

distribution of *The International Jew*, a four-volume compilation of the original articles, published between 1920 and 1922. Ford was widely hailed for the apology, and it appeared to be a triumph for tolerance. In reality, he disingenuously claimed that he had not been aware of the anti-Semitic tone of the articles. He was also unable to stop further publication of *The International Jew* in Europe and other parts of the world. It is impossible to measure its impact, but Ford's version of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* undoubtedly contributed to the Holocaust.

Woeste's book is not the history of the legal doctrine of group libel. Rather it is a rich social history of a public controversy and a long-forgotten libel suit. Its strength is in delineating the contingencies involved in the interplay of strong personalities, organizations, and conflicting strategies for combating bigotry. In passing, Woeste illuminates a fascinating chapter in American economic history during the 1920s with an account of Sapiro's role in promoting agricultural marketing cooperatives. Most importantly, she provides insight into the conflicting approaches of Sapiro (as the classic outsider) and Marshall (as the establishment leader) about how to respond to Ford's anti-Semitism. Her analysis has broader relevance for understanding the internal strategy debates among groups trying to fight their outcast status.

Samuel Walker
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Omaha, Nebraska

doi: 10.1093/jahist/jat216

The FBI's Obscene File: J. Edgar Hoover and the Bureau's Crusade against Smut. By Douglas M. Charles. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2012. xii, 171 pp. \$24.95.)

The FBI's Obscene File tackles a mysterious and titillating subject—one that has especially intrigued historians of sexuality. This first monograph on the topic is both narrower and broader than its subtitle suggests: the book reveals little about J. Edgar Hoover as a person but follows the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) well beyond his death. The omission of Hoover's personal life is disappointing. Hoover was a fascinating specimen of human sexuality; many of his contemporaries and biographers believe that

he was gay, yet he led an extended and vicious witch-hunt against homosexuals. Douglas M. Charles makes little mention of Hoover's sexuality even though he identifies Hoover's "personal interest in the issue of obscenity" as "the driving force behind the FBI's obscenity cases" (p. 88). Hoover emerges here as a single-minded bureaucrat whose obsession with prosecuting producers and distributors of obscenity was motivated primarily by political and professional ambitions.

This book details how broad cultural and political developments shaped Hoover's antiobscenity crusade even as he aimed to shape American culture and politics in areas such as partisan politics, presidential policies, and U.S. Supreme Court decisions as well as popular culture, grassroots movements, and mainstream moral standards. Federal antiobscenity efforts, however, were not simply top-down initiatives; they were also responses to the demands of civic and religious groups as well as individual citizens.

The FBI established its first obscene-materials file after Hoover assumed control of the organization in 1924. His goal was to use the file as a crime-fighting tool during this time of perceived loose sexual mores and when daring literature and films became more common. Not until the United States entered the World War II did the FBI direct its antiobscenity work less at criminals and more at "leftists" and others whom Hoover considered enemies of the United States. Thus, the focus of the bureau shifted to shaping "public policy and attitudes" through propaganda and repression (p. 25). In one tantalizing instance Hoover made his Obscene File available to the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) when it sought images of "Japanese individuals in lascivious poses" that would help the OSS inspire hatred of the enemy (p. 34). After the war Hoover targeted new "un-American" influences: communism, "race music"—also known as "rhythm and blues"—and homosexuality (p. 40).

Between 1957 and 1967, Hoover's FBI resisted the Warren court's liberalizing opinions by educating the public about "the dangers of obscenity" and coordinating its efforts with President Richard M. Nixon (p. 65). Many individuals associated with the Watergate scandal show up here as leaders in Nixon and the FBI's crusade against smut.

In the post-Hoover decades the FBI refocused on organized crime and political corruption—a shift prompted both by a series of Supreme Court decisions that made obscenity prosecutions more difficult and by the 1970 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, which presented the FBI with a new tool.

Historians of sexuality will be especially interested in this book, but it is most likely to satisfy readers looking for a detailed narrative about the evolution of the administrative portion of the FBI's Obscene File.

Leigh Ann Wheeler
Binghamton University
Binghamton, New York

doi: 10.1093/jahist/jat274

Twilight of the Idols: Hollywood and the Human Sciences in 1920s America. By Mark Lynn Anderson. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011. xiv, 223 pp. Cloth, \$60.00. Paper, \$24.95.)

If Mark Lynn Anderson is correct, society is in trouble. In *Twilight of the Idols*, his provocative and thoughtful study of early twentieth-century film and social and behavioral phenomena, Anderson argues that cinema, like other modern cultural institutions, is a conduit through which the masses understand themselves. If the television programs *Keeping Up with the Kardashians* (2007–) and *Two and a Half Men* (2003–) are means to understanding ourselves, then we are witnessing an unraveling of social fabric and the values that uphold our families, communities, and friendships. But let's not get ahead of ourselves.

Anderson notes that 1920s Hollywood's promotion of particular stars deemed deviant or subversive closely aligned with the media's sensationalizing of sex, drugs, and crime, and the abnormal personalities and nonconformity that allegedly accompanied them. Anderson argues that the celebrity scandals of the nascent star system and the eventual dismantling of the studio system established "a set of new hegemonic categories of social deviance and psychological abnormality" (p. 7). In short, Hollywood is responsible for our transformed understanding of deviance and eccentric and peculiar personalities.

In detailed and fastidiously analyzed case studies of star scandals, Anderson makes the case

that Hollywood's interpretation of events shaped not only the outcome of stars' careers but also society's understanding of certain types of scandal. For example, Anderson looks at the glorious silent-film star Wallace Reid and his untimely death due to drug addiction. Anderson juxtaposes Reid and Douglas Fairbanks, who remains emblematic of (and credited for) contemporary masculine norms. Reid showed a new side of drug addiction, but his contribution to a more nuanced image of masculinity has been largely ignored.

Anderson also unpacks the stardom of Rudolph Valentino, the murder trial of Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb, and the collapse of Mabel Normand's career in the aftermath of the murder of the director William Desmond Taylor as *leitmotifs* of themes emerging in society. How the media and Hollywood reacted to these stars and their accompanying scandals reflects, to Anderson, a more rational and formalized system paving the way toward a cultural hegemony and control of the masses. This argument is obviously not unique—Theodore Adorno and Antonio Gramsci have put forth powerful theories of cultural hegemony—but the means toward achieving such hegemony and the means by which Anderson demonstrates his thesis are innovative and fresh.

However, the relationship between film production and the promotion, or demotion, of certain stars and what they represent may be less sinister and more cynical than Anderson purports. Film shapes society, but more significantly society shapes Hollywood (the accoutrements of the celebrity-industrial complex). Anderson's take is somewhat alarmist: Hollywood's promotion of deviance and pathology created a hegemonic culture and "containment of a mass audience" (p. 3). I suspect the origins of how Hollywood and the media deal with scandal may be simpler than the grand plan of hegemony, though all the more devastating. The other way to consider the evolution of stars and scandals is that Hollywood and the media obtusely ignore the real human tragedy of drug addiction and poor mental health in favor of an easier and more lucrative path. They may glamorize and sensationalize subversion and deviance because these qualities are the currency of modern celebrity culture. The sex tapes of Paris Hilton and Kim Kardashian are not so much about Hollywood's

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