

# The Margins of Mondo

Tracing genre through 1960s American  
'mondo' film discourse

By Erin Wiegand

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The exploitation documentaries of the 1960s and the 1970s known as 'mondo' films are often considered to be an Italian popular cinema genre, given that their origins tend to be traced to the 1962 Italian film *Mondo Cane*. In this film, and the mondo films that came after, clips of documentary footage taken from around the world are edited together to highlight exotic, unusual and shocking scenes, often juxtaposing Western European cultures with those of Africa and Asia. Scholarly (and popular) discussions of mondo tend to agree upon the basic trajectory of the genre cycle, presenting a history along the following lines: In 1962, Gualtiero Jacopetti and his collaborators Franco Prosperi and Paolo Cavara created the innovative, breakthrough hit *Mondo Cane*. Its success sparked the production of a series of other films in a similar vein, both from Jacopetti and Prosperi, and other Italian filmmakers such as Angelo and Alfredo Castiglioni and Antonio Climati. While mondo 'tendencies' or themes can be retroactively identified in many films that existed prior to *Mondo Cane*, such as Italian 'sexy documentaries', travelogues and American exploitation 'jungle' films, Jacopetti's films set the mould for the genre as such. Through the 1960s and the 1970s, mondo films were produced outside of Italy as well, but tended to be cheaply made imitations relying heavily on staged footage; in particular, this is said to be true of those films produced in the United States.<sup>1</sup> In fact, a large portion of the American-made exploitation documentaries that screened in US theatres alongside Italian imports throughout the 1960s are absent altogether from existing writing on mondo films. Those that do get referenced are typically only cited

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briefly, with little to no description of their content, style or historical context.

While the American-made exploitation documentaries following *Mondo Cane* may not have had much impact on the Italian cycle,<sup>2</sup> they have much to say about the broader landscape of American exploitation films in the 1960s. Thus, while Mark Goodall has shown how Italian mondo films tapped into and responded to Italian film traditions of neorealism (2008), I look at how the American interpretation of 'mondo' was rooted in existing American cinematic traditions and cultural concerns. In contrast to the globe-trotting travelogues of the initial *Mondo Cane* cycle, American exploitation documentaries tended to turn the camera's gaze inward, examining locations and topics closer to home. In particular, it is possible to identify a trajectory of exploitation documentary in this period that spanned several smaller cycles, moving from an initial emphasis on sex work and the business of sexploitation filmmaking (1963–66) to an exploration of the burgeoning 'hippie' countercultural scene (1966–69).<sup>3</sup>

In addition, mapping out the industrial and critical use of 'mondo' as a generic signifier across the 1960s demonstrates the importance of pragmatic approaches to genre studies – particularly when it comes to exploitation films. While genre theorists have long called for more attention to industry and press usage of genre signifiers (Neale 1990, 2000; Gunning 1995; Altman 1999), many studies of individual genres and genre cycles (including mondo films) continue to rely heavily on analysis of films' shared aesthetic and thematic concerns, prioritizing those films that have already been canonized as the most emblematic of the genre's subjects and structures. This poses a particular problem for understanding the role that genre plays in exploitation films, where the textual elements typically used to identify genre (character, plot, setting) are often of lesser importance to producers, distributors and (arguably) audiences than a single exploitable element, such as nudity or other 'forbidden' images. Complicating matters further is the fact that exploitation films were often marketed as something different from what was actually shown; while mainstream films may also have been misrepresented to a certain extent to broaden audience appeal, exploitation films' advertising campaigns went above and beyond to promise spectacles that they often failed to deliver. Even more than with traditional films, then, the marketing of exploitation films may culti-

vate viewers' generic expectations in a way that does not necessarily match what is found on-screen.

I argue that this is precisely what happens with the 'mondo' genre signifier over the course of the 1960s as it was applied to American exploitation films by producers/distributors (i.e., in film titling and advertising), industry press and film critics. The term was initially used to describe films that shared a number of basic characteristics with *Mondo Cane*, such as *Women of the World* (1963), *Malamondo* (1964), *Ecco* (1965), *Mondo Pazzo* (1965), *Taboos of the World* (1965) and *Mondo Balordo* (1966).<sup>4</sup> Briefly summarized, these are sensationalist documentaries taking the form of a travelogue; that assemble a series of vignettes, loosely linked together, showcasing 'strange' cultural practices and ways of life; that eschew dialogue and interviews, using an often sardonic voice-over narration to interpret scenes; and that emphasize an underlying 'primitiveness' of cultures the world over.<sup>5</sup> By 1966, however, 'mondo' was being used in conjunction with a wide range of exploitation documentaries that had little or nothing to do with the original cycle, and had been adopted in the advertising of a number of fictional (narrative) sexploitation films. To understand how this came to be, it is necessary to first understand the context under which *Mondo Cane* and its successors entered the US film market.

### The American context for *Mondo Cane*

When *Mondo Cane* hit US screens in April of 1963, its treatment as a major theatrical release and its high box-office returns were extremely unusual for a documentary, a genre that at the time was not considered especially lucrative.<sup>6</sup> Documentary production had surged during the Second World War due to heavy government investment, but now, in peacetime, that support had waned. In the post-war period, theatrically shown documentaries tended to consist of newsreels and travelogue shorts, which were sold to exhibitors as double-feature fodder (Katz and Katz 1948, 1949). Most documentary filmmakers turned to alternative outlets (primarily educational and industrial markets, followed by television) as the mainstream industry shied away from the format. A *New York Times* article from 1964 reports that theatre owners 'are afraid to book documentaries because they have no stars' (Schumach 1964: 21), while a *Variety* article from 1963 carries the headline 'Dirty Word – Documentary: Such Features

an Uphill Sell' – suggesting that the term 'documentary' carried such negative connotations that those in the industry would go to great lengths to avoid using it (Anon. 1963b: 5).

Of course, there were a few exceptions to this general rule. One was the Academy Award-winning *The Sky Above, The Mud Below* (*Le Ciel et la boue*, 1962), a French travelogue featuring an expedition to New Guinea in which several members of the team died along the way. While such 'explorer' films were nothing new, *The Sky Above* was remarkable in the extent of its success and its reach across multiple markets. The distributor behind the American release of *The Sky Above*, Joseph E. Levine, elected to run separate promotional campaigns for the film: one targeting 'art house' audiences and one targeting 'exploitation' audiences. Levine's biographer, A. T. McKenna, suggests that it was the commercial success of *The Sky Above* – unusual for a documentary – that 'whetted the public's appetite for ethnographic documentaries with a sensationalist bent' such as *Mondo Cane* (2016: 69–70). Whether or not this is the case, the film's success undoubtedly signalled to exhibitors that such documentaries could in fact be box office hits – which was only amplified by the returns (and buzz) generated the following year by *Mondo Cane*.

Both of these films, in fact, are named in several reports of the time as exceptions to what otherwise is taken as a general rule that documentaries do not sell tickets. The above-mentioned *Variety* report on documentaries being considered a 'dirty word' names *The Sky Above* and *Mondo Cane* as exceptions due to their 'sensational, sexy, and/or violent exploitation handles' (Anon. 1963b: 5).<sup>7</sup> Thus, while many of the American exploitation documentaries that followed *Mondo Cane* may not entirely fit with typical notions of a genre cycle – that is, they do not adhere closely to the formal or thematic concerns of the initial films produced in the cycle – it is conceivable that it was, at least in part, the success of *Mondo Cane* (and *The Sky Above* before it) that enabled the proliferation of theatrically distributed, sensationalist documentaries that were viewed as entertainment rather than education. However, the initial wave of such documentaries produced in the wake of *Mondo Cane* tended to rely on a more tried-and-true exploitation method of selling tickets: nudity.

## 1963–66: Mondo sexploitation

While some distributors continued to import European-made 'mondo' films such as *Women of the World*, *Mondo Pazzo*, *Paris Secret*, *Ecco* and *Malamondo* – all of which would be connected to a 'mondo' film cycle in critical and industry press – a handful of filmmakers, primarily based in Los Angeles, were creating new 'documentary' sexploitation films. In 1963, the same year that *Mondo Cane* was released, Russ Meyer came out with *Europe in the Raw*, while Lee Frost and Bob Cresse released *Hollywood's World of Flesh*; both promised a behind-the-scenes look at the sex industry, including prostitution, exotic dancing and pornography.

Both films were treated by the industry press as simply another couple of 'nudie pix'; that is, no connection to the *Mondo Cane* cycle is referenced. In addition, the marketing for both films heavily advertises them in connection with sexploitation: *Hollywood's World of Flesh*, for example, is sold as both an 'exposé documentary' and a 'nudie cutie'.<sup>8</sup> In the advert shown above, in which the film is paired with the earlier Cresse-Frost nudie film *The House on Bare Mountain* (1963), the advert sells the films as 'The 2 Biggest & best "Cuties" of 1963' (Anon. 1964c: 14). *Europe in the Raw* also cited its creator's previous forays into the nudie-cutie business: several adverts note that it is from 'the creator of "The Immoral Mr. Teas"' (Anon. 1964a: 37). The use of cartoon women in both adverts (instead of photographs or stills from the film) also fits the standard for nudie-cutie advertising of the time.<sup>9</sup>

In the first year following the release of *Mondo Cane*, then, the few exploitation documentaries made by American producers did not attempt to link themselves to 'mondo', instead associating themselves with the tried-and-tested sexploitation marketing methods that they were familiar with (both Meyer and Cresse had several nudie cuties behind them by 1964). This is in contrast to imported Italian and French documentaries of the same period, such as *Malamondo* (Cavera, 1964), *Women of the World* (Jacopetti et al., 1963) and *Paris Secret* (Logereau, 1965), which played up an association to *Mondo Cane* in advertising and were discussed in conjunction with it by critics. (Of course, the association to *Mondo Cane* for *Malamondo* and *Women of the World* was aided by the fact that the same filmmakers were involved as well.)

However, by 1966 American sexploitation filmmakers were freely invoking connections to 'mondo' –

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irrespective of any similarity in form or theme to the initial mondo cycle. *Mondo Topless* (Meyer, 1966), for example, consists of a compilation of topless dancing performances, set in and around San Francisco. While the film does make heavy use of a voice-over soundtrack, the narrator's tone here moves away from the dry, sardonic detachment of previous 'mondo' films, instead affecting the tone of a side-show barker. The film also employs lengthy voice-over excerpts from interviews with the dancers themselves (whereas imported mondo films of the period eschewed interview footage). Another sexploitation feature that adopted the 'mondo' moniker was *Mondo Oscenita* (Mawra, 1966), which, despite being called 'the latest and the best of the mondos' in advertising (see advert above), departed even more severely from the *Mondo Cane* format. *Mondo Oscenita* is essentially a retread of Barry Mahon's *Censored* (1965), a compilation of footage from various sexploitation films, overlaid with a narration asking the viewer to consider whether each scene is 'obscene' and should have been censored.

*Mondo Keyhole* (Hill, 1966) does not even adopt a documentary veneer; it is a sexploitation 'roughie' feature about a porn producer who is also a serial rapist. In addition to using 'mondo' in its title, the film further encouraged associations with the 'mondo' film cycle in its advertising. One advert urges patrons, '[i]f you have seen all the other Mondo Pictures don't miss [...] "Mondo Keyhole"' (Anon. 1968c: 15), while another calls *Mondo Keyhole* '[o]ne of the greatest Mondo films in the world' (Anon. 1968e: 12). Even sexploitation films without the word 'mondo' in the title occasionally tried to associate themselves with the genre: one advert for *Olga's Girls* (Mawra, 1964) describes it as 'a Freudian *Mondo Cane*!' (Anon. 1964b: 98).

In other words, producers were employing a practice standard to the exploitation industry – to hitch a product to the bandwagon of an existing film cycle to draw in the audience base for that cycle, however tenuous an actual connection there may be. By 1966, producers no longer used the 'nudie cutie' formula, as interest in this cycle had faded, and needed a different marketing hook. It made sense to connect those films on their roster with a documentary or 'exposé' framework with the best-known theatrically released documentary around. (In 1966, *Mondo Cane* was still screening around the country on double and triple bills.) The 'mondo' tag could also have been appealing to producers in its evocation of Italian and European cinema, which at the time would still have been strongly associated with sex, nudity and scandalous subject matter.<sup>10</sup> Joseph Mawra, for example, used the pseudonym 'Carlo Scappine' as his director's credit on *Mondo Oscenita*, further attempting to link the film with Italian productions.

### 1966–69: Mondo hippie

Of course, some of the American 'mondo' films did also imitate the style and format of the European mondo films. Foremost among these were *Mondo Freudo* (1966), *Mondo Bizarro* (1966) and *The Forbidden* (1967), all produced by Bob Cresse and directed by his frequent collaborator Lee Frost. Like Cresse and Frost's previous exploitation documentary *Hollywood's World of Flesh* (1963), these three films were largely shot on sets and primarily contained scenes 'exposing' sordid practices of pornography, sex work and sex trafficking (all faked), featuring plenty of topless women and often claiming to use hidden cameras or



other covert filming techniques. But this new trio of films also adopted several formal qualities found in the Italian mondo films of the time: they purported to offer a 'round the world' view, citing camera units in other countries in their opening credits or voice-over soundtracks; they include scenes of 'weird' culture and violence, including 'voodoo' ceremonies and a chicken being slaughtered for a 'satanic mass'; and they contain a sardonic voice-over narration mocking much of what is shown on-screen.<sup>11</sup>

Notably, the films also feature scenes of American countercultural activities. While Italian mondo films often included scenes of wild teen culture (in particular, *Malamondo*), they had focused their efforts on European youth; in contrast, the Cresse-Frost films hone in on their own Los Angeles, specifically the scene that had sprung up around the Sunset Strip. *The Forbidden* portrays the area as derelict, populated primarily by 'the long-haired, the unwashed, the rebellious', and largely abandoned by the tourists and movie stars who once crowded its bars. This film also includes real footage from the Sunset Strip riots that occurred in November of 1966, which the narrator describes as protesting 'the ten o'clock curfew, Vietnam, [and] the racial issue', further invoking associations with what would become widely known as the 'hippie' movement. Hippies and countercultural protests make further appearances in *Mondo Bizarro*, which includes a scene featuring the Peace Tower art installation (protesting the Vietnam War) by Irving Petlin and Mark di Suvero. Another scene profiles the eccentric Los Angeles artist Vito, known for allegedly coining the popular 1960s term 'freak-out', in his studio photographing a topless woman while explaining his antiwar stance – thus merging the two primary elements of nudity and counterculture that American exploitation documentaries would continue to focus on throughout the latter half of the 1960s.

Following these films, American exploitation documentaries began to heavily emphasize teen subculture and counterculture in marketing and content. One such film was *Mondo Mod* (1967), a film that attempted to appeal to a youth market (despite its creators' heavy involvement in the 'adult' industry).<sup>12</sup> While the pressbook admats address parents ('if you don't understand your children, see this motion picture!'), a heavier emphasis was clearly being placed on a different age bracket: for example, the pressbook offers exhibitors the use of TV trailers that have been made 'with a special emphasis on the 13 to 25 year old age group', and radio spots 'designed to sell all the excitement and fast-paced action with a strong appeal to the younger audience' (Timely Motion Pictures, Inc. n.d.: 3). Spot adverts (shown below) employ youth and countercultural lingo such as 'freak out'

and 'gassed'. In addition, the use of popular Los Angeles DJ Humble Harve as the film's narrator and tie-ins with the Tower Records chain to sell the film's rock-and-roll soundtrack suggest that *Mondo Mod* was being positioned, primarily, as a youth film.<sup>13</sup>

On the basis of its youth-oriented, slick press kit, *Mondo Mod* seemed to be positioned as a competitor to films by companies such as American International Pictures (AIP), which had been aggressively courting the teen market since the late 1950s (Doherty 1988: 154–57). In fact, during its Boston run *Mondo Mod* was paired with a film distributed by an AIP subsidiary (Trans-American Films), *Teenage Rebellion* (1967) – also called *Mondo Teeno* in some markets (Anon. 1967a: 39).<sup>14</sup> *Teenage Rebellion* provides an interesting point of reference as it is an Italian import – and in keeping with the style of previous Italian mondo films, it compares and contrasts youth culture the world over (while *Mondo Mod* stays firmly on American soil, and does not employ the same 'comparative' editing structure as the Italian mondos). In fact, a *Variety* review of the film reflects that,

It must have been a temptation [...] to call this one 'Mondo Teeno,' as it cuts back and forth from one country to another in its discovery that, aside from language barriers, kids the world over are faced with the same difficulties and usually come up with the same answers. (Anon. 1967b: 3)

This indicates that the American industrial press, at least, still identified 'mondo' with a particular generic syntax tied to the original Italian cycle, despite the confusion created by sexploitation films' adoption of the term.

In any case, it is instructive to compare the content of *Teenage Rebellion*, which seems to more or less follow the 'globe-trotting comparison' mondo format, with its marketing campaign. Pressbook admats for the film completely omit references to 'global' or 'international' culture, instead citing contemporary American counterculture: the long-haired figure and the reference to the 'now generation' both invoke associations with what were then widely called 'hippies', while the 'make love, not war' slogan was popularly used by anti-Vietnam War protesters. In keeping with standard exploitation industry practice, *Teenage Rebellion* had been repackaged to exploit the hot topics and trends of the day. While previously, sexploitation films had eagerly adopted references to 'mondo' despite a complete lack of connection to the original genre cycle, now films whose content actually did conform to the genre's key textual elements were being stripped of their 'mondo'-ness in favour of

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what seemed like a more exploitable marketing angle. Another imported Italian film, originally titled *Mondo Nudo*, had its title changed to *This Naked World* (1963) by its American distributor, Times Film Corp. (interestingly, the same distributor that in 1963 had opted to retain the original Italian title for *Mondo Cane*). A representative from the company reported to *Variety* that they had decided to change the title because “‘mondo’ had acquired a dirty name with all the films that have been borrowing the label” (Frederick 1968: 7).<sup>15</sup>

Similarly, Robert Carl Cohen, the director of *Mondo Hollywood* (1967), an exploration of counterculture and general eccentricity in Los Angeles, later regretted using the ‘mondo’ moniker in his film’s title. In a 2007 interview, Cohen says that he had adopted the term because of his admiration for *Mondo Cane* and out of a desire to indicate that his documentary was a look at ‘the world of’ Hollywood, referring to the literal translation of the Italian word ‘mondo’ as ‘world’. However, as the above examples make clear, by 1967 ‘mondo’ had spent enough time in American popular discourse to have become associated, at least

partially, with the numerous low-budget exploitation films now bearing its name. According to Cohen, critics of his film complained that *Mondo Hollywood* did not deliver what they were coming to expect from a film with ‘mondo’ in the title: “They were displeased because the film did not show anything sensationally horrible [...] they thought that “mondo” meant weird, strange, bad, lots of bottles of ketchup and rubber daggers and cutting things, all that kind of stuff” (2007: n.pag.).

Following this, American-made documentaries appear to have largely avoided associating themselves with a ‘mondo’ genre. Nevertheless, the term continued to be used in the critical and industrial press. Three hippie documentaries from the late 1960s, *Hippie Revolt* (aka *Something’s Happening*, Beatty, 1967); *Revolution* (O’Connell, 1968); and *You Are What You Eat* (1968), were all connected with ‘mondo’ despite the fact that none of the films employ the global scope, editing style or sardonic commentary of the European mondo cycle. One *Variety* article identifies a shift in advertising strategy in *Revolution*, which according to the article was ‘initially billed as a serious documentary study of the hippies [but is now merchandized] as a Mondo hippie (exploitation) film’. The same is true of *You Are What You Eat*, which ‘switched from being sold as thoughtful sociological study to now being geared as a colorful fun camp’ (Anon. 1968b: 5). Another article contrasts *You Are What You Eat* with previous hippie documentaries, reporting, “[t]he temptation is great to call [You Are What You Eat] a “Mondo Hippie” and project the same dreary b.o. [box office] fate that awaited such previous efforts as “Revolution,” “The Hippie Revolt,” and “Chappaqua” (Anon. 1968a: 26). Where earlier, *Variety* had identified ‘mondo’ films with a particular documentary genre, identifiable by shared textual characteristics such as editing style and global theme, its reporters now use the term simply as pejorative shorthand for ‘exploitation’, ‘camp’ and – appropriately – an exhausted film cycle.



### Exploitation and genre cycles

The point of any generic study should not be to simply redefine the canon, and thus this article is not an attempt to argue that films such as *You Are What You Eat* are ‘really’ mondo films because they are

described as such by industry press. On the contrary: it is certainly possible to delineate a corpus of mondo films based on shared images and themes (as suggested earlier) that would clearly exclude most of the films discussed in this article. However, as Steve Neale argues, genres 'exist always in excess of a corpus of works', comprising not just the films themselves but the public discourses, knowledge and expectations about those films (Neale 1990: 51, original emphasis). On the margins of what we might identify as the core mondo corpus, we find a wide variety of references to 'mondo' that might otherwise appear to have little in common with *Mondo Cane* – yet these references, whether in an advertisement for a sexploitation film or an offhand remark by a film critic, have much to say about the impact of exploitation on genre.

Exploitation has been undertheorized in relation to genre films, and is often assumed to be a descriptor of a *kind* of film rather than an active *practice*. Genres, as mentioned earlier, are complicated by exploitation filmmaking's emphasis on marketing hooks rather than on an imitation of a genre's themes and structural elements. The American exploitation documentaries made in the wake of *Mondo Cane* cultivated superficial generic associations to 'mondo' when doing so seemed potentially profitable, and discarded them when it no longer did. Because fostering accurate generic expectations was of no importance, the genre cycle became diffuse, leading both industry and critics to associate 'mondo' with a confusing array of films and contexts.

But crucially, this was not always the case. Early criticism, advertising and industry discussions of imported *Mondo Cane*-style documentaries in fact indicate the development of a coherent genre cycle, one based around a shared, specific set of formal and thematic attributes; it was only after 'mondo' became adopted by exploitation filmmakers in the mid-1960s that it seems to have diverted its course. In other words, exploitation as an industrial practice may have altered the development of the genre cycle. As a case study, the trajectory of 'mondo' in the United States points to a need for further attention to contexts of production, distribution and exhibition when discussing mondo films – and for genre theorists to look more closely at the relationship between exploitation and genre cycles.

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### Contributor's details

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Erin Wiegand is a Ph.D. researcher at Northumbria University and the web editor of the *Journal of Cinema and Media Studies Teaching Dossier* (<http://www.teachingmedia.org>).

Her most recent publication, 'Who Can Be Eaten? Consuming Animals and Humans in the Cannibal-Savage Horror Film', can be found in the edited collection *What's Eating You? Food and Horror on Screen* (Bloomsbury, 2017).

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Wilinsky (1996), “A Thinly Disguised Art Veneer Covering a Filthy Sex Picture”: Discourse on Art Houses in the 1950s’, *Film History*, 8:2, pp. 143–58.

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## Notes

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1. Examples of this basic history can be found in Newman (1986); Kerekes and Slater ([1996] 2018); Castiel (2005); Goodall ([2006] 2018, 2008); Bentin (2006); and Moliterno (2014), among many others. I do not refute the factual validity of this history, but simply suggest that its scope is limited and in need of expansion.

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2. An examination of whether American-made mondo films were imported and screened in Italy at this time is outside the purview of my current study, but warrants further research.

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3. Of course, these are not mutually exclusive categories; sexploitation films occasionally adopted countercultural lingo or concerns (e.g., ‘free love’, sexual liberation), while ‘hippie’ documentaries often contained exploitable nude scenes.

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4. Dates and titles given refer to the initial theatrical release of the film in the United States, unless otherwise indicated.

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5. While most modern descriptions of ‘mondo’ describe it as a genre based in part on fabrication or misrepresentation, this element does not seem to be present in most industry and critical writing on ‘mondo’ in the first few years of the cycle.

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6. *Mondo Cane* opened in New York and Los Angeles on 3 April 1963; in New York, it broke box-office records for the first-week run of a film at both theatres it screened in, the Forum (\$30,000) and the Little Carnegie (\$20,000), both premiere art-house venues (Anon. 1963a: 9).

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7. Making its point even more emphatically about the outlier status of *Mondo Cane* and its commercial success, the article goes on to note that ‘[f]or the purpose of this discussion, the various Italo “Mondo” pix, and similar films for which footage is staged, are not considered true documentaries’.

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8. ‘Nudie cutie’ films, a relatively short-lived genre cycle of the early 1960s, featured fantasy scenarios filled with topless and nude women; the tone of these films is typically light and humorous rather than crudely sexual, with male protagonists more likely to become flustered and incapacitated at the sight of

nudity than lecherous and leering. For more, see Gorfinkel (2017: 109–29).

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9. For more on the use of cartoon imagery and humour in early sexploitation advertising, see Schaefer (2007: 21–22). Schaefer connects this advertising strategy to an attempt to ward off censors searching for signs that films appealed to ‘prurient interest’, a key factor in obscenity rulings of the time; making advertising more playful and fun, Schaefer contends, served to ‘diffuse some of the erotic tension’ of the films, distancing them from pornography.

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10. For more on the connections between the American exhibition of European imports and adult or sex films, see Wilinsky (1996); Hawkins (2000); and Betz (2003).

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11. Cresse and Frost had also previously combined and repackaged the Italian films *Mondo di notte numero 2* (Proia, 1961) and *Mondo di notte numero 3* (Proia, 1963) as the American release *Ecco*, which perhaps provided them with a better working knowledge of the ‘mondo’ template.

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12. The film was produced by Harry Novak, who had dubbed himself ‘the sultan of sexploitation’, directed by sexploitation director Pete Perry, and financed in part by Gil Atamian, a distributor who had also helped produce Cresse’s *Hollywood’s World of Flesh* (Kilgore 1997: 40).

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13. Exhibitors seemed to follow this lead: One advert placed in a rural Ohio paper lists *Mondo Mod* as part of a drive-in triple feature, calling *Mondo Mod* a ‘teenage hippie swinger’ (Anon. 1969: 18), while another advertises, ‘See the New Generation, the Hippies, the Weirdos, the Freakouts, Love-Ins’ (Anon. 1968d: 19). Other screenings show the film being paired with teen rock-and-roll films like the Elvis Presley vehicle *Tickle Me* (Anon. 1967c: 3).

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14. Little information is available about Trans-American Films, but *Variety* describes it as ‘the “special” film subsidiary of American International’ (Anon. 1967b: 3). Trans-American also acted as the distributor for a number of mondo and exploitation documentary films, including *Macabro* (1966), *Sadismo* (1967), *Spree* (1967), *Secret Africa* (1969), *Witchcraft ’70* (1970) and *Africa Uncensored* (1971).

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15. The press continued to make associations between *Naked World* and other mondo films despite the name change: one review refers to it as ‘another “Mondo” movie’ (Anon. 1968f) and another calls it ‘one of those “mondo” things’ (McKinnon 1968: 23).

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