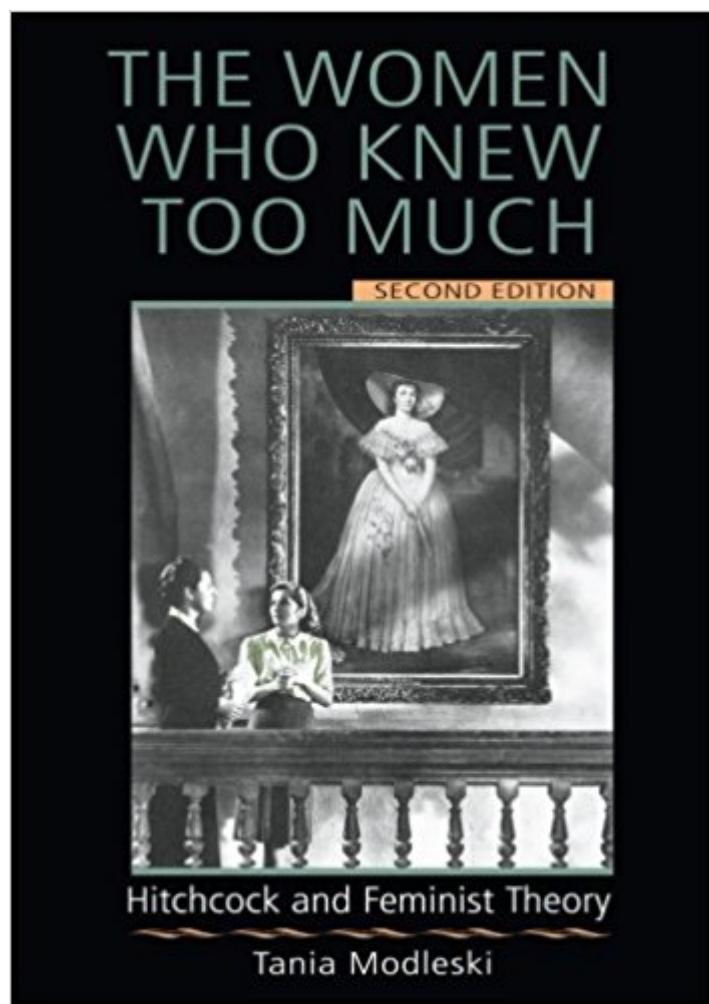


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# The Women Who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock And Feminist Theory



## **Synopsis**

First published in 1988, *The Women Who Knew Too Much* remains a classic work in film theory and criticism. The book consists of a theoretical introduction and analyses of seven important films by Alfred Hitchcock, each of which provides a basis for an analysis of the female spectator as well as of the male spectator. Modleski considers the emotional and psychic investments of men and women in female characters whose stories often undermine the mastery of the cinematic Master of Suspense. This new edition features a new chapter which considers the last 15 years of Hitchcock criticism as it relates to the ideas in this landmark book.

## **Book Information**

Paperback: 200 pages

Publisher: Routledge; 2 edition (September 9, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0415973627

ISBN-13: 978-0415973625

Product Dimensions: 0.5 x 6 x 8.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces

Average Customer Review: 3.7 out of 5 stars 8 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #383,676 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #65 in Books > Textbooks > Medicine & Health Sciences > Medicine > Clinical > Dermatology #100 in Books > Medical Books > Medicine > Internal Medicine > Dermatology #219 in Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Literature > Literary Theory

## **Customer Reviews**

Tania Modleski is Florence R. Scott Professor of English at the University of Southern California. Among her other books are *Loving with a Vengeance* and *Feminism without Women*.

it was a great book and the seller delivered as described

Delivered as promised.

This book is skewed heavily toward a radical feminist perspective. I guess by that I mean that the author always seems ready to interpret a film as being hostile toward women. I consider myself a feminist, and heaven knows I am no apologist for Hitchcock in his attitude toward, and treatment of,

women; but I also refuse to hate or blame men for every ill in the female cosmos. While one could make the case that Hollywood has institutionalized misogyny, and that the strong female roles of the 40s have been replaced to a large extent by roles as prostitutes and crime victims, sometimes the specific conclusions Ms. Modleski reaches are just plain loopy. Other times I think she adds great insight to her observations about the films of one the most talented directors ever. You just have to read the book knowing that the author does have a strong viewpoint and may not always present a balanced perspective. The author examines seven films: *Blackmail*, *Murder!*, *Rebecca*, *Notorious*, *Rear Window*, *Vertigo* and *Frenzy*. This is a book worth reading, particularly if you are a film (or especially Hitchcock) fan. But you should be aware that this author has an agenda to put forward, and sometimes she doesn't let common sense, or the facts, get in her way. This kind of a book can be very rewarding, but you have to put more effort into the reading of it -- not just reading what the author says, but trying to understand why the author says it. In this sense it is also a good introduction to feminist film theory.

*The Women Who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock And Feminist Theory* first appeared in 1988, but it remains a unique and important work of film theory for college-level students today and its reprint edition assures libraries with solid film analysis holdings will still have access. Hitchcock fans receive critical insights on seven important films, each of which serves as a foundation for an analysis of spectators of both sexes. This updated second edition includes a new chapter surveying the last 15 years of Hitchcock and adds further food for thought.

This book was assigned reading for a Hitchcock class at NYU. I thoroughly enjoyed its even-handed approach to pondering the great film auteur's perspective on women as expressed in his films and the place of women in American films in general. Although I might disagree with about 5-10% of her conclusions, I would still highly recommend this study.

A fascinating though dense read for people interested in women's studies or Hitchcock. It ain't easy reading, but Modleski's perspectives of some of Hitch's best work (as seen through the lens of feminist criticism) is worth the struggle.

Fabulous, accessible writing! Deft use of theory makes for sensible critique. A book I go back to time and time again.

This is a horrendous book. The author's feminist agenda completely distorts her interpretation of Hitchcock's films, and the conclusions she comes to are ridiculous. Not recommended.

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