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Book Reviews

Elisabet Björklund and Mariah Larsson (eds), *Swedish Cinema and the Sexual Revolution*, Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2016. ISBN 978-1-4766-6544-3. Paperback, 240 pages.

The editors and contributors of *Swedish Cinema and the Sexual Revolution* guide the reader through the ways that cinema expressed and expanded Sweden's sexual ideology throughout the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. This marks the first comprehensive overview of Sweden's unique and important place in the production and display of sex films. By investigating the roles that a relatively small group of films and filmmakers played in constructing Sweden's sexually liberated identity, the pieces form a well-organised and thoroughly researched volume on an under-exposed area of Swedish film history. With a limited roster of films up for discussion, and many pieces rooted in a similar historical methodology, it is a credit to the editors that the argumentation and subject matter of each chapter remains distinctive.

The book is divided into five sections. Part I, 'Summertime Sensuality', contains two essays, which both focus on films from the 1950s. Arne Lunde's 'The Story of a Bad Girl' documents the marketing and reception of Ingmar Bergman's *Summer with Monika* (1953), while Anders Marklund identifies three films as landmark moments for Swedish cinematic sexuality: Alf Sjöberg's *Miss Julie* (1951), Bergman's *Summer Interlude* (1951) and Arne Mattsson's *One Summer of Happiness* (1951).

All five chapters in Part II, 'Art, Exploitation and Pornography', appeal to authorial intention. Anu Koivunen's 'Pillow Talk, Swedish Style' cites interviews from director Jörn Donner in arguing that *To Love* (1964) is exemplary of a serial connection between art cinema and the sex film. In 'Her Body, His Self', Anders Wilhelm Åberg documents the significance of authorial presence in Vilgot Sjöman's *I Am Curious (Yellow)* (1967) and *I Am Curious (Blue)* (1968). With 'Ann and Eve', Bengt Bengtsson identifies Arne Mattsson's authorial message in *Ann and Eve* (1970). Mariah Larsson's chapter compares Anne-Marie Berglund's *Weekend in Stockholm* (1976) to the director's other artistic works. Closing the section, Mats Björkin's ponders the use of Swedish insignia by American Joseph Sarno in *Come and Blow the Horn* (1978).

The chapters in Part III, 'Obscenity and Censorship', revolve around films that pushed the limits of legal cinematic practice in Sweden. Tommy Gustafsson describes three separate court cases relating to illegal screenings of pornographic films between 1921 and 1943; Lena Lennerhed documents the infamous case of Vilgot Sjöman's *491*

(1964) with '491 and the Censorship Controversy'. In closing the section, 'The Limits of Sexual Depictions in the Late 1960's', Elisabet Björklund offers more detail to the history of Swedish censorship, noting the forms of sexuality that were given reprieve from legal interference.

Part IV, 'The Institutionalization of Sex in Sweden', contains three chapters, which explore the politics and public relations of Swedish cinema: Per Vesterlund's account of Swedish research into cinema's effects on viewers in 'Institutionalized Sexploitation?'; Maaret Koskinen's chapter on the working relationships at the heart of the Swedish scene of the 1960s and 1970s in 'P(owe)R, Sex and *Mad Men* Swedish Style'; and Lars Diurlin's entry on the use of PR to create the notion of marketable 'Swedish Sin'.

With 'Illegally Blonde', Klara Arnberg and Carl Marklund allow for a smooth transition into Part V, 'The American Reception of Swedish Sin'. The chapter explores the origins and applications of commercial Swedish Sin. Ulf Jonas Björk documents the critical reception of *I Am Curious (Yellow)* in both Sweden and America in 'A Modicum of Social Value?' The book closes with one of its strongest pieces, Kevin Heffernan's 'One of Your Finer Nudie Films', which discusses the transnational productions *Come and Blow the Horn* and *Butterfly* (1975), as well as the decline of a uniquely Swedish form of cinematic sexuality.

Despite the diversity of its sixteen chapters, the book is stitched together by many common threads. Linda Williams, as one would expect, is invoked often throughout the text. Many authors share in a common ambition: exposing the touristic conflation of imagery – rocky shores, countryside and sexual liberalism – with something uniquely Swedish. Several contributors declare Swedish cinema from the 1960s and 1970s as a union of the arthouse and the grindhouse (or pornography, or exploitation). Filmmakers (Bergman, Sjöman and so on) are given relatively even amounts of attention throughout, while nearly every piece discusses the Swedish Film Institute or its founder and managing director, Harry Schein. Though readers may suppose that Bergman would star in the collection, in fact the fascinating, complex and contradictory accounts of Schein take centre stage here.

One of the collection's many assets is its extensive historical inquisition and documentation of critical attitudes. As the introduction outlines, the text aims to follow a trajectory that departs from a mythological account of Sweden and its culture; this aspiration is buoyed by the depth of research presented by the contributors. Pairing a consistent measurement of Swedish cinema's place in other cultures (especially America, Italy and France) with an abundance of reporting on domestic commentary, the book focuses on the reception of Swedish film both within and without the nation's borders. This symbiotic process must be accounted for when characterizing a widely distributed national cinema, and the authors and editors of this collection deserve commendation for their mindfulness in this respect. Perhaps the main component in need of attention is the book's English-language readability: awkward constructions and punctuation glitches abound.

The book serves well those interested in Scandinavian or Nordic film, film historiography and mythmaking, censorship and pornography, authorship and media

industries. Some chapters will also be of interest to Bergman historians. The filmmaker undoubtedly looms as a point of reference in many chapters, and the collection gives worthwhile insight into Bergman's predecessors, contemporaries and descendants, even if only Lunde and Marklund take up his work in any depth. The chapters in this collection are well suited for courses on national cinemas, European art film or sexuality and cinema.

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Austin Fisher and Johnny Walker (eds), *Grindhouse: Cultural Exchange on 42nd Street, and Beyond*, New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. ISBN: 978-1-6289-2749-8. Paperback, 280 pages.

When Travis Bickle trawled the streets of midtown Manhattan in *Taxi Driver* (1976), he interpreted its neon-lit theatres and sleaze-seeking denizens as arbiters of irredeemable moral and social decay. What, then, might Travis have made of a twenty-first-century phenomenon such as Tartan Grindhouse, a niche brand which specialises in slickly remediating cheaply produced exploitation shockers as luxuriant Blu-ray releases? Sometimes known as 'retrosploitation', this commercial trend has been fuelled by a lucrative mythology surrounding the would-be experiential qualities of the grind house: those run-down inner-city movie palaces and suburban drive-in theatres which employed a lurid mix of splatter movies, sex films and other salacious fare to turn a quick profit.

The editors of *Grindhouse: Cultural Exchange on 42nd Street, and Beyond* begin by pointing an ambivalent but accusatory finger at *Grindhouse* (2007), Quentin Tarantino and Robert Rodriguez's influential pastiche of 1960s and 1970s exploitation filmmaking which successfully reified the mythos of a long-lost historical phenomenon. The bulk of the dozen essays gathered here are concerned with classic exploitation themes, but the contributors are uniformly careful to distinguish between 'grind house' theatres and *grindhouse* as a quasi-generic style of filmmaking.

While many of the essays are concerned with the exploitation Holy Grail of sex, violence and autophilia, a significant number engage with the substantially less visceral thrills of *demystification*. 'Grind houses once existed,' notes Glenn Ward in the volume's most assertively revisionist essay, 'but "grindhouse cinema" and "grindhouse films", as they are imagined today, never did' (13). This blunt statement also serves as a summation of David Church's *Grindhouse Nostalgia*,¹ an estimable tome which interrogates the cultural politics involved in the marketing and remediation of cult/exploitation films. Church's work casts a substantial shadow over this collection: his thesis that the anarchic squalor of the grind house is best understood as retrospective fantasy is repeated mantra-like throughout.

To this end, Phyll Smith traces the various exhibition practices lumped together under the 'grind' descriptor (rolling exhibition of a handful of films; late-night and early-morning performances; double or triple-features) as industry standards as far

back as the 1910s. Rather than being an anomaly which began in the 1950s, Smith argues persuasively that ‘continuous grind is perhaps the longest standing and most widespread model of programming throughout cinema history’ (46). Elsewhere, Dean Brandum looks beyond the United States to examine the exhibition and distribution models employed by flea-pit theatres in 1970s and 1980s Melbourne. While ostensibly focused on the overseas distribution of Italian cannibal films, Brandum’s essay is more rewarding for its powerful evocation of a specific time and place. One would have to be a particularly glum revisionist not to find joy in the wilful eclecticism of Melbourne’s Athenaeum theatre, a venue which apparently thought nothing of programming *Pygmalion* (1938), *Farewell Uncle Tom* (1971), *Major Barbara* (1941) and *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia* (1974) across the space of a few weeks.

Budget-priced grind houses often attracted working-class, immigrant and non-white patrons, a clientele which made these theatres the predictable locus of bourgeois anxieties. More interesting than routine moral panic, however, is the content of films, which were targeted at non-normative audiences. Austin Fisher explores the evolving racial politics of the blaxploitation western from *The Legend of Nigger Charley* (1972) to *Take a Hard Ride* (1975). Fisher makes a compelling case for understanding the displacement of 1970s Harlemites into the Wild West of the Hollywood imaginary. Neither white frontiersmen nor Native Americans, the films’ anachronistic black heroes are doubly alienated. As a counterpoint, David Church’s carefully contextualised contribution on ‘Indiansploitation’ movies such as *Billy Jack* (1971) and *Johnny Firecloud* (1975) remains acutely sensitive to the films’ latent challenge to ‘the condensation of blackness as the quintessential symbol of American race relations’ (198). Conversely, Richard Nowell warns against the unthinking celebration of exploitation cinema as counter-hegemonic. Nowell analyses a group of largely forgotten sun-drenched teenpics from the mid to late 1970s whose solipsistic conception of the world extends little further than the stretch of coastline between Santa Monica and Malibu. Nowell intimates that the apolitical complacency of affluent white teenagers – who constituted the target demographic for films like *The Van* (1977) – is mirrored by blinkered grindhouse cultists and myopic film scholars who happily fetishise their own class-based tastes and patterns of consumption.

Not all the essays in *Grindhouse* are entirely successful. Neil Jackson’s otherwise lively discussion of *Exhausted: John C. Holmes the Real Story* (1981) ends with the banal Lacanian truism that the penis is not the phallus. It is difficult to be wowed by Jackson’s critical money shot when the multiplex-friendly *Boogie Nights* (1997) made the same point two decades ago. Elsewhere, Clarissa Smith’s enthusiastic discussion of the hyper-stylised grindhouse aesthetic employed by porn auteur Jack Zipper eventually succumbs to cultist solipsism. After a celebratory endorsement of the ‘belligerent physicality’ (229) of porn performer Faith Leon, Smith offers the following disclaimer: ‘For the purely judgemental observer, the scene I have described here could be considered no more than the usual blow job scene ending in bukkake found across innumerable compilation DVDs’ (230). In other words, the

affective fandom which structures Smith's reading trumps all other viewpoints: a disingenuous critical sleight of hand in which objections to Zipper's cum-drenched, meta-textual pornotopia are always-already bland and unimaginative.

Moreover, it is warily on-trend to point out that all but two of the thirteen contributors here are male, and there remains a nagging sense that the study of exploitation cinema remains primarily a boys' club. Indeed, it is telling that Joanne Hollows' precise critique of the 'masculinity of cult'² barely registers. Nevertheless, there remains much about *Grindhouse* to admire and give intellectual pause, not least the devout fascination that this phenomenon continues to inspire. 'Perhaps if we approach grindhouse on the basis that it never uncomplicatedly existed', muses Glenn Ward pointedly, 'we might arrive at a fuller understanding of why we *wish* that it did' (27, reviewer's emphasis).

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Notes

- 1 David Church, *Grindhouse Nostalgia: Memory, Home Video and Exploitation Film Fandom*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015.
- 2 Joanne Hollows, 'The Masculinity of Cult', in Mark Jancovich, Antonio Lázaro-Reboll, Julian Stringer and Andy Willis (eds), *Defining Cult Movies: The Cultural Politics of Oppositional Taste*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003, pp. 35–53.

Kelly Oliver, *Hunting Girls: Sexual Violence from The Hunger Games to Campus Rape*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2016. ISBN: 978-0-2311-7837-2. Paperback, 216 pages.

Kelly Oliver's *Hunting Girls: Sexual Violence from The Hunger Games to Campus Rape* traces cultural representations of sexual violence from fairytales such as Snow White to contemporary films such as *The Hunger Games* (2012–15), *Maleficent* (2014) and *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2011). The introduction situates these films within the context of the current sexual assault epidemic at universities in the United States. The body of the study is divided into three sections. The first, 'A Princess is Being Beaten and Raped', discusses the pervasive fantasies of rape surrounding women and princess figures dating back to fairytales like *Sleeping Beauty*, and which is evident still in films such as *Divergent* (2014) and *Twilight* (2008). The second, 'Rape as Spectator Sport and Creepshot Entertainment', explores the more recent trend of social media being used to humiliate victims of sexual assault through pictures of their unconscious bodies, which have in turn contributed to a fetish for the unconscious woman as a sexual object. The third section, 'Girls as Predators and Prey', addresses a recent spate of films like *The Hunger Games*, which feature female protagonists who are not only hunted but have become predatory hunters themselves.

The most valuable aspect of Oliver's study is this final analysis of female hunters: women who have inverted the usual predatory paradigm. She cites films like *Hanna*

(2011), *The Hunger Games* and *Twilight* as indicative of this more recent trend in which viewers are offered 'fairytale heroines who are tougher and more violent in their predecessors', girls who 'may be traumatized, but ultimately find ways to cope' (143). Yet these new, more violent heroines represent a double-bind for Oliver. Are these 'equal-opportunity killers' our 'new feminist role-models', or are they rather 'patriarchal fantasies of phallic girls with guns and arrows' (142)? Do these fictional characters reduce 'girl power and feminine empowerment' to 'violently fighting back and killing innocent animals' (143)? For Oliver, the answer is inextricably both – a thesis that, while not explored here, could be fruitfully pursued in terms of the 'double entanglement' described in Angela Robbie's influential treatise on postfeminism.¹

While the premise of this book is timely and important, its analysis of rape in popular culture is limited by its methodological framework and disciplinary assumptions. Is this a sociological account, as occasional citations from publications like the *Journal of Research in Personality* and the *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* might suggest? In that case, why is there no qualitative or quantitative inquiry into these films' actual impact on those who see them? If Oliver's study takes a film studies perspective, why are there so few close analyses of film form? If a philosophical treatise, where is the discussion of recent developments in postfeminism or the field of gender theory more broadly? Without a clear framework, the subsequent claims lack precision and the stakes of her argument remain unclear.

A clearer methodological focus would have helped Oliver untangle the lines between the violence experienced by women in the actual world (often on college campuses) and the violence she sees depicted on screen. Without it, however, these lines remain unhelpfully blurred. In a single paragraph, for instance, Oliver compares the 'age-old myth of Sleeping Beauty' with the 2011 rape endured by an unconscious high school student in Steubenville, Ohio. In relation to Disney's fairytale, *Maleficent*, and the mutilation that the title character suffers at the hands of King Stefan, Oliver writes that, 'We could say, like most victims of sexual assault, that she suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder' (33). These kinds of comparisons between fictional characters and real victims obscure the distinction between reality and representation, lived experience and myth and, in doing so, inadvertently risks reducing the violence suffered by real women to just another example of a pervasive cultural trope.

In describing the more recent film depictions of young women as hunters, Oliver writes that 'it is crucial to ask whether this type of progress actually benefits women and girls' (25). But what is the nature of this potential benefit? Representational? Educational? Cultural? Political? Without a clearer methodology or a more lucid exploration of the causation – or, at least, the correlation – between art and life, any answer as to whether this kind of screen representation 'actually benefits women and girls' fails to marshal much meaning.

Likewise, a clear justification of the choice and range of material would have been helpful. To embark, without explanation, upon an analysis of female representation in popular culture that entirely ignores television seems perplexing. Indeed, this omission is especially odd given that the television show *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*

(1997–2003) paved the way for the female hunter films that Oliver analyses, far more so than the fairytales that she discusses. Over the course of seven seasons, *Buffy* transformed a petite high school student into a slayer of demons, constantly saving the world while navigating her own coming of age in a misogynistic world that, quite literally, wanted her dead. She came into herself not only through her experiences of violence – often terrible violence, which the show did not obscure – but also, more importantly, through her experiences of love. To ask whether this series ‘actually benefit[ted] women and girls’ in a material sense, however – in the sense that say, a robust Title IX (the US equal rights legislation discussed in Oliver’s conclusion) can – is perhaps asking the wrong question, making a category error in terms of what this kind of media can and should achieve.

Reiteration of women’s victimisation is necessary for consciousness-raising, and the ways in which film can participate in narratives of victimisation are of course important to note. But recognition of this problem is also, as Oliver repeatedly writes in her study, ‘nothing new’ (4, 27), at least not among the academic audience that this book will reach. Regardless, the relationship between film and life is not a purely mimetic one. The beauty of screen media lies in its ability to operate outside the confines of reality as we now know it, to rather offer up an idea of what might be possible, if we tried harder, in the (possibly errant) hope that change might follow. This was the cultural work of a show like *Buffy*, twenty years ago. Recognising this potential should perhaps also be the work of studies like *Hunting Girls* today.

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Note

- 1 Angela McRobbie coined the term ‘double entanglement’ to describe postfeminism in a 2004 essay for *Feminist Media Studies*, reprinted as ‘Postfeminism and Popular Culture: Bridget Jones and the New Gender Regime’, in Yvonne Tasker and Diane Negra (eds), *Interrogating Postfeminism: Gender and the Politics of Popular Culture*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2007, pp. 27–39.

Carol Siegel, *Sex Radical Cinema*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015. ISBN: 978-0-2530-1806-9. Paperback, 229 pages.

Sex Radical Cinema is a profound exploration of representations of sexuality in contemporary American film and television. The book’s introduction highlights the political relevance of audiovisual portrayals of sexual activity which are inextricably linked to representations of sexuality, gender and race. The analytical framework Siegel proposes is, therefore, of interest to scholars of cultural, gender and film studies alike. According to Siegel, the aim of her book is not to advocate for legislative change, but rather to contribute to the understanding of the complexities behind the regulation of sexual activity at all levels. In this regard she establishes pragmatic,

albeit respectful, differences between her perspective and that of other feminist, queer and sexualities studies scholars. Rooted in Deleuze's and Guattari's distinction of majoritarian and minoritarian scripts, Siegel's examination of audiovisual portrayals of sex attends to race, gender and sexuality within a binary structure of liberalism and radicalism. Siegel thus reveals the (almost) universal acceptance of sexual activity within committed relationships; radical films aim to surpass this by depicting sex on its own and for its own sake.

Throughout the book, Siegel evidences how topics, story plots and characters' development respond to the concrete sexual politics of visual entertainment media, which in turn 'reflect, inform, promote, or contest various visions of sexual desires and practices' (26). Cinematic and televisual narratives are examined for their radicalism – or lack thereof – which is described in Deleuzian terms as a cinema of disruption against dominant discourses. In her discussion of mainstream and fringe narratives, Siegel demonstrates that much of queer and feminist scholarship promotes a culture of validation and affirmation in order to attain 'a place at the capitalist table' (23). Radical cinematic portrayals of sexual activity provide a way of resisting, contesting and exploring this very intimate and personal topic in its whole depth and breadth. Siegel illustrates her argument with examples from popular culture, such as the James Bond film franchise, and powerfully connects these well-known narratives to current political issues, such as the credibility of Julian Assange and allegations of sexual assault. Film by film, it becomes clear that 'representations of sexuality are not a side issue in political analysis' (18).

The importance of storytelling, narrative and experience underpins Siegel's book, which consists of a contextualising introduction followed by five case-study chapters and a conclusion in which radical cinema and radicalism as an approach to scholarship (and life) are further discussed. Chapter by chapter Siegel demonstrates the shortcomings of existing quantitative and qualitative research on audiovisual representations of sex. She argues that such research does not account for narratives in which sexual activity is used as a reference, or as a motive behind story plots and character development. The first chapter explores representations of sexual purity and their connections to bourgeois family values. The figure of the cinematic paedophile is analysed in relation to policy and politics in the United States. Siegel then moves the discussion towards the sex trade. She discusses how the portrayal of prostitution 'as inherently damaging to women and children' (28) has a great impact upon the agency of these groups within wider society.

The second chapter explores the vilification of Muslims as a group, who are often portrayed as perpetrators of sexual oppression. This topic is expanded in the third chapter, where Siegel closely looks at links between sex and militaristic aggression in contemporary war films. In Chapter 4, the horror genre allows Siegel to explore the connection between sexuality and violence in a different environment, namely the familiar, the domestic and the mundane. From this point onwards, her argument centres on highlighting the ways in which fear of change in racist/hierarchic American social structures influences shared understandings of children's and adolescents' sexuality 'and how these concepts give shape to liberal

and radical politics of cinematic representation of sexuality' (29). While Chapter 4 looks at American and international films, the work of a single author, Tim Burton, is examined in Chapter 5. The popular, while controversial, reception of Burton's films allows Siegel to reveal contradictions in the ways the film industry constructs childhood and adolescence sexuality.

Finally, Siegel reviews Miranda July's *The Future* (2011) alongside other recent cinematic tales of apocalypses, as well as Lena Dunham's and Jennifer Konner's HBO series *Girls* (2012–17). She argues that *The Future* rejects the majoritarian narrative of reproductive futurism by giving visibility to those who are unhappy in their current circumstances as well as by rendering happy endings invisible. Siegel praises *Girls* for its fresh and radical take on sexuality as it shows 'a defiant adult daughter who is determined to express her sexuality without restraint by what anyone – conservative, liberal or cultural feminist – thinks she should do' (30). Siegel probably suffered a major disappointment last year as the final season of *Girls* aired. The concluding chapter of *Sex Radical Cinema* connects minoritarian audiovisual representations of sexuality with understandings of sexuality as an end in itself, which, as Siegel argues throughout the book, is radical per se. The juxtaposition of Miranda July's *The Future* and Lena Dunham's *Tiny Furniture* (2010) reveals a common narrative: life is composed of cycles and so is the future. 'There can be no future, because we do not move forward; we simply replicate past patterns' (201). Going back to Edelman's *No Future*¹ and Heather Love's² critique of it, Siegel demonstrates the imperative relevance of narratives that encourage us to live presently and acknowledge experiences and processes per se, unlinked to outcomes. Siegel's well-argued claim of sex radical cinema as a way of learning about the 'management of our sexualities' (207), by creating a participatory present, will interest those who undertake research in media politics, film, sexuality and race.

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Notes

- 1 Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and Death Drive*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004.
- 2 Heather Love, 'Wedding Crashers', *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 13:1 (2007), 125–39.

Eric Schaefer (ed.), *Sex Scene: Media and the Sexual Revolution*, Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2014, ISBN: 978-0-8223-5654-7. Paperback, 456 pages.

With this edited collection Eric Schaefer continues to bolster his considerable body of work on sex and film. Schaefer brings together an impressive cadre of adult film scholars – a total of sixteen – whose contributions provide a comprehensive and valuable range of approaches to the study of the role that media played in the history

of the sexual revolution in the United States. The material ranges across mainstream media, softcore and hardcore pornography, and marginalised forms. As a whole, the anthology offers a balanced combination of general overviews and in-depth case studies, although for this reader the latter methodological approach makes for more stimulating and gratifying reading. Preceded by Schaefer's introduction, 'Sex Seen: 1968 and Rise of "Public" Sex', the fifteen well-illustrated chapters are organised around five sections: 'Mainstream Media and the Sexual Revolution', 'Sex as Art', 'Media at the Margins', 'Going All the Way' and 'Contending with the Sex Scene'. The chronological arch traversed by the vast majority of the essays – 1968–73 – and the geographical delimitation – the US context – bestow cohesion and focus to the collection. And, as Schaefer announces in the introduction, '[a] number of shared themes and concerns will become apparent to the reader: the public/private divide, issues of identity and politics, individual rights and civil liberties, and the separate, but frequently overlapping, roles of the consumer and therapeutic cultures in post-World War II America' (19). Moreover, numerous references to obscenity laws and prurience, recurrent reflections on the commodification and consumption of mediated sex, or punctual examinations of the formation of erotic taste cultures and sex scenes in a variety of contexts yield a larger narrative about the history of the sexual revolution in the United States across the chapters.

One of the recurrent patterns at work in the analyses of sex media during this period is the correspondence between the production of commodities and taste production. Like any other scene, product differentiation and the logics of distinction drove media and the sexual revolution. Institutions like the National Sex Forum differentiated its educational material from commercial pornography. Similarly, erotic film festivals were at pains to distinguish their programming from pornographic fare by distinguishing their activities and their audiences from sexploitation and 'skin flick' consumers. Individual entrepreneurs like Arlene Elster 'politically distanced herself from the earlier generation of pornographers and movie theater owners' (306) and aimed to attract a demographic associated with countercultural beliefs and sexual liberation. As cultural mediators of sex films, many critics 'still needed to maintain a kind of distance from or coolness towards such films in order to maintain the edge they had over the popular tastes' (385). While they were constrained by advertising and regulatory frames, TV networks such as ABC, NBC and CBS were under immense competitive pressure to embrace sexual content in their programming directed to mainstream audiences.

The first part of the volume 'Mainstream Media and the Sexual Revolution' surveys the changing media landscape in mainstream film and television. Christie Milliken's 'Rate It X? Hollywood Cinema and the End of the Production Code' examines the reconfiguration and recalibration of Hollywood products against the backdrop of changes introduced in the industry through the new Code and Rating Administration (CARA) established by the MPAA in 1968, whereby the X rating was not copyrighted and thus left 'vulnerable to widespread interpretation and appropriation', leading 'many independent producers to freely adopt it, often as a publicity stunt and advertising gimmick, without ever submitting their

films for CARA review' (33). Linda Williams's 'Make Love, Not War: Jane Fonda Comes Home (1968–78)' – previously published in her influential *Screening Sex*¹ – focuses on the representation of female sexual pleasure and the realistic expression of orgasms in the domain of mainstream Hollywood films as epitomised in 'the willowy body' (53) of Jane Fonda. Part I closes with 'The New Sexual Culture of American Television in the 1970s' where Elana Levine lays out her case for the centrality of television 'to translate the sexual revolution to mainstream America' (81) in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s. Despite a number of disclaimers concerning the impossibility of offering 'a full picture of television and sex in that time' (99), the chapter strikes a sensible balance between the gestalt of American television and the discussion of specific TV products, namely entertainment programmes and made-for-TV movies that embraced and mediated changes brought by the sexual revolution through the comedic treatment of sex as in the case of ABC's *Love, American Style* (1964–74) or the representation of sexually endangered youth in films such as *Dawn: Portrait of a Teenage Runaway* (1976, NBC).

Part II, 'Sex as Art', moves the anthology beyond its immediate US context and adopts a microhistory mode with the inclusion of three detailed case studies. In 'Prurient (Dis)Interest: the American Release and Reception of *I Am Curious (Yellow)*', Kevin Heffernan traces the legal status of the Swedish film across different jurisdictions between 1968 and 1971 and considers the multiple factors that contributed to its crossover success in 'its ability to straddle at least three categories of the commercial cinema (the general-release film, the exploitation film, and the art cinema)' (106). Of particular interest is Heffernan's discussion of how film critics writing about *I Am Curious (Yellow)*, and other contemporary films featuring sexually explicit material, groped 'for new critical categories' (106), such as titillation and boredom, to convey new viewing experiences. In 'Wet Dreams: Erotic Film Festivals and the Early 1970s and the Utopian Sexual Public Sphere', Elena Gorfinkel takes the pioneering 'Wet Dream' festival in Amsterdam as a point of departure to investigate the rise of its American counterparts. 'Let the Sweet Juices Flow: *WR* and Midnight Movie Culture' by Joan Hawkins locates the Yugoslavian film *WR* (Dusan Makavejev, 1971) at the intersection of different yet related modes of exhibition and consumption, that is, the art-house circuit and midnight screenings.

Part III, 'Media and the Margins', turns its attention to marginal media practices: '33 1/3 Sexual Revolutions per Minute', by Jacob Smith, focuses on erotic phonograph records meant for home consumption. Schaefer's "'I'll Take Sweden": The Shifting Discourse of the "Sexy Nation" in Sexploitation Films' (a key point of departure for Adrian Smith's article in this very issue) discusses how sexploitation movies coming from Sweden (or set in Denmark or Sweden) replaced French films 'as the sexy terrain of choice for American filmgoers' (215). In turn, Jeffrey Sconce traces different manifestations of occult exploitation in a variety of adult media (films, magazines and paperbacks) in his chapter 'Altered Sex: Satan, Acid, and the Erotic Threshold'. While Smith examines the different ways in which adult-theme records 'were found to "speak sex" for various home-listening audiences' (180), among them post-war male consumers of hi-fi technology and adult material, and

young suburban couples seeking titillating entertainment and/or sex education, Schaefer argues how 'Scandinavian films' were viewed by specific audiences as ideals of sexual freedom, naturalness and progressivism.

The following section, 'Going All the Way', moves away from conventional analyses of mainstream media-construct 'porn chic' and zooms into the territory of hardcore in both educational and entertainment contexts to tell the stories of less-known sex scenes. In 'The "Sexarama": Or Sex Education as an Environmental Multimedia Experience', Eithne Johnson explores how researchers, therapists and educators associated with the National Sex Forum engaged in 'productive "prurience"' (267) through their multimedia SAR method (Sexual Attitude Reassessment) of sex education, and affirmed their commitment to sex education by producing, archiving and distributing 'innovative training materials' (266). Joseph Lam Duong looks beyond the 'monetary gain' (314) which tends to shape any discussion of the sex film industry by considering in 'San Francisco and the Politics of Hard Core' two different ways of exercising oppositional politics: whereas a figure like Arlene Elster produced erotic films, exhibited them in her very own theatre, the Sutter Cinema in San Francisco, and spread the political aspirations of sexual freedom, the Mitchell Brothers in the pursuit of screening sexually explicit material for commercial profit increasingly adopted the politicised rhetoric of 'libertarianism, sexual freedom and the Constitution' (314) to defend their business. Those familiar with Jeffrey Escoffier's book *Bigger than Life: The History of Gay Porn Cinema from Beefcake to Hardcore*² will find here a comparable overview of the representation of gay pornography from beefcake magazines to experimental film and all the way to hardcore movies.

The concluding set of essays ('Part V: Contending with the Sex Scene') deals explicitly with questions of reception and of consumption. Leigh Ann Wheeler's painstakingly researched 'Publicizing Sex through Consumer and Privacy Rights: How the American Civil Liberties Union Liberated Media in the 1960s' brings into sharp focus debates around the private and the public in her analysis of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), an institution which fought through the invocation of the First Amendment to protect 'the rights of consumers of speech' and 'the rights to sexual privacy' (351), empowering media consumers in the process. Film criticism is the object of study of Raymond J. Haberski Jr; his essay 'Critics and the Sex Scene' is a critical journey through a range of reviewers and reviewing trends learning to deal with evaluations of cinematic sex. Arthur Knight and Kevin M. Flanagan take porn to college in the final chapter of the volume. Their microhistorical analysis locates two specific events at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana, in 1969, and in the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, in 1973, in relation to wider 'struggles over public representations of and discussions about sex and sexuality' (409) and to developments in American film culture.

The final essay brings some of the main threads of the collection together. Like all the contributors in the collection, Knight and Flanagan highlight the rise of the public discussion and display of sex, the emergence of sex scenes in a variety of industrial, institutional and countercultural contexts, the struggles with law enforcement, and

the interactions between different actors (producers, critics, reformers, educators, exhibitors and so on) which shaped discourses around, sex, sexuality and the sexual revolution. But the final chapter also indicates areas that require further study, among them the cultural and media histories to be found outside the metropolitan experiences of New York, San Francisco and other urban centres, or the complex dynamics around gender and the reception and consumption of porn. In addition to these, there are other marginal media practices worth scrutinising: for example, detailed analysis of adult magazines such as *Screw: The Sex Review* founded by Al Goldstein in 1968 when public sex, as Schaefer stresses in his introduction, was erupting, or readings of underground comics which hit the streets during the years of the sexual revolution with explicit images of sex.

Sex Scene partakes of the fruitful intellectual and methodological dialogue between growing fields of study – pornography studies, adult film history, sex-ploitation scholarship – which have made sex and sexuality the subject of academic study over the last two decades. Scholars of film studies will find the collection particularly valuable, for the vast majority of chapters look at cinematic sex. Its widespread coverage of the history of the sexual revolution across other media makes it equally valuable for researchers in media studies, cultural studies and cultural history. More generally, the critical mass of scholars working in sex media will surely be inspired by the contributions in this collection and will find plenty of stimuli to explore their own scholarly encounters with other sex scenes, its participants, the media practices that shaped them, and their histories.

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Notes

- 1 See Linda Williams, *Screening Sex*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008, pp. 155–80.
- 2 Jeffrey Escoffier, *Bigger than Life: The History of Gay Porn Cinema from Beefcake to Hardcore*, New York: Perseus, 2009.