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[Review of: E. Schaefer (2014) Sex scene: media and the sexual revolution]

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Sex Scene: Media and the Sexual Revolution. Ed. by Eric Schaefer. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014. x, 470 pp. Cloth, \$99.95. Paper, \$29.95.)

This collection of fifteen essays was inspired by the “curious lack of attention paid to the role that media played in the history of the sexual revolution in the United States” (p. 1). Framing media neither as a cultural force influencing a change in attitudes nor as evidence for this shift, the authors instead provide a range of cases in which media served as the “battleground” where a “media revolution” was fought (pp. 2, 13). This approach places legal skirmishes over obscenity laws at the forefront of many of the analyses, providing a valuable survey of the changing legal landscape. The overview is detailed, wide-ranging, and encompasses an array of media, from long-playing records to television, as well as diverse contexts, from college classrooms to erotic-film festivals. As is often the case with essay collections focused on one issue, the strategy also leads to some duplication and repetition. Scholars interested in charting the changing trends across the various media of the 1960s and 1970s will be most interested in reading the entire collection, while others can make their selections from five thematic subsections.

Part 1, “Mainstream Media and the Sexual Revolution,” addresses Hollywood films and television programming and includes one of the stand-out essays of the collection, “Make Love, Not War: Jane Fonda Comes Home (1968–1978),” by Linda Williams. Unlike many of the other contributions, which seem oddly apolitical given their provocative content, Williams’s integrates the antiwar and feminist sexual-liberation ideologies of the era within Jane Fonda’s attempts to redefine the presentation of female sexual pleasure and orgasm in mainstream cinema.

Part 2, “Sex as Art,” focuses on attempts to recast (and reinvent) sexually explicit media as culturally significant and to protect it from censorship, while part 3, “Media at the Margins,” includes an intriguing essay by Jacob Smith on erotic sound recordings (“blue discs” or “party records”) and their intended listeners, making this one of several essays that give

a good sense of audiences and not just media producers. Jeffrey Sconce’s contribution, “Altered Sex: Satan, Acid, and the Erotic Threshold,” is brilliantly written and absolutely fascinating. Sure to be an instant classic among students, his analysis of the essentially tame moral frameworks of pseudo-satanic hedonistic storytelling explores the association of hippies with Satanists made by middle-class critics and exploitation filmmakers.

Part 4, “Going All the Way,” considers sex education as a multimedia experience, and examines the politics and practicalities (especially commercialism and censorship) of hardcore pornography. Only Jeffrey Escoffier’s essay specifically focuses on gay sexual media, from magazines to movies, although several of the essays mention different industry and regulatory attitudes toward same-sex relations. The final section, “Contending with the Sex Scene,” includes essays on movie reviewers’ reactions since the 1960s and attempts to show and discuss pornography on university campuses.

The collection richly demonstrates the moments of contestation and cooptation by which increasingly sexualized sounds and images made their way into the media. However, the collection editor Eric Schaefer suggests that readers reframe their idea of the sexual revolution as a media revolution, when “distinctions between the private and the public became radically destabilized” (p. 13). Indeed, while the media now available may have changed dramatically as a result, the reimagined sexual politics that appear tentatively in some of these essays barely figures in it.

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Mr. America: The Tragic History of a Bodybuilding Icon. By John D. Fair. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015. xvi, 457 pp. \$35.00.)

John D. Fair’s highly detailed, largely administrative study of American bodybuilding uses Mr. America contests sponsored by the Amateur Athletic Union of the United States (AAU)