The Southern Slasher Comes of Age

Old Age, Race, and Disability in Ti West's *X*

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This essay considers how Ti West's *X* (2022) reimagines the Southern-set slashers' unique relationship to disability and race through horrific representations of old age. I first discuss *X*'s engagement with *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (Hooper, 1974) and argue that slashers set in the American South often indirectly engage histories of racial violence. Southern slashers draw on stereotypes around disability and race to relocate a confrontation with racial violence onto strategically-othered White Southerners, and this is evident in both *X* and *Massacre* through depictions of old age. I then turn to *X* for an analysis of how the film engages tropes from Southern slashers to portray aging in relation to Whiteness, disability, and ultimately, violence. Considering key moments from the film, I conduct an intersectional analysis with relation to age, race, and gender to argue that *X* manipulates and reaffirms the Southern slasher's troubled relationship with disability, where old age in the South has violent implications. Ultimately, *X* builds upon the slasher's longstanding tradition of using coded disability to relocate the histories of racial violence embedded in the Southern slasher. *X* forces us to consider how fears of old age in the slasher are not only connected to physical or mental deterioration, but rather, the inevitability of cyclical violence as time passes with age.

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On *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and the Legacy of Slashers Set in the American South

While *X* references a variety of independently-produced horror and pornographic films from the 1970s, it most unmistakably evokes the notorious slasher classic, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (Hooper, 1974). One could catalog the many overt, concrete references to Hooper's film in *X* (such as mimicked shot compositions, the protagonists traveling to the house by van, the final girl leaving by pick-up truck, etc.), but the most noteworthy similarity between *X* and *Massacre* is their setting: rural Texas. Rural Texas – and its connotations from Hooper's films extended by West – serves as a geographical reference for socially-construed disability and histories of racial violence. Old age as monstrosity is crafted through *X*'s setting in the American South, and moreover, informed by race: to grow old is to succumb to an urge for barbaric violence, represented through indirect depictions of White supremacist violence in West's film. *X* subverts the typical source of fear in the slasher film: it is not the fear of death, but the fear of surviving – and aging into a monster – that is at the heart of the film's horror. In the first part of this essay, I will consider how *X* plays with *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*'s presentation of aged Southerners, where White discomfort about race and racial violence is displaced onto the South through representations of disability. As I will discuss in relation to both *Massacre* and *X*, old age functions as a particularly Southern manifestation of disability, where old age is presented as an inevitable social, physical, and moral degradation intrinsic to the landscape.

In *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, old age materializes in an extreme and often comedic fashion. In an exemplary scene, the family of cannibalistic slaughterhouse workers sits down for dinner with their victim, Sally (Marilyn Burns). As Robin Wood (1979) has argued, the scene is a distorted parody of a family comedy, where the almost slapstick-like pacing of the sequence follows the younger men in the family encouraging, and then helping, the nearly-dead patriarch of the family ("Grandpa," played by John Dugan) bludgeon Sally in the head. Grandpa's impossibly pale and waxy visage amplifies this physical comedy with the deep-

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set eyeholes on the mask that Dugan wears – Grandpa looks and moves more like a puppet than a patriarch. Meanwhile, a brief shot in the film also reveals that the family matriarch – "Grandma – is a rotting corpse in the attic, à la Mrs. Bates in *Psycho*. This scene portrays a certain kind of Southern conservatism, evident in an interest in respecting family tradition (Grandpa was the best killer at the slaughterhouse) and maintaining a nuclear, patriarchal family, through absurd, nearly incestuous, and cannibalistic behavior.

Adam Lowenstein argues that Hooper's approach to horror defamiliarizes old age both physically and behaviorally through exaggerated costumes and makeup or by blurring the lines between old and infantile tendencies (2022: 71). With respect to *Massacre*, Lowenstein argues that Grandpa's mix of "babyish" behavior and "impossibly wizened" appearance makes him all-the-more frightening despite his lack of a physical threat (Lowenstein 2022: 79). The film's emphasis on aging is brought to the foreground by Grandpa's constantly transforming relation to his age and feeds on spectatorial fears of liminality by transgressing how we understand age. Lowenstein's analysis of aging, while overall concerned with gender, does not deeply interrogate masculinity in this scene, despite its centrality in characterizing the family's aptly Southern interest in tradition and patriarchy. For example, there is a lack of virility implied by Grandpa's failure to 'finish the job' and deliver a striking blow to Sally's skill. Grandpa's impotence is relevant to his age, and moreover, to this kind of Southern, patriarchal family the scene invokes. While Lowenstein speaks at length about the invisibility experienced by the elderly, his investigation of how gender shapes aging is largely focused on elderly female characters (2022: 75). In doing this, Lowenstein inadvertently construes the male experience of aging as default and assumed, as if men do not have their own unique relationship to aging that is also shaped by their gender. If aging women experience invisibility more than men (Woodward 1999: xiii), then it also seems that in *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, a masculine relationship to aging is constructed as highly visible, as spectacular, when Grandpa performs (and fails to perform) in front of his family at the dinner table. Meanwhile, Grandma's corpse is hidden away, invisible, and even more impossibly aged, in the attic.

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To understand aging in relation to disability, it is crucial to account for how aging is deeply intertwined not only with social constructions of old age, but of gender, and, as I will discuss next, race.

The American South has been a popular venue for slashers to unfold far beyond just *Massacre*. A Southern setting allows for veiled and layered approaches to race and general "otherness" because of the region's fraught past of racial violence and the generalization of its rural character. In this essay, I emphasize the Southern setting, rather than just rural areas, because the Southern geography prevailing in these films ties disability specifically with Southerness and draws on the South's relationship to racial violence to do so. The American South, and more generally rural America, is often described with terms associated with disability, such as "backwards" and "inbred." Moreover, terms of age are ascribed to the region's culture, such as "antiquated." The values of the "Old" South – racism and White supremacy – are perceived as persisting (although not exclusively) in its elderly residents. Critiques of the South invariably invoke notions of disability as impairment, old age as disability, and old age as conservative and even violent. The contradictory assumptions about old age persist throughout Southern-set slashers in complicated ways. For example, what does it mean that having a slasher set in rural Texas can immediately inform how we read the intelligence and cruelty of the characters who live there? Moreover, how can Southerness inform how we consider the social implications of old age in relation to race and disability?

Depictions of the American South in horror films are often rendered visible only through ableist, negative connotations of disability, suggesting that White Southerners are 'inbred' and thus have physical or intellectual differences that inform and exaggerate their "Southerness." This kind of Southern, violent, yet ineffectual monster or killer is a stock character in many horror films. This unintelligent, evil Southerner is so prevalent in slashers that the trope was effectively parodied (and subverted) in the meta-slasher *Tucker and Dale vs. Evil* (Eli Craig, 2011), where two affable "hillbilly" men are mistaken for murderers by a group of teenagers. The film plays with the assumptions of both ignorance and predisposition for violence expected of "backwoods" and "rural" folk in

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slasher films to great comedic effect. This longstanding association of "hillbillies" with violence has long been replicated even within Southern storytelling, such as in the infamous film adaptation of Georgia author James Dickey's novel *Deliverance*, where a group of Southern, city-dwelling men are terrorized by their more rural counterparts while on a canoeing trip (John Boorman, 1972). Or, to turn even further back in cinematic history to a Southern proto-slasher, one can look to a true "hicksploitation" ("hick" exploitation) film: Herschel Gordon Lewis' *Two Thousand Maniacs!* (1964). Lewis takes Southerners' violence to extremes in his splatter film, where a Southern town celebrates its centennial by torturing and murdering a group of lost road trippers from "the North;" with an all-White cast and a set replete with Confederate flags, its indirect address of White supremacy allowed the film to perform well (if not better than in other regions) on the Southern drive-in circuit (Pinkowitz 2016: 114). But what led to this tradition of evil, White Southerners in the Southern slasher, and why is it so acceptable, if we consider Lewis' film, even to Southerners themselves?

Carol J. Clover, in her influential study of the slasher, makes note of the shift to rural folks as targets for racial anxieties: "If 'redneck' once denoted a real and particular group, it has achieved the status of a kind of universal blame figure, the 'someone else' held responsible for all manner of American social ills. The great success of the redneck in that capacity suggests that anxieties no longer expressible in ethnic or racial terms have become projected onto a safe target – safe not only because it is (nominally) white, but because it is infinitely displaceable onto someone from the deeper South or the higher mountains or the further desert" (Clover 1992: 135). What is underlying 'hicksploitation' horror films and Southern-set slashers, thinly-veiled but rarely engaged directly, is that the brutality associated with Southerness is used to indirectly invoke White supremacist violence. This is largely achieved when White Southerners are depicted as other – through markers of disability – to distinguish them from the protagonist White characters. While Clover describes these White characters as a "safe" target, her argument ignores how Whiteness as a racial category itself is informing the need to make these characters "infinitely displaceable" onto some-

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one more Southern. More Southern, here, means more isolated, less intelligent, more violent, and perhaps physically different in same visible manner. Thus, it is stereotypical markers of disability – both social and physical – used to distance the more urban White victims from the White supremacist associations underlying the violence of the more rural Southerners. The extreme violence of White Southerners in horror films evokes the history of racial violence and lynching of the region while simultaneously masking this history through both an absence of Black characters and any address of race at all

This covert invocation of racial violence in Southern slasher is shaped by a White, liberal "anatomy of guilt," where shame and guilt about racial violence lead to an indirect or symbolic address of the violence, reinforcing ignorance of ongoing racism and histories of racial violence in the South (Crank 2012: 53). The preternaturally violent Southerners in slasher films enact coded racial violence against other White characters (usually from urban areas), and these films neither confront race nor confront the spectator with the truth of the White supremacist violence underlying the film's politics and landscapes. As Richard Dyer discusses, when "white-makings of whiteness" construe Whiteness as the default (as they often do), Whiteness is neither racialized nor acknowledged in what is often called an "invisible" approach to Whiteness (Dyer 1997: xiii). In a film with only White characters, as in many Southern slashers, race is hardly ever addressed at all, even as racism and histories of racial violence undergird the ideologies, geographies, and horrors of these films. Instead, White supremacist attitudes from the region's history are replicated in this neglect of race. bell hooks explains how, "in white supremacist society, white people can 'safely' imagine that they are invisible to black people since the power they have historically asserted…accorded them the right to control the black gaze" (hooks 1998: 41). Just as these films supplant White supremacist violence through representations of disability, they also refuse a Black gaze toward this violence through their displacement of racial violence onto (ableist) conceptions of disability rather than directly confronting race.

By carefully manipulating Whiteness through markers of disability, the Southern slasher has served as a genre where a direct confronta-

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tion of race is allayed through violence committed by and against distinctly "other: White characters. Southerners in Southern-set slashers are created as too barbaric, too fundamentally prejudiced, too unintelligent to be identified with by other White characters or White spectators. Rather than directly addressing race, Southern slashers films safely distance these violent Southern killers from Whiteness and the implications of White supremacist violence. In *X*, West picks up, extends, and subverts this trope of White Southerness as "disabled," engaging old age as a form of disability that is particularly Southern in its preoccupation with the past.

Aging the Southern Slasher: Gendered and Racialized Old Age in *X*

Set in 1979, *X* follows a crew of young adults trying to shoot a pornographic film at a farm in rural Texas without the elderly farm owners' knowledge. In *X*, the confluence of the film's Southern geography, an emphasis on Whiteness, and the centrality of old age engages the tropes of the Southern slasher in familiar, reflexive ways. Considering key moments from the film, I will conduct an intersectional analysis with relation to age, gender, and race to continue my argument about Southern slashers and disability. Ultimately, I will argue that *X* manipulates and reaffirms the slasher's troubled relationship with both ageism and disability. Old age in the South means an inevitable return to the past violence embedded in Southern landscapes, resurrected through the passing of time with age.

X is a film with unusually visible elderly characters, and throughout my analysis, I will consider old age through frameworks of ageism and disability. First, I will briefly describe my disability framework. As disability studies scholar Alison Kafer discusses age and disability: "Whether by illness, age, or accident, all of us will live with disability at some point in our lives … becoming disabled is 'only a matter of time.' Snyder, Brueggemann, and Garland-Thomson call this temporality of inevitability 'the fundamental aspect of human embodiment'" (2013:26).

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While aging in relation to disability might be conceived of as a variety of physical or cognitive impairments, there are social models of disability where "disability is socially created through a variety of obstacles that prevent people with impairments from having equal opportunities, access to public spaces, and institutional resources" (Beaudry 2018: 7). For my analysis, I will engage with the socially-inflected aspects of old age to understand age's relationship to other social categories, such as gender and race. As age studies scholar Margaret Gullette notes: "Ageism [is] an ideology based on a master narrative of life-course decline," where older age leads to prejudices that inflect social relationships and various forms of social, economic, and medical support (Gullette 2018: 252). For Gullette, the ageism that accompanies old age is grounded in the social rather than chronological and biological, and ageism's connection to disability is grounded in social hierarchy rather than biological aging. This is not to say the physical elements of aging, which themselves vary greatly due to social factors, are not apt for a disability studies analysis, but rather, that all the various components that comprise the lived experience of old age are can be understood through a social model of what it means to be disabled. It is not impairments themselves that are central to old age as disability, but rather, the ageism faced by elderly people that shapes assumptions and access to resources. My own analysis of *X* is indebted Gullette's theorization of old age and ageism, as well as to feminist-of-color disability studies, a framework rigorously theorized by Schalk and Kim where race is made a central component of understanding disability in order to "expose 'the ideology of ability in situations that do not appear immediately to be about disability'" (2020: 40).

In *X*, the "horrors" of old age are conveyed through physical appearance, sexual impotence, and both moral and social decay. The film emphasizes the physical aspects of aging to grotesque extremes meant to repulse the spectator, yet old age is made particularly horrific through the sense of social isolation and attitudes of Pearl and Howard, the film's elderly couple. In the film, aging in the South only means you risk aging into someone resentful, if not violent and prejudiced. Aging as representative of the South's irreparable moral decay is evident even in the film's

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mise-en-scène, as the couple's dilapidated farmhouse suggests a sense of anachronism and moral deterioration. Perhaps most prominently in *X*, scenes that trigger fears of what old age means for sexuality capture both the physical and social fears of aging implicit in many Southern-set slashers. Throughout the film, West capitalizes on fears of old age through the juxtaposition of young and old, raising questions of how gender and race are inflected by age, and moreover, using old age's inevitability to create sense of looming violence.

The most pronounced juxtaposition of young and old in *X* is the mirror image between the film's final girl – the youthful, sexy, and defiant Maxine (Mia Goth) – and its wispy, frail, and desperate killer, Pearl (also Goth, in old age makeup). In having Goth play both characters, the film asks: what does it mean for the final girl to survive? What does it mean for her to age past girlhood and to become in herself a kind of societal monster: an old woman? As Carol J. Clover famously describes, the final girl is the sole survivor at the conclusion of a slasher film – usually young and androgynous, the final girl is tortured and traumatized, yet triumphant over the killer. Implicit in Clover's figure of the final girl and Clover's overall discussion of the slasher film is that the slasher is a genre largely featuring, and made for, teenagers (1992: 35). Age, and particularly youthfulness and its implicit fear of aging, are central to slashers. In *X*, this relationship between the slasher and aging is encapsulated in Goth's two performances. Goth, 29 years old at the time of filming, is made to appear at an indeterminably old age as Pearl through the remarkable prosthetic and makeup work of Sarah Rubano (Douglas 2022). Rubano transforms Goth beyond recognition – it takes a discerning eye to see that Pearl is indeed played by Goth in makeup. What is readily apparent, however, is that Pearl (and Howard) are made to appear not just old, but grotesque. They have yellowing unkempt hair, an abundance of liver spots, exaggerated eye bags, and teeth in disarray. Pearl and Howard are not inherently frightening because they are old, but rather, they are frightening because they look abandoned and unable to care for themselves. West constructs a purposefully unflattering image of elderly bodies marked by social neglect rather than just old age

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itself, and this socially-inflected construction of aging is only amplified by the fears of aging divulged by younger characters throughout the film.

To return to my claim that old age in the Southern slasher is a continuation of using disability to other White characters, I will examine how the film contrasts young and old through Maxine and Pearl. Maxine is a sexy, young, and confident porn actress. Her outfit – short denim overalls with nothing underneath – evokes the backless shirts and short shorts worn by the female protagonists in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. Maxine takes her youthfulness and open sexuality for granted, with an air of casualness, if not entitlement, to the world – or at least this is how Pearl views her. In the shadows Maxine's brazen sexuality, Pearl reflects back loneliness and desperation. As Katherine Woodward describes how aging pits older women against young: "Younger people (and older people who deny their own aging) have functioned as mirrors to older women, reflecting them back half their size. Surely the practice of the disregard of older women is one of the reasons why in fact we have so many 'little old ladies'" (1999: xii). When Pearl looks at Maxine, she is constructed as the deteriorated version of the younger woman. Not only does this relationship emphasize women's unique experience of aging, but it allows for an understanding of aging in relation to socially-constructed disability. Pearl's social confinement, rather than just physical or cognitive impairments, shapes her ability to navigate the world in old age. She peeks around corners and lurks in the shadows, made not only invisible by society but also socially isolated by virtue of her age. As Gullette describes the social limitations of women's aging, women are more so "aged by culture" than biological aging in itself (Gullette 2004: 6–7). Here, Pearl's frail and frightening appearance exaggerates biological aging, but the film's framing of her behind corners, in shadows, and desperate for connection, illustrate the social constraints of old age that have come to be seen as an implicit part of women's experience of old age. Moreover, Pearl's diminishment in confidence, physical strength, and visibility evoke the child-like passivity often assigned those with disabilities. In Nasa Begum's manifesto for women with disabilities, she describes: "Stereotypes of passivity and childlike dependency are created for members of the 'disabled' and, at the same time, roles are

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prescribed which render us powerless" (1992: 71). Pearl embodies the chronological contradiction described by Begum: she is old yet childlike, passive yet also later, violent. This anachronism is particularly apt for Southern slasher as it replicates the South's own obsession with the past in the present.

West juxtaposes the youthfulness of the porn industry (Maxine) with the old age that presupposes the source of violence of in the horror film (Pearl). In porn, the spectator is meant to unabashedly look, while horror aims for a spectator to look away; throughout *X*, Maxine and Pearl's relationship is negotiated looking toward and away from each other. This looking is not just a reference to woman-as-spectacle-object – as porn star, final girl, or monster – but also a form of looking forward and back in time. The glances the women exchange throughout the film are ones of looking back at the past and forward to the future. It is a relationship of contrast between visibility and invisibility, between leering in sexual desire and looking on in horror. Maxine catches Pearl from around a corner, a window, peeking out – Maxine must effort to see Pearl, and when she does, she's frightened. In contrast, Pearl capitalizes on the connection between youthful sexuality, femininity, and hypervisibility, voyeuring Maxine as she skinny dips and Maxine performs while shooting the crew's pornographic film. Pearl's gaze is one of both a desire to be seen like Maxine, and to be with Maxine. Pearl's sexual repression and desire manifest in her look at Maxine, and when this desire is not met, Pearl's frustration turns to aggression and explosive violence as she begins to murder the pornography crew. Indeed, Pearl's lack of access to sex is where Pearl resents Maxine the most. At the film's violent conclusion, Pearl states what she and Maxine both fear the most: "We're the same. You'll end up just like me." To become "just like" Pearl is to become invisible, to lose sexual desirability, and, to be driven to violence. As feminist age studies scholars have noted, a key aspect of women's experience of aging is how they are made invisible, and inherent in this invisibility is the loss of heterosexual desirability (Woodward 1999: xiii),

The presentation of Pearl's old age, and experience of age as disability, is necessarily informed by notions of White femininity, where Pearl's frailty and childlike helplessness are presented as a universal experience

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of old age. Pearl's femininity and initial weakness, while shaped by ageism, reinforce White femininity as docile and a universal experience of old age. The racialized implications of Pearl's femininity in relation to aging can be bolstered when contrasted with a reading of Black women's experience of disability. As Bailey and Mobley note: "The myth of the strong Black woman … suggests that Black women are uniquely strong, able to endure pain, and surmount otherwise difficult obstacles because of their innate tenacity. Black women are disallowed disability and their survival is depoliticized" (2019: 21). Whereas Black women are not granted weakness, White women's experience of age calls for a kind of frailty that acts as an exaggerated version of White femininity's demure docility. This relationship to old age, particularly in relation to invisibility and weakness, is part of a larger White supremacist framework that enforces White women's "need" to be protected. Schalk and Kim, in their feminist-of-color critique of disability studies, describe how "Discourses of (dis)ability…have been used to create, maintain, and justify racial and gender hierarchies (and the various injustices and violence that result from such hierarchies) in numerous ways across various historical moments" (2020: 40). Here, too, expectations for White women's femininity, when confronted with old age, can be used to uphold White supremacist constructions of femininity, even when informed by disability. This social consideration of the ageism informing Pearl's supposed frailty places her violence later in the film in the context of larger histories of violence and disability in Southern slashers.

The other half of *X*'s elderly homicidal couple, Howard (Stephen Ure), provides further nuance to questions of aging, gender, and race in the film. In Howard, the film's engagement with the Southern slasher's complex relationship to race becomes more overt: *X* reinforces the South as a setting that can be used to invoke racial anxiety and a connection between old age and White supremacist ideology. Whereas Pearl and Maxine are doubled, an embodiment of past and present captured by Mia Goth, Howard's age is thrown into relief by someone different than him. Howard develops a tenuous working relationship with one of the porn actors, the young, Black, and (perhaps stereotypically) virile Jackson Hole (Kid Cudi). Howard and Jackson are framed as foils early in the

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film. While never explicitly stated, racial tension underlies the scenes with Howard and Jackson, where an elderly, White, Southern man and a young Black man are placed in unfamiliar situations together. Moreover, these men are constructed as opposites in relation to their sexual virility. A humorous gag shot of Jackson Hole's nude shadow portrays him as physically well-endowed; in contrast, Howard constantly refuses Pearl's sexual advances because of his weak heart. This difference is furthered through their respective sexual encounters in the film: Jackson is energetic in the crew's pornographic film, while Howard's sex scene, framed within a long, bird's-eye shot, only makes him appear even more vulnerable. At first, the film plays with the tension between Howard and Jackson, teasing an almost saccharine relationship arc when the two bond over both having served in the military. Yet, the differences between the two men prevail, confirming spectatorial expectations embedded in cinematic tropes around race; as the two walk through a dark bayou, Howard shoots Jackson in the back with seemingly no motivation. Howard's murder of Jackson affirms spectatorial fears introduced when the first two met – a fear of racial violence between a presumably prejudiced older White man and a young Black man. Howard's resentment of Jackson's sexual virility is inflected with both racial stereotypes affirmed by the film and the kind of racism stereotypically associated with older, particularly Southern, White men. While Pearl resents Maxine for embodying what she could have been, Howard resents Jackson for everything he is not. *X* rehearses the rhetoric of the Southern slasher where race is never directly addressed yet underlies the ideologies underlying the film's violence.

In its pastiche approach, *X* exploits and affirms the Southern slasher as a venue for addressing the fear of aging as a fear of "old" values. The film makes old age's potential loss of sexuality hypervisible and grotesque, but also an inevitability. Between Maxine and Pearl, horror and pornography's longstanding connection is constructed as an evolution from the youthfulness and sexual desirability apparent in pornography to the supposed horrors of being an old woman. In a reconfiguration of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, *X* concludes with Maxine driving a pick-up truck away from the farm, refusing to look back.

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However, in refusing to see and acknowledge Pearl – to look back to her possible future – Maxine inscribes her own fate. As the surviving final girl, Maxine entrusts the inevitability of her own aging. *X* reconfigures the final girl's relationship to her sexuality as doomed precisely because she survives. Maxine's youthfulness and sexuality are not punished by death, as they would be in a typical slasher from the 1970s and 1980s; rather, her punishment is surviving, living on to age, and risking "ending up" just like Pearl.

In *X*, aging is not a forward progression, but rather, an inescapable cycle. The cyclical nature of aging, as a marker of disability and indicator of impending violence, alludes to the cycles of racial violence embedded in Southern landscapes, as well as the cyclical nature of violence in slashers as a genre. Given the inevitability of aging, *X*'s Southern setting reaffirms the connection between Southern slashers and disability. *X* unselfconsciously uses aging as a new means of invoking disability, continuing to avoid an explicit engagement with the histories of racial violence that inform Southern slashers. Analyzing old age alongside notions of disability and race, as I have done throughout this essay, forces us to carefully reconsider how and why old age appears in horror films. Horror films hardly ever just present a fear of chronological, biological aging. Rather, old age in the horror film, when complicated by gender, race, and disability, reveals much greater social anxieties about past injustices inevitably, and violently, reemerging through the passing of time.

Author Bio

Rose Steptoe is a Ph.D. Candidate in English and Comparative Literature at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her dissertation focuses on the intersection of feminist film theory and body horror, and more broadly, she is interested in horror's capacity to engage questions of gender and sexuality across disparate aesthetic and generic formulations.

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