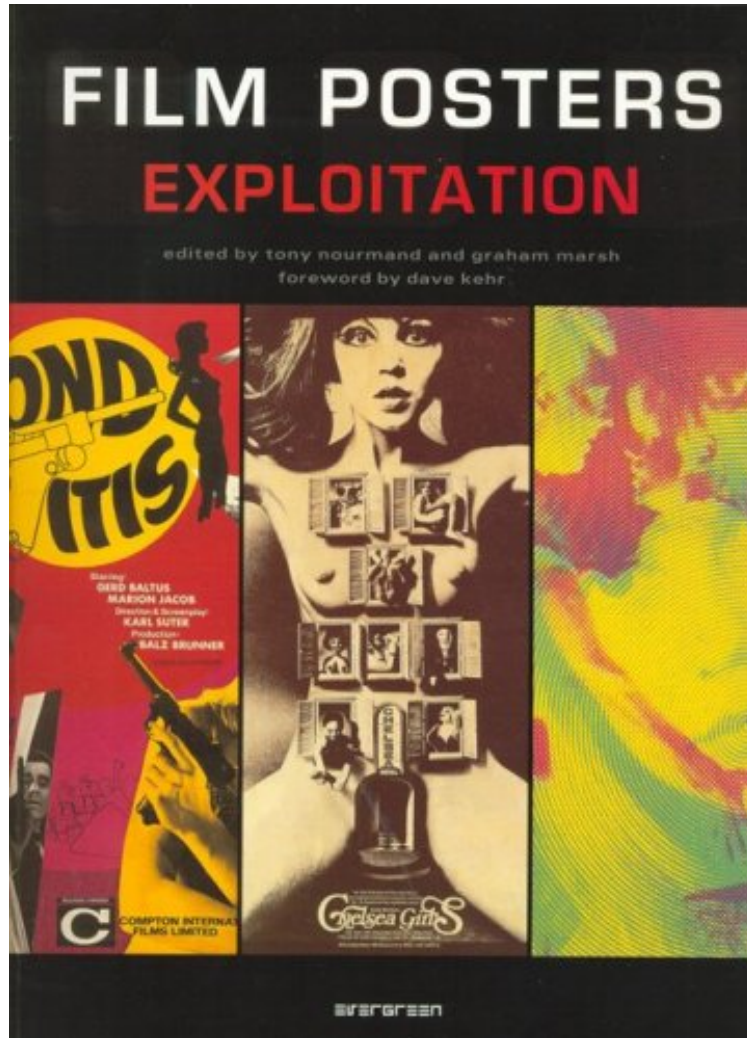


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Sex, drugs, delinquency, Black power, alternative culture and, of course, rock and roll: these are just some of the themes, which have attracted the attention of the cinema's bottom-feeders over the past eighty years. A few of the

resulting films have become cult classics, but most were simply tacky - few would probably now want to sit through two hours of "High School Hellcats" (1958) or "Hot Rod Rumble" (1957). The posters produced to promote them, on the other hand, are wonderful period pieces that vividly evoke the social fears, temptations and taboos of bygone eras. Up until the introduction of the Hayes Code in 1934 Hollywood had few inhibitions; the poster for "Girl Without A Room" (1933), for example, left audiences in little doubt as to how the young lady planned to find accommodation.

Later in the decade, it became necessary to adopt the old tabloid trick of pretending that titillating content had a redeeming social message - thus the producers of "Marihuana" (1936) were obliged to present it as a warning about the dangers of drug addiction. In the 1950s, it was the Beats and juvenile delinquents who put a chill into middle-class hearts - and, of course, attracted middle-class kids to the drive-in screens. Then, in the 60s and 70s, came 'Blaxploitation' movies like "Shaft", Russ Meyer's mammary-obsessed epics like "Faster Pussycat, Kill, Kill", and even an animated sexploitation story, "Fritz The Cat". The posters for these films, from Alberto Vargas' artwork for "Ladies They Talk About" (1933) to Alan Aldridge's photomontage for Warhol's "Chelsea Girls" (1966), are masterpieces of visual innuendo, offering, in most cases, far more than the movies actually delivered.