

## 112 BOOK REVIEWS

negative media response. As they rightly point out, there are no easy answers here, as we dance around those red lines: “The force of a potent slur should not be understated or treated lightly, and requiring Black students to confront *Huckleberry Finn* in the context of group readings and discussions places a burden on them that other students are not made to carry” (121).

The tale of *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*—which was first published privately in Italy in 1928 and did not appear in its unexpurgated version in Britain until 1960, after the celebrated Penguin Books trial had inaugurated a more liberal attitude in the “permissive sixties”—is well known and succinctly retold here. But there is a twist, underlining D. H. Lawrence’s own red lines. He did not regard his novel as obscene, in spite of its graphic depictions of sex and sprinkling of four-letter words, because it did not treat sex as shameful and dirty. “But even I would censor genuine pornography, rigorously,” he wrote in 1930. “It would not be very difficult. In the first place, genuine pornography is almost always underworld, it doesn’t come into the open. In the second, you can recognize it by the insult it offers, invariably, to sex, and to the human spirit” (201).

“It would not be very difficult.” In fact, it is obscenely difficult to strike a balance between maximizing free speech and policing boundaries, as this collection of case histories beautifully illustrates. Any notion that we have taken a one-way ride toward greater toleration and “enlightenment” is thoroughly debunked (and if there is a main theme or argument in the book, this is it). In some regards, we have become much less likely to censor or self-censor; in others, more so. For those who think it relatively straightforward, consider *Hit Man: A Technical Manual for Independent Contractors*, written by an anonymous woman using the pseudonym “Rex Feral” and published by Paladin Books in 1983. A decade later in Maryland, a man followed its “instructions” to the letter in the killing of three people. The bereaved families brought a civil suit against Paladin for aiding and abetting murder. Before the courts could reach a final conclusion, the publisher settled with the plaintiffs, so there was no “definitive” ruling on First Amendment rights. Well, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, what is your verdict?

BRIAN LEWIS  
*McGill University*



*The War on Sex*. Edited by DAVID HALPERIN and TREVOR HOPPE. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017. Pp. 512. \$119.95 (cloth); \$32.95 (paper).

Michel Foucault undid the repressive hypothesis and then some. While Foucault reimagined sexuality as a site of perverse implantations, as biopolitical administration, and through such striking images as the “perpetual

spirals of power and pleasure” at play in the various regulatory technologies of sex and its confessions, the generations of historians of sexuality inspired by Foucault’s work may also have overemphasized some of the productive aspects of repression at the expense of attending to crude old methods like incarcerating people in cages as punishment for their sins.

Or at least, such is the tacit gambit of David Halperin and Trevor Hoppe’s *War on Sex*, whose blunt title is elaborated on in Halperin’s powerful polemical introduction, which begins by declaring that “the world is waging a war on sex,” one that “in recent years has intensified in scope and cruelty” (1, 9). Listing HIV criminalization, the proliferation of NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) ostensibly dedicated to fighting sex trafficking but in reality just as often criminalizing sex workers themselves, and the staggering expansion of sex-offender registries in the United States, which by the end of 2015 included over 840,000 people, greater than the populations of several states, Halperin presents a somewhat nightmarish but well-evidenced case for a repressive regime playing out in plain sight whose cruelty and viciousness cannot be hidden behind theoretical sophistication. Even measures that seem at first glance unambiguously positive, such as the 2003 Prison Rape Elimination Act, ultimately reinforce the war on sex by criminalizing consensual same-sex behavior in punitive fashion.

The essays Halperin and Hoppe selected for inclusion extend each point of that framework, and while there are some gaps in coverage, the chapters are routinely excellent, varying between lengthier research pieces and shorter editorial-like ones. If there is a central through-line to the book, it is this: while conservatives, with their rank bigotry and open support for punishment-driven governmentality, are the driving force of the war on sex, still underrecognized are the complicity and often active support of two groups generally perceived as being at odds with the right: LGBTQ rights organizations and contemporary feminism. *The War on Sex* is clearly intended as a damning accounting of their roles.

In two centerpiece essays, Judith Levine and Elizabeth Bernstein lay out the main critiques. Levine begins with the release of the “San Antonio Four” from prison in 2013. Queer Latina women convicted of transparently ludicrous child sexual abuse charges at the tail end of a national Satanic ritual abuse panic in 1997–98, their case was largely ignored at the time by mainstream LGBTQ rights organizations. Indeed, Levine charts a history of gay and lesbian assimilation achieved in part by disregarding the plight of such perceived deviants as Bernard Bayan, a gay man arrested in 1984 at age eighteen on flimsy charges at the daycare where he worked and convicted, again without support from LGBTQ groups, before spending two decades incarcerated. When he was finally recognized as innocent and released, he died before reaching the age of fifty. As Levine shows, this pattern has held from the 1970s into the twenty-first century.

If that queer passivity reflected a grim recognition of the price of admission to “normalcy,” Bernstein accuses mainstream feminism of a more active role in building the carceral state, since “contemporary anti-trafficking campaigns can be viewed as an effective, feminist embodiment of neoliberalism’s joint carceral and sexual projects, ushering in agendas of family values and crime control” (312). She notes that as US campaigns against pornography and sex work lost favor among feminists, leaders of those movements shifted to international mobilizations, with a conception of “human rights” that dovetailed nicely with neoliberalism and reduced rights claims “exclusively to questions of sexual violence and to bodily integrity.” This elided political economic factors and larger claims to socioeconomic rights, all while building expansive NGO infrastructures (310). In this arrangement, sensationalized imagery of sex trafficking overshadows the actual human trafficking that undergirds the supply chains of a great many corporations and the consumer products of daily life in the United States.

Fusing these themes into an analysis of what he calls “penal Keynesianism,” Roger Lancaster notes that while scholars have diagnosed how the carceral state both controls reserve armies of labor and produces stable employment in times of austerity and insecurity, “harsher sex crime laws contributed to the rise of mass incarceration more than is usually recognized” (83). Some of the statistics are shocking: between 1996 and 2010, imprisonment for possession of sexually explicit materials, primarily of minors, expanded *sixtyfold*, wildly out of proportion to any shifts in actual abusive behavior.

Some of the most vivid essays use case studies to illuminate war(s) on sex. To name only two: the Sexually Violent Predators Acts in numerous states concealed their operations by classifying inmates not as prisoners but as mental patients; and the CASE (Californians Against Sexual Exploitation) Act carried 81 percent of voters in 2012 but also served as a cynical vehicle for wealthy political opportunists like former Facebook officer Chris Kelly who use vaguely defined “sex trafficking” rhetoric “to burnish their image and raise their public profile, particularly as they seek public office” (336).

Several senior scholars build on their already influential work, but some of the breakout voices come from junior scholars such as Scott De Orio, whose work this journal first published in 2017 and whose piece on the creation of the modern sex offender shows how gay and liberal activists in the 1970s, in their push to decriminalize gay sex, often played into the hands of law-and-order conservatives.<sup>1</sup> De Orio makes a nuanced critique that holds back from *overcriticizing* gay activists, the least powerful of the bunch, and challenges queer theorists who recoil from liberalism to “take a more vigorous role in conceptualizing and promoting constructive ways

<sup>1</sup> Scott De Orio, “The Invention of Bad Gay Sex: Texas and the Creation of a Criminal Underclass of Gay People,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 26, no. 1 (2017): 53–87.

for the state to respond to sexual violence” (249). Alexis Agathocleous pursues this theme in an illuminating look at *Doe v. Jindal* (2011), a Louisiana state case that managed to get several hundred sex workers removed from a racially discriminatory sex offender registry but that nonetheless was criticized by queer theorists whom Agathocleous convincingly portrays as misguided.

While a few excellent essays address Taiwan, the Netherlands, and Jamaica, the collection never quite fully commits to a global rather than US focus. Halperin’s introduction sets the thematic tableau but avoids engaging the theoretical question of whether the war on sex is indeed a new repressive hypothesis—a curious move, considering Halperin’s role as one of the founders of queer theory itself! The essays pay great attention to a few topics but miss others. The escalating criminalization of teen sexting, including of teens making erotic images of themselves, is a major front in the new regime of sexual policing; it is alluded to several times but is never given sustained attention. HIV criminalization, which Sean Strub accuses of “creating a viral underclass in the law” (347), received enormous attention and pushback in the years between the 2012 conference that generated these papers and the book’s 2017 publication. This critique was led by scholar-journalist Steven Thrasher, whose work would have made a nice addition to this volume.

Still, *The War on Sex* ultimately throws down a resounding gauntlet for scholars of sexuality, demanding we attend to these emerging twenty-first-century regulatory frameworks, some new, some, I think, so grounded in longer histories that we must wonder whether sex—since becoming “sex”—has ever *not* been under attack.

WHITNEY STRUB  
Rutgers University–Newark



*Reproduction: Antiquity to the Present Day*. Edited by NICK HOPWOOD, REBECCA FLEMING, and LAUREN KASSELL. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018. Pp. 730. \$125.00 (cloth).

*Reproduction: Antiquity to the Present Day* is an enormously ambitious interdisciplinary collaboration by over sixty scholars that attempts to trace the history of human reproduction from ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia to the twenty-first century. Edited by Nick Hopwood, Rebecca Fleming, and Lauren Kassel, the volume collects forty-two essays, as well as forty “exhibits”—short essays dealing with particular images and artifacts. *Reproduction* draws on a wide variety of academic fields, from sociology to the history of science, from art history to demographics, not to mention philosophy, theology, and botany. The volume addresses an impressively