

2 * **Make Love, Not War: Jane Fonda Comes Home (1968–1978)**

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In the late 1960s and early 1970s, after the demise of the Production Code, Hollywood began to devise new tropes for sexual representations that had been prohibited by the code: “going all the way.” Most of these tropes involved a certain amount of simulated pelvic thrusting by male performers. At the same time, an emerging genre of hardcore pornography, under no obligation to fake sex, discovered fellatio as if it were a brand-new sexual act. Lost in the shuffle of the portrayal of these two heterosexual sex acts—genital sex and oral sex, both presented as primarily male forms of pleasure—were the different pleasures of women. In the abundance of male pelvic thrusting and ministrations toward eventually ejaculating penises, female sexual pleasure tended to be assimilated to that of the male. The possibly different rhythms and temporalities of a woman’s pleasure were simply not acknowledged. It is worth asking, then, just how female pleasure came to be presented in its own right in the domain of mainstream Hollywood movies. The long answer that follows is inextricably tied to the context of resistance to the Vietnam War, emerging discourses of sexology, and the willowy body of one iconic female star (figure 2.1).

“Make Love, Not War”

“Make love, not war” was a slogan that many of my friends and I chanted at “Stop the Draft Week” demonstrations against the Oakland Induction Center in 1967 during American troop buildups for the Vietnam War. In those heady days, saying “yes” to sex felt like saying “no,” not just to war but to the kind of instrumental reason that had fatefully led to one of America’s now-too-familiar bellicose quagmires. Sexual revolution seemed inextricably linked in those days, as David Allyn’s history of the era argues, to political revolution.¹ When we chanted “make love, not war,” my draft-resisting friends and I were echoing the words of Frankfurt School theorists such as Herbert Marcuse and Norman O. Brown. These theorists argued against the Freudian premise that sexual desire



Fig. 2.1 During the late 1960s and 1970s female sexual pleasure was frequently represented in the willowy body of Jane Fonda, seen here in *Barbarella* (1968), directed by her husband at the time, Roger Vadim.

was in permanent need of sublimation if human culture and society was to persevere. Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization*, first published in 1955, envisioned a liberation that would restore "the right of sensuousness" and not simply release libido but utterly transform it.² Marcuse argued that the body would be "resexualized": all erotogenic zones would be "reactivated," and a "resurgence of pregenital polymorphous sexuality" would accompany a "decline of genital sexuality." The entire body would thus become "a thing to be enjoyed—an instrument of pleasure."³ Sparked by Marcuse; turned on by music, marijuana, and psychedelics; outraged by the escalations of a war whose injustice was driven home by a draft

that affected the entire population of young men, my generation really did think, at least for a moment that making love could be a political act against war.

But what was a woman's place in this loving alternative to war? Another slogan, also popular in this period, though not quite as easily chanted, was "Women Say Yes to Men Who Say No!" I never marched under this banner but as one who *had* said "yes" to a man who had said "no" by refusing induction into the army, it took me longer than it should have to realize the flaws in that slogan. Behind it stood a whole regime of patriarchy that saw a woman's pleasure as subservient to the man, who was the only real political actor in this revolutionary scenario. If I were to make love and oppose war then, as feminist cultural historian Lynne Segal notes, it "was going to have to mean something more than 'the freedom to get laid.'" It was going to have to mean, ultimately, "a radical rethinking of the whole area of sexuality and sexual politics."⁴ But what *was* a politically correct form of making love? Against Freud's dictum that civilization required a certain amount of discontent, Marcuse had encouraged the decline of genital sexuality and a "pregenital polymorphous sexuality." Those were confusing words requiring a knowledge of sex that my previous education had not prepared me for. To learn what such terms might mean, my generation turned to the earlier sexology of Alfred Kinsey and the newer work of William Masters and Virginia Johnson, just emerging in the late 1960s.

Sexology and Sexual Politics

Alfred Kinsey was a zoologist whose long crusade was ultimately to dissolve the ironclad distinctions between supposedly normal and abnormal sex. Although most people (still) tend to believe that whatever they do sexually is what everyone else does, or should do, Kinsey discovered, at first just by interviewing married students in his famous "Marriage Course," that people actually did a great many different things.⁵ Lecture 2 of this course, first taught at Indiana University in 1938, had already challenged Freud's orthodoxy about the vaginal orgasm. Projecting a slide of a penis entering a vagina on the wall of his lecture hall, Kinsey emphasized that the reason for the woman's pleasure was not vaginal but clitoral stimulation.⁶ The married or engaged students, who were the only ones admitted into his courses, were decidedly interested in what Kinsey had to teach. And what he had to teach often derived from what he had learned from these students.⁷ Through ever-widening research,

conducted in the form of extended face-to-face interviews, Kinsey came to believe that there was very little sexual activity that was abnormal or perverse. In fact he eschewed these words, preferring the label “rare.”

Kinsey would democratically survey every possible aspect of sexual behavior. However, he would only count that behavior *as sex* if it led to orgasm.⁸ As a zoologist whose expertise was gall wasps, he valued measurability above all. Orgasms, which to him had the virtue of being countable, were his gold standard. From the very beginning, however, this meant that Kinsey’s research, like that of most sexologists, was inherently androcentric. It began with men, and its tools of measurement were male centered. Although he was remarkably nonjudgmental about what behaviors might lead to orgasm—masturbation, hetero- or homosexual relations—the countable orgasm of the male was the standard. It would not be until he got to researching and writing his female volume, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* published in 1953, that Kinsey would discover enormous dissimilarities between male and female sexual “outlets.”⁹

Most interesting for this chapter, to me, however, is the way Kinsey went about studying orgasms: he filmed them. Early in his research Kinsey had contrived to observe sexual activity live. He paid prostitutes who allowed him to watch while they performed their tricks. But prostitutes proved unsatisfying subjects precisely because they did perform “tricks” and often faked orgasm. Inevitably, Kinsey turned to film in 1948, at first to test the theory of how men ejaculated—whether in dribbles or with projecting force. Clarence Tripp and Bill Dellenback, Kinsey’s trusty photographers, paid three hundred men in New York City to masturbate to ejaculation before the camera. After eventually collecting films of a thousand men masturbating, they concluded that in 73 percent ejaculate does not spurt but dribbles.¹⁰

Filming ejaculation soon branched out into filming the partnered sex acts of male homosexuals. By 1949 much of this filming moved into an attic room of Kinsey’s home, and the research leading up to his volume on female sexual behavior began to include women.¹¹ The subjects of these films were certain special “friends of the research.” Just as Andy Warhol would give a screen test to just about anyone who wandered into his factory, so Kinsey would film the solitary or social sex acts of just about anyone who would let him. But he especially valued the “rare” ones. One of these was a gynecologist, Dr. Alice Spears, capable of “from fifteen to twenty orgasms in twenty minutes.” “Even the most casual contact could arouse a sexual response in her. Observing her both in

masturbation and intercourse, we found that in intercourse her first orgasm occurred within two to five seconds after entry.”¹²

In filming sex, Kinsey was only doing what Masters and Johnson would later do with married couples in their laboratory. However, his way of doing it blurred the line between objective, distanced science, and a much more involved, subjective “participant observation,” since both he and his collaborators sometimes appeared in the films. The budget for this filming was cleverly disguised under the category “mammalian studies” and did, indeed, begin as a collection of how other kinds of mammals “do it”—films of porcupines had been particularly valued.¹³

For some, Kinsey’s sexual proclivities, combined with his filming, utterly disqualified him as a scientist and made him complicit with criminals.¹⁴ One recent biographer, James Jones, argues that Kinsey was a masochistic, homosexual voyeur possessed entirely by his demons. The real motivation for all his research, Jones insists, was to see if others were like him. Jones asserts that Kinsey’s real interest was prurience, not science.¹⁵ Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy, another recent biographer, disagrees. He does not deny that Kinsey had homosexual encounters, nor that he engaged in masochistic acts, nor that he liked to watch others have sex. He asserts, rather, that Kinsey was a bisexual who fluctuated on his own scale, but whose interest in diverse sexual practices is what enabled him to extract valuable histories from homosexuals and other minority sexualities in the first place.

Media scholar Thomas Waugh argues, from yet another direction, that Kinsey’s problem was that he did not admit to the prurience that inevitably informed his work and that Waugh himself believes should be a fundamental principle of all “gay cultural and sexual research.” Sexual science, Waugh insists, is inseparable from eroticism.¹⁶ Waugh adds that Kinsey, in addition to being the voyeur and auditor, as well as sometime participant, in a number of these films was also their ultimate director, the grand *metteur-en-scène*.¹⁷

Of course, Kinsey could hardly have received funding as a proudly eroticized homosexual researcher. He is perhaps best viewed as a scientist, as a sexually interested observer, *and* as an interested participant in the sex he studied. Contra Jones and with Waugh—though with less condemnation—I believe we should no more dismiss Kinsey’s science than the eroticism that fed its interest. If Kinsey was a protopornographic filmmaker, he was also interested in detailing the kinds of gestures and acts that were often faked by prostitutes or in the stag films often featuring the same “working women” of his own era.¹⁸ However

one judges Kinsey's objectivity or prurience, one only has to read the descriptions of orgasm in the female volume to recognize that behind all the graphs of respiration and blood pressure stands the kind of observation that could only have come from getting closer to the acts that literal "screening sex" afforded. Kinsey writes:

Prostitutes who attempt to deceive (jive) their patrons, or unresponsive wives who similarly attempt to make their husbands believe that they are enjoying their coitus, fall into an error because they assume that an erotically aroused person would look happy and pleased and should smile and become increasingly alert as he or she approaches the culmination of the act. On the contrary, an individual who is really responding is as incapable of looking happy as the individual who is being tortured.¹⁹

He continues, "Fully 84 percent of the females in the sample who had masturbated had depended chiefly on labial and clitoral stimulation. . . . All the evidence indicates that the vaginal walls are quite insensitive in the great majority of females."²⁰ Kinsey concludes, contra Freud, that vaginal orgasm is a physical and physiologic impossibility that has no relation to maturity.²¹

Kinsey, however, was not in the business of fixing what was wrong with the practice of sex among heterosexual couples. Masters and Johnson, who duplicated many of Kinsey's "discoveries," concentrated on just this problem of sexual satisfaction among monogamous, heterosexual married couples. With their first book, *Human Sexual Response*, published in 1966, Masters and Johnson confirmed many aspects of Kinsey's groundbreaking work. Like Kinsey, they rhetorically stressed the similarities of male and female sexual response, while actually detailing some remarkable differences such as the fact that women could orgasm both more frequently and much longer than men.²² Like Kinsey, also, they debunked the vaginal orgasm, asserting that "clitoral and vaginal orgasms are not separate biologic entities."²³ And like Kinsey as well, they watched and filmed sex, even placing internal electrodes to measure response. Perhaps most threatening to established hierarchies of male and female sexual response was their observation that "maximum physiologic intensity of orgasmic response" had been achieved through "self regulated mechanical or automanipulative techniques." The second-greatest intensity was achieved through "partner manipulation," and a poor third was achieved "during coition."²⁴ However, unlike Kinsey, they closed down Kinsey's openness to varieties of sexual "outlets," basing their study on only 694 white, middle-class heterosexual men and women.

There had been no major women's movement to absorb the lessons of Kinsey, but by the time Masters and Johnson reached print, feminists were immediately drawing inferences that may not have been consistent with the researchers' essentially masculinist and monogamous perspectives. Mary Jane Sherfey, a psychoanalyst who had studied with Kinsey as an undergraduate, was the first: "Theoretically," she asserted, "a woman could go on having orgasms indefinitely if physical exhaustion did not intervene."²⁵ This much Masters and Johnson would have agreed with, but she departed from the goal of their therapy when she added, "Neither men nor women, but especially not women, are biologically built for the single-spouse, monogamous marital structure."²⁶

In a mood of even greater insurgency, the feminist activist Anne Koedt proclaimed, in a famous pamphlet widely circulated at radical meetings long before it was published, that if vaginal penetration is not the cause of orgasm, then women have been falsely "defined sexually in terms of what pleases men; our own biology has not been properly analyzed."²⁷ According to this reasoning, what was needed was thus nothing short of a redefinition of women's sexuality and a rejection of former androcentric concepts of "normal": "New techniques must be used or devised which transform this particular aspect of our current sexual exploitation."²⁸ Yet another feminist, Barbara Seaman, further drew out Sherfey's lesson of indefinite orgasm: "*The more a woman does, the more she can, and the more she can, the more she wants to.* Masters and Johnson claim that they have observed females experiencing six or more orgasms during intercourse and up to fifty or more during masturbation with a vibrator."²⁹

No wonder the pornographer Gerard Damiano had, by 1972, been able to weave an entire film around cultural anxieties about female orgasm in his epoch-making *Deep Throat*. And no wonder that, in the early seventies after the great success of his film, Damiano proclaimed the need for "insertions and cum shots"—the only way he could imagine "real sex"—in mainstream Hollywood fare: "Look at Jane Fonda in *Klute*," he exclaimed, "hardcore sex belonged in that picture."³⁰ In pointing to the absence of hardcore sex in *Klute* (1971), Damiano was challenging the mainstream film industry to do what many observers of Hollywood at the time believed inevitable: the integration of hardcore sex into Hollywood films, though tellingly he could only imagine it in the formulaic way of pornography, as "insertions and cum shots." Though no such hardcore sex would materialize, it would be Jane Fonda, not Damiano's Linda Lovelace, who would pioneer the representation of female orgasm in mainstream films. In the rest of this chapter, I will trace the advent of

a new kind of female carnal knowledge through Fonda's career of sexual performances, arguing that it was precisely Fonda's association with the antiwar injunction to "make love, not war," that was central to her role in the critique of phallogentric sex.

Jane Fonda, daughter of Henry,³¹ is perhaps best known today for two highly mediated public roles: first as "Hanoi Jane," the antiwar activist whose opposition to the war was demonstrated in a highly publicized visit to Hanoi in July 1972³²; second, as the guru of the home video workout, which, beginning in 1982, popularized aerobic workouts for women, utilizing the same video technology that would also bring hardcore pornography into the home. Fonda's highly disciplined, "worked out" body became an icon of do-it-yourself fitness that was every bit as big a "household word" as Linda Lovelace had been in the previous decade. It is not accidental that it was this icon who was the very first to play women characters whose orgasms mattered.

Jane Fonda's Orgasms

Jane Fonda's orgasms take on significance against the background of all the above-mentioned factors: highly sexualized antiwar activism; new discourses of sexology questioning the causes and the nature of female orgasm; feminist revision of these discourses; and the new appearance, in hardcore pornography, of explicit sex acts. In 1969 Pauline Kael reviewed the film *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* with the observation that Fonda, who had been a "charming, witty nudie cutie in recent years," now "goes all the way" with an archetypal character, "as screen actresses rarely do once they become stars." "Jane Fonda stands a good chance of personifying American tensions and dominating our movies in the seventies."³³ Dominate she would.

Fonda had once been informed by the great stage director Joshua Logan that she would "never be a dramatic actress with that nose, too cute for drama."³⁴ It was this "cute" starlet who was invited to France in 1963 to make a film with Roger Vadim, whose . . . *And God Created Woman* (1956), starring Brigitte Bardot, had inaugurated a whole new era of sophisticated, if not exactly graphic, European screen sexuality. Vadim was a contemporary of the French New Wave artists, but unlike them he was unabashedly commercial. He celebrated a particularly French kind of sensual pleasure in the first film version of *Les liaisons dangereuses* (1959), in a "racy" remake of Max Ophüls's *La Ronde* (1964), and in the quite remarkable and little-known *The Game Is Over* (1966, *La curee*).³⁵ Vadim rarely pictured graphic sex, but he was fascinated by female

sensuality and did not always find it necessary, as Hollywood films of roughly the same era did, to punish female protagonists for their pursuit of sexual pleasure.³⁶ For a six-year period, overlapping with her career as a proto-Hollywood star in such films as *Cat Ballou* (1965), *Any Wednesday* (1966), and *Barefoot in the Park* (1967), Fonda worked in France under the tutelage of Vadim, whom she eventually married.

To his great credit, Vadim did not try to make Fonda into an American version of Bardot. What he did instead, with a screenplay authored by satirist Terry Southern, was to capitalize on her American innocence while asking her to disrobe in suggestive, but never frontally nude, ways. The credit sequence of the French-Italian coproduction, *Barbarella: Queen of the Galaxy* (1968), was emblematic: intergalactic traveler Barbarella strips off her space suit while floating weightless in space. The letters of the credits hide crucial body parts. The peeling off, or decorous shredding, of already skimpy outfits constitutes the primary visual pleasure of this film about an earthling ignorant of the “old-fashioned” sexual pleasures derived from bodily friction. Earthlings, we learn, had long ago given up such primitive “distractions.” But when a hirsute, virile representative of another galaxy insists on old-fashioned friction, Barbarella is pleasantly surprised. All we see, however, is a state of extreme, presumably postcoital, satisfaction. Another sexual episode—this time with the smooth, well-built flesh of the angel Pygar (John Phillip Law)—further convinces her that old-fashioned sex has its charms. But like the first scene, this one too is elided: all we see is a postcoital Barbarella, relaxed and humming, stroking herself with a feather from Pygar’s wing.

By the time Barbarella arrives at her third sexual encounter, this time with a bumbling revolutionary, Dildano, played by David Hemmings, she is eager to engage again in this supposedly retrograde activity. But Dildano is a modern man who insists that she engage in the more proper pill-induced “exaltation transference.” After ingesting the transference pellets, they face one another, fully clothed, and touch only their palms, which gradually begin to smoke as their faces reveal mild pleasure. The “climax” for each appears to be a moment when their hair curls and stands up, though Dildano’s hair curls more.³⁷ At one point the slightly bored Barbarella drops her hand, but then politely reengages.

Barbarella’s plot is usually dismissed as a silly excuse to maneuver Jane Fonda into various stages of undress. This it ably does, but it is worth noting that Southern’s script hinges upon Barbarella’s mission to locate and eliminate a “positronic ray,” possessed by the villainous Durand-Durand, which threatens the peace of the universe. It is thus to avert war that the future Hanoi Jane undertakes her mission. Our

sci-fi heroine makes love, the old-fashioned way (off-screen), and averts war (on-screen) by disarming the power-mad megalomaniac Durand-Durand. But if *Barbarella* is strangely modest about the portrayal of sexual acts compared to the exhibitionist display of its heroine's body, it is especially innovative in its approach to female orgasm.

Caught in the clutches of the villain, whose peace-shattering weapon it is her mission to destroy, Barbarella is placed in a number of vaguely S/M torture devices. The most important is a futuristic version of an old-fashioned single-person steam bath from which only her head, neck—and later her upper chest—protrude. This rubber tent is attached to an organ (the musical kind) whose keys the villain plays. His plan is for Barbarella to die of pleasure from the sound vibrations caused by his playing. In “playing the organ,” he thus proposes to “play” Barbarella herself—to death. What we then see is a nonexplicit extended “sex” scene in which the feminist inference drawn from Masters and Johnson is dramatized: “The more a woman does, the more she can, and the more she can, the more she wants to.”³⁸

As Durand-Durand begins to “play his organ,” Barbarella sighs and her eyes widen as one-by-one items of her clothes are spit out at the bottom of the “Exsexive Machine.” “It’s sort of nice, isn’t it?” she asks. “Yes,” replies the sly villain, “it is nice . . . in the beginning.” Though more of her upper body will gradually protrude from the steam-bath-like contraption, it is her face that registers the surprise of successive degrees of pleasure as the music builds. “When we reach the crescendo you will die,” promises the villain. Big death—real death—is supposed to follow the excess—exsex—of the little death (*petite mort*) of orgasm. But the more frenetically the villain plays the organ as the music reaches one crescendo after another, the more it becomes apparent that Barbarella can “take” whatever pleasures it offers. In the end, it is the machine that dies. “Theoretically,” as Mary Jane Sherfey put it, “a woman could go on having orgasms indefinitely.”³⁹

In this scene a finite, masculine concept of sexual pleasure as climax and crescendo—the quintessentially French and male concept of orgasm as a kind of finite *petite mort*—comes up against the lessons of Kinsey, Masters and Johnson, and feminist sexological revisions of female sexual pleasure as potentially infinite. The more the machine tries to kill her with pleasure, the more Barbarella relaxes and enjoys. Soon the tubes feeding the sound into the cubicle shrink, and the connections smoke and burn. Yet another mad male scientist’s experiment has gone awry. “Wretched, wretched girl!” exclaims Durand-Durand, “What have you done to my Exsexive Machine?! You’ve undone it! You’ve undone *me*!



Fig. 2.2 Barbarella (Jane Fonda) can “take” whatever pleasure’s Durand-Durand’s “Exsexive Machine” has to offer. (Digital frame enlargement.)

Look! The energy cables are shrinking! You’ve turned them into *faggots*! You’ve burned out the Exsexive Machine! You’ve blown all its fuses!” The snickering double entendre of Terry Southern’s script is evident in every word of this monologue, but the words are superfluous compared to the ever-widening eyes, open mouth, and growing beads of sweat on Barbarella’s face (figure 2.2). This is one point in the film in which Fonda’s face, not the game of peekaboo with her seminaked body, counts. And it is the expression on this face that presciently prefigures all of Fonda’s subsequent performances of orgasm. What it reveals is Kinsey’s insight that “an individual who is really responding is as incapable of looking happy as the individual who is being tortured.” Such is the first (American) face of female orgasm on the American screen.

Although many have noted the campy sets and sexual innuendo of much of the film’s dialogue, and though some have drawn a connection between the “Exsexive Machine” and Woody Allen’s later “orgasmatron” in *Sleeper* (1973), no one has noted the sheer temporal duration of this scene or the fact that it only ends when the machine itself dies. Barbarella’s pleasure endures as the machine steams up and sputters out. If the film carefully elides all views of heterosexual coitus as pelvic thrusting—more chastely, in fact, than American films of the same era—it does not elide the orgasm presumed to be the end point of sexual pleasure. Nor does it presume that this orgasm can simply be represented as a single crescendo or climax. Rather, it is suggested as something that goes on and on, beyond the capacity of the machine to control. In its own very “sixties” way, then, and in a way that will carry over, though in a much more serious mode, into Fonda’s film career post-1960s, the future Hanoi Jane uses her orgasmic capacity to expose the warlike villain and

his death machine as impotent and to celebrate herself as orgasmically triumphant. Make love, not war, indeed!

In the introduction to his book about Victorian pornography, first published in 1964, Steven Marcus introduced an image derived from Masters and Johnson that he considered symptomatic of the new era of twentieth-century pornography that was on the rise at the time of his writing. Noting that Masters and Johnson had “discovered” the “orgasmic capacities of women,” he points out the aptness of this discovery for an era of postindustrial advanced capitalism: “It can hardly be an accident . . . that the idea of large or virtually unlimited female orgasmic capacity should act as a centrally organizing image of our time. [It] corresponds exquisitely to the needs of a society based on mass consumption. It is in effect a perfect image of mass consumption—particularly if we add to this image the further details that she is probably masturbating alone, with the aid of a mechanical-electrical instrument.”⁴⁰ Fonda’s *Barbarella* is not exactly masturbating alone, but she does have the aid of a “mechanical-electrical instrument” in the form of the Ex-sexive Machine. As such she seems to be an important precursor of the image of the future that so worries Marcus, perhaps as much as it worries Durand-Durand: the multiply orgasmic woman in no need of heterosexual coitus.⁴¹

In her autobiography, *My Life So Far*, Jane Fonda places the *Barbarella*, of 1968, as the last chapter of the first of the three acts of her life: here, the sex kitten Jane, shaped by the Pygmalion, Vadim. The second act, which begins with a chapter entitled “1968,” is called “Seeking.” It tells the story of her political awakening. This act would eventually be presided over by a very different Pygmalion in the form of Tom Hayden, former leader of Students for a Democratic Society. But before Hayden makes his entrance, Fonda describes witnessing some of the events of May 1968 as interpreted and explained by her sometime mentor, French actress and left-wing activist Simone Signoret. In this phase of her life, Fonda becomes pregnant, goes to an antiwar rally in Paris with Signoret, and at the latter’s prodding, reads Jonathan Shell’s story of the “pacification” of the village of Ben Suc in his book by that title. She learns of France’s own sorry history of Vietnamese colonialism, begins to contemplate the significance of her father’s legacy as an icon of American democracy in his roles as Lincoln and Tom Joad, and from there is gradually drawn into the movement of American GI war resisters.⁴² Signoret, who was also a friend of Henry Fonda, is reported by Fonda to have maintained a belief that “what she loved about my father from his movie roles was waiting inside *me* to manifest itself through action.”⁴³

This action becomes manifest in antiwar political action as well as in the roles she takes on when she “comes home” to the United States, first to make *They Shoot Horses, Don’t They?* then Alan Pakula’s *Klute* (1971) and eventually the aptly named *Coming Home* (1978), directed by Hal Ashby. It would be in the latter two films that Fonda’s orgasms would take on narrative relevance and no longer in the context of the “nudie-cutie” pleasure machine that was *Barbarella*. Thus whereas *Barbarella*, *Klute*, and *Coming Home* would all make female orgasm central to their story, it would only be the American films that would take on the challenge of how to represent orgasm in more realistic, socially embedded contexts beyond the sniggering joke of an “Exsexive Machine” but also without encroaching on the emerging territory of hardcore pornography.

How, then, did the mainstream New Hollywood cinema portray sexual acts now that the Production Code no longer necessitated the elision of all sex except the briefest of kisses? How did it portray a sex that could now be presumed to “go all the way” and that no longer need end with the cut away from, or fade out on, a kiss?⁴⁴ With the new MPAA ratings in place since 1968 there was now a category, R, that could permit the limited display of what would come to be called “simulated”—as opposed to hardcore—sex. However, that limited display had, even before the rise of the ratings system, fallen into a fairly predictable pattern of representation that I call the *Hollywood musical interlude*.⁴⁵ It is that pattern that Fonda’s orgasms would disrupt, if not definitively shatter.

The Hollywood musical interlude is a formula that was forged perhaps most memorably by *The Graduate* as early as 1967. It was Hollywood’s presumably “tasteful” way of suggesting carnal knowledge. This knowledge is *revealed* (we are certain the couple does have sex; no coy fade-out or narrative obfuscation typical of the Production Code years) yet simultaneously *concealed* (we are not asked to confront the visual fact of genital action). In theater history an interlude was a short humorous play between the acts of a more serious miracle or morality play. But one of the term’s primary meanings is also musical: the instrumental music played between the sung parts of a song.⁴⁶ Either way, an interlude offers a break with the normal flow of drama or music. In movies before the 1960s it was conventional, in addition to the usual scoring of Romantic music throughout a film, to add interludes in the form of songs sung by performers within the narrative (for example, Dooley Wilson singing “As Time Goes By” in *Casablanca*). But in the 1960s, films began to appropriate a new model for importing a wide range of pop music into their very fabric. They moved away from “monothematic scores”—single themes that return in dramatic situations—and toward “multitheme”

formats: new or old pop songs that underscore the film, often to highly edited montages.⁴⁷ The popularity of the song could thus contribute to the popularity of the film. This move to “underscore” movies and even to sell them with entire compilation scores was especially attractive to younger audiences. These lyrical montages (in some ways prefigurations of music videos) tended to stop the narrative flow of the film in order to “sell,” or at least let viewers enjoy, the song.⁴⁸

It is precisely in these lyrical montages, montages in which music amps up and narrative amps down, that a certain palatable form of carnal knowledge first found its way into mainstream American film. Indeed, the conjunction of music and sex, as opposed to the presentation of sex acts with little or no music, is enormously important in the history of cinematic sexual representation. When the sounds of sex became audible for the first time without the cover of music, and when the kind of affective control offered by musical interlude was not deployed, then a new kind of “nakedness” became available to films, even when the characters having sex were clothed. The smooch of a kiss, the smack of a slap, the slurp of fellatio or cunnilingus, the whoosh of penetration—not to mention the sighs, moans or outright cries generated by sexual connection—make the sex that is seen seem all the more proximate to the viewer-listener. Where Hollywood sound cinema was quick to provide “sound effects” for the physical blows of fight scenes, it was not equally quick to provide sound “synch points” for carnal encounters. Indeed, the trope of the musical sexual interlude seems partly designed as a new way of screening out components of sex acts that were nevertheless becoming necessary to present. We do well to recognize that *bracketing off* carnal knowledge from the rest of the film is what the music and editing of the sexual interlude does. Within this bracket, intimate sexual relations reside in a different register of time, space, and sound. Just as romantic kisses in the silent or sound film almost never occurred without soaring music, so it would prove extremely rare for post-Code Hollywood films to depict carnal knowledge without affectively controlling, and reassuring, audience response with musical accompaniment. When we do get sex without the soaring musical interlude, it usually seems more “naked,” more “real,” even though the acts represented remain simulated.

Something closer to this zero degree of nakedness is what we find in Jane Fonda’s post-*Barbarella* American film performances of orgasm. However, it would first be through the discovery of ways of depicting nonorgasmic sex—often figured as “bad” sex displayed without music or bracketed editing, eschewing the celebratory, lyrical format of the sexual



Fig. 2.3 Bree (Jane Fonda) checks her watch while she fakes an orgasm with a client in *Klute* (1971). (Digital frame enlargement.)

interlude—that Hollywood would eventually find a new way to portray sex beyond these conventions.

“Bad” sex in Hollywood had previously been portrayed as the sex the woman did not want to have. By the early 1970s, however, it began to encompass another meaning: inauthentic or faked sex. Fonda’s Oscar-winning performance in *Klute* was one of the first to complicate the sexually promiscuous figure of the femme fatale, usually a figure of villainy. In this film the woman is, in a more traditional sense and despite her sexual identity, “good.”⁴⁹ Having already proved in *They Shoot Horses, Don’t They?* that she could act beyond the role of the ingénue, Fonda now proceeded to play Bree Daniels, a high-class call girl stalked by a mysterious killer and protected by a strong, silent cop-turned-private detective named Klute (Donald Sutherland). Bree’s orgasms, both faked and real, would matter to this narrative, though only the faked, “bad,” ones would be enacted. In an early scene, Bree has sex with a client. Pro that she is, she is fully in control of the orchestration of his pleasure through the semblance of her own. At the moment of her supposed orgasm she offers a patently fake show of enthusiasm while slyly glancing at her watch (figure 2.3). Analytic sessions with a female psychiatrist make this point even clearer: Bree confesses that real sexual pleasure would threaten her control over the scene.

Both Molly Haskell and Pauline Kael’s reviews of *Klute* discuss this early scene of “bad” sex. Kael knowingly complains that the timing is off—realistically Bree would have looked at her watch before, not during, the faked orgasm. Haskell, for her part, notes what kind of toll such a performance exacts: “As any woman who has ever faked an orgasm knows, it’s too easy to count as a great performance and too cynical not to leave behind some poison.”⁵⁰ Although both critics score important

points in the evaluation of the film, what is most striking is that two influential women critics of the early seventies, themselves informed by discourses of sexology and its feminist critique, now find it possible to argue about the realism of a performance of “bad” sex. They recognize it when they see it.

“Good” sex would be the new post-Code, Hollywood, answer to “bad.” This may constitute a terribly impoverished range compared to the sexual performances emerging at that same time outside the Hollywood mainstream,⁵¹ it is nevertheless fascinating to watch Fonda “progress” from the comic “exsexes” of *Barbarella* to the theatrically fake orgasms of *Klute* and finally to a more “politically correct” portrayal of simulated “good” sex in the later *Coming Home*. In *Klute*, Bree explains to her female analyst that in her affair with Klute she is fighting having real orgasms for fear of losing control. Indeed, in a scene that might seem initially to be the “good” sex antidote to the faked orgasm with the client, the two sleep on narrow adjacent mattresses in Klute’s basement apartment after Bree has been frightened by a death threat. In the middle of the night Bree silently climbs onto Klute’s mattress and seduces him.

The scene is striking in its stark simplicity. There is no fancy editing, no musical accompaniment, and only one ellipsis that takes us from a preliminary stage of seduction to thrusting man-on-top, woman-on-bottom missionary sex. Until we see the triumphant look of control on Bree’s face as Klute expresses his (muted) pleasure, we may think that this is the “good” sex—at least she does not look at her watch. But the triumph is too smug, and she taunts him afterward with the knowledge that she did not come—“I never do with johns.” This is her way of asserting control over a man she feels tempted to love. “Good” sex is not shown, but it is hinted at in an extended bit of “sex talk” spoken by Bree in a long monologue to her analyst, of which I excerpt a part:

I enjoy, uh, making love with him, which is a very baffling and bewildering thing for me because I’d never felt that way before. I just wish I could let things happen and enjoy it for what it is and while it lasts and relax with it. But all the time I keep feeling the need to destroy it . . . to go back to the comfort of being numb. . . . I had more control with tricks . . . At least I knew what I was doing when I was setting things up. . . . It’s so strange, the sensation that is flowing from me naturally to somebody else without it being prettied up. I mean, he’s seen me horrible. He’s seen me mean, whorey and it doesn’t seem to matter; he seems to accept me and I guess having sex with somebody and feeling those sorts of feelings is very new to me.

Bree's words could almost be taken as Hollywood's best advice to itself on how to present sexual relations that capture a sense of a charge flowing between two bodies, without the buffer of musical interlude, without the abstraction of tight editing, and "without it being prettied up" in the usual Hollywood ways. *Klute* itself does not take that plunge beyond this verbalization, but toward the end of the decade Jane Fonda would again perform brief, "bad," nonorgasmic sex in yet another Academy Award-winning performance, in *Coming Home*. This time, however, the bad would be answered by a good that would break the pattern of most previous Hollywood portrayals of sex, while also addressing the question of whether what Anne Koedt called "certain sexual positions now defined as 'standard'" deserved to be so defined.⁵²

Hal Ashby's *Coming Home* is not an antiwar film of the late 1960s. Rather, it is an antiwar film made in the late 1970s, after the Vietnam War was over, but looking back at the late 1960s. Early in the film Sally (Fonda) has perfunctory farewell sex with her Marine captain husband Bob (Bruce Dern), before he departs to Vietnam. In the dark of their bedroom, Sally lies still under Bob's body. Her eyes are open and her hands are folded on his dog tags, as he pushes tamely, passionlessly into her, emitting only a muted couple of grunts at the end. Sally does not fake orgasm; she simply holds still and passively takes what her husband gives.

An adulterous affair will be the occasion to counter this "bad" marital sex and to render shy Sally more independent. She volunteers at the hospital and develops a friendship with Luke (Jon Voight), a paraplegic Vet who channels his anger and shame about his participation in the war into antiwar activism. After Luke chains himself to the Marine base gate to protest conditions in the veterans' hospital, Sally asks to spend the night with him. In a scene almost perfectly designed to illustrate the argument of Anne Koedt's "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm," she achieves her first orgasm with Luke, a man paralyzed and without sensation from the waist down.

The scene begins with Luke emerging from the bathroom of his apartment in his wheelchair with only a towel draped over his crotch. Sally, still in a trench coat, helps him onto his bed and turns off the light. "Turn on the light," says Luke, "I want to see you." What follows is almost a lesson in synesthesia designed for movies. Luke informs Sally that he can't feel when she touches him (down there) but he can see. Sight, in a solution that neatly coincides with the needs of an audience screening sex, thus partly substitutes for touch in a sex scene that has a legitimate excuse to leave the light on.⁵³



Fig. 2.4 Sally (Jane Fonda) and Luke (Jon Voight) negotiate new ways of touching, feeling, and looking in *Coming Home* (1978). (Digital frame enlargement.)

The first image after the light goes back on is a goldenly lit shot of the now naked couple in a tight clinch. “What can I do?” asks Sally. “Everything, I want you to do everything,” answers Luke. This invitation implies a liberation from the usual temporality of a sex act that in hardcore films would progress through a certain amount of quick foreplay toward the predictable end in male orgasm and ejaculation presumed to signal the end of the female’s pleasure as well. In the new, bracketed, musical interludes of post-Code Hollywood, this trajectory would be similar but the foreplay would be extended and the thrusting would be both simulated and truncated. Without this usual telos, the trajectory of the encounter is now up for grabs; we cannot assume what this sex will be. Thus when, in the next shot, we see a more distant view of Sally, her back to us astride Luke, we cannot assume that he is penetrating her (see below). At this point, the polymorphous perversity of the body in its entirety, which Herbert Marcuse had called for in *Eros and Civilization*, seems to have a chance to emerge as the couple negotiates new ways of touching, feeling, and looking (figure 2.4).

However we construe the sex that Luke and Sally have, it is emphatically not that of active, phallic thrusting. We see Luke kissing lower and lower parts of Sally’s anatomy in what we may assume, but cannot confirm to be, cunnilingus. And what we hear is Sally’s delighted, encouraging direction: “Oh softly!” It would seem that hard, phallic thrusting is the last thing on her mind. Were this a scene in hardcore pornography, the injunction from the penetratee to the penetrator would inevitably be “harder!” “Softer” suggests a sex of delicacy in which less movement,

force, size, hardness might seem more. The following shot shows Sally's legs convulsing as they wrap around Luke's seriously scarred back. We surmise from where her feet are that his face, not visible, must now be at her genitals. A cut to her face reveals the wide eyes, and some panting convulsive movements and a series of long "ohhhs" reminiscent of Barbarella's encounter with the "Exsexive Machine." When Luke says "You're so beautiful" — again asserting that his primary pleasure is visual — Sally for a short while just goes on convulsing, raising the question of when this "sex act" might end. It does end, however, after they have embraced and held one another for a while, when Sally says, perhaps unnecessarily, "It's never happened to me before." Here, finally, is the end-of-the-decade's "good" sex that answers both Bree Daniels's hurried sex with a client in *Klute*, and Sally's passive, unresponsive sex with her husband at the beginning of *Coming Home*.

In her autobiography Jane Fonda explains that she and Jon Voight met with Vietnam veteran paraplegics and their girlfriends in preparation for their roles in the film to learn the various ways they had sex. In the process of the research, they were surprised to learn that the men were capable of occasional, unpredictable erections. She writes that until learning this, "genital penetration was not something I had considered possible between my character and Jon's."⁵⁴ Nor was she interested in portraying this somewhat rare possibility. She was more interested in finding "a dramatic way to redefine manhood beyond the traditional, goal-oriented reliance on the phallus to a new shared intimacy and pleasure my character had never experienced with her husband."⁵⁵ Hal Ashby, however, was determined to portray the sex as precisely an achievement of rare penetrative virility. Voight, for his part, agreed with Fonda that the sex scene would be more adventurous if the assumption was that his character did not have an erection and the sex was nonpenetrative.

Thus began what Fonda calls the "Battle of Penetration." Ashby had already directed Fonda's body double in the nude scenes to move as if she were being pleasurably penetrated, whereas Fonda in her own flesh refused to match those actions. The "climax" of the battle occurred in the final day of shooting the scene when she was on top of Voight and Ashby yelled at her "Ride him! Dammit! Ride him!" while Fonda, holding on to her concept of the scene, refused to play jockey. In Ashby's conception, Sally was astride Luke, who had achieved an erection. In Fonda's conception the climax of the scene was Sally's experience of oral sex. The double who acted in the long shots had been directed to "ride," whereas Fonda, in the closer shots, refused. According to Fonda, the two do not match. I would argue, rather, that they look like two phases of the couple's love-

making, a first in which Sally is on top and could be “riding” Luke—but perhaps his thigh, not his penis—and a later phase that consists of cunnilingus and in which Fonda achieves orgasm. At this point most of Luke’s body is “below,” out of frame. From the evidence on the screen, I’d say Fonda won the “battle” of the depiction of this particular orgasm as resulting from nonpenetrative sex. However, one sex scene in one Hollywood film could hardly win the larger war of gender equity in screening sex. Though Sally does give evidence of a prolonged and continuous pleasure that does not have the same rhythm and telos of phallic sex, her “performance” ultimately operates to restore a semblance of masculinity to an initially emasculated veteran.⁵⁶

Perhaps the only way to truly challenge what still remains the dominant phallic discourse of sex would have been to question the very notion of orgasm itself as the “be all and end all” of pleasure, or as the “ultimate truth” of sex for women. For in both these phrases is embedded the notion of a singular end pleasure—a climax, or as Durand-Durand would put it, a “crescendo”—that contradicts the very notion of the polymorphous and the multiple.

As feminist researcher Annie Potts demonstrates, the language of orgasm, even the more “enlightened” female-aware language of sexologists such as Masters and Johnson, tends to be organized as a teleology of excitement, plateau, and resolution in much the way it is performed by Fonda here: still privileging phallocentric models of thrusting and getting “there.” Men are often portrayed as getting there too soon and women too late, if at all.⁵⁷ Potts attempts to deconstruct the binaries by showing how the privileged term of presence (getting there) is dependent on the absence of a later “falling away” from presence, of the end of orgasm.⁵⁸ Potts herself advocates a discourse of sex in which climax would not be regarded as the only source of true intimacy and a general “unfixing” of pleasure from any specific organs. This general unfixing of pleasure from any specific organ is similar to Marcuse’s call for a more general reactivation of all erotogenic zones, not just the genitals.

It would be unfair to ask Fonda alone to point the way to a brave future of such deconstructed orgasm. Perhaps a simpler way to approach the problem of the figuration of orgasm(s) in this film would be to recall a somewhat simpler model for thinking about all sexual pleasure. Leo Bersani’s argument that often the “pleasurable and unpleasurable tension of sexual stimulation seeks not to be released in discharge but to be increased—as in a clitoral, prolonged, way of thinking of orgasm as an excitement that prolongs itself and, in Potts’s terms, reintroduces the concept of desire.”⁵⁹ In other words, the hydraulic model of orgasm,

which views it as mounting tension concluded by an explosion of release, can be complicated by another model of sexual excitations that seek nothing more than their own intensification and that might do so, as Sally requests, quite “softly.” The “scratch” model of sexual pleasure aims at satisfaction in discharge, at hitting a specific target, or “spot.” The scratch always presumes a thrusting and a targeted, focused tactility of one erogenous zone upon another. The “itch,” on the other hand, is much less specifically targeted; it is ultimately whatever manages to keep desire in play. The scratch model of orgasm has obviously been the dominant, phallocentric term of much sexology and much cinema. It took an antiwar movie about a paraplegic to begin to figure the pleasure of the itch in mainstream Hollywood: anticipation, prolongation, intensification, but not necessarily hard, not necessarily discharged—to begin to challenge the dominant phallocentric model of going all the way.

Coming Home received mixed reviews but substantial recognition at Oscar time (for both Voight and Fonda as well as the screenplay). Critics were divided by the lightning rod of “Hanoi Jane” playing a docile Marine wife whose political and sexual transformation moves politically in the direction of . . . well, Jane Fonda. They were also divided about the film’s focus on Sally’s orgasms as well as its use of rock music from the 1960s to underscore many scenes. Vincent Canby called the film “soggy with sound”—“a nonstop collection of yesterday’s song hits.”⁶⁰ Pauline Kael agreed, arguing that Ashby “has filled in the dead spaces by throwing a blanket of rock songs over everything.”⁶¹ David James, writing in the early 1990s, nevertheless made an important case for the film’s use of rock and roll, pointing out that though there have been many American films about the devastation of American soldiers who fought in Vietnam—and no feature-length fictional films about the devastation of the Vietnamese—this film’s “unequivocal assertion” that the invasion of Vietnam was “*wrong* distinguishes it from all other films made in Hollywood.”⁶²

What no one seemed to notice, however, was that music was for once *not* applied to the sex scenes. Indeed, these sex scenes (orgasmic or not) were sometimes the only times in the movie when nondiegetic music did *not* accompany the action. Relative silence ruled, punctuated by the sounds of sex (the opposite of the musical sexual interlude’s typical blocking out of such sounds), and that simple fact gave the sex scenes—admired or not—a more dramatically integrated status than the standard interlude. What some critics, Canby included, may really have been objecting to in the derogation of the film as a “women’s picture” may not

only be its politically tinged melodrama, but the postsexual revolution mutation of a love story that details a woman's sexual pleasure without that pleasure being contained in the usual ways.⁶³

It is fascinating to watch American critics come to grips with an American—not European—screen sex that goes all the way. Kael, for example, undergoes an interesting change of mind in the course of her review. At first she seems to follow Canby's judgment and to trivialize the achievement-of-orgasm plot: "*Coming Home* started out to be about how the Vietnam War changed Americans, and turned into a movie about a woman married to a hawk who has her first orgasm when she goes to bed with a paraplegic."⁶⁴ In the end, however, Kael does not deride the importance of this new "women's picture" subject matter. More organically, she argues that the film does not quite deliver on the logic and motivation of its sexual subject. Contrasting the look on Sally's face when she had open-eyed sex with her husband, to the look when she also had open-eyed sex with Luke, Kael writes that the situation fairly demands that her husband discover her infidelity through the new way she would make love when they next have sex. In essence, this comment reduces to the question: Could the woman who now "really" makes love do so with a man who desperately wants to believe in the good of making war? Since the film does not depict such a scene, it, according to Kael, fails its subject.

Whether one agrees with Kael or not, the important point is that in the course of her review she begins to take the dramatic matter of the orgasm seriously, not just as something to be discussed (as in *Klute*), but as something to be represented and corporeally understood. After initially making fun of the importance of Sally's orgasm weighed against the disillusionment of Vietnam, Kael implicitly recognizes that how Fonda has sex with her two different partners represents a new cinematic codification of carnal knowledge now demanding to be respected on its own cinematic and dramatic terms. Kael's insight is to see that that first climax required yet another sex scene with Sally's husband. Without actually noting that sexual performance had now become relevant to a mainstream Hollywood film with major stars, Kael tacitly grants that a Hollywood film can use simulated sexual performance to express the complex psychology and "drives" of its characters and perhaps something more nuanced than simply "bad" or "good" sex. She also implicitly acknowledges, through her very demand for yet another sex scene, that screening sex up to and including the quality and kind of orgasm conjoins with interest in character and narrative and was now a valid expectation at the movies. Thus in 1978, three years after the American with-

drawal from Vietnam, American audiences could finally understand and accept the axiom that had been the basis of my generation's activism: "Make love, not war."

*

In a documentary film by Rosanna Arquette, *Searching for Debra Winger* (2002), about the pressures of being a woman, a mother, and an actor in Hollywood, Jane Fonda provides the concluding interview. Centered on well-known female stars who had found plenty of work while young and dwindling opportunity once they hit their forties, Fonda and Vanessa Redgrave are the mature survivors whose life stories often serve as inspiration to the questioning Arquette and her cohort. Fonda freely admits that she was a bad mother who never balanced parenthood, career, and antiwar activism. But the point at which she becomes most animated, and the reason her interview concludes the documentary, is her vivid description of the eight or so times in her life when she has entered the magic "circle of light" on the movie set, when all light and energy focuses on the main actor as a kind of "eye of the hurricane." In those moments of greatest fear and tension, when one manages, perhaps just a few times in one's career, to deliver a great performance, it has all, Fonda asserts, been worth it. What is interesting, however, is that Fonda describes both the unsuccessful and the successful performances in sexual terms, first as bad sex and then as good. What if you give too much in rehearsal and "blow your wad," leaving nothing for the shoot? What, she speculates, if in the shooting you "can't get it up"? On the other hand, she eagerly describes how thrilling it is to "hit your mark" with all channels open, like a "plane taking off," "like a dance, both with the other actors and the camera and loving your co-star"; "it's this wonderful fusion . . . better than any lovemaking."⁶⁵

It may seem surprising that Fonda sexualizes the craft and the art of acting in such extremely phallogentric terms, given her contribution to our understanding of orgasm as something more than "blowing your wad." Good feminist and antiwar activist that she is, Fonda is obviously still subject to the dominant discourses of sexuality. And if "getting it up" and "hitting the mark" are the metaphors that work, we should not demand that she also tell us how she lets go and relaxes into it. We can forgive an actor whose sexual performances were as crucial to the cinematic knowledge of sex in the 1970s and perhaps as important and influential in their own female sphere as Marlon Brando's animal sexuality was in his. It does not seem accidental that the quintessential American sexuality of both actors was forged, early in Fonda's career, later in the older

Brando's, in relation to European, and specifically French-associated, movies. Both actors brought coming—each in their own, gender-based way—“home” to our movies.

Notes

1. David Allyn, *Make Love, Not War: The Sexual Revolution. An Unfettered History* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2000), 127.
2. Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (New York: Vintage, 1955), 174, 184.
3. Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 184.
4. Lynne Segal, *Straight Sex: Rethinking the Politics of Pleasure* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 31.
5. Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy, *Sex, the Measure of All Things: A Life of Alfred C. Kinsey* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 121.
6. Kinsey pointed out “that the clitoris at this point is stimulated, thus providing the erotic stimulation necessary for the completion of the act on the part of the female.” Gathorne-Hardy, *Sex, the Measure of All Things*, 126.
7. Kinsey discovered, as Gathorne-Hardy notes, that the “mere fact of saying sexual intercourse, coitus, masturbation, clitoris, orgasm, etc., in a society where even the word sex was barely mentionable, and in which ‘venereal disease’ had just been banned on radio, was enough to shock his audiences into electrified attention.” *Sex, the Measure of All Things*, 126.
8. Gathorne-Hardy, *Sex, the Measure of All Things*, 171.
9. For example, before marriage, Kinsey calculated that the average male had experienced 1,523 orgasms whereas the average woman only 223. After marriage he calculated that most husbands achieved orgasm in almost all acts of intercourse whereas wives only 39 percent of the time. Segal, *Straight Sex*, 90. See also Kinsey, et al., *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders, 1953).
10. Gathorne-Hardy, *Sex, the Measure of All Things*, 308; Kinsey et al., *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*, 634.
11. Gathorne-Hardy, *Sex, the Measure of All Things*, 307.
12. Wardell Pomeroy, as quoted in Gathorne-Hardy, *Sex, the Measure of All Things*, 315. This was all the more surprising in that Spears had not had her first orgasm until she was forty and was in her sixties at the time of filming. Kinsey shot a total of seven hours of films with Spears performing with a great many different partners drawn from his entire team of male researchers, including himself. According to Gathorne-Hardy, Kinsey himself had a sexual liaison with Spears and remained friends for many years after.
13. No one knew about the human films until the 1972 publication of collaborator Wardell Pomeroy's biography of Kinsey. Had they known, Kinsey would have instantly lost his funding—as he would do soon enough after the publication

of the female volume. Kinsey's "attic films"—which meticulously recorded not only female orgasms, but male/male and female/female homosexual relations as well as scenes of sadomasochistic sex—are of obvious interest to any history of screening sex in America, and it is regrettable that the Kinsey Institute does not permit their study today. Gathorne-Hardy, *Sex, the Measure of All Things*, 333.

14. Judith Reisman, leader of a group called Restoring Social Virtue and Purity to America, has particularly targeted Kinsey as the cause of a pro-sex agenda that has, as one of her books puts it, been "*Crafting 'Gay' Children*." These claims give Kinsey an awful lot of credit—as if one man could cause a sexual revolution, let alone an epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases. Reisman's claim that Kinsey based a portion of his research upon a sexually voracious pedophile blames Kinsey for acts committed and entered in a diary long before Kinsey began research. See www.defendthefamily.com_docs/resources/6390601.pdf.
15. James H. Jones, *Alfred C. Kinsey: A Public/Private Life* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997).
16. Thomas Waugh, *Hard to Imagine: Gay Male Eroticism in Photography and Film from Their Beginnings to Stonewall* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 398.
17. Waugh, *Hard to Imagine*, 400.
18. For a discussion of stag films as an archive of sex work, see my essay, "'White Slavery' versus the Thenography of 'Sexworkers': Women in Stag Films at the Kinsey Archive," *Moving Image* 5, no. 2 (fall 2005): 106–139.
19. Kinsey et al., *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*, 606.
20. Kinsey et al., *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*, 580.
21. He writes, "There is no evidence that the vagina responds in orgasm as a separate organ and apart from the total body." Kinsey et al., *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*, 582–583.
22. They write, "The female is capable of rapid return to orgasm immediately following an orgasmic experience," and "the female is capable of maintaining an orgasmic experience for a relatively long period of time," Masters and Johnson, *Human Sexual Response* (New York: Bantam, 1966), 131. Lynne Segal comments: "They in fact recorded so many physiological differences between men and women that their decision to emphasize similarities was clearly ideological." Segal, *Straight Sex*, 93.
23. Masters and Johnson, *Human Sexual Response*, 67.
24. Masters and Johnson, *Human Sexual Response*, 132.
25. Mary Jane Sherfey, "A Theory of Female Sexuality," in *Sexual Revolution*, ed. Jeffrey Escoffier, 91–99 (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2003), 91.
26. Sherfey, "A Theory of Female Sexuality," 93.
27. Anne Koedt, "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm," in *Sexual Revolution*, ed. Jeffrey Escoffier (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2003), 199. See also Mas-

- ters and Johnson, *Human Sexual Response*; Sherfey, "A Theory of Female Sexuality"; and Barbara Seaman, "Is Woman Insatiable?" in *Sexual Revolution*, ed. Escoffier, 122–142.
28. Koedt, "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm," 101.
 29. Seaman, "Is Woman Insatiable?" 133.
 30. Quoted in Bruce Williamson, "Porno Chic," in *Flesh and Blood: The National Society of Film Critics on Sex, Violence and Censorship*, ed. Peter Keough (San Francisco: Mercury House, 1995), 14.
 31. Recognized especially in his work with John Ford—in *Young Mr. Lincoln* (1939), in *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940), and in several Westerns.
 32. She is credited with publicly exposing Nixon's potential strategy of bombing the dikes, which would have endangered hundreds of thousands of civilians. Fonda toured the country, made numerous radio speeches to American pilots informing them of the devastation they were wreaking on the country. She was called a liar and, after being photographed sitting on anti-aircraft turrets, was accused of treason. But her efforts did expose and avert the plan to bomb the dikes. Jane Fonda, *My Life So Far* (New York: Random House, 2005), 291–333.
 33. Quoted in Fonda, *My Life So Far*, 216.
 34. Fonda, *My Life So Far*, 128.
 35. This film stars Fonda as a woman whose quasi-incestuous affair with her husband's son proves her undoing.
 36. Compare, for example, Hollywood's "celebration" in 1960 of Elizabeth Taylor's sexual charms in Daniel Mann's *Butterfield 8*, which could only end with the demise of Taylor's high-class call girl.
 37. We will need to remember this curling of hair. In an era as obsessed with hair as was the "sixties," curled hair on women, long hair on men, would prove a reliable indicator of predilection for pleasure.
 38. Seaman, "Is Woman Insatiable?," 133.
 39. Sherfey, "A Theory of Female Sexuality," 91.
 40. Steven Marcus, *The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth Century England* (New York: New American Library, 1974), xiii–xiv.
 41. According to Marcus, nineteenth-century pornography was marked by the wish-fulfilling expenditure of the scarce resource of male semen, "spent" as a utopian reversal of a social and economic economy of scarcity. Now, the multiply orgasmic woman pleased by an electrical device is no longer a wish-fulfilling reversal of economic reality, but the somewhat scarier embodiment of that reality itself: postindustrial consumption. I have argued elsewhere that Marcus invokes a curious double standard in his utopian model of nineteenth-century (male economic) "pornotopia" and his comparatively dystopian (female economic) pornography, which implicitly represents pleasurable female self-sufficiency as depressing reality. See Williams, *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure and the "Frenzy of the Visible,"* exp. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 108–110.

42. Fonda, *My Life So Far*, 176–304.
43. Fonda, *My Life So Far*, 197.
44. See my essay on the movie's kiss, "Of Kisses and Ellipses: The Long Adolescence of American Movies," *Critical Inquiry* 32, no. 2 (winter 2006): 288–340.
45. See my discussion of mainstream Hollywood's various ways of "going all the way" in chap. 2 of *Screening Sex* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008). The following three paragraphs adapt the discussion from that chapter.
46. *Webster's New World Dictionary*, 735.
47. An example would be the "Can't Buy Me Love" montage of the Beatles 1964 film *A Hard Day's Night*. See Jeff Smith, *The Sounds of Commerce: Marketing Popular Film Music* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998). See also, Russell Lack, *Twenty Four Frames Under: A Buried History of Film Music* (London: Quartet, 1997).
48. Jeff Smith's example, in *The Sounds of Commerce*, is the playful montage to "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head" in *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969).
49. See Linda Ruth Williams's discussion of the film in her book *The Erotic Thriller in Contemporary Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 118.
50. Both Kael and Haskell praise the psychological nuances of Fonda's performance. Kael, "Pipe Dream," *New Yorker*, July 3, 1978, 40; Haskell, "Review of *Klute*," *Village Voice*, July 15, 1971, 55.
51. For example, in hardcore pornography, European art film, and the American avant-garde, not to mention Nicolas Roeg's remarkably adult "pensive" coupling in *Don't Look Now* (1973).
52. Koedt, "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm," 101.
53. Contrast *The Graduate*: Benjamin slams the door, the screen grows dark, and the film then shows everything but what happens in the bed between them.
54. Fonda, *My Life So Far*, 371.
55. Fonda, *My Life So Far*, 371.
56. Fonda, *My Life So Far*, 375. Ron Kovic, the paraplegic antiwar vet who had served as inspiration for the character of Luke, later told Fonda that the film had improved his sex life.
57. See Annie Potts, "The Day the Earth Stood Still," in *The Science/Fiction of Sex: Feminist Deconstruction and the Vocabularies of Heterosex* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 79–100. For example, Potts shows how many women especially value female ejaculation, which one woman calls "coming like a guy," 85.
58. Potts, *The Science/Fiction of Sex*, 90–100.
59. Leo Bersani, *The Freudian Body: Psychoanalysis and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 34.
60. Vincent Canby, "Coming Home," *New York Times*, February 16, 1978.
61. Pauline Kael, "Mythologizing the 60's *Coming Home*," *New Yorker*, February 20, 1978, 120.
62. David James, "Rock and Roll in Representation of the Invasion of Vietnam," *Representations* 29 (1990): 90.

63. In fact, there is just the faintest possible sound of music presented as if from an off-screen diegetic source, playing ever so “softly” under this scene. I have not been able to recognize it.
64. Kael, “Mythologizing the 60’s *Coming Home*.”
65. *Searching for Debra Winger* (2002).