

INTRODUCTION

The Soul of Pornography

‘It has been said’, my late colleague, the great Welsh television director John Hefin used to claim (perhaps the source had been forgotten?), ‘that every British film is, really, about class.’ This was sometimes his first comment, in his first lecture, to first-year undergraduates on an Introduction to Film Studies course.¹

This book is, in part, a stress testing of this arresting thesis. For John, British cinema was understood either to have been limited, even immobilised, by an inability to see beyond an ordering of reality via preconceived ideas of a hierarchical class stratification, or to have been energised by critical engagements with such an ordering and its concomitant prejudices. This book looks to the former tendency, but with one major proviso: that while I want to look at unconscious accommodations of preconceived ideas of class, I also want to find the junctures at which such ideas become manifest in a disordering way. To do this, I approach the material of this research – pornography on film, from the Summer of Love to Margaret Thatcher as prime minister, plus coda – as building blocks of imagination and fantasy. The intellectual’s view of pornography as essentially utilitarian (that is, as a masturbatory aid or a stimulant to sex), typically then prompting a discussion of freedoms of speech versus censorship – as with Anthony Burgess’s 1970 lecture ‘Obscenity & The Arts’ (Burgess, Greer and Biswell 2018: 49–79) – is not explored in this book. Rather, I read pornography as presenting ideals, aspirations, desires, possibilities, intelligence and rewards for its users, and utopian visions. And, in this presentation, in pornography, I find particular insights into the ways in which ideas of class order or fire imagination, and order or fire this fantastical take on reality. To do this, I take one step back from the material so as to consider how these fantasies can be interpreted as striving to anticipate, and then meet and match, the desires of their perceived audiences. Or, put simply, what did the pornographers think their audiences wanted to see? From this vantage point, each pornographic film can be seen to imagine its audience, as the fantasies it offers evidence a set of assumptions, conscious or otherwise, about

the desires of that imagined audience. An example of a conscious element to this process is found in an interview with the hardcore Scottish pornographer John Lindsay, whose work is discussed at length below – who even, as with an election strategist, has identified his ideal constituent, as summarised in an interview for the pornographic magazine *Knave*:

Who then is the ideal girl for a Lindsay film? ‘She’s about 17, big blue eyes, long blonde hair, slim body, medium titties. She’s Lolita-like. Innocence ready to be seduced. That’s what the average man wants.’

It is to the average man, ‘l’homme moyen sensual’ [the man of average appetites] as the French so neatly put it, that Lindsay aims his films. Or rather at their fantasies. In an interview some three months ago on London’s Capital Radio, John was asked by an aggressive American female why men liked seeing schoolgirls and suchlike getting up to naughty capers in his films. His reply was as candid as most of his conversation: ‘Because of women like you’. (Duncan 1978: 71)

It seemed, then, as I began, that the research would order the analysis of the material thematically, around grouped sets of fantasies: from, at first glance...

- blunt proletarian opportunism in the blue-collar service industries...
- ... to sophisticated erotica around country houses;
- the ‘lure’ of the Soho gentlemen’s clubs and some of the noted glamour models associated with them;
- ditto massage parlours;
- some kind of notion of pro-sex, 1970s feminism liberating the sexually frustrated housewife into infidelity;
- niche, ritualistic sadism and masochism;
- playacting schoolgirls;
- chambermaid(s) encountering guests who are late checking out of their hotel rooms;
- aristos ‘swinging’ with the younger set

... and so on. And the objectionable nature of such class prejudices (and frequent misogyny, homophobia and racism) could, at least initially, be set aside, because these were fantasies for unseen audiences, and not considered attempts to

represent, even-handedly, various social groups. Thus, the more objectionable the films, the more relevant the idea of fantasy would be in terms of that fantasy underwriting and evidencing class prejudice. (And at first glance too, I wondered where the non-heterosexual material may be – if indeed it existed at all in this period, at least on a commercial circuit of sorts.)

But, surprisingly, the material, as it revealed itself, would not be ordered in this way. Rather, the pornography mostly presented itself along auteur lines: specific film-makers whose oeuvre was often characteristic with respect to both their concerns and overall interests, and their signature film styles. In a way, and in the context of the oft-noted timidity and frigidity of British erotica, each auteur figure was a pioneer and so was often quite individual – and some paid the price for this path-breaking (or just overstepping the mark), and for their roles in the, or a, sexual liberation of the British cinema. And, as individuals, they rarely shut up about their work. There was, in print and on screen, much reflection on what they did – and how and why, and where and when, and for whom and with whom – and on the embattled libertarian, and heroic, political import of all of this endeavour. This is true of Stanley Long (his 1971 documentary *Naughty!*), Lindsay (his 1973 documentary *The Pornbrokers*), Paul Raymond (the 1982 quasi-documentary *Paul Raymond's Erotica*), the figure of Mary Millington (in *Queen of the Blues*, Willy Roe, 1979 and, posthumously, with *Mary Millington's True Blue Confessions*, Nick Galtres, John M. East, 1980), arguably Peter de Rome (in the sense that his loops were often an add-on to sexual encounters: filming those he had spent the night with), and via the endless puff-piece profiles of such figures in pornographic magazines. Indeed, in addition to Harrison Marks's self-ghosted biography (discussed below; Wood [1967] 2017), de Rome (1984) and Long (Long and Sheridan, 2008) also wrote autobiographies, and arguably a number of female porn stars discussed here may have done so too (or lent their names to such books). Lindsay apparently also wrote an autobiography, *The Sexorcist*, which was published in some form, but I have been unable to trace a copy or bibliographic record, and Derek Ford wrote two self-serving studies of cinema and sexual exploitation (1988 and, co-written as Selwyn Ford, 1990). David Sullivan added a business guru twist to this subgenre, with *We Made £200,000: The Story of B.H. and D.S.* (co-written with Harry Marle and Bernard Hardingham, 1972, and in some additions 'with an interview with Lord Longford'), on his first three years in the pornography business. And the softcore film *The David Galaxy Affair* (Roe, 1979), made by Sullivan to advance Mary Millington's fame, reputedly contains autobiographical elements.

There seems to have been a similar tendency on the part of the film-makers to reveal the milieu too: so many of the films feature long sequences in Soho, or around the seedier areas of Piccadilly Circus – presumably the streets just outside the cinemas and clubs in which these films were being watched. *Snow White and the Seven Perverts* (David Hamilton Grant, Marcus Parker-Rhodes, 1973) even ventures inside the cinema club, to reveal a gaggle of masturbating men sprawled in front of a cinema screen – albeit in animation. The loop *Certificate 'X'* (possibly 1968, from Ultima Films) showcases the culture: a lone female hippy enters a Soho cinema club and undergoes paroxysms of autoeroticism as she watches loops, with a male filmgoer joining her.

The *Knave* interview with Lindsay is prime auteur-ism: Duncan presents Lindsay as a neorealist pornographer, and with discernibly characteristic creative tendencies:

The films reflect the personality of their maker: there's a mordant, anti-establishment, cynical humour about them. In 100 Lines the scene opens with a stunningly beautiful girl sitting at a desk in the full school outfit. She is doing her detention [etc] ... Obliging, she faces the camera so that it can record the repeated entry of [sic] the penis into vagina, and the girl's breasts heaving up and down in a lascivious rhythm of their own. (And they were pleasantly large breasts for a girl who was, I believe, only 16 at the time.)

But it is typical of Lindsay that he should have shot such a film in a real school. Typical also that he should choose, as he does so often in his films, to clothe the models in uniforms [that] should make them taboo – as schoolgirls or girl guides or nuns ... This is how John Lindsay sees himself: a social rebel, an outsider. He once told me that he looked upon himself as a mixer of love potions, someone who 300 years ago would have been called a wizard or a witch. (Duncan 1978: 27)²

And, as to the libertarian impulse justifying or redeeming Lindsay's work:

'I pay a lot of tax,' he says, 'more than the average guy' ... Recently the police came round to one of Lindsay's clubs, enquiring about the presence of any Soho protection rackets. They were told that yes, the heavy mob had been round with a 'pay up or else' demand. They were a bit put out when they eventually learned that was a description of a visit from the VAT [value added tax] men ...

Politicians, he says, would like to put a tax on pleasure. ‘People who say they know better are forever censoring us people – the other people – or the peasants as they believe we are. Like cigarettes and alcohol which, admittedly, kill us. But they also censor sex, which doesn’t kill us. Why is that? It’s because they haven’t actually sussed out a way of putting a meter on a basic human function.’
(Duncan 1978: 27)

And so, with apologies, I have perhaps inadvertently uncovered in a new cohort of British film directors, who may now need to be incorporated into histories of the British cinema. But their work is meagre (in quality if not quantity) and often miserable. Twenty years ago I began a similar process of, as it turned out, very slightly expanding the canon, around the life and work of British horror film-maker Michael Reeves (1943–1969; for the resulting critical biography, see Halligan 2003). And, while I have been gratified to see his name included and his reputation grow, I cannot say the same of the film-makers discussed, pretty much entirely for the first time, in the current book.

The operationalisation of my methodological approach to the material often raised the question of how little of it I could watch, before being in a reasonable position to offer comment. Nonetheless, researching and writing this book has resulted in too many hours of viewing joyless ‘erotic’ films of little or even no merit – frisson-less, and a paucity of entertainment, a paucity of aesthetics, seemingly some performers in distress, and often unpleasant encounters with reactionary and objectionable ideas. At times, even after only a couple of days, I found myself genuinely unable to recall whether I had already viewed yet another dire 1970s ‘sex comedy’ or washed-out hardcore loop that I may have forgotten to remove from my never-diminishing pile of ‘to watch’ films. They blurred into one underlit and dingy tale of sexual frustration and misfiring erotic gambits, across housing estates, rainy holiday resorts, and chintzy hotels. Note taking was difficult when there was so often little or nothing to actually note down. And even sourcing such films has been a pain, as so many are, understandably, out of circulation. In this, my methodological approach drew some comfort from my former colleague John Mundy’s book *The British Musical Film* (2007), which, by the time it hits the 1970s, begins to evidence that Mundy’s patience is so frayed that he seems to edge towards giving up trying to find something to say about the umpteenth Cliff Richard vehicle of diminishing returns. In that my experience mirrored Nick Roddick’s excursions into the ‘island of furtiveness [of] Soho cinemas’ in 1982/83,

for *Sight & Sound*, it seems that the material had not improved with age. On the ‘films [that] run from the barely passable to the unspeakably tedious,’ Roddick says, ‘I don’t quite know what I was expecting, but what I got was a two-week course in aversion therapy. In no real sense can the films be described as erotic; and, with one of two rare exceptions, they are not particularly distasteful. They are merely boring’ (Roddick 1982/83: 18).

Some further notes around implementing my methodology seem appropriate here. Firstly, I place to one side summaries of specific definitions of ‘pornography’, ‘softcore’ and ‘hardcore’, and the related legal debates, and changing positions of censors, often around contested notions of obscenity. Related questions, as to whether naturalist documentaries and fetish films (for example, shots of feet) are, to use another ambiguous term, indecent, are not explored here. These discussions are well rehearsed elsewhere and, at any rate, wend to the inconclusive; Hawkins and Zimring are able to tabulate differing definitions of ‘obscenity’, ‘pornography’ and ‘erotica’ (1991: 26). Even the 1979 parliamentary Report of the Committee on Obscenity and Film Censorship struggles to attain a definitive position, and seems to conclude, at the outset and with respect to the same material discussed in this book, that such an attempt would be counterproductive (Williams 1979: 6). John Ellis, in part discussing this report in 1980, notes the ‘combination of vagueness and moralism in existing definitions of pornography’, and observes that, at any rate, ‘definitions of pornography have an inhibiting moral force to them’ – seemingly inhibiting critical engagement with pornography itself (Ellis 1992: 146).

My concern is around films that are unashamedly designed for, to a discernible and defining level, titillation and sexual arousal. This then covers films that have no other clear function (for example, films that just show sexual intercourse), or films that are erotic, but with very substantial elements of titillation (as with Derek Ford comedies, or Harrison Marks’s relatively mainstream films, or, perhaps less certainly, the Joan Collins disco films). ‘Pornography’ is a catch-all term – for this study, as a general descriptor of the most forward element of all these films. This descriptor then excludes 1970s British ‘sexy comedies’ (the *Carry On*, *Confessions of...* and *Adventures of...* cycles, for example), as they may be understood to be erotic but contain, if thinking in general terms, less substantial or upfront levels of titillation. Roddick, therefore, would not have found such films playing in the depths of Soho – Barbara Windsor levels of fleeting nudity in *Carry on Camping* (Gerald Thomas, 1969) would have been insufficient. If a definition is to be demanded, I would defer to the Church of England’s report on ‘Obscene

Publications: Law and Practice’ in relation to items to be ‘entirely prohibited’ (Board for Social Responsibility of the General Synod of the Church of England 1970: 15) – that is: ‘publications [that] are patently obscene or pornographic and [that] are published as such’ (10), and ‘material [that] is plainly pornographic and [that] has no other objective or intention’ (15). Within this paradigm, ‘hardcore’ can be taken, as it would have been at the time, to denote displays of sexual organs in a state of arousal – differentiating ‘hardcore’ then from ‘softcore’, which tended to titillating nudity. ‘Glamour’, as in the ‘glamour film’, is therefore my chief identifier – one signalling back to the earlier days of the evolution of the form, when erotic display was supposedly only a facet (rather than the facet) of the advertised female. This is an expedient euphemism, then as now, in terms of smuggling in material that would otherwise be a cause for concern or disapproval. And in respect to my assembly of materials, ‘glamour’ has been the password – to collections and informal archives, albeit mostly around curator-salesmen of ‘retro-porn’. Glamour opens up the existential promise of moving into a certain world or accessing experiences, whereas ‘pornography’ suggests the demarcations of a tableaux vivant, to be surveyed and then put away.

Secondly, some material has been difficult to locate, and this has (mis-)shaped my survey scope. My limited engagements with Russell Gay, David Hamilton Grant and – although I place him beyond the timeline of this study – Mike Freeman, and the blind spot of the obscure Ivor Cooke, seemingly making hardcore loops in the early 1960s or even before, reflect this difficulty.³ Gay’s oeuvre seems to have mostly remained on 8-mm celluloid, Freeman’s work stayed on limited circulation (i.e. mail order) video cassettes of some thirty to forty years ago, and Grant attempted to vanish but was rumoured to be subject to a contract killing (see Sweet 2006) – but beyond this, and into the video-release era of the 1980s, some pornography makers did not use names at all (either credit-less or pseudonymous releases). In addition to these gaps, I have sporadically declined to make good my being ill- or under-informed about some of the work discussed, flouting the minimum standard for academic researchers in the field of film history. In some cases, as with Lindsay’s work, I wanted to watch a just-sufficient amount, but no more than that, and was happy to allow myself to be warded off by some of the more lurid film titles. Indeed, calculating how soon I could call time on reviewing his oeuvre, to allow me to curtail this element of the research, was a constant consideration; like many of the men who came his way, and about whom Lindsay complained, I wanted to exit the set hastily, leaving the action to continue

unabated, after a premature termination. To tarry with the material was often to watch yet another stretch of sexual intercourse in close-up, prompting no further academic insights on my part, whatsoever.

I have adopted the same position of prudence too on the prospect of endless indistinguishable hours of silent, black-and-white loops from the early to mid-1960s, from small and long-forgotten production companies, featuring models shuttling between magazines and strip clubs. To compensate for this lack of very substantive exposure, mostly around hardcore films, I have tended to use, in my discussion of various auteurs' philosophical positions on sexuality, other elements of their writing – even with the danger of allowing the film-maker to interpret their own work. This has been mostly around hardcore film-makers (Marks, Lindsay, Triga Films, and Ford as an exception), as, in hardcore, one looks for a philosophy of sex, which can be extended to a wider reading of life. In softcore, in contrast, the philosophy of life may already be present, as the films embrace a wider world (their settings), and then situate sex in it (their pay-offs). So I have found myself thinking about meanings lent to Euston railway station and its people *through* one particular Lindsay hardcore loop (i.e. sex to place), and I have found myself thinking about the meanings of sex and eroticism *through* Derek Ford's filming of Essex (i.e. place to sex). In this respect, *Brief Encounter* (David Lean, 1945), in its engagement with ideas of place and eroticism, came to exert an even more extensive influence over this book than I initially anticipated.

One of the challenges of researching vintage pornography is navigating the way in which 'bootleg streaming ... affords unprecedented access to previously elusive material, but often operates as a chaotic data dump, without even useful metadata', pushing researchers to juggle with multiple versions from multiple sources (official, levels of unofficial, fan archived), or finding that something once available has since been made unavailable (Strub 2019: 42). In all likelihood, there are other strains of filmed pornography production from this period of which I am completely unaware. But some of this may have been deliberately abandoned to obscurity, and I would respect the wishes of those involved, particularly performers, to be forgotten.

Thirdly, I took a principled position in relation to open access of academic resources, and so if secondary scholarly writing was not fairly immediately accessible, I have ignored it – abiding with some authors' choices of opting for marginality for their research. But I have tended towards the unearthing and integration of texts from the time, in terms of trying to tap into something of the

mindsets of opponents of the Permissive Society, no matter how hysterical (in both senses) these texts were, or even when, in the case of some feminist writers, their later transphobic positions have been taken to render all their work *déclassé*. (Indeed, as I note below, this objectionable trait was already in operation in some feminist writing decades back.) I note too my debt to the blogger and reviewer Gavin Whitaker who, as GavCrimson, has spent nearly two decades rediscovering and reappraising, and mapping, British pornography and sexploitation film-making. This area has been all but ignored by academic researchers of post-war British film history across the last forty years. Indeed, this absence seems one to be of the few continuities across the entire field. This oversight is found in Armes 1979; Barr 1986; Murphy 1992, 2014; McFarlane 1997; Ashby and Higson 2000; Harper and Smith 2013; and Petrie, Williams and Mayne 2020. It is possible that an exclusionary quality bar was effectively in operation for these studies, or that the films themselves simply were not sufficiently or readily available. Their resultant absence is not an issue in these publications (which articulate their scopes), except in the lackadaisical, maximal case of Murphy. The volumes by Leon Hunt (1998), Matthew Sweet (2005) and I.Q. Hunter (2013) are the most prominent exceptions to this tendency, along with Robert Shail's edited collection (2008), by dint of the inclusion of Hunter. Pioneering work outside academia includes the writing (and film-making) of David McGillivray (1992) and Simon Sheridan (1999, 2011).

So, with this discovery of film-director-ness, this book was then to be divided along the lines of hardcore pornography and its auteurs, and softcore erotica and its auteurs, and with an interregnum concerning lifestyles and models. And this was to be in the strict context – I initially assumed – of a particular historical period: from the Summer of Love and the British counterculture (of 1967/68), as the 'free love' high-water mark, to the coming to power of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Party (in 1979), with the outraged, moralistic and censorial in the ascent. This period was aligned to technological developments too. The popularity of the home video cassette in the early 1980s effectively ended the use of celluloid, so that pornographic cinema clubs were rapidly rendered obsolete, as was the equipment (and skills) needed for screening 8-mm porn loops (also known as rollers) at home. Even the set-ups needed to produce porn, with nominal professionals, could be dispensed with once the video camera became a means of production for niche do-it-yourself pornographers – from West German amateur 'Hausfrauen pornos' (housewife porn; see Hebditch and Anning 1988: 21), to

videos shot after-hours in Manchester clothes shops of men dressing as women, with shop assistants giving a running commentary, to paedophilic material arising from, and distributed across, networks of abusers (see, for example, IICAS 2021: 27, 93–94).

To contextualise the magnitudes of the freedoms from the late 1960s to the dawn of the 1980s, in terms of British pornography, it was necessary to first address the post-war years and the ways in which eroticism was restricted or limited, as with food rationing. But these new freedoms and abundances were not suddenly constant or consistent across the 1970s: they remained in negotiation, contested at the margins of what was and what was not acceptable, subject to sudden removal, and generally vilified, and condemned from many quarters (right, left, feminist, ecclesiastical, establishment and anti-establishment). Those doughty pornographers who fought back, in the 1970s, sometimes talked of a time to come when all such internecine strife was banished: a libertarian utopia, in which sexuality is not a matter for shame, or restrictive legislation, or moral censure, but a gateway to good mental and physical health, and to a wholeness to the experience of adulthood. Such talk suggested that they knew that history was on their side. And this then prompted a desire in me to defy my strict time frame, and to close this book by travelling forward in time to that moment they had anticipated, in order to take the measure of that utopian aspiration, and explore what freedoms seemed to be in operation – that is, to find the moment at which the censor's scissors have been blunted (with the legal release of hardcore pornography) or simply kicked out of their hands altogether (digital distribution networks beyond the reach of the British Board of Film Classification). This coda would also allow me to belatedly offer a corrective to the exclusive heteronormativity, if not the predominant whiteness, of almost all the previous material under scrutiny. And two novels concerning the English gentleman under duress at the dawn of the twentieth century suggested the potential insight offered by such a move.

E.M. Forster's *Maurice* – a novel that explored the psychic damage of sexual repression, was restricted by Forster himself during his lifetime (and only published posthumously, in 1971) – does something akin to this jarring lurch forward in time. After a series of precisely situated scenes, which constitute the novel, Forster suddenly whisks Clive (who had abandoned the homosexuality of his Cambridge University years with Maurice, forsaking him for married respectability and a role in the judiciary) forward in time, up to the moment of his death:

[Clive's] last words were 'Next Wednesday, say at 7.45. Dinner-jacket's enough, as you know'.

They were his last words, because Maurice had disappeared thereabouts, leaving no trace of his presence except a little pile of the petals of the evening primrose, which mourned from the ground like an expiring fire. To the end of his life, Clive was not sure of the exact moment of departure, and with the approach of old age he grew uncertain whether the moment had yet occurred. The Blue Room would glimmer, ferns undulate. Out of some external Cambridge his friend began beckoning to him, clothed in the sun, and shaking out the scents and sounds of the May Term. (Forster 1971: 230–31)

Clive's inane, establishment life, after the sudden exit of Maurice some decades before, seems worthy of little further comment for Forster; the illicit experiences of homosexuality re-measure, jarringly, the life's chronology and intensity. Sexuality rereads life and offers, crucially, alternative, hidden histories.

I had thought that such a leaping forwards in time also occurred in the 1895 novella by H.G. Wells, *The Time Machine*. As I recalled, the protagonist travelled from the Victorian present to the future in his time machine, and then to a number of stops in the very distant future, finally returning to the present. Once back in the present he relates the story of his journey to his friends, including an unnamed witness, who presents the Time Traveller's narrative verbatim, and some bookending comments of his own. And, again, parallels suggested themselves: this time in the anticipated freedoms of a future of pure hedonism. The first time machine is sent 'gliding into the future', at which point '[t]here was a breath of wind, and the lamp flame jumped' (Wells [1895] 1969: 10). The flame could be read, as with church ornamentation, in terms of a symbolic presence of God; this time-travelling transition from a Christian to a secular era seems to visibly trouble God. The travel also overthrows the Christian structuring of the week, where six work days, followed by a day of rest, follows the timeline of God's creation of the world.

Once in the future, the protagonist encounters the 'graceful children of the Upper-world' (53), who exist selfishly, for play and pleasure alone – but in a 'colossal ruin' of civilisation (52) nevertheless, for 'this wretched aristocracy in decay' (71), where they are sporadically preyed upon by an underground of workers who seem to have mutated into cannibals. And the very distant future, towards 'more than thirty million years hence' (95) is post-Anthropocene, with only 'a monstrous crab-like creature' and a 'crowd of earthy crustacea creeping in

and out among the green weed and red rocks' of an 'abominable desolation' (95). These stops in time, as I recalled them, could be mimicked for the structure of this book. The starting point would be those drab post-war years; the future would be the Permissive Age (as indeed it seemed to be for Wells: a workless leisure society); and the distant future would be post-millennium queer hardcore pornography of a type that would have been barely imaginable in the previous phases – barely, but just about. In one of her final books, *Mary Whitehouse*, the chief public opponent to the permissiveness, begins to touch on satellite television, 'decoders', 'Filmnet' and 'hard porn' on Thursday, and Sunday, mornings (Whitehouse 1994: 179).

But when I eventually reacquainted myself with the novella, I found elements that I had forgotten. The story ends with the Time Traveller departing once again, this time with a camera to gain proof of his access to other times. The unnamed narrator stumbles in on this moment of departure ('a ghostly, indistinct figure sitting in a whirling mass of black and brass'; Wells [1895] 1969: 103), and records:

I stayed on, waiting for the Time Traveller [to return]; waiting for the second, perhaps still stranger story, and the specimens and photographs he would bring with him. But I am beginning now to fear that I must wait a lifetime. The Time Traveller vanished three years ago. And, as everybody knows now, he has never returned. (103)

Then, in an epilogue, the narrator reflects on the Time Traveller's fate or whereabouts:

It may be that he swept back into the past, and fell among the blood-drinking, hairy savages of the Age of Unpolished Stone; into the abysses of the Cretaceous Sea; or among the grotesque saurian, the huge reptilian brutes of the Jurassic times. He may even now – if I may use the phrase – be wandering on some plesiosaurus-haunted Oolitic coral reef, or beside the lonely saline lakes of the Triassic Age. Or did he go forward, into one of the nearer ages, in which men are still men, but with the riddles of our own times answered and its wearisome problems solved? (105)

These speculations and uncertainties, in which the past seems as barbaric as the future (with its cannibal terrors), so that the future-to-come seems to be a return

to the Dark Ages – a barer existence, entirely akin to, or even interchangeable with, the past, and with the Time Traveller perhaps stuck in an ambiguous either – better represent the disorientations of the encounter with pornography made before, during and after the Permissive Age. And the Time Traveller, anticipating Walter Benjamin’s ‘Angel of History’ (see Arendt 1969: 257), questions the assumption that post-Enlightenment progress is forever forward to the better. Thus the Time Traveller ‘thought but cheerlessly of the Advancement of Mankind, and saw in the growing pile of civilization only a foolish heaping that must inevitably fall back upon and destroy its makers in the end’ (Wells [1895] 1969: 105). For Benjamin, reflecting on Paul Klee’s 1920 monoprint ‘Angelus Novus’, history is not, as ‘we perceive[,] a chain of events’, but rather ‘one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage’ (Arendt 1969: 257), and a ‘pile of debris’ (258). *The Time Machine* anticipates and illustrates Benjamin’s thesis – with a likeness between Wells’s Time Traveller and Klee’s Angel (in Benjamin’s reading), for whom ‘a storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned’ (258). And this heaping and piling finds an echo too in the multiplicity of bodies in pornography across this time frame: the single, posed female of glamour (of the 1940s and 1950s), through to the sequences of erotically posed females (of much of the 1960s), then couples making love along with – via a philosophical impulse, towards swinging, as will be discussed – copulating multiples (from the late 1960s onwards), and thereafter to pile-ons of scrums of bodies (towards and beyond the millennium). My chronology, then, mimics the narrative of *The Time Machine*; and my analysis, which also finds forgotten visions of futures in the past, shares the uncertainties voiced in that novella’s epilogue. And any sociological bent in my analysis draws on the lesson of Forster – the other or hidden life story or stories, available via this history of sexuality, that can now, belatedly, be told, suggesting a more compelling narrative of society and codes of respectable living.

This is how the material under scrutiny shapes the organisation of this book. Particulars of the methodology will follow. Before this, however, and still in introductory mode, it is appropriate to turn to a blunt foundational example of class stratification, and codes of respectable living – the 1945 David Lean film of Noël Coward’s *Brief Encounter*. This is in order to consider how John Hefin’s thesis can prompt an analysis of the determination of the erotic imagination by class, even in the nominally, metaphorically ‘buttoned-up’ melodramas of propriety, which would seem to represent the polar opposite of the literal unbuttonings of pornography.

The Soul of *Brief Encounter*

Brief Encounter is remembered as a famously repressed film, even to the extent that it is sometimes read or reimagined as a closeted gay text (as with Medhurst 1991), in part prompted by Coward's discrete homosexuality, and perhaps even the film's title. Indeed, the philandering male protagonist of *Brief Encounter* could be taken as a certain 'bachelor' type, and would have been born roughly at the same time as Forster's Maurice. He is now middle-aged, still unattached, outwardly respectable, inwardly adrift, and looking for fulfilment in improper love affairs conducted surreptitiously, and liaisons in public places – before heading off to a posting in the colonies (and out of scandal's way, to mine the clichés). *Brief Encounter*, in the context of this study, which is in part grounded in film history studies, also marks the first and one of the few glimpses of familiar territory. So this choice perhaps lends some reassurance to the historian of British cinema that elements of the foundations of this study also rest on a film that is omnipresent in considerations of British film history; McFarlane observes that '[i]t seems that anyone who has ever written about British cinema has had to come to terms with *Brief Encounter*' (McFarlane 2015: 47).

Brief Encounter offers limited comic relief from its bourgeois romantic drama – a married mother, Laura Jesson (Celia Johnson), fails to begin an affair with an unmarried doctor, Alec Harvey (Trevor Howard) – by contrasting the pained and halting romantic entanglements of the middle-class protagonists with those of two lower-class workers. For the latter, a kindly if bluff railway station guard, Albert (Stanley Holloway), expresses amorous affection to the prim if shrill Myrtle (Joyce Carey), who presides, regally, over the station tearoom, and whose clumsily assumed airs and graces render her reticent to reciprocate. The middle-class romantic entanglement is so pained that Laura and Alec only kiss very belatedly in the film, after endless hesitation, soul searching, talk and reflection. Prior to that, erotic frissons are limited to looks and, almost unbearably, to the moment that Alec discretely places his hand on Laura's shoulder and squeezes it as he takes leave of her in the station tearoom without alerting an unwelcome interloper, a friend of Laura's, that infidelity is in the air. Laura first edges into 'emotional infidelity' (in the contemporary legalese associated with divorce and relationship counselling), then they kiss, and he leaves permanently for a new life in Johannesburg, South Africa. She momentarily contemplates suicide – an exit from an impossible situation, or self-inflicted capital punishment for her behaviour –

but returns to her husband and family life. The historical context of Laura's self-control is quite precise: stoicism under fire, the keeping up of appearances (including the mostly successful holding back of tears), and refusing to buckle under pressure, were qualities that were understood to have been necessary – essential even – to a London bombed and blitzed in the years immediately prior to the film's setting.⁴ When urban societal collapse was understood to be a real possibility, this firm control of feelings, and the mandates of decorum and politeness, and maintenance of mores, all mostly via self-denial or repression, or hot tea pick-me-ups, can be read as a home front against the Nazi onslaught. Even the shoulder squeezing is a reassuring act. That import was painfully apparent with the juxtaposition of two Robert Capa images, placed next to each other in the 2011 exhibition *Eyewitness: Hungarian Photography in the Twentieth Century* (Royal Academy of Arts, London). The first was the 'Face in the Surf' image of the 1944 'Magnificent Eleven' shots for *Life* magazine – that celebrated split-second blur of an American soldier propelling himself from the sea onto the Omaha beach in Normandy, to meet his enemy and perhaps death. The second was 'London, England, evening tea in an air raid shelter' (1941), which foregrounds an elderly air raid warden, with a look of kindly concern, talking to an elderly woman, seemingly in a borrowed overcoat, perhaps fearful of the destruction of her home. They sit by tea-making items, on a barrel draped with a makeshift table cloth. 'Evening tea' offers a shaken dignity under pressure, to the determination, despite fear, on the face of 'Face in the Surf'. And both qualities, in the witnessing of this Hungarian photographer, are understood to have been equally essential.⁵

The particularity of the somewhat unglamorous (relative, that is, to the norms of female leads of this time) role of Celia Johnson in this is precise too: her 'station' in life, as Laura, is to be respectable and middle class. She cannot talk as freely of love or affection as the workers who momentarily and periodically share her space in the railway station tearoom (and who seem perhaps to have been sexually active, and so freer in that way too). Lean ensures that the shared space is nonetheless appropriately organised: segregation via an unforgivably long tracking shot in the first scene, which wrenches the viewer away from the tearoom counter and flirtatious banter, and finds Laura and Alec huddled over a table, nursing their drinks and their ethical and moral dilemmas. Such imbalance, and discarding of the 'lower orders' in this movement is, for McFarlane, 'one of the recurring problems of British cinema of the period' (McFarlane 2015: 57). But Laura nonetheless seems to set the example of propriety for the workers. If she cannot,

who will? And her final reluctance to detach herself from her family maintains that cell of regeneration that will outlast the Second World War and come to repopulate, and shore up, the dull city suburbs of the film's setting. This is her class's role and destiny. Patterns of sexual behaviour in pre-1945 suburbia are seen to be either absent, or contained within marriage, or (for the working classes) somewhat ridiculous. Laura's crime, in this context, seems to be as much about an ambiguous measure of intimacy with Alec as seemingly missing sexual desire and dallying with thoughts of becoming reacquainted with it, outside the comfort and familiarity of her marriage.

Laura's wayward thoughts are manifest, or let rip, in a fantasy sequence, in which she dreams of escape to an exotic, intimate and safe space with the urbane Alec. The romance is clichéd – whether on the part of the makers of the film, or as indicative of Laura's limited mental creativity (she claims she feels 'like a romantic schoolgirl – like a romantic fool!' in this moment), or as playing to the assumed understanding of what the audience of *Brief Encounter* would read as fantasy. Prior to this, a shot in which Alec and Laura kiss in a rubbish-strewn underpass is suddenly revealed to be a revelry, when Laura's armchair, and Laura, fade into the foreground of the scene. This reconfigures Laura as a spectator or curator of her own memories, now briskly pulled back from her revelry into reality by the voice of her husband, from the family living room in which the armchair is actually located. Thus, the mundane everyday of the film, for a crucial stretch, is usurped by fantasy. But even in this, in the voice-over that represents her conscience, the incredible formality of Laura's language remains; the politeness and properness is seemingly neurological: 'I imagined being with him in all sorts of glamorous circumstances. It was one of those absurd fantasies, just like one has when one is a girl being wooed and married by the ideal of one's dreams'.

The societal example that we find in Laura is both actual and psychological: yes, the public example is how one behaves and appears, and indeed quietly lives one's life, and it exerts control over how one is seen in public (it is Alec who pushes for kisses, and Laura who worries about being seen). But the example is also how one ought to think, and the rhetoric one uses as one talks to (and scolds, and contains) oneself. This voice-over is followed by a complicated shot: Laura's face reflected in the window of her train carriage, but seemingly oblivious to the passing countryside and 'seeing', instead, chandeliers, and herself and Alec (in ball gown and dinner jacket) dancing. In this way, her reflection is effectively superimposed on her fantasy, allowing for material, present reality to be pushed back into the

frame (the blur of the passing landscape, the sound of the train), which is otherwise full of fantasies of escape from suburban existence. So romantic fantasy is seen to contain the very conditions of its generation: both the dull suburbs and the plush escape, simultaneously within the frame, for a jostling between Laura's daydream revelry and her conscious awareness of her surroundings. She frames the vision of this imagined couple being 'perhaps a little younger than we are now, but just as much in love' – that is, imagining what might have been, had they met before she married and, by implication, before she had aged in or into that marriage. And then to Paris, in a box for an opera – Alec lifting Laura's fur coat from her shoulders, now erotically exposing the flesh that, before, he had reassuringly squeezed. And then to Venice, kissing in a gondola. And then to an open-top car, and then to the balcony of a ship, with a sunset reflecting in the sea, and then to a 'tropical beach in the moonlight, with the palm trees sighing above us', until the image returns to the dull British countryside, 'and all those silly dreams disappeared'. It is an incredibly chaste sequence, delivering only the exotic, and barely the erotic.

The cruel ripostes to such imaginings – the way in which the film ensures those 'silly dreams' really do disappear – come thick and fast, as with the sight of a railway station advertisement for Llandudno, which is included in the sequence of their first kiss. Llandudno would seem to be the limit of exoticism actually on offer to this couple: a windswept Welsh holiday spot (the weather of *Brief Encounter* is blustery and autumnal) rather than ball gowns and furs, tropics and ocean cruises. The romance, or the potential of the romance, is confined to wishful thinking and daydreaming. What, after all, actually happens? In terms of what Lean shows us: just a bit of one-off smooching.

Brief Encounter, like a number of British films from the early/mid-1940s, seemed to attempt to imagine the coming peacetime life – a validation of 'what we are fighting for' (or, less prosaically: why lives had been expended). And this *Brief Encounter* suburbia would need to fulfil the role of the peacetime utopia of wartime aspirations: quiet cul-de-sacs and semi-detached houses of modest size in which replacement lives could be generated. The nominal setting of the film is a fictional 'Ketchworth' – strongly signalling Letchworth, that pleasant garden city, given over to sympathetic town planning, a uniformity of appearance for its new residential areas, and fights in town pubs, that would come to find a place in the commuter belt for London workers, another locality, and a template for further regeneration.⁶ Indeed, this would be just the kind of nest area for the 'marriage to post-war repopulation' noted above. And freedoms within that suburban utopia would

need to be granted in order to create a second iteration of the home front for the Cold War – this time against the restrictions and dearth of fun understood to typify life on the other side of the Iron Curtain. For the fight against communism, there would necessarily be a lifting of repression and a loosening of mores in the West.

Even as the film pierces the respectable facade, and breaches privacy in rendering Laura's stream of consciousness (an inner monologue in voice-over, structured as a confession to her husband, in which she frets over her yearnings, chides herself for untoward feelings, or observes that those in sunnier climates are freer with their affections), the resulting revelations nonetheless reveal a sexual imagining that is entirely locked into Laura's own class. And class structures, here, determine sexuality in an entirely custodial way, imprisoning those who conform, punishing those who do not, as in *The Wicked Lady* (Leslie Arliss, 1945) and *Black Narcissus* (Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger, 1947). The freedom to cross class boundaries, and the sexual possibilities that arise with that, will be bestowed on the next generation – that of Laura's children – and not on this one. (Tellingly, then, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, the 1928 D.H. Lawrence novel that concerned just such cross-class desire, would not be published in an unexpurgated version in the UK until 1960 – perhaps, then, something Laura's children would have read.)

In his discussion of the evolution of the British strip club, Elsom notes the legal injunctions against moving nude models (self-moving, that is; rotating platforms with still models were deemed to be acceptable). So that, seemingly, in the mid-1960s, it was possible to see Paul Raymond's glamour models 'in lion's dens, on revolving stages, under waterfalls, even *in ice*' (Elsom 1973: 179; emphasis in the original). The Lord Chamberlain held the power to veto stage productions (and with Sir George Titman assigned to inspecting strip shows), and a common joke concerning this ran 'a nude was rude if it moved' (quoted in Capon 1972: 87). And this maxim even extended to shivering in the cold – making one model's task, of standing still while freezing (as her brother threw axes at her), impossible to the extent that a 1957 King's Lynn show had to end early (see Davenport-Hines 2013: 142–43). The idea of the immobile nude woman encased in ice surely goes to the heart of this discussion of British sexual repression of this period, from the close of the Second World War to the onset of the counterculture. In this respect, pornography can be anticipated as an essential melting of the ice in the British psyche – a defrosting of national frigidity. As *Brief Encounter* illustrates, this must be an operation of freeing imagination, and so loosing fantasy. British pornography,

then, must be located between ideas of class and fantasy. The dialectical tension that arises from such a dynamic for Laura (erotic adventure versus class propriety) then defines her ‘self’, which can be read in those subjective sequences (revelry, voice-over) noted above – a modernist, cinematic stream of consciousness flourishes. But the ideological battles to come, as this stream of erotic revelry swells into pornography, prompts me to locate, more precisely, and in a post-secular way, that ‘self’ – not of the psyche, but in Laura’s soul. After all, Lean disassociates: Laura seems to see herself. This then is not diving into the self, and being immersed in a subjective state. Rather, it is splitting the consciousness away from the body, as if the soul leaves the body, and so is able to judge the body and its action – and, if that stepped-away soul is still unsullied, to be able to right herself.

‘Being Her Means Being Pornography’

Performers who flit through the films under examination in this book may have been in these films against their wills or desires. And a number of such performers seemingly met unfortunate ends. They have not always been, in the romantic Hollywood tradition, taken too young by a tragic caprice of fate or, as if unable to contain their talent, the victims of a terminal surfeit of hard living. Rather, I refer to those for whom their later lives seem to have been marked by a return to the grimier and grimmer ends of the sex industry, and who then disappeared altogether. This then is a variant of, as per Dale Spender’s book, *Women of Ideas and What Men Have Done to Them*. While the ‘done’ remains the same (and Spender [1988: 14] notes how ‘hundreds of women – often influential in their own time – have been made to disappear’), my concern here is with those at the bottom: the notional voiceless everywoman, down on her luck to the point of being exploitable, rather than the martyrdoms of notable women of ideas. But the way in which ‘men have used punitive measures against’ women remains, albeit not just for those who have ‘challenged’ men (ibid.: 8), but also for those who have merely been in their proximity. Even the reassuring cosiness of retro-porn nostalgia, which defaults to ideas of what was once ‘naughty’, and sports an inclusive wryness around the lack of political correctness in these earlier and freer times, has been very substantially tarnished by revelations or intimations of deep connections between some of the personnel encountered in these films and in seemingly vast and still mostly uncharted networks of organised sexual abuse.⁷ It

is striking that few voices from the period are heard about the actual conditions of the porn set for the female performer. As can be imagined, and as Paula Meadows recalls: the performer ogled by interlopers, groped, and in comfortless surroundings, ‘no running water – just someone’s back garage or something’ (quoted in Hebditch and Anning 1988: 94). Such a power dynamic also goes some way to explain the exclusive whiteness of the film-makers considered in this book; a feudal system of exploitation would be weakened, in the context of the times, by the much greater vulnerability of non-white pornographers to the law.

Many of these films can be considered to be evidence for the prosecution, and 1970s feminist writing was quite clear on this matter. *No Turning Back: Writing from the Women’s Liberation Movement 1975–1980*, edited by the Feminist Anthology Collective for The Women’s Press, places the writing on pornography in the ‘Male Violence’ section, rather than the following section on culture (Feminist Anthology Collective 1981: 224–26). And yet the collective’s first task is a critique of those who make the case for the benefits of pornography, with the collective examining the commonality of eroticism in consumer culture, and then assessing the psychological, physiological and physical/biological damage that such a commonality is causing and maintaining: ‘Women are seen as the vehicles for the plastic myth of mechanical, perfect, inhuman, profitable sex. That reduces us to the level of objects to be raped or humiliated, and those situations are reflected in much pornography’ (Women’s Report Collective [1977] 1981: 226). This was more generally theorised by feminist writers as a wider patriarchal strategy of oppression, with pornography as the apex or zenith of a sub-strategy of objectification, and also a warning or threat or illustration of imminent sexual assault, requiring inculcation from cradle to middle age and beyond. Likewise, to feminist activists of this time, pornography was a heteronormative/patriarchal intervention – joining innumerable discourses aimed at making the vagina available to men, and in so doing reducing the status of women, further to the limited gains achieved through feminism. For the Leeds Revolutionary Feminist Group in 1979, these discourses are outgrowths of the Permissive Society (now filtered through to the liberal mainstream), and represent the basis for abandoning heterosexuality altogether in favour of lesbianism:

Penetration

Penetration (wherever we refer to penetration, we mean penetration by the penis) is not necessary [for] the sexual pleasure of women or even of men. Its

performance leads to reproduction or tedious/dangerous forms of contraception. Why then does it lie at the heart of the sexualised culture of this particular stage of male supremacy? Why are more and more women, at younger and younger ages, encouraged by psychiatrists, doctors, marriage guidance counsellors, the porn industry, the growth movement, lefties and Masters and Johnson to get fucked more and more often? Because the form of oppression of women under male supremacy is changing. As more women are able to earn a little more money, and the pressures of reproduction are relieved, so the hold of individual men and men as a class over women is being strengthened through sexual control. (Leeds Revolutionary Feminists 1981: 6)

Andrea Dworkin, in her 1981 book *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*, charted nothing less than the erasure of woman herself, across history, in favour of pornography – stages of (as per Dworkin’s chapters) ‘objects’, ‘force’, ‘pornography’, ‘whores’, and feeding into the sole ‘idea of woman as sexual provocateur or harlot, [as] so consistently postulated in pornography’ (Dworkin 1984: 178). From here, Dworkin sees (as shared with the critical approach of this book) pornography as illuminating or activating a nexus of ideas and assumptions, determining cognition:

In the male system, women are sex; sex is the whore. The whore is pornē [i.e. the shared etymological root of ‘prostitute’ and ‘pornography’], the lowest whore, the whore who belongs to all male citizens: the slut, the cunt. Buying her is buying pornography. Having her is having pornography. Seeing her is seeing pornography. Seeing her sex, especially her genitals, is seeing pornography. Seeing her in sex is seeing the whore in sex. Using her is using pornography. Wanting her means wanting pornography. Being her means being pornography. (Ibid.: 202; Dworkin’s emphasis)

And, further therefore, that ‘the genre [of pornography] insists that sex is conquest’ (Dworkin [1978] 1988: 208; see also 209–10, 219–20). A testing of cognition in relation to pornography occurred in the 1983 public hearings documented in *Pornography and Sexual Violence: Evidence of the Links* (Every-woman 1988), which included Dworkin’s contribution.

Less radical feminist positions than Dworkin’s still tended to read female sexuality as the prized possession of the male – and (therefore) the matter over

which, and through which, control was to be exerted by the male, or patriarchal society, and its functioning in general. This was a particularly generative set of ideas, channelling feminist writing of the 1970s into Women's Studies so as to address, often sociologically, contradictions of the moment, and to trace these contradictions back into historical periods, as with Dworkin's *Pornography*, and the work of Judy Giles (1995, 2004), as well as within the constellation of Michel Foucault's work. The theme of control was explored in relation to legal status, medical status and victim status (especially in respect to sexual assault) in the collection *Women, Sexuality and Social Control* (Smart and Smart 1979), and extended to encompass the entirety of sexual liberation, via the 'challenges' raised by contraception, in Hera Cook's *The Long Sexual Revolution* (2004).

In *Pornography*, for the chapter 'Men and Boys', Dworkin loops such perceptions back to childhood. For Lee Comer, this inculcation is the role of 'Toys, Books and Television', discussed in her chapter of the same name in *Wedlocked Women* (Comer 1974: 29–39); and for June Statham, these same things (and clothes) function as patterns of reinforcement, to be offset by 'non-sexist childraising' (Statham 1986: 97). In this was effectively a socialisation of sexual role models, as founded on rampant and institutionalised misogyny. And, with this line of argumentation, pornography seems the very logical outcome: women as objects of sexual desire, as their primary function, offsetting the problems and irritants of 'keeping' (to use 1970s parlance) the 'little lady' or 'her indoors'. Thus, the sexualised female nude becomes the chief interpretative frame, for the male, of the female in her entirety. Lacanian strains in psychoanalytical thought would be quite familiar with this trope in which man effectively 'creates' woman as a fantasy projection, even to the complete exclusion of the actual woman herself.

Another jokily pejorative term for the female partner, the 'trouble and strife' (Cockney rhyming slang: the 'wife'), was utilised by David Bailey for a collection of his photographs of his then wife, the model Marie Helvin-Bailey. The book is introduced, by Brian Clarke, with the unconsciously Lacanian comment that while Bailey 'has "invented" during his career several women whose images are now part of the corporate psyche', these pictures of Helvin are apart from his usual fashion photography and portraits, as they 'present another view of Marie, sometimes erotic, sometimes cadaverous, but always beautiful' (Bailey 1981: 10). From the intimacy of, the collection suggests, their shared home or hotel suites, and the sense of a consensual, sexually experimental life together, Bailey effectively seems to mount a provocation against feminist criticism across the 1970s. As can be

expected, Helvin is seen modelling lingerie, a little black dress in PVC, elements of bondage gear, flirtatiously blowing bubble gum as if a (nude) schoolgirl, nude on the bed and the floor, in the bath and the attic, and in images reminiscent of the home studio of Bailey's fictional alter-ego in *Blow-Up* (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1966), played by David Hemmings. But Helvin is also contrasted with tailors' dummies in the frame – and as seemingly the nude object of private holiday snaps. And nude but for a missing face: firstly with a white towel wrapped around it (while bringing a tea tray into a bedroom, as if a latter-day harem); and secondly, obscured by a camera (as per Clarke's introduction: the woman is faceless/personality-less, until Bailey has utilised his camera to 'invent' as much). The final image of the collection is Helvin as if a corpse, on the bare floor of the attic, wrapped in string and (bar for her exposed genitalia), head-to-toe in newspaper. A wicker basket placed next to her could be for body parts, as if this was a scene-of-crime photo, a serial killer having been disrupted in his post-rape task of dismemberment. The newspaper headlines wrapped around her seem carefully selected: those words that can just about be discerned include 'father / her jea[lous] husband', 'blow-up', 'chump', 'dream', '...bate' next to her genitalia; and, across the head, 'have a go'. And the biographical note on the back cover that immediately follows the image shows Bailey and Helvin, young and serious: 'Mr and Mrs David Bailey'. Bailey's recreations of domestic eroticism at the dawn of the 1980s seem to bait critics of pornography by freely providing the evidence to substantiate all their accusations: seemingly demeaning practices of domination, degradation and humiliation, an air of violence, and women considered in solely sexual terms. And yet Bailey's rejoinder is the suggestion of a recasting of such power games and masochistic tendencies (on, of course, the part of the woman), in the context of sexual experimentation, and straight male-to-beloved obsessive adoration. Here, if the sexualised female nude becomes the chief interpretative frame, for the male, of the female, then this is seemingly the start of the relationship, not the end of it. And *Trouble and Strife* chronicles the way in which the relationship then develops into psychological maturity. One problem with such a position, here from the quarter of 'classy' erotica, is that it still denies the female autonomy, beyond an assumed choice to be submissive: she remains the object of attention of the unseen other (Bailey's shadow appears in one shot alone). So this liberation, for women, is reformist, and purely on the basis of the male retaining his dominant role. And it is a liberation that effectively shows, critically or otherwise, the validity and scope of the feminist critique of pornography across the 1970s.

No Sex Please, We're British

Yet to have acted, in the 1970s, on a sense of distaste or repugnance for the pornographic text would have been to have found oneself siding, by association, with the censorious moralists then in the ascendancy, and with their own misogynies. And, indeed, the censorious moralists occasionally cited feminist positions as aligned with their own, despite ideological differences – as if porn, as an absolute evil, prompted a popular front, uniting groups at either end of the political spectrum. Ruth Wallsgrove expressed this disorientation in the feminist magazine *Spare Rib*: of finding herself, as a feminist, seemingly aligned with anti-feminists – as caught '[b]etween the Devil and the true blue Whitehouse' (Wallsgrove 1977: 44), whose 'reason for attacking pornography is precisely the opposite to mine' (46). She concludes:

I don't want to choose between Mary Whitehouse and the producers of [the pornographic magazine] High Society, between two equally unacceptable alternatives... I believe we should not agitate for more laws against pornography, but should rather stand up together and say what we feel about it, and what we feel about our own sexuality, and force men to re-examine their own attitudes to sex and women implicit in their consumption of porn. We should talk to our local newsagents – many of whom feel pressured into stocking porn – or picket porn movies, or walk down Oxford Street with our shirts off. We must make it clear that porn is a symptom of our sexist society ... We must choose a third alternative – Women's Liberation. (Ibid.: 46)

A middle way between the two was also possible, with prolific romantic novelist Barbara Cartland condemning both nude models and women's liberation when interviewed in, disconcertingly, the exploitation documentary *The Anatomy of a Pin-Up* (David Cohen, 1971).

Right-wing pressure groups around anti-pornography activist and spokesperson Mary Whitehouse also took the fight to gay rights (as Wallsgrove notes), to feminism (blamed in part for 'causing' infidelity and homosexuality, as discussed below), and to blasphemy. No quarter was permitted for any form of progressive justification, or intimation of the common freedoms of the 'Permissive Society', in this popular front. The Whitehouse position was effectively that of 'No Sex Please, We're British' (as per the name of the British farce, discussed below).

I will engage further with Whitehouse's ideas later, as I wish to layer these in, in relation to the evolution of the ideological positions of the Conservative Party in the 1970s, rather than try to assemble and summarise a coherent position on her part. However, it is now time to introduce Mary Whitehouse (1910–2001), founder of the Clean-Up TV Campaign in 1964, and of the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association (NVALA, sometimes abbreviated as VALA) in 1965, and a ubiquitous and rambunctious media presence from the early 1970s onwards.

Whitehouse's groups seem, in part, to have effectively enabled sexual abuse by allowing some of the figures that she associated with to assume a saintly persona via their roles in her networks. Ridicule for their upstanding and unmodish declared beliefs and standards, via the public derision that could come from a connection to Whitehouse, would only have further obscured their opportunism. Almost any 1970s political grouping would have had a concern for internal security and potential infiltration (and Whitehouse was well aware of the latter from the protests mounted from within the venues she spoke at), and yet in this instance, Whitehouse – even indicating a slight awareness that things were not as they seemed – seemingly did nothing.⁸ More than just two examples would be possible, but the two most extreme examples follow nonetheless, concerning now-deceased figures whose crimes are well documented.

In her final autobiography, Whitehouse reproduces some comments on Jimmy Savile (1926–2011), an equally rambunctious public figure, further to watching, and seemingly being involved with, an episode of his BBC television show *Jim'll Fix It* (broadcast between 1975 and 1994):

Jimmy spoke very kindly about our work and he was very touched by the 'We've fixed it for Jim' medallion which we had specially made for him. The team responsible for the show is quite obviously committed to something way beyond just the production of a programme. Some of the stories they told about the way in which they get involved with the children were very moving, like the one about the little girl Jimmy said he was going to marry and they got engaged with a huge cuddly toy just a few days before she died. ... [Savile] added 'While Mrs Whitehouse possibly wouldn't agree with my personal lifestyle, it is through organizations like hers that there is some semblance of decency'. Well, I don't know anything about Jimmy's lifestyle and, in any case, it's no business of mine. (Whitehouse 1994: 88–89)⁹

The lifestyle was one of serial sexual assault, of adults and children, across many decades, including terminally ill children – to the extent that it is difficult to think that the child mentioned in this passage was spared (see Davies 2015). Indeed, Savile seems to have engineered *Jim'll Fix It* to facilitate further abuse opportunities for himself (O'Mahony 2012). Davies also notes Whitehouse with respect to Savile's moves to establish a powerbase via notable acquaintances (Davies 2015: 276–77). The halo awarded then would hold good for intimate access to royals (the 'squidgy tape', noted below, included a discussion of Savile as a placating marriage go-between for an arguing royal couple; see Booth 2012), and cautious silence or rumour-dispelling endorsements from later generations of television entertainers (as with David Mitchell: 'Jimmy Savile and child molestation – it rings true without being true'; Mitchell 2012: 117).

A second example is apparent in Whitehouse's *Mightier than the Sword* (1986), which goes out of its way to expose the Paedophile Information Exchange (PIE). A Foreword by her then regular barrister John J. Smyth, QC, includes: 'I have no doubt that history will give her a place amongst that select band of men and woman who in the name of Christ have done so much ... behind every engagement [of Whitehouse's] there is a preparation of prayer and dependence upon her Lord' (Whitehouse 1986: 9, 10). Smyth was with Whitehouse at a Festival of Light rally in 1971, discussed below, was Whitehouse's go-to for legal prosecutions, and appeared on television with her – a partnership across more than a decade (Graystone 2021: 20, 85). Smyth had been accused of sexualised violent beatings of over one hundred boys and young men, accessed through his chairmanship of the Church of England Iwerne Trust, which specialised in running holiday camps (Graystone 2021: 185). This Foreword was written after Smyth had fled the UK for Zimbabwe (where he carried on as before, and was later charged in relation to the death of a boy; see Laville 2017), after an internal report commissioned by the trust, but not then made public, verified these allegations. He died before prosecution was possible (Williams 2018). Whitehouse notes that God was effectively informing her decision making in terms of allies and court appearances (see Tracey and Morrison 1979: 11, 15, 54); in this respect both Smyth and God badly let Whitehouse down, although God seems to have been more adept at ensuring a flow of cash into the group when needed (54). Whitehouse's sensibility and operations were very reminiscent of clericalism, which was the assumed authority base that enabled and accommodated child abuse in various church organisations, as abusers were afforded a respect that removed them from suspicion, and even questioning.

Despite the subsequent, and very substantial, blackening of the reputations of some public moralists of this time (more of whom are encountered below), as part of the revelations after Savile's death, it is disconcerting to find that some of broadsides emanating from Whitehouse, relating to the mechanisms of the corruption of the innocent, were quite correct – including in relation to strategies around paedophile rights. Likewise, a 2016 report into the derelict nature of the running of the BBC's weekly pop music chart show, *Top of the Pops* (broadcast from 1964 to 2006), with the event read as becoming an opportunity for serial sexual assaults across a number of decades, would have held few surprises for 1970s campaigners looking to 'clean up' television.¹⁰ For Whitehouse, *Top of the Pops* was a showcase for violence and anarchy (Whitehouse 1978: 43), and resulted in, for example, group masturbation among 'small boys' (see letter reproduced in Thompson 2012: 101–2).

The issue for the moralists was not so much that of, as it were, public littering (the occasional deposit of unwelcome material, against which legislation already existed, so that pornographers could be arrested, tried and punished), but of a countrywide pollution. In this sense, with their seeming potential to cause such damage, otherwise unremarkable cultural artefacts and films are afforded a much-enhanced importance. As with all moral panics, this unwelcome material was perceived as changing the complexion of society itself and corrupting the very psyche of the nation, for Whitehouse and her associates – and particularly her academic attack dog, the prolific and apocalyptic writer David Holbrook. The idea of a spiritual battle over national and cultural identity, and the collective psyche, and with the British people themselves at stake, is a beguiling and energising notion in terms of considering British film-making and pornography. Perhaps pornography deserves such exaltation? This is not, after all, merely the violent, or the merely lascivious, or simply impious, forms of entertainment, as with so many other British Board of Film Censors (BBFC) certificated and commercially released films that attracted conservative ire.

My approach then is both historical and conceptual. That is, firstly, that the pornographic films are specific to their points of origin, and so can be considered as artefacts of a nation's culture – which is the historical frame of this study. Secondly, the pornographic films are generators and enablers of that sense of culture – which is the conceptual frame of this study. This approach, rather than re-engaging with an already articulate historical feminist or somewhat threadbare moralist critique, is the way in which this book will primarily consider British

pornography. To do so, it will first be necessary to outline a conceptual approach to film and national identity, beyond the standard Film History paradigms that are typically deployed.

Methodology Note #1: From National Identity to Collective Imagination

What is the relationship between fictional film and a sense of national identity – specifically, for this book, a British national identity? Reading films in relation to a sense of national identity and culture, in the fields of Cultural Studies, Film Studies and Film History, has been a methodological challenge for film scholars. Any cultural artefact can be understood to express a sense of its belonging to (in the sense of originating from) a certain place and time, and critical methodologies often seek to tie its form and content to that certain place and time. But this is typically a linear, sequential progression: the cultural artefact is seen to reflect something extant, so that the film is in receipt of ideas from the outside world. The presentation of a station guard in *Brief Encounter*, for example, is understood to reflect how station guards were, or were perceived to be, during the period in which the film was made. So the film is not only in receipt of information, but it validates that information too, through the process of representing the typical. In this sense, the cultural artefact also effectively creates and so normalises, and then transmits back out, such notions. Therefore the cultural artefact is generating a sense of society too: a non-linear progression that reverses the sequence – now the reflection of society becomes the template for that society itself, against which, in my example, the normality of station guards can be measured. Arguably, *Brief Encounter* worked to show the audiences of its time how and how not to behave when beset by opportunities for infidelity. This process is typically understood by film scholars to be enacted with films that have at least a nominal engagement with social reality, and often deploy realism or naturalism. Indeed, McFarlane notes that *Brief Encounter* was received as high realism at the time of its release (McFarlane 2015: 58–59). The questions of fair and reasonable representations of minority or un- or under-represented or marginalised groups, particularly in forms of popular culture such as soap operas, flow from this thinking with regard to processes of normalisation. Indeed, as Comer (1974) and Statham (1986) understand about this process too, as noted above, a variety of cultural streams or discourses (toys, books, television, clothes) can come together,

mutually reinforcing each other, to germinate and disseminate objectionable messages and ideas. Culture, in this transmitter sense, is read as being affective in developing feelings in the audience concerning right and wrong, appropriate or inappropriate, typical or unusual.

For Jeffrey Richards, in *Films and British National Identity*, the dissemination is a function of state – a way in which the state establishes and continues to talk about itself:

Once the national identity has been defined, it can be promoted and spread by a whole range of institutions, events, symbols and ceremonies ... The practitioners of both elite and popular culture, and later the mass media, therefore play a central role in defining and disseminating national identity, values and character. (Richards 1997: 2)

This process is typically read as a soft propaganda model – akin to an Althusserian reading of media as an Ideological State Apparatus. Richards goes on to apply such a notion to a reading of film through, for example, a discussion of British character (equitable, selfless, virtue-endowed, morally superior, civil-minded) in terms of films that ‘dealt with’ (in the vaguest possible sense) the empire – the ‘British Imperial Heroes’ of *Sanders of the River*, *The Four Feathers* and *The Drum* (Zoltan Korda 1935, 1938, 1939 respectively). In these, ‘the man is the message’ (Richards 1997: 40). Or, for a later discussion of *Brief Encounter*, Richards is able to move to a more diffused form of reading: seeing beyond that which now feels like ripe melodrama (as the realism that McFarlane notes now seems terribly dated), Richards finds something that is ‘both documentarily and emotionally true’ – the former not literally but in relation to ‘the precise evocation of a middle-class woman’s existence in the Home Counties in the 1930s and 1940s’ (ibid.: 124–25). Richards problematizes all aspects of received and recreated notions of national identity.

The transmitter model seems more appropriate to moments of state crisis than moments of social crisis. British film can be taken to have had a particular role during the times of state crisis – and the development and propagation of ideas of ‘the typical’ serve to shore up certainties endangered by a besieged or changing state (as associated with the ending of the British Empire, or times of war). During times of social crisis or upheaval, film can be read as being effectively in reception mode: mirroring, even trying to make sense of, a confusing reality. This results in

the artefact that later seems to ‘reflect the times’. For Sue Harper and Justin Smith, in confronting a body of films associated with one decade (the 1970s) in which a sense of national identity was understood to have been in a process of fragmentation (i.e. a social crisis), the receptive nature of the film medium is identified thus: ‘Ever since its inception, the medium of film has had a unique function in negotiating the relations between social morality and the emotional hinterland of psycho-sexual life’ (Harper and Smith 2013: 138).

The nature of this negotiation remains uncertain, despite the identified uniqueness of this function to film culture. However, the outcome of the negotiation is seemingly not a settlement across both parties (presumably ‘the state’ and its institutions, as the generators of ‘social morality’, and the people of the state), but that film culture ‘was able to articulate an unusually wide range of responses to social change, albeit in a chaotic and often oblique way’ (Harper and Smith 2013: 232). And this is said to be true with respect to a particular shift detectable across the second half of the 1970s and its ‘ideological rupture in consciousness’, and as related to (referencing Raymond Williams) ‘new structures of feelings’ (ibid.). Consequently, as with Richards’s reading, film remains indexical – reflecting extant matters, dealing with found reality. In this sense, the films reflect or generate a sense of national identity, in the flow of typification or normalisation. But, for Harper and Smith, at a time of social upheaval, the circumference of the reflection is expanded. Areas of the reflection now include the non-extant, and psychology – that is, the felt or imagined or desired or feared, the ‘mood of the times’, as it were. And film seems to be trying to make sense of the confusion of social upheaval, consciously or otherwise – as if trying to locate what is typical, so as to normalise it for transmission, but being unable to find the typical, and so the transmission becomes garbled, but remains more enlightening in its garbled state than any questionable and selective shoring up of normality. This is an expansive critical approach, and one that moves to a consideration of auteur film-making (which identifies an interpretative singular intelligence behind the camera) over industry film-making (where the soft propaganda function can be read as the product of multiple intelligences at work). This means that, for their study, *British Film Culture in the 1970s: The Boundaries of Pleasure*, a full range of films from mainstream to avant-garde fall under examination (including some ‘low’ sexualised comedies too), as all the films can be read as striving to reflect/articulate more than found reality. Thus, *Confessions of a Window Cleaner* (Val Guest, 1974) is grouped with films that very actively sought to engage with, and deconstruct, ‘difficult’ social/sexual

mores (from incest/child abuse to the 1970s persecuted queer underground) – Peter Whitehead’s *Daddy* (1973), Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen’s *The Riddles of the Sphinx* (1977), Ron Peck’s *Nighthawks* (1978) and Derek Jarman and Paul Humfress’s *Sebastiane* (1976). *Confessions of a Window Cleaner* is ‘nuanced’ (presumably from such art house cinema) however, as this film (and the subsequent *Confessions* films) ‘addressed a young, working-class audience’ through ‘pop soundtracks and denim fashions’ (Harper and Smith 2013: 145). And the films, in this framing, merely ‘display a new liberalism in their espousal of sexual freedom’ and ‘propose, without hint of irony, that sexual freedom can be available to all’ (ibid.). My contention is that this end point of analysis, for Harper and Smith’s catholic overview, can now be positioned as the starting point of an exploration of such ‘new structures of feelings’ and ‘psycho-sexual life’. And, indeed, this might allow access to a deeper strata of national identity – to (pace Whitehouse et al.), some kind of national psyche that is particularly vulnerable and so, once assailed by pornography, may potentially damage a sense of national identity altogether. To move towards such an analysis, it is necessary to outline a more sophisticated model of reading film than along the lines of transmitter/receiver/reflector, and sense or no-sense maker. That is – to move away from discretions of film criticism to wider considerations (ideological, partisan, technocratic, rallying, ‘spiritual’) from those unversed in the discourses of film criticism, but espousing ideas of the role of film, and art in general, in life.

Within the standard paradigm of film history, via the idea of the theatrical play reflecting life (that is, in terms of deploying a straight naturalism or realism), the film can only really be read in terms of its relationship to found, material reality. So film is taken as a mirror to known life itself: indexical, familiar, representative, empathetic – a recreation of, a documentation of, life. But what if films are read as grounded within a sense of the familiars of that reality, but in the context of the immaterial: thought and psychology; that is, the immaterial as that which can be taken as the aspirational, fantastical, utopic, furtive, with film as reflecting or recreating ideas of fantasy rather than found reality? This is not a particularly unusual or abstract turn: whole swathes of media (lifestyle television, advertisements, the media discourse of politics) essentially operate along this line of departure. As per the cliché, the car advert is not so much selling a car as selling a lifestyle. And effective propaganda also conforms to this model to an extent: it needs to diagnose not only that which is wrong with found reality, but how the proposed remedy will (even if only via suggestion) right the situation. This is the

conceptual turn I mention in terms of my critical approach to pornography – and my point of departure from standard Film History approaches.

But I need to identify a further stage of consideration in this. The makers of the car advert present a lifestyle, for which the car is presented as essential. For smaller and cheaper cars, aimed at younger buyers, this seems to include, as per the adverts, trips out with friends in the sun, informal sports and picnics in the countryside; the car allows transport of, and access to, a loved one, and the ability (in the car) to have some alone-time with that loved one. It is unlikely that this is the lifestyle to which the advert makers themselves aspire, so they are not speaking of their personal preferences, but of the preferences of the potential buyers of the car being advertised. But I now need to identify yet a further stage of consideration. The lifestyle presented is an aspiration (accessed via having the car), but also a *presumed* aspiration. That is, the lifestyle can be read as the makers' assumption or understanding or belief (bolstered, no doubt, by marketing data, focus groups and so on) of the kind of lifestyle that potential purchasers of the car would want to aspire to. The lifestyle to which they aspire will probably not be the lifestyle they may attain, and indeed the car will generally be more useful for mundane domestic duties and commuting than picnics or romantic intrigues. But this articulation of an aspired-to lifestyle, in the advert, then begins to reveal information about the nature of such aspirations, of such unknown and unseen people. That is, firstly, the advert reveals who the makers think their audiences are (and, typically, along gendered and biologically essentialist lines); and secondly, the advert reveals what the makers think their audiences themselves (a) think they are, and/or (b) would like to think they are. Put simply, the car advert makers are peddling an aspirational lifestyle to a group of unknown people, and that aspiration reveals the car advert makers' imagining of the imaginings or imaginations of the unknown people.

Much of this kind of thinking determines Roland Barthes-inspired approaches to the deconstruction of the semiotics of advertising, and the interplay of meanings beyond just, for example, the selling of packets of spaghetti. There even seems to be something in the visualisation of eroticism that organically prompts this critical framing, perhaps because of the violation of privacy through showing intimacy; John Ellis notes, in passing, the defacing of adverts on the London Underground in 1980, with graffiti and stickers – one such is 'KEEP MY BODY OFF YOUR ADS' (Ellis 1992: 152). He notes the way in which the slogan is redolent of the various problems with such critiques – melding representation and reality, finding a limited target for campaigning (over representation of the body), and how "I" refers to

the collectivity of women; “you” is either the collectivity of men who in an undifferentiated way “portray women”, or (as is more probable given the address of most posters) the power elite of marketing personnel’, so that ‘the (male) viewer is left in the same relationship to the poster plus sticker as he was to the poster alone: he is the voyeur to women speaking to the advertisers as he was the voyeur to the women performing in the poster’ (ibid.). As an aside, confined to an endnote, Ellis suggests a corrective: a ‘sticker “Who does this poster think you are?” [which] would be a more effective way of confronting the attitude that advertising promotes’ (ibid.: 169, note 6).

Another useful parallel to this complicated thought process can be found in the work of the French conceptual artist Annette Messager. Messager’s series *Mes Dessins d’enfant* (My children’s drawings, 1971–72) are childlike colour pencil sketches of, seemingly, Messager herself, as if made by an imaginary child of hers. The identification of the mother, in addition to the series title, is also apparent in the words scrawled next to the sketches (complete with spelling mistakes and letters the wrong way around): *Maman avec son chignon* [Mama with her hair in a bun], *Mama met du rouge à levre pour sortir* [Mama puts lipstick on to go out], etc. The sketches do not for a second suggest the kind of technique or artistic achievement one would expect for conventional art works in a gallery, so their existence in this context prompts a series of speculations. For these sketches, Messager adopts the imagination, and mimics the infant drawing, of her imagined child – in order to imagine how her imagined child would see her, with the drawings as the artefact of that imagination. The same is true of another series of ‘better’ drawings: *Comment mes amis feraient mon portrait* [How my friends would do my portrait] (1972–73). These friends may or may not exist, and at any rate it is Messager herself who has made these drawings, not the friends. Critical writing on Messager has then tended to the point of the identification of the self, in terms of reading the images as a way in which art interrogates a sense of self, or plays with ideas of performing oneself – as with, for example, Sophie Duplaix’s essay on Messager, ‘Playing with Forms of “I”’, (Duplaix 2009: 10–21). This is quite typical in terms of evolving ideas of self-performance, and of identity politics in the 1970s, and then even in terms of ideas associated with business or lifestyle gurus (‘how to make a good first impression’; ‘how others see you, how you see yourself’, and so on). And, finally, this became typical in terms of evolving ideas of how the pressures of social media demand the ability to deliver images that meet the idea of a certain look and lifestyle that one may feel one needs to project to others, and

the potentially detrimental nature of such pressures (so that, in his analysis of social media, Ben Light is prompted to argue for the Internet as, counterintuitively, ‘just another space of our everyday life rather than another world’ [Light 2014: 19]). But the use of this concept in Messenger’s art, in terms of my moving towards a more useful or appropriate model of reading fantasy film, is that the images suggest a complicated series of assumed positions. In the childish sketch, one sees how:

- (a) Messenger imagines her imaginary child, or friends, to draw;
- (b) therefore, in this, is something of what these people may be, or may have been, like (since they may or may not exist);
- (c) from this comes the idea of how they see her: in the child’s case, willowy and ghost-like, with towering full-body images; in the friends’ cases, oval-faced, and with a natural look, for portrait-like images (these vantage points denote different heights on the parts of the drawers);
- (d) and how, of course, Messenger sketches herself.

My concern is with the idea of (b): the image that suggests an imagining of the thinking of unknown or non-existent others. For this, I cannot turn to a body of Freudian/Lacanian film theory, in attempting to chart psychology, or the idea of the projection of (rather than perception of) other people. This body of film theory primarily considers, particularly in its intersections with auteur theory, the film text to be the creative imagining of the film director, who is then cast as the patient, or the midwife of enlightenment about various psychological conditions – as with, for example, Kline’s study of Bernardo Bertolucci’s films as a ‘dream loom’ (Kline 1987). Although there is a substantial organisation of the films examined in this book by the film-makers themselves, in relation to the above-mentioned auteur approach, I do not read the films in the standard auteur way, which is the foundation for psychoanalytical approaches to film-making. Rather, the films summon up ideas about the aspirations of others, so there is a distance between the films themselves, and what seems to animate them – and this guides an analytical approach that, nevertheless, remains grounded in close textual reading.

Again, Messenger’s work offers a useful parallel: ‘Back in 1971, with the series called *The Boarders*, I would put little stuffed sparrows on the clockwork mechanisms used in toys, and with keys I’d make them jump about. It was rather touching’ (quoted in Pagé and Parent 2009: 154). In the resultant macabre objects,

the preserved remains of the sparrow are brought back to motion (if not life) by a small motor. So while the effect might be a split-second recognition of a living, hopping sparrow, and a human reaction to this might be one of warmth and care, this recognition is very suddenly revised when one sees this taxidermy ornithonoid at work, to Frankenstein-like ends. Likewise, the films may seem to function ‘naturally’ at first glance, as one would expect, with narratives of love and lust. But one could think again and conclude that what animates these films can be considered as apart from the films themselves: not love and lust as the goal in itself, as with the advertised car, but love and lust as indicative of something else, which is akin to a lifestyle imagined as desirable for an unknown other, by the makers of the film. A clear pornographic tendency parallels this operation: the supposed ‘readers’ letters’ to pornographic magazines – seemingly written by staff writers (despite Anne Hooper’s protestations to the contrary, which open an edited collection of as much from *Forum* magazine; Hooper [1973] 1980: 7). In these, the staff writer imagines a reader’s voice, and in this speculates on what this fictional reader may fantasise about, and then writes up the speculations that the writer imagines may appeal to the other imagined actual readers. It is no surprise then that, in this tangle, tangible scene-setting often occurs in line one of each letter:

‘About 12 months ago I had my first orgasm after 20 years of marriage.’
‘I love going down on my boyfriend and giving him “a trip” as we call it.’
‘One morning I found a copy of your magazine on my front lawn.’
‘Shortly before our marriage 20 years ago, my wife, who was 19 at the time, lost all her teeth due to a severe illness.’
‘The recent fad of streaking now seems to be fading, but during a warm spell in May I did my best to keep it going.’
‘When I was 12, I was sent to an expensive boarding school in Surrey.’
‘My reason for writing to you is that I thought my long experience as a full-time homosexual may be of some use to others have who written to you on the subject.’
 (Hooper [1973] 1980: 23, 64, 65, 67, 160, 222, 251)

And this opening gambit then becomes the recognisable basis for flights of fantasy. Indeed, the very set-up of pornography suggests this is, to an extent, an appropriate approach for the form: the inauthenticity of the biological reactions

and emotions (the outer human skin and appearance, disconnected from the inner self, which may not be organically reacting at all), with the whole lot effectively prompted into motion by the presence of the clockwork mechanisms of the camera pointed at the love-making scene. And so Messager's reanimated sparrows seem like apt metaphors for pornography.

This approach then maintains some distance from other methodological approaches that have evolved to pornography – most ably articulated in Jeffrey Escoffier's work on gay hardcore of yesteryear. Escoffier, in 'Sex in the Seventies: Gay Porn Cinema as an Archive for the History of American Sexuality', cites Laura Kipnis: pornography is 'acutely historical. It's an archive of data about our history as a culture and our individual histories – our formation as selves ... Pornography is a space in the social imagination as well as a media form' (cited in Escoffier 2017: 88). While my approach recognises and builds on these attributes, the proportions are quite different. Escoffier notes the 1970s as the zenith of gay pornography in the United States – and central to an age and culture of libertinism. For Escoffier, the documentation of gay or queer cultures transfigures the films with an inescapable and valuable documentary impulse, as 'even pornographic movies preserve some historical evidence of the quotidian sex lives of gay men in the seventies' (ibid.: 104). And the antecedents or parallels are via acclaimed filmmakers such as Richard Leacock, D.A. Pennebaker and John Cassavetes (105), allowing for an anthropological or sociological impulse in the recovery of yesteryear's pornography. Even Peter de Rome's gay porn (often fantastical, ritualistic, musical) is taken as 'homorealist' (107) – a category that 'walks a fine line between documentary and fantasy' (109), and delivers '*memory images*' (110, Escoffier's italics). And so, in conclusion, 'it is possible to contribute to an ethnography of sexual encounters among gay men in the seventies using homorealist porn movies' (113). The vibrancy of the films, and the out-ness of the culture they drew on or reflected, is such that 'reality superabounds', to use André Bazin's term (Bazin 1967: 27), with documentary realism unavoidably manifest on the screen.

But the case was quite different for pornography – gay or straight – in the UK. This culture was furtive and with limited access, and private wherever possible. It seemed unsure of its right to exist, beyond the boundaries of 'red light' districts – which is why, for the casual visitor finding him or herself in Soho, the experience could be so shocking. And that equivocation has, to an extent, remained intact. So British pornography seems a minor concern: slight happenings, filmed in private,

that only really begin to make sense, or justify their existence, when considered as accesses to other imaginings, rather than as skimmed off from an extant culture. The direction of travel then is quite different: British porn, in my conception, points to historical fantasy images rather than ‘memory images’. This then responds to the feminist critique: the analysis seeks to deconstruct the very content of patriarchal inculcation, via an access to its purest and so most debased discourse: filmed sexual exploitation.

If the pornographic films contain within them intimations of their imagined viewers’ desires, which will then be the way in which I will, in part, read these films, then a further question arises: how do these pornographic films effectively function in respect to imagined viewers’ desires? And external pressures on this question are apparent, for this is not a case study scenario (pervert A enjoys film B because it combines violence with sex, to refer to a typical concern of the BBFC of the 1960s and 1970s) but a universalising of this idea of imagined viewers’ desires. One almost has to think of some kind of collective imagination that exists outside the viewers: a free-floating smog of ideas that seeps into domestic spaces and pollutes those within them. In the Church of England report *Obscene Publications*, it is an ‘unwarranted pollution of the social atmosphere’ (Board for Social Responsibility 1970: 12). This is why the battle is on the spiritual plane, for Whitehouse and associates. And even in terms of feminist thought, Wallsgrove notes the lack of a ‘causal link’ between pornography and rape, but that ‘they are linked in spirit’ (1977: 44, Wallsgrove’s italics). Here, in a classic (albeit unversed) Judeo-Christian theological turn, ‘evil’ resides without, engulfing those vulnerable unfortunates in its proximity. To fight evil becomes a physical matter: the destruction of, or locking away of, items that contain intensities of evil – putting the genie safely back into the magic lamp. So those who have the means of production (cameras, models, lights, rooms, editing facilities, outlets for distribution) have the ability to intervene into, and damage, this collective imagination. This then delivers a very specific potential for those film-makers: not just something as trivial as makers of entertainment, or makers of art, but something more akin to agents shaping the way a nation desires. So, rather than any expected psychoanalytical approach, as centred on an individual figure (the lone viewer and their desires, and speculative reasons for them, and so on), I wish to take as a starting point an approach that draws on Joseph Stalin’s reading of writers as the ‘the engineers of the soul’. But desire, and the soul, are now familiar: that potential endangerment of the soul for those ranged against the

Permissive Society, and (therefore) the soul read as the terrain of battle between desires and propriety of *Brief Encounter*, and that battle as determining life and personality itself.

Methodology Note #2: Erotic Engineers of the Soul

Stalin borrowed a phrase coined by the novelist Yury Olesha, ‘the engineers of the human soul’, for a general conversation with authors in the home of Maxim Gorky, on 26 October 1932.¹¹ This was only months before the ending of the first Five Year Plan – given over to the radical reorganisation of agriculture in order to increase the pace of industrialisation – which would be announced as a success, and engender further medium-term revolutionary strategies to consolidate the USSR’s position as an industrial world power. The second Five Year Plan would run from 1933 to 1937, and would include improvements in transport – one area in which the first Five Year Plan had exceeded targets (albeit accidentally; see Hunter 1973). Stalin’s thinking about the role of writers can understandably be placed, then, at this juncture, with new priorities now spreading to classes not covered in the first plan. The position, and so role, of the artist is understood to be in the realms of an idea of a collective psychology.

The second Five Year Plan included work on the railway network, and the prospect of shuttling rural citizens into new and alien stretches of the country; how they would react would have been a reasonable concern. These were citizens who, only some years before, may have been entirely rustic; Lieberstein notes that ‘[o]f the 12,600,000 workers and employees drawn into industry during the first Five Year Plan, 8,600,00 were former peasants’ (Lieberstein 1975: 53). So some finessing of such social upheavals, in terms of developing a modern, urban sensibility, or a more advanced or sophisticated mindset for the populace, perhaps fast-tracked across a couple of generations (peasantry to proletariat) would have been welcome. In addition, this identification of the role and use of the artist in society then allowed for rearguard action against artists whose work sought to undermine societal cohesion and purpose – as it once had. A.A. Zhdanov, who would codify and operationalise Stalin’s position (‘Zhdanovism’ or the ‘Zhdanov Doctrine’, as then popularly associated with socialist realism) had identified the intelligentsia as actively, damagingly reactive:

Gorky once said that the ten years from 1907 to 1917 might well be called the most shameful, the most barren decade in the history of Russian intellectuals; in this decade, after the 1905 Revolution, a great many of the intellectuals spurned the revolution and slid down into a morass of pornography and reactionary mysticism ... deserters from the camp of revolution to that of reaction, hastening to dethrone the lofty ideals that the best and most progressive representatives of Russian society were fighting for. (Zhdanov [1947] 1975: 518–19)

In the most straightforward way, Zhdanov's conception of the role of the artist was in respect to the battle for ideals. And, in the most concrete way, this battle was literal: those who had lost their lives fighting for the same things that the writers deign to satirise and attack.

So at the point of considering the achievements of the first Five Year Plan, Stalin's concern in 1936 turned to the matter of the developing intellectual life and its wider functions. From 'Changes in the Life of the USSR in the Period from 1924 to 1936', on 'the question of the intelligentsia [including] workers on the cultural front', Stalin hailed 'an entirely new intelligentsia', which – unlike the previous iteration, who had been entirely within the orbit of the ruling classes – was now 'bound up by its very roots to the working class and peasantry'. This was true not least as now '80 to 90 per cent of the Soviet intelligentsia are people who have come from the working class, from the peasantry, or from other strata of the working population'. Consequently,

the very nature of the activities of the intelligentsia has changed. Formerly it [the intelligentsia] had to serve the wealthy classes, for it had no alternative. Today it must serve the people, for there are no longer any exploiting classes. And that is why it is now an equal member of Soviet society, in which, side by side with the workers and peasants, pulling together with them, it is engaged in building the new, classless, socialist society. (Stalin 1953: 685–86)

As Clark notes, this positions the worker-writers 'as intermediaries between the educated and the masses, and as such provide "levers" of the cultural revolution' (Clark 1978: 197). Zhdanov expanded on Stalin's position in a speech for the Soviet Writers' Congress of 1934:

The weaknesses in our literature reflect the fact that consciousness is lagging behind economic life, a state of affairs from which, obviously, our writers are not exempt. That is why unceasing work on educating themselves and improving their ideological weapons in the spirit of socialism are the indispensable conditions without which Soviet writers cannot change the consciousness of their readers and thus be engineers of the human soul. (Zhandov [1934] 1950: 17)

And the remit of ‘changing’ was reiterated as ‘remoulding’ in his closing directives to the Congress:

*Create works of great craftsmanship, of profound ideological and artistic content,
Be the most active organisers of the remoulding of people’s consciousness in the spirit of socialism,
Stand in the front ranks of the fighters for a classless socialist society!
(Ibid.)*

To engineer a soul or a psyche, which might then be termed, in a classic propaganda fashion, as working to manipulate the psychology of the Soviet citizen, can reasonably be taken as needing the ingredient of projection or fantasy. The artistic works look a few steps ahead – to the world to come. And from this perspective, a series of ethical framings of the present can occur: read what is right or wrong as what works for the collective good, or does not, and so speeds up or hinders the progression to the world to come, respectively. And such an ethical sensibility also encompasses the need to be resilient during times of social upheaval, for the times to come, which will be those of social peace. Thus the projection or fantasy becomes the justification of the upheavals and hardships of the present too. In the use of Stalin’s position on art and society, aligned to communism, and for the doctrines of socialist realism, reality was understood to be rendered in two registers: critique of the present, and intimation of the near future – diagnosis and cure, suffering and then reward; in Eagleton’s terms ‘the development of the productive forces, free from the stymieing and blockages of pre-history or class society, to the point where they can give birth to a surplus sufficient for the abolition of labour and the fulfilment of the needs of everyone’ (Eagleton 2010: 101–2). So the heroes of socialist realism do not flounder around

lost in the world, but seem inexorably pointed in the direction of their (or their children's) salvation. And this is an affective endeavour: seeking to inculcate change through art. Clark offers a commentary on the results, in Soviet literature: that '[s]ome writers were so carried away by the Five Year Plan cult of technology that they depicted industrial machines as actually impressing their own rhythms and harmonies on the psyche of the workers who operated them' (Clark 1978: 190), aligned with a universal effort whereby 'social institutions were seen as a sort of assembly line for retooling a human product and turning out the new Soviet man' (ibid.: 192), '[t]he most dramatic illustrations' of which 'can be found in the books about "alien elements". One such source, and a particularly rich one, is the book commissioned to celebrate the White Sea–Baltic Canal project [*Belomorsko–Baltiiskii kanal imeni Stalina* of 1934], an undertaking that used thousands of convict laborers. On almost every page the authors describe how the "human raw materials" were "reworked"' (ibid.).¹² And the reworking itself had both psychological and biological benefits: one character here, an engineer and a former member of the bourgeoisie, developed a quicker pulse and reactions, as well as a faster mind, once he began working for the greater Soviet good, and this new tempo also changed and regulated his breathing patterns. During this process, he experienced a complete disassociation from his former self. This is the kind of position that, in 1932, would be relayed into thinking about mutually enforced and enforcing capitalism, and sexual oppression, by Wilhelm Reich – so that socialism strikes a virtuous and non-censorious relationship with the sexuality that it liberates: 'Only through socialism can you achieve sexual *joie de vivre* ... Socialism will put an end to the power of those who gaze up towards heaven as they speak of love while they crush and destroy the sexuality of youth' (Reich and Baxandall 1972: 274).

One final note is that the White Sea–Baltic Canal book, in its material sense, is then considered an essential tool in the toolbox of the worker:

It was even argued [by proponents of the Five Year Plan] that books should have a direct effect on production itself. Occasional slogans in the literary press reminded writers that 'The Book Is an Instrument of Production', and 'In Order to Conduct a Successful Spring Sowing Campaign We Must Arm Each Kolkhoz Member with a Book, and Likewise Every Sovkhoz Worker and Each Poor- and Middle-Peasant Household'. At a rather higher level of sophistication, a joint appeal of the Education Commissariat and the Federation of Soviet Writers

described the writer's function as 'raising the morale high, inspiring the masses for the struggle, ruthlessly exposing indifference, stagnation and desertion, all of which undermine the plan'. (Clark 1978: 196)

(The Western counterpart is simply that the material item is essential for the worker's leisure, rather than labour.)

From this vantage point, a clear demarcation becomes visible between films that effectively work on expanding the 'soul' (that is, via the work of the artist-engineers: films that dare to show the projection or fantasy, and so educate and galvanise), and films that may stand on the brink of showing this, but cannot or will not. That bar may be entirely due to the regulations of the day. And that bar is apparent in the example of *Brief Encounter* too. This is not just a matter of maintaining propriety, and what can be seen to happen, or should not happen (and so may not happen) to the couple – to be straightforward: sexual intercourse, and a new life together – but also the way in which the imagery itself is limited or curtailed or ambiguous. What is it that is not seen? *The Servant* (Joseph Losey, 1963) ends with an orgy, at the point at which the aristocratic protagonist, seemingly having suffered a nervous breakdown, has been reduced to a bedroom-confined, drink-induced stupor. He falls to the floor and crawls on his hands and knees, and with his former sense of sexual propriety (which was aligned to an appropriate fiancée) now abandoned. Weedman reads the orgy as the moment of the final reversal of power, between upstairs and downstairs (the aristocratic and servant classes), in the context of a crisis-inducing 'crossroads' moment (social, political, artistic) of 1963 (Weedman 2019: 116–17).

But the orgy cannot be seen for the flux of visual metaphors and stylistic flourishes that obscure it. In fact, read literally, this is not an orgy at all: Losey provides images of people walking with some difficulty around a bedroom, some with cognac in hand, or sitting listlessly and staring into the middle distance, and some kissing. The latter group includes the servant kissing the aristocrat's fiancée. For McFarlane this is a 'party sequence, in which the house is invaded by 60s swingers', but he also notes the implicit: 'a pervasive acrid aura of sexuality' (McFarlane 2015: 142, 143). De Rham, also writing on the film, hedges her bets, with 'the final "orgy" scene (as it came to be known)' (De Rham 1991: 154), whereas Palmer and Riley find not only an orgy (and note Losey's agreement on this term), but also see drugs in the hedonistic mix (Palmer and Riley 1993: 60, 61, 45). Losey recalls deliberately wanting to shoot an orgy at which nothing happened – which

begs the question: how, then, is it an orgy? (quoted in Ciment 1985: 230–31). Palmer and Riley also note the jarring shift to visual stylisation for the final third of the film – which effectively then offers a further way of not showing the orgy – as arguably upsetting the aesthetic unity of the whole film (Palmer and Riley 1993: 51–55). For example, the camera seems to join the guest in its lurching about. And all these writers orientate their readings to a homosexual subtext in the film that, arguably, completely fails to break surface.

Losey seems as bold as can be, within the strictures of the time – even almost twenty years beyond the epitome of British buttoned-up emotions, *Brief Encounter*. And, indeed, *The Servant* was passed uncut by the BBFC on 30 September 1963, albeit awarded the ‘X’ certificate. The unintended consequence of working in the area of implied rather than shown is that censorship, or self-censorship, can result in that unexpected problem of making matters look substantially worse than they actually are: the more that is cut away, the worse the (surmised or implied) offences that must not be shown. Ken Russell was fond of telling a story about the removal of the naked wrestling scene between two male protagonists in his 1969 adaptation of D.H. Lawrence’s *Women in Love* in some South American countries. This resulted in the scene of hyper-heterosexuality – now a cut from a door being locked from the inside to two sweaty, unclothed and panting men lying in front of a roaring log fire – being referred to as ‘The Great Buggery Scene’ (cited in Baxter 1973: 180). (But even the film uncut, despite its heterosexuality, was warmly received by the British ‘barely covert’ gay film magazine *Films and Filming* in December 1969, with a cover photo of the naked clinch, at a moment of exertion, and the enticement of ‘more pictures inside’.) And it is this juncture – where the muted suggestions seem even worse – that makes for the tipping point: the time at which it seems better to allow a modicum of the forbidden than, in banning it, suggesting more extreme possibilities. And, indeed, this juncture could be taken as the very foundation for the ‘Swinging Sixties’ in London: to begin to allow rather than to continue to disallow.

As an example of the disruptive consequences of disallowing, one thinks of the famous Lewis Morley photograph of Christine Keeler, taken in the Establishment Club in 1963, at the height of the scandal (‘The Profumo Affair’) over her relationships with a Soviet military attaché and a British politician, and the perceived state security liabilities. This was a scandal that was understood to have helped promote *The Servant*, as the scandal broke at the time of the film’s first release – and one could note the similarities of appearance between Keeler and

Sarah Miles, who plays Vera in the film (two working-class figures who find themselves in the locale of misbehaving aristocracy). And, in relation to this magnitude, for British intelligence officer Peter Wright, the prospect of yet another scandal and, with this, the Conservative Party driven further from office, was one that scared MI5 and MI6 to the extent that they covered up any homosexual variant, in the figure of the confessing ‘Cambridge spy’ Anthony Blunt (see Wright, Greengrass 1988: 213–14, 230, 340–41).¹³ Profumo was, in this reading and in relation to permissiveness, not so much an aberration for the party of decency and the family (and so on) but, as Wayland Young (1963) put it, something already within ‘aspects of Conservatism’. In Davenport-Hines’s later reading, the Permissive Society seems to have been materialised by a number of electrifying ‘good time’ girls (Pamela Green, Stockport’s Norma Ann Sykes aka Sabrina, seen in an early St Trinian’s film, Keeler and her friend Mandy Rice-Davies, and Diana Dors), gaining exposure via newly emboldened newspapers (now wielding an osmotic sexual frankness gained through coverage of legal proceedings) and nightclub shows – all of which suggest swinging and leisure and sexual freedom in a secular, post-marriage capitalist mode, freeing the ‘insulated lust’ of the ‘English sex parties [which] fell short of orgies’ of the 1950s (Davenport-Hines 2013: 126). Comedian and writer Bob Monkhouse’s recollections of partying with Dors in 1952 is quite different: a ‘continuous showing of blue movies on a big screen’ (Monkhouse 1994: 97–98), at first manipulated into having sex for others to watch (through a hidden two-way ceiling mirror), followed by an actress of the day engaging in bestiality for the same crowd (ibid.: 100–101). Dors blamed her manipulative husband Dennis Hamilton for some of this, in her autobiography *Swingin’ Dors* (with cover copy of ‘I’ve been a naughty girl! A frank and full account of the wild life I have lived – and the men I have loved’), (Dors 1960: 101, 122).

Morley’s contact sheets show a variety of standard glamour poses, mostly with a cross-legged Keeler seen from the side, sat in the chair to obscure her breasts but showcase her legs, and glancing, flirtatiously, over her shoulder.¹⁴ But when sat with the chair backwards, so that Keeler’s legs are on either side of the chair’s pinched ‘waist’, and breasts blocked from view by her arms, which are positioned so that the elbows rest on the top of the chair’s back, the resultant image suggest something quite different. The V-like back of the chair (in fact, a knock-off of the more famous Arne Jacobsen chair) suggests the black pubic triangle of this (then) most notoriously sexually active of glamour models – as if the exalted epicentre of this sexual activity, into which the Conservative government has fatally fallen,

which is her vagina, has appropriately grown to cover a third of her body, or even dissect her body altogether. It could be a latter-day variant of Gustave Courbet's scandalous painting *L'Origine du monde*, but now the vaginal 'V' explodes outwards (rather than inwards) and upwards, contained only by the knowing, come-hither look on Keeler's face. In this way, Morley's rendering of Keeler comes to suggest an overgrown, even superhuman, vagina, thrusting forwards at the viewer, and that, with Keeler at the centre of her times, this vagina now hovers disruptively over once polite British society.

And the counter to this tendency, then, is the 'begin to allow' – which could then logically extend to the bluntness of pornography. Here, especially in hardcore, nothing is implied, and all is shown.

Pornography, in these contexts of Whitehouse on permissiveness, of ideas of film and national identity, of Stalin on the role and agency of the artist, is therefore read as showing the possible – the near future that will right the unacceptable present (in the most immediate way: sexual frustration replaced by sexual abundance). And that 'possible' is presented as a battleground: between the censorious who feel that the independent existence of this promise is detrimental to the individual, and so to society at large, and the pornographers, who may speak of libertarianism, but effectively seem to work to supply a series of promises for an assumed audience. The promises themselves then engender, in the manner of socialist realism, rituals and understandings and codes of behaviour: the very clichés of pornographic narratives. And all this lifts the pornographic texts out of the standard modes of reception, especially as regards the transmitter/receiver models of film and national identity, and into a spiritual realm. The soul is endangered, for the censorious, by pornography. The soul is being engineered, for the libertarians, by pornography. And Stalinist terminology around such an idea is consistent with Whitehouse's writing too. And even Max Caulfield, in a mid-1970s hagiography of Whitehouse, noted Stalin's position on the artist as a pole in direct contrast to NVALA's prescriptions for the BBC (whereby less inherent leftist establishment bias would allow for artistic voices from the political right; Caulfield 1975: 88).

My critical and analytical approach to pornography is therefore located between two sets of ideas, both of which are removed from any materialist impulse – even as the pornography itself seems entirely materialist in orientation, illustrating objects of desire that can be possessed or owned. In terms of its historical reception across the timeline of this book, pornography is like a spiritual battle for

the soul of man. In terms of its essence, in the period under examination, pornography evidences sets of working assumptions about the fantasies of man. The next chapter seeks to identify or explain the terrains of the historical reception. And, beyond this, the remainder of this book seeks to identify and explore the assumed fantasies, as created by my canon of British pornographers.

Notes

1. Further discussion, as related to such an idea, can be found in Hefin's (2007) thoughts on casting predominantly Welsh actors for his film *Grand Slam* (1978). The dynamism of the result, for 1970s television films, needs to be considered in respect to Raymond Williams's identification of the pre-emptive self-deprecation of Welsh figures in popular culture at that time (D. Williams 2021: 57). The Introduction to Film Studies course ran from 1994 to 2001 in the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, and was mostly delivered by the two of us. On Hefin's teaching and position in Welsh media culture, see M. Williams 2021a and 2021b.
2. While the film itself seems to exist, styled as *One 100 Lines* on its title card, I have been unable to find the date of its making or release. Lindsay's preferences for presenting performers as schoolgirls in his films resulted in numerous legal problems, discussed below. It is instructive that while the *Knave* article goes into Lindsay's work in detail, and discusses his legal problems (including from the 1974 loop *Jolly Hockey Sticks*), a 1982 profile of Soho sex cinemas for the respectable auteur-centric magazine *Sight & Sound* notes *Jolly Hockey Sticks* as ambitious, but remains unsure of its national origins, let alone its director or the trouble it occasioned (Roddick 1982/83: 21).
3. Cook or Cooke has remained mysterious – see Hebditch and Anning (1988: 213) and Carter (2018). The former reproduce the rumour of his hardcore film *100% Lust*, featuring Christine Keeler. Since this film has remained as hearsay (and then also in relation to other figures encountered in this book), it is possible that it does not exist, but it has the persistence of a story originating in slanderous state propaganda arising from the Profumo scandal, some years later. A comparable incident of attempted character assassination concerned Marianne Faithfull 'caught' receiving oral sex from Mick Jagger, and incorporating a Mars bar, during the Redlands bust, discussed below; see Faithfull and Dalton (1994: 113), Todd (2016). This rumour was referenced in *Performance* (Nicholas Roeg and Donald Cammell, 1970), with a Mars bar glimpsed outside the Powis Square pad of Jagger's character.
4. The actual year of the film's setting is not entirely clear, but it could reasonably have been read as contemporary to its year of release – if the lack of discussion, or evidence, of the experience of wartime life, is discounted.
5. I say 'painfully apparent' because, as I approached the images, I saw that for a fellow visitor, whom I estimated as old enough to have had direct experience of this time, they were too much: he had retired to a bench and was weeping silently.
6. My thanks to Jill Patterson, and her father – my guides to Letchworth. See also Stephenson (2002) on the influence of Letchworth on subsequent urban planning. Edgar Wright's use of Letchworth for *The World's End* (2013) suggests a form of arrested development for those

- unable to leave, tending their pints in the same pubs and succumbing to entropy while their school friends, long since departed, live fuller lives.
7. Retro-porn readings permeate the pre-#MeToo majority of recent studies of British exploitation cinema. On #MeToo and film culture, see Boyle 2019.
 8. For activist infiltration of a Festival of Light rally in Westminster Hall, which involved members of the Gay Liberation Front dressing as nuns (and so dodging the way hippies were being screened and barred from entry), see Green (1988: 380–82) and Grimley (2014: 183). The resultant protest involved heckling, cushion throwing and dancing. The bill for the habits was footed by Graham Chapman, of Monty Python, who would play the figure mistaken for Christ in *The Life of Brian* (Terry Jones, 1979) – a film discussed below.
 9. The Savile quote is from the coverage of the award ceremony, in the NVALA newsletter, *The Viewer and Listener*, of January 1978. The newsletter is much given over to pre-emptive attacks on the 1979 Williams ‘Report of the Committee on Obscenity and Film Censorship’, then in preparation (and discussed below), and paedophilia. Prior to the quote, Savile is disconcertingly clear: ‘It goes to show that happiness is not necessarily connected with the sordid side of life’ (Anon 1978: 1). The accompanying photograph shows Whitehouse in the background behind Savile, and a child perched on Savile’s thigh.
 10. See Chapter 9 of Volume 2 (‘The Jimmy Savile Investigation Report’) of Smith’s report into sexual abuse at the BBC: *The Dame Janet Smith Review* (Smith 2016).
 11. Other variants are ‘of the human soul’ and ‘engineer of souls’; for the source reference, see (Gorky et al. 1977: 25–69).
 12. The project itself featured in dissident writing as a particularly fatal one for the prisoners involved.
 13. Blunt confessed in 1964, the year after the Profumo scandal broke. Wright (1988) notes that the Profumo affair was understood to be a Soviet intelligence operation in some quarters of UK and US intelligence (270), and that the example of Profumo was still unnerving Conservative prime ministers in the 1970s (372–73). Indeed, the 1973 scandal surrounding Lord Lambton (Antony Claud, photographed ‘in bed with two prostitutes, smoking a joint’; Holden 2004: 196) initiated by the husband of the call girl Norma Levy, ‘who later told press that she voted Tory because they had always been her best clients’ (196), suggested that Conservative sexual double standards merrily continued. Sir Henry d’Avigdor-Goldsmid mentioned the scandal in the House of Commons directly in relation to the Profumo affair, but even then seemed unwilling to name the matter directly – ‘the events of ten years ago’ (197) – as if a collective Conservative traumatised remained.
 14. The contact sheets, along with the chair itself (its varnish now somewhat blistered, but the chair clearly never had much in the way of finish) were included at the outset of the Victoria and Albert Museum exhibition ‘You Say You Want a Revolution? Records and Rebels 1966–1970’, of 2016–17. The photoshoot was intended to promote a film about Keeler, which ran into censorship difficulties; see Farmer 2018.