

<p>Institution: Southampton Solent University</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 36. Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management</p>
<p>Title of case study: Sex and Sexuality in Film Representation and Culture</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words) The research featured in this impact case study was carried out by Dr. Claire Hines, Darren Kerr, Dr. Donna Peberdy and Dr. Mark de Valk. Their work has influenced creative practice and cultural expression, contributed to the creative economy, encouraged knowledge transfer, and has been part of wider discourses that have helped to inform on-going public debate concerning sex and sexuality on screen, such as research-informed objections to Section 63 of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 - more colloquially known as the 'Extreme Porn Bill' <www.backlash-uk.org.uk>.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words) Collectively, the research focusses on cinematic representations of sex and sexuality on screen in order to demonstrate the need to move beyond the hyperbole of moral campaigners' arguments concerning the immoral effect of media on society and instead focus more closely on the representation of sex, a too often neglected area of sexuality studies. New insights foreground original perspectives on the cinematic representation of sex and sexuality that has often been marginalised in the study of gender politics on screen. The research is located in, connected to and influenced by related work emerging from the UK based <i>Onscenity Research Network Group</i>, which has been involved in public, political and policy debate on matters of sex and sexuality in British society and culture (which we are members of). The cross-disciplinary nature of the research acknowledges a shift towards the mainstream in the cinematic representation of previously marginalized sexual practices that are often comfortably demonized rather than critically discussed and explored.</p> <p>Many current studies have opened up discussions concerning sex on screen but remain rather broad and fixed in gender politics and feminist discourses around sex on screen. The research draws on the recent critical history of sex on screen through a context that acknowledges a range of key critical thinkers in the field. This includes building on the pioneering work of Linda Williams' breakthrough study from 1989, <i>Hard Core: Power, Pleasure and the 'Frenzy of the Visible'</i>, which has now come to be recognised as an indispensable account of the subject and the need to address matters of <i>on/scenity</i> whereby sex is on-scene rather than merely ob-scene. The research underpinning this case study extends the work of Williams by examining sex as text in both theory and practice while continuing to question the concept of <i>on/scenity</i> as cultural attitudes to the explicit and obscene change. The demand to historicise, theorise and frankly confront matters of sex and sexuality through screen studies is effectively our central tenet intended to illustrate how sex and sexuality on screen is eclectic, expressive and demands closer examination. A research-based approach predicated on examining and exploring theory and practice positively shapes and influences our reach and significance. Such an approach now allows the field to be collectively investigated outside of media effects debates (which negates the polysemic nature apparent in film textual analysis). This framework for understanding is supported in earlier work in the field calling for its instigation and continuation (see Laura Kipnis (1996), Laurence O'Toole (1999) and Brian McNair (2002), who collectively investigate the very terms of debating the relationship between history, technology, sex and modern culture).</p> <p>The contradictory state of sex and sexualities as both known and unknown, has driven this research which presents original work, fostering new critical readings, understandings and approaches that, by necessity, returns us to the screen as a dialogic <i>text</i> in various contexts</p>

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(critically, theoretically and industrially).

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Hines, C. & Kerr, D. eds. (2012) *Hard to Swallow: Hard-core Pornography on Screen*. London: Wallflower/Columbia University Press.

Kerr, D, & Peberdy, D. (2013) 'Playing with the Self: Celebrity Autoerotic Asphyxiation', in *Celebrity Studies Special Issue: Sex and Celebrity*. 4, (1), 58-70.

Peberdy D, (2011) '*Masculinity and Film Performance: Male Angst in Contemporary American Cinema*.' Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Peberdy D, (2010) 'From Wimps to Wild Men: Bipolar Masculinity and the Paradoxical Performances of Tom Cruise,' in *Men & Masculinities*, 13, (2), 231-254.

M. de Valk. (2010) *The Body As Montage: A Spectacle of Punishment*. Directed by M. de Valk. UK. 90mins.

M. de Valk. (2012) *The Life of Herculine Barbin*. Directed by M. de Valk. UK. 20mins.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words) <618

The Solent Screen Research Cluster has seen numerous specialisms evolve since its inception. One of the key areas has been original research and publications focussing on largely neglected areas of sex and sexuality studies in film representation and culture. The research, publications and subsequent impact for this case study have emerged from and been shaped by the work of the Onscenity Research Network – an AHRC funded initiative (originally based at Sheffield University) which engages specifically with the cultural, political and contemporary aspects of sex and sexuality in the UK and Internationally. Forged from a symposium exploring the possibilities of such a network (to which Kerr and Hines were specifically invited) the Onscenity Research Network has grown into the dominant forerunner which bridges academic studies with public and political understanding of sexual cultures. This has recently culminated in the emergence of the first ever Porn Studies journal (to which Kerr was invited to be a member of the Editorial Board and Hines and Peberdy invited as regular peer reviewers) which has garnered numerous headlines in the press and stimulated debate on the cultural value of sexual representation, pornography and the pornification of culture in the media and political arenas. It is within this sphere that the sex and sexualities research, outputs and impact noted in this case study – particularly around the creative economy - can be found.

Kerr has been curating the Controversies, Short Film and BAFTA strands for the annual Southampton Film Week, an event which engages broadly with the public in various capacities including film education outside of academia. The Controversies strand saw a research-informed talk on early representations of sex in film to the public (*Sex on Screen: An Illustrated Talk*, Oct 13 2010) and the Short Film strand has had numerous short films screened by local and international filmmakers on matters of sex and sexuality (for example *Exploring the Body: Short Film Roundtable, Discussion and Screening*, Oct 8 2009). Also members cited in this case study hosted a *Short Film Special: Women and Film* (Oct 10 2011) with women filmmakers exploring the debate about gender, filmmaking and film culture in the UK. Mark de Valk has presented screenings of his film work including the Foucault inspired short film *The Life of Herculine Barbin* (2009) and feature length film *The Body As Montage: A Spectacle of Punishment* (2010) which examines gender, sexuality, state politics and culture. The latter has also been selected and screened at special events for the Lighthouse Cultural Centre in Brighton (June 2010) and the Portobello Film Festival in London (September 2010). Both films draw on his doctoral research as one of the first successful recipients of a PhD by Practice in film. Southampton Film Week has attendees from across the country with a significant focus on the south and south coast with a remit closely

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centred on public and community engagement. The events gain local coverage from the press and radio while maintaining a strong presence on social networking sites throughout the year. Kerr has coordinated events on behalf of the University in partnership with organisers City Eye since Film Week was established in 2008. This has seen collaborations on events with BAFTA, experienced writer/directors from industry (Jason Ford, Fay Rusling, Ken Russell,) as well as new and emerging filmmakers who focus on matters of gender politics in their creative practice (Alys Scott Hawkins, Nicola Mills, John Maclean). Public engagement on matters of sex and sexuality is at the centre of the drive behind this case study's reach and significance through Southampton Film Week – a space in which academic and critical debate is held in a public forum alongside film education, festival screenings, masterclasses and workshops on the film industry and culture.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

The work of the Onscenity Research network which illustrates reach and significance can be found at <http://www.onscenity.org/>

Contributors to the case study have seen their work cited across the web e.g. an extensive and public focussed blog on James Bond draws on Hines' work (see http://jamesbondmemes.blogspot.co.uk/2010_10_01_archive.html) and Peberdy's work on Tom Cruise informing debate (<http://mediacommons.futureofthebook.org/imr/2013/08/13/performing-american-masculinity>).

Choice gave a four star review to Peberdy's *Masculinity and Film Performance* who also gave the book its Outstanding Title award for 2012. See:

<http://www.ala.org/acrl/choice/outstanding>
<http://www.cro3.org/content/49/07/49-3764?related-urls=yes&legid=choice;49/07/49-3764>

Peberdy's book was also positively reviewed in the Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television (see <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01439685.2012.699168#.UovCKsQvmoM>) which noted how the work can 'not only benefit the nation and American men but also possibly prevent a consistent return of trauma and angst that are then used to legitimize white male authority' (Faucette, 2012:462).

Hard to Swallow was reviewed in the New Review of Film and Television Studies noting that 'Editors Darren Kerr and Claire Hines [...] both have excellent essays in the collection' and that 'Kerr's reappraisal of the feminist potentiality of notorious 1970 feature *Behind the Green Door* is an ingenious close analysis which delivers an original reading' (Joyce, 2013: 241)
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17400309.2013.775912#.UovJlcQvmoM>

De Valk's film production work is listed on imdb: <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0212023/>

Contributors also evidence significant reach through data available on their respective Academia.edu sites with numerous views and hits aligned to their research.

<https://solent.academia.edu/DarrenKerr>
<https://solent.academia.edu/ClaireHines>
<https://solent.academia.edu/DonnaPeberdy>

Details of Southampton Film Week events and their engagement with the regional community are archived at <http://www.southamptonfilmweek.com/sfw-archives.html>