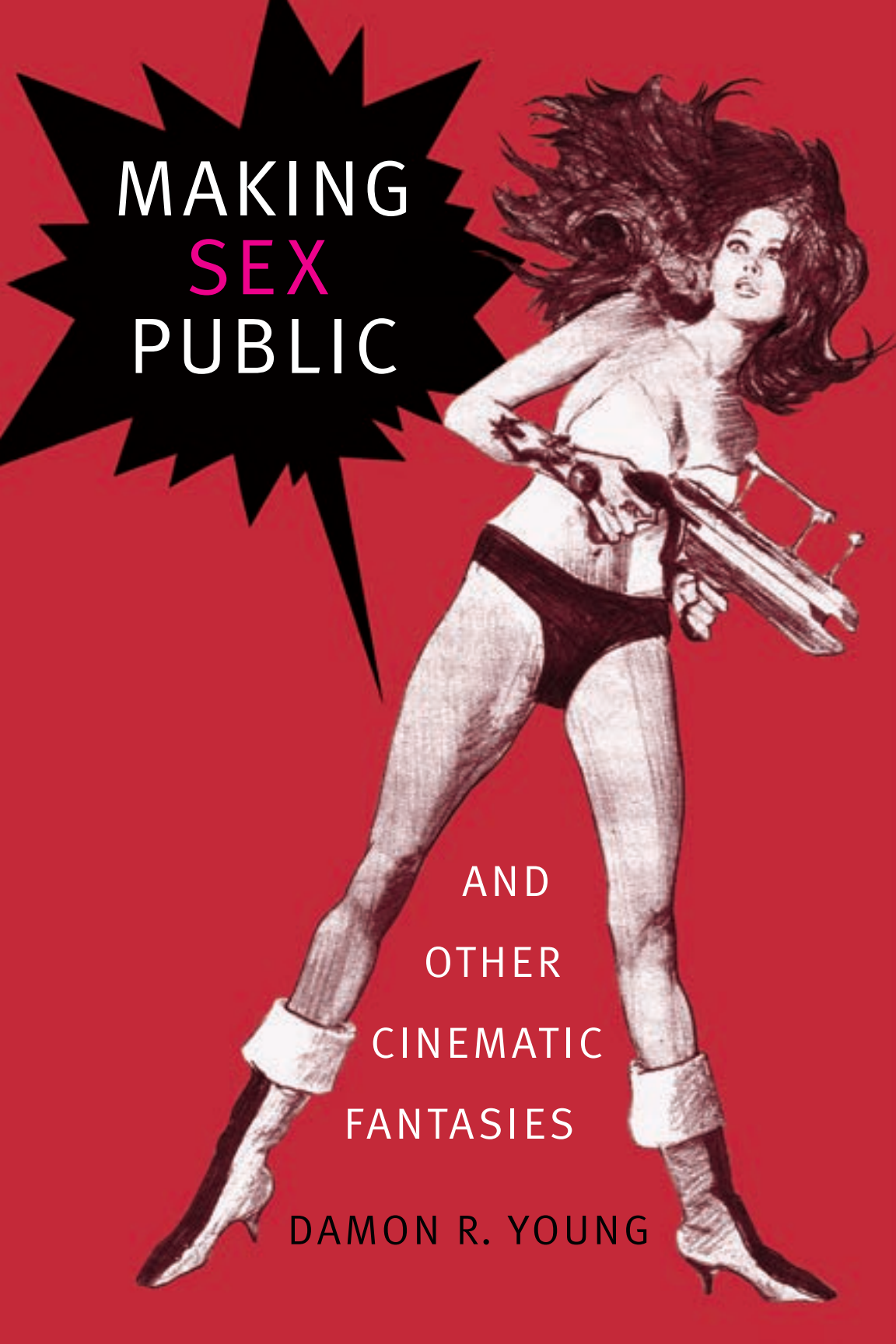
MAKING SEX PUBLIC



AND OTHER CINEMATIC FANTASIES

DAMON R. YOUNG

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THEORY Q

A series edited by
Lauren Berlant
and Lee Edelman

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DAMON R. YOUNG

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For Laurie Young

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This book is the product of a long labor. During the writing I took consolation from a comment Debussy once made while composing a sonata: he had "spent a week deciding on one chord rather than another." Robert Bresson, citing this statement in his *Notes on Cinematography*, adds about his own practice: "These horrible days—when shooting film disgusts me, when I am exhausted, powerless in the face of so many obstacles—are part of my method of work." Alas, *Making Sex Public* is not a Bresson film or a Debussy sonata. But in writing it, I at least could humor myself by considering that in the most torturous aspects of my method, I was suffering in good company.

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Back in Sydney, Natalya Lusty, my first mentor, made scholarly research seem fun, necessary, and glamorous. I still hope to live up to her example and to the optimism and promise of that galvanizing encounter.

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Back in Sydney, Natalya Lusty, my first mentor, made scholarly research seem fun, necessary, and glamorous. I still hope to live up to her example and to the optimism and promise of that galvanizing encounter.

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When my brother, Adam Young, realized I was gay in high school he transformed, overnight, into the world's most fearless gay ally. He has reproduced that act of silent solidarity many times since.

Fathers, alive and dead, loom large in the pages that follow. This is, no doubt, because ours is a patriarchal culture, in which daddy fantasies (murderous or desiring; reproachful or adoring) proliferate across the cultural field and across gender and sexual categories (nothing necessarily straight or male about the daddy).

My own father, Laurie Young, died hours after I completed the first draft of this book. He was fascinated by transgression and the occult and by Kenneth Anger, Aleister Crowley, the Marquis de Sade, and Genesis P. Orridge. The last film we saw together, in an empty Brisbane movie theater, was *The Human Centipede*. In the last years of his life, we often argued about Freud, Foucault, and Nietzsche, whose work he saw as an expression of egoism (could this be said of all writing?) but who nevertheless, or for that reason, fascinated him. Had he lived longer, as he should have, he would have read this book, out of love or endless curiosity. (He would have considered it an example of a postmodernism that bemused him, but he still would have appreciated its perversity.) In the book, I am critical of paternal legacies, and in some sense the book tries to disrupt, by remarking, the Oedipal logic that generates them. We all have to live with our (and others') contradictions. My father, whom I loved deeply in spite of his failings, died before he had time to write the book he always talked about writing. I dedicate this one to him.

And to Michael, who is always there with me to pick up the pieces. He makes private life something worth—well, both living and keeping private.

INTRODUCTION

Making Sex Public

The erotic is film's very own theme, its essence.
Belá Balázs, *Visible Man or the Culture of Film*, 1924

The age of Photography corresponds precisely to the explosion of the private into the public, or rather into the creation of a new social value, which is the publicity of the private: the private is consumed as such, publicly.
Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 1980

IN 1968, WHILE FRENCH students occupied the halls of the Sorbonne, Barbarella fucked her way to freedom. More than one kind of revolution was in the air! As students and workers lent their bodies to a Marxist revolution to come, Barbarella came for the sexual revolution—the culmination, in the film (however perversely), of a civilizational project that began with the French Revolution. As Barbarella, Jane Fonda, French-speaking American star of a French fantasy film, embodied a peculiarly French-American fantasy of the modern liberal subject as one who reconciles the republican ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity with the pleasures of the flesh. In this futuristic fantasy world, sexuality is no longer cordoned off from, but is now integrated into, civic existence. Liberated from marriage and the family, from the inequalities of the private sphere, sexuality in *Barbarella* is an expression of personal autonomy, but it is no longer at the foundation of a complex, private self.

In these ways, *Barbarella* gives (kitschy) form to a fantasy of making sex public that has, since the 1950s, transformed the ways we think about sexuality in the West. This book explores how that fantasy took shape in French and U.S. cinema—narrative and documentary; commercial, experimental, and activist—from the mid-1950s to the end of the 1970s, and how women and queers became its privileged figures. (Chapter 6 and the epilogue deal with some contemporary legacies of these developments.) Susan Sontag once referred to cinema as "*the* art of the twentieth century." Here I approach it also

as a technology of cultural fantasy, one that mediates and transgresses the boundary between public and private as its constitutive mode of operation.[1] The cinema's rise to cultural dominance in the twentieth century is fundamental to the emergence of an imaginary of making sex public; the medium is also the message.

Before I say more about what the fantasy of making sex public entails, consider its possible implication in the very technological basis of the medium: if the autobiography and the novel had equipped the private self, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with an elaborate discursive apparatus, cinema's photographic basis gave its incursions into the private sphere in the twentieth a new documentary concreteness.[2] That documentary concreteness entailed a specifically visual kind of eroticism. Film theorist André Bazin, not known for his prurient sensibilities, wrote in 1957 that "it is of the cinema alone that we can say that eroticism is there on purpose and is a basic ingredient . . . even perhaps an *essential* one," presumably because of its affinity for representing the human body.[3] Stanley Cavell went further, arguing that "the ontological conditions of cinema reveal it as inherently pornographic."[4] In the cinema, the realist thrill of photography's famed indexicality combines with the voyeuristic pleasure of "looking in on a private world."[5] In Cavell's terms, cinematic looking is a nonreciprocal structure through which a spectator defined by "ontological invisibility" observes a spectacle that tends toward—even if it rarely arrives at—the "pornographic" display of the body as the ultimate exposure of the private. ("A woman in a movie is *dressed* . . . , hence potentially undressed," writes Cavell, conflating cinema as technological apparatus with the normative system of gender that shaped its classical narrative syntax.)[6]

From a certain theoretical vantage point, then, the developments I track in this book extend an impetus embedded in film technologies at the outset.[7] That impetus was already at work in early silent cinema in which, as Heide Schlüppman has written, documentary scenes of public spaces quickly gave way to fictionalized views of the domestic interior, precisely in order to show what had been considered private, namely "family life and love scenes."[8] But whether or not we take making sex public to be an "ontological" propensity of the medium, film and media scholars agree that, at the level of representation, a paradigm shift occurred toward the end of the 1950s. This was the period of the demise of the Hollywood Production Code, the U.S. film industry's globally influential mode of self-regulation that took effect in the early 1930s (and was formally abandoned in 1968). The collapse of the Code is one among several converging phenomena that contributed to the changing norms of

cinematic representation in this period. Eric Schaefer describes it as the period of a "media revolution . . . in which distinctions between the private and the public became radically destabilized."[9] Citing political theorist Jeff Weintraub's definitions of public and private, he continues, "More than anything, the sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s was a process by which that which was 'hidden and withdrawn' became 'open, revealed, or accessible.'"[10]

In similar terms, Elena Gorfinkel writes of a "sexualization of the larger public culture" in the 1960s and '70s through an "unabashed proliferation of screen eroticism."[11] And Linda Williams has coined the term "on/scene" to describe the process "by which a culture brings on to its public arena the very organs, acts, bodies, and pleasures that have heretofore been designated ob/scene and kept . . . off-scene."[12] The period from the mid-1950s through the end of the 1970s was one in which sex came on/scene in many genres, from mainstream commercial cinema to avant-garde and experimental film, activist documentary, and auteur or art cinema.[13] Sex in cinema generally moved, to put it in a linguistic lexicon, from the realm of connotation to the realm of denotation, generating a series of historical firsts. In *Barbarella*, for example, Fonda's face became the "first (American) face of female orgasm on the American screen"—in a French film.[14] That pairing is not coincidental: shifting parameters in the representation of sex were often, though not always, initiated in French and U.S. cinema, and depended on the circulation of stars, directors, and cinematic tropes between the two.

The collapse of the Production Code and the rise of an auteur cinema, less constrained by the studio system, coincided historically with a reinvigorated feminist critique of the private sphere and a new visibility of queer sexuality in the public sphere. In the 1950s, '60s, and '70s, making sex public also meant imagining sex outside the institutions and spaces of traditional, heterosexual domesticity. Women's bodies—privileged objects of the cinematic gaze since its inception—took on new meanings in mainstream and feminist film, representing both sexual autonomy and a sexual difference uneasily integrated into the public sphere. In the case of queerness, the historical transformation designated by the phrase "making sex public" is even more stark: this period witnessed the transformation of a regime of the closet, in which homosexuality could barely be alluded to, into one of increasing, and increasingly acceptable, explicitness. Throughout this period, at the center of converging imaginaries of making sex public on both sides of the Atlantic, women's and queer sexualities became highly charged sites of cultural contestation, utopian projection,

and dystopian fantasy. *Making Sex Public* explores how and why this was so, and how this recent period in film history laid the foundations for our contemporary ways of thinking sex.

The Liberal Sexual Subject versus the Republican Social Contract

In *Barbarella*, I wrote above, sexuality is "no longer at the foundation of a complex, private self." This contention would seem at odds with Michel Foucault's account of the way "a veritable discursive explosion" on the topic of sex, since the eighteenth century, produces a subject for whom sexuality is precisely at the opaque center of a complex interiority.[15] Far from transparent, this subject's sexual "truth" is displaced onto symptoms and signifiers; it requires ferreting out, and it demands the production of a narrative that also serves as a means of categorization and control. According to Foucault, our modern system or *dispositif* (apparatus) of sexuality emerges "at the juncture between Christian confession and medicine."[16] "Tell me what your desire is, and I'll tell you what you are as a subject": in this defining imperative of the modern subject, according to Foucault, we hear together the voices of the priest, the psychoanalyst, and the policeman.[17]

Cinema's profusion of images and narratives about sex in the 1960s and '70s might at first seem to be simply an extension of this "incitement to discourse," its ramification in the domain of images. And yet, surprisingly enough, the films I discuss here do not approach sexuality as a reservoir of subjective truth in need of unearthing. Barbarella's sexuality has no hermeneutic density; it is not indexed to a specifically psychic life that would provide the contents for a confessional (e.g., psychoanalytic) narrative. Barbarella's sexuality is instead shaped by her status as citizen of the Sun System, conforming to the principles of liberal democracy. Barbarella is the book's first example of what I call a liberal sexual subject, a subject for whom sexuality is not indexed to psychic interiority but instead assumes its significance in relation to concepts of social contract, public sphere, and nation, within the framework of a broadly defined liberalism.

The term "liberal sexual subject" may seem oxymoronic insofar as sexuality was traditionally considered outside the purview of politics, precisely because it was deemed a private matter. According to political theorist Carole Pateman, the implicit "sexual contract" that has governed domestic relations between men and women has been exempt from the egalitarianism that defines the social contract at the mythological foundation of the liberal/republican social

order.[18] But in the 1960s and '70s, making sex public means reimagining the sexual contract in terms of the social contract, whether as harmoniously reconciled (as in *Barbarella*) or as irreducibly antagonistic. In other words, the book tracks the imaginary convergence of the sexual subject and the political subject of modern liberal democracy. This is not meant to suggest a real fusion of the two—both are, in any case, abstractions—but rather to show how the terms through which we imagine and figure each begin to converge.

What I call liberalism here does not refer to the specifics of any existing political regime but rather to an ideal fundamental, in different ways, to the national mythologies of both France and the United States—the ideal of a social order founded on the formal equality and negative freedom (freedom from interference by other people) of its constituents. This ideal spans U.S. liberalism and French republicanism, uniting them in their core commitments in spite of their different emphases. Liberalism in this book refers to a set of normative ideas and fantasies about the social; it is associated, in different chapters, with a mythological social contract that founds the social order as a regime among equals; with the public sphere understood as a domain of "communicative rationality" (Habermas); with the republican values of liberty, equality, and fraternity; and with the pluralistic notion of differences transcended by national (or universal) belonging.[19] I make no attempt to reconcile these nonconcordant aspects of liberalism, broadly conceived; my aim is show how in each specific context, one or several of these ideas shapes the way sex comes into view.

Why should women and queers be so central to the emergent imaginary of a liberal sexual subject in the second half of the twentieth century? One answer is provided by Annamarie Jagose, who has shown how straight women and gay men have been differently invested by social theory as avatars of "sexual modernity."[20] For example, in sociologist Anthony Giddens's influential modern history of intimacy, he describes women as the sexual "revolutionaries of modernity," advancing, in the twentieth century, a notion of autonomous pleasure "severed from its age-old integration with reproduction, kinship, and the generations."[21] Sexuality is then transformed into "wholly a quality of individuals and their transactions with each other."[22] For Giddens, the signal feature of sexual modernity, driven by advances in women's rights, is that "democratic norms" of equality and reciprocity come to "bear upon sexual experience itself" (194). Jagose rightly sees this as a "utopian" reading of modernity, and what I call the liberal sexual subject indeed names a utopian fantasy (typically allied to a dystopic fear of the nonliberal Other).[23]

What Giddens calls "pure relationship" (based on autonomy and egalitarian reciprocity) and "plastic" sexuality (separated from kinship) remain, in his account, normatively heterosexual. By contrast, for Danish sociologist Henning Bech, as Jagose also observes, the theoretical avatar of sexual modernization is not the woman but the gay man. According to Bech, the anonymity and impersonality of gay male sexual cultures is a reflection of modern democratic norms and market principles; those cultures model "the formal equivalence, and right to participate, prevailing in the modern world on the market, in politics and in the city."[24] In this description, the gay man cruising for sex in the city embodies the dissolving force of capitalism, that force via which, as Marx and Engels famously put it, "all that is solid melts into air." Along with the family, kinship, and the private sphere, the gay man as he appears here has also separated sex from the personal and the psychological. He is a depersonalized agent transacting exchangeable units of pleasure value. Replacing a hermeneutic model of sexuality in this description is a quantitative and transactional model.

A somewhat different (but related) version of the liberal sexual subject appears in Gayle Rubin's influential essay "Thinking Sex" (1984), one of the pioneering texts of Anglophone queer studies. In that essay, Rubin powerfully critiques the moralizing and pathologizing frameworks—derived from religion, psychiatry, and popular social discourses—that distinguish acceptable from unacceptable forms of sexuality.[25] Rejecting these "hierarchies of sexual value" (150), Rubin instead proposes a concept of benign sexual variation, albeit one that turns out to have its own normative criteria: "A democratic morality," she writes, "should judge sexual acts by the way partners treat one another, the level of mutual consideration, the presence or absence of coercion, and the quantity and quality of the pleasures they provide" (168). In the place of a system of judgment that condemns homosexuality as a moral failing or as perversion, Rubin advocates a "democratic morality" elaborated in terms of mutuality and consent, and organized around a calculus of pleasures. This democracy of queer sex—in which autonomous sexual subjects contract to come together in the mutual pursuit of pleasure—bears parallels to *Barbarella*'s Sun System. The appearance of an in some sense analogous fantasy in such different texts attests to the way that an imaginary of the liberal sexual subject has generated ways of thinking sex that operate across cultural and theoretical registers, from popular culture to social movements, to sociology and queer theory.

The metaphorics of democracy, liberalism, and the market used by these authors to characterize sexual modernity is not the one that operates in more standard, psychoanalytically oriented accounts of the subject of desire in cinema. But it is a metaphorics that is crucial, I argue, for understanding the way in which French and U.S. cinema makes sex public in the second half of the twentieth century. What follows is not in any simple sense a narrative of liberation in which women and queers, through the successes of their respective emancipation movements, attain sexual equality and autonomy, unburdening themselves of the shackles of domesticity, psychology, normativity, and the family. It is rather a narrative in which ideals of equality and autonomy, introduced into the private domain of sexuality, generate a complex and often contradictory set of imaginaries, with women and queers at their center. These imaginaries bear less on the psychic specificities of the sexual subject—less on the psychological individual—and more on systems and structures of social organization, and the national, transnational, and universal imagined communities that underpin them.

The figure of the woman and/or queer as liberal sexual subject is far from only positively invested in this period. The intrusion of women's and queer sexualities into the public sphere also inspires converse fantasies of civilization's demise. Camille Robcis has recently shown how a reigning conception of the social in France, enshrined in family law and drawing on (a specious reading of) anthropological and psychoanalytic sources, holds that the difference between the sexes constitutes the symbolic foundation of the social per se. Robcis calls this the "republican social contract" that takes heterosexual conjugality and filiation to be the essential basis of both biological and social reproduction.[26]

Within the framework of this republican social contract (which finds parallels in the US context), homosexuality in particular is conceived of as a privileging of individual pleasure over social responsibility. The discourse of the republican social contract pits the idea of a selfish individual seeking only his or her own gratification against the "public good" (Robcis, 245), where the public corresponds to a social order taken to be founded on heterosexual filiation. The mass protests against the legalization of gay marriage in France in 2013, and the heated debates on the *Obergefell v. Hodges* case in the United States two years later, attest to the ongoing force of such a conception of the social on both sides of the Atlantic. What the protests express is ostensibly not disgust at homosexuality as a private orientation of desire but rather an

objection to its claim on marriage and family as public institutions. Homosexuality becomes a problem not when it comes into view as such but when it lays claim to the institutions that make sexuality socially meaningful, thus challenging the foundations of the social order and taking us into unknown territory.[27] (I examine these issues in the French and US contexts respectively in chapters 3 and 5.)

A key thesis of this book, then, is that a tension between these two conceptions of sex underpins the ways in which cinema makes sex public: on the one hand, the fantasy of a liberal sexual subject as an autonomous, pleasure-seeking agent; on the other, that of the republican social contract, rejecting the idea of sexuality as an individual attribute and insisting on sexual difference and the "heterosexual family as *constitutive* of the social."[28] The first is a fantasy of autonomy's extension to the domain of sexuality; the second emphasizes the specifically heterosexual constitution of social bonds.[29] The tension between the liberal sexual subject and the republican social contract does not directly map onto the US/France divide; it shapes, more broadly, the contours of a twentieth-century sexuality fundamentally transformed by the medium of cinema, as sex tends to move from off-scene to on, from the closet to the public sphere, from the bedroom to the cinema screen.

Before Sex Was Public

In order to see what is at stake in the transformations mapped in this book, it will be helpful to consider an example from the immediately preceding period. A decade before *Barbarella*, there was perhaps no more iconic embodiment of a troubled female sexuality than Elizabeth Taylor, at the apogee of her career in two Tennessee Williams adaptations at the end of the 1950s: *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (dir. Richard Brooks, 1958) and *Suddenly, Last Summer* (dir. Joseph Mankiewicz, 1959).[30]

In each of the publicity shots reproduced in figs. I.1 and I.2, Taylor directs a fraught look diagonally up to the right, twisting her shapely body along the same vector toward eyes that fail, however, to see it.[31] In both films, the putative male gaze of classical Hollywood cinema is in default; but what is lacking within the diegesis is compensated at the level of the apparatus, which offers the spectacle of Taylor's body to a spectator invited to himself assume it. On closer inspection, however, even this expected operation of the apparatus seems precarious. In fig. 1.1, from *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, Paul Newman's face, directed away from Taylor's look, becomes the focus of ours;

Fig. I.1. The male gaze, slantwise: *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1958). Studio publicity image.

Fig. I.2. White-clad shapeliness: *Suddenly, Last Summer* (1959). Studio publicity image.

instead of gazing at Taylor, Newman's face presents itself "to-be-looked-at."[32] The scandal continues: in *Suddenly, Last Summer* (fig. 1.2), the white-clad shapeliness that characterizes Taylor's body and determines, at this moment of high drama, its narrative function, has spread, as if through some contagion of formal properties, to the buttocks that literally stand between our look and its ostensible object. What the films narrate thus seems to have also corrupted their manner of narrating, albeit in ways that remain covert: Taylor's presence ensures that the film's gaze does not quite belong to its gays, that its heterosexuality will not be called into question, even as it seems inexorably to signal the male gaze's purely formal constitution.

Thus do the films, in both form and content, stage a crisis of male heterosexual desire that is channeled through, and mapped onto, Taylor's body as the figure of a complex, multidimensional, and frustrated female sexuality. At once pent up and uncontainable, unrealized and all too present, Taylor's sexuality reduces her to her body—yet the meaning of that body, so resolutely

in the picture, is referred to a sphere of male homoeroticism that for its part remains strictly *sous entendu*, off-scene, inscribed only in the lacuna of the unreturned look. Taylor's hypercorporeality and emblematic to-be-looked-at-ness characterize a female sexuality coming into view in new ways and, at the same time, stand in for a nascent homoerotic imaginary that cannot be directly expressed. In Taylor's films of the 1950s, words and bodies conceal secrets, and the quest for an unutterable truth—the truth of some foundational trauma in the past, or of desire and its symptomatology—animates the film's signs and images precisely as what they are unable to fully disclose. Hysteria, spreading contagiously between women (in *Suddenly*, from Taylor's Catherine to Hepburn's Mrs. Venable), is the symptomatic product of a close encounter with a male love that dare not speak its name—and whose unspeakability undermines the referential status of everything that is said and shown.

"We always seem to talk around things, we seem to leave things unsaid and unspoken," says Big Daddy to Brick (Newman) in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. "Now we gotta talk straight," he adds. But of course the truth of sexuality—sexuality as the characters' ultimate truth—is not so straight and cannot be arrived at through straight talk. It dwells in what is not or has not been said, in Skipper's abortive phone call to Brick, in Brick's letting the phone ring out a second time, unanswered. "Skipper won out anyway," says Maggie, in a voice that suggests she knows too much and not enough: he won out even or precisely in his death, immortalized as a signifier for an unavowable loss, the absent center of the film's economy of desire. Taylor as Maggie the Cat incarnates at once sexual authenticity (straight talk) and mendacity, the great theme of this great film, which fades to black as Brick finally kisses Maggie in a gesture holding out the promise of rekindled heterosexual desire and (thus) a renewed commitment to life and to truth, even as Big Daddy's words continue to ring in the spectator's ears: "The truth is . . . paying bills and making love to a woman you don't love anymore."

At the end of the 1950s, Taylor, a figure of both women's to-be-looked-at-ness and of a male homoerotics that remains ineffable, condenses two imaginaries. In the first place, she is "embodiment and victim of sexuality: she is sex objectified, she is the symbol of sex in the human species."[33] This is how Wendy Brown describes the place of women in a Western tradition in which, she adds, "sex and woman go together like man and the polis" (5). Brown and other feminist political theorists have shown how the abstract political subject of liberalism and of republican universalism have been implicitly defined

as male, "in opposition to women and all their bodies symbolize."[34] (This is the historical background against which a figure such as Barbarella, reconciling embodiment and political subjecthood, assumes its significance.)

Taylor's body also draws its charge from its implication in a second imaginary, that of the homoerotic and homophobic relations between men for which women have historically functioned as mediating figures: this is the argument with which Eve Sedgwick helped launch the career of Anglophone queer theory.[35] In her follow-up book, *The Epistemology of the Closet*, Sedgwick laid bare the discursive mechanics of sexual knowledge and secrecy that have underpinned the "important knowledges and understandings of twentieth-century Western culture as a whole."[36] That culture (so runs the book's dazzling opening claim) is "structured—indeed, fractured—by a chronic, now endemic crisis of homo/heterosexual definition, indicatively male, dating from the end of the nineteenth century" (1). Sedgwick proceeds to unfold the discursive currents of this crisis as they ripple through the power-knowledge matrix of Western culture, shaping the early twentieth-century literary canon in France, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Let me dwell for a moment on that oft-quoted but rarely discussed phrase, "indicatively male." Women's bodies are a site of cultural struggle and projection at the moment of Taylor's appearance in the Williams adaptations. But the patriarchal system within which they assume their vexed significance is one that circulates male desire as its fundamental (and fundamentally fraught) currency. Rather than thematizing the significations that accrue to women's bodies and sexualities, Sedgwick instead showed how male-male relations determine the framework in which gender comes to signify at all. In the first part of this book, I reverse this dynamic, offering a (gay male) analysis of women's sexuality as a primary site of cultural struggle and fantasy, and (in chapter 2) a discussion of feminist attempts to reimagine women's bodies as not simply mediating relations between men.

The corollary of women's positioning as the "embodiment of sex in the human species" is that men's bodies have retained the privilege of receding from view—whether hidden behind suits, or figuratively dissolved into the unmarked universal. Nevertheless, patriarchy names a system of male power in which the image of the male body—invested by the mythology of the phallus—must itself be endowed, so to speak, with the highest of stakes. It can only be via a strange displacement (power's covertness) that women have been made to embody embodiment, given how firmly the reality of male

power is embedded in the fantasy (and asserted through metaphors) of male anatomy. The second part of this book focuses on fears and fantasies about men's bodies as cinema brings them into view in new ways.[37]

I mean "into view" quite literally. Sedgwick's argument about the epistemological underpinnings of "twentieth-century Western culture as a whole" presupposes the novel's status as cultural dominant. The argument still works well for Tennessee Williams, a writer whose oeuvre draws its force from the epistemology of the closet, that organization of the public/private divide that confines homosexuality to the realm of connotation. In *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *Suddenly, Last Summer*, the epistemological paradigm that produces sexuality as a domain of opacity and mendacity is translated into the visual language of narrative cinema. But appearing as they do at the beginning of the period of making sex public, these films also mark the beginning of the end of the era in which the closet would serve as organizing trope of Western sexual power/knowledge. The figure of Taylor both demonstrates the salience of Sedgwick's analysis of the epistemology of the closet across media forms, and begins to suggest its historical limits.

The Private Self and After

In Code-era cinema, of which the two Taylor films serve as late examples, the relation of the off-scene to the on/scene corresponds to the psychoanalytic split between latent and manifest. In that cinema, sex is kept off-scene; it cannot be shown. Precisely for that reason, it is the very thing that never ceases to be implied. In reference to the films of Hitchcock, for instance, Robin Wood notes the omnipresent "dread of repressed forces" that is "accompanied by the sense of the emptiness of the surface world that represses them."[38] Withheld from view, sex constitutes a concealed foundation always threatening to expose the "surface world" as merely a cover story. Like Hitchcock films, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *Suddenly, Last Summer* emerge from a paradigm with a properly precinematic genealogy.

In his late eighteenth-century *Lectures on Ethics*, Kant, turning his attention to questions of daily custom, remarked on the seemingly self-evident fact that when we invite guests into our homes, we refrain from showing them "the bedroom, where the chamberpots are."[39] "Domestic nastiness [*Unreinigkeit*]," he added, is confined to a "special place" (27:444–45). Kant's comment is intended to illustrate that man's public and social being depends on a division between concealment (*dissimulatio*) and display. The latter, however, is

itself no simple matter, since what is displayed is just as likely to be a disguise (*simulatio*). Between the dissimulatio of concealment and the simulatio of disguise, we are not very socially honest creatures. And this is just as well, says Kant, because man "is full of iniquity" (27:444). Certainly, "if all men were good, nobody could hold anything back; but since this is not so, we must keep our shutters closed" (27:445).

Kant's domestic metaphors spatialize a split between public and private within the architecture of the home. His comments also illustrate how the bourgeois subject of modernity is—even before the invention of psychoanalysis—a split subject. In Dipesh Chakrabarty's words, "Subjectivity itself, or . . . the 'interiority' of the subject, comes [in discourses of European modernity] to be constituted by a tension between the individual's private experiences and desires (feelings, emotions, sentiments) and a universal or public reason. . . . It is this opposition that manifests itself in the split between the private and the public in modernity."[40]

The modern private self is constructed through media; it "pours [itself] out incessantly in diaries, letters, autobiographies, novels, and of course, in what we say to our analysts"—all, except the last, constituents of the eighteenth-century liberal-bourgeois public sphere.[41] Habermas, in his canonical account of that sphere, argues that the voluble private self of bourgeois modernity was "always already oriented to an audience [*Publikum*]."[42] But for all its chatter, this eighteenth-century self was not benignly or transparently self-expressive; it was fractured, writes William Connolly, by "convoluted relays among passions, interests, wishes, responsibility and guilt" that would later be considered conflictual "levels of unconscious, preconscious, conscious and self-conscious activity."[43] In other words, the garrulous modern subject is not one who holds forth in transparent prose; he is an individual who both conceals and "disguis[es] himself."[44] This is not only because he has something he knows he must hide, but also because he does not know what, with all that talk, those diaries, letters, and autobiographies, he is actually revealing. The modern—neurotic—individual's discursive profusion lends itself to a symptomatic reading that, according to Foucault's famous analysis, always leads back . . . to sex.

It is well known by now that the subject of all those letters and diaries is destined for psychoanalysis, and psychoanalysis will interpret their contents as veiled narratives, paradigmatically Oedipal, of sexuality.[45] In Chakrabarty's account, which aims to historicize this model and to demonstrate the force of its normative articulation in colonialist practices and discourses, the modern

"private self" is the corollary of "the bureaucratic constructions of citizenship, the modern state, and bourgeois privacy."[46] The "grand narrative of rights, citizenship, the nation-state, and public and private spheres" (41) that is also bound up with a history of colonial violence linked to the global rise of industrial capitalism, produces a voluble subject, split between public and private, who will find an ideal audience in the analyst's office.

Consider now a contemporary film like *Shortbus* (John Cameron Mitchell, 2006), discussed in chapter 6, in which the protagonist, Sofia, is a sex therapist (or self-nominated couples counselor) whose therapeutic modality is, significantly, not psychoanalysis but rather cognitive-behavioral therapy. Like *Barbarella* (its precursor), *Shortbus* organizes its narrative around the trope of the female orgasm. In successfully achieving one at the end of the film, and in doing so on screen, Sook-Yin Lee's Sofia does what Taylor's Maggie in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* could never do. Nevertheless, some interesting continuities span the divide between the moment of Maggie and the moment of Sofia. Women's sexuality and queer sexualities are at the center of both films' imaginaries. However, the problem in *Shortbus* is no longer mendacity—the dynamics of duplicitous speech and silence—but rather the need to cultivate modes of connectivity and permeability that make sex not a private secret but a mode of social belonging and queer world citizenship. A semiotic regime of troubled signification, befitting the idea of sexual repression, has given over to an insistently visual regime of display, with ostensibly nothing to hide. Like *Barbarella* before it, *Shortbus* turns sex made public into an allegory of liberal democracy. The film begins and ends with (simulated) images of the Statue of Liberty, marking the symbolic or mythological alliance between France and the United States as bastions of a liberal democracy now refashioned as queer-friendly or even as fundamentally queer.

Gloriously on view in *Shortbus*, the liberal sexual subject is no longer strictly produced in relation to a repressive hypothesis (and may turn out to be more neoliberal than liberal). The structuring opposition is no longer one of repression versus liberation but rather of blockage versus free circulation. While arguing that this subject inhabits a regime of power-knowledge that postdates the one described by Foucault, I nevertheless take from Foucault the project of historicizing sexual subjectivity and the social and institutional power relations that shape it. That historicization must also extend to the media forms in which the subject appears. This book's overarching thesis is that the period in which cinema makes sex public is one in which sexuality comes to be less organized by the dynamics of knowledge and secrecy that

characterize both Foucault's account of sexuality as a modern *dispositif* of power-knowledge and Sedgwick's account of the "endemic crisis of homo/heterosexual identification" that organizes the epistemology of the closet. A disciplinary regime of sexuality produced through a dynamics of concealment and disclosure is assuredly at work in the novels of Proust, Melville, James, and the other modernist authors whose silences Sedgwick rendered so eloquent. But the cinematic/technological and cultural/political processes of making sex public I describe in this book ultimately displace an epistemological paradigm.[47]

Women, Criminals, Citizens

Moving between France and the United States, from popular cinema to experimental and documentary film, and from women to queers as privileged figures of sexual modernity, the case studies that follow show how cinema in the second half of the twentieth century developed new imaginaries of making sex public, shaped by a tension between an emergent fantasy of the liberal sexual subject and an enduring conception of the "heterosexual family as *constitutive* of the social."

Part I, "Women," deals with the significations that accrued to proliferating images of women's pleasure from the mid-1950s to the 1970s. While the civil individual has been historically constructed as male, it was, paradoxically, women's orgasms that first gave visual and narrative form to new imaginaries of making sex public, whose genealogy in French cinema of the 1950s and '60s I explore in chapter 1, "Autonomous Pleasures: Bardot, *Barbarella*, and the Liberal Sexual Subject." In chapter 2, "Facing the Body in 1975: Catherine Breillat and the Antinomies of Sex," I consider the way feminist theorists and filmmakers in the 1970s tested out the role of the film apparatus in sustaining or challenging a system of sexual difference that troubles any notion of universalism.

Part II, "Criminals," explores the imaginaries that attend the coming into view of homosexual desire, before and after the gay liberation movements of the 1970s. In *Le désir homosexuel*, arguably the first work of queer theory, Guy Hocquenghem wrote in 1972 that "homosexual desire"—indicatively male—"haunts the 'normal world.'"[48] It does so, according to Hocquenghem (anticipating Sedgwick), as the invisible glue of the patriarchal social order, "haunting" the intense affective bonds between men that must but can only precariously be defined as nonsexual. Chapter 3, "The Form of the Social:

Heterosexuality and Homo-aesthetics in *Plein Soleil*," examines a French film in which homosexual desire appears as a murderous, self-replicating sameness that threatens conjugality and filiation, at the very moment the young directors of the French New Wave were rewriting film history as a story of Oedipal struggle between men. Chapter 4, "*Cruising* and the Fraternal Social Contract," turns to the U.S. context and to the moment just after gay liberation. The film *Cruising* (William Friedkin, 1980) brought explicit gay sex into mainstream view, and I argue that in so doing, it presented a disturbing allegory of what Pateman calls the "fraternal social contract" and gave a scandalous twist to Hocquenghem's thesis. In both chapters, we see how the fears of conservatives perversely mirror the argument of a certain strand of queer theory that homosexual desire represents a "revolutionary inaptitude for . . . sociality as we know it."[49]

The films I discuss in part II offer fascinated but phobic visions of male homoeroticism as at once fundamental to and destructive of the patriarchal social order. In part III, "Citizens," I examine the emergence of a diametrically opposed model of queerness, one based on a liberal notion of diversity and one that makes a claim on ordinary citizenship. Chapter 5, "*Word Is Out*, or Queer Privacy," revisits the landmark activist documentary, *Word Is Out* (1978), typically taken to exemplify an assimilationist politics that defuses the radical potential of queerness by presenting it as a form of benign domesticity. Examining queer theory's own varied investments in making sex public, I argue that what has been criticized as "queer liberalism," i.e., a queer politics that makes a claim on the institutions of marriage and family, and that keeps sex in some sense private, is more complex than it appears.[50] *Word Is Out* makes domesticity queer and in so doing demonstrates the potentiality as well as the limits of the queer appropriation (rather than radical refusal) of liberal categories. In chapter 6, "Sex in Public: Through the Window from *Psycho* to *Shortbus*," I explore the recurrent cinematic trope of a camera moving through a bedroom window, invading the *foyer domestique*, traditional domain of privacy in both U.S. and French law.[51] Comparing this move in the opening shots of Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) and of John Cameron Mitchell's *Shortbus*, I show how the same formal trope at different historical moments takes on different meanings and models different kinds of subjectivity—from a subject rooted in an opaque privacy to a subject circulating in a globally connected network. The epilogue describes this as the transition from a liberal to a neoliberal imaginary of sexuality, through a discussion of *The Canyons* (Paul Schrader, 2013), a film that thematizes the death of cinema and the emergence

of a world in which, as one character puts it to another, "Nobody has a private life anymore." I compare the American dystopian fantasy of a world without privacy in Schrader's nostalgic film to some recent developments in French cinema that restage the question of making sex public in a century now said to be postcinematic.

In the second half of the twentieth century, women and queers—at the center of proliferating images and narratives of sex becoming public—crystallized the tensions between, on the one hand, a new idea of the sexual subject as autonomous and independent and, on the other, enduring conceptions of the social as heterosexual and generational. The first five chapters focus on a period that antedates the AIDS crisis and the rise of the New Queer Cinema in the U.S. and Britain in the 1990s, as well as of a mainstream queer cinema in France in the late 1990s and 2000s.[52] Skipping over these more familiar moments in the history of queer cinema, the book ends with a reflection on the contemporary legacies of the 1960s and '70s, an era whose questions and problems seem to have either persisted or returned ("the sexual revolution," writes Schaefer, "has become the longest revolution").[53] This book shows how the cinematic fantasy of making sex public anticipates both our postcinematic future and our neoliberal present.

A final note to the reader: the cinematic, cultural, and theoretical fantasies of making sex public that I discuss in these pages often take the form of a desire for transparency—the transparency, for example, of a sexual pleasure devoid of significations, which might seem to make the films I discuss best suited to a "surface reading."[54] Given my argument about the historical dwindling of a hermeneutic model of sexuality, it may seem paradoxical that the book itself remains committed to the practice of interpretive close reading (even as, or precisely because, I agree with Lauren Berlant that "explanation does not dissolve what's incomprehensible about a thing").[55] That practice, constitutively negative (the negativity of critique), tends to undermine any position taking for or against making sex public, though in presenting this work, I have often been asked to state my position. Certainly, making sex public names a galvanizing process that has generated real political gains for women and queers and has oriented important strands of queer theory.[56] It also names a fantasy that has occasioned its own occlusions, and even generated its own hegemony. Whether or not sex has or could ever truly become public, this story of how it has been imagined to do so in the cinema is intended to bring into relief the converging strands of a cultural logic within whose terms the reader might recognize some manner of her or his own contemporary interpellation.

NOTES

Introduction

1. Sontag, "A Century of Cinema."
2. On the nineteenth-century novel's discursive management of a "private and domestic sphere on which the liberal subject depends," see Miller, *The Novel and the Police*, ix. The novel, he argues, produces a private subject whose illusion of autonomy belies its shaping by disciplinary forces. Habermas, in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, situates its origins in the eighteenth-century technologies of the public sphere: the letter, the diary, the autobiography. "The directly or indirectly audience-oriented subjectivity of the letter exchange or diary explained the origin of the typical genre and authentic literary achievement of [the 18th] century: the domestic novel, the psychological description in autobiographical form." Henceforth, everyone became "*sujets de fiction* for themselves and [for] others" (50).
3. Bazin, "Marginal Notes," 170, emphasis added. Bazin expands on the idea of an eroticism specific (and essential) to the medium: "Eroticism has clearly no specific connection with . . . literature. . . . [And] even painting, in which the representation of the human body might well have played a determining role, is only accidentally or secondarily erotic." Eroticism in these other arts is "a subordinate and secondary phenomenon," whereas in cinema it is primary (169–70).
4. Cavell, *The World Viewed*, 45.
5. Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure," 9. For an argument about cinema's inherently voyeuristic structure, see Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier.* And for a queer reading of this argument, see Young, "The Vicarious Look."
6. Cavell, *The World Viewed*, 44. Without thematizing the formal and technological operations via which it becomes so, Cavell's remark confirms that film functions as a "technology of gender," as Teresa de Lauretis would later put it.
7. In the first part of *Hard Core*, Linda Williams locates such an impetus toward the display of the body in protocinematic technologies, making the case through a discussion of Muybridge's experiments with documenting and analyzing human and animal motion. See also her essay on nineteenth-century erotic photography, "Corporealized Observers."
8. Schlüppman, "The Documentary Interest in Fiction," 35. As an example of the former, consider *La Sortie de l'usine Lumière*, the first film made by Louis Lumière, in 1895.
9. Schaefer, "1968 and the Rise of 'Public' Sex," 13. The literature on this development in film history, especially in the United States, is vast. See especially Schaefer, *Sex Scene*; Gorfinkel, *Sensational Bodies*; Williams, *Screening Sex*; Williams, *Porn Studies*; Radner and Luckett, *Swinging Single*. For a compilation of relevant primary sources, see Escoffier, *Sexual Revolution*. For a cultural history from a U.S. perspective, see Allyn, *Make Love, Not War*. For a less teleological take on changing norms of sexual representation in France in this

period and the one preceding it, see Hervé, "Un Éros de celluoïd." On gender and sexuality in the immediately preceding period in French cinema, see Burch and Sellier, *The Battle of the Sexes*.

10. Schaefer, "1968 and the Rise of 'Public' Sex," 14. With reference to the French republican context, Joan Landes (*Feminism*, 2) similarly defines the private as the domain of "things that ought to be hidden from view," foremost among which are "the body and its needs." Public, correspondingly, refers to "the community, the common good, things open to sight, and those things that are accessible and shared by all" (2). In *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt defines public versus private in terms of the "distinction between things that should be shown and things that should be hidden"—a distinction, according to Arendt, that held for the ancients and has been lost in modernity (72). My analysis follows these theorists in associating the public with what is visible and what is shared by the community as a whole. On the different meanings of privacy in the United States and Europe, see Whitman, "The Two Western Cultures of Privacy."
11. Gorfinkel, "Wet Dreams," 62, 61. This sexualization of public culture did not take place only in cinema; its other forms included "the rise of sex newspapers, sexological tomes of erotic self-help, adult bookstores, peepshows, massage parlors, and swingers clubs" (62).
12. "On/scene," a term I adapt in this book, is a neologistic counterpart to "obscene"—which literally means "offstage," designating that which should be kept "out of public view." Williams, "Porn Studies," 3.
13. As well, of course, as in pornography itself, which enjoyed in the 1970s its "Golden Age" (Williams, *Hard Core*, passim). For a brief moment, it even seemed possible that Hollywood, inspired by the massive financial success of *Deep Throat* (1972), would begin to feature explicit sex in some of its productions (see Lewis, *Hollywood v. Hardcore*). A year before *Deep Throat* caused a sensation, the gay pornographic film *Boys in the Sand* (1971) was advertised in the *New York Times* and reviewed in *Variety*, signaling a short-lived moment in which even hard-core gay pornography presented itself as a part of public culture.
14. Williams, *Screening Sex*, 169. Williams is referring to mainstream narrative cinema, not to stag or pornographic films. To my knowledge, Fonda's was the first American face of any gender to experience orgasm on the mainstream American cinema screen. As I discuss in chapter 1, the face of orgasm that became a trope of narrative cinema at this moment was typically, and significantly, female.
15. Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 17.
16. Foucault, "The Gay Science," 391.
17. Foucault, "The Gay Science," 390.
18. Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*. This social contract is the one described by Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, one invoked as an origin myth (with slight differences) in both Anglophone liberal and French republican traditions.
19. These heterogeneous conceptions of liberalism, and their sources, are fleshed out more specifically in each of this book's chapters. I have in mind here Wendy Brown's description of liberalism as a "porous doctrine subject to historical change and local variation" that nevertheless "takes its definitional shape from an ensemble of relatively abstract

ontological and political claims" (*States of Injury*, 141). The theoretical reference points for her own analysis include Locke, Tocqueville, Bentham, and Rawls, as well as Hobbes and Rousseau. I do not thematize here the distinctions between democracy—rule by the people—and liberalism, with its emphasis on individual liberties and rights, since the two tend to be conjoined in the imaginaries in question. On the distinction (and tensions) between them, however, see Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*.

20. Jagose, *Orgasmology*, 88–92. The idea of sexual modernity is used, in both France and the United States, to bolster a specifically Islamophobic rhetoric. See Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*; Scott, *Sex and Secularism*; and Fernando, *The Republic Unsettled*. On the role of discourses of sexual freedom in constructing a modernity whose epicenter is Europe, see also Butler, "Sexual Politics, Torture, and Secular Time."
21. Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy*, 130, 27, cited in Jagose, *Orgasmology*, 89–90.
22. Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy*, 27, cited in Jagose, *Orgasmology*, 89.
23. See Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, on the tension between liberalism's putatively universalist horizon and democracy's dependence on defined borders.
24. Bech, *When Men Meet*, 114. Cited in Jagose, *Orgasmology*, 92.
25. Rubin, "Thinking Sex."
26. Robcis, *The Law of Kinship*. From a different angle, and in relation to the U.S. context, Lee Edelman's name for such a conception of the social is "reproductive futurism" (*No Future*, passim).
27. See Robcis, "Catholics, the 'Theory of Gender,' and the Turn to the Human in France"; and Robcis, "Liberté, Égalité, Hétérosexualité." While the protests against gay marriage in France constitute a protest against its public inscription in law, the critique of gay marriage from the side of queer politics holds, conversely, that its legalization returns homosexuality to the domain of the private. See, for example, Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality* (especially chapter 2, "The Incredible Shrinking Public"); and Eng, *The Feeling of Kinship*. This might mark a contextual difference; in France, marriage is seen as a public institution, whereas for American queer theorists, marriage is taken to be an institution that confines sexuality to the private sphere. I address the queer critique of privacy (and gay marriage) in chapter 5.
28. Robcis, *The Law of Kinship*, 4, original emphasis.
29. The tension I elaborate here between the liberal sexual subject and the republican social contract parallels the tension Elizabeth A. Povinelli lays out between what she calls the "autological subject" and the "genealogical society" in liberal discourses of love and intimacy. Povinelli's *Empire of Love*, which tracks this tension across contemporary settler colonial contexts (and traces it to its roots in French and US liberal and republic theory), has been crucial to my understanding of how the competing claims of autonomy and genealogy/filiation are in some sense constitutive of the liberal subject, and particularly concentrated around sexuality, or what Povinelli calls the "intimate event."
30. On the semantic confusion between female and gay male eroticism in the latter film, see Miller, "Visual Pleasure in 1959." My analysis here, and throughout the book, is indebted to that exemplary essay.

31. Each publicity shot closely resembles, but does not exactly reproduce, images in the films. I use them here because they have the virtue of condensing the dynamics of looking and display that underpin the films' drama.
32. This is how Laura Mulvey, in "Visual Pleasure," describes the function of women in classical narrative cinema.
33. Brown, "Where Is the Sex in Political Theory?"
34. Pateman, *The Disorder of Women*, 53. See also Brown, *States of Injury*; Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer*; Scott, *Parité!*; Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere*; Hunt, *Eroticism and the Body Politic*; Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*; Surkis, *Sexing the Citizen*.
35. Sedgwick, *Between Men*. Gayle Rubin's essay "Thinking Sex," cited earlier, also contributed to this launch, and Sedgwick's argument builds on Rubin's in the earlier "Traffic in Women." The origins of Anglophone queer theory must also be attributed to earlier work by (among others) Audre Lorde ("The Uses of the Erotic") and Cherrie Moraga and Gloria E. Anzaldúa (*This Bridge Called My Back*), and to the Combahee River Collective's "Black Feminist Statement" of 1977, which articulated a notion of identity as constituted along multiple axes, a notion that anticipated queer theory's later interest in and critique of identity.
36. Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, 2.
37. See Ginette Vincendeau's study of Alain Delon and Jean-Paul Belmondo for a discussion of the increasing visibility of the male body as such in 1960s France (*Stars and Stardom in French Cinema*, ch. 7).
38. Wood, "Ideology, Genre, Auteur," 50.
39. Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, 201 (27:445).
40. Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 129–30. In the same paragraph he refers to the "bourgeois individual"—he uses the terms interchangeably.
41. Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 35.
42. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 49. Also quoted in Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 35.
43. Connolly, *Political Theory and Modernity*, 71.
44. Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, 201 (27:444).
45. It is the homogeneity of what that symptomatic discourse reveals that Deleuze and Guattari satirize in their essay on Freud's Wolf Man: "Witness Freud's reductive glee: Seven wolves . . . six wolves . . . five wolves . . . One wolf: the wolf is the Father, as we all knew from the start" (*A Thousand Plateaus*, 28).
46. Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 43. Neither Habermas nor Chakrabarty makes explicit the connection between the subject's profusion of discourse and the function, in this system, of sexuality. Yet in Chakrabarty's discussion of Bengali writer Nirad Chauduri's autobiographical narration of his first night with his new wife, it is precisely sexuality that lurks behind the ellipses Chakrabarty notes ("He screens off intimacy with expressions like 'I do not remember' or 'I do not know how,'" 36). This "screening off" extends to Chakrabarty's own account: while he remarks that some of these protestations are "very Freudian," he concludes only that "the desire to be 'modern' screams

out of every sentence" of the autobiography, without explicitly acknowledging that the "interiorized private self" he finds only incompletely narrated in Chauduri's work is one revealed, by these ellipses, to be constituted by repressed sexuality.

47. Matthieu Dupas has similarly argued, in "The Postsexual Transition," that the *dispositif* of sexuality described by Foucault transforms after the 1960s, through the advent of reproductive technologies, which separates sex from the institution of the family. While this book emphasizes cinema, Dupas's analysis suggests that a transforming *dispositif* is also expressed in contemporary literature.
48. Hocquenghem, *Homosexual Desire.*
49. Bersani, *Homos*, 7.
50. The term "queer liberalism" is from Eng, *The Feeling of Kinship*, but also refers more generally to an object of critique in many queer studies texts.
51. Whitman, "The Two Western Cultures of Privacy," 1176.
52. On the latter, see Rees-Roberts, *French Queer Cinema*; and Gerstner and Nahmias, *Christophe Honoré*; on the former, see Rich, *New Queer Cinema*; and Davis, *The Desiring-Image.* For an account of queer cinema that ventures beyond Western contexts, see Schoonover and Galt, *Queer Cinema in the World.*
53. Schaefer, "1968 and the Rise of 'Public' Sex," 19.
54. Foucault himself had such a fantasy about the transparency of "pleasure," which he hoped might save us from the "psychological and medical armature . . . built into the . . . notion of desire" ("The Gay Science," 389–90). "Pleasure," which is "nothing other than an event," he suggested, "means nothing" (389). On "surface reading," see Best and Marcus, "Surface Reading."
55. Berlant, "Do You Intend to Die (IV)?"
56. Queer theory has produced a series of compelling arguments in favor of making sex public—which has meant, at different moments, making sex less personal, critiquing marriage and other institutions that ostensibly make sex private, celebrating the world-making capacities of queer counterpublics, and extolling the ethical virtues of anonymous (public) sex. To cite examples is to bring together divergent theoretical projects, for example, Ricco, *The Logic of the Lure*; Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality*; Eng, *The Feeling of Kinship*; Bersani and Phillips, *Intimacies*; Dean, *Unlimited Intimacy*; and, of course, Berlant and Warner, "Sex in Public." In their various critiques of privacy, these heterogeneous works evince a shared commitment to making sex, in some sense, public, a commitment I—with the ambivalence proper to the neurotic subject—both share and question.

Chapter 1. Autonomous Pleasures

1. Truffaut, *The Films in My Life*, 19.
2. Kael, "The Current Cinema," 182.
3. For an analysis of the contemporary functions of a discourse of sexual liberalism in relation to ethnic and religious tensions in France, see Fernando, "Save the Muslim Woman, Save the Republic."