

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE
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Sexuality in Cinema

9½ Weeks (1986)

Adrian Lyne (b. 1941)

OVERVIEW

Director Born in March of 1941 in Peterborough, UK, Lyne was raised in London and educated at Highgate School. He began his film career in the mid-70s directing commercials for DIM Lingerie. His first feature, *Foxes*, was released in 1980 and was well liked by critics and viewers alike. His next film, *Flashdance*, was released in 1983 and remains one of his best known. His 1987 release *Fatal Attraction* is his most famous and adored film, earning six Academy Award nominations and setting the bar for American drama in the years to come. In 1990, he turned away from drama to release a disturbing psychological horror film, *Jacob's Ladder*. After directing *Unfaithful* in 2002, he would not direct another film for 20 years, though this was not for lack of trying: several projects were planning to feature him as a director, but plans kept falling through. In 2022 he directed the erotic thriller *Deep Water*, notable as the first erotic film released by Disney since 1994's *Color of Night*.



Film Lyne wanted to film an adaptation of Ingeborg Day's 1978 novel of the same name but realized it would be impossible to remain true to the novel and make a studio feature film. Even this 'brightened' version of the dark storyline in the novel was seen as too explicit, resulting in heavy edits by MGM before its release, stalling the premiere for two years after the end of shooting. It was an utter box office bomb, grossing only \$6.7 million to its \$17 million budget. The soundtrack, however, sold extremely well, and the unedited film was popular in Europe. The film essentially splits the room among viewers, having a 58% approval rating on the film review aggregation site Rotten Tomatoes at the time of writing.



Background There was no end to the trouble in the creation of this film. Lyne's initial studio contract was revoked shortly after principal photography began with TriStar citing "creative differences" as the cause. Lyne has stated that a major stakeholder in TriStar, Coca-Cola, pressured studio executives to end production due to the subject of the film. PSO picked up the production, and, after some convincing and some heavy edits, MGM distributed the film in North America. Half a million dollars alone was spent on scheduling conflicts between the stars and Lyne. Star Kim Basinger felt her audition was grueling and demeaning, telling her agent she wouldn't work on the film even if she was selected, though she eventually changed her mind. Similar to the issues cited by Lyne with TriStar's stakeholders, the film's original composer, Stewart Copeland, had to step down when his label deemed the film's script too offensive. Frankly, it's a wonder this film was made.

MAIN CHARACTERS

John Gray – A rich and powerful day trader who has a fixation with Elizabeth

Elizabeth McGraw – A young employee at an art gallery who falls for John

SYNOPSIS

Elizabeth McGraw works at a SoHo art gallery. One day, while preparing for a dinner with some new clients, she makes her way to a Chinese grocer to buy supplies with a co-worker. It's here where John Gray first makes contact with Elizabeth. He follows her to a local swap meet, where he purchases her an expensive silk shawl she was looking at. They begin a relationship, but it quickly turns strange as John's

behavior becomes more and more controlling. Elizabeth wants to introduce him to her friends, but he responds that she can live her life during the day, but he wants the nighttime. To cement their relationship, he purchases her an expensive gold watch and instructs her to think about him touching her each day at noon.

His behavior becomes more domineering, and he begins to control her life, telling her to wait in his apartment for him on certain days. While waiting one day, Elizabeth goes through John's dresser and finds pictures of him with another woman. He calls and asks if she's gone through his things, and she admits it, and when he returns, he insists on "punishing" her with a spanking. She refuses, and they trade slaps before collapsing on the floor and having rough sex. After this, John begins to control every aspect of Elizabeth's life, brushing her hair, choosing her clothes, and even feeding her. Elizabeth becomes dependent upon him to make decisions for her.

During lunch one day, she mentions that she'd like to know what it's like to be "one of the guys," and John arranges a strange date for them in which Elizabeth cross-dresses and joins him at an upscale cigar bar. As they walk home, they're mistaken for a homosexual couple and harassed by a small gang of men who chase them down an alley where Elizabeth stabs one of them in the buttocks, sending them scrambling away. Elizabeth then proclaims her love for John, and they have sex in the rain in the alley. After this, John begins making their S&M relationship more public, ordering Elizabeth around in public and performing overtly sexual acts in front of store clerks. Around the same time, Elizabeth's ex-husband begins dating one of her coworkers. She finds some solace in her work when she's asked to secure an elderly artist's appearance at their upcoming art gallery showing.

In an attempt to add more perversion to their sex life, John attempts to prompt a threesome by bringing a sex worker into a hotel room in which he's blindfolded Elizabeth, causing her to hit him and flee. As a form of revenge, Elizabeth rushes into a live sex show, and John follows. There, Elizabeth begins kissing a random man. When John approaches, she stops, embracing him. After her successful gallery opening, Elizabeth breaks down in tears and spends the night with John. The next morning, however, she begins to pack her things. For the first time in their relationship, John opens up, but it's too late for Elizabeth, who leaves, wandering the crowded streets with tears in her eyes.

PLOT

City streets – A woman walks along a path along a river and over a bridge. Puddles of water reflect her legs as she strides past, hinting at a rainstorm early in the morning. Locals begin passing the other way, walking their dogs or jogging. She passes a homeless man sleeping under a bridge and soon picks up a newspaper. The crowds of people begin to swarm as she walks deeper into the city. We watch a man chase a pickpocket as rain begins to fall again, the woman covering her hair with the newspaper. She cuts down an alley where steam jets from vents along a wall. Some sanitation workers stop throwing bags of garbage into the hopper of a garbage truck to hoot and holler, catcalling her. The woman reaches her destination, where she sits to read the paper, waiting on her co-worker who has the key to make it in to work. When he does, their conversation is drowned out by the theme music still playing as the final title credit takes the screen.



Office talk – "This is a message from Sinclair," a woman says, passing in an office, handing the woman from the street a piece of paper. "He's coming to your party tonight." She asks about the guests. The balding man complains, saying the guest list should be, "One client, two clients, and three more clients." He makes a veiled sexual joke about one of the other women, and the office erupts in giggles. After that, another woman takes coffee orders, calling the blonde woman from the street 'Liz.' The gallery owner says he only wants hot water and lemon. One of the women calls him "tubs" and asks if he's trying to "slim down." "I don't fast to lose weight," he quips. "I fast to save money." A bit later, Liz and a co-worker exit the gallery, making a grocery list for the work dinner later that night. The other woman jokes about adding aphrodisiacs and sex toys to the list, causing Liz to choke back a laugh.



Chinese market – The two women make their way through Chinatown to a little grocery store. The brunette makes disgusted noises on seeing the shopkeeper inside handling live fish before going down her list and noting the guest's dietary restrictions. Inside, the shopkeeper argues with a man in Cantonese: the customer seems unhappy with a price. "Okay, alright, okay," the shopkeeper says, relenting and wrapping a cut of meat in paper. He then greets Liz and her co-worker, who are making their meat order for whatever they're cooking for dinner. A man in a business suit approaches the counter and asks what they're going to do with their meat. "We plan to give them a proper burial," says Liz, deadpan, but she quickly begins guffawing at her own joke, the other nearby customers joining in. The shopkeeper fails to contain his frustration with their time-wasting antics as another man in a suit appears behind Liz. He stares at her, and she turns to see him. Her smile fades, but something in her expression hints at attraction. As Liz and her coworker leave, she turns to see the man ordering in a restaurant before getting into a cab.



Cooking and dinner – In Liz's apartment, we see her with her roommate (her co-worker from before) wandering around the house partially dressed, covered only by an apron. She and Liz prepare the food that's going to be served for their work dinner. Her roommate lights a clove cigarette and puffs on it while watching a romantic movie on a tiny color TV set, mocking Liz for her apparent sexual coldness. "Molly," Liz sighs as her roommate dreams up a personals ad to put in the newspaper for her. "You are the grossest... most perverted... oversexed, disgusting..." She can't finish her thought because of Molly's play-acting sexual arousal. The camera jumps to a dark room where Liz and Molly entertain their guests. It's hard to make out conversation over the overlapping voices as one of the guests balances a spoon on her nose while drinking wine from a glass. Liz then jokes about an artist who makes "rectal portraits" by painting with a brush up his rear end. One of the other women teases the critic at the table, saying he writes his reviews the same way, and everyone laughs.



Swap meet – The younger man who stared at Liz in the Chinese butcher wanders the streets. Nearby, a band plays loud reggae music. There's a swap meet going on, and vendors of varied goods have set up tables and tents all along the narrow street. Liz is there, looking at the wares and dancing to the live music with strangers. He also notices her appreciating an expensive antique shawl but puts it back because it costs \$300. At another table, Liz is delighted to see a little mechanical chicken that walks around making an approximation of clucking noises as it lays little eggs. As she talks the man behind the table down on his price, the man from the butcher appears behind her and jokes that every time he sees her, she's buying chickens. She comments that he's always smiling at her.



Restaurant with history – The camera makes a hard cut to the interior of an Italian restaurant. A large group sits in front of a tiny stage where a man plays guitar and an older woman sings a folk tune. The crowd claps in time as a waiter distributes different drinks to everyone. In a nearby dining room, the man lifts a glass to Liz's lips and waits for her to sip before saying, "This place has a lot of history." He describes how several mob members were killed in this restaurant over the years, including a man named Gino Gambini who "got his brains blown out" while he was sitting where Liz sits, eating what she eats. Liz is captivated, sipping at her wine. A nearby man with a cigar and a black hat shoots the couple a dirty look, but they don't see him. Back on the city streets, Liz gets a gift: the expensive shawl she was looking at before at the swap meet. "John," she murmurs, shocked. "Don't say I didn't warn you," he smirks as he drapes it over her shoulders.



Houseboat – John and Liz walk along the harbor as seagulls squawk and fly away. John helps Liz up a short ladder to a houseboat, and she asks if it's his. He says it belongs to a friend. Inside, she comments that it's beautiful, crossing to a large window overlooking the bay. John starts to make a nearby bed, causing Liz to joke that, "Either you've been practicing to be a maid at a Holiday Inn." John just grins at her, tucking in the sheet nice and tight. He asks if she likes music and puts on a record, Lady Sings the Blues by Billie Holiday. The song Strange Fruit begins to play. Liz asks what John does, and he says he buys and sells money: "Some people call it arbitrage." As he keeps talking, Liz says his job sounds risky,

and he says it's no more risky than her following him here. "Out here," he continues, "where there's no neighbors around. I mean, we hardly know each other... There's no taxi cab waiting on the curb. There's no phone booth outside. There's no one to hear you if you called out." Liz is obviously uncomfortable, and John says he was just trying to make a joke. Liz, however, demands to leave.



Flowers and the fair – The gallery owner works trying to organize a new exhibition of pieces, strange, disjointed pieces of human forms, and isolated photos of people in sexual bondage. Liz sits nearby, coming up with new arrangements. "I think the dog collar," the owner says, lifting a large red picture, "belongs here." Liz can't contain her laughter, correcting him that it's a "chastity belt." Downstairs, a comically inattentive delivery boy enters the gallery with a bouquet. He dances goofily to the music on his cassette player as the man at the front desk signs for the delivery. Someone has sent flowers for Liz. She jumps up and down upon reading the card before the camera jumps to a bunch of kids playing games in an arcade. John and Liz run nearby, and he buys her a big bunch of balloons before leading her to a fairground where he puts her on a ferris wheel alone, much to her chagrin. Back on the ground, she makes her displeasure known, slapping at John, but they quickly make up. Some passing kids ask for a dollar, saying one of their friends can "fart the theme from *Jaws*." John gives them the money, but the boy delivers only a single 'note,' and the kids scamper away with the money.



Elizabeth's apartment – In Liz's apartment, she listens to her answering machine while John takes a quick look around. He picks up a picture, and she tells him it's her father and her before a deep baritone voice on the answering machine catches his ear. "That's Bruce," she explains. "He's a songwriter. We were also married for three years." John doesn't respond at all, piquing Liz's interest. "Aren't you going to ask me how I feel about him?" she asks. "No," replies John with a soft smile. "Take off your dress," John orders, and after a moment's hesitation, Liz obeys. "I'm going to blindfold you," he says, picking up a nearby shawl. Liz seems uncomfortable, but she lets him do what he wants after a bit of reassurance. He positions her in front of a lamp and puts the blindfold on her, looking at the form of her body under her thin white shirt in the bright lamplight. After a few moments, he lowers her to the couch, where he begins to undo the buttons of her shirt before tracing his fingers around her belly button and teasing her with a piece of ice pressed against her bare skin. Liz gasps and writes in pleasure.



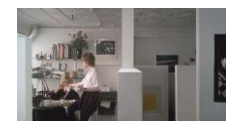
"Dead or asleep?" – The scene fades into a picture of a figure lying in a similar position to Liz. A man with a dog stares at it, asking if the figure is dead or asleep. "I think he's sleeping," says Liz. "It's by Matthew Farnsworth." The man is unimpressed even as Liz explains what she enjoys about the work. She turns her attention to the dog, asking if he likes it. The dog licks its chops as if responding. Liz leads the customer out of the gallery. One of the janitors teases her by flicking his mop at her feet. The two men mopping stop their work and watch Liz as she heads back into the gallery offices.



John's apartment – Liz enters John's apartment. He comments that she smells good as he leads her deeper inside. The apartment is lavishly yet sparsely decorated with fashionable furniture. It looks more like a model home than a space someone lives in. He puts on a cassette as she tries to sit on his strange furniture. "You have a lot of TVs," she comments. "My uncle died watching TV..." she continues her story as John fiddles with his HI-FI player, saying her uncle was a sports fanatic who died of a heart attack. John says he's come close to a heart attack himself watching the stock markets before casually dropping that he loves to cook. He also has a gift for Liz: an expensive watch. He comments that ticking sounds can hypnotize, and she lowers her ear to the watch to listen before slipping it on her wrist. John asks Liz one thing in return: "Each day at twelve o'clock, would you look at that watch and think of me touching you?" After a moment's thought, Liz agrees.



On hold – The phone rings in the art gallery office as Liz fiddles with a pen at her desk. A co-worker pops her head over the cubical divider and tells her Sinclair is calling for her. "Who?" Liz asks. "God... What does he want?" Her co-worker guesses



that it's about their new star artist, Farnsworth. She leans against Liz's desk and routes the call through, handing her the receiver. Liz says hello and is immediately put on hold. She covers the mouthpiece of the receiver and takes a moment to chat about her love life to her co-workers: "I think I've been hypnotized." She complains that she can't concentrate, saying she sprayed Lysol under her arms instead of deodorant that morning. Her co-workers giggle, asking if she brushed her teeth with Ben Gay cream. Molly mentions that Liz's ex-husband wants to have dinner with Liz later, but Liz tells Molly to go in her stead. Molly agrees but jokes, "Can I borrow your body?"

Slideshow – Liz sits in a dark room off of the main offices in the gallery. With one hand, she manipulates the controls for a slideshow projector, flipping through examples of Farnsworth's art. After a dozen or so slides, she starts to sway drowsily in her seat. Opening her eyes again, she begins to touch her chest and squeeze her breasts before sliding her hand up her skirt and touching herself. "I guess it's just a feeling," the soundtrack repeats over and over again as she drops the remote and leans against it. The slides flick past at a rapid pace.



"There's a man on the premises" – A boat horn bellows as Liz and John run through puddles toward a ferry. She screeches with excitement as they barely reach the deck before the boat pulls away from the dock. After a cut to black, we see Liz open a door and whisper to get Molly's attention: "There's a man on the premises." "Terrific," mutters her half-sleeping roommate as she rolls over and covers her eyes. "Go to it." In the bedroom, John looks at some sketches Liz has done, sitting on his bed. He turns to face her and strokes her hair as she squeezes his crotch. After a long moment, he grins and says, "I'm starving." They both laugh. A bit later, John chops veggies on the counter. Liz enters, and he instructs her not to move before telling her to close her eyes and lie on the floor. There, he feeds her many things, which results in a sloppy mess. Both laugh as *Bread and Butter* plays. Falling back on his tricks, John feeds her a hot pepper, causing Liz to shriek and chug a glass of milk, spilling much of it on herself in the process. The sequence ends with John covering Liz in honey before they fall all over each other, kissing and groping.



Confession – Liz stands in the office looking at some negatives in the sunlight. Molly walks up behind her, yammering to herself about how she "should have said no." Liz asks if she's speaking to her when Molly makes a roundabout confession, saying she slept with Bruce on their first date. "My Bruce?" Liz asks for clarification. "I just thought you should know," Molly replies. "Your mom will like him," Liz says in response. "Mine did." Molly nods knowingly, understanding that this is hinting at what Bruce did to earn the divorce. Molly leaves, and Liz stares at the chair she was seated in with a sour look before something catches her eye outside: the goofy delivery boy approaches the gallery with another big bouquet of flowers. Liz knows that John has sent them for her, and she smiles.



"I just want the nighttime" – Later that day, Liz dines with John at his apartment. As he sips some wine, she asks him to come to a party with her. He simply stares at her, unresponsive. "Come on, John," she says. John groans and thumps his head onto the table. "Mm mm," he repeats, shaking his head while it's pressed against the table. "I don't want to meet anybody," he eventually whispers. "I just want to be with you." She offers to clear the table, and he tells her to sit before saying he'll provide for her, he'll clean for her and cook the food. He'll even bathe her. "I'll take care of you," John says. "And you can see your friends in the daytime. I just want the nighttime from now on to be ours." The phone rings, interrupting their moment. He hangs up after a few words exchanged, saying he has to meet someone. Liz says she'll go do some work at home, but he demands that she stay at his apartment. After a little pressuring, she agrees.



Passing time – Liz surfs through the channels while lying in bed. She grins at the goofiness of TV movies and wooden acting in advertisements. Sometime later, she lies with the TV off, playing with the gold watch John gave her. Bored and restless, she crosses to the closet, which she opens, noting how many empty hangers are in John's closet. She opens a drawer where she finds his passport and a picture of him with another woman. Suddenly, the phone rings. Liz closes the drawer and rushes to answer. John calls from a phone booth,



saying he's headed back home. He asks her a strange question: "I was wondering if perhaps, maybe, you were going through my clothes... looking in my drawers... looking at the things in my closet. And I said, 'No, she's not that kind of girl. She's a good girl.' Good girls don't snoop, do they?" Liz admits that she's been through his things after a minute or so of goading. "Shame on you," John says, hanging up.

Fight – John enters his apartment, shutting the door hard behind him. "I didn't think you'd be here," he says to Liz. "You've been a very bad girl, Elizabeth." He crosses in front of her, telling her to hike up her skirt and lean against the wall so he can spank her. "You are kidding?" she asks with a harsh tone. "I'm not kidding," he says in a strangely soft tone. She storms off to get her bag and heads to the front door, but she quickly turns around, shouting as she advances on John, "Who the fuck do you think you are?" He lashes out to slap her, and she smacks his hand away. They start trading slaps and wrestling around. Eventually, John pushes her onto the table and starts having sex with Liz, but she doesn't put up a fight, instead pulling him closer.



Strange devotion – Liz wakes up in John's bed, naked. In the kitchen, he scrambles eggs. She rolls over and dozes back off, and eventually John comes in. Slowly, gingerly, he lays out her clothes for her before gently kissing her awake. "Your breakfast is ready," he whispers in her ear. A bit later, we see John enter a store and sit on a bench. Looking at herself in a mirror, Liz straightens her blouse before turning to look at John with a strange expression. He smiles back at her. The clerk asks how he's going to pay, and he says cash while stroking Liz's hair. Back at the apartment, rain comes down outside as John brushes Liz's hair. "Did you take as good of care of the others as you do with me?" He doesn't reply, simply beginning to kiss her. She smiles at him, happy with that answer. A montage passes by with John playing tricks and earning Liz's frustration, but she always forgives him. They laugh together as they visit various locations across the city. Inside of a clock tower, they make love against the clock face. The music fades as John feeds Liz in bed. "How did you know I'd respond to you the way I have?" Liz asks between mouthfuls. "I saw myself in you," John responds, holding up another spoonful of soup.



John at work – Back in the gallery office, Liz talks to Molly about John: "I can't figure this guy out... Sometimes, it's so easy... It might be the tie they wear or the books they read. Or don't read. But you know." Molly looks up from her knitting, asking, "Know what?" Liz sighs, "What will end it. SO you just file it away and you wait... But with this guy..." "Maybe it's true love?" Molly suggests. "Maybe," says Liz. A bit later, John makes his way into a fancy office on Wall Street. Unseen behind him is Liz, who watches him grab a hot dog and help a woman collect her dropped change on the way inside. Sneaking past his secretary, Liz finds John seated at his desk. She makes the excuse that she's brought him lunch. She comments on how big his office is and how attractive his secretary is too. "Do you always buy her lunch?" she asks before starting to tear up. She runs away. With a strange smile, John picks up his phone and tells his secretary, "Don't let her leave." The secretary rushes after Liz, her high heels clacking against the hardwood floor.



Public display of arousal – The Italian restaurant from before buzzes with activity. John and Liz stand at the bar, waiting for a table. They smile at each other. "I love Wall Street," she says, and John chuckles, thinking she's making a joke. She says she's not joking, saying further, "Sometimes I wonder what it'd be like to be one of the guys." "Yeah?" asks John, tracing her lips with his thumb as she gently moans. A nearby man sees this and shoots the couple a dirty look for being so affectionate and sexual in public. His displeasure grows as he sees Liz grab John's crotch. "The lady wants to know what it'd be like to be one of the boys?" John asks. A bit later, Liz opens a door to a hotel room where she finds a note for her. It reads, "Open them. Get dressed. Meet me in the lobby at Eight. John." she obeys, going through the boxes and bags on the nearby desk.



One of the boys – A thin man in a black suit and hat enters a cigar bar. John sits nearby, sipping on brandy. He looks up at the man and says, "Don't sit down next to me looking like that!" We hear Liz's giggle and see it's her in a false mustache. A bit later,



they dine together at a table, sipping cognac and puffing on cigars that make Liz cough and sputter. John delivers a sort of monologue about the life of a man in this business, how it's just repeatedly selling unwanted things to men you don't like over and over. He gives her a taste of the conversations they have, talking about a "side chick" he has who is "so hot." Liz can't help but grin as he mentions her "heart-shaped ass." He asks her if she's ever had one, and she can't help but giggle, almost blowing her cover.

Homophobic harassment - On their way home, mistaking the cross-dressed Liz and John for a gay couple, some men in a car call them a homophobic slur. Liz responds angrily, shouting for them to come back and say it to their faces. The men get out of the car and chase Liz and John down an alleyway where Liz produces a knife and stabs one of them in the buttocks, making them run off. As the rain begins to pour down, Liz excitedly shouts that she loves John before they start to rip off each other's clothes and have rough sex on some stairs under a broken drainpipe.



New bed – Back at the gallery, Liz sits at her desk, looking distracted. Her co-workers prattle on about which neutral colors they should use for some new matting on some art. The others seem to notice Liz's distance, giving her some space. Later that night, John takes Liz to a jewelry store. There, she finds a necklace she likes, and John orders her to steal it before walking away. Liz looks around the store before pocketing the charm and following him. She giggles as she kisses John on the escalator, the stolen necklace now around her neck. In the next shop, John talks to a woman about buying a bed with equal parts demanding attitude and indecisiveness. Liz smiles at him from across the room until he asks her to try out the floor model he's insisting on purchasing, making a show of taking off her shoes and worshiping her feet. The exchange ends with John ordering Liz to lie back on the bed, grab the headboard, and spread her legs "for daddy." The store clerk watches with thinly veiled disgust as Liz giggles and squeaks as John climbs over her.



Riding crop – In a tack store, John picks up a series of riding crops and tests their flexibility. Liz sits nearby. The store clerks eye them suspiciously. He selects one, flicking it around the store as the clerks watch. Dissatisfied, he picks up another, bends it, and whips Liz across the thigh. The clerks jump, unable to hide their surprise and disgust. "I'll take this one," John says matter-of-factly. The clerk nods but isn't able to hide his disapproving expression. Back at John's apartment, a CD falls into a player, and Joe Cocker's *You Can Leave Your Hat On* begins to play. Shrouded by blinds, Liz begins to perform a strip tease featuring the riding crop and a pair of handcuffs as John watches, eating a bowl of popcorn as if he were at the movies. This sequence continues for several minutes, ending with Liz leading John upstairs to the roof, where she removes the last of her clothing.



Visiting Mr. Farnsworth – One of Liz's co-workers looks frustrated as she hangs up a phone. "Liz," she says over the partition between their cubicles, "We'd better do something about Farnsworth." The artist won't answer his phone. The others say Liz has the best relationship with him and should go for a visit. Liz pays a cabbie for the trip out into the woods and approaches a cottage shrouded in overgrown greenery. The front door is open, but there's no one inside. "Mr. Farnsworth?" Liz says loudly, wandering into his studio, where she sees some of his latest work. She checks the other rooms in the house, finding the phone off the hook. Outside, the old man sits with a large fish he's just caught. Liz sits next to him, saying his art show is in three weeks and they're still missing some of his art before complementing his unique style: "I don't know what it is. The way you manage to capture a moment." Still holding the fish and examining it, Farnsworth explains, "It's the moment. A thing is so familiar, it's strange."



Hands and knees – Liz sits in a chair in John's apartment. She fidgets with her hands and taps her toes. "Elizabeth," John says. "We're going to play a little game. I'm a man with a very big problem. Because, you see, I can't get excited. I can't get excited unless I see you get on your hands and knees and crawl across the floor. And I'm willing to pay a lot to see you do that." He pulls out his wallet and throws some bills on the floor. With an unsure look, she obeys, lowering herself to the ground and picking up a couple of bills, but she stops.

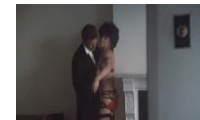


Liz sighs and shakes her head, saying, "This is stupid, John." He insists that she crawl, threatening to whip her with his belt and starting to take it off. "I don't want to negotiate with you," he says, having just cracked the belt against the wall. "Now crawl." She refuses, and he goes through with his threat, striking her with the belt. Angrily, she picks up the bills and throws them in his face. "You love this game," he says, grinning. "I hate it!" she shouts through gnashing teeth, pushing him away and punching at him as he tries to hug her.

"Bruce is down there" – One day at work, Liz sees her ex-husband enter the gallery. She rushes to Molly, telling her Bruce is here and asking her to play interference. "He's here for me," Molly confesses. Liz walks away as Molly goes back to touching up her makeup and hair. From the balcony overlooking the lobby, Liz looks down at Bruce with an odd expression, holding a single red rose. Bruce looks up at her with a mixture of regret and desire. The moment ends quickly when Molly appears, and Bruce ferries her off for their date. Later, Liz waters her plants at home. She looks across the way at children playing on a swing set before aimlessly wandering into her house, spilling water from her watering can. She sips at some wine while listening to a message from her therapist, the secretary telling her she's missed the last two and she'll still be paying for them. The next message is from John: "Meet me at the Chelsea Hotel at 5PM in room 906."



Unwelcome surprise – The camera pans away from a shot of the iconic railings outside the Hotel Chelsea to the hotel's sign as cars honk in the street. Inside, a little girl has a snack on the steps. Liz walks past, stroking the girl's hair as she rounds the corner. At the top of the stairs, Liz finds room 906. Cautiously, she opens the door. The room is empty. She hangs up her coat and waits patiently on the bed. Suddenly, the phone rings. It's John. "Elizabeth," he starts. "I love you. I have something I want you to do for me..." His instructions ramble off at a level we can't quite make out, and the line goes dead. In the dresser across from the bed, Liz finds a blindfold. She takes off her dress, sits on the bed, and waits for John. He seems disappointed when he enters: "It was a simple thing I asked you to do... Now do it." She puts on the blindfold, and John teases her with gentle touches. A knock comes on the door, and John lets a woman in. She speaks in Spanish with him before crossing the room where she touches and undresses Liz, purring while murmuring in Spanish. Removing Liz's blindfold, John begins to kiss the other woman, causing Liz to storm out after slapping John and the woman.



Peep show – Chasing Liz down the stairs, tense music plays as John catches up with her on the city streets. "You scared the shit out of her!" he says as Liz gets away again. Taunting him, she points to a nearby peep show, where she rushes inside. There, a group of men gather around, watching a live sex show. One of the men looks up at Liz, shocked to see a woman there. John enters and slowly tries to cross to Liz. When she sees him, she grabs a nearby man and pulls him into a kiss, the other men around them watching. John pulls her away, and they kiss, still standing in the crowd.



Gallery showing – The soiree for Farnsworth is in full swing at the gallery. People drink and eat hors d'oeuvres as they look at Farnsworth's paintings. Liz watches everything going on around her, distracted. It looks like she's been crying. The gallery owner and some of her co-workers notice the critic's team taking pictures and make a move to do a photo-op with Farnsworth. At the same time, another critic she knows crosses the room to complain about Farnsworth's stoicism. Liz moves away from everyone, taking a moment to herself beneath the stairs. From across the room, Farnsworth stares at her with a strange expression. After taking a moment to splash her face with water, Liz makes a phone call.



Packing- Early the next morning, Liz lies behind John on the bed. After a long moment's thought, she puts on her pants and stands, crossing to the closet. Teary-eyed, she begins to collect her things. John wakes up, but he doesn't move from the bed until she's left the room. After throwing on some pajamas, he follows her into the living room, where he places her things in a bag. Still, he doesn't say anything. Finally, he asks, "You leaving? You wanna stay?" She doesn't answer. In some bizarre attempt to connect to her, to make her stay, John begins telling her about his life, his childhood. He holds back tears. After a long moment,



Liz says, "It's too late." John dives into another speech about how she's special and how he loves her. "You knew it would be over when one of us said stop," Liz replies. "But you wouldn't say it. I almost waited too long." She takes what she can, saying she'll send for the rest, and leaves. "I love you," John says to the door. "Would you please come back by the time I count to fifty?" Liz walks away through the city streets, wiping away tears as she disappears into the crowd.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Elizabeth

Liz works at an art gallery in New York City. She lives with a co-worker and has recently divorced her husband. A chance meeting with John leads her into a deeply sexual relationship with him.

Submissive This personality trait is subtle when she's not with John, but it's there. She fawns when her boss and other men make sexual jokes about her or when the janitors sexually harass her, making it out to be a joke as a way to minimize her discomfort. Liz's submissive nature shows mostly in her sexual relationship with John. Where she starts off uncomfortable with relinquishing control, she soon gives into his desires, blindfolding herself and lying still as he examines and worships her body. We see this most clearly when his control over her becomes nearly complete. He dresses her, pays for her clothes and food, feeds her, and even bathes her. Liz is strangely happy with this arrangement for the most part despite her earlier desire to have more control.

Playful Liz has a playful side that John helps to bring out of her. We see Molly joking with her at the beginning of the film, but Liz remains somewhat serious and reserved. When the other women joke about sex and other topics, Liz usually remains on the sidelines. When she's with John, however, she acts almost childlike, giggling and smiling from ear to ear over little gifts like balloons or Ferris wheel rides. She also likes to wrestle around with him in his home. Their sexual games start in the bedroom but soon move to public spaces. It's in these moments we see Liz at her most playful. She can be pushed too far, however, as we see when John demands she crawl and pick up his money and again when he tries to surprise her with a threesome.

Unhappy The story stages Liz as an unhappy person quickly. She is a bit disgusted by sex talk in a way that is unusual for a woman her age, playing into the fact that she is recently divorced. Even when her roommate and co-worker, Molly, jokes with her, she is frustrated and uncomfortable, wishing people would just leave her alone. This lack of sexual and marital happiness drives her into the arms of John, who appeals to her desire to be spoiled and cared for. As the film goes on, she appears happy for a while, but eventually John's lack of stated and social commitment drives her into a depressive state. She seems lost, distracted throughout the day. As she debates whether or not to stay with John, Liz looks to be at her lowest, drinking during the day and drowning her houseplants while splashing water around her living room.

John

John is a rich day trader. We learn little about him throughout the film. He is obsessed with Liz and seeks to simultaneously serve and dominate her.

Dominant John shows himself to be dominant early in the film. It's subtle at first, a display of wealth to Liz by buying her a very expensive shawl. After this, he takes her to a secluded houseboat, joking that 'no one can hear you scream.' Liz doesn't like this, and John relents, letting her go home. When they do finally have sex, it's an odd sort of procedure, John seemingly worshiping Liz's body, tracing it with his fingers and an ice cube as she lies back, blindfolded. Here we see his desire for control come out for the first time. This pattern repeats and escalates as the film goes on, moving from sexual pleasure to feeding, bathing, and dressing Liz. John wants her to depend on him completely. Whereas many of the dominant men in this series have a purely sexual motive, John seeks complete control over the women he desires and loves.

Playful Like Liz, John has a playful side that comes out often. He is a trickster, frequently teasing Liz and playing pranks on her. At first these include leaving her atop a Ferris wheel and embarrassing her in subtle ways to get a rise out of her, but they escalate and become more sexual as the film goes on. We see this clearly in the department store when John orders Liz to shoplift a necklace, then again when they engage in not-so-subtle sexual play in front of the bookstore clerk. It escalates again when he, without consulting Liz, invites a sex worker to have a threesome with them, causing Liz to erupt with anger and run away. At the end of the film, we see John thinking things have gone back to normal, and he believes Liz packing is a game of hers, realizing only too late that she's serious. His inability to be serious about their relationship creates the cracks in the relationship that result in its eventual end.

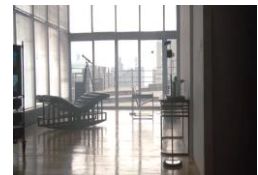
Closed off This trait of John's is the one we see most often. He outright refuses to talk about himself and his life to Liz at many points throughout the film. Where Liz is looking for romance and thinks she finds it with him, John doesn't do his part to return the feelings and openness that comes with such a relationship. It's only at the very end of the film when Liz is packing that John opens up, telling his life story as quickly as possible. Like Liz says, it's too late: she expected reciprocity in emotional connection long before this moment. His refusal to share his life and emotions with Liz outside of sex is the largest part of why their relationship fails.

THEMES

Society

Class A minor theme, we're shown the general wealth of John frequently. From one of his first appearances, he showers Liz in expensive gifts, buying her a \$300 antique shawl she admired at the swap meet. Liz seems to be comfortably middle class, not having to worry about making payments or spending a lot of money on furnishing clients, but John is on another level, replacing furniture and even his living spaces when they bore him. This gives his home an almost clinical feel: it's almost like a model home rather than a bachelor's apartment. John uses his wealth to try and bend Liz to his will, wanting to control her through providing for her.

Illustrative moment We see many moments that highlight the upper-class nature of this story, but the clearest comes when John shows Liz his apartment. The interior is pristine and filled with expensive furniture. Everything looks brand new. The home also looks unlivable. There is a deadness to it: no plants, no pets, not even knickknacks on the shelves or tables. This moment highlights just how John lives his life, buying what he wants and throwing it out when it begins to look used. Not only does he have a spacious and expensive-looking apartment, he's constantly spending money on new furniture.



Work Work takes up a major part of the plot. When Liz isn't with John, she's often at work, and we get many moments of her with her co-workers. Most of the work seen isn't labor in a traditional sense: It's often making aesthetic decisions and trying to brown-nose rich patrons into purchases. John is unwilling to talk about work, so Liz tracks him down at his office. He is a rich day trader. Neither main character has to worry about money, and neither works an especially taxing job, tying into the theme of class.

Illustrative moment One of the first scenes in the film includes Liz and her co-workers talking about their clients in the offices of the art gallery. Here we're given a glimpse of their office culture as they mock the critics and others who are coming and their proclivities and tastes. Their boss makes a quip that they should have focused on more people who would buy art and put Molly in the back room for them, and the girls laugh. The conversation quickly moves to coffee orders, several of the girls asking for pastries while their boss asks for hot water and lemon. When they mock him for this, thinking he's trying to watch his figure, he responds that he's simply cheap.



Violence: Gender/Sexual harassment The male gender goes somewhat unexplored in this film except for sexual harassment. While the film itself treats this as normal or comic relief, we're shown many moments where men sexually harass Liz and other women around her. The first such moment comes during the title sequence when Liz walks to work: a group of garbage men stop their work to catcall at her in an alley. Even her boss engages in mild sexual harassment, insinuating that they "give" Molly to the rich patrons in the hopes that they'll buy some art. While this is a joke, it is blatantly sexual harassment. Women in these situations smile and fawn. Perhaps if this film were directed by a woman, there would be some comment on this behavior instead of its repetition: such fawning can be a fear response. While under-explored and accepted as the norm, we see most examples of the theme of gender in the film have to do with men harassing women they find sexually attractive.

Illustrative moment While there are several moments where sexual harassment occurs, the clearest happens early on when Liz shows a client and his dog who didn't want to buy one of Farnsworth's paintings out. After shutting the door after him, one of the nearby janitors mopping the floor flicks at her feet with his mop, causing her to giggle and walk away, saying, "Okay, boys." The two men stare at her as she leaves, watching her rear end. One of the men strokes his mop's pole like an erection, grinning.



Relationship

Friendship Another minor theme is friendship. We mostly see this through Molly, Liz's co-worker and roommate. They seem to be close friends, more like sisters than friends. While home together, they're often seen in states of undress around one another as they talk or prepare for parties. Molly wants Liz to find a happy relationship after her divorce and often teases her and gives her advice in order to goad her friend to meet more men. Friendship in *9 ½ Weeks* is portrayed as necessary, grounding, and healthy.

Illustrative moment Early in the film, we see Liz and Molly share in a moment of friendship. The co-workers and roommates work to prepare a dinner for their clients at the art gallery, and Molly begins to tease Liz about her lack of a sex life. Liz starts to call her a pervert—among other things—but Molly simply responds with pantomimed sexual moans before falling to her knees in mock pleasure, and Liz can't help but laugh.



Loyalty A small but important theme is that of loyalty. We see this idea work as a foil between John and Liz's friends. John is distant, controlling, and seeks to isolate Liz. Her friends, however, want to be a part of her life, seek to help her succeed and find happiness, and advise her to take control of her life. In many ways, John demands complete loyalty from Liz while giving none in return. He won't even tell her about his childhood or previous partners as she does with him.

Illustrative moment One of the clearest moments of loyalty happens when Molly admits her relationship with Bruce to Liz. After taking Liz's place at a dinner, Molly slept with Bruce. She admits this to Liz, wanting to keep her friend informed even though it's uncomfortable to talk about. This sets her apart from John, who won't even meet Liz's friends because of his desire for secrecy and emotional disconnection.



Power Power in interpersonal relationships refers to the ability to influence others' thoughts, behaviors, or decisions. In this movie, John has more experience, knowledge and financial means in comparison to Liz, who has less experience, knowledge, and financial means. Therefore, John acts more powerful in this relationship and exercises power to a degree until Liz quits this relationship altogether at the end of the movie.

Jealousy There are many small moments of jealousy throughout this film. One that goes overlooked is Liz's jealousy for John's previous partner. It goes by so quickly, but she's obviously emotionally affected by finding the picture of the woman in John's dresser. We also see jealousy flare when Molly begins

dating Bruce: Liz still sees him as “hers” even though they’ve been divorced for three years. A side effect of sexual domination without proper communication is jealousy. We see this most clearly as the film goes on, and John’s sexual demands escalate. He stops asking Liz to play sexual games and just begins doing things, such as bringing a sex worker to a hotel for a surprise threesome. This spurs Liz into a jealous rage, as seen below.

Illustrative moment After slapping the sex worker and John in the hotel, Liz runs out onto New York’s streets. John tries to bring her back to the hotel, but she runs off again, entering a peep show. Inside, she grabs a random man and, in view of John, kisses him. Out of jealousy, Liz attempts to make John feel what she did. This fails, however, as John doesn’t seem phased, and Liz collapses into John’s arms, sobbing.



Sexuality

Love While it frequently comes up in the narrative, love is especially vague in *9 ½ Weeks*. We never see a clear moment of love, only its lingering vestiges and rising attraction toward it. We also see its lack, such as in the way John refuses to talk about himself or meet Liz’s friends. He wants her body, he wants to control her, but he doesn’t want to be a part of her life. Liz senses this lack, leading to their eventual breakup. We also see Liz’s lingering attraction to Bruce. Bruce, too, seems to want her back, but for some reason they will never rekindle their romance. The platonic ideal of love frequently comes up, but the love we see in the film is complex, incomplete, or flawed compared to it. There is also a lot of empty talk around the idea, confessions of love not backed up by action.

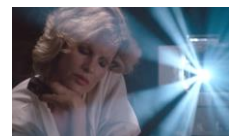
Intimacy We see non-sexual intimacy in the roommate relationship between Molly and Liz. They often share their sexual frustrations or other intimate parts of their lives and are shown walking around partially dressed with one another. Their relationship has an air of sisterly intimacy. We also see an intimate moment between Mr. Farnsworth and Liz when she goes to visit him. He explains that what makes his art so provocative to her is that it makes the unfamiliar familiar and vice versa. The rest of the intimacy we see is sexual intimacy between Liz and John. In their relationship, we see Liz open up for the first time since her divorce, but John fails to return the favor, treating Liz more like an object than a person. While their sexual exploits escalate throughout the film, Liz finds the lack of emotional intimacy too much to bear and leaves John because of this.

Illustrative moment A very clear moment of intimacy happens when John first visits Liz’s apartment. After she’s listened to her answering machine, he asks her to take off her dress, and she does hesitantly. John blindfolds Liz and looks at her body before running his hands over her, worshiping her form. He takes an ice cube and unbuttons Liz’s undershirt, running the cube across her body. In this moment, we can see the beauty and trust that comes with sexually intimate moments like this.



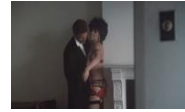
Desire Unlike love, we see desire clearly throughout the film. Liz *wants* John, even though she’s unsure about starting a new relationship after her divorce. John clearly wants Liz, showering her in gifts and giving in to her demands and desires, at least at the beginning of the relationship. We see strong sexual desire rise up in Liz who begins to grow distracted when she’s not with John. Their behavior escalates, as they have sex in risky places such as in front of windows, on top of buildings, and in public alleyways. Desire in this film leads to a lack of inhibition, leading Liz into a whirlwind of sexual activity she might never have considered before.

Illustrative moment We see this concept most explicitly when Liz is watching a slideshow of Farnsworth’s paintings at work. It’s obvious it’s a hot day and she’s having trouble paying attention. She stops looking at the paintings and begins touching herself. It’s clear she’s thinking about John, and she completely loses herself, masturbating in the middle of her office.



Multiple partners This idea comes up in a couple of small ways during the film. Unlike how it's presented in many other films (or in the illustrative moment), most of what we see is a normal 'moving on' from past relationships. Liz is recently divorced, but she hasn't taken any partners yet. After she meets John, she discovers that he has pictures of himself with several other women, and this makes her uncomfortable. Molly reveals to Liz that she is sleeping with Bruce, leading Liz to make a comment about how he'll probably like her mother, hinting to us why they divorced. While the film doesn't dwell on this for long, it's clear Molly pursuing Bruce is causing tension between the friends and roommates.

Illustrative moment The most overt moment of the theme of multiple partners happens toward the end of the film when John orders Liz to meet him at the Chelsea Hotel. There, he orders her to put on a blindfold before he leads a sex worker into the room. She touches Liz's body before she begins to undress her. Liz takes off the blindfold and watches with disgust as John kisses the other woman, causing Liz to explode with anger, slapping them both repeatedly before running out of the room.



Sexual games / New experience About half of this movie is sexual games. John is very adventurous, and in Liz, he finds a willing partner for the most part. She wants new and exciting experiences. We see this come out not just in glimpses into their sex life but in longer moments as well, such as when John helps Liz to cross-dress so she can "feel like one of the boys." It takes a slightly darker turn. It takes a long time and some outright disrespect for Liz to be pushed too far. We see them having sex outdoors, performing strip teases, using various sex toys, preparing for whipping and other bondage, and touching one another in crowded places, just to name a few of the games they play. It's in these strange displays of affection and paraphilias that the two share intimacy. Whereas in many erotic films sexuality is purely about sex, John and Liz's relationship is based on play in an almost childlike way.

Illustrative moment While there are many moments that show sexual games in this film, we see one of the most obvious when John comes to stay with Liz for the first time. After having sex in her bedroom, Liz walks out to get a drink. John follows, blindfolding her and feeding her as he is wont to do. They laugh together as Liz, blindfolded, struggles to eat and makes a mess. Eventually, John's prankster side emerges, and he feeds her a jalapeño pepper. She cries out in pain before chugging a glass of milk John provides. They finish the sequence by rubbing honey all over each other before licking and kissing it off. This moment highlights one of John's paraphilias around food: he loves to feed Liz, and this shows the more playful side of the trait. This feeling of playfulness is aided immensely by the soundtrack.



Role-playing Liz mentions her curiosity about the men's life, leading John to set her up with men's clothes and a special date. When we see her next, Liz is totally transformed, unrecognizable until she giggles at John's joking comments. John lays it on thick, too, talking to Liz as if she were one of his male coworkers about his "side chick" with a "heart-shaped ass" who is "so hot." We're also shown this roleplay going too far when the couple faces misplaced homophobic harassment on their way home, leading Liz to stab one of their harassers in self-defense.



Illustrative moment Liz is allowed a chance to become "one of the boys" during a strange date with John. He buys her an expensive suit and a false mustache, instructing her to meet him at a cigar bar. When she arrives, we don't recognize her at first. At the bar, John shows Liz how men frequently talk about women with each other, using her as the subject of conversation with her male persona.

Exhibitionism This becomes a frequent feature of the relationship between John and Liz. They start off fairly normal, sharing kisses on the street or in restaurants, holding hands and the like. As their strange sexual relationship escalates, so does their public affection. They touch each other's bodies in ways most people consider inappropriate outside of the bedroom. When shopping for a new bed, John makes the clerk uncomfortable with his touching and commands to Liz. They even have sex in the rainy alleyway after Liz stabs a man in the buttocks. This film shows us many moments of public affection pushed too far.

Illustrative moment Later in the film, we see Liz and John return to the Italian restaurant. At the bar, waiting for their table, Liz tells John she wants to know what it's like to be "one of the boys." He promises to set something up for her to learn from experience, tracing her lips with his thumb. Another patron looks with disgust as Liz grabs John's crotch and kisses him.



Voyeurism / Watching / Vicarious experience This theme is a bit muddled in the film. This may be the fault of censorship during editing. Pure voyeurism only shows up when Liz enters the peep show and we see dozens of men gathered around screens and windows watching live sex shows. John often watches Liz and her reactions. Their first moment of intimacy includes John simply looking at the shape of her body through her nightshirt with the aid of a bright lamp. Most of the vicarious experience we're shown comes in the form of perturbed onlookers to Liz and John's more exhibitionist tendencies. In the Italian restaurant, a man at the bar frowns judgementally as Liz and John kiss, and he catches a glimpse of Liz groping John. This happens again when John commands Liz in the furniture store and when he uses the riding crop on her in the tack shop.

Sadism This is a surprisingly subtle theme for how little screentime it actually receives in *9½ Weeks*. It haunts the narrative as we're shown the dynamics between John and Liz. He wants to control every aspect of her life, treating her at times like a pet or a doll rather than a woman. Liz fawns for him, allowing him to control many aspects of her life, including what she wears, when she sleeps, and what she eats. While we don't see many explicit sex acts that would fall into this category outside of some play with blindfolds, we do clearly see the release of control and choice from the submissive partner, Liz, as the desires of the dominant partner, John, become central to their relationship.

Illustrative moment The closest we get to a moment of genuine S&M play happens during a trip to a tack store. John stands at the counter, flexing and whipping riding crops around in the air, getting a feel for them. The clerks watch with strange expressions, their eyes darting between Liz, who sits nearby, and John, who takes every crop off its hook before laying it on the counter, displeased. Eventually, he hits Liz, who doesn't move, and he decides this is the crop he will buy. The only time we see it after this is during Liz's strip tease.



Domination John is a dominating force. While we don't see much of his work, we can assume this part of his personality serves him well since he's wealthy enough to purchase anything on a whim. He seeks to control Liz for his sexual and social pleasure. It's stated several times through the film that he is not interested in being a part of her life outside of their domestic and love lives, and it's the only part of Liz's life he doesn't actively seek to control: she can have her friends and her job, but her night is his. We see John's domination escalate through the film, starting with some pretty tame blindfolded sexual play and ending with an attempt to force a threesome. In John, we see an unhealthy power imbalance between the dominant and the submissive. He wants too much and gives too little, as seen by his pitiful grand gesture in an attempt to keep Liz in his life at the end of the film. While she does get a thrill and some pleasure out of much of their sex, the way John wants to control how she dresses, what and when she eats, and every other little aspect of her life outside of her work and friendships drives a wedge between them. We'll explore how Liz responds to John's domineering below.

Submission At first, Liz refuses to fully submit, scared of what such a release would mean and not trusting John yet. After a few dates, however, and getting to know him a little, she opens up and allows him to do with her as he pleases. At first it's nothing too bizarre: some sensory play with blindfolds and ice cubes, a bit of food play. But things soon escalate into sadism and masochism and beyond. What really begins to drive Liz away from John is how often he makes extreme decisions without even mentioning the desire to her first. It's toward the end of the film that Liz begins to understand the misogynistic attitudes that drive John's sexual dominance over her: he thinks of her not as a woman and a partner but a sexual toy who only wants his money. While it's the attempted surprise threesome with the sex worker that pushes her over the edge, the cracks in their relationship begin to show before that.

Illustrative Moment We see submission in many moments, but the most thematically relevant comes toward the end of the film when John demands that Liz crawl across his living room floor and pick up his money. John takes pleasure out of this kind of degradation, but it's clear to the viewer just how much this type of disrespect hurts Liz. She refuses at first but relents. As she tearfully picks up the bills, she can no longer take it, hurling the fistfulls of cash in John's face spitefully. This moment is the first time that Liz is wholeheartedly bucking against John's domination and should have been the point where he made a change if he really did love her. Instead, he brushes it off.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the early signs that John and Elizabeth's relationship will fail? Provide at least two examples.
2. In what ways is female sexuality centered in this film? In what ways does *9 1/2 Weeks* play into the male gaze?
3. How does *9 1/2 Weeks* treat the topic of workplace banter and sexual abuse?
4. Would John having opened up early in the relationship have changed anything?