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BLUE MOVIES IN AUSTRALIA: A PRELIMINARY HISTORY

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In the 1890s, for the first time, pictures began to move. Their movement aroused excitement, awe – and fear – among scientists and cultural elites as well as ordinary people. For their first decade, no one knew exactly what moving pictures were capable of, what they could become. There was a wide diversity of practices and responses. 'Moving pictures' meant many things: science, magic, the end of civilisation. It all depended on which sort of movement one emphasised. What preposition mattered most: of, in, or by?

The first type of movement was *of* the pictures themselves. Here, the emphasis was on the way new technologies created visual illusions so that, to the eye, a sequence of static images appeared to be a single seamlessly moving picture. Inventors around the world engaged in feverish competition to create the machines and film medium that would become the standard technology of the future. Would the film width be 8, 28, 35, 63 or 70mm? Would the pictures be photographed at 12.5, 16, 18, 24, or 46 frames per second (fps)? Would they be displayed in a peepshow machine for individual viewers, or projected on to a screen for a crowd of spectators?

A second type of movement was *in* the pictures. Here, the emphasis was on content. Scientists, showmen and artists competed to produce the type of moving pictures that would command the imagination of audiences. Would their pictures capture and re-present the movement of real world events, an aesthetic ideal, magical tricks, or melodramatic fictions? Would the picture last for two minutes or 10, or three hours?

The third type of movement was that stimulated *by* moving pictures in those who watched them. A famous anecdote from the early days tells of audiences becoming anxious, fearful, even panicking and fleeing the theatre as a train projected on to the screen appeared to thunder towards them.[1] More generally, early moving pictures provided shocks, thrills, shudders, as well as quiet contemplation, edification, and aesthetic delight. They moved audiences to tears, to thought, to laughter, to sexual arousal.

While the first two forms of movement, involving the technology and content of moving pictures, have attracted much attention and research by scholars and fans, the third form has only just begun to have a scholarly presence. In this paper, I shall be focusing on that third form. I shall suggest that an understanding of the audiences who were moved by what is generally considered a marginal form of cinema has a significance that reaches well beyond the concerns of traditional film history and give us a unique insight into the shifting contours of Australian society throughout the 20th century.

From the beginning of cinema, audiences were as diverse as the modernising societies from which they were drawn, and their mode of spectatorship ranged from private to public, individual to companionably or exuberantly collective. In the face of such heterogeneity, defining and regulating the appropriate cinematic experience was the subject of intense debate among moralists, cultural elites, regulatory officials and spectators themselves – all seeking to control the cinematic experience for their own preferred futures. Who was the acceptable movie spectator: child or adult; male or female; black or white; working or middle class; individual, couple, family or community? What was the acceptable range of such spectators' intellectual and emotional responses and behaviours?

Not until the second decade of the 20th century did this creative and competitive chaos of technology, performance and spectator response even begin to settle into standard patterns. Historians have been able to identify in the early 1920s the emergence of what is called the classic paradigm of moving pictures: a respectable adult moviegoer sitting in rapt silence with family or friends in the dark of a comfortable and well-regulated theatre, watching a tasteful and morally judicious narrative produced by a major Hollywood studio, photographed on 35mm cellulose nitrate film projected at 16fps on to a screen. There was a minor paradigm available for children, involving a different time of day – morning or afternoon rather than evening – and a different story content – with more action but without moral ambiguity. With slight adjustments (including those for talking pictures), the dominance of these paradigms was maintained well into the 1960s. Dominant, but not all-encompassing. Throughout the 20th century, a diversity of alternative practices co-existed.

I want to sketch the outline history of one of those alternative practices – adult cinema – and to make the case for the importance of its inclusion within film and cultural history, and in the collecting policies of the National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA). It can only be a sketch at this stage, reliant on vignettes and extrapolation, because the dominance of the classic paradigm has until recently dissuaded scholars from broader research and obliterated much of the evidence.

I use the word 'cinema' to indicate a field considerably wider than just 'film'. Cinema certainly includes film as a material artefact, and as an aesthetic and narrative form, but includes as well the set of economic, organisational, social and cultural relations between and associated with producer/creator, distributor, exhibitor, viewer and regulator.[2] More specifically, by 'adult cinema' I mean a general and historically shifting phenomenon, encompassing the set of relations involved in the exhibition of moving images to adult audiences, specifically excluding children. The types of

films, the types of venues in which they were exhibited, and the types of people involved were multiple and varied. For my purposes, 'adult film' covers all films deemed not suitable for children on grounds of sex.[3] More colloquially, these are called 'blue movies'. Pornographic films are a sub-set of adult or blue, not its full definition. Eric Schaefer's definition usefully summarises the range:

> "adult film" [encompasses] a wide range of moving images designed to be shown to adult audiences. Such material is shot and distributed commercially on film (35mm, 16mm, 8mm) and video and can be hard-core (featuring non-simulated sex acts) and soft-core (featuring nudity and provocative situations up to and including the simulated presentation of sex acts). The term "adult film" encompasses early exploitation movies (nudist films, sex-hygiene pictures, and so on) designed to be shown for "adults only", as well as soft-core sexploitation, foreign films with some sexual content that played in art houses and grindhouses, as well as hard core stags, shorts, and features.[4]

Such films were made from the beginning of cinema in 1895 until the early 1980s, when household video machines became available and dramatically changed the quantity and content of sexual representations and the place and experience of their viewing, as well as the economic and regulatory relations surrounding them.

My sketch history will concentrate on adult cinema in Australia up to the 1980s, while recognising both its transnational and more local contexts. As with mainstream film, most adult movies were made overseas and imported into this country. They were subject to – or had to circumvent – Commonwealth censorship at point of entry, after which they were distributed around the country. Between the various States and regions they were subject to significantly different conditions of exhibition, regulation, and public response.

THE BEGINNING OF BLUE: THE PEEPSHOW, CENSORSHIP AND CONTROL

Such qualifications declared, let me begin the story in Sydney, in early 1903. 'Wongim', a theatrical correspondent for the *Bulletin* magazine, described the scene at an amusement arcade where people were enjoying penny-in-the-slot peepshow machines:

> Watching the public at the Mutoscopes came to the conclusion that the machines labelled "High Kicking", "Peeping Tom", "Maiden's Midnight Romp", etc, would soon break down through overwork, whilst those entitled "Riding with Kitchener," "Coronation Scenes", etc, will probably die of starvation. As I possessed a penny at the time, had a look at one of the first-mentioned, and was shocked. When I have another penny am going to get shocked again.[5]

The first Australian audiences to experience the magic of the moving pictures saw them in direct film viewers, or peepshows.[6] Edison Kinetoscope machines were introduced in 1894, and toured the country over the next few years. Despite the introduction of projected pictures in 1896, the peepshows sustained their popularity, even enhancing it with the introduction of Mutoscope machines from 1903.[7] The peepshow's competitive edge came from the superior quality of image and absence of flicker, which plagued cinematic projection. A further, ambiguous, advantage was that, while it was a public entertainment, it could be viewed by only one person at a time. This meant that there was a sense of false privacy about the viewing experience – a bit like our experience of the mobile phone.

Initially as they rolled out across New South Wales, peepshows were set up in relatively prestigious venues. Contemporary newspaper sketches show well-dressed men and women peering into the machines at a Kinetoscope parlour. We know that, elsewhere, peepshows initially attracted women as well as men, middle as well as working class, and children.[8] Yet, as Wongim makes clear, from their beginning in Sydney, the peepshow machines displayed an indiscriminate mixture of topical,[9] theatrical and erotic pictures,[10] moving their viewers to carnal amusement as well as patriotic pride. Mutoscope exhibitors, like early cinema exhibitors, seem to have felt there was nothing either improper or incongruous in such a combination.

The film companies proliferating internationally from the mid-1890s made a variety of films for a variety of technologies, venues and audiences – from the family-centred to the exclusively masculine. Films of the latter sort covered such topics as boxing, dog and other animal fights, and sexually suggestive burlesque turns, all of which have been identified in the programs of early Australian picture theatres as well as Mutoscope displays. The erotic pictures seem generally to have been of the tease variety, with titles promising more explicit sexuality than was ever delivered. As Wongim reported:

> In "Sylvia Undressing", "Peeping Tom", "Who owned the Corset", etc, the spectator who has invested a penny is just thinking he is going to see something shocking when the light goes, and the penny, which had been acting as a joint in the circuit, falls down into the cash box with a sound like a fat chuckle.[11]

The erotic peepshow films were made by the same, reputable, film companies that made the other films. Georges Méliès made at least two versions of *Peeping Tom* before the turn of the century. Charles Musser, in his discussion of Edison's Kinetoscope pictures, indicates that the company produced a substantial number of films of coochee-coochee dancers,[12] and *High Kicking* could be an 1894 Edison film of the pioneer modern dancer Ruth St Denis who was known in her vaudeville days as "the Champion High Kicker of the World".[13] Musser also suggests that there was "a body of Edison films [that] were circulated more or less clandestinely".[14]

The salacious content of the peepshow has passed into folklore, indelibly associated with striptease, burlesque scenes and suggestive nudity. Indeed, in England, Mutoscopes were known generically as 'What the Butler Saw Machines' and some arcades were labelled 'For Gentlemen Only'.[15] But, in these early days, neither producers nor exhibitors of the films wished to control the circumstances of their exhibition. However, others did.

In 1904, Melbourne police prosecuted Frederick Wilson for "having obscene pictures in his possession"[16] and exhibiting them for gain in his Mutoscope Parlour.[17] They seized four reels: *The Temptation of St Anthony, Why Marie Blew the Light Out, Peeping Tom,* and *Behind the Scenes*. The offence was proven, largely because the wrong sort of people had been allowed to look at the show. "The worst feature of the place was that to enable children to look at the pictures a small platform for them to stand on had been built in front of the machine."[18]

This seems to be the first Australian prosecution of moving pictures for obscenity, and it set the pattern of reaction to adult cinema across the century. A moral guardian of the city, possibly acting on information from his parishioners, complained to

CHRONOLOGY OF AUSTRALIAN FILM CENSORSHIP

1894 First commercial exhibition of Kinetoscope [peepshow film loop movie viewer].

1896 First theatrical screening of Cinematographe [film projection].

1902 First commercial exhibition of Mutoscope [peepshow flip card movie viewer].

1904 First successful legal case against "obscene pictures": Melbourne Mutoscope Parlour's exhibition of *Why Marie Blew the Light Out, A Peeping Tom, Behind the Scenes, The Temptation of St Anthony.*

1908 First explicit legislation for the health and safety of cinema audiences: *NSW Theatres and Public Halls Act.*

1912 Regulations prohibited

(i) scenes suggestive of immorality or indecency,

(ii) scenes of debauchery, low habits of life, or other scenes such as would have a demoralising effect on young minds,

(iii) executions, murders or other revolting scenes,

(iv) successful crime, such as bushranging, robberies or other acts of lawlessness which might be reasonably considered as having an injurious influence on youthful minds.

25 films banned in the first year of regulation.

1914 *War Precautions Act* introduced military censorship.

1916 Extensive lobbying against "vicious and demoralizing" films and plays in NSW.

1916 Appointment of first State Censor Board in NSW.

1917 Commonwealth Censorship Board established under the *Customs Act*, with power to refuse to register any film "which in the opinion of the Board

(a) is blasphemous, indecent or obscene, or

(b) is likely to be injurious to morality, or encourage or incite to crime, or

(c) is likely to be offensive to any Ally of Great Britain, or

(d) depicts any matter the exhibition of which, in the opinion of the Board, is undesirable in the public interest."

1929 Revised regulations established a Commonwealth Censorship Board and an Appeal Board.

1930 Informal agreement by distributors to include G symbols in advertising of films deemed suitable for all ages.

1932 Appeal Board replaced by a single Appeal Censor.

1943 Informal agreement between NSW Government and exhibitors that: at children's matinees films or trailers classified "for adults only" not be screened, and performances not exceed two-and-a-half hours; all advertising clearly indicate the classification of the film.

1948 Total ban on horror films.

1949 Uniform legislation allowing the Commonwealth to act as States' delegate in censorship matters (initially Qld, WA and Tas).

New advisory classification scheme: SOA (Suitable only for Adults), NRC (Not Recommended for Children), G (General).

1951 Censorship of privately owned films.

1953 First Film Festival near Melbourne.

1956 Introduction of television.

Establishment of the Film Censorship Board.

1965 Campaign by Sydney Film Festival for imported festival films to be exempt from censorship.

1971 Appeal Censor replaced by a five-member Cinematograph Films Board of Review.

Recommended classification scheme: R (persons between 6-18 years not admitted), M (15 years or older), NRC, G.

1972 Censorship function transferred from Customs to Attorney-General's Department.

1984 Introduction of X18+ classification for the sale/hire of videotapes in the Territories, but banned in the States.

1988 Creation of the Office of Film and Literature Classification (OFLC) as an independent non-statutory body.

1995 (Commonwealth) *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995* (The *Classification Act*).

1996 Beginning of National Classification Scheme. Advisory categories: G (suitable for all ages), PG (Parental Guidance recommended for persons under 15 years), M15+ (Recommended for mature audience 15 years and over); Legally Restricted categories: MA15+ (persons under the age of 15 must be accompanied by a parent or adult guardian), R18+ (Restricted to adults 18 years and over), X18+ (Applies to videos only – contains consensual sexually explicit material. Restricted to adults 18 years and over. Available only for sale or hire in the ACT or NT), RC (Refused Classification).

the State Premier that indecent moving pictures were being shown. The authorities "recognised how far art could go in a matter of this sort", but it was a matter of "the deepest regret that any company should have thought such an exhibition would have been tolerated in Melbourne".[19] While it was unfortunate that there were adults who sought out and enjoyed such "demoralising and disgraceful" displays, it was the court's responsibility to protect the vulnerable from corruption. Newspaper reporters, as great believers in freedom of expression, presented counter views ridiculing the authorities and declaring their actions heavy-handed and the offence trivial:

> We are paying huge sums of money yearly for the maintenance of a body of huge men to keep a watchful eye on us and see that we don't drop a penny in the slot to have a peep at a picture that can make a policeman blush, whilst our houses are robbed

> and garotters [are] allowed to
> roam about at large.[20]

The fourth party to the occasion, the public, had a divided response, writing letters of moral outrage but also treating the prosecution as an advertisement for a sensational show. "The suggestive always attracted people, and in this case great crowds were attracted."[21] The exhibitor, Mr Wilson, had his conviction and fine of £10 in lieu of ten days jail quashed on appeal, and his business continued profitably.

The interaction between these players – moral guardians, state authorities, social commentators, paying audience, exhibitors, and sometimes producers – as well as the moving pictures themselves, constituted the very meaning and dynamic of cinema as it developed across the century. The content of movies, the forms of exhibition, the composition of audiences, and the emphasis of cultural criticism, were all shaped by the practice and threat of censorship.

The first Australian legislation explicitly enacting censorship of the content of movies was passed in New South Wales in 1908. Regulations under the Act banned the screening, among other topics, of "scenes suggestive of immorality or indecency", and "scenes of debauchery, low habits of life, or other scenes such as would have a demoralising effect on young minds".

In 1912, the first year of operation, 25 films were banned. The other States and soon the Commonwealth followed suit, and the legislative regime of Australian censorship began its fraught and tortuous career that would span the century and beyond. Its central points of operation were the entry of imported films, and complaints over exhibition.

The application of censorship to film production was more transnational, and occurred predominantly offshore. In 1915, a United States Supreme Court ruling denied moving pictures the protection of freedom of speech that was afforded "artistic" work as well as the press.[22] In response, the major Hollywood studios determined to forestall official censorship by self-censorship and in 1922 formed the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association of America to run their strategy. Hollywood sought to avoid all political and social controversy in its products and among its personnel. Historian Lee Grieveson argues convincingly that, as a consequence of this strategy, "[m]ainstream cinema became, in part at least, a self-referential space, purposively disconnected from other forms of discourse and from social relevance".[23] But this self-contained status, "melodramatic but fundamentally benign",[24] was not achieved once and for all, and constantly had to be re-negotiated. The interactive game of censorship was perpetually in play, re-establishing boundaries, drawing new lines in the sand.

From the end of the First World War till the 1970s, Hollywood produced well over three quarters of the feature films screened in Australian picture theatres. On arrival in Australia, these already self-censored films were subjected to further scrutiny by Commonwealth censors. As the films moved across the continent, more localised sensibilities came into play, banning the exhibition of films that might be acceptable elsewhere. The self-censorship strategy of the studios was duplicated by their Australian distribution companies, who formed an industry regulator and lobby group in 1926, the Motion Picture Distributors Association of Australia (MPDAA). Until the rise of civil liberties groups and film societies in the 1960s, the MPDAA was a key (although behind-the-scenes player) in the censorship game, representing the interests of the motion picture industry "before Government Municipal Local Departmental authorities (including Censorship and Customs) and public bodies and associations and the officials thereof".[25] The industry they protected comprised the Australian operations of American producers and their local subsidiary distributors, and Australian exhibitors. The interests of the latter were not always congruent with those of the former. Even less compatible were the interests of the Australian producers, who were also subject to censorship, but were not represented by any strong or long-lasting lobby group.

Ina Bertrand, in her pioneering work, *Film Censorship in Australia*, has traced the interactions of these various institutional players and the major films that tested the alignment of forces across the century.[26] But there is one player whose story is still little understood: the audience. Who were the people who liked to look at sexual representations, who liked to go to adult pictures? While the shifting boundary between obscene and pure films has been well described, we know little of the shifting boundary between corrupt and pure audiences.

For too many critics, there has been an easy assumption that sexual movies appealed to the same type of people throughout the century: men only, particularly young, working-class, heterosexual men, and 'perverts'. But given the range of film types and exhibition venues embraced by the term 'adult films', this assumption cannot stand. First, the category of young working-class men is not itself a stable and singular category, but has changed substantially over the 20th century. The burgeoning field of the history of masculinity is beginning to detail the many expressions of masculinity at any moment, as well as through time.[27] Second, there are a few contemporary studies that alert us to the probability that significant numbers of women have been members of the various audiences for adult films throughout the 20th century. Adult industry surveys have documented the popularity of X-rated videos among couples and female customers;[28] and an audience study by Brigid Cherry of female viewers of horror films, an analogously assumed 'male only' genre, has reported that there are considerable, if largely hidden, numbers of women who enjoy such pictures.[29] Historically, there have also been significant numbers of women among the entrepreneurs of the adult industry and, of course, many women have performed in the diverse range of adult films.[30]

Third, film scholars are increasingly recognising that there is more to cinemagoing than watching films and that the "context of viewing" is as important to study as the "object of viewing".[31] Throughout the century, different cinemas offered different cinematic experiences, based on the theatre's locale and architecture, its self-presentation, its personnel and their attention to patrons, and the nature of the whole show. At least in major cities, individuals could choose the type of experience they wanted and visit the appropriate cinema, while exhibitors could solicit a specific audience. Consequently, neither the meaning of any movie nor of any audience was fixed. The same film would be understood differently depending on where and to whom it was screened: a smut film in Sydney's Kings Cross could be an art film in Paddington (eg Russ Meyer's 1966 film, *Faster Pussycat! Kill! Kill!).*

So, who went to see *Peeping Tom* in the Mutoscope arcade? Who went to see *Passion's Slave*, screened by the eminently respectable Clement Mason Cinematographe Co., before it was prohibited from exhibition in New South Wales by the Chief Secretary in October 1911?[32] Who was the regular audience at the theatres showing the films of "[v]ulgar rubbish and degrading comics" (particularly the Keystone movies starring Charlie Chaplin and Fatty Arbuckle) that *Theatre Magazine* fulminated against in 1915?[33] From scattered evidence, it would seem that with the coming of moving pictures, with their mass production and ubiquitous exhibition, sexual representations could be said to have become democratised, cheaply available to everyone regardless of gender, age, class or race. Such availability

resulted in complex practices of censorship, which in turn resulted in two audience effects: first, the consolidation of an alternative and disreputable masculine cinema culture; and, secondly, the formation of a new type of mixed-sex audience for risqué content.

CLANDESTINE BLUE

Until the early 20th century, access to sexual representations was restricted to male audiences. Order in the Victorian world was maintained by multiple segregations: of men and women, youth and age, middle and working class. In this world, the enjoyment of sexual spectacle was the preserve of men alone. Katherine Snyder and Howard Chudacoff have recently alerted us to the existence in America of a specific urban subculture of men, a "bachelor culture", whose peak years were between 1880 and 1930.[34] My own critical reading of a large number of magazines published in Sydney during those years suggests that there was a similar subculture in that city too, one that mixed together upper- and lower-class men who engaged in a particular practice of masculinity. It called itself a 'sporting culture'. It comprised men of the cultured elite, sportsmen, theatricals, journalists, and petty opportunists. The bachelors and sports of such 'half worlds' retreated from family life, at least for a time, into the company of other men, with whom they enjoyed gambling, smoking, drinking, prize-fighting, blood sports, variety theatre, and non-marital sex. It is not yet clear to historians how 'sports' related to 'bohemians' or to 'clubmen', or to the fraternity of journalists who are now historians' chief source of evidence for the cultural modernisation of Australia at the beginning of the 20th century, including evidence of censorship battles. It is also not yet clear how this subculture related to the *Playboy* bachelor cult of the 1950s and 1960s.[35] In both periods, however, men of the subculture congregated together, creating homo-social enclaves in clubs and pubs. They attended various sporting and entertainment events – boxing, racing, theatre, burlesque, smoke concerts. And it is likely that at least some of them enjoyed the camaraderie of watching sexual movies together when the opportunity arose. In all these places, even in the ostensibly 'male only' places, women were always present, to serve and entertain the men, as the objects of male pleasure. Such women were the stars of the half world's visual culture, both as live performers and in representation.

From photography's beginnings in the 1840s, pictures of naked women, sometimes engaging in explicit sexual acts, circulated among a select clientele within the half world, the traditional elite consumers of pornography. There is evidence that such erotic or 'filthy French' postcards circulated in Australia among elite men. Artist Norman Lindsay recounts in his autobiography that a young friend,

> returned from the Grand Tour of Europe, bringing back with him some French postcards, designed in a key of the skittish pornographic, and those supplied subject-matter for some of my ribald drawings and saved me the nuisance of thinking up a gag of my own that could raise a laugh.[36]

An older member of Sydney's cultured elite, David Scott Mitchell, shared similar interests. After his death in 1907, librarians at the New South Wales Public Library were scandalised to discover that the magnificent collection of over 50,000 books, pictures, manuscripts and maps that he had bequeathed was a true "gentleman's library", containing a considerable number of erotic items, including "hundreds of photographs, many very explicit, from England, France, Japan, India and Germany".[37]

Erotic photographs and postcards, of a much cheaper quality, similarly circulated at the opposite far end of the social hierarchy, among lower-class men on the margins of society who were also members of the half world. Before the First World War, *The Sydney Morning Herald* was reporting that visiting sailors arrested for drunkenness "were often found to have their pockets full of revolting postcards".[38] When pictures began to move, sexual activity was an obvious candidate for representation. The erotic postcard prepared the way for and accompanied erotic moving pictures. Audiences as well as performers and sets were shared between live variety theatre, photography, the peepshow and the screen.

In his 1975 book, *The Australian Screen*, Eric Reade reproduced a small photograph of four film frames showing a naked woman with a classic hourglass figure taking a camp shower in a secluded suburban garden. The caption reads:

> "Porno" films of the silent era – which goes to prove that the modern age isn't so progressive after all. The only change is in the "shape of things".[39]

The film is attributed to the "Maurice Bertel collection".[40] There is no other mention of pornography in the text. Born in France, Maurice Bertel was a pioneer cinematographer who worked in Melbourne from 1907 till his death in 1930, filming for the major companies Pathé Frères, Australasian Films, Lincoln-Cass Productions and Herschells. He shot newsreels, short dramas, features and documentaries. Did he also shoot pornography? There is a well-established tradition of crew members on mainstream films borrowing equipment on their days off to make erotic films for limited circulation. Or is this a fragment of a film made elsewhere? The four frames are reminiscent of a genre of early films made in Europe involving scenes of women disrobing, oriental tableaux, naked women dancing or bathing, and scenes with artist and model.[41] The earliest has been identified as *Douche après le bain*, made by Louis Lumière in 1897.[42] Such films shared a common inspiration – and common producers – with the Mutoscope films mentioned above. They were also related to more explicitly sexual films made as extensions of the legal brothel business in pre- and post-First World War Europe,[43] which in turn were related to the photographs and films of the avant-garde surrealists, including Luis Buñuel and Man Ray.[44] But, since there were neither legal brothels nor many surrealists in inter-war Australia, for whom did Bertel screen his film?

French Postcard, early 20th century. (Private collection)

The same question is raised by a film donated to the NFSA in the 1980s during its Last Film Search. Identified in the catalogue as an "American semi-pornographic film c.1935",[45] it was one of five cans of film, the others containing home movies of planes flying and landing, a family picnic and family games. It is without title or credits, but has a simple humorous plot involving a fortune-teller, an English lord and four women who strip and cavort naked in and around a swimming pool. The intertitles exploit the ambiguity between afternoon teas and strip tease. This film could perhaps be designated "skittish pornographic" in the same vein as Lindsay's French postcards.

While such films would now be considered merely risqué, they would certainly have been banned from entry to Australia by Customs censorship had they been discovered. Other films donated to the NFSA from suburban collections are more explicitly hard-core pornographic (ie showing explicit sexual acts), and they too illegally avoided detection. One, a nitrate negative, was part of a donated collection from the estate of a film exhibitor, most of whose other films were newsreels. Another was found on a junk heap. Both fragments seem to be of the same film. The NFSA Catalogue suggests that they were made around 1925 or 1928. The notes read:

> Australian Silent Pornography Film, c. 1925. A short extract of pornography including two settings. The first setting involves a man and two young women, and the second involves three women. In the first series of scenes a man urinates in the bush watched by two women. The trio then engage in explicit sexual activities on the ground in the bush. In the second setting, three nude women engage in sexual activities on a bed in a room. – General notes: There is no evidence to suggest that this is necessarily Australian, although the bush setting does carry some credence and the fact that the car is right-hand drive. Original footage unknown, surviving footage 498 feet of 35mm (7 mins @ 18 fps).[46]

Both film fragments, in fact, are from the American film, *A Free Ride* (a.k.a. *The Grass Sandwich*), dated 1917-19 by the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender and Reproduction and claimed as the earliest extant stag film.[47] Another donated film, 'Girls Do You Think It's Big Enough: Silent Pornographic Film, 1929', originally from the small collection of the donor's friend's grandfather, is similarly graphic, and probably similarly illegally imported.[48]

The production, distribution and exhibition of such movies were all prohibited virtually everywhere in the world. Al Di Lauro and Gerald Rabkin suggest that they were made in only a few countries: France, Germany, Italy, Latin America, Japan, and the United States, essentially as a highly localised cottage industry. The films had limited national let alone international reach.[49] So how did such films come to be in Australia, which prided itself on having one of the strictest censorship regimes in the world? And how were the two fragments related? Such questions become insistent as more such films are discovered by NFSA archivists.

In its 1962-63 Report, the Commonwealth Film Censorship Board stated that privately imported and owned 16mm and 8mm films, many "poorly produced" and containing "objectionable material", increased in number from the 1930s into the 1960s. We do not know whether a single negative of *A Free Ride* was privately imported into Australia by an otherwise respectable film exhibitor who then made copies, one of which turned up on the junk heap. It is just as possible that each film was independent of the other, part of two distinct smuggling, copying and distribution operations. Given the reported increase in importations, we can hypothesise that there were numerous clandestine networks, each illegally importing films from America or Europe, and copying them for limited distribution around a local network. There is, as yet, no evidence as to the nature or extent of these networks, or whether they were linked.

Nor do we know much about the audiences that gathered through these networks. In Europe, the audience for blue movies in the inter-war period largely comprised brothel customers and upper-class collectors. In America, from the 1920s, men belonging to voluntary social organisations and residential college students organised stag shows. For Australia, oral history informants, as well as police vice squad reports, suggest that during the 1950s, in hired halls and licensed clubs across the Australian suburbs, blue movies were screened for a male audience recruited by word of mouth – an audience type descended from the masculine subculture discussed above. But there are also suggestions that there were screenings in more domestic settings, in private homes, and that women also watched.

Blue movies are not renowned for their cinematic quality, and the description of the business as 'a cottage industry' suggests a related dimension of adult cinema in Australia – locally made home movies. With the development of less cumbersome, cheaper and safer film and equipment from the 1920s, amateur filmmaking became a popular hobby for many, especially men. Film cameras and projectors turned suburban living rooms and back sheds into movie theatres for family and the neighbourhood. Centre for Scholarly and Archival Research (CSAR) Fellow Michelle Baddiley has found little evidence of erotica in the NFSA collection of home movies up to 1930.[50] However, from the 1940s, presumably because of the cheaper availability of 8mm equipment, the number of amateur films involving strip tease and naked women posing increases. A recent donation to the NFSA of some 70 cans and reels came from the back shed of a suburban house previously owned by a projectionist. The films were a mixture of newsreels, advertisements and erotic fragments cut from Hollywood features, along with home movies, several of which involved women undressing and posing topless.[51] In one film, 'Ultra Ray: Woman Semi-Naked Dancing and Undressing in a Studio', the camera lingers on composed shots of body parts as shapes – hand, elbow, fingers, thigh – as well as on the movement and play of light on a flimsily gowned and naked female body.[52] Presumably this work was understood by its maker as an art film, even avant-garde. Other amateur films in the collection are dramatic narratives, and here too there is adult content. For example, Arthur Browne was a professional sound recordist and prize-winning amateur filmmaker. His films were predominantly short dramas acted by family and friends and screened annually at the local church hall. But one of his earliest films, *Ants in Her Pants* from the late 1930s, is a chase comedy involving near nudity and suggestiveness.[53]

While films of nudity per se were declared to be not indecent by the New York Court of Appeals in 1957, such subject matter was banned from importation into Australia.[54] It was, however, relatively easy to make. But were the actors professional models, or wives and girlfriends? Victorian Vice Squad raids in 1958 discovered extensive evidence of local models, both male and female, willing to pose nude for artistic photo shoots, with some prepared to pose "in a suggestive attitude".[55] Just as erotic postcards and blue movies were related, so too were painted, photographed and filmed life art studies of nudes. They all belonged to a broad and longstanding visual culture that considered the naked female body simultaneously beautiful and sexually arousing.

However, some of the home movies stored in back sheds were less an appreciation of the female form and more a record of sexual performance. 'Amateur Pornographic Film

Featuring People Wearing Sunglasses',[56] was donated by someone who thought that it was a "slightly blue" 1930s film that "a friend's grandfather had in the war." In fact it is amateur footage of a very explicit sex party involving two men, two women and a cameraperson, with the style of the sunglasses worn as disguise by the performers indicating the fashion of the 1950s or early 1960s. Such a film would presumably have been intended for private viewing by the participants. Many more films of this sort continued to be made, and while few have found their way into the NFSA's collection, the existence of those few provides evidence of a cinematic culture that would otherwise remain merely anecdotal.

HYBRID BLUE

In terms of more public exhibition, by the 1970s blue movies returned to their beginnings in the peepshow. A new adult industry, which would grow exponentially in both size and respectability in the 1980s, made its first public appearance in adult or sex shops in Sydney's lower George Street, Darlinghurst and Kings Cross. At the back were small cubicles in which loops of 8mm films – often imported from 'permissive' Sweden and Denmark – were projected on to a wall. Patrons saw rather more graphic footage than *What the Butler Saw*, and put considerably higher denomination coins in the slot, but the principle was the same. The viewer watched these loops as an individual, rather than as part of an audience, and by all accounts the viewers were inevitably male.

Meanwhile, in America, beginning in the late 1950s and spurred by the greater moral liberality of the 1960s, soft-core sex films, eg Russ Meyer's *The Immoral Mr Teas* (1959), and then hard-core pornographic movies began to emerge from the underworld of the stag show into down-market but nonetheless public theatrical release. The transition between the underworld and more public respectability was first hinted in two films from 1970 which drew inspiration and audiences from both domains. Both films investigated and graphically displayed the newly decriminalised pornography industry in Denmark.[57] John Lamb's *Sexual Freedom in Denmark* (1970) and Alex de Renzy's *Pornography in Denmark* (1970) – a title quickly changed to *Censorship in Denmark: A New Approach* in order to be acceptable for newspaper advertising – combined hard-core sexual representation with documentary travelogues.[58] Within two years, a soft-core variant had been produced in Australia. *An Essay on Pornography* (1973) was originally a report on the pornographic film industry made for television.[59] It was programmed for broadcast by ATN7 in Sydney, but was withdrawn at the last minute. Subsequently expanded, it screened "with considerable commercial success" in small independent theatres, including those regularly screening European films.[60]

Hybrid films revealed that there were now legitimate exhibition spaces available and a clearly profitable market. The next step was to bring the products of the masculine underworld fully into the public domain.

Such hybrid films revealed that there were now legitimate exhibition spaces available and a clearly profitable market. The next step was to bring the products of the masculine underworld fully into the public domain. US West Coast producers began making hard-core feature movies. The first was Bill Osco's *Mona* (1970).[61] But the most famous was *Deep Throat* (Gerard Damiano, 1972). Made for $25,000 it grossed more than $600 million, and screened in mainstream theatres to respectable audiences across America.[62] Some 10 years later, Australian producers entered the market with hard-core features:[63] Dennis Huntley's *Down Under* (1983),[64] Greg Lynch's *Lusty Afternoon* (1986),[65] followed by John Lark's more extensive 'Down Under' series of 23 made-for-video titles,[66] and Lynch's *Arigato Baby* (1990).[67]

By that time, who was watching adult movies and where had changed dramatically. In 1970, the Commonwealth Government established a new scheme of film classification which permitted the public exhibition of films dealing with matters of sex in a manner "unsuitable for perusal or viewing by minors". In other words, adults and those under 18 were formally separated in terms of what they could see. But representation of genitally explicit sexual activity remained banned. While New Yorkers would soon see *Deep Throat* in a mainstream theatre, it would never have a legal screening in Australia. Instead, Australians saw the British film *Percy* (Ralph Thomas, 1971), the first movie classified R. It was an "[e]xcruciating comedy" filled with "nudge nudge images" and "every phallic gag known to schoolboy smut".[68] It played to full houses for several weeks.

Subsequent R releases drew similarly large audiences for the first few days, and then tapered off to become "a normal part of the film scene".[69] While some in those audiences were undoubtedly also patrons of sex shop cubicles, as a 'normal' film audience it also contained substantial numbers of women. The R classification was followed in 1984 by a specifically video classification, X, which granted persons over the age of 18 access to depictions of explicit genital sexual activity between consenting adults.[70] The illicit men-only subculture had thrived on its outlaw status, so in the face of the public acceptability of viewing sexually explicit representations, its membership seemingly dissipated.

At this point, then, we need to leave the story of the traditional masculine audience and turn to a parallel history: the mixed-sex audience for blue content. Both histories begin in the same space: the contained late 19th century masculine subculture in which sexual representations were produced and consumed. While the segment of that world I have been following so far remained relatively sex-segregated and hidden during the 20th century, another portion moved slowly towards a greater openness and even respectability. One crucial determinant of the divide was film itself.

The 19th century men-only subculture was disreputable, but also filled with spectacle, which was the essence of early filmmaking. Prize-fighting, blood sports, variety and burlesque turns had more long term entertainment value than moving trains, waves and street scenes. Curiously, when captured on film and made available beyond the confines of the subculture, such spectacles tended to be regarded as naughty, rather than taboo. Charles Musser argues that, at least at first, performances on film were more acceptable than on stage or in the ring because of "the absence of presence" – that is, precisely because they were representations – and so women got to see into the masculine world. He writes:

> Because this performance culture had been reduced to representations, women could, for instance, more freely view [body builder] Sandow's almost naked body. And they were allowed to see two perfectly conditioned male fighters, stripped down to their togs. Female voyeurism was unexpectedly mobilized, within a socially acceptable framework…They gained access, however limited, to the

> male homosocial world from which they had been excluded or kept at the periphery. Motion pictures thus contributed to the breakdown of two discrete and complimentary [sic] realms – that of rugged masculinity and feminine domesticity – by pulling the veil from the former and exposing it to the latter. [71]

Films offered everyone, including women and children, visual access to previously hidden movement – of semi-naked male boxers and scantily clad female dancers. The potential effect of such spectacle was to make available to everyone, not just men, the involuntary thrill of physical (sexual) response. In other words, a new social grouping was being constituted: a vulgar but nonetheless relatively respectable mixed audience with a mutual interest in sexual titillation.

A mixed audience for sexual representations was not unique to moving pictures, but was coming into existence more generally in the field of visual culture. For example, while the market for postcards of the most sexually explicit sort moved further underground, access to bawdy images passed beyond such restricted circles. Following technical developments in both photography and printing, a new audience was generated for mass-produced sexual representations: working-class women, children and Indigenous subjects became consumers in addition to their more traditional role as the objects of such representations.[72] Sexualised postcards were soon as easy to buy as they were to understand. They became an increasingly taken-for-granted accompaniment to working-class leisure and communication: think of all those racy 'wish you were here' holiday postcards that are with us still.

As Australia moved into the 20th century, there were many among the cultured elite who insisted that social and cultural order could only be sustained through the traditional segregations of the Victorian world. But mass commercial culture in the modernising world increasingly blurred those boundaries.[73] The ideal of "Victorian repression" faced an irresistible onslaught.[74] In particular, the older ideal of woman as mother increasingly broadened to accommodate woman as wife and sexual partner.[75] Women began to define themselves as denizens of a sexualised world, but no less respectable for that. On screen, stage and radio, in recorded songs, magazines and postcards, sexual material was a staple – from vulgar jokes and innuendo to romantic temptation and steaming passion – and women laughed and were thrilled as well as men. Effectively, sexual representation and adult cinema, underwent a shift from 'men only' to 'over 18'.

MAINSTREAM BLUE

That audience transition took place haphazardly from the 1920s till the 1970s, driven by the play of censorship. In terms of films that sought public, not subcultural, exhibition the line between sexual representation that was acceptable and that which was indecent or obscene was under constant negotiation. As mentioned above, the majority of feature films screened in Australia during these decades were Hollywood products that had already been subjected to the rigours of the Production Code process. Australian public opinion, which the censors were required to interpret, vocally demanded a higher standard. On occasions, as the censors regretted, Hollywood "smartness and sophistication stepp[ed] over the borderline into suggestiveness and indecency".[76] Scenes from major studio productions were cut, and some entire films were banned.[77] Trends and disputes over the banning and cutting of feature films, both star vehicles and B grade, have been at least partially documented.[78] We know the fate of Mae West, Jane Russell, and Jane Fonda; *Flaming Youth* (John Francis Dillon, 1923), *Golddiggers of 1933* (Mervyn LeRoy and Busby Berkeley, 1933), and *Lolita* (Stanley Kubrick, 1962). What is less well known is the fate of two other types of film that sought exhibition in Australia: exploitation films and European art films.[79]

During and after the First World War, contemporary sexual behaviour was openly displayed in a number of European and American 'social conscience' features which sought to overcome sexual ignorance and educate audiences about homosexuality, the white slave trade and sexual hygiene. These metamorphosed in the 1920s and 1930s into 'exploitation' movies: films in "bad taste" dealing with "forbidden" subjects.[80] Ostensibly warning of the dangers of promiscuity, narcotic drugs, abortion, and child marriage, such films increasingly emphasised sensation, titillation, the exotic and bizarre, and added more vice, violence and horror, and more naked flesh to their minimal and improbable plots. They were produced on low budgets by independent directors working outside the Hollywood system, and were distributed independently and exhibited in theatres not affiliated with the studios. The term 'exploitation', although apt for the motivation of many in the business, related specifically to the advertising techniques such independents used to promote screenings. Without the vast resources of the Hollywood studios to encourage brand loyalty among cinema audiences, the independent producer/distributors took their films from city to city, drumming up audiences with sensational advertising ploys.

The leading historian of exploitation films, Eric Schaefer, makes a distinction between films subjected to this treatment and the low-budget films made by Poverty Row independents and Hollywood B studios, designed for the lower half of the double bill program.[81] While this distinction is valid for the producers/distributors, it is not clear that it is relevant for the audience, especially far away from the source of production.[82] Few independent American producers had the interest or resources to enter the export market: the risk of rejection was too high for the likely profits. Australian censors explicitly allowed their judgment to be influenced by the style as well as the content of any film, so the poor production values of many of these non-Hollywood films saw them roundly condemned and banned.[83] This meant Australian audiences saw a limited range of films known variously as exploitation, B, and trash. Those few were severely cut on entry, and tracking their exhibition is difficult, in part because of the common practice of changing titles for local release, and in part because Censorship Reports did not publish the names of films until the 1970s.

Nonetheless, there is evidence that some of the early sex films were well received in Australia, with the pro-contraception/anti-abortion film, *Where are My Children?* (Lois Weber and Phillips Smalley, 1916), and the white slave film, *Traffic in Souls* (George Loane Tucker, 1913), having "outstanding success".[84] Others did not fare so well, with *Damaged Goods* (Alexander Butler, 1919) banned in Victoria where its subject of venereal disease made it obscene by definition. The new wave of exploitation films after the Second World War also received some success:

> Crowd Out of Hand. Rush To See Picture.
>
> Six hundred young men tried to force their way last night into the Savoy Theatre, where a sex picture was being shown.
>
> Three policemen who were on duty at the theatre were unable to cope with them, and reinforcements were sent from Phillip Street police station. The picture, "Secrets of Life" was first shown last Friday, but last night was the first time the crowd became unruly.[85]

Crowd outside the Paramount Theatre in Bundaberg for a screening of *Secrets of Life* during the 1950s. The film was advertised as an experience not to be missed, with Elliot Forbes' commentary a key attraction. State Library of Queensland, image no. 64547

Secrets of Life was, in fact, the retitled *Mom and Dad* (William Beaudine, 1944), the most well-known and most polished American exploitation film. Made by Kroger Babb for about $65,000 and shot in a week, it was reputed to have earned $100 million during its lifespan of over 30 years.[86] Its fortune was made as a roadshow package rather than a mere film. Babb had multiple units playing small town circuits across America. Each unit consisted of the film, an "Eminent Hygiene Commentator" named Elliot Forbes who made an in-person appearance at every performance to reveal the "secrets of sensible sex", one or two women in nurses uniforms, advertising material, and large stocks of two 64-page books titled *Man and Boy* and *Woman and Girl*.[87] An advertising blitz preceded each local stand, especially focusing on the sex segregation of the performances. One of the "Elliot Forbes" was an Australian magician, Card Mondor, who secured the Australasian rights for *Mom and Dad*, and employed the same exploitation techniques with apparently the same success.[88]

From the 1950s, a series of changes in the American film industry had flow-on effects on cinema culture in Australia, with significant consequences for adult exhibition.[89] In particular, Hollywood underwent long-term restructuring in the wake of the Paramount decrees of 1948,[90] and in response to the 1968 introduction of a formal classification scheme. The era of classical Hollywood ended, and the classic paradigm of moviegoing changed with it. Theatres diversified and their bookings loosened up, with more openings for independent films; films which were increasingly made for and exhibited to differentiated audiences. In this climate, the public exhibition of films with sexual themes and scenes began to flourish.

Concurrently, in Australia as well as the United States, suburban sprawl and the baby boom shifted the market demographics supporting local theatres, while television and drive-ins engaged them in immediate competition. The first Australian drive-in opened in 1954, with well over 200 operating around the country by the end of the decade.[91] Initially attracting families with young children, by the early 1960s almost three quarters of their audiences were aged between 15 and 24. Lured by the opportunity for unsupervised dating and hanging out with friends, this audience appreciated blue movies, along with horror and assorted trash.[92]

Small independent city theatres also took on a new lease of life. Until the collapse of the Hollywood system of vertical integration, these theatres had had a hard time. Their supply of films and their ability to advertise and attract an audience were constrained. They were compelled to exhibit Hollywood films well after their first release, so many of them drew their films from non-Hollywood sources as well. In particular, they screened 'Continental' films, attracting both European immigrants and the Anglo cultural elite. For example, the Bridge Theatre in Sydney catered briefly for the first Film Society of Australia in the early 1930s, screening German Expressionist, French Surrealist and Russian Realist films, all made outside the constraints of the US Production Code.[93] Neither theatre nor Society was able to sustain itself for long. More successful was the Savoy Theatre, which switched from live to filmed performance in 1937, and began a longer career screening Continental and other independent films. The boundary between art, exploitation and foreign-language film became blurred in such a venue. The near-riot over *Secrets of Life* occurred at the Savoy.

There was also a Savoy Theatre in Melbourne. Its programs introduced a new audience to the post-war renaissance of European cinema, but its reputation was risqué. Leading film advocate and producer, Phillip Adams, remembers seeing the Swedish film, *One Summer of Happiness* (Arne Mattsson, 1951) which had caused a minor international scandal for its scenes of a young couple swimming naked and embracing in the grass. "It took a lot of courage to go to the Savoy for the first time… We went to the Savoy as smutty little boys and came out as lovers."[94] The reputation of European films remained dubious for the next several decades. American hard-sell exploitationeers recognised and encouraged this by taking up their distribution. Joe Burstyn added sex to his promotion of Italian neo-realist films in New York, advertising Roberto Rossellini's *Rome, Open City* (1945) as "sexier than Hollywood ever dared to be", while for Vittorio De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves* (1948) his posters showed a buxom woman astride a bicycle – "neither the scene nor the character existed in this film".[95] Kroger Babb, of *Mom and Dad* fame, distributed Ingmar Bergman's *Summer with Monika* (1953) after editing it from 97 to 65 minutes and retitling it *Monika: The Story of a Bad Girl*.[96]

Exhibition of the few post-war European films that passed Australian censorship began forging a new hybrid audience, mixing local intellectuals, migrants and smut seekers. Members of newly resurgent film societies flocked to independent theatres in the capital cities, then created film festivals in order to import and screen films which would not – or could not – receive commercial release.[97] One commercial distributor, writing in support of censorship, described such efforts as "purveying under the camouflage of 'artistry', an unprecedented

Briony Behets and Graeme Blundell in a still from the feature *Alvin Rides Again* (Robin Copping, Tim Burstall and David Bilcock, 1974); NFSA Collection, title no. 628799

variety of sensually exciting themes of lust and violence".[98] Inevitably, such films were cut, often clumsily, which in turn led festival boards and members into a persistent campaign against censorship, beginning in the mid-1960s.[99] They achieved two successes: first, in 1971, the introduction of the R classification meant that a class of film that would previously have been cut or banned was now available for exhibition to adults. Relatively few films have been cut since then although a small number of feature films have been refused classification, with notable public controversies erupting in the early 2000s over *Romance* (Catherine Breillat, 1999), *Baise Moi* (Coralie Trinh Thi and Virginie Despentes, 2001), and *Ken Park* (Larry Clark and Edward Lachman, 2002).[100] A second success of the campaign was the granting of formal exemption from censorship to film festivals, allowing films a singular screening for an exclusive, adult audience.

A further, earlier, result of the energy of the film societies and festivals was the encouragement of an underground film production movement. Like the 1960s counter-culture of which it was a part, and like the European surrealist movement from which it claimed descent,[101] many of these films rejoiced in sexual transgression and were banned.[102] Above ground, from the early 1970s, the combination of the R classification with government funding for the film industry resulted in the encouragement of local commercial filmmaking. Among the earliest titles were a number of ocker and sex comedies that had no pretensions to European-style eroticism let alone philosophy: *Stork* (1971),[103] *The Adventures of Barry McKenzie* (1972),[104] *Alvin Purple* (1973),[105] *Alvin Rides Again* (1974).[106] By now, the audience for this range of locally produced and European films was a fully respectable, mixed-sex hybrid, with multiple motivations for enjoying blue content.

There is much more we need to know about the history of the production, distribution, exhibition, regulation and reception of sexually explicit moving pictures in Australia. Let me finish this preliminary survey by emphasising both the importance of such research to Australia's cultural and social history, and the importance of the National Film and Sound Archive to that research. As I mentioned at the beginning, cinema history embraces a great deal more than a collection of films as artefacts or texts. Cinema has been an integral part of over 100 years of social interaction, defining the meanings of cultural creativity, business conduct, technological development, moral values, leisure activity, and gender identities, all played out in the arena of public interest and opinion. Sexual activity and its representation have been traditionally defined as outside that arena, but their exclusion creates the very shape and condition of the existence of the public sphere. I would argue that understanding Australians' changing engagements with blue movies is as central to our history as understanding our engagement with gambling, the Returned & Services League (RSL), religion or cricket (and is, of course, related to all of them).

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1 See Stephen Bottomore, 'The Panicking Audience? Early cinema and the "train effect"', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television,* 19:2, 1999, pp.177-216.

2 Cf. Thomas Elsaesser, 'The New Film History', *Sight and Sound*, 55:4, Autumn 1986, p.248: "To do film history today, one has to become an economic historian, a legal expert, a sociologist, an architectural historian, know about censorship and fiscal policy, read trade papers and fan magazines, even study Lloyds List of ships sunk in World War One to calculate how much of the film footage exported to Europe actually reached its destination."

3 I am excluding from consideration films deemed 'adult' on grounds of horror, violence, or other non-sexual extremes.

4 Eric Schaefer, 'Dirty Little Secrets: Scholars, Archivists, and Dirty Movies', *The Moving Image*, 5:2, Fall 2005, pp.81-82.

5 'At Poverty Point', *The Bulletin*, 6 August 1903, p.30; see Ina Bertrand, *Film Censorship in Australia*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1978, p.12.

6 This account of the Kinetoscope and Mutoscope is based on Chris Long, 'Australia's First Films' Parts1, 2 & 18, *Cinema Papers*, 91, January 1993; 92, March 1993; (with Bruce Klepner) 109, April 1996; Dan Streible, 'Children at the Mutoscope', *Cinémas*, 14:1, Autumn 2003.

7 The Kinetoscope machine ran a continuous loop of 35mm film at 40 fps; the Mutoscope system involved a sequence of photograph flipcards displayed at the rate of some 80 per second.

8 Streible, 'Children at the Mutoscope'.

9 The compilation *Federation Films*, made by Chris Long for the NFSA, contains footage based on surviving Mutoscope reels of topical events. NFSA Collection, title no.65162: *Federation Films*, (videorecording), Dir. Chris Long, Prod. National Film and Sound Archive (Australia), 1991.

10 The American Biograph company produced erotic films until it discontinued Mutoscope production in 1909: Tom Gunning, 'From the Opium Den to the Theatre of Morality', in Lee Grieveson and Peter Krämer (eds), *The Silent Cinema Reader*, Routledge, Oxford, 2004, p.149.

11 'At Poverty Point', *The Bulletin*, 11 April 1903.

12 Charles Musser, *Edison Motion Pictures, 1890-1900: An Annotated Filmography*, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, 1997, p.132.

13 The 2006 Pordenone Silent Film Festival screened this recently rediscovered, 42 ft., 22.5 seconds Edison film: ['Ruth Dennis'], Prod: W K L Dickson, Prod. Edison, 1894.

14 Musser, *Edison Motion Pictures*, p.132.

15 Mutoscope Manufacturers Extraordinaire, http://mutoscope-manufacturers.co.uk/history/what-victorians-did.asp?adapt=true&cd=32&ww=983&reload=1 (accessed 10 August 2007).

16 'Improper Pictures', *The Age*, 12 March 1904.

17 This account is based on Chris Long and Bob Klepner, 'Morals and the Mutoscope', *Cinema Papers*, 109, April 1996; and Bob Klepner, 'The Mutoscope in Australia', unpublished manuscript. I am grateful to Bob Klepner for providing me with a copy of this paper.

18 'Mutoscope Pictures', *The Argus*, 12 March 1904.

19 *The Age*, 12 March 1904.

20 *Ballarat Courier*, 23 April 1904, p.2, quoted in Long and Klepner, 'Morals and the Mutoscope', p.54.

21 *The Argus*, 12 March 1904, p.16, quoted in Long and Klepner, 'Morals and the Mutoscope', p.54.

22 Mutual Film Corp. v. Industrial Commission of Ohio, 236 U.S. 230 (1915).

23 Lee Grieveson, 'Woof, Warp, History', *Cinema Journal*, 44:1, Fall 2004, p.120.

24 Ruth Vasey, *The World According to Hollywood 1918-1939*, University of Exeter Press, Exeter, 1997, p.226.

25 NFSA Collection, title no.484386: Motion Picture Distributors Association of Australia, Memorandum and Articles of Association, 1926, S3(c).

26 Ina Bertrand, *Film Censorship in Australia*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1978. Insofar as they are still extant, the Australian-made feature films subjected to cuts and bans are part of the collection of the NFSA. Collections of footage cut from imported films have recently been discovered by Archivists at the National Archives of Australia.

27 Michael Flood, *The Men's Bibliography*, 15th edition, 2006, http://mensbiblio.xyonline.net/ (accessed August 2007).

28 Yasmin Element, 'Adult Sales Go Through the Roof…', *Eros*, 6:1, 2005; Catharine Lumby, Katherine Albury and Alan McKee, *The Porn Book*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, forthcoming.

29 Brigid Cherry, 'Refusing to Refuse to Look: Female Viewers of the Horror Film', in Melvyn Stokes and Richard Maltby (eds), *Identifying Hollywood Audiences*, BFI, London, 1999.

30 Women have traditionally been brothel owners and managers and, since the efflorescence of the adult industry from the late 1980s, have been owners and managers of sex or adult shops.

31 David Morley, *Television, Audiences and Cultural Studies*, Routledge, London, 1992, pp.157-158.

32 *The Theatre*, 1 October 1911, p.13.

33 'Censorship of Moving Pictures: Urgent Need for United Action', *Theatre Magazine*, 1 February 1915, p.50.

34 Katherine Snyder, 'A Paradise of Bachelors', *Prospects*, 23, 1998, pp.247-84; Howard Chudacoff, *The Age of the Bachelor*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1999; see also, Timothy Gilfoyle, *City of Eros: New York City, Prostitution, and the Commercialization of Sex, 1790-1920*, Norton, New York, 1992.

35 Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men*, Doubleday, New York, 1983; Kevin White, *The First Sexual Revolution*, New York University Press, New York, 1979.

36 Norman Lindsay, *My Mask*, quoted in James Cockington, *Banned: Tales from the Bizarre History of Australian Obscenity*, ABC Books, Sydney, 2005, p.5.

37 Richard Hall, 'Revealed: Mitchell's Library of Dirty Books', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 June 1994, Spectrum, p.7A.

38 Peter Coleman, *Obscenity, Blasphemy, Sedition*, Jacaranda Press, Brisbane, n.d.[1974], p.157.

39 Eric Reade, *The Australian Screen: A Pictorial History of Australian Film Making*, Lansdowne Press, Melbourne, 1975, p.60.

40 Eric Reade died in 1978, and I have not been able to find any other trace or mention of the Bertel Collection.

41 Michael Achenbach and Paolo Caneppele, 'Born Under the Sign of Saturn: The Erotic Origins of Cinema in the Austro-Hungarian Empire', *Griffithiana*, 65, 1999, p.129.

42 See Al Di Lauro and Gerald Rabkin, *Dirty Movies (ed.): An Illustrated History of the Stag Film*, Chelsea House, New York, 1976, p.43; Joseph-Marie Lo Duca, *L'Erotisme au Cinéma*, 3 Vols, Pauvert, Paris, 1958, 1960, 1962; also *Projektionen der Sehnsucht. Saturn – Die erotischen Anfänge des österreichischeb Kinematografie* (videorecording), Filmarchiv Austria, 1999.

43 *The Good Old Naughty Days (Polissons et Galipettes)*, (DVD), Dir. Michele Reilhac, 2002.

44 Jennifer Mundy (ed.), *Surrealism: Desire Unbound*, Tate Publishing, London, 2001; John Baxter, 'Man Ray Laid Bare', *Tate Magazine*, 3, www.tate.org.uk/magazine/issue3/manraylaidbare.htm (accessed August 2007).

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46 NFSA Collection, title no.8010: [Australian Silent Pornography Film c.1925].

47 This date is disputed by Kevin Brownlow, *Behind the Mask of Innocence*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1990, p.28. The claim to be the oldest stag film is disputed by Linda Williams, *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the Frenzy of the Visible*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1989, p.62.

48 NFSA Collection, title no.47145: [Girls Do You Think It's Big Enough: Silent Pornographic Film, 1929]. I suspect the film is somewhat more recent than this date.

49 Di Lauro and Rabkin, *Dirty Movies*, p.52.

50 Michelle Baddiley, NFSA Centre for Archival and Scholarly Research 2007 Research Fellowship Project: '1899-1930 Home Movie Actualities from Early Australia: Mapping the Memory Grid'.

51 NFSA Collection, title no.70397: [Woman in a bikini strikes various poses on rock formations by the sea, c.1960]; NFSA Collection, title no.703150: [Woman semi-naked in various poses and surroundings, c.1950].

52 NFSA Collection, title no.703323: [Ultra Ray: Woman semi-naked dancing and undressing in a studio, c.1950].

53 NFSA Collection, title no.714337: *Ants in her Pants*, Dir. Arthur Browne, c.1940.

54 *In re Application of Excelsior Pictures Corp. v. Regents of University of New York State*. (App. Div., 3d Dept., NY Sup. Ct.) (2 A. D. 2d 941.) Nov. 14, 1956.

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56 NFSA Collection, title no.47821: [Amateur Pornographic Film Featuring People Wearing Sunglasses].

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58 Jack Stevenson, 'And God Created Europe', in Jack Stevenson, (ed.), *Fleshpot: Cinema's Sexual Myth Makers and Taboo Breakers*, Headpress, Manchester, 2000, pp.45-47; Williams, *Hard Core*, pp.97-98.

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65 NFSA Collection, title no.513432: *Lusty Afternoon*, Dir. Greg Lynch, Prod. Victoria Goodwin, 1986.

66 For example, NFSA Collection, title no.525413: *Aussie Exchange Girls*, 1990; NFSA Collection, title no.525443: *Aussie Maid in America*, 1990; NFSA Collection, title no.513556: *Australian Connection*, 1990; NFSA Collection, title no.525355: *Dick Tracer*, 1989; NFSA Collection, title no.525378: *Phone Sex Girls Australia*, 1989; NFSA Collection, title no.513565: *True Blue*, 1990.

67 NFSA Collection, title no.539688: *Arigato Baby*, Dir. Greg Lynch, Prod. Greg Lynch, 1990; see also, Andrew King, 'Reconciling Nicci Lane: the "Unspeakable" Significance of Australia's First Indigenous Porn Star', *Continuum*, 19:4, December 2005, pp.523-543.

68 John Pym, (ed.), *Time Out Film Guide*, 14th edition, Time Out, London, 2005, p.1020.

69 Bertrand, *Film Censorship in Australia*, pp.189-190.

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73 Jill Julius Matthews, *Dance Hall and Picture Palace: Sydney's Romance with Modernity*, Currency Press, Sydney, 2005.

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100 'Refused Classification: Film Classification in Australia' provides details of non-hard-core films that have been banned or cut since 1970: www.refused-classification.com/ (accessed August 2007); see also, 'The Chopping List: Banned and Censored Movies in Australia', www.cosmos.net.au/~hologram/chopping/list_home.html (accessed August 2007).

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103 NFSA Collection, title no.1770: *Stork*, Dir. Tim Burstall, Prod. Bilcock & Copping Film Productions, 1971.

104 NFSA Collection, title no.159: *The Adventures of Barry McKenzie*, Dir. Bruce Beresford, Prod. Phillip Adams, 1972.

105 NFSA Collection, title no.4: *Alvin Purple*, Dir. Tim Burstall, Prod. Tim Burstall, 1973.

106 NFSA Collection, title no.410: *Alvin Rides Again*, Dir. Robin Copping, Tim Burstall and David Bilcock, Prod. Tim Burstall, 1974.

Films offered everyone, including women and children, visual access to previously hidden movement – of semi-naked male boxers and scantily clad female dancers. The potential effect of such spectacle was to make available to everyone, not just men, the involuntary thrill of physical (sexual) response.

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