Part IV: Going All the Way

10 * The "Sexarama": Or Sex Education as an Environmental Multimedia Experience

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One important class of experiential products will be based on simulated environments that offer the customer a taste of adventure, danger, and sexual titillation or other pleasure without risk to his real life or reputation.

ALVIN TOFFLER, *Future Shock*, 228.

In the 1960s, much was made of the potential for combining audiovisual technologies in order to stimulate the senses within what were referred to as environmental forms of exhibition. While the space program was concerned with sensory exposure under extreme conditions, IBM, Bell Labs, Disney, and other corporations were invested in the commercial potential of sensory effects. Indeed, the potential for media, in the widest sense, to transform humanity was hotly debated, much as society was reimagined in terms relevant to the ascendant discourses of communications and cybernetics. Marshall McLuhan famously theorized that every medium represented an "extension of man"; by shifting attention away from content, it was possible to hypothesize that audiovisual technologies could have specific effects on the human sensorium in relation to their environmental forms—that is, the ways in which they were installed or exhibited.[1] Of course the movie theater already offered its audiences a particular environmental experience. Considering the spatial models that preceded it, Anne Friedberg observes that the cinema emerged from the "panorama and the diorama," which were "building-machines . . . designed to *transport*—rather than to *confine*."[2] The cinema's theatrical environment offered its patrons a metaphoric journey simulating the escape from confinement. But in the 1960s, some saw the traditional movie theater as stultifying. As Gene Youngblood put it, the "popular media" had "dulled" people's senses because "commercial entertainment" was merely "a system of temporarily gratifying, without really fulfilling, the experiential needs of an aesthetically impoverished culture."[3] Drawing on cybernetic-communications theories, as did McLuhan and Toffler, Youngblood anticipated a new media synthe-

sis that would provide aesthetically richer sensory experiences. At the same time, new "building machines" were equipped to project simultaneous or multiply timed films and slide shows onto large-scale screens, panoramic screens, or both, which were designed to surround the participants and seemingly transport them into exciting new spaces, identified as "simulated" or "immersive" environments.

As Toffler noted in *Future Shock*, immersive installations, commonly called "multimedia," combined media technologies that were "devoted to the creation or staging of specialized psychological experiences."[4] In 1966, one of the most recognizable artists in the United States was identified with producing "multimedia" events: "A touring unit, created by Pop Artist Andy Warhol and equipped with movie projectors and musicians has been playing Los Angeles before moving on to San Francisco."[5] Warhol was already notorious for making sexually oriented films such as *Blow Job* (1964), in his "Factory" studio in Manhattan, and now he was creating sensory-rich environments at off-site locations. Toffler also described "fun palaces" as immersive spaces where "the patron steps inside a work of kinetic art."[6] Industry-sponsored attractions at Disneyland and the Expo 1967 in Montreal invited visitors into exhibits combining sound and image, promising sensory excitement as well as product promotion. In the fields of business and education, the term "multimedia" typically referred to presentations that used film, slide shows, or a combination of both and that temporarily transformed offices and classrooms into potentially eventful spaces.

Given this historical context, it is not surprising that environmental exhibition techniques promising immersive experiences would strike some as the future for sex education. Multimedia installations organized to excite the senses would be articulated as a means to enhance participants' knowledge of sexuality and to explore their sexual potential. Here I'll examine how this theory was put into practice by the National Sex Forum (NSF) in what it officially called the SAR, an acronym that refers both to "Sexual Attitude Reassessment" and "Sexual Attitude Restructuring."[7] Originally known as the National Drug and Sex Forum, the idea for the NSF as a provider of sex education and "innovative training materials" started at the Institute for Sex Research in Bloomington, Indiana, and it "began officially in October 1968, as part of the Glide Urban Center," a foundation based in San Francisco.[8] Through the work of its founders, Ted McIlvenna and Laird Sutton, and associates, Marguerite Rubenstein, Loretta Haroian, and Phyllis Lyon, the NSF created its multimedia SAR method of sex education, amassed an archive,

launched a media distribution division (Multi Media Resource Center [MMRC]), and became a producer of what it identified as erotic films.[9] In 1976, the NSF was converted into the Institute for the Advanced Study of Human Sexuality (IASHS).

Publications by both the Glide Foundation and the NSF not only make a compelling case for sex education, but also provide empirical evidence that the NSF's associates and supporters were engaged in the productive "prurience" that Thomas Waugh finds in Alfred Kinsey's practice of sexual science manifested in his desire to collect sexually explicit materials and to film sex acts.[10] The NSF's immersive multimedia SAR method of sexual consciousness-raising continues to be included in the IASHS curriculum, though its peak circulation on college campuses has long passed. Nevertheless, it was an important precursor to the feminist-identified "antipornography" and "pro-sex" presentations that proliferated in its wake, both in its deployment of sights and sounds that were identified as dangerous or titillating, particularly for women, and in the popularization of assumptions from behavioral psychotherapy about how exposure to pornographic or erotic stimulation could be channeled to change people's beliefs and behaviors.[11]

Sensory Stimulation Techniques for Entertainment, Therapy, and Education

Environmental multimedia forms of entertainment typically promised to saturate or bombard the participants' senses to presumably pleasurable ends. In 1966 *Life* magazine offered ironic commentary on this new "madness" at nightclubs: "To enjoy the latest thing in discothèques, you had better wear ear plugs, dark glasses and shin guards. Otherwise, you may be deafened, blinded and bruised in an electronic earthquake that engulfs you completely in an experience called 'total recreation.'"[12] Although Toffler warned against the shock effects of sensory stress (i.e., "information overload") brought on by increased exposure to communications media as well as to the reflexivity of cybernetic systems, he nevertheless predicted that the expanding "experience industries" would aim for beneficial effects on the human sensorium through targeted approaches to "psychic gratification."[13] Within the context of this popularization of immersive multimedia as well as the proliferation of new portable media technologies, self-identified sex researchers, sex therapists, and sex educators eagerly explored the premise that sensations could be manipulated and refined for improved psychological health,

sensual pleasure, and satisfactory orgasmic performance.[14] In the classroom, exposure to sexually explicit materials was intended to produce health professionals who would be more aware of the range of human physical traits and sexual behaviors.

In *Future Shock*, Toffler described a novel example of an immersive multimedia entertainment that cocooned patrons in a luxuriously outfitted sensory environment: the "Cerebrum" was "an 'electronic studio of participation' where, for an hourly fee, guests . . . strip off their clothing, don semi-transparent robes, and sprawl comfortably on richly padded white platforms"; each guest was given "a stereophonic headset [and] a see-through mask." While projected slides and light shows stimulate the eyes, "folk and rock music, interspersed with snatches of television commercials, street noises and lecture by or about Marshall McLuhan fill the ears."[15] Whether or not the Cerebrum rocked anyone's psyche, Toffler linked it with what he considered the new gratification-oriented economy. Referring to the productive flow of ideas between the counterculture or avant-garde and corporate capitalism, he drew comparisons between Club Med, which started as a members-only nonprofit holiday club and became a hugely profitable brand-name resort, and the Esalen Institute, which gained recognition for popularizing the "human potential movement." At its Big Sur, California, location, Esalen originated the "encounter group," encouraged meditation and bodywork, and inspired the growth of psychotherapies as well as the concept of the therapeutic spa.[16] Up the coast in San Francisco, the NSF attracted people who shared Esalen's commitment to exploring human potential through eclectic methodologies as well as the presumed health benefits of soaking in hot water. Returning to Toffler's argument, all-inclusive vacation clubs and self-actualization organizations can both be seen as symptomatic of the "psychologization" that accompanies an "economy geared to the provision of psychic gratification."[17] Also referring to Esalen's influence, Janice Irvine states that the NSF's institutional discourse aimed to give all people "permission to recognize and feel their own sexuality."[18] This perspective was too radical to some of those who had brought the NSF into existence, and, according to its website, its financial survival in the early 1970s hinged on removing its affiliation with its churches.[19] But even after the NSF modified the word "sex" in its name and became the Institute for the Advanced Study of Human Sexuality, it quickly acquired new naughty nicknames—"Hot Tub University" and "Fuck U."[20] This hints at the tricky relationship between psychic gratification and physical gratification that exists at the foundation of behavioral psychotherapy and its techniques for sensory experiences—that is, their poten-

tial to be identified by others as pornographic education and a rationale for openly recreational sex.

In his critical history of psychology, Morton Hunt argues that the discipline "was not originally an applied science, and its training centers produced not 'health care providers' but researchers and theorists. . . . By the 1970s, however, psychology was growing not as a pure science but as several forms of applied science, of which health care was by far and away the largest."[21] The practice of behavioral psychotherapy "increased geometrically" after South African researcher Joseph Wolpe relocated to the United States, and his "method of 'reciprocal inhibition' or 'desensitization'" was incorporated into both training and treatment programs.[22] Compared to environmental multimedia entertainments designed to bombard the senses, Wolpe's method of behavioral therapy took a more controlled approach to sensory manipulation: a "structured" experience directed by the therapist. Although William Masters and Virginia Johnson did not credit behavioral psychotherapy, their "structured" program for treating sexual dysfunction in married couples was implicitly indebted to that applied model of desensitization (Hunt, 576).[23] Hunt states that desensitization therapy follows these steps, derived from laboratory experiments with animals: (1) "induce a pleasant trancelike state," (2) "link its agreeable feelings by associative training with the fear-inducing stimulus," and (3) "thereby overcome the fear" (Hunt, 573). Wolpe's influential treatment technique was organized around exposure to a feared object through a "series of scenes" that required participation by therapist and patient (Hunt, 573, 575).

For example, to treat a woman suffering from "frigidity," whose "anxiety was triggered by situations involving the sight or touch of a penis, which she found revolting," Wolpe directed her through a structured desensitization in which the woman, her husband, her hand, and his penis all became objects that she could learn to control within her imagination (Hunt, 574–575). Like a slide show, this narrative was sequential: it began with a scene in which the woman saw a "nude male statue in a park thirty feet away"; then "a series of scenes in which she imagined herself [in] the bedroom, seeing her husband's penis from a distance of fifteen feet"; then gradually moving closer, until she could touch it without anxiety, until "by about the 20th session she reported that she was enjoying sexual relations with her husband and having orgasm about half the time" (Hunt, 575). Wolpe's frightened patient was reportedly desensitized—her fear mitigated—through imagined exposure to sexually explicit scenes that sequentially intensified her relationship to the specific object both in treatment and through private practice

with her husband at home. As a result, she experienced what other therapy practitioners would term a "resensitization," becoming positively excited by seeing the previously "revolting" penis.

This notion was not new, but it was articulated through a contemporary scientific discourse that could be traced to the postwar significance of the concepts of feedback and reflexivity as articulated by theorists of cybernetics and communications. Looking farther back into the interest of Western culture in the "eroticization of the senses," Paula Findlen finds an intriguing example in the literary pornography of Pietro Aretino's *Ragionamenti* (1534–1536): the heroine, Nanna, encounters an "erotic panopticon" through which she "is initiated into the pleasures of sex by observing different images of couplings decorating the walls of the monastery and by watching others through various peepholes." Suddenly sensitized after spying on these displays, Nanna becomes "susceptible to every sight, sound, and smell she encounters." Organized around imagining sequentially intensified sexual encounters, behavioral psychotherapy's structured treatment design promised to deliver its own "eroticization of the senses." Wolpe's method also resulted in a female subject who could, as Findlen describes the successful outcome of Nanna's sex education, be a "manipulator of the pornographic gaze."[24] Although Wolpe apparently relied on his patients' imaginations to provide the sexual imagery, some enterprising sex researchers, therapists, and educators would soon incorporate sexually explicit media into their treatment and training programs. Going beyond individual therapy sessions and imagined sex acts, they would draw on the popularity of environmental entertainment and would include college students as participants.

In their teacher's guide for his textbook *Becoming a Sexual Person*, Robert Francoeur and Linda Hendrixson credit Indiana University professor Edward Tyler as the first educator to apply behavioral psychotherapy techniques to sex education through a multimedia installation in 1968: "Knowing the resistance of the medical students, Tyler knew he would have to desensitize, break down anxiety, and overcome inhibitions. Tyler decided on sensory overload with several hour-long sessions of explicit films, often shown simultaneously, each followed by intense but relaxed small group discussions with trained leaders."[25] For films, Tyler had an archive within reach at the Kinsey Institute. As to Tyler's inspiration for multiscreen projections, he would probably have been aware of this technique from the national coverage of multimedia events by Warhol and others. Tyler may also have heard about movie marathons, which offered audiences longer-than-normal viewing ex-

periences.[26] Like corporate environmental entertainments, movie marathons, "midnight movies," and "underground" screenings were perceived as exciting sensory experiences. Unlike corporate-sponsored entertainments, the rules governing audience behavior could be looser during these alternative screenings. Underground programs were also notorious for showing films that were more sexually explicit.[27] As described in Tyler's classroom, this technique of combining the structure of behavioral psychotherapy's treatment—desensitization followed by resensitization—with the technique of multiply projected sexually explicit films running for longer-than-normal times resulted in a new method of sex education that subjected its participants to a unique experience in sensory bombardment.

Given the increase in college enrollments as well as the expansion of youth cultures, Toffler predicted that education, "already exploding in size, will become one of the key experience industries as it begins to employ experiential techniques to convey both knowledge and values to students."[28] Tyler's method of multimedia sex education for medical students spread from Indiana University to other institutions, with medical and health science classrooms typically serving as the environments for what were also known as "saturation" sessions or workshops. Journalist Phil Tracy explained in 1970 that this type of sex education was intended to allow individuals to have "meaningful exposure to a realistic objectification of the range of behavior into which their own experiences and those of other humans fall."[29] As the inherently dramatic narrative of desensitization and resensitization became culturally significant, the supposed effects—positive or negative, as defined in binary terms—of exposure to sexually explicit media would serve as justifications for governmental and institutional funding. Before long, however, desensitization would also be used to mean a detrimental numbing effect and objectification would be narrowly defined to refer to an act of representational violence, typically by men against women, especially in relation to pornography after it became more widely available in a variety of settings. Specifically, in arguments against sexually explicit imagery in pornography (as well as advertising), desensitization and its process of objectification would no longer be understood by some as a necessary step in the education or refinement of the senses, serving to make them more receptive to stimulation as well as more perceptive about the means of stimulation. But back in the late 1960s, those were the prosocial objectives of the NSF when creating the multimedia Sexarama and its roadshow workshops, designed especially to teach the "flower generation" about sex.[30]

Environmental Multimedia Sex Education

In a 1970 interview, Ted McIlvenna explained the NSF's institutional mission: "While Masters and Johnson are doing some individual counseling, nobody has set up a full-time realistic sex education program."[31] According to the coauthors of the NSF's *SARGuide*, "McIlvenna and his staff began experimenting with a methodology that would help professionals grasp a broader view of human sexuality. The answer seemed to lie in the use of sexually explicit films and slides."[32] The *SARGuide* claimed that the SAR workshop was "one of the most revolutionary methods ever designed for educating adults about what people do sexually and how they feel about it."[33] At the time, a multimedia method may have seemed more realistic to the NSF associates because, as Francoeur explained in 1977, the "technique recognizes the dependence of today's youth on the visual image, and the need for sex-positive comfortable educators who are not embarrassed by any aspect of human sexual behavior."[34] Although one approach to a sensory-stimulating environment was to cocoon each participant in a private mediated experience, as with the Cerebrum, the NSF's SAR was organized around sensory bombardment of a group of participants; in this way, it was more like a cross between a multimedia event and a movie marathon at which everyone is exposed to the same stimuli.

In addition to focusing on collective consciousness-raising, the NSF's associates would make their mark in the discipline of sexology by taking a countercultural position in relation to Masters and Johnson, who dominated sex research at the time with their focus on "structured" private therapy sessions. Furthermore, in contrast to Masters and Johnson's concentration on heterosexuality, the NSF associates would promote Kinsey's spectrum theory of sexuality. According to Irvine, when it started at the Glide Urban Center the NSF was "originally committed to work in the gay community."[35] It soon expanded its scope by focusing on what it claimed as healthful aspects of sexuality rather than on sexual dysfunction: the NSF's "founders coined what could be the slogan for humanistic sexology as a whole: 'We believe it is time to say "yes" to sex.'"[36] They were skeptical about what advice doctors could offer, due to traditional curricula for medical training programs. As McIlvenna said in 1970: "Physicians are practically as ignorant about what people actually do in bed as is the general public."[37] Therefore, from the NSF's perspective, the SAR was a "logical progression in the history of the field of sex education."[38] Resisting the warnings of Masters and Johnson against using media "crutches" and their narrow definition of heterosexuality,

the NSF discourse championed the idea that exposure to sexually explicit media could liberate audiences from ignorance about what naked humans look like and how they perform sex acts.[39] It also attempted to promote potential pleasures that might arise while seeing and hearing sexual material in an environment that was designed to be both comfortable, as in recreation rooms, and immersive, as in total sensory entertainments.

According to the Glide Foundation's report for the President's Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, the NSF gathered an "interdisciplinary group of 20 professionals" to study a variety of "materials and procedures" in the process of developing the SAR.[40] The NSF encouraged academic health professionals and community activists to share ideas about sexually explicit materials, a partnering that might have been more culturally resonant in San Francisco, where bookstores and movie theaters were also bringing pornographic materials to the public. The report stated that during the investigation process, "it was immediately evident that the persons attending our first experimental training sessions were far more interested in graphic sexual materials than in the traditional sex education materials."[41] They were, apparently, an audience primed for such excitement. The commitment of this eclectic group to its task points to the interdisciplinary character of sexology in the late 1960s. As Irvine explains, the discipline soon began to split between the scientific sexologists, exemplified by Masters and Johnson, and the humanistic sexologists, such as those affiliated with the NSF.[42]

According to Irvine, the difference between humanistic and scientific sexologists is also evident in their media productions: in contrast to scientific sexology's modernist preference for "dense, complex textbooks, replete with charts, graphs, and anatomical drawings," humanistic sexologists are open to representations "that tend to be visually aesthetic rather than anatomically accurate." Moreover, "when humanistic sexologists want to impart information, they attempt to embed it in an experiential exercise, since they believe that people will more readily grasp and integrate it."[43] Determined to expose themselves to a wide range of sexual materials in the service of creating their own experiential exercise, the NSF's group poured over thousands of photographs and "looked at more than 5,000 films" as well as many art books and "slides of erotic art objects." Some material would likely have been considered obscene in other contexts. Attentive to aural sensations, they listened to tapes of "music, poetry, lectures, [and] sounds of people engaging in sexual relations"; and they tested "small group discussions with persons reacting to the shared experience of looking at erotic materials"[44]

In short, they educated themselves as self-selected volunteers in their own desensitization-resensitization sessions, becoming self-proclaimed experts—perhaps even fans—of sexually explicit media. Through their seemingly exhaustive and perhaps stimulating research, the group arrived at what they called "a unique environmental approach . . . using a variety of multimedia methods involving multiple projection, light, sound, and tactile environments which facilitate both information-giving and feeling-response" (Glide Foundation, 355).

Having selected the materials, the NSF then developed a "specially designed Awareness Room" at its headquarters with an operator's "control booth" facilitating "use of 26 pieces of equipment at the same time" (ibid., 357). This unique building-machine was designed to stimulate the senses through the technique of saturation/bombardment. For *Commonweal* in 1970, Tracy observed that this "specially-designed 'awareness room,' . . . contains soft rugs, large pillows and . . . waterbed. The walls are sculptured and have a projection-surface quality. At any one time several things are going on at once."[45] Explaining the SAR to the readers of the adult magazine, *Oui*, Edward Brecher credited McIlvenna with understanding "that effective sex education required much more than merely increasing a student's store of knowledge. Sexual feelings, attitudes, and bodily responses must also be affected."[46] Whether understood as a psychological process of attitude "reassessment" or a "restructuring" of one's preconceived notions, the SAR's form borrowed from behavioral psychotherapy's method of the structured treatment program. Instead of deploying imaginary scenes in a controlled sequence exclusive to therapist and patient, the SAR immersed groups of people in what resembled a total recreational environment that could be rationalized in terms of humanistic sexology's emphasis on experiential learning.

Indeed, the NSF's Sexarama offered audiences the opportunity to be exposed to sexually explicit materials in a socially "clean" environment, without having to set foot in a "dirty" bookstore or theater specializing in pornographic movies. According to the Glide Foundation's report, the NSF also "design[ed] training events to fit the participants" who could not come to San Francisco for the full SAR workshop in the Awareness Room.[47] To make off-site exhibition possible, the NSF created its own Multi Media Resource Center to distribute SAR workshops as well as other media productions by artists, therapists, and its own production team, headed by its cofounder Laird Sutton as media director. Because it could be packaged in different components, a SAR workshop could last from several hours up to "two to six days," depending on the site and the exhibitor's intent.[48] Sketching a general description of these events,

Irvine writes, "The SAR format is a marathon. Participants gather in a room for twelve or more hours . . . and watch explicit sex films. They usually sit on the floor on large, fluffy pillows, in the stereotypic marathon fashion, and are surrounded by screens. Often several films run simultaneously."[49] Pushing the boundaries of what could be exhibited in art house movie theaters (though not in private shows, such as stag parties or exclusive events at Warhol's Factory) the Sexarama included films on "heterosexual intercourse, male and female masturbation, lesbian and gay male sex, and occasionally 'paraphilia' (bestiality or sadomasochism) . . . also short humorous films."[50] Taking a pragmatic view of the SAR's use of commercial pornography at the time, the NSF's Maggi Rubenstein observed,

> It *is* the way that people get information, a lot of people can't afford to go to counseling or come to workshops and may instead go to watch a film, or may go to a theater. At least they see, well it may be exaggerated, as all films are, larger than life and more gorgeous than life, but it does show what people do, sexually. So it does have benefit.[51]

Because the NSF's institutional intent was to deploy the "visual impact of movies and television" to saturate participants' senses, the SAR was part of what they took to be the logical progression in sex education from print media to a multimediated environment. Perhaps more important, the SAR was designed to teach its audiences how to distinguish between erotic and pornographic audiovisual materials.

Desensitizing with Pornography, Resensitizing with Erotica and the Need for New Sex Films

Masters and Johnson's first book, *Human Sexual Response*, published in 1966, revealed that they had filmed their research participants, reportedly focusing on physiological evidence of responsiveness.[52] Although the pair denied anyone, including other scientists, access to their films, *Newsweek* quoted a popular joke in response to the book: "'Have you read [it]?' 'No, I'm going to see the movie.'"[53] Filmmakers seized the opportunity to capitalize on public curiosity by making and releasing sex documentaries, including the new "marriage manual films," which were narrated by fake doctors.[54] Some theaters not only showed these movies, but also the more sexually explicit "beaver" films, which brought female genitalia to the big screen.[55] Aware of the new pornographic films, the NSF also wanted, as associate Teresa Welborn put it, "to do visually what Masters and Johnson had done in their research."[56] Not only did

Fig. 10.1 Ted McIlvenna (bottom, center) interviewed in the SAR room at the NSF for the film *Sexual Liberty Now!* (1971). Note the overhead, slide, and film projectors in the booth at the top. (Digital frame enlargement.)

NHF feel the need to produce their own films (figure 10.1), which they identified as erotic and educational, but they divided their multimedia SAR into two sessions to correspond with the therapeutic techniques of desensitization and resensitization. According to Brecher's description of the SAR, desensitization involved bombarding the participants with "three or more films projected simultaneously on as many screens." "The films are snippets from hardcore commercial porno films portraying in explicit detail all of the sexual ways in which mouths, cocks, cunts, tits, and asses can interact."[57] The "resensitization films shown at the next session are mostly Laird Sutton's best products," he noted. "They are equally explicit, but the emphasis is on the couple making love together."[58] In the NSF's discourse, the SAR's educational environment would serve positive prosocial purposes and would not incite dangerous antisocial behaviors, as was assumed about obscene materials and as they had been legally defined.

The theory behind this two-part programming for multimedia sex education was that the "commercial fuck films" would "take the *threat* out of sex" for the participants when they were projected in the first session.[59] Following from the method of behavioral psychotherapy, the

exposure to a feared object would reduce fear of it. In the second session, as the NSF's Phyllis Lyon explained, their films showed "sex in the context of involvement, love, joy, and happiness."[60] Brecher suspected that the NSF "associates built [their] films into a crash program of sex education" because they were less appealing to audiences than commercial porn films.[61] Regardless of which films participants preferred, the SAR's division of sexually explicit media into the desensitization or resensitization sequences may have educated some to distinguish between the commercial porn films and the films made by or distributed by the NSF and to identify these productions as "erotic," rendering them more socially acceptable. To meet—or to encourage—demand for materials deemed appropriate for sex education and therapy, the NSF's MMRC distributed its own films as well as slide shows, photo series, and SAR packages, all of which were marketed as erotic rather than pornographic.

In the 1960s, as the marketplace for sexually explicit materials expanded, the effort to distinguish erotica from pornography became significant. As Lynda Nead argues, the discursive maneuver to differentiate erotic art from commercial pornography was tied to the humanistic belief in "the liberatory and therapeutic effects of erotic art and of sexual behavior freed from the conventions of bourgeois authoritarianism and repression."[62] The NSF was committed to a similar notion of sexual liberation. According to Irvine, though both scientific and humanistic sexologists shared a disciplinary concern for "erotophobia"—"an irrational fear of the erotic"—the latter openly appreciated erotic art and expounded on the concept of erotology, that is, "the practical study of lovemaking."[63] By linking erotic art with the experience of sexual pleasure, humanistic sexologists, psychologists, and therapists actively campaigned for what Michel Foucault would describe as humanism's impossible "dream of a complete and flourishing sexuality."[64] Through the new circuit of erotic film festivals, the NSF's own films would reach a mostly self-selected audience and some acclaim. In 1974, Sutton described their film *Fullness* in an interview for the adult magazine *Oui*: "One of the films I recently completed had sodomy in it—anal intercourse—as an alternative to sex during pregnancy. An incredible film. The woman was eight months pregnant. It just took first place at the Baltimore Erotic Film Festival."[65]

By linking "eros"—love—with some sexually explicit products, such as those that were accepted into film festivals and classrooms, humanistic sexologists offered audiences a way to distinguish the erotic from the pornographic and soon the distinction would be made that women, in particular, preferred the former over the latter. In fact, the NSF's in-

stitutional discourse helped link erotica with the feminist movement, and Betty Dodson, Joani Blank, and Lonnie Barbach, who participated in the interdisciplinary research for the SAR, would each contribute to the growth of feminist-influenced sex products. The NSF associate Lyon was also cofounder of the influential lesbian organization, Daughters of Bilitis.[66] In a 1975 survey of sex education films for the adult magazine *Gallery*, Don Carson quoted Lyon stating that the NSF wanted its films to show "sex in the context" of loving relationships. Carson noted, the NSF's films were intended to challenge the "all-male bias of commercial porn": "The problem was that most of the films on the market were not only made *for* men, but they were made *by* men, too, Ms. Lyon says."[67] The NSF was committed to producing films that Lyon claimed debunked the "myths" of male and female sexual performance featured in commercial porn films: specifically, "the man who can go on forever in bed" and the "woman who gets incredibly excited when somebody merely touches her genitals." According to Carson, the "trouble with commercial sex films was not their explicitness, or lack of it, but what the [NSF] directors saw as a tendency to 'mythologize' sex and divorce it from 'relationship.'"[68] Brecher quoted McIlvenna's description of such films: "The porn cameras . . . focused in tight on tits, cocks, cunts, asses, and tongues. . . . Human beings and their relationships were largely ignored." Having seen the NSF's films as part of the Sexarama, Brecher wrote, "Sutton's films are as physiologically explicit as the commercial fuck films, but there is a major added ingredient. While the participants are balling, they are also making love."[69]

The NSF's claim for differentiating its films from commercial pornography was staked on the articulation of a kind of documentary style, which was in keeping with the didacticism associated with erotic art. If the commercial pornographic cinema provided, as Gertrude Koch puts it, the "night school for sex education," then the NSF's own productions were intended as the day school for sex education.[70] As McIlvenna told Tracy, their intent was to "show what people do, not what they ought to do."[71] In the 1960s, revolutionary claims were made for the new documentary film movements—direct cinema and cinema vérité. Whereas scientific sexologists assumed that universal truths about the "human sexual response" would be revealed through an aggregate of modernist data collected via recording technologies, including film, the NSF's discourse adhered to the humanistic assumption that individual erotic truths would be revealed by filming apparently ordinary people engaged in their preferred sexual activities. In 1997, NSF associate Rubenstein described their filmmaking practice: "Regular people, not actors,

were hired, who don't work in the sex field, the sex industry, but are just people sharing their sexual patterns on film for education, not to be shown in theaters."[72]

The claim to a representative ordinariness echoed the enthusiasm within documentary practice at the time for what Brian Winston identifies as the direct documentary's focus on "the private life of ordinary people in ordinary circumstances."[73] In interviews, Sutton identified the NSF's films as "sexual *cinema vérité*," whereas McIlvenna referred to them as "pattern films," following from the Kinsey practice of creating data-rich representations of people's sex habits through extensive interviews.[74] As Carson described the NSF directing style, "It's not unusual, Sutton says, for the participants in one of his films to forget all about him and his one-, sometimes two-member crew. 'That's easy to do, because, once I start shooting, I don't interrupt the people in any way or tell them what to do.'"[75] Similar to what Masters and Johnson reported about making films in the laboratory, Sutton assumed his camera could be ignored by the sexual performers, thereby simply recording reality, as if the process were no more intrusive as a "fly on the wall."[76] Although edited and sometimes narrated, the films had an authenticity rooted in the fact that the NSF's performers hailed from a Bay Area milieu in which humanistic sexology crossed paths with sexual countercultures variously invested in the sexual revolution as well as feminist and gay liberation movements.[77] The films had ordinary titles, privileging first names. About *Rich and Judy* (1971), the NSF's MMRC catalogue from the early 1980s suggested using "this film to introduce and portray heterosexual intercourse within a very loving relationship."[78] *Visions of Rasberry* (1979) offered "an interweaving of sensual/sexual fantasies of Rasberry by her husband Laird Sutton. . . . There are fleeting scenes of explicit sexual activity, both heterosexual and bisexual" (Multi Media Resource Center, 12). About *Johnnie and Bonnie* (1981), "The country is the setting for this black couple taking a horseback ride, having an outdoor picnic and having sex in the sunshine" (Multi Media Resource Center, 18). Performers tended to conform to the natural body appearance of the period, identified with hippies and normalized in *The Joy of Sex*: long hair and beards for men; long hair, hairy armpits, and bushy pubes for women.[79]

The NSF also made films about self-loving, specifically female masturbation, which was considered crucial both to the representation of female sexual pleasure and to the competent practice of female sexuality. More to the point, the NSF sought to represent female sexuality differently from the commercial porn films; as Lyon explained, "Natu-

Fig. 10.2 The first film released by the NSF, Constance Beeson's *Unfolding* (1969), attempted to represent female sexuality through a more humanist-feminist techniques that could be called "erotic" when compared with commercial pornography. (Digital frame enlargement.)

rally, our first film was made by a woman, specifically about female sexuality."[80] The catalogue copy for that first film, *Unfolding* (1969) by Constance Beeson, gives an idea of the NSF's association of humanist-feminist ideas about sex with filmic techniques that could be defined as erotic rather than pornographic (figure 10.2): "*Unfolding* is a series of dream-like episodes, double and triple images blending ocean, hills, poetry and ethereal feelings. While various persons take part in the film fantasy, two couples are focused on illustrating sexual pleasure and orgasm" (Multi Media Resource Center, 26). Beeson's imagery had a lot in common with other experimental art films of the period, notably Carolee Schneemann's *Fuses* (1964–1967).[81] However, the NSF's own productions privileged their documentary style, and this was true for the films on female masturbation: *Susan* (1971), *Margo* (1972), and *Shirley* (1972) each featured a woman masturbating to orgasm. Describing Margo as a "heavyset woman in her thirties," Carson quoted her perspective on participating:

> At first, when I started really getting into masturbating, I thought, Well, if I'm ever going to come, I'm going to have to black out the fact that I'm

> making a film. Laird had said to do that, but then somehow my whole head got turned around, and I realized what a far-out, radical, and wonderful thing it was to be making a film that would turn other women on to their bodies and their sexuality.[82]

In *Susan* the performer looks at the camera and smiles after her final act of masturbation, enthusiastically waving her vibrator at the camera. Whether or not she received off-screen direction, which would certainly violate the cinema vérité ideal, the scene conveys her personal celebration of sexual agency. Such a self-conscious moment was in keeping with the NSF's institutional intent to say yes to sex.[83] Over the years, the NSF's Multi Media Resource Center produced, distributed, and exhibited a variety of explicit media productions by women.[84]

Speaking for a *Gallery* audience familiar with porn films by 1975, Carson attempted to distinguish between the commercial product and the NSF's films that he said were "probably as gamey . . . as the weekly bill at your local inner-city movie complex. But, in actuality, the movies it describes are probably 'cleaner' than most *Gallery* readers would care for."[85] Carson was skeptical about the NSF's claim to an erotic documentary style. Already familiar with *Deep Throat* and its theatrical depiction of fellatio, he opined, "Take the way Sutton zoomed up and pointed his camera at the woman in *Sun Brushed* as she performed fellatio. There was something downright school-marmish about the maneuver, as if Sutton—high-minded as hell—had rapped his ruler and said, 'Class, repeat after me: See Jane suck. Jane likes to suck. You can suck, too.'" Carson summed up his view of the NSF's documentary style with reference to *Possibilities* (1973), which featured a quadriplegic man and his lover: it was "another UPI-style visual report on a sexual pattern."[86] Given that the NSF catalogue copy promised sexually explicit imagery, Carson asked, "What makes these films different from what they appear to be—kinky and far-out porno?"; he answered his question by noting that the "the difference is intent" as stated by the NSF. Moreover, he noted that "a contract clause . . . stipulates that the films are to be knowingly sold or rented only to church and social agencies, colleges, and professionals engaged in therapy, counseling, and education."[87] The NSF's institutional discourse prohibited the exhibition of its films as popular—or, to extend Carson's point, "dirty"—entertainment. Instead, it permitted the inclusion of experimental art films in its distribution catalogue, and the circulation of its own films as both erotic art and instructional media. Of course, like the porn entrepreneurs who pushed the boundaries of censorship, the NSF could have claimed that its films were not sex pictures

(entertainment), but pictures about sex (education), and a few of them were even award winners at erotic film festivals. But by the late 1970s, exhibiting sexually explicit materials in public spaces would again seem to be a riskier activity in the face of new social forces, including the rise of the Christian Right and morality campaigns; the emergence of feminist antipornography groups; and increased public awareness of sexual harassment, incest, and rape; as well as renewed concern over sexual promiscuity and sexually transmitted diseases, especially AIDS.

The SAR Experience, Then and Now, Public and Private

The new image-exchange and duplication technologies are a formidable obstacle to effective sexual censorship. Home videotape recorders, Polaroid cameras, and 8 mm. film cartridges render censorship nearly powerless.

GENE YOUNGBLOOD, *Expanded Cinema*, 114.

Like prior building machines, the Awareness Room of the NSF and IASHS was structured to simulate the experience of being metaphorically transported somewhere sensational (figure 10.3). Through this sexually explicit audiovisual journey, the captive, and perhaps captivated, audience was simultaneously supposed to learn about forms of human sexuality and to appreciate erotic sensory stimulation. Echoing the names of those precursors, the diorama and the panorama—from the Greek word "horama," for a sight, a view, or a vision—the SAR's nicknames, Sexarama and Fuck-o-rama, suggest that people expected it to deliver a sexual spectacle.[88] At the time, the country's best-known sexologists, Masters and Johnson, were promoting the popular bias against viewing sexually explicit materials; indeed, they theorized that men with erectile performance issues suffered from a debilitating self-consciousness they termed the "spectator" problem, the cure for which was to emphasize tactile over visual stimulation.[89] This was a challenge for those who believed in the therapeutic and educational potential of a visual sexual aesthetics, and the NSF met it by dividing its SAR into two distinct sections sanctioned by behavioral therapy: the commercial fuck films for desensitization and its own films for resensitization. In doing so, the NSF reinforced the bourgeois humanistic cultural judgment that was then deployed around the provocative problem of distinguishing between pornography and erotica. To borrow from Nead's argument about the role of discernment in the identification of erotic art, the NSF's SAR offered sensationally spectacular transportation to the "frontier of legitimate culture" without, however, sacrificing their ability to make

Fig. 10.3 The SAR room circa 1977. Multiple images projected on the walls and comfortable pillows were an integral part of the SAR experience. (Courtesy IASHS.)

intellectual judgments.[90] The NSF's institutional discourse articulated a distinction between erotic art and commercial pornography in relation to an educated preference for authentic sexual "patterns" instead of pornographic "myths," for lovemaking as opposed to balling, for didactic rather than fictional films. Thus, the NSF's claim to the liberatory, therapeutic, indeed resensitizing, value of its own films rested on the premise that they could be identified as erotic art, not pornography.

Indeed, they were training their audiences to perceive the NSF films that way. Regarding the experience of watching pornographic films in public spaces, Koch ventures an important aside: "It is possible that the social environments in which the films are seen determine their effect more than the film's form and content. That is, the organization of the audience's sexuality defines the mode of the product's appropriation."[91] In its ideal environment, or perhaps in any installation with prolonged

exposure, the NSF's multimedia SAR was designed to organize "the audience's sexuality." Along with sounds to stimulate erotic listening, the SAR was expected to encourage an eroticized experience of looking, what Koch describes as a pleasurable and touristic "lust to see."[92] But as Brecher observed, the NSF films "proved a disappointment. You couldn't just show them cold to an uptight audience; they made many of the viewers even more uptight—and the ones that needed enlightenment most were the ones most likely to walk out."[93] In other words, the commercial porn films may have served to warm up the audiences for the NSF's didactic films and that suggests a specious correlation between the categorization of porn versus erotica and their presumably different sensitizing effects. If audiences reported feeling favorably inclined—resensitized—to sexually explicit materials after experiencing the SAR, it could well have been a function of the order of the two-step exposure program. Another way to test their theory would have been to program their films in the first session and the commercial films in the second session, then compare reactions to the original program. According to Irvine, the ultimate reaction to the SAR would involve the participants' removal of their clothes in the full expression of humanistic sexology's commitment to experiential learning, to getting in touch with their feelings, and saying yes to sex, right there on the shag carpet.[94] At the IASHS, the SAR continues to be a requirement in the graduate studies curriculum: "#311 SAR 4 Units. An intensive 7-day educational and experiential program for sex educators, therapists, counselors. Each year's SAR focuses on new methodologies in the sex field and new applications of the SAR process. An integral part of SAR is the opportunity for interaction with professionals from throughout the world who attend."[95] Although the SAR's historic moment as a new media experience has long passed, it is important to consider its possible impacts on its audiences as well as its influence on subsequent educators. Much as movie theaters drew protests as well as audiences during the period in which porn films went mainstream, college campuses also became contested spaces for environmental multimedia exhibitions claiming to educate audiences about sex and gender, to teach them to see and to decode images correctly.

After the SAR was created, people affiliated with the NSF attempted to measure audiences' responses in order to bolster their claims about the purported benefits of sensory saturation in service to sex education. For the 1970 Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, the Glide Foundation reported their results of the "effects of erotic stimuli" on a sample of SAR participants: "It is difficult to make evaluations of individual categories of a training program specifically designed to be experienced as

a whole. In terms of ranking, the multimedia approach was first, with 92.8 percent saying that it 'helped' or 'greatly helped.'"[96] This awkward remark hints at skepticism on the part of humanistic sexology about scientific methods for quantitatively measuring experience. Nevertheless, the authors clearly recognized the political value of such data, stating that "close to 90 percent of the 329 persons found that historic and current sex action films, which are graphic depictions of sexual activity, helped or greatly helped in the [NSF's] training courses."[97] Of course, this sample was likely composed of self-selected people, perhaps favorably inclined toward sexually explicit materials, or at least willing to subject themselves to such exposure.

For a 1975 report published by the Sex Information and Education Council of the United States, Derek Burleson echoed the Glide report's conclusions, stating that the SAR provided a "rich laboratory for investigating the effectiveness of explicit audiovisual media in helping both professionals and the general adult public to deal with sexual attitudes on a personal-affective level."[98] In 1977 the NSF assessed the impact of the SAR and published its results in its *SARGuide*: "30,000 persons have taken the SAR process courses either through the National Sex Forum or through other groups using the process. Roughly half of these persons have been counselors, doctors, social workers or others in the 'helping' professions."[99] Apparently, the other half of the thirty thousand was not so easily categorized, perhaps because, as Carson noted, the SAR was "originally geared for professionals only but later opened to the public," which implied that people outside the field of sex education and therapy may have attended.[100] Whether or not evaluations were collected for all thirty thousand, the *SARGuide* enthusiastically stated that "statistics indicate that 96 percent find the SAR very helpful both personally and professionally."[101]

How people responded may have depended on whether they attended the NSF's SAR in the Awareness Room or a roadshow SAR. After attending one in Minneapolis, Robert Miller described his experience in 1970: "The windows were blacked out and the doors were locked. Slides of erotic art and pornography were being projected one after another—sometimes three at a time—on a screen while the taped voice of an evangelistic preacher came on strong extolling the rewards of free sexuality."[102] The environmental aspect of the roadshow SAR would vary by location. The packages of audiovisual materials would include slides, films, or both, and they would have to be projected and amplified, proficiently or not, in church basements, college classrooms, therapy offices, community centers, and other spaces lacking the technical, theatrical, and tactile speci-

fications of the original Awareness Room. College students certainly made up a portion of the overall audience for the NSF's packaged SAR, and it would appear that medical, social service, and health students were most common. Considering survey data for SARs held in Minnesota and California medical schools, Brecher reported in 1974 that the results indicated "overwhelmingly favorable responses" immediately after the SAR; apparently, survey data from a year later continued to be positive.[103] In their 2007 essay published by the IASHS's *Electronic Journal of Human Sexuality*, Butler, Hartzell, and Sherwood-Puzzello reported that a "Midwestern" university's undergraduate human sexuality survey course included a SAR component, which they described as follows: "The purpose of the contemporary SAR programs is to provide an opportunity for attendees to assess their own cultural influences, deconstruct their own assumptions about human sexuality, and become desensitized to unfamiliar sexual practices and sexological issues."[104] The researchers' focus group study of the "perceived benefits" to students serving as "peer-facilitators" for this course included this participant's quote about the SAR component: "When I discuss some of the issues with the students I notice on a real general level along with them I'm sort of breaking my own discomfort zone on whatever issues we're tackling with them."[105]

Other evidence suggests that people reacted inconsistently and even negatively to the SAR and its perceived discomforts. In 1982 Francoeur and Linda Hendrixson published their *Instructor's Resource Manual* for other professors to adapt his "Becoming a Sexual Person" course to their curricula. About his "Sex Saturday" SAR, Francoeur and Hendrixson stated that "the students are much more relaxed and communicative in class" after experiencing it. Taking a longer view, they concluded that it "generally takes several months for students to sort out their feelings about the SAR." They also described what happened as a result of an off-site event, when Francoeur held "a two day SAR for the nursing students at Northwestern Louisiana State University," where the "homosexual films . . . brought very strong negative reactions from the students." Although "some students protested the immorality of the experience to the university president," Francoeur and Hendrixson reported that the students' responses changed over time: "When a final evaluation of the program was done, every student reported a positive final evaluation of the SAR."[106] Such positive assessments could be used to support the humanistic perspective on the liberatory potential of multimedia when applied to experiential education, but it also indicated that participants might have to be monitored over a period of time.

The surveys by the Glide Foundation and the NSF as well as the col-

lege course evaluations obviously shaped participants' responses into data for quantitative analysis without necessarily representing their felt experience, which was so important to humanistic sexologists. According to Irvine, the NSF's multimedia method put a premium on feelings: as "in earlier encounter groups, participants in SARs are encouraged not to intellectualize by analyzing the film, but instead to find out which aspects of sexual behavior give them a 'visceral clutch.'"[107] How individuals experienced the SAR and what they felt during and after may have depended on one's willingness to be emotionally expressive in public. Written descriptions provide some evidence of people's spontaneous responses. Calling the SAR "an illusion-shattering experience," Brecher wrote, "people usually experience a whole range of reactions to the films—from delight to anger to disgust," and "freak-outs occasionally occur during or immediately following a SAR. They generally take the form of temper tantrums, hysterical outbursts, anxiety attacks, or depression."[108] For *Commonweal*, Miller remarked: "some people are all wound up in some kind of other-world ecstasy. Their excitement grates on the rest of us, and, as I look at them I see they are the same people who become unplugged in any milieu which places a premium on feeling."[109] Although Miller was bored by the SAR, he seems to have shared Toffler's concern that groups of excited people could fall victim to "social irrationality."[110] Indeed, Miller not only criticized the multimedia Sexarama for excluding specifically "moral" limitations, but also waxed negatively on the consequences of desensitization, as he understood it: "The great American vulgate will not be satisfied for long with mere voyeurism. . . . Desensitization will demand that they proceed toward more participatory approaches to the subject—or turn away from it altogether—until they reach satiation, which is really what it is all about, the goal of any sexual encounter."[111]

Similarly, Toffler expressed concern about the use of sensory manipulation techniques for "political or religious brainwashing." Rather than look to organized religion or political parties, he wrote disparagingly about rock concerts: "The glazed stares and numb, expressionless faces of youthful dancers . . . where light shows, split-screen movies, high decibel screams . . . and writhing, painted bodies create a sensory environment characterized by high input and extreme unpredictability and novelty." In addition to characterizing attendees of these multimedia events as blindly numb, he ominously linked them with "hippie cultists," guilty of "drug abuse," as well as "group experimentation" in "sensory deprivation and bombardment."[112] Miller's and Toffler's comments expressed concern about controlling people, especially youth, in group

settings, echoing long-standing fears of mob behavior in public spaces. In particular, Miller's comment recalled the government's case against hardcore pornography: that it posed "a clear and present danger" to society. As early as 1977, Francoeur's Saturday SAR for his students was targeted by "Rev. Morton Hill, president of Morality in Media, Inc."; the *Instructor's Resource Manual* quoted from the Hill's text: "Demand investigation as to whether state or federal laws are being violated . . . Unless this is done every college in America will follow the example of Fairleigh Dickinson University . . . Academic freedom does not justify use of obscene material."[113] Such calls to political action—in particular to policing expressions of sexuality in public—would be issued from both religious groups as well as feminist organizations, and both would gain student followers on many college campuses.

Whether its student audiences were bored or excited, disgusted or enchanted, or experienced all those feelings at once, the NSF's multimedia experiment tapped into the youth culture's expectations both for radically new sensory experiences and for frankly sexual films. In this way, the NSF's discourse linked humanistic sexology with technological innovation. Because the discourses around media technologies emphasized experimentation, new aesthetic practices—experimental, underground, and direct documentary or cinema vérité—could be embraced as a form of expression to resist and to challenge commercial visual cultures. Although the SAR was not widely adapted across college curricula, the impetus to educate people, especially college students, about sexually explicit imagery would be claimed by antipornography advocates on the one hand, and "pro-sex" experts on the other.[114] Not surprisingly, both would consider it necessary to expose their audiences to sexually explicit media. Although these events fell short of the total sensory experience of the multimedia SAR, these new sex education sessions implicitly relied on the behavioral psychotherapy technique of bombarding their audiences with sensory stimulation in order to teach them to identify and to prefer some sexually explicit materials—or none—over others.[115] It was as if the two factions split the two-step SAR, and each one claimed one part of the process—either the desensitization with pornography or the resensitization with erotica—to bolster their own arguments.

In contrast to the goals of Tyler, Francoeur, and the NSF's associates, antiporn educators reoriented the saturation method of the multimedia workshop to frighten audiences with sexually explicit imagery. Like Miller and other critics, they redefined desensitization to mean a numbing effect, and the antiporn show warned audiences away from

what it widely identified as pornographic imagery—ranging from porn films to mainstream advertising—deemed to "objectify" and "dismember" women's bodies. In addition to screening select films, such as *Killing Us Softly: Advertising's Image of Women* (1979) and its sequels and *Not a Love Story* (1981), the antiporn educators created slide shows and video compilations. The fairly rapid disappearance of porn films in mainstream theaters, before it became more socially acceptable for women to see them, further minimized the degree to which female college students in particular could readily compare them with what was identified as pornographic in these antiporn presentations. Furthermore, the process of sensory bombardment can result in emotional responses that may discourage or delay intellectual engagement. Although the antiporn critics promulgate Laura Mulvey's theory of the "male gaze," pro-sex educators claim a pornographic gaze for women. Willing to engage with porn and recognize the emergence of more sexual products by women and for women, the pro-sex educators, such as Susie Bright and Annie Sprinkle (PhD, IASHS), lobbied for the eroticization of the senses through their own resensitization process, encouraging audiences, especially women, to appreciate examples of sexually explicit materials from a variety of sources, including work by women porn directors. The pro-sex program was articulated to undermine the twin assumptions supported by both the antiporn educators and feminist theorists, who did not challenge what dominant sexologists presumed: that women are less capable of being turned on by visual stimuli and are generally represented as objects to men for their visual stimulation. Like the NSF's Sexarama, the pro-sex shows emphasize saying yes to sex of various kinds and to addressing female sexual pleasure, in particular. No matter their goals, both the antiporn and the pro-sex educators have offered their audiences a spectacular collective and public experience that can be traced back to the 1960s, the sexual revolution, and the rise of the Sexarama.

In conclusion, the discourse of the NSF and its multimedia SAR attempted to refute the long-standing argument against pornography: that its potential to stimulate the senses is dangerous, leading, as the law has often put it, to the incitement of sexual experimentation for the sole purpose of physical gratification. Indeed, the humanistic sexologists affiliated with the NSF argued for the benefits of sensory stimulation, without assuming, as did Masters and Johnson, that such exposure was a detrimental substitute or replacement for actual sexual activities, potentially leading to what the country's most famous sexologists considered an unhealthy "dependency" on audiovisual media.[116] If the NSF's environmental multimedia approach seems quaint now, that is because

not only have technologies changed, but also the home—with its array of consumer media devices—has become the most acceptable environment for experiencing sexually explicit materials.[117] In fact, the IASHS's media division turned to video early on as a new means of exhibition.[118] The MMRC catalogue from the early 1980s advertised the SAR Video Systems I: "a self-help program for personal sexual enrichment and education . . . including four hours of 1/2" video programming—the best of the educational films produced by the National Sex Forum," priced at $995. After the MMRC became Multi-Focus, Inc., the catalogue from the mid-1990s also offered the SAR Video Package—"for use by individuals and couples in the home setting as well as for classes or workshops, and doctors with patients"—at the new price of $795, with the old films from the 1970s and 1980s. The SAR video packages only included the second, resensitization, session from the multimedia SAR. Meanwhile, some IASHS graduates produced sex instruction videos for home viewing.[119]

Even though the NSF/IASHS was instrumental in expanding the range of sexually explicit media products, its emphasis on collectively experienced sex education and its commitment to sexual heterogeneity were not advanced by the makers of sex instruction videos. Generally such productions, now on DVD, favor heterosexual couples and the treatment of sexual dissatisfaction or dysfunction. Meanwhile, commercial porn does a bang-up business delivering all manner of specialty sex acts across consumer media platforms to the millions of private screens now owned by the flower generation and their descendants.

Note

This essay is a revision of a chapter from my PhD dissertation, "Sex Scenes and Naked Apes: Sexual-Technological Experimentation and the Sexual Revolution," University of Texas at Austin, 1999.

1. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (McGraw Hill: New York, 1964).
2. Anne Friedberg, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 1993, 20; italics in original.
3. Gene Youngblood, *Expanded Cinema* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1970), 42.
4. Alvin Toffler, *Future Shock* (New York: Bantam, 1970), 220, 227. Youngblood preferred the term "intermedia."
5. "Wild New Flashy Bedlam of the Discothèque," *Life*, May 27, 1966, 72.
6. Toffler, *Future Shock*, 177.
7. Formerly the NSF, the Institute for the Advanced Study of Human Sexuality (IASHS) spells out SAR as "Sexual Attitude Restructuring": see IASHS, www.iashs.edu/history.html. Search under History of the Institute. No date.

Accessed November 30, 2010. In her study of the contribution by NSF or IASHS to the field of sexology, sociologist Janice Irvine refers to "Sexual Attitude Re-Assessment." See *Disorders of Desire: Sexuality and Gender in Modern American Sexology* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 106.

8. IASHS, no date. Accessed November 30, 2010.
9. According to the IASHS, "Ted McIlvenna & Laird Sutton, two Methodist ministers who chose sexuality as their ministry, invented the Sexual Attitude Restructuring (SAR), the sexual pattern film, and the doctoral program in human sexuality." Given that sources credit them as well as several associates for creating specific NSF projects, I prefer to refer to the NSF founders and associates collectively, except for individual quotes and materials identified with a specific person's name. See www.iashs.edu/history.html.History of the Institute. No date. Accessed November 30, 2010. Thanks to Ted McIlvenna for granting me an interview when I visited the IASHS in 1996.
10. Thomas Waugh, *Hard to Imagine: Gay Male Eroticism in Photography and Film from Their Beginnings to Stonewall* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).
11. For an analysis of the antiporn and pro-sex presentations, see my essay "Appearing Live on Your Campus! Porn-Education Roadshows," *Jump Cut* 41 (1997): 27–35.
12. "Wild New Flashy Bedlam of the Discothèque," *Life*, May 27, 1966, 72.
13. Toffler, *Future Shock*, 200, 227.
14. Often such materials addressed female pleasure and how to achieve it, starting with specular self-examination and masturbation. See Eithne Johnson, "Loving Yourself: The Specular Scene in Sexual Self-Help for Women," in *Collecting Visible Evidence*, ed. Jane M. Gaines and Michael Renov (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 216–240.
15. Toffler, *Future Shock*, 229. In *Expanded Cinema*, Youngblood also refers to the Cerebrum.
16. Walter Truett Anderson, *The Upstart Spring: Esalen and the American Awakening* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1983).
17. Toffler, *Future Shock*, 220, 227. For Esalen's role in developing alternative therapies and influence on humanistic sexology, see Irvine, *Disorders of Desire*.
18. Irvine, *Disorders of Desire*, 117.
19. IASHS, History of the Institute. No date. Accessed November 30, 2010.
20. Irvine, *Disorders of Desire*, 117, 128. She notes that some women reported feeling pressured into having sex in that environment.
21. Morton M. Hunt, *The Story of Psychology* (New York: Anchor, 1993), 560.
22. Hunt, *The Story of Psychology*, 573. Hereafter, cited in the text as Hunt. For more on Wolpe's research, see Joseph Wolpe, *The Practice of Behavior Therapy* (New York: Pergamon, 1973); and Joseph Wolpe and Arnold A. Lazarus, *Behavior Therapy Technique: A Guide to the Treatment of Neuroses* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1966).

23. See also Irvine, *Disorders of Desire*, 192.
24. Paula Findlen, "Humanism, Politics and Pornography in Renaissance Italy," in *The Invention of Pornography: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity, 1500–1800*, ed. Lynn Hunt, 48–108 (New York: Zone Books, 1996, 74).
25. Robert T. Francoeur and Linda Hendrixson, *Instructor's Resource Manual* to Accompany *Becoming a Sexual Person* by Robert T. Francoeur (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1982), 268.
26. For more on midnight and underground movies, see J. P. Telotte, "Beyond All Reason: The Nature of the Cult," *The Cult Film Experience: Beyond All Reason*, ed. J. P. Telotte (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991), 5–17.
27. Underground cinema also provided a public venue for homosexuality on-screen and off. See Juan A. Suárez, *Bike Boys, Drag Queens, and Superstars: Avant-garde, Mass Culture, and Gay Identities in the 1960s Underground Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996).
28. Toffler, *Future Shock*, 234.
29. Phil Tracy, "The National Sex and Drug Forum," *Commonweal*, November 28, 1970, 195.
30. Robert T. Francoeur "Sex Films," *Society* 14, no. 5 (July/August 1977): 33–37.
31. Tracy, "The National Sex and Drug Forum," 195.
32. Toni Ayres, Phyllis Lyons, Ted McIlvenna, et al., *SARGuide for Better Sex Life: A Self-Help Program for Personal Sexual Enrichment/Education Designed by the National Sex Forum*, 2nd rev. ed. (San Francisco: National Sex Forum, 1977), 13.
33. Ayres, Lyons, McIlvenna, et al., *SARGuide for Better Sex Life*, 13.
34. Francoeur, "Sex Films," 33.
35. Irvine, *Disorders of Desire*, 117.
36. Irvine, *Disorders of Desire*, 106.
37. Tracy, "The National Sex and Drug Forum," 195.
38. Ayres, Lyons, McIlvenna, et al., *SARGuide for Better Sex Life*, 14.
39. Virginia Johnson, quoted in Sally Quinn, "Sex Counselors: They're No Laughing Matter," *Boston Globe*, April 6, 1978, 19.
40. Glide Foundation, "Effects of Erotic Stimuli Used in National Sex Forum Training Courses in Human Sexuality" in *Technical Report of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971), 5:356–357. The NSF's 1977 *SARGuide* reported that eighteen people participated.
41. Glide Foundation, "Effects of Erotic Stimuli Used in National Sex Forum Training Courses in Human Sexuality," 356.
42. The NSF's associates broke with their academic affiliates on the way to establishing the IASHS as an independent graduate program. IASHS, History of the Institute. No date. Accessed November 30, 2010.
43. Irvine, *Disorders of Desire*, 115.
44. Glide Foundation, "Effects of Erotic Stimuli Used in National Sex Forum Training Courses in Human Sexuality," 357.

45. Tracy, "The National Sex and Drug Forum," 194.
46. Edward M. Brecher, "The Lush New Body of Knowledge," *Oui*, September 1974, 50.
47. Glide Foundation, "Effects of Erotic Stimuli," 347.
48. Francoeur "Sex Films," 34; Brecher, "The Lush New Body of Knowledge," 50.
49. Irvine, *Disorders of Desire*, 128.
50. Irvine, *Disorders of Desire*, 128.
51. Elizabeth Sullivan, "God Mother of SexEd: Maggi Rubenstein, 'I Was There,'" foundsf.org/index.php?title=Godmother_of_SexEd:_Maggi_Rubenstein. Search under I Was There. Archived interview, dated 1997. Accessed January 27, 2011.
52. Based on interviews, Thomas Maier dramatically describes a rare screening of one of their films, which may have shown Virginia Johnson as the anonymous performing body, at a seminar for ob-gyn faculty at Washington University; see Maier's *Masters of Sex: The Life and Times of William Masters and Virginia Johnson, the Couple Who Taught America How to Love* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), 134–140.
53. "Response to 'Response,'" *Newsweek*, May 23, 1966, 94.
54. Eithne Johnson, "Sex and 'the Naked Ape': The Marriage Manual Film Shows How Humans Do It," paper presented at the Society for Cinema Studies Conference, San Diego, April 1998.
55. See Eithne Johnson, "The 'Coloscopic' Film and the 'Beaver' Film: Scientific and Pornographic Scenes of Female Sexual Responsiveness," in *Swinging Single: Representing Sexuality in the 1960s*, ed. Hilary Radner and Moya Luckett (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 301–324.
56. Don Carson, "See Jane Screw: New Dimensions in Sexual Education Training Films," *Gallery*, February 1975, 112.
57. Brecher, "The Lush New Body of Knowledge," 120.
58. Brecher, "The Lush New Body of Knowledge," 120.
59. Brecher, "The Lush New Body of Knowledge," 120; italics in original.
60. Carson, "See Jane Screw," 112.
61. Brecher, "The Lush New Body of Knowledge," 50.
62. Lynda Nead, "'Above the Pulp Line': The Cultural Significance of Erotic Art," in *Dirty Looks: Women, Pornography, Power*, ed. Pamela Church Gibson and Roma Gibson (London: British Film Institute, 1993), 151.
63. Irvine, *Disorders of Desire*, 9, 188.
64. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1980), 71.
65. Robert Weider, "Expanding the Body of Knowledge: A Mini Interview with Laird Sutton, Candid Cameraman of Sex Documentaries," *Oui*, September 1974, 123.
66. See Lonnie Barbach, *For Yourself: The Fulfillment of Female Sexuality* (New York: Anchor, 1975); and Betty Dodson's *Liberating Masturbation: A Meditation on Self Love* (New York: Bodysex Designs, 1974) and *Sex for One: The Joy of*

Self Loving (New York: Crown, 1987). Joani Blank founded Down There Press as well as Good Vibrations, the store for sex products. Daughters of Bilitis was established in 1955.

67. Carson, "See Jane Screw," 112–113; italics in original.
68. Carson, "See Jane Screw," 112–113.
69. Brecher, "The Lush New Body of Knowledge," 50.
70. Gertrude Koch, "On Pornographic Cinema: The Body's Shadow Realm," trans. Jan-Christopher Horak. *Jump Cut* 35 (1990): 17–29, 22.
71. Tracy, "The National Sex and Drug Forum," 195.
72. Sullivan, foundsf.org/index.php?title=Godmother_of_SexEd:_Maggi_Rubenstein. I Was There. Archived interview, dated 1997. Accessed January 27, 2011.Robert Eberwein compares Sutton's film *Free*, featuring an African American couple, with the commercial marriage manual film, *Black Is Beautiful* (a.k.a. *Africanus Sexualis*, 1970). See Eberwein, *Sex Ed: Film, Video, and the Framework of Desire* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 190.
73. Brian Winston, *Claiming the Real: The Griersonian Documentary and Its Legitimations* (London: British Film Institute, 1995), 155.
74. That the NSF's film style was identified both as documentarist and sexological suggests that the production process was based on the notion that people's sexual responsiveness had to be accurately represented, but not in the abstract, modernist style of scientific sexology. Previously affiliated with the Kinsey Institute, Wardell Pomeroy brought his method of sex history-taking to the NSF. See, for example, the NSF video, *Pomeroy Takes a Sex History* (1972). Of course, this process could be understood to direct—or perhaps inscribe—"patterns" onto the performers.
75. Carson, "See Jane Screw," 113.
76. According to Brian Winston, new portable film technologies made it possible for documentary filmmakers to elaborate fresh claims on reality: "It is the experimental method and the place of the camera as scientific instrument that provides the context in which the filmmaker/observer, a veritable fly on the wall, emerges." See *Claiming the Real*, 149.
77. People who might have been recognized for playing themselves included the NSF's Margo Rila (*Margo*), affiliated with the San Francisco Sex Information Hotline, and Salli Rasberry (*Visions of Rasberry* and *Self-Loving* [1976]), who was listed in the production credits for some NSF films.
78. Multi Media Resource Center, Catalog, n.d. (possibly 1982), 16.
79. Alex Comfort, ed., *The Joy of Sex: A Cordon Bleu Guide to Love Making* (New York: Fireside Books, 1972).
80. Carson, "See Jane Screw," 113.
81. The NSF's Multi Media Resource Center distributed films directed by Constance Beeson, James Broughton, Anne Severson, and Honey Lee Cottrell that could be categorized as "sexperimental" films. Richard Dyer identifies three films produced by the NSF as "affirmation politics documentaries." See

Dyer, *Now You See It: Studies in Lesbian and Gay Film* (London: Routledge, 1990), 231–235.

82. Carson, "See Jane Screw," 113. Margo Rila was a coauthor of the *SARGuide* and is currently listed as faculty on the IASHS website, www.iashs.edu/faculty.html. Search under Faculty. No date. Accessed November 30, 2010.
83. In this respect, the NSF's film style might be compared to the exhibitionism of the later amateur porn, which, as David James points out, privileges the performers' experiences, in comparison to the professional porn movie, which subordinates the performers' experience to the production process. See James, "Hardcore: Cultural Resistance in the Postmodern," *Film Quarterly* 42, no. 2 (winter 1988–1989): 31–39.
84. Women artists whose early work was distributed by the NSF include Honey Lee Cottrell, Tee Corinne, and Pat Califia. Along with Susie Bright, Annie Sprinkle, and others, they would continue to articulate distinctions between pornography and erotica in their subsequent projects, challenging assumptions about lesbian identities, female sexualities, and whether or not women experience visual pleasures.
85. Carson, "See Jane Screw," 111.
86. Carson, "See Jane Screw," 113 (first quote), 112–113 (second quote). The NSF produced and distributed several films under the category "disability."
87. Carson, "See Jane Screw," 111.
88. Irvine refers to Sexarama and "Fuckarama"; see *Disorders of Desire*, 128. Rubenstein identifies the "fuck-o-rama" as the first section of the SAR, featuring commercial pornography; see foundsf.org/index.php?title=Godmother_of_SexEd:_Maggi_Rubenstein. I Was There. Archived interview, dated 1997. Accessed January 27, 2011.
89. Masters and Johnson, *Human Sexual Inadequacy* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970).
90. Nead, "'Above the Pulp Line,'" 147.
91. Koch, "On Pornographic Cinema," 20.
92. Koch, "On Pornographic Cinema," 21. Jan-Christopher Horak provides this translation for the German term, *Schaulust*.
93. Brecher, "The Lush New Body of Knowledge," 50.
94. Irvine refers to survey data from "eleven SARs in 1978" showing that "body contact" and "nudity" were rare when sexologists outside of the NSF modified them for their own use. See *Disorders of Desire*, 129. When I visited the Awareness Room in 1996, it was a shadow of its former tactile glory: the waterbed was gone; the beanbag chairs were shabby, and the shag carpet worn and dated.
95. IASHS, www.iashs.edu/index.html. Search under Courses. No date.
96. Glide Foundation, "Effects of Erotic Stimuli Used in National Sex Forum Training Courses in Human Sexuality," 357.
97. Glide Foundation, "Effects of Erotic Stimuli Used in National Sex Forum Training Courses in Human Sexuality," 368.

98. Derek Burleson, "Explicit Media – Sources and Suggestions," *SIECUS Report* 3, no. 6 (July 1975): 4.
99. Ayres, et al., *SARGuide for Better Sex Life*, 13.
100. Carson, "See Jane Screw," 112.
101. Ayres, et al., *SARGuide for Better Sex Life*, 13.
102. Robert B. Miller, "Sex, Sex and Sexxzzzzzz," *Commonweal*, November 28, 1970, 193.
103. Brecher, "The Lush New Body of Knowledge."
104. Scott M. Butler, Rose M. Hartzell, and Catherine Sherwood-Puzzello, "Perceived Benefits of Human Sexuality Peer Facilitators," *Electronic Journal of Human Sexuality* 10 (May 26, 2007), accessed March 15, 2010, www.ejhs.org/volume10/peer.htm.
105. Butler, Hartzell, and Sherwood-Puzzello, "Perceived Benefits of Human Sexuality Peer Facilitators."
106. Francoeur and Hendrixson, *Instructor's Resource Manual*, 271.
107. Irvine, *Disorders of Desire*, 128–129.
108. Brecher, "The Lush New Body of Knowledge," 120–121.
109. Miller, "Sex, Sex and Sexxzzzzzz," 194–195.
110. Toffler, *Future Shock*, 351.
111. Miller, "Sex, Sex and Sexxzzzzzz," 197.
112. Toffler, *Future Shock*, 349 (first quote), 348 (second quote).
113. Francoeur and Hendrixson, *Instructor's Resource Manual*, 269.
114. Andrew Ross, *No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 171–208.
115. Eithne Johnson, "Appearing Live on Your Campus! Porn-Education Roadshows."
116. "Sex Counselors: They're No Laughing Matter," *Boston Globe*, April 6, 1978. 19.
117. See Jane Juffer, *At Home with Pornography: Women, Sex and Everyday Life* (New York: New York University Press, 1998).
118. Eberwein mentions the SAR as a method for training to become a sex counselor. See *Sex Ed*, 209–210, 233.
119. These graduates include Michael Perry, *Sex: A Lifelong Pleasure* series (1991), Betty Dodson, *Selfloving* (1991), and Judy Seifer, *Videos for Lovers* series (1996).