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1

Introducing the Erotics of Wounding: Sex, Violence and the Body

Jeff Hearn and Viv Burr

Sex, violence, the body

Sex, violence, the body – any one of these alone alerts complex emotions, questions of power, feelings around vulnerability, even awareness of existence, mortality and life themselves. Put together, various connections and permutations of sex, violence and the body suggest further challenges and indeed often considerable uncertainties, contestations and ambivalences. For example, sexual violences, such as rape and sexual assault, can be understood, from one point of view, as specific forms of (often male) sexuality, and then, from another point of view, not as sexuality, but rather as forms of violence.¹

There is a vast literature, and a large set of public debates, on the relations of sex and violence – in pornography, prostitution, the sex trade more generally, sexual violence and abuse, eroticisation of violence, sadomasochism (S&M), bondage and dominance (B&D),² visual media, censorship and so on. However, the extent to which commentaries on such political matters are explicitly embodied varies considerably; even if they are clearly matters of the body, they are not always located within an explicit politics of the body and body power. The reference to ‘the body’ here is necessarily broad and open ended. This is not least because different contributors address very different bodily practices, social relations and representations, and different practices, social relations and representations of the body/bodies. Suffice it to say at this stage, we take a social view of the body and embodiment, but that does not suggest a social essentialism, as in some constructionist and postmodernist versions: bodies do exist, are matter, and do matter; they can be and are violated and damaged.

In this book the sex-violence-body nexus is approached through a specific focus on the erotics of wounding, breaking skin and injuring bodies. While wounding, and potential wounding, is our primary concern, it is not always possible to make clear distinctions from violence and violation more generally. This introductory chapter seeks to synthesise some of the main ideas in the book, clarify conceptual issues and articulate some of the debates and challenges.

Wounding and its erotics

In this book we present a range of contributions that examine the relations between sexuality, violence and the body, by way of the erotics of wounding. When we began this project focusing on wounding some years ago, it seemed at times a somewhat specialist concern. The social and psychological significance of wounding and injury has been studied in relation to a variety of phenomena, for example S&M practices, sex crimes, body modification, cosmetic surgery, pornography, self-mutilation and self-injury (for example, Babiker and Arnold, 1997). At the same time, in many anthropological studies there is extensive research on scarification, tattooing and forms of wounding, often as part of initiation or generational rites of passage. In some such contexts wounding may have positive connotations, often with clear gendered meanings, sometimes overtly sexual meanings.

However, the more we, as editors, explored these concerns, with the inspiration of colleagues and contributors, the more we realised that the erotics of wounding are widely pervasive and embedded within many general and pervasive cultural forms – in war, militarism, surgery and medicine, film, fantasy, religion, art, aesthetics, beauty, fashion, sport, ‘ordinary’ sexual practice and imagery, and not least in the recurrent relation of sex and death. Wounding is a central feature of various religious and spiritual traditions (Glücklich, 1999; Loughlin, 2004), not least in the idea of ‘Christ’s wounds’. Penance and bodily self-mortification recur in many religions traditions, for example in Muslim self-flagellation of the back or chest³ and in the use of the cilice⁴ by Opus Dei Catholic numeraries.

Importantly, transgression is a major theme in constructions of erotics and sexuality (Bataille, 1985, 2006; Kaite, 1988; Nead, 1992; Denman, 2006): ‘Is not the most erotic portion of a body where *the garment gapes?* . . . it is intermittence . . . which is erotic’ (Barthes, 1976: 9–10, emphasis in original); wounding is one form of transgression. We see the specific focus on wounding as a productive approach partly because

it makes the embodied nature of the relations of sex and violence more explicit, more speakable, more fully articulated for interrogation. To put this differently, attending to wounding, breaking skin and injuring bodies, along with their erotics, impels clearer confrontation with embodiment. Despite the assertion that 'human sex takes place mainly in the head' (Stone, 1977: 483), the doing of the relations of sex and violence produce, perform, 'do', invoke and represent the body, and bodies. The sexual body is constituted in the intersection of corporeality, cultural discourses and institutions (cf. Frank, 1995; Grosz, 1995; Williams and Bendelow, 1998; Weiss, 1999).

These social relations are typically intensely gendered, and subject to and part of gender and intersectional power relations. These gendered relations occur not only in particular, individual and interpersonal bodily events and practices but also at cultural, structural and societal levels. These latter social processes are also increasingly transnational and transsocietal in character, as in the spread of pornography and the sex trade through information and communication technology (Hughes, 1999, 2002; Hearn and Parkin, 2001; Hearn, 2006).

The concept of 'wounding' – used here as a shorthand for bodily wounding, breaking skin and the injuring of bodies – deserves some further analytical and conceptual attention. We see the cutting or breaking of skin as a prime concern, as in some legal definitions of 'Wounding'.⁵ This may be with or without 'consent', a term that raises multiple legal and ethical complications.⁶ However, it is also necessary to use the term at times in a broader way in some chapters. In particular, there is the question of the relations of the direct physical wounding of the body, through breaking of the skin, however accomplished, and less specific forms of wounding, as in emotional and psychological wounding. Thus how the boundaries around the topic are discussed and defined deserve close attention.

A number of dimensions can readily be seen as relevant: degree of damage or injury; whether injury is self-inflicted, other-inflicted or naturally occurring (for example, is body piercing wounding or adornment?); the boundary between breaking of the skin and wounding through bruising; the extent to which the damage or injury carries what are principally sexual or non-sexual (for example, aesthetic or medical) meanings; whether any sexual meanings are almost entirely personal (for example, self-harm) or culturally shared (for example, circumcision); and the relations between physical wounding and non-physical wounding.

While most chapters attend primarily to physical wounding, this is not always so, and indeed the separation of physical and 'non-physical'

wounding may be problematic. The chapter by Michelle Jones and Jeff Hearn on women's experiences of violence from male partners and ex-partners is especially relevant here, as is Mona Livholts's chapter on textual representation by journalists and researchers of rape, sexual assault and attempted murder. Such violence, whether by known assailants or strangers, can mean both physical and non-physical damage. Psychological violence, control and wounding, particularly in long-term relationships, can have dire effects on those victimised and their sense of self. Textual violence both builds on these relations and has its own power dynamics. In a different way, the broad phenomenon of wounding can include risk or threat of being wounded, as discussed in Victoria Robinson's chapter on rock climbing and extreme sports (see Palmer, 2004).

What this brief discussion illustrates is that there is a need for some precision in distinguishing between wounding as a general and sometimes extended social process of temporary or permanent damage; the wounder; the wounded; the wound(s) produced; and the wound(s) 'healed' (as in cosmetic surgery or healed wounds after scarification in initiation). In some contexts wounds are best understood as a process, at other times as an object of attention, a thing, even a fetish, that comes to be eroticised.

In terms of sexual desire, a considerable number of connections with wounding are possible; these include desire of/for the wounder, desire of/for the wounded and desire for the wound. There are of course possible in-between positions between desire 'of' and desire 'for', in terms of ambiguities and changing positions in sexual and related relations, over time or across biographies. In addition, and perhaps more controversially, the wound itself or the production of the wound may, for some, be constitutive of sexuality and erotics.

Sexualised (or sexualed)⁷ relations to wounding may be from the perspective of the wounder – whether the self, mutually, by proxy or others (for example, the sadistic) – or those wounded (for example, the masochistic) or others as 'observers'. More specifically, and as represented simply in Table 1.1, *the wounder* or *the wounded* (or indeed others)

Table 1.1 Sexually positive and negative positions of the wounder and the wounded

	<i>Sexually positive</i>	<i>Sexually negative</i>
Wounder	Sadistic position	Regretful position
Wounded	Masochistic position	Violated position

can relate to wounding in *sexually positive* or *sexually negative* terms (or indeed ambiguously).

For some or in some situations, wounds and wounding may be given meaning as (sexually) positive, may be celebrated, sometimes aggressively so. (Sexual) Identification may take place with this position, as when wounds are signs of sexual initiation and maturity or as in sexual arousal by wounds in rape or other sexual crimes. Another example is the sexualisation of more institutional practices, such as corporal punishment (Butt and Hearn, 1998). Alternatively, those who are wounded may be identified with, in seeing their wounds, and wounding as negative, damaging and something to be condemned, but still as sexually relevant. In this, sexual experience or identification is with the sufferer. Indeed the wounded 'hero', the damaged victim, the wounded self may be or in turn may become desirable. This is not necessarily a masochistic position or identification; rather it may draw on associations of care, comfort and sex, and in that sense it can be compatible with non-violent sexualities. Such interlinking constructions of 'erotic wounds', identities and subjectivities may often be structured in terms of dichotomies, for example heterosexual/non-heterosexual and reproductive/non-reproductive sex and sexualities.

Sexuality can relate to wounding for those directly involved, and for others not so directly implicated. For example, there are those identifying with one or more parties; such identifications are especially important in understanding representations of wounding, and viewers' and other users' relations thereto. Further complex positionings may also be elaborated, for example, within mutual S&M, interlinked matrices of subjectivities, changing sexual preferences across biographies or paradoxical psychoanalytics. All these positions are used in visual media, film, television, video and pop culture.

As regards those who are less directly involved in doing wounding or being wounded, there is a range of possibilities. Such observers can include those who are directly, less directly or indirectly involved; they may be actively involved or passively uninvolved; they can be analysts or actors, for example, as medical or legal actors. The wounding may be done by proxy, as discussed by Sheila Jeffreys in her chapter on bodily mutilation and modification, including 'cosmetic surgery', in relation to postmodernism and feminism. Taina Kinnunen addresses similar questions, more specifically from the viewpoint of the women seeking such surgeries. These kinds of proxy wounding are seen by some, probably an increasing number, as 'respectable' and have become remarkably popular in recent years. They are also strongly international in their appeal,

with the greatest concentrations of activity in the US, Spain, Mexico, Argentina and Brazil, with the UK not far behind with 577,000 cosmetic treatments in 2007 (Bindel, 2008). Spain boasts the headquarters of Corporación Dermoestética, the first plastic surgery company in Europe trading on the stock exchange. Plastic surgery is also popular in Iran; Turkey is becoming a lead country in botox treatments. In some contexts such wounding interventions are given liberatory meanings, as signs of sexual 'freedom', by the wounders or the wounded. According to some commentators, this can even be seen as a reaction to previous political authoritarianism, as in the Spanish case (see Fuchs, 2006). From a very different perspective, others stress the 'humane' benefits of such surgical interventions, as part of advocacy for individual control and conventional, often 'white', beauty ideals (Lewis, 2007).

Social practices and social representations

The book covers a range of forms of damage and injury, both in concrete social practices and in representations. It seeks to contribute to long-established general discussions on the relations of 'the real' and 'representational', and to recent debates on the relations of the social/human and the biological/human, and of things (such as weapons and texts) and people (such as wounders and wounded). In particular, it operates across the border of analyses of social practices and analyses of social representations. In this regard, an interesting contrast can be made between Ani Ritchie's chapter on SM social practices, and fictional writing and representations on BDSM, discussed in Jenny Alexander's chapter.

This quickly brings us to some complex debates. On the one hand, there are real differences between direct wounding of real flesh – of you or me – and representations of wounding, which may, or may not, be representations of previous or real-time actual wounding. On the other hand, there are, to complicate matters, all sorts of connections and crossovers between wounding practices and representations of wounding. For a start, representations are practices and are the result of practices. Representations can have very harmful effects and effects that are experienced as harmful, as in the production of pornography and consequent degradations, the use of the 'N word' or cartoons of the divine. However, a further important point is context. Sentences like 'He wounded her and she enjoyed it' and 'He was wounded and he enjoyed it' can have very different meanings and effects depending on context.

Slippages around these questions of practice-representation are one, but not the only, reason for the degree of disagreements between analysts

and commentators on these issues, including between some of our contributors. Divergences in approach build on established and related differences around pornography and prostitution, even though these debates have their own specific character. Displaying the suffering and wounding of others is not straightforward, not least because of the existence of ‘already well-worn, predictable forms of representation’ (Rossi, 1995: 36).⁸ Or, to put it differently, ‘the assimilation of violent erotic images with violent erotic acts creates moral and methodological confusions which do not necessarily strengthen critiques of either violence or representation. On the contrary, such assimilations may indicate a collusion between viewer and viewed to the extent that “the official version of things has become reality”’ (Heathcote, 1994a: 156).⁹

Let us take just one example of these linkages across practices and representations, that of pain. While pain is highly medicalised in modern society, beliefs about pain are deeply socially and culturally embedded. Illness narratives have elaborated pain experiences by focusing on the person and using concepts such as biographical disruption, narrative reconstruction and illness adjustment (Williams, 1984; Bury, 1991; Greenhalgh and Hurwitz, 1998), thus allowing for emotional and cultural frameworks. However, visual imagery and the complex rapport between art and pain (Morris, 1991; Spivey, 2001) also have a key role: links between pain and emotional suffering have long had erotic overtones, as in the relations between martyrdom and sadomasochism. These various perspectives on wounding can thus overlap and interconnect in representations and social practices (Bendelow, 1998).

Many genres and traditions engage with violence and wounding. A great number of classical, often firmly patriarchal, texts and works of art have shown complex links between sex, violence and wounding. These range from the conjunction of sex and death, for example Eros and Thanatos in classical Greek drama and Abrahamic religious texts, to grand opera, for example Puccini’s *Tosca* (1900) and Strauss’s *Salome* (1905). Many visual artists have engaged heavily in this terrain (Lucie-Smith, 1972) – from Bosch in his mediaeval horrors to Caravaggio in *The Flagellation* (1606–7) and his erotic mixing of armoured bodies and naked bodies, to Max Ernst in *The Blessed Virgin Chastising the Infant Jesus before Three Witnesses* (1926).

Beliefs about pain and suffering linked to sexuality and wounding are represented in the iconic images of pain, such as Gerrit von Honthorst’s *San Sebastian* (1590) and Frida Kahlo’s *The Broken Column* (1944).¹⁰ In particular, various Renaissance depictions of St Sebastian and other martyred saints were spawned by a small industry of artists, and since

then supplemented by imitators and commentators, attesting its painful, homoerotic allure. Andrea Mantegna painted St Sebastian c. 1457–8, with arrows entering his head from opposite directions and with another aimed at his groin. Tanzio da Varallo depicted the saint tended by angels c. 1620–30 in an ambiguous masochistic rapture of emotion and pain (Lucie-Smith, 1972: 217). These images remain highly resonant today.

With reference back to St Sebastian, and drawing on the works of Yukio Mishima and Eric Jourdan, Owen Heathcote (1994b) has analysed links between martyrdom, masochism, sadism and homotextuality. In this he ‘exposes and magnifies homosexual exposure and homosexuality as exposure’ (p. 176), for example, ‘the masochistically aestheticized theme of containment and concealment in the narrative’ (p. 178). This kind of exploration interrogates the complex relations between desire, violence and literature and between the violence *of* representation and violence *in* representation (Armstrong and Tennenhouse, 1989; Heathcote, 1994a).

The male gaze upon women and the feminine has been well charted (Mulvey, 1975); less explored is the gaze upon men and the masculine. A number of writers in the visual media, for example war photography (Vettel-Becker, 2002), fine art (Greer, 2003), literature (Slattery, 1999) and film studies (Neale, 1983; Tasker, 1993b), have noted that the naked and wounded (generally male) body is offered as ‘spectacle’ and carries sexual/gender meanings. But the focus has been principally upon the construction of masculinity, dynamics of the male gaze and the possibilities for a ‘female gaze’ (de Beauvoir, 1953; Gamman and Marchment, 1988; Doane, 1990; Waterhouse, 1993; Goddard, 2000). These questions are taken up, in different ways, in the chapters here by Viv Burr on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and Tim Edwards on masochism in the movies.

Interestingly, the idea of ‘the Wound’ or the ‘wounding’ of men has been taken up by a surprisingly diverse collection of mainly male writers in recent years, including Robert Bly (1990, ‘father wound’), Victor Seidler (1997, ‘wounds from both hegemonic forms of men’s identities and from feminism’), and Michael Kaufman and Michael Kimmel (1993, ‘mother wound’) (also see Carrera, 2002; Ashe, 2008). They argue, in different ways and with less or more sympathies with feminisms, that men are damaged, wounded, by gender arrangements or patriarchal relations, in terms of their relations with men, women, mothers, fathers, self. Kaja Silverman (1992), drawing on the work of Leo Bersani (1987), has taken these critiques further, arguing for the subversive potential of masochistic wounding, through a fragmentation of the dominant male subject, focusing her attention on cultural products, notably films. Calvin

Thomas (2002), also developing Bersani, extends this approach both to the medium of writing and to what this means in social practice more generally, arguing that penetration *of* men is key for 'anti-patriarchal' identity and social change.

Film provides a rich set of traditions. According to Anneke Smelik (1999), in Hollywood, '[t]he denial of the homoeroticism of looking at images of men constantly involves sado-masochistic themes, scenes and fantasies. . . . the highly ritualized scenes of male struggle . . . deflect[s] the look away from the male body to the scene of the spectacular fight'. Gangster films routinely deploy violent heterosex, with blood, guns and weapons added none too subtly, and often phallically, into the concoction; horror and slasher genres, threaten vampiric bitings and monstrous woundings on the pure(r), usually female, victim(s), with its own replications of whore/virgins (Cherry, 1995). Special film favourites among both the viewing public and eager analysts are *Alien* (1979), *Fatal Attraction* (1987) and *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991) (and indeed their sequels, such as *Red Dragon* (2002) and *Hannibal Rising* (2007)), with sex, violence and wounding (actual, threatened, imagined) never far from the scene. The names of Peckinpah and Tarantino have become almost synonymous with the power of wounding; Michael Haneke's films, such as *Funny Games* (1997), *The Piano Teacher* (2001) and *Funny Games US* (2007), also explore sex, violence and S&M. The film *Crash* (1996), the subject of Anthony McCosker's chapter, is iconic of the erotics of wounding in the relations of body and technology.

Some of these representations thrive on intertextualities. Multiple links between sex (as an alien divine force within the body), violence and religion have been charted in film genres (Loughlin, 2004). In this view, divine Eros is always other; God is infinitely alien, yet intimate to ourselves: a sacred eroticism. And in a different approach crossing social practice and representation, Stephen Eisenman (2007) has shown the meaningful links between images from paintings of the grand masters and photographic images from Abu Ghraib. Meanwhile, contemporary mainstream television, *inter alia*, *Dexter*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *House*, *Nip/Tuck*, seems to delight in broadcasting wounds, nonchalantly.

Similar themes have also been taken up in various forms of body art and performance art (Vergine, 2000; Miglietta, 2003). In recent years there has been a pronounced tendency for some artists to use their own bodies as a medium for their art. In some cases, body art has been linked to feminist politics or clear gender themes, as in the works of Matthew Barney, Helen Chadwick, Sarah Lucas, Nan Goldin¹¹ and Carolee Schneeman; in others, different personal and political projects are emphasised, sometimes with

nihilistic or negativistic aspects; either way, the artist's 'model' is the artist's body itself (Warr, 2000).

In *Extreme Bodies: The Use and Abuse of the Body in Art*, Francesca Alfano Miglietti (2003) builds on multiple examples from both classical and contemporary art to discuss 'About wounds'. She reviews the works of the photographer Rudolf Schwarzkogler, who inflicted wounding and mutilation, including symbolic castration, on himself; Gina Pane, who, through photography and film, used burning, cutting and thorns to link religious iconography and the exhibiting cut exposures of her body; and Franko B., who also used his body and blood in his performance art to overcome the separation of reality and representation. This is the arena explored by Ulla Angkjær Jørgensen in her chapter, 'Cut Pieces: Self-Mutilation in Body Art'. Her chapter illustrates the need to think across practice-representation. In this practice is representation, and vice versa (also see Spector, 2007).¹²

Wounds and wounding can carry multiple symbolic sexual meanings. Wounds wound flesh, human 'meat', which itself may sometimes become a sexual fetish. Cuts and cutting may signify loss (Lemaire, 1977: 196): 'the "erotic" may be assumed to arise in gaps, overlaps, contrasts, ambiguities between other elements that are split, as signs' (Hearn, 1992: 224). The arrows afflicting St Sebastian may be phallic or the slashing wound itself; the slashed wound may be the vaginal or anal 'slit', or again phallic; the blood may be menstrual, anal or seminal. The wound and wounding in representation is that extra notch of violence that may seem much more violent than the physical attack with fists or head or feet or even weapons (that brings heavy bruising or internal bleeding). It is, or pretends to be, the peak (visual) experience – the breaking of the skin membrane container and the letting out of flesh and blood within – perhaps equivalent to the pornographic 'money shot'. There are also many art house examples – most famously, Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí's iconic cutting of the eye in *Un Chien Andalou* (1929).

Theoretical, ethical and political issues

Thinking about sex and violence in wounding and embodied contexts raises many methodological and theoretical questions. Though our prime concern here is exploration rather than explanation, we might consider how to explain wounding – as an individual, interpersonal, group, cultural, societal or transsocietal phenomenon. The answer to such questions must of course depend on the specific forms of violence

being addressed. Some examples of wounding are mass market, as in cosmetic surgery; others are more minority pursuits, such as ritual group S&M. Different practices are more or less readily understandable in relation to historical processes of capitalist marketisation of the body, heteropatriarchal gender power relations, imperialist and postcolonial ethnic othering and other structural power relations. Even so, the nature of the relationship between wounding and eroticism is often taken for granted. Where it has been given more focused attention (for example, Silverman, 1992), its theoretical analysis has been largely limited to a psychodynamic framework. Perhaps significantly and despite their critiques (Denman, 2006), psychoanalytic approaches sometimes seem hard to avoid totally in discussing these matters, not least through the return to the relations of sex and death.

Thinking about sex, violence, the body and wounding is instructive for thinking and acting on general methodological and epistemological concerns, for example the relations of materiality and discourse. Theoretical, and sometimes abstracted, debates on relations of the material and the discursive, the macro and the micro, and structure and agency become especially important as the context of research and intervention on these embodied matters (Hearn, 1998). They point to the significance of diverse theoretical traditions, including feminism, materialism, structuralism, post-structuralism and social constructionism, deconstruction, as well as psychoanalytics.

Violence and wounding are both simultaneously material and discursive: simultaneously painful, full of pain, and textual, full of text. They are matters of experience of change in bodily matter, and matters of change in discursive constructions. Wounding, and what is meant by wounding, is historically, socially and culturally constructed; this is a matter of material discourse. Talk and text about wounding is not just representation, it is also (creation of) reality in its own right. The whole complex of wounding, talk about wounding and responses thereto is a cultural phenomenon that is both material and discursive.

In this complex theoretical universe it might be appropriate to talk of 'post-poststructuralism' in emphasising materiality and bodily effects, especially of sexually violent acts and sexually violent words. There are possible misuses of 'discourse' and deconstruction in addressing wounding. They may divert attention from the body and the bodily materiality of violence, even if viewing the body as materialisation of discourse. There are certainly problems with apolitical uses of deconstruction, whether through confusion with 'destruction' or engulfment within the pleasure of the text. Deconstruction does not delete ethico-political

concerns, as with the reappropriation, even revalidation, of the object in 'wounding chic'.

In all this it is important to remember that a key focus of this work on wounding is on *violence*; as such, being against wounding in real life, that is wounding as violence, is part of stopping violence. At the same time, wounding, and thus its erotics, remains a broad concept. In some definitions, it might range from, for example, unwanted splitting of skin in consensual anal penetration to fatal wounding in sexual crime. Thus, the erotics of wounding raise many ethico-political concerns, contingent partly on what is being meant by wounding and partly on different ethical and political positions and standpoints. This is no more clear than in the contested arena of S&M sexual practice, especially more violent forms of S&M. One major issue is the status of 'consent' in such contexts. There is much room for disagreements among commentators here. For some, adults are able to announce their own consent unqualified and be beyond critique; for others, announced consent is no different from other social constructions within sexual, gendered and other power relations, including constructions of 'consent' within (gender) hegemony.

A crucial question remains the gendered/sexual/violent relations of talk/text on wounding and actions on wounding and the body. This is not to suggest that there is any fixed set of relations, but these questions do seem especially persistent in critically studying men and masculinities, where close relations of sexuality and violence often seem to inhabit the same bodies, times and places. Such gendered/sexual/violent relations also intersect with other social divisions in constructions of erotics of wounding.

Significantly, recent decades have seen important moves from dramatic or 'art' uses of wounding or wounding as a minority representational practice to the mass reproduction of such images, in mass market media. Rapid changes in modes of cultural reproduction, with virtuality, replication and construction of persons (Lury, 1993), have coupled with processes of pornographisation (Hearn and Jyrkinen, 2007). A recent mainstream magazine advertisement for Diesel clothing featured a topless man with whip marks on his back in the shape of a game of noughts and crosses; in this case of 'wounding chic', the complaint against it was upheld by the UK Advertising Standards Authority (Smithers, 2007).

This volume

This book necessarily brings together a range of issues around sexuality, gender, power, violence and representations. It straddles several

disciplinary areas – cultural and media studies, sociology, psychology, social psychology, as well as studies on gender, sexuality and violence. It brings together contributions – from Australia, Finland, Norway, Sweden and the UK – on both social practices and representations in film and other media. The book acts on long-running preoccupations with the relations of sex and violence and seeks to contribute to general debates on the relationship between sexuality, violence and gender, as well as on more focused concerns. The cultural significance of the erotics of wounding has implications for sexuality, violence and gender more generally. The variety of the relations between wounding and sexuality is a key focus of this book.

Following this Introduction, the next five chapters address social sites where real bodily wounding and injury may take place. These examine body mutilation and cosmetic surgery (Sheila Jeffreys; Taina Kinnunen), domestic violence and bodily marking (Michelle Jones and Jeff Hearn), S&M and self-injury (Ani Ritchie), extreme sports and risk (Victoria Robinson). The next four chapters are more concerned with specific forms and examples of representation, focusing on the David Cronenberg film *Crash* (Antony McCosker), fan fiction (Jenny Alexander), *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (Viv Burr) and men in the movies (Tim Edwards). While in some senses all the chapters deal with the interrelations of the real and the representational, this complex matter of the crossover between the real and the representational is highlighted in the last two chapters. These chapters are thus on performance art using the body as an art resource through injury (Ulla Angkjær Jørgensen) and researchers and journalists writing on rape, violence and wounding (Mona Livholts).

Notes

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1. Interestingly, the concept of 'sexual violence' is much more frequently used than that of 'violent sexuality'.
2. Various alternative abbreviations include SM, S/M, s/m, BD and BDSM, each sometimes with different connotations.
3. Shia Muslim men's self-flagellation while processioning is well known, though there are other examples of both women's and men's self-flagellation in different Muslim traditions.
4. A spiked chain worn around the upper thigh for two hours each day, except for Church feast days, Sundays and certain times of the year.

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5. In British law, wounding means the breaking of the continuity of the whole of the outer skin, or the inner skin within the cheek or lip, but does not include the rupturing of internal blood vessels (Offences Against the Person Act 1861, Section 20 (Archbold 19–212)).
6. This was aptly illustrated in the 1990 UK case, *R. v. Brown* ('The Spanner case'), in which five men, including Anthony Joseph Brown, were convicted of assault occasioning actual bodily harm, even though the harms resulted from consensual S&M. The five appealed in 1992, contending that a person cannot be guilty of assault regarding acts that are consensual and not in the public domain. In 1993, the House of Lords affirmed the Court of Appeal's decision. There is an extensive legal secondary literature on this (cf. Athanassoulis, 2002; Markwick, 1992).
7. 'Sexualed' refers to having or being given meaning *in relation to* sexuality, including asexual meanings; 'sexualisation' refers to deliberate and explicit attempts to give, produce and heighten sexual meaning and attraction often for other instrumental purposes (Hearn and Parkin, 1987/1995).
8. Citing Minha, 1991: 191.
9. Citing Jolly, 1992: 172.
10. We are grateful to Gillian Bendelow for drawing our attention to the significance of these latter images in this specific way.
11. Nan Goldin (2003) has completed long-term photography and videoing of her life, her family and friends, including her sexual relations, the visible results of interpersonal violence on her and her own self-harm using cigarettes.
12. Matthew Barney explores 'how an action can become a proposal, rather than an overdetermined form. . . . [T]here was the possibility that it [an art performance] was all an imagined activity, that it never happened' (quoted in interview with Barney in Goodeve, 1995: 69, cited in Trotman, 2007: 146).

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