



# A Not So Foreign Affair: Fascism, Sexuality, and the Cultural Rhetoric of American Democracy

*Andrea Slane*

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In *A Not So Foreign Affair* Andrea Slane investigates the influence of images of Nazism on debates about sexuality that are central to contemporary American political rhetoric. By analyzing an array of films, journalism, scholarly theories, melodrama, video, and propaganda literature, Slane describes a common rhetoric that emerged during the 1930s and 1940s as a means of distinguishing “democratic sexuality” from that ascribed to Nazi Germany.

World War II marked a turning point in the cultural rhetoric of democracy, Slane claims, because it intensified a preoccupation with the political role of private life and pushed sexuality to the center of democratic discourse. Having created tremendous anxiety—and fascination—in American culture, Nazism became associated with promiscuity, sexual perversion and the destruction of the family. Slane reveals how this particular imprint of fascism is used in progressive as well as conservative imagery and language to further their domestic agendas and shows how our cultural engagement with Nazism reflects the inherent tension in democracy between the value of diversity, individual freedoms national identity, and notions of the common good. Finally, she applies her analysis of wartime narratives to contemporary texts, examining anti-abortion, anti-gay, and anti-federal rhetoric, as well as the psychic life of skinheads, censorship debates, and the contemporary fascination with incest.

An invaluable resource for understanding the language we use—both visual and narrative—to describe and debate democracy in the United States today, *A Not So Foreign Affair* will appeal to those interested in cultural studies, film and video studies, American studies, twentieth century history, German studies, rhetoric, and sexuality studies.



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