

**Perspectives on Pornography and Erotica: Nudes,  
Prudes, and Attitudes**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Perspectives on Pornography and Erotica: Nudes, Prudes, and Attitudes**

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The study of the multi-billion dollar industries of pornography and erotica, known in the academy as ‘Porn Studies’, has recently been revised with contributions from authors such as Linda Williams, Debbie Nathan, Gail Dines, Pamela Paul, Harry Brod, Bernard Arcand, and Joseph Slade. Previous to this paradigm shift in theorizing about pornography and erotica, arguments made by authors such as Andrea Dworkin, Catherine MacKinnon, Robin Morgan, Susan Brownmiller, and others traditionally discussed pornography in terms of a pro-censorship anti-pornography dualist framework.

The last three decades have witnessed a paradigm shift as feminists and gender theorists have reexamined pornography and erotica and anti-porn proponents such as Susan Brownmiller began to question their earlier positions and even validated pornography with a cost-benefit equation on the individuals. This thesis reviews the more traditional perspectives as well as the influx of new perspectives on pornography and erotica.

This research project is not solely about pornography and erotica. This project examines the history of sexual representation and the changing cultural and technological landscape of values, relationships, sex, our bodies, and the wider ‘pornification’ of society as proposed by author Pamela Paul. This work provides a detailed literature review of relevant sources and a historical examination of representations of sex in ‘restricted’ or taboo genres such as pornography and erotica, as well as mainstream media and classical art. The nature of this research is not evaluative and does not rely on participant interviews. However interviews with a convenient sample indicate a range of reactions to pornography. While most of this thesis explores the debates about pornography, and erotica, I did informal, interviews with seven individuals — whose take on Internet pornography added some value to the “expert” testimony and a range of values and perspectives. This research provides readers with comprehensive information on pornography and erotica, so that they may make a decision about how to deal with pornography and the so-called ‘pornification’ of society.

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This project is dedicated to the memory of the late Dr. John McKendy who truly believed that “another world is not only possible, but she’s on the way”.

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## **Introduction**

*“The attempt to define pornography is a trick question, since essentially no thing exists. It is only naming the thing that creates it. The naming of pornography separated representations of sex from everyday life.”*

—Fenton Bailey

*“Art and pornography are caught in a cycle of reciprocal definition, in which each depends on the other for its meaning, significance and status.”*

—Lynda Nead

This thesis is not solely about pornography and erotica. This thesis is about the history of sexual representation, technology, values, relationships, sex, our bodies, and how we become who we are sexually. My intention here is to provide a non-evaluative exploration of pornography from multiple perspectives. I will investigate assumptions regarding sexual representation and argue for a less dogmatic and more contextual approach to understanding pornography and erotica. As opposed to answering a single research question, my research seeks to provide an overview of the many facets of pornography and erotica. This research project relies upon the conflicting theories, thoughts, and opinions of other researchers and is not based on participant interviews. My research does not condemn or commend pornography but instead provides an introduction to the rapidly growing discipline of ‘Porn Studies’.

### *Defining Pornography and Erotica*

How do we define what is pornographic and what is erotic? What is pornographic? What is erotic? Are the terms synonymous? Can’t the pornographic be

erotic and the erotic pornographic? What some may consider pornographic, others may consider erotic and vice versa; opinions vary and beliefs are different. The only consensus on the definition of pornography and erotica seems to be the lack of consensus.

Etymology is a start to finding consensus and from the history of these words we can learn a great deal. Pornography is from the Greek word *pornos* (prostitute) and *graphos* (to write), meaning to write about prostitutes. Erotic is also from the Greek: Eros was the god of (sexual) love, and was later transformed by the Romans into Cupid, associated with desire and love, well known-for his arrows of love. The term “pornographie” was used in the French language during the early 1800’s but the word “pornography” did not enter the English language as the familiar conjunction that it is until 1857. An early British medical dictionary defined pornography as “a description of prostitutes or of prostitution, as a matter of public hygiene” (Kendrick, 1987:1).

Etymologically the distinction between pornography and erotica is fairly clear: it is that between sex and love, the physical and the emotional. In real life however the distinction is not so clear. The distinctions between what is pornographic and what is erotic are similar to distinctions made between naked and nude, by distinguished art historian Kenneth Clark. Clark suggests a short answer to the question ‘what is nude’, writing “an art form invented by the Greeks in the fifth century, just as opera is an art form invented in seventeenth century Italy” (Clark, 1959:4). Throughout his book *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form* (1959), Clark attempts to distinguish between the nude and the naked, arguing that the nude is not just a representation of a bare body but a quest for perfection. In the introduction to Clark writes: “The English language, with its elaborate generosity, distinguishes between the naked and the nude. To be naked is to be deprived

of our clothes, and the condition implies some of the embarrassment most of us feel in that condition. The word “nude”, on the other hand, carries, in educated circles, no uncomfortable overtone. (Clark, 1959:9).

What are the differences between the naked and the nude? What is the difference between the pornographic and the erotic? Even though these words have identical meanings the emotional connotations are different. Nudes are not just art forms but they are people too, so why such different emotional connotations? Again, attitudes and circumstances are increasingly important.

During the 1992 *R. v. Butler* case the Supreme Court of Canada divided pornography into three categories: "(1) explicit sex with violence, (2) explicit sex without violence but which subjects people to treatment that is degrading or dehumanizing, and (3) explicit sex without violence that is neither degrading nor dehumanizing" (R.v. Butler, Supreme Court of Canada). In his book *Eros Revived: Erotica of the Enlightenment in England and America*, Peter Wagner defines pornography and erotica as: “the written or visual presentation in realistic form of any genital or sexual behavior with a deliberate violation of existing or widely accepted moral and social taboos,” and the “explicit depiction of sexual organs and sexual practices with the aim of arousing sexual feelings” (Wagner, 1998: 7).

For historian Walter Kendrick, the production of pornography by definition has a particular function; the construction of pornography creates a special category and “secret” to be kept from certain social groups — women, children, and the lower classes (Kendrick in Attwood, 2002: 95). Kendrick also notes that the failure “of several generations” to produce a satisfactory definition of pornography should alert us to the



pitfalls of “confusing some sort of regulatory category with textual particularity” (Kendrick, 1987: xiii).

Lynne Segal notes, “inconsistency is the only consistency to emerge from empirical research which ignores both the semiotic and the social context of images of sexual explicitness” (Segal 1994: 359). Our insistence and desire to produce and then act accordingly upon these definitions illustrate “the disruptive place of pornography within modern culture” and attempts to define pornography often produce rather than discover various forms of pornography (Segal in Attwood, 2002: 97). The various definitions in use reveal more about fears of susceptibility to be aroused and ‘corrupted’ than the pornographic item in question. As an “outlaw discourse” (Wicke, 1993:79), pornography threatens to overturn the established cultural hierarchy while providing the base on which that hierarchy is erected (Williams, 1990: 153). Pornography has come to stand for a wide range of social ills and anxieties such as violence against women, sexism, the commodification of pleasure, changing values, and so on (Attwood, 2002: 98).

### *The Pornification of Society*

Sex is everywhere. Sexual images are abundant in Western society and especially for those who have access to the Internet and television. Our increased interest in sex and our bodies can be measured by participation in sex therapy, exercise classes devoted to pole dancing techniques, prevailing sexual attitudes, and mainstream media. Pornography has moved from the back streets to Wall Street, and has entered into the realm of big business and popular culture. Pamela Paul has coined the term ‘pornified’ to describe the

perceived pervasion of society by imagery, language, and attitudes associated with pornography and ostensibly sex.

Authors such as Gail Dines (2010) and Pamela Paul (2006) have taken up what I call the ‘pornified’ approach to studying pornography. The pornified approach focuses on the increase in depictions of sex across a range of media and addresses the important question of how sex is represented in contemporary culture. This approach differs from traditional feminist critiques of pornography that impose a positive/negative anti/pro dualist structure. The ‘pornified’ approach allows for a recontextualization of our understanding of discourses on sexuality and the construction of identity in lieu of recent technological developments within the context of mainstream culture (Attwood, 2002). Broadly speaking, the pornified approach moves towards the contextualization of pornography within a specific culture in relation to other forms of discourse and sexual representation.

While Dines and Paul use the pornified approach to argue that the pornification of society is damaging our personal relationships and hurting young adults, others argue that in our radically individualist and consumerist society, sex is now relocated away from reproduction, family, community and relationships and is increasingly about individual gratification. According to Mark Simpson, the man who coined the term “metrosexuality” argues that sex is increasingly becoming a site of individual pleasure and gratification, a “form of personal therapy and self expression” (Simpson, 1994:14). According to Simpson, sexuality may increasingly refer to a form of self-interaction with one’s own body and psyche, mediated through various forms of cultural expressions,

representations and performances, what he calls a kind of “autosexuality” (Simpson, 1994:14).

Arguments from Catherine MacKinnon, Andrea Dworkin, Pamela Paul, Michael Kimmel, Gail Dines, John Stoltenberg, and others claim that pornography should be censored for it promotes sexual violence towards women and objectifies women. Others (Debbie Nathan, Walter Kendrick, Caitlyn Moran, Bernard Arcand, Lynne Segal, Linda Williams, etc.) claim that pornography can have positive benefits and we should resist censorship. Some mental health professionals warn us of the potential dangers of pornography as an addictive substance, while other mental health professionals discuss the potential benefits of producing and consuming pornography. We often receive warnings and causal arguments regarding the potential harm that pornography can cause, yet rarely do we hear that pornography may be beneficial to some personas and it may be a safer way to engage in sexual activity. Social scientists, including psychologists, sociologists, and communications scholars look for objective ways to understand pornography and these varying approaches illustrate the need to understand pornography within its relation to other forms of discourse and sexual attitudes. These various approaches applied to the ‘porn debate’ also raise a number of interesting questions and allow us to contemplate the future of pornography. Can we imagine a context in which the taboo and transgression that pornography relies upon ceases to exist?

Warnings are issued across society from the pulpit to the press but despite these warnings many people still use pornography. A recent study conducted by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, a U.S.-based organization that investigates public health issues, found that seven out of ten fifteen to seventeen year olds in the United States have

looked at Internet pornography (Henry J. Kaiser Foundation, “Generation Rx.com: How Young People Use the Internet for Health Information”, 2001). Thus there is a growing need to address questions related to the distribution, reception, and production of pornography and erotica.

### *Overview*

The first chapter of this thesis will be devoted to presenting a brief history of pornography and erotica. In this chapter specific attention is given to the effects of technology on pornography, Internet pornography, and the evolution of three major magazines: *Playboy*, *Penthouse*, and *Hustler*. Beginning with the *Kama Sutra* and concluding with the introduction of Internet pornography this chapter attempts to review the history of pornography and erotica and locate both within a specific historical and cultural context.

The second chapter of this research project, “Perspectives on Pornography: The Politics of Representation” serves as a literature review of relevant sources that discuss various aspects of pornography and erotica. Throughout this chapter I review past and present perspectives on pornography and erotica put forth by legal scholars, feminists, Marxists, psychologists, sociologists and other academics.

While we are quick to say that “All’s fair in love and war”, this is not necessarily the case. Chapter four “Pornography and the Power of Law” attempts to illustrate that perhaps not all *is* fair in love and war. Throughout chapter four I present important Canadian legal cases that have altered Canadian legislation, as well as the production, distribution, and reception of pornography and erotica.

The fourth chapter of this thesis titled, “The Future of Porn: The Changing Cultural and Technological Landscape of Values, Sex, Relationships, and Technology”, details the rapidly changing adult-entertainment industry. Ranging from new forms of technology used in the production and distribution of pornography, to new forms of pornography itself, this chapter attempts to grasp where the pornography industry might be headed.

The fifth chapter in this work, titled “Paraphilias and Fetishes”, catalogues psychological concepts that categorize sexual behavior, important figures that inspired these concepts, and concludes by summarizing various approaches taken to studying sexual behavior. This chapter provides the reader with an idea of how drastically different our sexual desires can be and speculates as to where these desires come from.

The final chapter of this project includes excerpts from conversations I have had with others regarding their personal feelings about pornography that have allowed me to understand the role that pornography plays in the lives of individuals. The final chapter also includes suggestions for further research, key themes of my research and my conclusions.

At the heart of this research is my interest in how we become who we are sexually and where our specific sexual interests come from. Perhaps it is consensual experience and the senses that we come to know our true sexual interests. Or perhaps we need some instruction on how to have sex and what our interests are — or what they “should” be. How much of what drives our desires is culturally and socially constructed and how much is biologically dictated? It is difficult to tell but it is an interesting exploration nevertheless. I continue to be fascinated by the changing role of sex and sexuality in

society and the power that pornographic and erotic images continue to assert in a somewhat puritanical culture whose intention is deny them.

One of the troubling features of pornography is the potential for one to confuse fantasy or a production with reality. One may worry, are we exploiting pornography or we enjoying pornography? Due to increases in both the consumption and production of pornography, there is a growing need to address questions like these. Throughout this work I do not commend or condemn pornography for the intention of my research is to provide readers with enough information so that they can decide how they wish to deal with the so-called 'pornification' of society and the values and criteria by which we can attempt to assess the new world of sexual visualization on the internet, whether defined as pornography or erotica.

## **Chapter 1: A Short History of Pornography**

*“At the heart of pornography is sexuality haunted by its own disappearance.”*

—Jean Baudrillard

*“Porn has entered the mature years... It is no longer naughty or underground. It is an up front, in-your-face business, as much a part of pop culture as anything else. We’re in a different phase of our pop culture.”*

—Paul Fishbein (*Adult Video News*)

### *Introduction*

Throughout this chapter I will present a historical examination of the representation of sex in taboo genres like pornography and erotica, in cultural practices such as high-art, and in a many forms of popular media. I will present firstly a brief history of pornography, secondly I will pay specific attention to the evolution of three major magazines; *Playboy*, *Penthouse* and *Hustler*, and will conclude by discussing Internet pornography. I argue that pornography and erotica should be understood within the context of prevailing culture and in relation to other forms of sexual discourse and representation.

### *The History of Pornography*

The increase in the production and consumption of pornographic and erotic materials is a contemporary social phenomenon that continues to gain momentum with the introduction of new technologies. However, erotica and early pornographic forms

have existed across societies for centuries. Circulated over 2000 years ago, the *Kama Sutra*, an ancient Hindu text written by the sage Vatsyayana, presents itself as a manual of sexual instruction meant to inform the reader about both the negative and positive realities of sexual relations. The *Kama Sutra* discussed the sensual and pleasurable advantages of various sexual positions, the need to satisfy the wife of concubine, and the joy of sex—all in a sex-positive, un-puritanical, philosophy of sex, not necessarily related to love.

Indicated by ancient archeological remains, both Greek and Roman societies celebrated nudity. When Pompeii, the Roman city buried by a volcanic eruption in AD 79, was dug up in the 1700's, many murals and fresco depicting people having sex were discovered in public and private spaces about the city. The pictures shown below are some of the many sexually themed artifacts and paintings found in the ruins of Pompeii.



A painting located in a public space uncovered at Pompeii (Adapted from: *Pornography: The Secret History of Civilization*. Dir. Fenton Bailey. BBC, 1999. DVD).





A decorative plate uncovered at Pompeii (Adapted from: *Pornography: The Secret History of Civilization*. Dir. Fenton Bailey. BBC, 1999. DVD).



A decorative vase uncovered at Pompeii (Adapted from: *Pornography: The Secret History of Civilization*. Dir. Fenton Bailey. BBC, 1999. DVD).

Among the archeological remains of Pompeii was the famous marble statue of the roman god Pan having sexual intercourse with a goat (the genitals of Pan and the nanny goat are visible to the onlooker). The sculpture (pictured below) was deemed obscene, offensive, and immoral and was promptly removed from the archeological remains to be hidden and locked away. In the BBC documentary *Pornography: The Secret History of Civilization*, art historian John Clarke comments on the removal of the Pan sculpture stating: “The removing of the Pan and the Goat from the culture that it was embedded in and putting it away started a process that still continues today, that is: cordoning off sexual representation from the rest of life. For the Romans it was a part of the continuum, for us it is still a very scary thing. We believe in the power of images of sex to create disturbance” (qtd in Bailey, Fenton dir. *Pornography: The Secret History of Civilization*, 1999).



A picture of the infamous “Pan and the Goat” (Adapted from: *Pornography: The Secret History of Civilization*. Dir. Fenton Bailey. BBC, 1999. DVD).

The Roman remains of Pompeii proved to be a threat to the prevailing Victorian social customs and Victorians and perhaps challenged the prevailing idea of how ‘civilized’ their ancestors were. Engravings and paintings that decorated the petrified walls of private and public spaces in Pompeii were locked away by Victorian historians; movable objects such as erotic frescos, and phallic looking lamps were deemed obscene, and were relocated to a locked room at the Naples National Archaeological Museum in Italy. The room containing these “obscene” materials at The Naples National Archeological Museum has come to be known as the “Secret Museum”. The presence of sexually explicit material at Pompeii was highly problematic and apparently continued to be for the contents of the “Secret Museum” were only revealed to the public in 2000.



The image above shows what is left of the “Secret Museum” in Italy.

(Adapted from: *Pornography: The Secret History of Civilization*. Dir. Fenton Bailey. BBC, 1999. DVD).

The so-called “British Secretum” housed in Cupboard 55 in the Department of Medieval and Later Antiquities at the British Museum in London, is another striking example of how we sanction off explicit representations of sexuality. The “British Secretum” contained the collections of the wealthy erotic connoisseur Roger Witt, who had donated his collection to the British Museum in 1865. The collection was kept under lock and key and those who wished to have access to the collection were put through a rigorous screening process that examined their intentions and interest in viewing the erotic materials. Those persons wishing to see the collections within the secretum were required to send a written letter of request to the director of the British Museum who would then evaluate the request. As a rule, women were not permitted to view these objects and those who were allowed to view the collections were wealthy, male scholars.

In a sense the “Secret Museum” and the “British Secretum” do to objects what the concept of pornography does to ideas. That is, sanction off sexually explicit materials, categorize them as immoral, perverse, or ‘bad for you’, and then decide who is able to view these materials. Like these secret museums, the concept of pornography attempts to cordon off, yet create a special space where we can keep the obscene...but keep it away from the people whom we don’t want to have contact with it most notably: women and children. Illustrations provided in this chapter indicate the acceptance of sexuality in Roman culture, unlike ours where “viewer discretion is advised”.

At the height of Roman civilization Olympic athletes competed in the nude, prostitution was legal and widespread, and Latin terms for ‘homosexual’ and ‘heterosexual’ did not exist to typify and dichotomize these concepts. Beert Verstraete the author of *Same-Sex Desire and Love in Greco-Roman Antiquity and in the Classical Tradition of the West* argues, “The sexuality of the Romans has never had good press in the West ever since the rise of Christianity. In the popular imagination and culture, it is synonymous with sexual license and abuse” (Verstraete, 2005:5).

The early Christian Church had a far more negative view of sex than the Greeks and Romans. Saint Paul worked to moralize sex and warned Romans that “to be carnally minded” —to be interested in sex for sex’s sake—“is death” (Romans 8:6). Early forms of religious art relied upon art patronage. The Roman Catholic Church and later Protestant groups sponsored artists and commissioned artwork for Churches and Cathedrals. Religious inspired art from the Renaissance period such as *The Martyrdom of Saint Agatha* depicts the torture of Agatha of Sicily and the removal of her breasts. *The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian* depicts Saint Sebastian shot with arrows. Both of these works of art portray images that today *could* be labeled as hard-core sadomasochism, or just depictions of reality, yet during the Renaissance they were painted to hang in a church.

*Venus, Cupid, Folly, and Time*, a painting by the artist Agnolo Bronzino, now stored in the Nation Gallery in London, depicts a nude Venus and her son Cupid mid kiss. This famous painting has gone on tours to high schools across the world and is considered an allegorical masterpiece. Often when a painting achieves the status of

‘high art’ we ignore the erotic and sometimes obscene elements of the image and render it a classic.

Although Christianity sought to moralize sex and sexuality, sexual themes are abundant in Christian art. Through patronage from the church, many artists painted erotic and arguably pornographic depictions of saints, prophets, and biblical figures. Michelangelo’s sprawling fresco painted on the walls of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican City titled *The Last Judgment* was a controversial Christian work of art. Members of the Catholic Church criticized the sexual content of this painting and accused Michelangelo of flaunting his talents and disregarding appropriate depictions of nudity and genitalia. Under a ruling imposed by the Council of Trent, the genitalia in the fresco were later painted over after Michelangelo’s death.

The subjects of Religious Renaissance eroticism were Saints and Gods; and Greek and Roman gods and goddesses were not ordinary people. The subjects of these works soon changed with the advent of the printing press, invented by Johannes Guttenberg in 1450. In 1524 the Italian poet and satirist Pietro Areino and engraver Marcantonio Rainondi published *I Modi* [The Ways]. Later translated into English as *The Sixteen Pleasures* or *The Postures*, the book originally contained sixteen copper engravings of men and women in different sexual positions. Under Pope Clement, *I Modi* was burned, the engraver jailed, and re-publication of *I Modi* was made punishable by death (Nathan 2007:19). Other sexually infused literature such as Francois Rabelais’s *Garguantua and Pantagruel* (1523) became so accessible to the general public that the Catholic Church issued the Index Librorum Prohibitorum in

1564 (Nathan, 2007:129)<sup>1</sup>. The Index Librorum Prohibitorum served as a list of prohibited literature that members of the Catholic Church were forbidden to read and *I Modi* was one of the first books to be added to the index.

The Protestant Reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and The Enlightenment encouraged Europeans to question Christianity and traditional monarchies. By the time of the French Revolution, it was common practice to satirize and ridicule kings, queens, and other nobles by writing about them having sex or depicting them in outrageous sexual positions. Religious officials had a difficult time distinguishing between anti-religious writing and sexual writing because many publications combined the two aspects using sexual material to attract attention to their criticisms of ruling institutions (Nathan 2007:20). One of the most widely circulated political pamphlets depicted Queen Marie-Antoinette in the midst of an orgy.

Stephen Marcus's *The Other Victorians* (1966) and Alex Comfort's *The Anxiety Makers* (1968) both address the pervasiveness of the medical and popular discourses on masturbation in Victorian culture. The extremely conservative Victorian culture brought about strict social codes and sexually repressive contraptions aimed at preventing masturbation. This sexual repression was a feature of Queen Victoria's long reign and in 1857 the political body of England passed a law forbidding the sale and distribution of obscene sexual materials, including information about contraceptives (Nathan, 2007: 129).

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<sup>1</sup> The Index Librorum Prohibitorum was eventually revoked in 1965 after adding more than four thousand works to the list.

Despite restrictions and censorship enforced by the British and French governments, and other various ruling bodies, sexually themed writing and imagery continued to flourish. The invention of the printing press allowed for the popularization of leisure novels among a variety of social castes. John Cleland's novel *Fanny Hill: Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1749), has been described as one of the most prosecuted and banned books in history. With a political overtone, *Fanny Hill* details the experiences and sexual exploits of the prostitute protagonist, Fanny. Literary historian David Foxton argues that *Fanny Hill* was the first work of English prose pornography to use the form of the novel (Foxton 1965: 45). The popularity of this politically and sexually charged novel continued to grow and by 1820 *Fanny Hill* was being smuggled into the United States (Nathan, 2007:21). In 1712, what was a British colony, and is now known as the state of Massachusetts, passed a law prohibiting obscene images and writing. It was under this law booksellers were prosecuted in Boston for distributing *Fanny Hill* (Nathan, 2007:128).

The nineteenth-century witnessed a sudden increase in pornography due to the introduction of a new technology: photography. First invented in 1827, photography enabled the production of two main venues for sexual imagery: magazine and film. The introduction of photography and subsequently video technology was perhaps the greatest leap forward in the history of pornography. Photographs for the first time, unlike paintings and sculpture, captured a specific moment in time and a person within that moment. Throughout the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century pornographic pictures were more expensive than actual intimate experiences at Parisian brothels for the



photographs offered a continual experience or fantasy, unlike the one-time-only exchange offered at brothels. The female nude displaying her genitals to the camera is a familiar image that continues to persist to this day. Paris police records dating back to 1855 document the prohibition of pornographers and the sale of erotic photos, which indicates demand (and prohibition) one hundred and sixty years ago. The popularity of French nudes photographs persists today for pictures and daguerreotypes remain valuable collectables sold in Parisian flea markets.

A photographic study conducted in 1832 by French photographer Bruno Braquehais titled *Nude Study with the Venus de Milo*, attempted to illustrate the differences between a supposed erotic photo and a pornographic photo. Two of his photographs used in the study are printed below.



(Adapted from: *Pornography: The Secret History of Civilization*. Dir. Fenton Bailey. BBC, 1999. DVD).

In the first picture the model seems to blend into the background of the photo and seems silhouette like; mimicking the statue seen to the left. She is not facing the camera, her breasts are not exposed, and her face is in shadows. In sum, a demure pose, one perhaps seen on the bathroom wall at someone's home.



(Adapted from: *Pornography: The Secret History of Civilization*. Dir. Fenton Bailey. BBC, 1999. DVD).

In this second photograph the model is turned and facing the viewer, engaging them with her facial expression, which is inviting and coy. The props themselves appear disheveled and her lace shawl only seems to accentuate her body, not conceal it. Her breasts are visible to the viewer and in total the picture expresses a much more sexual theme. She knows that she is desirable and desired, and thus the difference between the naked and the nude.

These two pictures are astounding, for they are so similar but incite such different feelings. With subtle differences in the posing and props, the image becomes much more sexually charged and provocative.

Soon after the use of photography in the production of pornography and erotica began, one of the first definitions for pornography appeared in The Webster dictionary in 1857. Invented by Victorians, up until the middle 19<sup>th</sup> Century the word and concept of pornography did not exist. Faced with ambiguity and repressive Victorian social codes the instinct to classify and name, much like the 19<sup>th</sup> Century classification of plants, animals, humans, etc., the classification of what is erotic and what is pornographic began. If the concept of privacy did not exist, would pornography? Perhaps the separation between public and private life enables the use of pornography. This being said, we think of our porn use as anonymous but if we use a computer within the United States our web use is monitored and recorded through individualized IP addresses.

In 1917 Margaret Sanger was arrested for opening the first birth control clinics in the United States. At this time the persons who controlled the mail also decided

what was obscene and would prohibit the sending of ‘obscene’ materials, this included not only sexually explicit pictures but also information on birth contraception and abortion (Nathan, 2007:128).

By the WWI era, there were many films called ‘stag movies’, shown at men-only parties and by the 1920’s and 1930’s there was a growing market for ‘men’s magazines’, following the market trend that existed among soldiers for sexual ‘pin up’ photos of Hollywood stars. The first lesbian orientated pornographic magazine called *Vice Versa* was launched in 1947 (Nathan, 2007: 128). Like most forms of pornography, these publications were considered to be for the lower class. This changed in 1953 when Hugh Hefner released the first issue of *Playboy*, intended for a very specific, more ‘sophisticated’ audience.

### **‘The Big Three’: *Playboy*, *Penthouse*, and *Hustler***

#### *Playboy*

The first issue of *Playboy* was published in December of 1953. Marketed as a magazine for men that included articles about music, travel, and politics, *Playboy* was sold as a lifestyle magazine that included tasteful and “erotic” pictures of women. The rise of the middle class market combined with strategic marketing made *Playboy* an overnight success. By including pictures of women with the “Girl Next Door Look” and refusing to run advertisements that sold sex toys or enhancement products the editors sought to project a certain ‘highbrow’ image, particularly in the early years of circulation. Hugh Hefner and his associates claimed the pictorials of women were

not the sole attraction of the magazine. Still, literary critics and many feminists claimed that this publication has an anti-woman theme and promotes the objectification of women. The success of *Playboy* can also be attributed to its groundbreaking nature and the lack of competition this publication faced, for it was the first of its kind.

Today *Playboy* has proven to be the most resilient adult magazine when compared to *Hustler* and *Penthouse*. The Playboy bunny logo and branding is highly visible in popular culture, found on a range of products from bumper stickers to sweatpants. In 1994 Playboy became the first adult magazine to have its own website and in the mid 1990's Playboy launched Playboy Media and Playboy TV (originally titled The Playboy Channel). The Playboy brand continues to grow. There are Playboy concept boutiques, Playboy Bunnies, and various other licensing opportunities and merchandise franchises. More recently Playboy has gained attention because of the reality TV show "The Girls Next Door" which features life at the Playboy Mansion (broadcast on E! television in 2005). Over its years of production, Playboy has included a range of nude pictures of popular figures such as Patti Regan Davis, daughter of former U.S president Ronald Regan, Betty Page, Marilyn Monroe, and 'Wheel of Fortune' star Vanna White.

### *Penthouse*

*Penthouse* proved to be *Playboy's* first competition and in 1969 the magazine ran an advertisement in the *New York Times* that targeted *Playboy*. The advertisement

consisted of an image of the Playboy Bunny caught in the crosshairs of a rifle, the caption read, “We’re going rabbit hunting” (Miller, 1985). Editor and publisher Bob Guccione fashioned the magazine’s image so that it portrayed an edgier, more sexually explicit publication than its competitor *Playboy*. Using revenue from the advertisers whom Hugh Hefner and the *Playboy* camp would not, Guccione reached a circulation of an estimated 500, 000 by February of 1970 (Dines, 2010: 40).

*Penthouse* has been pushing the proverbial envelope for years. The magazine was and continues to be more sexually explicit than other porn magazines; it was the first magazine to reveal pubic hair and pictures of females urinating. And as the competition between *Playboy* and *Penthouse* grew each tried to up the ante. In August of 1971, *Penthouse* included its first full-frontal centerfold and in January of 1972 *Playboy* followed suit. *Playboy* tried to compete with the edgier image of *Penthouse*, but under immense pressure from advertisers the magazine returned to its previous standards. Perhaps this was a good business strategy for Hugh Hefner and the *Playboy* camp, for by 1990 *Playboy* had a circulation of 3.5 million whereas *Penthouse* had a circulation of 1 million (Dines, 2010: 46). It is theorized that *Penthouse* was swept up in the hard-core pornography market that was soon flooded, awash with free Internet pornography. Whereas *Playboy* retained their status as a soft core or lifestyle magazine such as *Sports Illustrated*, *Esquire*, *Rolling Stone*, and *GQ*, amongst others.

In the early 2000’s Bob Guccione went bankrupt and Marc Bell Capital Partners purchased *Penthouse* magazine (Fakler, 2006). The brand *Penthouse* is now known as Penthouse Media Group, which owns 27 social networking sites including

the popular site AdultFriendFinder.com, the focus is no longer on the magazine publication but on other business ventures. Other ventures undertaken by the Penthouse Media Group include *Penthouse Pets*, a group of young women who make guest appearances at nine of the executive Penthouse Clubs across the United States. Within their social networking sites company chairmen Marc Bell and Daniel Stanton use specific marketing strategies, usually vertically integrating their products and websites to create synergy amongst their various business ventures. *Penthouse* is currently available for the very low price of one dollar per month, delivered via PDF file.

### *Hustler*

Twenty-one years after the first issue of *Playboy* hit the stands, Larry Flynt published the first issue of *Hustler* in 1974. In this liberal social period of the 1970's it was much easier for Flynt to publish more hard-core images than it was for Heffner in the 1950's. Larry Flynt has been quoted saying that *Hustler* is the "first nationally distributed magazine to show pink" (in Dines, 2010:15). In an earlier issue Flynt wrote, "anyone can be a playboy and have a penthouse, but it takes a man to be a hustler" (in Dines, 2010:15). Flynt took pride in being a 'no-holds-barred' magazine that did not take itself too seriously— unlike the more 'high brow' competition, *Playboy*. This was a market strategy used by editors and also a part of the overall image of *Hustler* and its readers: Flynt has been quoted as stating, "we sell to the Archie Bunkers of America" (Dines, 2010:16). In sum, *Hustler* and Flynt promoted a more lowbrow image and tried to distance their publication from the *Playboy* style. In

stark contrast to *Playboy*, *Hustler* limited advertising to companies only involved with the sex industry such as phone sex, sexual enhancements products, sex toys, etc.

*Hustler* magazine was and continues to be the most provocative magazine of ‘The Big Three’. However, Flynt worked hard not to alienate his viewers and tread a careful balance between soft-core and hard-core.

It is worth noting the contrast between the public image of Hugh Hefner and Larry Flynt: the demonization of Flynt and the celebration of Hefner. Flynt has been described as “a nightmare version of the American dream come true” (Goodman, 1993:19). Hefner has been described as a business mogul and has no doubt reached celebrity status. Paralyzed from the waist down from injuries sustained from a 1978 assassination attempt, Flynt is a controversial public figure. Flynt famously published nude pictures of former First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis in the August 1985 issue of *Hustler*.

Flynt is now a multimillionaire who owns an adult entertainment empire. He is the president of Larry Flynt Publications (LFP) and Hustler Film Studio a subsidiary of Larry Flynt Publications. He also owns the rights to a chain of sex shops and the Hustler Casino in Las Vegas. Flynt publishes several magazines under the Larry Flynt Publications logo (*Hustler’s Taboo*, *Hustler’s Leg World*, *Hustler*, *Busty Beauties*, *Barely Legal*, *Hustler XXX*, and *Asian Fever*). In 1998 it was estimated that Larry Flynt Publications was doing \$135 million in annual sales with 51,112 periodicals published and 7,812 movies or videotapes produced (Dines, 2010: 21). Flynt also owns Hustler.com and the video production company Barely Legal. Flynt is still heavily involved with video and magazine production and distribution



however, in 2004 only 20% of his business was accounted for by his magazine publication *Hustler* (Dines, 2010:21).

In sum, all three of these publications were forced to adapt to the contemporary porn industry in order to stay relevant and in business. This being said, *without* these three popular pornographic publications the contemporary porn industry may not be where it is today. *Playboy*, *Penthouse*, and *Hustler* all worked to push the envelope and erode traditional boundaries of censorship. Each of these publications had their own image and content yet, as *Hustler* pushed the envelope and became more explicit, *Playboy* looked increasingly acceptable and perhaps even tame. With each publication pushing the boundaries, pornography and erotica became increasingly visible and increasingly public. The Internet and video recording technology however changed the pornography industry forever.

### *Sex and Video Technology*

The 1970's were the 'golden era' of pornography productions until home videos revolutionized the industry. In 1970 there were 900 adult film theatres in the United States, by 1987 only 200 theatres remained (Bailey, 2005). By the 1970's pornography had made its way to the big screen with iconic films such as *Deep Throat* (1972) starring Linda Lovelace. *Deep Throat* grossed 50 million dollars and unlike previous forms of pornography and erotica, the film became an attraction for both males and females alike (Nathan, 2007:25).

Home video technology again transformed our relationship to pornography and erotica. In 1976 JVC launched VHS tapes that allowed consumers to view movies at home. Pornographic productions could now be viewed in the privacy of the home as opposed to ‘seedy’ theatres. Home videos offer a more interactive experience to the viewer, for the viewer has the ability to pause, zoom, fast forward, and slow down what is on the screen. The introduction of video and recording technology to the pornography industry resulted in a market flooded with every imaginable kind of sexual representation.

Steve Hirsch, perhaps the most successful porn producer, capitalized on new recording technologies and launched his company VIVID entertainment in 1984. Producing roughly 60 high quality films per year, using state of the art audio recording technology to dub the films in various languages, and then distributing these films through Internet subscription, DVD, and pay-per-view via cable/satellite television, VIVID Entertainment dominates the pornography industry. With estimated revenue of \$100 million, VIVID is an excellent example of pornographers using technology to further the production and distribution of their films (Dines, 2010).

While both photography and film furthered the production of pornography in new ways, film and video-recording technologies still continue to further the production and distribution of pornography. Home video recordings have evolved from Super 8 cameras to compact high definition video cameras. Video recording can now conveniently be done through web cams that come standard in laptop and desktop computers. These technological advancements have set the stage for those interested in producing their own forms of pornography: consumers can be producers,

and can also be the ‘star’ of the production. The ability to produce and distribute your own pornography has caused an onslaught of amateur productions. The work is generally unpaid and usually consists of solo performances or couples together, featuring a range of sexual styles and body types. I assume this increase speaks to the exhibitionism in interest and presumably the enjoyment these individuals get from creating their own exhibitionist pornographic material.

The high definition recording that is now used in professional videos can illustrate the realities of porn stars like never before, adding a more ‘realistic’ element to the production. The zoomed-in and magnified, blemishes, stretch marks, faded tattoos, and stubble of the actors all appear, in the flesh, to the viewer.

### *Pornography and the Internet*

Pornography was one of the first products featured on the Internet (Dines, 2010: 30). The influx of personal and home computers equipped with Internet access helped to popularize pornography. The introduction of the Internet has been a catalyst in changing and growing the pornography industry. “By 1998 it has been estimated, Internet porn was bringing in \$1 billion in revenue— between five and ten percent of all the money made online” (Nathan, 2007: 27). Ironically enough, it was the same year (1998) that the US Federal Communications Commission allowed journalists to use the word “penis” on the air (Nathan, 2007:131). Yet, only one year later in 1999, Private Media became the first adult entertainment company to be traded on the NASDAQ stock market exchange.

Internet pornography offers the viewer a wide range of genres including, vanilla; a white heterosexual couple having sex, amateur; persons promoting themselves as one-time performers who are more interested in exhibitionism than profit, barely legal; youthful looking performers in juvenile outfits and scenarios, interracial; mostly depicts black men having sex with white women, gonzo; wall to wall sex without any story line in which performers acknowledge they are being filmed and often address the viewer through the camera, then there is fetish, anal, lesbian, Latina, gay, bisexual, bondage, hardcore, outdoor, orgy, Asian, web-cam, funny, euro, MILF, female friendly, and celebrity— the list goes on. It seems that there appear to be too many genres to take stock of! An increase in pornographic websites continues to grow; in 2000 there were roughly 60, 000 adult-entertainment websites and in 2004 there were roughly 1.6 million (Nathan, 2007: 129).

As the amount of adult-entertainment websites continues to increase so does female interest and participation in pornography. In 2001, 25 percent of North American visitors to adult-entertainment websites were women and in early 2007, forty-eight percent of U.S visitors to adult-entertainment websites were women (Nathan, 2007: 41). Perhaps this incursion of female interest hints at the widening acceptance of pornographic forms into female lives.

Jenna Jameson, porn star, entrepreneur, and writer is a fitting example of one of the many females who have made their claim to fame in the pornography industry through the rise of Internet pornography. She founded the web site ClubJenna.com in 2000, which was one of the first pornographic websites to include more than just pictures and videos. ClubJenna.com provides relationship advice, explicit diaries, and

member forums. ClubJenna.com later expanded and added a second website titled ClubThrust.com intended for Jameson's gay male fans.

Now one of the most famous porn stars, in 2001 Jameson was invited by the Oxford Union debating society to debate against the proposition: "The House Believes that Porn is Harmful". In May of 2003 she appeared on a 48 foot tall billboard in New York City's Times Square. The advertisement displayed Jameson wearing only a thong and read: "Who says they Cleaned up Times Square?" Jameson released her tell all book "How to Make Love Like a Porn Star" in 2004 and continues to produce pornographic productions with her husband.

Other amateur user-generated pornographic productions have also received a great deal of attention through the Internet and in some cases, have caused some serious legal trouble. For instance, in May of 2006 the so-called "Masha's Law" was included in the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act with a provision that enables anyone 18 years of age and older to sue persons who buy, sell, or distribute pornographic pictures taken of them when they were minors. Allen had been adopted by a pedophile at age of nine and her pedophilic foster parent posted nude pictures of her in sexual poses across the Internet. Allen testified before the United States Congress in order to convict her abuser.

My Google search for simply the word "porn" in 2011 provided me with 2,030,000,000 results in seconds. Readily available, seeming able to cater to whatever possible sexual proclivity possible, and usually free, porn is one of the most daily searched items on the Internet. Sergey Bin, co-creator and owner of Google.com has been quoted as saying that percentages of those who are searching for pornography is

in the “single digits” which translates into millions upon millions of requests for pornography daily (Vise, 2008:165). Other statistics have stated that every second 28,258 Internet users are viewing pornography. In that same second 372 Internet users are typing adult search terms into search engines (C.A.S.E, 2011).

In order to combat all of this Internet pornography, web-filtering computer programs like Net Nanny have been created to prevent users from accessing sexually explicit content online. Net Nanny is sold for roughly forty dollars and once installed, it “stops porn from invading your child’s computer, by filtering and blocking web content while they surf” ([www.NetNanny.com](http://www.NetNanny.com)). Censor-software like the Net Nanny has been installed in public libraries and schools across Canada and the United States. One extremely unfortunate consequence of the installation of web filtering software is that these programs also block content from sex-education websites. A study conducted in the U.S found that most fifteen to twenty-four-year-olds had gone online to find information about contraceptives, HIV/AIDS, pregnancy, and health issues related to sexual activity (Henry J. Kaiser Foundation, 2001). However their requests for the information were denied by filtering software. A study conducted by the Henry J. Kaiser Foundation titled “See No Evil: How Internet Filters Affect the Search for Online Health Information”, examined how often Internet filters affect young adults in search of health information related to sex. Using several types of censor-software that public libraries and schools often use, researchers keyed in terms such as “safe-sex”, “condom”, and, “gay” to find that the filters blocked as many as one out of every two sexual health orientated websites (Henry J. Kaiser Foundation, 2002). It is my opinion that the installation of this censor-software contributes to the

some of the problems surrounding not pornographic consumption, but how we regard sexuality, sex education, and our bodies.

### *Conclusion*

Our unwillingness to talk about sex and sexuality openly, yet our interest in consuming, performing, having, and using our sexualities creates tension, contradiction and shame. This contradiction between a sex-saturated culture, our hesitancy to discuss sex, and the urge to deny these images seems to be utterly ironic. Our cultural anxiety to discuss sex seems paradoxical for if we do not procreate, we perish as a species. Our hesitancy to discuss sex openly is reflected in poor sex education programs and remains one of the biggest hurdles in sexual education.

Sex is now considered to be a highly personal and private act, in contrast to the civilization of Pompeii and the instructions given by the *Kama Sutra*. The changing definition of what is pornographic and the continually changing public reception of pornographic materials confirms to the need to locate pornography within a specific historical context. The drastic change from the Victorian era to the present demonstrates the need to understand pornography within its relation to culture, discourses regarding sex and sexuality, and other representations of sex, whatever the medium may be.

After a brief history of pornography and erotica, and an examination of the effects of the printing press, photography, film, the Internet, and webcams, it is evident that most everything to do with sex still remains controversial. While the

social construction and definition of pornography as we now know it is a modern cultural invention, we are still struggling with what sort of construction we want to build.



## **Chapter 2: Perspectives On Pornography:** **The Politics of Representation**

*“If we are going to talk about oppressive images of women, we’d better include laundry soap commercials.”*

— Lisa Paulac

*If feminists define pornography per se as the enemy, the result will be to make a lot of women ashamed of their sexual feelings...and the last thing women need is more sexual shame, guilt, and hypocrisy — this time served up as feminism.*

— Ellen Willis

### *Introduction*

Since the rise of commercial pornography in the 1980’s, an academic field of study, known as ‘Porn Studies’ has emerged and porn is now legitimized as a topic for academic study. There are numerous ways to approach the subject of pornography and erotica. The emerging field of ‘porn studies’ and the proliferation of discourses discussing pornography, assist us in examining and understanding the power, pleasure, and displeasure that pornographic images can contain.

The criticisms of pornography that are based on puritan morals and the teaching of fundamentalist religion may be easy to ignore for those who are not religious. Traditional feminist criticisms of pornography generally focus on the subordination of women and besides pitting males as the satisfied consumers of porn, they rarely address the role that pornography can play in men’s lives. These arguably outdated feminist arguments can isolate men and may actually hinder male participation in the pornography debate. However, both men and women can see the

claims and criticisms put forth by psychologists, criminologists, sociologists, and other professionals as very powerful arguments, especially when given significant media coverage.

In this chapter I will present a literature review of relevant sources, surveying perspectives on pornography put forth by legal scholars, feminists, Marxists, psychologists, and sociologists.

### *Feminist Arguments and Contemporary Perspectives*

Nearly four decades ago, the women's liberation movement of the 1970's strove to instill equality amongst the sexes. These second wave feminists were one of the first groups not affiliated with organized religion to discuss and debate pornography in the public arena. With the splintering of the movement in the 1970's, two distinct and passionately oppositional factions developed in the debate over pornography; those who were for pornography, and those who were against pornography. There was no consensus as to what the 'official feminist' stance on porn was and within the women's liberation movement, the question of how to represent sex— even the question of how to *have* sex— became divisive. It was during this time that terms like “sex-positive feminist” came into use; with each faction thinking they were being “sex-positive” (Levy, 2006:62). In the late 1970's a prominent group of feminists, including Susan Brownmiller, Shere Hite, Robin Morgan, Gloria Steinem, and Grace Paley turned their attention to fighting pornography and formed the New York chapter of Women Against Pornography.

Women Against Pornography rented a storefront located on Forty-Second Street in Manhattan, and set up camp in the thick of adult entertainment; surrounded by peep shows, sex shops, and prostitution. In hopes of spreading women's liberation and cleaning up the streets, Women Against Pornography organized protests and demonstrations. The trademark of Women Against Pornography was offering guided tours of the neighborhood that were intended to illuminate the degradation of sex workers and American women. Guiding curious housewives inside adult entertainment stores, leading high school class trips, and escorting Benedictine nuns to strip clubs, were some of the tactics used by Women Against Pornography (Levy, 2006:64).

Their slogan, "Pornography is the theory, rape is the practice," coined by Robin Morgan, was also a theme in Susan Brownmiller's 1975 book *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape*. It is in this text that Brownmiller argued that rape was not an isolated crime such as robbery, but a systematic process of demoralization. In *Against Our Will* she defines rape as "nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation by which *all men* keep *all women* in a state of fear", and pornography as an "undiluted essence of anti-female propaganda"(Brownmiller, 1975:297).

Susan Brownmiller and her compatriots felt they were working to liberate women from degrading sexual stereotypes and a culture of male domination. Looking back upon those years in her autobiography *In Our Time: Memoir of a Revolution* (1999) Brownmiller wrote, "Sometimes there were emotional defenses of free speech, but to our bewilderment, we also saw that some women identified their sexuality with the S&M pictures that we found so degrading. Porn turned them on and

they didn't want to hear any political raps about how women were conditioned to find their sexual pleasure from within misogynistic scenarios created by men. They claimed we were condemning their minds and behavior, and I guess we were" (Brownmiller, 1999:308).

Rifts among feminists continued to deepen in 1983 when a radical feminist legal scholar named Catharine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin, author of the controversial books: *Woman Hating* (1974), *Pornography: Men Possessing Women* (1981) joined forces. Together Dworkin and MacKinnon drafted a city ordinance positioning pornography as a civil rights violation against women. The law stated that if a violent crime was committed against someone and police found that the attacker had used pornography beforehand, the people or company who produced the pornography could be sued for violating the crime victim's civil rights. Since producers of pornography could never know in advance if people who would later commit crimes might use their products, the Dworkin-MacKinnon ordinance would have strongly discouraged the production of pornography.

Although the mayor of Minneapolis vetoed the initial ordinance, Dworkin and MacKinnon soon began working with the conservative city council of Indianapolis, Indiana. In an attempt to rid the city of pornographic materials MacKinnon and Dworkin joined forces with these unlikely bedfellows for ordinarily this conservative Republican group opposed many feminist ideals such as abortion rights and the Equal Rights Amendment. However the Indianapolis city council worked with these two radical feminists in an unsuccessful movement to ban pornography (Nathan, 2007:59).

In a 1995 interview with British writer Michael Moorcock, when asked about her interest in pornography Dworkin responded, “I looked at pornography to try to understand what happened to me. And I found a lot of information, about power and the mechanisms by which the subordination of women is sexualized” (Moorcock, 1995). Dworkin was adamant that pornography is harmful by its very nature and a violation of women’s civil rights. In her book *Letters From A War Zone* (1979) she describes romance as “rape embellished with meaningful looks” and later when describing dating she writes, “in seduction the rapist often bothers to buy a bottle of wine” (Dworkin 1979:57).

In the text *Pornography: Men Possessing Women* (1981), Dworkin writes; “The sexual colonization of women’s bodies is a material reality: men control the sexual and reproductive uses of women’s bodies. The institutions of control include law, marriage, prostitution, pornography, health care, the economy, organized religion, and systematized physical aggression against women (for instance, rape and battery). Male domination of the female body is the basic material reality of women’s lives” (Dworkin, 1981:201).

In her chapter titled “Whores” Dworkin discusses the ideology of male sexual domination and argues that this ideology posits that the possession of the female is the natural right of males and men are superior to women by virtue of their physical anatomy: their penises. When discussing sexual relations within the ideology of male sexual domination she writes, “Sex is, in fact, conquest of the female, especially but not exclusively phallic conquest and phallic possession; that is the use of the female body for sexual or reproductive purposes is the natural right of men; that the sexual

will of men properly and naturally defines the parameters of a woman's sexual being, which is her whole identity" (Dworkin, 1981:201).

In the preface to the tenth anniversary addition of her book *Intercourse* (2006). Dworkin writes, "Equality in the realm of sex is an anti-sexual idea if sex requires domination in order to register as sensation. As sad as I am to say it, the limits of the old Adam— and the material power he still has, especially in publishing and media— have set limits on the public discourse (by both men and women) about this book" (Dworkin, 2006: XXXII).

Ironically enough, Dworkin has written books that are banned in Canada under the Supreme Court of Canada ruling *R. v. Butler* because of depictions of "cruelty and violence" found in several of her books (Nathan, 2007:60). A passage in her book *Ice and Fire* reads, "We are on the beach, Mister wants some sex...He is wired, tense, he has spasms, shows me his knife...He fucks me" (Dworkin, 1986:119).

In a 1998 article written for *The Guardian* (London) titled "Dear Bill and Hillary", Dworkin writes, "Bill Clinton's fixation on oral sex — non-reciprocal oral sex- consistently puts women in states of submission to him. It's the most fetishistic, heartless, cold sexual exchange that one could imagine... I have a modest proposal. It will probably bring the FBI to my door, but I think that Hillary should shoot Bill and then President Gore should pardon her" (Dworkin, 1998).

Just as Dworkin's and MacKinnon's radical ideas about pornography have been accepted by many women's rights advocates, they have been strongly rejected as well. As writer Suzie Bright commented in her blog shortly after Dworkin's death in 2005:

“Every single woman who pioneered the sexual revolution, every erotic-feminist-bad-girl-and-proud-of-it-stilettoed-shitkicker, was once a fan of Andrea Dworkin. Until 1984, we all were. She was the one who got us looking at porn with a critical eye, she made you feel like you could just stomp into the adult bookstore and seize everything for inspection and a bonfire.

The funny thing that happened on the way to the X-Rated Sex Palace was that some of us came to different conclusions than Ms. Dworkin. We saw the sexism of the porn business... but we also saw some intriguing possibilities and amazing maverick spirit. We said, “What if we made something that reflected our politics and values, but was just as sexually bold?” (Nathan, 2007:61).

Journalist and essayist Ellen Willis echoes Suzie Bright, arguing that the slogan “pornography is violence against women” is simply the traditional claim that “men want sex and women endure it” repackaged and sold by feminists (Nathan, 2007:62). Though a lot of porn *does* show men acting violently toward women, much of pornography also presents the opposite: women tying men up, and then abusing them both verbally and physically. Feminist scholar Lisa Duggan also weighs in on this issue and argues that pornography degrades women no worse than non sexual

images of gross violence or “advertising images of housewives as dingbats obsessed with getting men’s shirt collars clean” (Nathan, 2007:62). I support Duggan for often I find pornographic images are much less offensive than adverts directed at women, or television shows. For example, *Toddlers and Tiaras*, broadcast on The Learning Channel, follows the lives of young girls who compete in beauty pageants across the Southern United States. These little girls learn to strut their stuff before they even have “stuff”. Duggan argues that the real problem is not pornography but is the economic and cultural institutions that keep women as second-class citizens that lead to those insulting images. Duggan proposes that we change the institutions that encourage sexism and keep the government out of the business of regulating images.

### *Contemporary Perspectives and Recent Research*

There is no doubt that pornography is full of contradictions. Yet arguably outdated feminist arguments against pornography are far from the last word on the subject. The introduction and articulation of a range of feminisms that attempt to represent common identity and experience but also express differences among women in conjunction with a growing emphasis on women’s sexual agency and pleasure have enabled a shift from the dualist Dworkin and McKinnon positioning. Burgeoning interest in both gender and sexuality in academia such as Gay and Lesbian Studies, Queer Theory, and Critical Masculinity Theory has revised many debates about gender, sex, and sexual representation. This rethinking of sexual politics and gender



politics has also allowed for a reevaluation of the possibilities of pornography (Attwood, 2002: 93).

In the past two decades a new interest in examining pornography from a variety of angles has evolved into the relatively new discipline called ‘Porn Studies’. Professor of Film Studies and Rhetoric at the University of California, Berkley, Linda Williams, pioneered the discipline of porn studies and has written extensively on many aspects of pornography. Her books *Hardcore: Power, Pleasure, and the “Frenzy of the Visible”* (1999) and *Porn Studies* (2004) make pornography and erotica a topic of contemporary scholarship and legitimize the study of pornography as a cultural form. Williams signals new directions for studying and teaching porn studies and convincingly argues that it is time for scholars to recognize the pervasiveness of pornography and perform a serious and extended analysis on this phenomenon. In the BBC documentary *Pornography: A Secret History of Civilization*, Williams comments, “As a woman, if you really want to get turned on by pornography, to this day, you watch gay porn... That’s what I watch” [laughs] (*Pornography: A Secret History of Civilization*, 2005).

On the heels of Williams, journalist Pamela Paul seeks answers to the several looming questions in her recent book *Pornified: How Pornography is Damaging Our Relationships, and our Families* (2006). In the introduction to her book she asks: “Who uses pornography and why? Are more women indulging in pornography? How does pornography affect people? What is the impact of a pornified culture on relationships and society as a whole?” (Paul, 2006:3). Although Paul is interested in these overall questions, later in her introduction she warns her reader that she will

leave the subject of pornography alone and instead focus on the demand—who uses porn and how—and why it matters even to those who do not use pornography. She writes, “This story is about how pornography’s growth, ubiquity, and acceptance are affecting American society” (Paul, 2006:10).

The central thesis of *Pornified* suggests that pornography has become so accepted, so anonymous, and so widespread, that we no longer question the potentially dangerous consequences of using pornography and the wider ‘pornification’ of society. Paul provides a plethora of examples detailing the various ways pornography has seeped into contemporary popular culture i.e. music, music videos, celebrity culture, television, advertising, etc. In the introduction to *Pornified* she writes, “Today, pornography is so seamlessly integrated into popular culture that embarrassment or surreptitiousness is no longer part of the equation”(Paul, 2006:4).

Paul seeks answers to her large research questions through testimonial from interviews, previously conducted research and the Pornified Poll she conducted in conjunction with Harris Interactive, a New York based marketing research firm. Paul describes her research poll as, “the first nationally representative poll of Americans to deal primarily with pornography”. In addition to the Pornified Poll, Paul also conducted roughly 100 in-depth interviews concerning participant pornography use. She notes that men were willing to discuss the subject of pornography openly, a subject according to Paul that men rarely get to discuss seriously and at length. Paul writes, “In short, America has porn on the brain” (Paul, 2006:10). Yet several pages later when examining participants willing to discuss pornography Paul seems to contradict herself, she write “Reliable figures are hard to come by, as many people are

reluctant to admit their usage even with the anonymity of a phone or online survey” (Paul, 2006:13).

I feel it is important to point out that all 100 participants identified themselves as heterosexual; roughly 80% percent of the participants were male and 20% female. By not including homosexual persons and an equal distribution of men and women in her research, Paul is generating unreliable results. Using testimonials from the 100 participants, she pieces together interviews to illustrate the ways in which pornography harms individuals and gives little attention to other possible avenues. Paul is quick to quote statistics when it suits her purpose and equally as quick to discount statistics when it appears there is a lack of support from testimonials to support her hypothesis. In the first chapter alone Paul quotes more than twelve surveys, polls, and reports while footnotes warn the reader that certain statistics are not nationally representative and are for “interests” sake.

Paul explores the stereotype that ‘porn is a guy thing’ in her chapter titled “Men Need Variety. She writes, “Men who don’t like pornography aren’t as rare as fans think, or even as unusual as guys who don’t like it suppose they are. In the Pornified Poll, only 27 percent of Americans agreed with the statement ‘All men look at pornography’ ” (Paul, 2006:21). To further describe the population of men who do *not* indulge pornography, Paul uses the experience of “Ian”, an interview subject who dislikes pornography. Ian “has trouble believing that as many men are into pornography as most people seem to think. For all I know, *nobody* I know watches pornography” (Paul, 2006:23). However on the next page, Paul seems to contradict this sentiment writing, “The consensus is that pornography is just ‘a guy thing’. It

may be biological or it may be cultural, but most agree that it [pornography] plays a part in nearly all men's lives" (Paul, 2006:24).

Not only does Paul reduce pornography and the connection with male sexuality and but she also does not entertain a positive connection between female sexuality and pornography. Her acknowledgement of those who do not use pornography is in direct opposition to a 2009 study conducted at Université de Montréal by Professor of Social Work, Simon Louis Lajeunesse. Lajeunesse's study attempted to observe the impact of pornography on the sexuality of men yet soon came to an impasse for his research team was unable to find a control group of men who had never used pornography. Lajeunesse comments, "We started our research seeking men in their twenties who had never consumed pornography. We couldn't find any" (Lajeunesse, 2009).

Paul cites (and agrees with) sources such as Be-broken Ministries in San Antonio, which claims that pornography is becoming the leading factor of divorce. Paul argues that pornography is a male "utopia" and a utopia that they are very interested in protecting. In the section titled, "The Power of Pornography" Paul writes, "Pornography is not only a place where men can exert control over their own lives; it is a place to validate one's maleness" (Paul, 2006:34). According to Paul, since porn only involves men looking at women and not interacting with them, this in turn, "elevates the physical while ignoring or trivializing all other aspects of the woman" and thus, "a woman is literally reduced to her body parts and sexual behavior" (Paul, 2006:80).

Paul suggests that as pornography continues to 'up the ante' and seep into the

realm of popular culture, it causes widespread desensitization amongst those who use pornography. In her section titled “You’ve Seen 1000 Women, You’ve Seen Them All”, Paul writes, “The inevitability of pornography can ultimately quash desire and increase the desire to both produce and consume even more explicit pornography” (Paul, 2006:85). The agglomeration of afore mentioned factors “leaves men desensitized to both outrage and to excitement, leading to an overall diminishment of feeling and eventually to dissatisfaction with the emotional tugs of everyday life. Men find themselves upgrading to the most intense forms of pornography, glutting themselves on extreme imagery and outrageous orgasms” (Paul, 2006:90).

While attempting to examine the question “why men like pornography”, Paul argues that men only have so much sexual energy once they pass their “sexual peak”, and so, men are drawn to pornography because it is “an emotionally and physically easier route to sexual satisfaction than dealing with another human being, even a willing partner, wooing and pleasing her” (Paul, 2006:153). Above all, pornography, according to Paul, informs the male sexual appetite and raises men’s expectations of how women should behave, ultimately leading to impotence, delayed ejaculation or erectile dysfunction and a general desensitization towards sexual activity (Paul, 2006:94).

Shifting focus to examine the ways in which pornography affects women, Paul is quick to point out the failure of the feminist movement to successfully combat the issue of pornography. Paul points out that in recent years women’s magazines now discuss pornography in new terms from a different perspective: how women can incorporate pornography into their own lives. Perceiving this as pressure to conform

to ideals of female sexuality Paul writes, “Porn, they are told, is sexy, and if you want to be a sexually attractive and forward-thinking woman, you’ve got to catch on” (Paul, 2006:109).

Paul does take note of female attempts to redefine and re-conceptualize pornography in a way that presents itself as more suitable to women. Giving coverage to entrepreneurs Carlin Ross, a lawyer, and Christina Head, a documentary filmmaker, who were quoted in the *New York Times* saying, that, for them, pornography is “all about empowering and educating women” (Paul, 2006:111). Paul remains inquisitive and questions whether companies such as Digital Playground, a California-based pornography production company owned and operated by Samantha Lewis, truly appeal and cater to female audiences. Digital Playground’s website reads, “With a classy female in the owner’s seat, Digital Playground shatters the porn stereotype, encouraging women and couples to join the consumer pool”. The author also included a 2004 *Elle* Magazine Poll that suggests that 41% of women intentionally viewed or downloaded porn in the last month (Paul, 2006:111).

Throughout a conversation I had with “Karen” who described herself as “pro-porn” and as a feminist, Karen discussed her participation in consuming and creating pornography. Her comments illustrate that user-generated pornography is increasingly about the self and sexuality.

*Pornography objectifies, but that is part of the appeal, you know? When I go online it is like there are no worries, no deep rooted emotional attachments, just sex- no fear of STDS— it is easy, if you don’t like the interaction you are having or the video you are watching you just turn it off and walk away. I really enjoy watching and participating in live casts. With the live chats, it is like, if there is nothing good on, or everyone sucks, then I do it! I guess it is kind*

*of like an ego boost, usually after I post, members e-mail you and will be like "oh you are so beautiful" "oh that was so hot"- like one time I had over a thousand people watching me, you know? It can be a really exhilarating and kind of assuring experience.*

Karen's comments illustrate the control that she has when watching pornography, for instance if she is not enjoying the video or experience she simply turns it off, or if she wishes to create her own pornography she does so. Her mentioning of her ego being a part of the process is a very interesting comment and again points to the notion that user generated pornography is increasingly about the self. Karen's feelings contrast Paul's research and offer a different perspective on female pornography use.

Ultimately Paul argues that popular culture promotes the "wild and fun woman who loves pornography" and provides examples of sex symbols such as Carmen Electra, Paris Hilton and Pamela Anderson. Comparing what is now an accepted form of attire, bodily maintenance, and exercise she writes, "back in the pre-pornocopia era, wearing a thong meant painful waxing and a wedgie, pole dancing meant emulating a low-class stripper" (Paul, 2006:109). It seems as though Paul is suggesting that we have been duped, or some of us have been duped, and we [women] now willingly objectify ourselves.

In her section titled "Playing Along", Paul argues that women learn to objectify themselves at an early age. Paul attributes early exposure to pornography to a rigid instruction regarding sexual preferences as opposed to a broadening of sexual horizons or an educational opportunity. She speaks of women 'tolerating' pornography, reinforcing traditional binaries, she hints that perhaps erotica is 'for the

girls' and porn 'a guy thing'. She writes:

“Despite the efforts of female erotica and pornography producers and the women who enjoy their work, most men do not find truly female targeted erotica appealing, and the men who do watch them with their partners say they do so only for their girlfriends’ or wives’ sake. For their own arousal, they watch male-orientated pornography on their own. True male-orientated pornography still offends the vast majority of women” (Paul, 2006:123).

Citing her Pornified Poll which suggests that only 15 percent of women believe pornography *does not* raise men’s expectations of women, Paul argues that pornography dictates how women should look and skews expectations of how they should act (Paul, 2006:133). In this section Paul gives no attention to male counterparts and how they may be implicated in the struggle over presentation of self and the sexual expectations that are also imposed upon men. She warns her readers that ultimately intimacy is impossible if either partner leads a “porn lifestyle”, and dubs masturbation the “selfish sex” (Paul, 2006:132).

Paul is quick to play up the elements of shame, guilt, and blame in the emotions that surround pornography use and pornography addiction after suggesting that “today, pornography is so seamlessly integrated into popular culture that



embarrassment or surreptitiousness is no longer part of the equation (Paul, 2006:4). She writes, “Women often blame themselves for husbands porn use, this blame is then reinforced by columnists, partners, sex therapists and other members of the therapeutic community “ (Paul, 2006:169). According to Paul women living in this Pornified culture tend to reach the same “sad” conclusion that:

“Porn is inevitable and there’s nothing they can do. Part of the reason men and women come to believe that pornography is so excusable, so natural, so unavoidable stems from what they learned growing up—the lessons their parents taught them, the shrugs and excuses from other adults, the advice and encouragement from friends and peers, and the messages from the media surrounding them during their formative years. Boys who are told that “boys will be boys” become men who are boys. Dads who hand down pornography teach boys a lifelong lesson: Pornography is a natural male imperative. Mothers who pretend not to notice set standards for the wives who follow. Today, a pornified culture reinforces and expands upon those messages. And then the next generation comes along.” (Paul, 2006:171).

Most of Paul’s arguments seem to be based on ideals of monogamy, traditional

gender roles, and traditional relationship models. She titles masturbation the “selfish sex” and focuses in on the guilt and shame associated with pornography use. Many sex therapists argue against the notion that masturbation is selfish and suggest that focusing on self-pleasure can be a gateway to self-actualization that allows for an exploration our bodies and sexuality with out a partner (Zamboni and Crawford, 2002). The ability to **give** oneself an orgasm, the importance of knowing our bodies and not bearing shame over our bodies and our sexuality in my opinion is paramount.

Examining addiction to pornography and compulsive pornography use, Paul addresses “pornography addicts” by using testimonial from participant interviews. Likening pornography use to ‘the rush’ from taking drugs, Paul argues, that pornography use begins as casual and then becomes habitual with exposure to more and more sexually explicit material (according to Paul this can lead to other experiences with adult entertainment such as strip clubs and various pornographic technologies). In her section devoted to pornography addiction, titled “Desensitization and Dissatisfaction” she argues that pornography has desensitizing effect on men, she writes, “it’s not as if most men intend to get into bestiality, child porn or rape reenactments. Desensitization is a major stage in becoming addicted to pornography” (Paul, 2006: 277). According to Paul, “the forbidden” no longer disturbs the mind the way it once did. Yet I ask, who chooses what is forbidden and what is disturbing?

For those who are pro-porn or for “sex-positive feminists”, or whom Paul dubs “pornography defenders”, Paul has a simple message:

“Pornography proponents not only deliberately conflate art

and pornography; they equate human sexuality with pornography consumption, drawing a causal link between man's instinct to look at other people with admiration or desire and his use of pornography" (Paul, 2006: 241).

Yet, don't both men and women alike look at others (the same sex included) with adoration? Again, Paul over generalizes and seemingly pigeon holes men. For Paul there is a vast difference between sexuality and its artistic representation, and pornography "a commercialized means to arousal" (Paul, 2006: 241). Perhaps Paul would agree with Oscar Wilde who wrote in his essay *The Decay of Lying* (1889), "Life imitates art far more than art imitates Life".

Paul leaves her reader with an ominous warning: "The costs to our relationships, our families, and our culture are great, and will continue to mount. Clearly we need to find new ways to approach the problem" (Paul, 2006: 259). I agree with Paul's statement that we must continue to search for alternative ways to approach the phenomenon of pornography and pornography use, but do not agree with all her recommendations. Her recommendations include attempting to "quell consumer demand, censor and limit the availability of pornography and anonymity of the consumer" (Paul, 2006:265). "What we need is a mind-set shift, one that moves us from viewing porn as hip and fun and sexy to one that recognizes pornography as harmful, pathetic, and decidedly unsexy" (Paul, 2006:265).

Paul leaves her reader with a call to arms:

"Pornography is a moving target and it's time we catch

up. For years, the pornography industry and the pornified culture have told both men and women who oppose pornography to shut up or turn a blind eye. They have accused anti-pornography activists, or even those who dared question their profit equation, of being anti-sex and anti-freedom. They have done so while creating a forcefully anti-sex product that limits the freedom of men, women, and children.

They have sold America on the idea of fantasy while inciting us to ignore reality. Those who have been silenced have only served to further legitimize pornography with their lack of censure. Those who are now quiet must speak out” (Paul, 2006: 276).

Dr. Paul Bryant, a professor in telecommunications at Indiana University feels that Paul “overstates the point”. In an interview with “The Boston Globe” he stated, “What we're talking about is more sexually explicit content; definitely, that's happened, But that's not just a function of more pornography. It's largely a function of the expansion of the media industry. We are just inundated with media messages, so what message makers have to do is come up with messages that are likely to get attention. The thing that is likely to get attention is sex. You could use fishing, but it's not going to be interesting to many people. You've seen this throughout history. Every

time a new medium comes around, there's an explosion of sexual content. It happened with books, it happened with movies, it happened with the VCR. And now the Internet allows it to happen to an even greater extent" (Aucoin, 2006).

Focusing on male sexuality and identity in his article "Pornography and the Alienation of Male Sexuality", Dr. Harry Brod uses both feminist and Marxist theory, to examine pornography's role in the social construction of sexuality, and "pornography's model of male sexuality" (Brod, 1996:394). Throughout the article he emphasizes the social construction of sexuality and seeks to present an analysis of neglected aspects of the debate over pornography; namely the links between mainstream male sexuality and pornography. Brod argues that analyses of the relation between male sexuality and pornography have typically focused on porn's incitement of greater extremes of violence inflicted upon women. Highlighting contradictions in these causal arguments he writes, "The violence endemic to both systems cannot be understood as externalized manifestations of some natural, inner biological or psychological drives, yet it emerges from relations of power" (Brod,1996:394).

Brod is careful to not take a "sexual liberationist" perspective on pornography and vows to neither minimize nor negate possible positives and negatives of viewing pornography; for while it may have a liberating function for some, it can entail the opposite for others. He claims that pornography has a negative impact on men's own sexuality and carefully argues that there is dialectical relationship at work here. He claims that aspects of the patriarchal system can actually work to disadvantage, at least in part, the group it privileges, men (Brod, 1996:394). Using Marxian theory he posits, "Pornography is inherently about the commercialized sex market, about the

eroticization of power, and the power of eroticization” (Brod, 1996:401). His comments on the multifaceted role that power plays in pornography allude to the dynamic role that power plays in the everyday lives of men and women, respective sex lives, and relationships, an area of great interest to me and one which I will address in Chapter 6.

When contemplating the difference between pornography and erotica, Brod argues that erotica portrays sexual subjects that manifest their selfhood or personhood in and through their bodies. Whereas pornography depicts literal sex objects, persons reduced to bodies that are up for sale, not to mention bodies that have proved to be quite profitable. Specifically, “Erotica, as a sexual art, expresses a self, whereas pornography, as a sexual commodity, markets one” (Brod, 1996:398). From this Marxian perspective a distinction between commercial and personal sex is provided, please see Chapter 6 for further analysis.

According to Brod “alienated pornography sexuality” has two dimensions: the objectification of the body and the loss of subjectivity. The objectification of the male body entails a focus on the male genitalia, he writes, “Men become sexual acrobats endowed with oversized and overused organs which are; the fantasy model of sex: two feet long, hard as steel, and can go all night” (Brod, 1996:395). Brod argues that erections have reached mythic significance and using penile performance as an index of male strength and potency is a blatant biological contradiction for there is no muscle tissue in the penis. Focusing attention on one organ can increase male performance anxieties and also detract attention from other areas of the body that could potentially become sources of pleasure. In his lectures on male sexuality Brod

argues that the most basic male sex organ is the skin, not the penis. Brod points out that while pornography tends to depict women as always sexually ready, it also presents men as forever ready, perpetually ready for sexual encounters and often the instigator of sexual activity (Brod, 1996:395). Brod argues that this diminishes pleasure and causes a split consciousness in men, in which they can no longer enjoy sexual activity because they are hyper-aware of flaws.

This leads him to his next argument that combats generalizations that women tend to connect sex with more emotional intimacy than men. Brod argues that indeed men do have feelings of intimacy similar to those of women, yet they are trained to deny them and are encouraged further to see physical affection and intimacy primarily, if not exclusively, in sexual terms. According to Brod's research these strict gender roles places a great deal of strain on male sexuality (Brod, 1996:396). In sum, Brod hypothesizes that pornography produces and reproduces uniform standards of female beauty, upon which male desires and tastes are channeled into a single mode with minor variations. He writes, "Men's own subjectivity becomes masked to them, and historically and culturally specific standards of beauty are made to appear natural and given" (Brod, 1996:396).

Applying Marxian concepts to the "crisis of masculinity" to further his argument, Brod suggests that particular crises of masculinity are actually manifestations of a "much deeper and broader phenomenon" which he calls the "general crisis of patriarchy" (Brod, 1996:400). According to Brod the increasing use of the male form as a sex symbol in contemporary culture is evidence of "advanced capitalism's increasing use of new styles of masculinity to promote images of men as

consumers, as well as producers” (Brod, 1996:400). Women, according to Brod are not the consumers of porn, but are the consumed.

In his concluding remarks Brod argues that pornography should be understood as “the imperialism of the body” and the greater public proliferation of pornography proclaims the greater colonization of the body by the market (Brod, 1996:400). Brod concludes that pornography is incompatible with real freedom and is a “vehicle for the imposition of socially constructed sexuality not a means for the expression of autonomously self-determined sexuality” (Brod, 1996:400). He argues that the campaign against pornography should not be a call for censorship but a consumer campaign for product safety (Brod, 1996:402).

Like Brod, sociologist Michael Kimmel has also theorized about the relationship between pornography and male sexuality. In his book titled *Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men*, Kimmel adds to the growing conversation about the crisis of masculinity. Kimmel’s *Guyland* explores middle-class male response to changing cultural conditions and asserts that the transition of boys into ‘manhood’ is a more confusing and elongated process than ever before. Suggesting that changing social and cultural paradigms have altered traditional roles of white middle class men, Kimmel argues that men now resist maturation and adulthood to instead live in utopian ‘guyland’, (populated by aggressive, beer-swilling and sex crazed guys who continually try to prove their manhood). In this “guyland” men live by the “guycode”, a collection of attitudes, values, and traits that together encompass what it means to be a man (Kimmel, 2008:45). Kimmel argues that the sexual mandate of the “guycode” is to “have sex with as many women as possible, as



frequently as possible, no matter what”, arguing further, that this mandate is such an unattainable goal that it leaves men feeling inadequate and vengeful (Kimmel, 2008:172).

Kimmel uses significant life events as markers to measure adulthood and maturity: completing education, finding a career, getting married, becoming a homeowner, and becoming a parent (Kimmel, 2008:30). In doing so Kimmel, invokes a highly ambitious and traditional timeline for male lives. Feminists, among others, have worked hard to show that marriage is not a prerequisite to full participation in society and adulthood, nor is becoming a parent. And while gay marriage is still illegal in most American states, and the right to get married is denied to so many, it is easy to see that marriage is not a requirement of adulthood. As for Kimmel’s goal of home ownership, I feel Kimmel entirely misses the point. Firstly, Kimmel makes no reference to the prevalence of homelessness amongst males, some of whom are veterans. Secondly, homeownership has proved to be a deeply rooted American ideal as documented by David Harvey in his work *Crisis of Capitalism* (2010). Perhaps Kimmel is confusing class and status with character for if a man is homeless, single, and without a job, it makes him no less of a man.

For my purposes here I will focus on chapter eight of *Guyland*, “Babes in Boyland: Pornography” in which Kimmel addresses male use of pornography. According to Kimmel, mainstream male consumption of pornography allows men to feel even *more* entitled to women’s bodies and serves as a reassurance to males who are a dosed with a “toxic brew of entitlement and despair” which fuels their

“voyeurism and predation” (Kimmel, 2008: 171-2). Arguing that reassurance is one of the chief functions of pornography, Kimmel overstates the point writing:

“The softest of soft-core guy magazines serve to reassure young men that their desire to look at girls is not only their birthright as guys but a biological imperative. Guys seem to need that reassurance in part because they feel so besieged by gender equality, so trampled by the forces of political correctness, that they can’t even ogle a woman on the street anymore without fearing that the police will arrest them for harassment” (Kimmel, 2008: 172).

In his section titled “Getting Off as Getting Even” Kimmel argues that pornography is about more than female availability and never-ending male desire, according to Kimmel, pornography is also about “guys’ anger at women for withholding what they, the guys, believe is their due: sex. It is about an arrogant in-your-face entitlement that guys feel and the fact that they feel it all the time” (Kimmel, 2008:175).

Kimmel concludes his chapter by attempting to answer why men are aroused by pornography, he writes: “So, what are guys getting out of getting off? They’re getting back. They’re not getting mad; they’re vicariously getting even. Getting back at a world that deprives them of power and control, getting even with those haughty women who deny them the sex even while they invite desire, getting back at all the

bitches and hos who, in the cosmology of Guyland, have all the power” (Kimmel, 2008: 188).

Kimmel references John Stoltenberg’s book *Refusing To Be a Man*, in which Stoltenberg famously wrote, “Pornography tells lies about women, but pornography tells the truth about men” (Stoltenberg, 1989:106). Kimmel reinforces the stereotype that men are willing to have sex at any time, without any emotional attachment, and that women require emotional attachment in order to have sex. Kimmel writes, “the most prevalent lie is that women’s sexuality is as predatory, depersonalized and phallogocentric as men’s sexuality. Women’s sexuality, by contrast, usually requires some emotional connection” (Kimmel, 2008:174). Unfortunately the scope of this book is far too narrow to be considered representative. Although it is encouraging to see critical attention given to masculinity and male use of pornography, Kimmel’s analysis is far from the last word on the subject.

In a different vein than Kimmel and Brod, writer and self proclaimed feminist Ariel Levy briefly touches on feminist approaches to pornography in her book *Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture*. Levy argues that the “Female Chauvinist Pigs” of today are making sex objects out of other women, themselves and male counter parts. Levy argues that the rise of raunch culture or, in other terms, the pornification of society, does not represent the achievements of the woman’s movement, instead it represents the need, possibility and future for other further achievements.

Levy argues that there is a problem with using pornography as a tool for mind expansion, she writes “no matter how much porn you watch you will end up with a

limited knowledge of your own sexuality because you still won't know how these things *feel*." She then asks the question, "To what end does treating sex like a commodity lead us" (Levy, 2006: 181)? Presumably, easy gratification and a waning in emotional value that sex can contain.

The group Feminists For Free Expression calls the censorship solution to pornography production "cosmetic" and "dangerous". Their website reads, "Censorship has traditionally been used to silence women and stifle feminist social change. There is no feminist code about which words and images are dangerous or sexist. Genuine feminism encourages individuals to choose for themselves" (<http://www.ffeusa.org/>). Representative of Feminists For Free Expression, Lisa Palac writes, "Women have rich sexual fantasies, powerful libidos and the power to choose what to look at and read" and elsewhere: "If we are going to talk about oppressive images of women, we'd better include laundry soap commercials (Nathan, 2007: 66).

Debbie Nathan, the author of *Pornography: A Groundwork Guide* (2007), presents one of the most comprehensive and unbiased texts discussing the phenomenon of pornography. She explores many possible theoretical trajectories, presents a number of studies on pornography use and makes reference to several studies that I will briefly detail below.

A recent study conducted at University of Toronto by Ron Langevin and Suzzane Curnoe, suggests that pornography plays a role in the crimes of very few sex offenders (Langvin and Curnoe, 2004). This research echoes Neil Malamuth's 1985 study "Sexual Arousal to Rape and Consenting Depictions: The Importance of the Woman's Arousal in which Malamuth examined the effects of aggressive

pornography on beliefs of rape myth. Malamuth concluded and suggesting that, “there is currently no research to show long –term effects from pornography on aggressive behavior” (Nathan, 2007:54).

Overseas in Japan a 1999 study conducted by Milton Diamond and Ayako Uchiyama revealed that Japan has one of the lowest rape rates in the world amidst an extraordinary amount of widely available explicit pornography depicting various fetishes and paraphilias (Nathan, 2007:55). Similar to this Japanese study Berl Kutchinsky’s study “Pornography and Rape: Theory and Practice? Evidence from Crime Data in Four Countries Where Pornography is Easily Available” examines sexual violence rates in countries where access to pornography is relatively unlimited, uncensored, and unregulated. Kutchinsky boasts declining rates of sexual violence in three European countries; Denmark, West Germany, and Sweden, all countries with liberalized pornography and obscenity law (Nathan, 2007:55).

### *Conclusion*

While some activists are calling for the censorship and regulation of pornographic materials, others such as Debbie Nathan and Caitlin Moran argue that there is a need for *more* pornography, not less. Nathan wonders if more democratic production and distribution of pornography could “create material that shows what desire is like for women and others who traditionally have been porn’s objects instead

of its creators” (Nathan 2007; 118). In her book *How to Be A Woman* (2011) Moran calls for more pornography that is tailored to the desires of various social groups:

“And that was when I started thinking that we need *more* pornography, not less. We need to start making our own stuff. Not the anodyne stuff that’s ostensibly ‘woman-friendly’ porn. I am a 35-year old woman, and I just want a multi-billion dollar international industry where I can see a woman cum.”

“So no. Pornography isn’t the problem. Strident feminists are *fine* with pornography. It’s the porn *industry* that’s the problem. The whole thing is an offensive, sclerotic, depressing, emotionally bankrupt and desultory as you would expect a widely unregulated industry with, at an extremely conservative estimate, \$30 billion to be. No industry has ever made that amount of money without being superlatively crass and dumb.

But you don’t ban things for being crass and dispiriting, If you did, we would have to ban the Gregg’s Mega Sausage Roll first — and we would have a revolution on our hands.

What we need to do is effect a 100 per cent increase in the variety of pornography available to us. Let's face it: the vast majority of porn out there is as identikit and mechanical as fridge-freezers rolling off a production line.

And there are several reasons why this is bad for everyone - men and women equally. Firstly, in the 21st century, children and teenagers get the majority of their sex education from the internet. Long before school or parents will have mentioned it, chances are they'll have seen the lot on the net.

But it's not just their sex education - which is a series of useful facts and practicalities, and the basic business of what goes where, or what could go where, if you're determined enough - that kids are getting from the net. It's also their sex hinterland. It informs the imagination, as well as the mechanics" (Moran, 2011: 36).

How much of what we are attracted to sexually is socially and culturally constructed, and how much is it biologically determined? Surely it can be a combination of both, but it is difficult to tell which takes dominance over the other. Does pornography represent "natural" desires and sexual practices, or does

pornography assist in the fabrication of desires and acts? As Joseph Slade, posits in his book *Pornography in America*, it is at these junctures of uncertainty that pornography seems most menacing (Slade, 2001:20). It is at these uncertain junctures that theorizing sexual representation becomes the most difficult.



### **Chapter 3: Pornography and The Power of Law**

*“Nine-tenths of the appeal of pornography is due to the indecent feelings concerning sex, which moralists inculcate in the young; the other tenth is physiological, and will occur in one way or another whatever the state of the law may be”*

— *Russell Bertrand*

#### *Legal Battles*

Obscenity law has the potential to uphold or suppress violent depictions of sexual relations. Often attempts to clean up pornographic material are based upon “community standards of tolerance” and whether the material qualifies as “degrading” and or “dehumanizing”. Obscenity legislation tends to focus on age of consent and depictions of violence in pornographic and erotic material. In the next section I will briefly discuss recent legal battles, Canadian court rulings and government coalitions that have played a major role in the formation of Canadian obscenity law.

#### *R v. Butler*

In 1992 the in *R. v. Butler* the Supreme Court of Canada described pornographies as “degrading and “dehumanizing” to women, and adopted Canada’s current obscenity law. Current Canadian obscenity law makes it a crime to produce a production in which the “dominant characteristic is the undue exploitation of sex, or of sex and any one or more of the following subjects, namely, crime, horror, cruelty and violence” (*R.v.Butler*, 1992). This particular case has been described as a victory for anti-pornography feminists

who call for censorship, regulation, and government intervention but as a loss for alternative sexualities and pro-pornography groups.

The Winnipeg store Avenue Video Boutique, owned by Donald Victor Butler distributed sexual toys, pornographic videos and magazines, among other sexual objects. Several months after business began in 1987, Butler's store was raided and he was charged under section 163 of the Criminal code of Canada with possession and distribution of obscenity. When Butler later restarted his business he was again arrested was found guilty of eight offences (under section 163) and was ordered to pay \$1000 per offence.

Various anti-pornography lobbyists and groups such as LEAF (Women's Legal Education and Action Fund) and GAP (Group Against Pornography) were unhappy with the *R. v. Butler* ruling and appealed to the Crown. A physically unhealthy Butler returned to court and again was found guilty. Upon this verdict, Butler re-appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada, in 1992 he was found guilty, and obscenity legislation was modified in Canada. Under the modified Canadian Obscenity law "community standards of tolerance" became the principle measure employed to establish and determine if material is "degrading" or "dehumanizing".

Although the Canadian Supreme court claimed that there is no evidence showing a direct correlation between pornography and discrimination or violence against women, the judges said, mere "belief" in the connection was reason enough to outlaw certain forms of pornography. It is worthy to note that in these legal battles the subject of erotica and erotic materials is rarely discussed. Since the enactment of the *R. v. Butler* ruling, Canadian Customs officials have confiscated many pornographic and erotic materials at

the border. Ironically enough, most of this “obscene” material that depicts “cruelty and violence” is en route to gay men—who are not typically not interested in having sex with women—and to lesbians, who are not typically interested in having sex with men (Nathan 2007: 59). Some lesbian and gay pornography focuses on sadomasochism (S&M), which usually incorporates violence and depicts persons being bound and whipped. It is generally this type of pornography that is seized at the border. Given the arguments put forth by anti-pornography feminists in the *R. v Butler* trial regarding pornography, violence, and women, this is ironic; for in most gay male orientated pornography the person taking the assault is a man, not a woman. In lesbian bondage porn the person with the whips, using the nasty words is a woman and it becomes hard to imagine how this material could be thought as anti-women, and censorship of this gay-orientated pornography as not a deeply homophobic tactic. Paradoxically, it is this same law that prevents Canadians from reading books authored by feminist, and anti-porn proponent, Andrea Dworkin, also one of the law’s main inspirations.

*Little Sisters Book and Art Emporium v. Canada*

The *Little Sisters Book and Art Emporium v. Canada* case before the Supreme Court of Canada in 2000 is a pivotal case in the Canadian obscenity law and the history and future of pornography. The case regarded the infringement on the freedom of expression and human rights of Canadians under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* by invoking Section 2 (freedom of expression) of the *Charter*. This pivotal case ruled that Customs officials (under the Customs Act) violated the right to freedom of

expression under Section 2 of the *Charter*. Customs were found justifiable under Section 1 of the *Charter* (also known as the reasonable limits clause or limitations clause; the legal power of the government to limit an individual's *Charter* rights).

In 2000 the Vancouver, B.C, based bookstore Little Sister's Book and Art Emporium specializing in gay and lesbian pornography, literature and sex-toys, challenged the Customs Act after facing repeated discrimination and confiscation from Canadian Customs. Little Sister's Book and Art Emporium challenged the section of the Customs Act that places the onus on the importer to appeal and disprove obscenity within a sixty-day time limit, and to successfully prove, the discrimination they routinely experienced when dealing with Canadian Customs. The court ruled in the favor of Little Sister's and struck down the challenged section of the Customs act.

In his analysis of the *Little Sisters* case, legal scholar Bruce Ryder reviews the Supreme Court of Canada ruling and argues that the Court's ruling is disappointing because it does not do enough to reduce the risk that over-censorship will reoccur (Ryder 2001: 208). Ryder questions if the obscenity law and its restrictions violate the right to freedom of expression, the possibility of institutional bias, excess in obscenity law, and the potential for forms of "self-serving censorship"

Ryder criticizes Parliament and Canadian courts of law for absolving their responsibility and accountability in this matter, for ultimately Canadian border patrol police have the power to decide what is obscene, what violates *The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and what constitutes depictions of "cruelty and violence".

According to Ryder, this is highly problematic due to unreliable training of officers,

preexisting institutional and personal bias, and the clout of power the Customs officials maintain. Ryder observes:

“First officials make censorship decisions routinely in a hidden and unaccountable manner, before members of the public have any awareness of the material at issue. Officials may not be provided with adequate training, time or resources to make consistent or legally intelligible decisions on a routine basis. Public announcements of decisions or the reasons for suppression materials are not issues. As a result, no public debate takes place about the merits of individual decisions or the value of suppressed works. An important safeguard against overzealous censorship is thus absent. Moreover, informed democratic debate about the appropriate boundaries of freedom of expression is hindered” (Ryder 2001: 221).

Ryder typifies popular arguments regarding censorship of pornography into two groups; the first argues pornography by definition is harmful, and the second attempts to differentiate between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ types of pornography. Within these two narrow viewpoints we see how these arguments have become infused with ideology and morals of the religious right and other conservative social groups. In light of Canada’s obscenity law there is a suppression of gay and lesbian sexuality. An interesting example that epitomizes the suppression of female sexuality is the banning of the lesbian magazine

“Bad Attitude” across Canada<sup>2</sup>. According to Ryder this relates to Western, Freudian models of ‘normal and perverse’, and the ‘natural vs. unnatural’ forms of sexual activity. In contrast with other writers such as Pamela Paul, Ryder argues that it is a conservative morality that dominates perceptions of sex in society, and the state should not enforce these conventional standards.

Ryder argues that there is an obvious need to find a balance in obscenity law and notes that obscenity law has become more enlightened in the past decade through Supreme Court cases such as *R. v. Butler* (1992). The author also points out the potential for virtually anyone to create pornography and thus views the attacks on the distribution of pornography as pointless. According to Ryder, it is not only the failures of customs officials that contribute to this problematic situation, but also Canada’s current obscenity law.

It is evident that pornography and obscenity legislation are areas that reveal the failures and limits of legislature and the criminal code. Carol Smart argues that a major problem of using criminal law to deal with pornography and obscenity is that it is required to “formulate judgments on the meaning of representations rather than acts” she also notes that female exploitation cannot be the sole focus of censorship (Smart 1989: 131). Brants and Kok warn us, “we must remember by invoking the criminal justice system, we are appealing to forces which are beyond our control and which, given the present political situation with its increasing reliance on law and order methods, may very well get out of hand” (Brants & Kok 1986: 202).

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<sup>2</sup> Ban later lifted.

## **Chapter 4: The Future Of Porn: The Changing Cultural and Technological Landscape of Values, Sex, Relationships, and Technology**

*“Pornographers are the enemies of women only because our contemporary ideology of pornography does not encompass the possibility of change, as if we were the slaves of history and not its makers. Pornography is a satire on human pretensions”.*

—Angela Carter

*“The good thing about masturbation is that you don't have to get dressed up for it”.*

—Truman Capote

How do we sort through various perspectives on pornography? The various perspectives analyze pornography in different ways (i.e. the economic, social and political aspects of pornography), but rarely do we receive suggestions — other than the call for, or against censorship — on what to do with all of this sex. If forms of pornography and erotica refuse to go away, how will new technologies continue to expand the pornography industry? In the midst of technological innovations will pornography continue to be seen as a taboo activity shrouded in shame — will porn still be porn? Although the answers to these questions remain to be seen, technological advancements continue to innovate the global-adult entertainment industry and pornography alike. Technological advancements have complicated and challenged traditional notions of just what pornography is.

It should be noted that technological advances play a dual role in the production and distribution of pornographic materials. Advancements can assist in the production and distribution of new forms of pornography, or, work to prohibit the

production and distribution of forms of pornography<sup>3</sup>. However it appears that technological advancements further pornography more often than they hinder it. The general interest in technologically advancing sex, contraceptives, plastic surgery, sex related products, sexual enhancements, sex toys, etc., is embedded in our culture.

As I acknowledged previously in Chapter 2, the introduction of video and photo technology in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century was one of the greatest technological leaps in the history of pornography. Unlike painting and sculpture, photography and video offered a picture of a *real* person in the raw; for some this was the thrill of it all, for others the indecency. Film accelerated the proliferation of pornography like never before. Early ‘Stag Films’— films generally shown to parties of all men —paved the way for more mainstream films like, *Barbarella* (1968), *Boys In The Sand* (1971), *Last Tango in Paris* (1972), *Behind the Green Door* (1972), and, *The Devil in Miss Jones* (1973). The combination of video recording technology and the Internet advanced the global adult entertainment industry in ways like never before. Often those involved in the adult entertainment industry are the first to use technological advancements and can be the driving force behind technological advancements. The development and research of mechanized sex toys and advancements in filming pornography illustrates the steady relationship between technology and sex.

Journalist John Tierney writes, “The erotic technological impulse dates back at least to some of the earliest works of art. The so-called Venus figurines of women with exaggerated breasts and buttocks, which were made by firing clay

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<sup>3</sup> Particularly prohibiting pornography that is deemed illegal or “obscene”.



27, 000 years ago — 15 millenniums before ceramic technology was used for anything utilitarian like pots” (Springer, 1996:9). Tierney’s analysis illustrates that the histories of technology and the pornographic are closely linked.

Throughout the following chapter I will explore the intersections of technology, sex, and representations of sexual activity. Through presenting new forms of pornography, sex-related products, and the distribution and production of these innovative materials, I hope to provide the reader with an understanding of the symbiotic relationship between technological advancements and just how advanced the global adult entertainment industry has become.

### *.XXX – The Domain of Porn*

On December 6<sup>th</sup> of 2011 the Internet domain .XXX, which only hosts adult entertainment websites paid for by credit card, was made available to the general public. The .XXX domain is a virtual location (or technically speaking a ‘sponsored top-level domain’) voluntarily used by Internet pornographers to distribute pornographic videos<sup>4</sup>. The sanctioning of this domain allows those who are not looking for pornography to bypass the material entirely and those who are searching for pornography to find the material in a regulated space. The .XXX domain is sponsored by the International Foundation for Online Responsibility and is the brainchild of Stuart Lawley, CEO of IMC Registry.

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<sup>4</sup> An Internet domain host name similar to .com, .net, .org, etc.

In hopes of legitimizing Internet pornography, Lawley has been working with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) since the early 1990's to create a domain devoted solely to adult-entertainment. In a statement to the press Lawley commented, "While adult entertainment is enjoyable to many adults, it is not appropriate for all audiences. We created .XXX to address the unique needs of the online adult entertainment industry. The public response has been overwhelming as consumers and the adult entertainment providers are excited about the benefits and infinite possibilities of .XXX" (Digital Arts, 2011).

The idea of this purely pornographic domain was debated, amended, and attacked for eleven years until its release to the general public in 2011. Various conservative social groups and even members of the porn industry continue to oppose the domain for reverse reasons, either due to a fear of the legitimization of pornography or a fear of censorship of pornography. The article "Why Pornographers No Longer Love the Web" published in the September 2011 issue of *The Economist* explores the changing economic and technologic landscape of the pornography industry. The article details the tensions of video piracy, stating that some porn production studios have seen sales drop by 30-40% in the past years due to so-called "tube" sites (The Economist, 2010).

A more recent article found in *The Economist* argues that the adult entertainment industry is seeking both profit and respectability through the new .XXX domain. After attending the XBIZ EU international conference on 'how to profit from pornography', the author explains some of the technological changes in the global adult entertainment industry. According to *The Economist*, the launch of the

.XXX Internet domain betokens the industry's new respectability, amidst an ongoing debate regarding copyright, censorship, and Internet piracy.

The development of the .XXX domain demonstrates the use of technology to regulate and distribute pornographic material. The creation of the .XXX domain also hints at the much more general and widespread issue of pirating copyrighted material in the 'digital' age. A current example is the controversial Stop Online Piracy Act, a recent Bill put forth by U.S Representative Lamar Smith. In my opinion the attempts of the .XXX domain to regulate Internet content and sanction pornography into a 'safe space' are innovative and honorable. However, the attempts of the .XXX domain try to make the Internet into something that it is not, that is, a regulated 'safe' space.

### *S(t)imulated Sex*

Technologically speaking, pornography continues to evolve by leaps and bounds. Interactive video chats, pornography shown in 3D, an influx in male and female sex toys, and advancements in interactive touch are examples of the ways in which the pornography industry continues to expand. Teledildonics or simply put, dildonics are electrical devices — sex toys— that are controlled via your own personal computer. A description one one dildonic called the Simulator a product found on the website, reads "Dildonics is the science of sending and receiving physical sensation via the computer AKA virtual sex"(http://www.dildonics.org/).

Dildonics come equipped with a vibrator, transmitter, and receiver. The male equipment is a sleeve in which the penis is inserted and the female equipment is a

dildo for vaginal insertion. The male attachment measures the speed and force of each thrust, this information is then communicated to software, and the software turns the measurements into vibration and pulse for the receiver (female) end. Dildonics allow for the sensation of touch to be transmitted from a data link to a receptor over thousands of miles.

The ‘Sinulator’ is claimed to be one of the most popular models of teledildonic technology. Steve Rhodes the president of Sinulator Entertainment feels that this product can “create a feeling of togetherness” when partners are separated from each other by distance. In his description of the product he remarks, “Imagine that: Someone across the world could give you light tickles or pounding vibrations as they saw fit. Combine that with a webcam or voice-chat technology and you start to stretch the definitions of what we consider an, ‘intimate encounter’ ”. Rhodes also notes that the Iraq war was “kind of a boom for our company” due to the separation of spouses and partners (Nathan 2007:120-1).

While it is mostly couples that use the popular Sinulator, another company called *HighJoy.com* markets a different type of teledildonic experience intended for singles. Similar to the idea of an online dating website, persons create an account with *HighJoy.com* and members make contact with other members via private message. If it so happens that there is a mutual desire for the electronic relationship to become sexual, members can then use teledildonic technology to have virtual sex.

These seemingly futuristic forms of pornographic material allow for new types of sexual relationships and perhaps for the maintenance of a long distance relationship— all facilitated by your computer’s hard drive. Many researchers are

interested in the potential outcomes of using these new forms of sex related technology. For example, sociologist and sexologist John Gagnon suggests that a virtually simulated relationship “decreases what is essential in human life, which is sociability — one’s capacity to relate to other people” (Nathan, 2007:120). Others are more optimistic about the possibilities and capabilities of sex-orientated technology. Regina Lynn the author of the “Sex Drive” column for the magazine *Wired* writes, “Cybersex gets blamed for a lot of things, including social isolation, infidelity and divorce. It’s a temptation previous generations of lovers didn’t have to face, and it’s technology, and therefore it’s scary for a lot of folks”. Regardless Lynn suggests that teledildonic technology has “as much potential to bring people together as it does to drive people apart” (Lynn, 2005).

Julia Haiman, director of the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction at Indiana University, predicts that by the year 2016, pornography will involve fictional virtual beings that are tailored to individual consumers tastes and specifications. She writes, “There is a possibility of developing erotic materials for yourself that would allow you to create a partner of certain dimensions and qualities, the partner saying certain things in that interaction, certain things happening in that interaction” (Tanner, 2006:58).

Supporting Haiman’s prediction, the Vancouver based company XStream3D Multimedia recently released the online videogame titled “Virtually Jenna”. For thirty dollars a month players can play an online game in which the goal is to have sex with porn star Jenna Jameson or one of the Club Jenna Girls. Players can select the actors, props, sets, outfits, sex toys, and sexual positions to be used in the game and even

have the option of photographing their favorite scene and creating a picture gallery. A description of the game found on the “Virtually Jenna” website reads: “The hottest 3D virtual sex game featuring Jenna Jameson and her hot Club Jenna friends. Explore the 3D world filled with interactive and erotic experiences and control all the hot 3D sex action” (<http://www.virtuallyjenna.com>). With surprisingly lifelike graphics and animations, this video game has attracted attention from technology enthusiasts and intrigued/aroused customers.

Columnist Regina Lynn demoed the game and reported her findings for her column “Sex Drive” found in the magazine *Wired*. Detailing her experience with the videogame she writes:

“You can dress Jenna in a limited selection of outfits (or nothing at all), pose her for solo or partner sex, and bring her into the studio for an intimate photo shoot. It's not as easy to "win" as it sounds.

Like real women, Jenna's arousal level rises and falls with little apparent connection to what you're doing.

I started by stroking her with the hand while stimulating her with a sex toy. Then I tried directing her in several compromising positions with the male character. Despite her repeatedly claiming, "I'm almost there," her Excite-O-

Meter never climbed all the way to the top. I suppose that's part of the realism.

It's about time someone created a sex game with such a well-rendered environment and beautifully modeled characters. And it's about time we had a game that devotes as much detail and screen time to sex as other games grant to violence” (Lynn, 2005).

In an interview with Lynn, Canadian President of XStream3D Multimedia Brad Abram discussed his plans of adapting the game for a second edition. Quoting Abram she writes, "We needed a starting point, and we wanted to get to market. As we move forward, we are investing money into more advanced motion capture and building in the back story and more traditional game challenges." When commenting on the public reception of portrayals of women in “Virtually Jenna” Abram argues, “The world is ready for something like this. In games like *Grand Theft Auto*, the women are not empowered, they're kind of secondary citizens and have low-class roles," Abram says. "In this game, the women are the stars. They're powerful" (Lynn, 2005). I would disagree with Abram for first they are video game characters who you control with your computer, and secondly, these characters are not empowered they are available. I wonder when a similar female version, a “Virtual James”, will be released.

In searching for new developments in sex related technology and pornographic materials I found many new products such as “Virtually Jenna” that are designed for presumably male use. Designed to imitate female sex organs, companies such as realdoll.com sell “lifelike” human size dolls for roughly six grand a pop. Other companies such as Japan based Tenga have begun producing artificial vaginas and anuses. Sex toy manufacturers such as Topco Sales have invested so far into their product that they have patented specific material called CyberSkin, which mimics the feel of human skin. The Fleshlight, a popular model of these artificial sex organs comes equipped with an anus, mouth, and vulva attachment and is available at the downtown sex-shop.

The We-Vibe is another new sex toy (released in 2009) that has recently received significant media coverage from CBC, CTV, *The New York Times*, *Cosmopolitan*, and Oprah Winfrey. Canadian Bruce Murison, a former Nortel engineer who faced layoffs, has created one of the first couples vibrator which now boasts 2 million clients. The silicone, U-shaped vibrator weighs sixty grams and is the product of six years of research and hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on developing the product.

In an interview with the CBC Murison details how he and his wife Melody pondered the question, ‘Why isn’t there a sex toy that fits between two people when they are making love’? In a 2009 interview with the CBC Murison is quoted stating, "This is, to me, not a sex toy. It's an electromechanical device. We truly look at it from a scientific point of view; in terms of plotting the x-y charts of power versus performance, versus the third dimension of the human dynamic: What frequencies do



women like?" (Murrison, 2005). One of the several descriptions of the product found on the We-Vibe website reads:

“The We-Vibe is already on every continent and in over 50 countries, available through thousands of drug stores, luxury boutiques and adult stores. But we're not resting. We are rapidly expanding the availability of innovative, body-safe and eco-friendly sexual health products to every corner of the globe” (<http://we-vibe.com/>).

The We-Vibe is sold for roughly one hundred dollars and marketed as a couples vibrator, intended to induce better sex and to help maintain healthy relationships. The tag line of the We-Vibe encourages potential consumers to “Share the Pleasure”. When visiting a friend in Toronto, I happened upon the sex store Come as You Are (touted as one of the only worker-owned sex stores in the world), and in their display window, propped up for all to see, was the We-Vibe. Shelly Taylor, owner of the Halifax based sex store Venus Envy, describes interest in the We-Vibe as “phenomenal”, and notes that her store has “never, ever seen a toy sell like this”. Intrigued by this testimony I have attempted to get a grasp for just how popular this new product is here in Montreal. I inquired at several Montreal sex shops about the availability and popularity of this new product. A representative from Boutique Erotika, located in downtown Montreal, described We-Vibe as, “very popular” and claims that customers “love them”. Claiming the product is attractive to couples the representative stated, “Couples like the idea of introducing something

new into the bedroom together. It makes it [the decision to purchase a We-Vibe] a choice they made together, something that can benefit both partners.”

### *Ecological Porn*

Fuck For Forest is a non-profit, Norway based pornography website. Founded in 2004 by couple Leona Johansson and Tommy Hol Ellingsen, the founders describe their website as an “ecological porn site” run by, “concerned humans who use their sexuality and love to direct attention to and to collect money for the earth’s threatened nature” (Nathan, 2007:118). Touted as the world’s first eco-pornography organization Fuck For Forest charges fifteen dollars a month to view mostly amateur material; pictures and videos donated by members and patrons. In its first year of business Fuck For Forest generated 100 000 dollars in revenue (Nathan 2007:118). Despite the fact that the World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF) and the Norwegian chapter of the Rainforest Foundation Fund have refused donations from Fuck For Forest, the website has continued their conservation and reforestation efforts in Central and South America by carrying out independent projects with indigenous peoples.

In a *San Francisco Chronicle* article, co-creator Tommy Hol Ellingsen is quoted stating, "We believe in the spirituality of nature. Fuck For Forest is something we really believe in. For us, sexuality is something really natural. We don't do it to provoke -- it is the right thing to do, and it helps connect to spiritual nature. One of the purest acts humans can do is making love to each other" (Dicum, San Francisco Chronicle: 2005).

The refusal of funds from FFF and disassociation from the adult entertainment

industry indicates that many taboos still surround the pornography industry and affiliation with the porn industry is not only political but has the potential to devastate the credibility of businesses. For instance, corporations such as General Motors<sup>5</sup> and AT&T<sup>6</sup> have recently been boycotted and castigated by critics and shareholders for their involvement in the pornography industry. The fact that it is troublesome for a couple to combine filming representations of sex and their desire to better the environment is interesting. Sex, perhaps not the filming of it, seems natural enough, as does the urge to better the planet, so where does the contradiction arise? Perhaps it is because porn has been forever condemned as ‘bad for you’ and therefore could not possibly offer any potential benefits to members of society.

### *Conclusion*

I have come across several themes while researching these recent technological advancements in the adult entertainment industry. Firstly, technology and the adult entertainment industry are now more interconnected than ever before. Technological advancements in sexual enhancement products, contraceptives, bodily maintenance products, sex toys, and plastic surgery represent the strong relationship between technology and sex. Whether using cave walls as a medium to represent sexual activity or by using state of the art 3D technology to depict sexual acts, as a society we are interested in depicting sexual representations and technological

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<sup>5</sup> DirecTV, a General Motors subsidiary now sells more pornographic films than adult entertainment empire Hustler.

<sup>6</sup> AT&T now offers the hard-core sex channel called The Hot Network to subscribers of its broadband cable service.

advancements allow us to do so in new ways.

Another theme I have found while researching is the increase in both sales and production of sex toys i.e. production of artificial vaginas/anuses. This increase indicates consumer interest and is just one of the ways that technological advancements have furthered the adult entertainment industry. Specifically, the growing interest in and distribution of male sex toys suggests a broader inclusion of males into the market of sex toys. The increasing popularity of female, male, and couple orientated sex toys demonstrates a growing market trend, comprised of individuals with an open mind to sexual experimentation and exploration. In researching the growing demand for these technologically advanced sex orientated products I am left with the suggestion that technologies can help to legitimize sexual exploration.

At the beginning of this chapter I entertained the question ‘will porn continue to be porn amidst the intersection of technology and sexual expression and the wider ‘pornification’ of society’? Producer and director Fenton Bailey is also concerned with this question, he argues that there will eventually come an age when “pornography is so commonplace that it is rendered completely unsecret and without taboo”. So, is it possible for pornography, with all of its taboo, contradiction, and stigma cease to exist as we now know it? According to Bailey, “Taboos and prejudices can be eroded but are rarely erased”. Bailey’s opinion contrasts with several other perspectives on pornography, particularly those that detail the mainstreaming of sex and pornography into popular culture, or the so-called ‘pornification’ of society (Dines, Paul, Levy).

In sum, I feel the widespread uncertainty about what triggers arousal and how pornography is implicated in this seems to be at the root of the issue. Does pornography mimic 'natural' desire, or does it fabricate it? Is this 'natural' desire culturally constructed or biologically based? Researchers seem to be concerned that pornography is creating the mold for our desires. Yet who is the judge that is able to decide what is a proper representation of sexual activity and what is deviant?

At the very least, pornography is a brilliant example of how representation (or erotic art) "both challenges and affirms the power of art; it is the bottom line, the ultimate proof that representation has the power to disturb, to ravish, to arouse, to console" (Slade 2010: 20).

## Chapter 5: Paraphilias and Fetishes

*“Love is a physical desire with an ideal intent.”  
-George Santayana*

*“Sex with out pain is like food without taste.”  
-Marquis de Sade*

A thesis written on pornography would not be complete with out a section that addresses paraphilia and fetish. This being said, one could devote a lifetime to researching the various aspects of fetish and paraphilia. Ranging from the seemingly harmless to the seemingly disturbed paraphilias are perhaps more common than we would like to think. The Greek origins of the word philia means friendship or love, as in philosophy, philanthropy. The definition of paraphilia according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-IV) is as follows: “The essential features of paraphilia are recurrent, intense, sexually arousing fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviors generally involving 1) nonhuman objects, 2) the suffering or humiliation of oneself or one’s partner, or 3) children or other non-consenting persons that occur over a period of at least six months” (American Psychiatric Association, 2005:566). A shorter definition states that paraphilias are “disorders characterized by a disturbance in the object of sexual gratification or in the expression of a sexual gratification” (Andreason and Black 2005:466).

A plethora of sexualities and paraphilias currently circulates amongst us. There are so many different sexualities and preferences it is hard to keep track. Some

of these preferences even contradict each other. Some of the more common paraphilias found in the DSM-IV include:

Exhibitionism	The exposure of genitals.
Fetishism	The use of non-living objects.
Frotteurism	Touching and rubbing against a non-consenting person.
Pedophilia	Focus on pre-pubescent child
Sexual Masochism	Deriving pleasure and gratification from suffering pain and humiliation upon the self, such pleasure is often sexual, but not exclusively so.
Sexual Sadism	Deriving pleasure and gratification from inflicting physical pain and humiliation upon another self, such pleasure is often sexual, but not exclusively so.
Voyeurism	Observing sexual activity.

Other more interesting and obscure paraphilias found in the “DSM-IV Casebook” include: necrophilia (attraction to corpses), partialism (exclusive focus on a particular part of the body), zoophilia (attraction to animals), coprophilia (feces), klismaphilia (enemas), and urophilia (urine) (APA, 2005:576). Apotemnophilia: an attraction to the idea of being an amputee. Acrotomophilia: a sexual attraction to amputees. Carl Elliot notes that while there is little scholarly research on this topic,

there are numerous list serves and web sites such as Amputees and Devotees in Unity that are devoted to “wannabes” (apotemnophiles), “devotees” (acrotomophiles), and “pretenders”.

Havelock Ellis, an early sexologist and one of the first to advocate the decriminalization of homosexuality, used the term “sexual deviation” to replace the previously used term “perversion”, which he pointed out, implied a moral judgment. Ellis insisted on the “vast range of kind and degree in the deviations of the sexual impulse”, from the “innocent and amiable attractions” to “the random murderous outrages of a Jack the Ripper” (Ellis, 1934: 151).

To the range of documented philiias and loves Ellis added presbyophilia: the love of the aged; iconolagnia or pygmalionism: a sexual attraction to statues or mannequins; oosphresiolagnia or ozolagnia: sexual pleasure aroused by body odors; algolagnia: sexual pleasure aroused by the giving or receiving of pain (now re-defined as sexual sadism and masochism); kleptolagnia: the state of being sexually aroused by theft; pyrolagnia: sexual pleasure aroused by fire; and undinism: pleasure aroused by water, especially urination (1934:367-9).

There is a great amount of deviation from the ‘normal’ and thus deviation seems to be the norm. The “Bible” of psychiatry continues to be revised. The trouble with a revised bible is one can’t help but wonder what the truth (or the definition) actually is, and again if there is an absolute truth on the subject? Now contemporary paraphiliias, formerly deviations, formerly perversions, and now disorders, will soon be removed from the DSM-IV. Former paraphiliias are no longer paraphiliias, they have become part of the normal, broad range of human sexuality. On the one hand it



is disturbing that experts can change their views so dramatically, but on the other hand it is reassuring to know that our understanding of our sexualities and ourselves is increasing. This acknowledged, the influence of cultural context on the reinvention of sexuality or what is sexy continues to change rapidly. A brilliant example of how drastically the accepted idea of appropriate sexuality changes is how homosexuality was once seen as a perversion or a paraphilia.

Sex may be sexy, but it can take us into dark places, not only into bedrooms with the lights off, but into minds also with the lights out. In the next chapter I hope to illuminate these dark spaces of the psyche and bedroom by surveying the creators of psychological concepts that categorize sexual behavior, important figures that inspired these concepts, and concluding by summarizing past and present studies and the various approaches they use in studying sexual behavior.

#### The Marquis de Sade 1740-1814

Marquis de Sade, an 18th-century French writer from whom the term sadism is coined, famous for his libertine sexuality and lifestyle, practiced what he preached—and thus spent thirty years of his life between prison and an insane asylum. He is most famous, or infamous rather for his books written while he was incarcerated in prison: *The 120 Days of Sodom* (1785), *Juliette*, and, *Justine* (1791). De Sade hid his book *120 Days of Sodom* behind the walls of his prison and when it was eventually found and published, the original, like de Sade, was locked away from the outside world.

His most infamous book, *120 Days of Sodom* has been described by one author as “above all, a mission, unique in literature, to describe, catalogue, and illustrate all possible manifestations of human sexuality” — to which I would add criminality for the text includes detailed scenes filled with torture, rape, and murder (Phillips, 2005:64). In stark contrast with literature of his time, which illustrated the triumph of virtue over vice, de Sade worked to present “vice triumphant and virtue the victim of its sacrifices” (De Sade, 1966:xxv).

Feminist author Camilla Paglia, insists that de Sade counters the enlightened ideals of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Apollonian ideal. Rousseau introduced “The Social Contract” (1762) with the famous words: “Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains” (Rousseau, 1963:3). At the heart of his argument, Rousseau believed that all men were born free, equal, and also good. The Marquis de Sade however, worked to demonstrate the inequality of Man, the evil of Man (both males and females), the primacy of the sex drive as related to power, and that neither sex is better than the other.

Attacking fundamentals of the Enlightenment, de Sade’s point is that, given freedom, men and women in a Hobbesian “state of nature” will take their pleasures where and when they can. In defiance of the American and French revolutionary ideologies, de Sade insists: “Men were born alone, envious, cruel and despotic, desiring to possess everything and surrender nothing, and perpetually struggling to maintain either their ambitions or their rights...But society is composed of the weak and the strong. And the state of nature is a state of perpetual war” (De Sade, 1966:40).

An atheist and misogynist, de Sade describes woman as:

“An insignificant creature, always inferior to man, infinitely less beautiful than him, less ingenious, less wise, whose outward form is repulsive and the exact contrary of what pleases and delights a man, one who is unwell three quarters of her life, incapable of satisfying her husband whenever Nature compels her to bear children, and of a sour, peevish, and imperious disposition; a tyrant if she is given her way, a fawning slave if held in check; but always false, always wicked, always dangerous. (1966:194).

But apart from that, according to de Sade, “egoism is the first law of Nature” and “lustful pleasures” are, or should be, “our sole motive” in life, for they are far superior to “merely intellectual pleasures”. Nor do they have anything to do with love, he writes, “Love and pleasure are very different things; the proof of this is that we love every day without pleasure, and that even more often we experience pleasure without love” (1966:152-3). In his novels, de Sade is obsessed with sodomy, coprophilia, rape, incest, cruelty, pain, infibulations, masturbation, gigantic penises, flagellation, torture, murder, exhibitionism, voyeurism — a catalogue of paraphilias, heinous crime, and the ever triumphant vice.

In October 2004, an Internet search on Marquis de Sade produced 128 000 hits; another later search in November of 2010 produced 791 000 hits: a six-fold increase in six years, and my search in February of 2012 produced 2,600,000 hits. Roughly nine films have been made about the Marquis de Sade and his life (Phillips, 2005:118; 129-30). I assume the principle interest in this man and his work is for his obscene and sadistic works. Obscenity and sadism are 'in' - or at the very least are accelerating at an exponential rate. The masochist finds pleasure in pain and the sadist loves to inflict it. For them vanilla sex is plain, white, and boring. According to de Sade and other S&M enthusiasts, "Sex with out pain is like food without taste"(Bergner, 2009:69).

#### Baron Leopold von Sacher-Masoch (1836-1895)

Baron Leopold von Sacher-Masoch was a History professor at Graz University in Austria. Sacher-Masoch was interested in not only history but also what is now named after him, sexual masochism. Sacher-Masoch enjoyed being tied up, punished, and to receive acute physical pain inflicted by a woman dressed in furs. It appears that his most famous novella, *Venus in Furs* (1870), which details sexual submission, the power of lust, graphic violence, a critique of Christian values, and a psychological analysis of lust, is also partly autobiographical. It is this graphic novel of submission that members of the S&M community regard as a bible.

*Venus in Furs* begins with a dream: the narrator is in the presence of Venus, the Goddess of Love. Venus explains love to the narrator: "It is woman's true nature

to give herself wherever she loves, and to love whatever pleases her.” Upon cries of protest from the Narrator, Venus explains, “Woman is faithful as long as she loves, but you demand that she be faithful without love and give herself without enjoyment. Who is cruel then, woman, or man? You Northerners take love too seriously. You speak of duty when it is purely a question of pleasure” (Sacher-Masoch, 1989:44)

Later Venus asserts, “It is man who desires, woman who is desired; this is woman’s only advantage, but it is a decisive one. By making man so vulnerable to passion, nature has placed him at woman’s mercy, and she who has not the sense to treat him like a humble subject, a slave, a plaything, and finally to betray him with a laugh — well, she is a woman of little wisdom” (Sacher-Masoch, 1989:144-6). The narrator tells his dream to his friend who cites Goethe’s words: “Be the anvil or be the hammer... woman’s power lies in the passion she can arouse in man and which she will exploit to her own advantage... Man has only one chance: to be a slave or to be a tyrant” (1989:150).

As the story develops, as does the Narrator’s love for Venus, who is now called Wanda. He begs Wanda to marry him and upon her refusal of his proposal he pronounced, “No half-measures, no lukewarm compromises. I prefer to be at the mercy of a woman without virtue, fidelity, or pity, for she is also my ideal, in her magnificent selfishness. If I cannot enjoy to the full love’s perfect bliss, then let me empty the dregs its cup of bitterness and woe, let me be ill-treated by the woman I love, and the more cruelly the better. For this is also a form of pleasure” (Sacher-Masoch, 1989:171).

After more discussion Venus (Wanda) concedes that the Narrator will become her slave. Finding her inner sadist to complement his masochist, she heeds his requests to be whipped. At first Wanda whips her slave with compassion and later with enthusiasm. The relationship escalates with humiliation and pain piled on top of each other in ingenious new ways. After a final whipping by Wanda's new lover, the Narrator returns home to look after his father and finds himself cured of his love for the Goddess.

The narrator tells us the moral of the story is: "That I was a fool!...If only I had whipped her instead! The moral is that woman, as nature created her and as man up to now has found her attractive is man's enemy; she can be his slave or his mistress but never his companion. This she can only be when she has the same rights as he and is his equal in education and work. For the time being there is only one alternative: to be the hammer or the anvil... Hence the moral of the tale: who-ever allows himself to be whipped deserves to be whipped" (Sacher-Masoch,1989:271).

The novel is an interesting exploration of obsessive masochism and the development of sadism in Wanda, and perhaps our own hidden impulses, but also the relation between pleasure and pain, and control in relationships. The moral of the story might be seen as misogynistic, perhaps, or as egalitarianism with an implied plea for equal rights, but there have to be other options than hammers and anvils.

### Richard von Krafft-Ebing

Richard von Krafft-Ebing was a pioneer of sexual pathology, publishing his monumental work *Psychopathia Sexualis*, in 1886. In a copy of his revised and

enlarged 12<sup>th</sup> edition of 1946, he argues, “The gratification of the sexual instinct seems to be the primary motive in man as well as beast” (Krafft-Ebing, 1946: v). Krafft-Ebing was particularly interested in the sexual instinct and the unusual ways that sexual gratification could be granted. Krafft-Ebing described the Baron Sacher-Masoch as a “remarkable example of the powerful influence exercised by the *vita sexualis* — be it in the good or evil sense — over the formation and direction of a man’s mind” (1946:133). It was the Baron Leopold von Sacher-Masoch from whom Krafft-Ebing derived the word masochism, describing the Baron as “afflicted with an anomaly of his sexual feelings” (1946:132).

Krafft-Ebing’s seminal text contained a total of 238 case histories of human sexual behavior. Several of which are listed below.

“Case 21. Vincenz Verzeni, born in 1849: ‘I had an unspeakable delight in strangling women, experiencing during the act erections and real sexual pleasure... The feeling of strangling them was much greater than that which I experienced while masturbating’” (Krafft-Ebing, 1965:63).

“Case 28. In the 1860’s the inhabitants of Leipzig were frightened by a man who was accustomed to attack young girls on the street, stabbing them in the upper arm with a dagger. Finally arrested, he was recognized as a sadist,

who at the instant of stabbing had an ejaculation, and with whom the wounding of the girls was an equivalent for coitus” (Krafft-Ebing, 1965:71).

“Case 57. ‘I am thirty-five years old, mentally and physically normal...Even in my early childhood I loved to revel in ideas about the absolute mastery of one man over others... In reading *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (which I read about the beginning of puberty), I had erections. Particularly exciting for me was the thought of a man being hitched to a wagon in which another man sat with a whip, driving and whipping him’ ” (Krafft-Ebing, 1965:95).

Krafft-Ebbing believed the root of paraphilia and sexual deviation was an abnormal instinct present in an individual from birth: “A differentiation of original and acquired cases of sadism is scarcely possible. Many individuals, tainted from birth, for a long time do everything to conquer the perverse instinct... Later, when the opposing motives of an ethical and aesthetic kind have been gradually overcome, and when oft-repeated experience has proved the natural act to give but incomplete satisfaction, the abnormal instinct suddenly bursts forth. Owing to this late expression, in acts, of an originally perverse disposition, the appearances are those of



an acquired perversion. As a rule, it may be safely assumed that this psychopathic state exists from birth” (Krafft-Ebbing, 1965:57).

### Dr. Fred Berlin

Dr. Fred Berlin, professor at John Hopkins University and practicing psychiatrist, likes to consider human erotic life from the vantage point of a Martian scientist gazing down at earth. Berlin figures the Martian would see “that a lot of different sexual interests exist within the people who live on this planet. He would note people attracted to adults of the opposite gender and people attracted to adults of the same gender and a percentage of people on Earth attracted to children and people attracted to all sorts of behaviors, but the Martian scientist would simply observe these Earthly desires and define their differences with no judgment or value attached to them” (Bergner, 2009:21). Berlin has worked closely with serial killers; Jeffery Dahmer who killed 17 men and boys, their deaths involving rape, cannibalism, dismemberment, and necrophilia; and Michael Ross, who confessed to raping and strangling to death eight girls and young women.

Berlin welcomes large numbers of child molesters, violent offenders, necrophiliacs, and even a gynecologist voyeur into his office. Urging his treatment on his patients, he believed he alleviated his patients from the chaos of Eros —the sex drive— the libido. According to Berlin, “God or nature put sex into each of us. If we don’t eat, we die. If we stop having sex, we perish as a species. We are talking about a powerful, biologically based appetite. And if that drive gets aimed in the wrong

direction it still wants to be satisfied. You know, sleep is another biologically based drive — you could promise yourself all you want that you're not going to give into that craving for sleep, but let me tell you eventually you're going to. That is the struggle some people are having sexually” (Bergner, 2009:22). It was this attitude that Berlin dealt with even the most dangerous and disturbed sex offenders such as Michael Ross. According to Berlin, Ross had restrained himself from indulging his violent desires all but eight times, yet people want not to believe this, for according to Berlin, “People can't deal with the humanity within a man like Ross. Society cannot consider the complexity”(2009:22).

Noting the public response — usually disgust— that is elicited when a sexually sadistic serial killer is found, Berlin argues that it is not surprising that neighbors may describe the serial killer as “the kind of guy you would call when you were in trouble or needed a hand”. For according to Berlin, criminal behavior is not a reflection of the visible aspects of one's personality, but hidden within the privacy of the sexual make up. Berlin argues his point stating, “You and I could sit next to each other, and I don't ask about you or your sexuality and you don't ask me about mine, so if the only thing that makes me dangerous is what's driving me sexually, you could be the next-door neighbor, you could be the wife and never know”. To further his argument Berlin cites the experience of a past male patient who had a girlfriend whom he wanted to marry but his urge to engage in coercive sex was so much stronger that he would leave his consenting relationship to engage in the coercive. According to Berlin, the man's girlfriend had no idea until her boyfriend was arrested and charged (Bergner, 2009:23)

Besides routine therapy sessions, Berlin heavily relies on another method to treat his patients. Routine injections of the drug Depo Lupron, an anti-androgen that cuts the production of testosterone to the degree that desire is severely quelled, are used by Berlin to suppress the sexual desires of his patients. Known as “chemical castration”, the effects of Depo Lupron can be reversed if injections cease. According to Berlin, under the influence of anti-androgen drugs such as Depo Lupron or Depo Provera, a sexual sadist or potential pedophile could become ‘cured’. Under the care of Dr. Berlin and the influence of Depo Lupron Michael Ross, a ‘cold-hearted’ serial killer, advocated for his own suicide, “asking to die for what he had done” (in Bergner, 2009:23).

Berlin describes the anti-androgen drug as a “club” for the “anti-androgens bludgeon the hormonal foundation of desire rather than addressing specific aberrance”(Bergner, 2009:24). However, until more accurate and delicate drugs are created Berlin feels the drug is a necessary medication for his patients. For Berlin, paraphilias are diseases rooted in biology. Berlin insists that erotic desire does not represent the self, and Eros or the ‘sex drive’ is not an integral component of the self. He argues that the sources of our desires are “programmed in” and imagines a futuristic world in which neurological understanding is so precise and accurate that any region of the brain could be manipulated. Although Berlin acknowledges a potential role of childhood experience in the formation of our desires, for Berlin, the truth of biology’s inborn power is inescapable.

## John Money

John Money, an early mentor to Berlin, is most famous, or infamous for persuading the parents of David Reimer (born 1965) to raise David as a girl after his penis had been seriously damaged in a botched circumcision. Under the guidance of Dr. John Money their infant son's testicles were clipped, a "rudimentary vagina" was surgically constructed, and a steady supply of estrogen was given to David in hopes of breast development. The case was covered in *Time* magazine, the *New York Times*, and a book by John Colapinto. However David eventually set out to undo the changes done to his body for his psyche was never female. After battling with the identity crisis his whole life, David took his life in May of 2004.

Dubbing paraphilias "disorders of love", Money wrote a great deal on paraphiliacs and worked to coin new names for new fetishes such as zoophilia; the desire for animals. In 1977 Money published the first case study history of what he termed "apotemnophilia", which is an attraction to and arousal by the thought of being an amputee (Elliot, 2000:73). Money also coined the term acrotomophilia, a desire, fixation, obsession, and arousal for amputees (Bergner, 2009:33). In the same way that others are attracted to animals and feet, acrotomophiles are attracted to amputees or those missing a limb. The apotemnophile wishes to become an amputee, and the acrotomophile wishes to be with an amputee.

According to Money, paraphilias were primarily rooted in childhood learning and were the product of nurture rather than nature: an argument perhaps negated by Reimer's suicide. Money argues "erotic diversity might be the evolutionary trade-

off—the price paid for the freeing of the primate brain to develop its uniquely human genesis of syntactical speech and creative intelligence” (Bergner, 2009:33).

Although Money was a mentor to Berlin these two doctors differed in practice in several ways. While Money believed prescribed drugs used to quell testosterone and estrogen were temporary solutions meant to give patients a “vacation” from their sexuality—some quiet from the chaos of Eros to bide time while psychotherapy started to work. Berlin felt patients always needed to be medicated. Berlin likened the dependency of his patients on Depo Lupron to diabetics in need of their insulin medication. Although Berlin insisted on the humanness of his patients (and their desires) he felt the need to completely quell their desires.

### Greg Lehne

According to Dr. Greg Lehne a clinical psychologist, “People’s sexual interests are very specific. Scientists are now inclined to look at genetic or prenatal issues, but why people become love struck at certain qualities, why we’re taken with a body type, or shape of a mouth or person’s nose looks like, or an aspect of warmth or a sadistic side—where do these interests come from? They must come through experiences, through the senses” (Bergner, 2009:30).

Lehne notes the fluctuation in prevalence of certain fetishes with changes in prevailing popular culture. Lehne argues that the prevalence of rubber pant fetishes diminished after the discontinuation of use of rubber pants on children. Lehne also posits that hair fetishes have become less common as women no longer brush their

hair a prescribed number of times or take care to “let down their tresses” each night. Although it may be nearly impossible to quantify such social shifts Lehne argues that by looking at pornography as an example one can trace shifts in interests and proclivities the industry caters to.

Other examples of changes in sexual preferences that correlate with socio-cultural changes include foot binding, the sexualization of the ankles and neck in the Victorian period, the contemporary shift of focus towards breasts and décolletage, and arguably circumcision. Mark Blechner, the editor in chief of the journal *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* reminds us “A century ago psychoanalysts were talking about fellatio and cunnilingus as perversions. As long as what persons do is consensual, I don’t think it is anyone’s role to judge”(Bergner, 2009:58).

Krafft-Ebing's heir, Magnus Hirschfeld, was a German physician whose collections of cases on sexual deviance were burned by the Nazis regime. Soon after his death, his students compiled a book of his writings and teachings titled *Sexual Anomalies*. In the text he documented, “In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the flagellomania of Englishwomen became sort of an epidemic. One of the most remarkable manifestations of this tendency was the formation of female flagellation clubs, whose members were recruited exclusively from the upper classes”(Krafft-Ebbing, 1965:71). Both Krafft-Ebing and Hirschfeld postulated that female masochism is common but true female sadism is less common.

Lehne and his colleague Kate Thomas both agree that their primary role in treating their patients is to listen and help their patient work towards self-acceptance. Lehne admits, “A cure in the form of the transformation of desire may never be

reached but some peace can be attained” (Bergner, 2009:40). Lehne, Thomas, and others like them work to lift the shame which shrouds the perception of self of many of their patients. A Los Angeles based psychologist, Dr. Winston Wilde agrees with Thomas and Lehne advocating, “A big aspect of sex therapy is permission-giving. It is important to give an education. Sometimes people’s whole lives can change if you direct them to an Internet site. I always like to normalize their situation” (Bergner, 2009:40). Claiming he had “three shit appointments this week” in reference with the many coprophiliacs he had been treating, Wilde does not discourage his patients wishes to be smeared with fecal matter, instead he offers safe(r) routes to his patients and listens to their tales.

Unlike Lehne and Thomas, Berlin did not talk in terms of permission giving; instead the intention was to quell desire even in the case of Jacob, a salesman with a foot fetish. Jacob was medicated with Depo Lupron and was told to fight his sexual urges. Berlin told Jacob that the anti-androgen would defy his “tendency to objectify women” (Bergner, 2009:44). Yet did Jacob objectify women any more than any other man or woman? The sexual isolation of this unconventional body part perhaps suggests a disregard for conventional physical attractiveness. When Jacob was asked to imagine a world where almost all men, ninety-four percent, saw feet as the locus of desire, he responded “You’re making me cry”. After wiping away his tears Jacob attempted to change the conversation by jokingly prodding, “How about those Yankees”. Jacob eventually tearfully responded, “I can’t imagine being in the ninety-four percent. It would be like I was able to climb up and live in the world” (Bergner, 2009: 45)

## Ray Blanchard and James Cantor

Psychiatrists at the University of Toronto, Ray Blanchard and James Cantor believe that they and their research team have located the neurological pathways of desire which proves nature's dominance over nurture, biology's primacy over experience in setting the direction of desire, in contrast to Money's work. According to Cantor and Blanchard they have proof that the divergence of desire is rooted in the anatomy of the brain, in biology.

By comparing the neurological processes of pedophiles with what Blanchard calls "teleophiles; the normal guys", Blanchard and Cantor have searched for differences in the temporal and parietal lobes between the pedophile and teleophile brain with the use of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI scans). Diagnostic imaging specialists digitally compose the quantitative analysis into graphics that made visual sense of the comparisons for Blanchard and Cantor to analyze.

A laboratory technician working on the experiment in the laboratory stated, "I've studied mind, body and soul. And here I am measuring dicks". The technician estimated that he had seen roughly 3200 penises while working on this research study. The technician often liked to ask participants "If I had a video clip of your mind in the last ten seconds before you climax during sex, what would I see?" He marveled at how few men who were predominantly excited by adult women answered that the ten-second video would be filled with the women they were currently with (Bergner, 2009:126).



When describing pedophiles Cantor speculates, “I don’t think any of them are quite happy; I don’t think I would be quite happy if I realized that I would never be permitted the sexual partners I find most attractive: that’s it; there is nothing I can do about it. It’s easy to understand why a lot of them ask for sex drive-reducing medications. They don’t want a sex drive they have to spend the rest of their lives resisting, that they’re never allowed to express. It’s easier to try to live without the sex drive all together” (Bergner, 2009: 131).

According to Cantor and Blanchard a “perturbation” as they call it, perhaps a chemical introduced by maternal drug use, occurs prenatally to pedophiles and this is what changes the course of their behavior. Strongly believing in the power of the prenatal in shaping sexuality and using ink to highlight the divergent directions of desire, Cantor and Blanchard have published studies that suggest the height of pedophiles is an indicator of the pedophilic persona (height also determined prenatally). Another finding of these researchers relies on the handedness of individuals, which is also determined prenatally. This particular study suggests that pedophilic men are about three times more likely than teleophiles to be left-handed and is often misunderstood since most left handed persons are not pedophiles.

Differences between the pedophilic and teleophilic brains as detected by the MRI machine and the research team are too vague and too general to be considered proof. A three- dimensional pixel is called a voxel and is about one millimeter cubed in size. Fibers in the brain are much smaller than this size and so fine differences may be far too small for an MRI to capture. The images reflecting pedophilic brains could have any number of associated conditions, a constellation of symptoms that have little

or nothing to do with sexual behavior or, these physiological differences could be caused by previous pedophilic experience. Even though there is evidence that roughly one third of sexual aggressors have been abused themselves, Cantor and Blanchard were highly skeptical of this evidence. For this team of researchers, biology was the beginning and biology was the end. There was no real opportunity for those afflicted to alter their course when pedophilia is determined prenatally. If stroke victims can painstakingly sprout new neural wirings allowing them to speak and walk, might the physiology of the brain be similarly fertile and malleable when it comes to desire?

Dr. Paul Fedoroff

Dr. Paul Fedoroff is the Director of the Sexual Behaviours Clinic of the Integrated Forensic Program of the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Care Group and has treated zoophiles; among them a man who had sex with horses, an another who had “fooled around” with dogs, an array of pedophiles, and paraphiliacs, all patients whom Fedoroff believed could change.

Continually intrigued by the ingenuity and uniqueness of his patients, Fedoroff remains utterly optimistic about their future. Citing the case of a young female patient who compulsively masturbated to the point that she had chaffed herself raw and was covered in sores, Fedoroff was confident that with the continuation of therapy the anti-androgen drug he prescribed to her would not always be needed and she would eventually leave her compulsive behavior behind.

In his work Fedoroff strives to show that desire can take fundamentally new paths. Fascinated by the evolutionary, the biological and the experiential, Fedoroff resists single answers because as he notes, “they all turn out to be wrong” (Bergner, 2009:137). Fedoroff posits that desire is malleable and can be shaped by all sorts of factors, biological and experiential, all weighing in differently in different persons. Unlike Blanchard and Cantor, he is not set on proving nature’s predominance over nurture, and argues, “If you tend to think like neurologists do: diagnose and adios. It’s a fatalistic approach, and over the years I’ve discovered that it’s not right. Because of course, people are capable of learning and developing. I am not sure that you can get rid of the original interest. But you can become less dependant on it by developing new desire” (Bergner, 2009:136).

A man of many theories, Fedoroff imagines inducing a “second puberty” that would alter the course of desire for individuals conflicted with their desires. Fedoroff suggests that some paraphiliacs suffer from a “sticky switch”. This sticky switch governs the parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous system, two branches of the autonomic circuitry system that regulates heart rate, sweating, breathing, and salivation. The parasympathetic system controls arousal, while the sympathetic enables orgasm and so they must be working in tandem in order for one orgasm. Fedoroff explains, “The natural progression during sex is that the parasympathetics are set off, and at some point when we become sufficiently aroused a switch flips and the sympathetics kick in and we start to have an orgasm. But the poor paraphiliac has a sticky, sluggish switch and needs to do something extreme to get the sympathetics going” (Bergner, 2009:137).

Besides inducing orgasm, the sympathetic system comes alive during emergency situations to deal with potential danger. Fedoroff's theory implies that some paraphiliacs use the deviant or the forbidden to stoke their sense of emergency or danger, thus creating an emotional urgency that would open up the sympathetic pathways and enable orgasm (Bergner, 2009:137). Fedoroff wonders if we could ease or lubricate this "sticky switch" for those experiencing difficulty or those who need to jump-start their switch through deviance.

Fedoroff is enamored with rare and perplexing examples such as the anthropological study of Sambia boys, conducted by Gilbert Herdt in Papua, New Guinea<sup>7</sup>. Describing a patient who suffered from a rare genetic disorder, Lesch-Nyhan syndrome Fedoroff explains, "The compulsion to mutilate and get rid of his own extremities was caused by a deficient supply of one single enzyme". Referencing studies conducted in Denmark and Japan that indicate the use of pornography can help quell desire in pedophiles, Fedoroff believes that the use of pornography could help men (and women) by diminishing and channeling their sexual urges.

Michael, a patient of Fedoroff, exemplifies the type of treatment Fedoroff provides and his notion that our desires can transform over time, or that we can change our desires. Michael was sentenced to treatment for licking his young daughters genitals, and before prescribed with heavy doses of Depo-Lupron, Michael would become overwhelmed by simply reading a book with a child character in it. Describing the Lupron, Michael stated it put him "totally to sleep" for he had lost all

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<sup>7</sup> The fertility ritual of Sambia Boys: around the age of seven Sambian boys, perform fellatio on teenage boys of their clans.

interest in interacting and socializing with others, including children. One Canada Day, out amongst a crowd of people, Michael suffered a serious setback. Michael had a meltdown and then quarantined himself inside his apartment: “I spent the next two days alone in my apartment virtually in tears. The thoughts lasted for two weeks and refused to give up. It was so bad that I almost approached my probation officer to ask her to call the police and take me into custody” (Bergner, 2009:149).

Yet, another change occurred in the sexual desires of Michael when his torturous desires for children were replaced with an interest in adult women. After six months of living with his changed interest, Fedoroff cut Michael’s dose of Lupron by half and eventually stopped prescribing the drug altogether. With time, erections became possible; Michael began to date, and claims he no longer entertain sexual thoughts of children.

### *The Devotee, The Wannabe, and The Pretender*

While researching for this chapter, finding scholarly information on both acrotomophiles (the desire for an amputee), and apotemnophiles (the desire to become an amputee) proved to be difficult. However, finding countless list serves and websites devoted to “wannabes”, “pretenders”, and “devotees” proved to be extremely easy. “Wannabes” are those who wish to become an amputee, “devotees” are those who wish to be with an amputee, and “pretenders” are persons who are not disabled but often pretend to be disabled. It is through my brief review of these websites that I have realized the criterion that constitutes an apotemnophile is blurry.

Some wannabes (those who wish to become an amputee) are also devotees (those who desire an amputee). This combination of wanting to be an amputee and wanting to be with an amputee poses the question: is it an issue with body image or direction of desire that these wannabes and devotees are dealing with?

The narratives and language used by “wannabes” to describe how they feel is strikingly similar to the language used by those who long for gender reassignment surgery; those who are ‘trapped in the wrong body’ (Elliott, 2000:76). One wannabe writes, “I have always felt I should be an amputee. It is a desire to see myself, be myself, as I ‘know’ or ‘feel’ myself to be” (Elliott, 2000:77). Seeing their limbs as some sort of abnormal surplus, most wannabes insist that their wishes for amputation were with them from early childhood. One amputee, who had wished for amputation since the age of eight stated, “My left foot was never a part of me” (Elliott, 2000: 76).

Carl Elliot, a professor at the Center for Bioethics, Pediatrics, and Philosophy at the University of Minnesota is one of the few scholars to have written on the subject of apotemnophiles and acrotomophiles. In his article “A New Way To Be Mad”, published in *Atlantic Monthly* he argues that the Internet has been “revolutionary” for acrotomophiles and apotemnophiles. A devotee Elliot interviewed claimed, “The Internet was, for me, a validating experience”. He writes, “On the Internet you can find a community to which you can listen or reveal yourself, and instant validation for your condition, whatever it may be. One wannabe told me that she has never spoken about her desire for amputation with a friend, a family member, or a mental-health professional, and that she never will. Yet she is a frequent participant on the wannabe discussion listserv” (Elliott, 200: 78).

It may be difficult to understand the desires of the apotemnophile for various reasons. Media coverage reporting on the desire for body modification is often treated as “the well-worn terrain of fashion slaves and social strivers, who buy cosmetic surgery in an endless quest for beauty and perpetual youth, or as something bizarre and unexplainable, like genital mutilation or masochistic fetishes” (Elliott, 2000: 81). Similarly, it seems that the popular imagination has difficulty imagining disabled persons having intimate relationships. Contrary perhaps to our thinking, for those who are paraplegic or quadriplegic, a loss of sexual functions does not mean a corresponding loss of sexuality.

Elliot argues that one does not have to envision a cult leader persuading people to have their limbs removed for, given the right set of social conditions, the desire for amputation could spread (Elliott, 2000: 81).

“Clinicians and patients alike often suggest that apotemnophilia is like gender-identity disorder, and that amputation is like sex-reassignment surgery. Let us suppose that they are right. Fifty years ago the suggestion that tens of thousands of people would someday want their genitals surgically altered so that they could change their sex would have been ludicrous. But it has happened. The question is why. One answer would have it that this is an ancient condition, that there has always been people that fall outside the traditional sex classifications, but that only during the past

forty years or so have we developed the surgical and endocrinological tools to fix the problem.

But it is possible to imagine another story: that our cultural and historical conditions have not just revealed transsexuals but created them. That is, once “transsexual” and “gender-identity disorder” and “sex-reassignment surgery” became common linguistic currency, more people began conceptualizing and interpreting their own experience in these terms. They began to make sense of their lives in a way that hadn’t been available to them before, and to some degree they actually became the kinds of people described by these terms.

Let us suppose that there is some truth to the idea that sex-reassignment surgery and diagnoses of gender-identity disorder have helped to create the growing number of cases we are seeing. Would this mean that there is no biological basis for gender-identity disorder? No. Would it mean that the term is a sham? Again, no. Would it mean that these people are faking their dissatisfaction with their sex? No. What it would mean is that certain social and structural conditions — diagnostic categories, medical clinics, reimbursement schedules, a common language to describe the experience,



and, recently, a large body of academic work and transgender activism— have made this way of interpreting an experience not only possible but more likely” (Elliot, 2000: 82-3).

If cultural conditions produce philiias such as Apotemnophilia, then why do certain philiias arise, seemingly out of nowhere, in certain societies during certain historical periods, and disappear just as suddenly? For thousands of years Chinese mothers broke the bones in their daughters’ feet, wrapped them in bandages to make the feet grow twisted and disfigured. To a modern, Western eye, these feet look grossly deformed. Yet for centuries Chinese men found them erotic. In a world where we struggle to tell each other apart perhaps bodily modification processes offer a way to redesign our bodies, assisting in the formulation of our identity.

When researching online I found several articles that claimed the desire for the amputated was wrong for it capitalizes on the disability of amputees. Perhaps in individual cases this is true, but why can’t amputees be sexy? Disabled persons, and for that matter amputated persons, want intimate relationships just like mostly everyone else. Yet society is anxious to ignore, deny and stereotype their sexuality. The de-sexualization of the disabled and disfigured hints at our narrow definition of what is sexy and also alludes to our fear of sex which falls outside the missionary position and involves a heterosexual male and female. Disabled sex may be taboo, but denying its existence has not made it go away. Some sex stores now offer a section for those who suffer from disabilities and handicaps and a wide array of academic research exists on the subject.

Ron is an example presented in Bergner's book *The Other Side Of Desire* (2009). He is an advertising art director who works to create billboards and posters for many major companies casting models of typical standards, yet is infatuated with amputees. As a young boy he recalls taking out encyclopedias at his local library to search for entries on amputation, polio and any other crippling disease he could think of. Often Ron found that the images had been removed and cut out; his first indication that he wasn't alone in his devotion toward amputees. He recalls a fascination with a local nun who wore special orthopedics to compensate for her left leg, which was shorter than her right. Initially studying architecture, Ron altered his career plans toward advertising and nurtured his love for fine art. After a successful stint as an advertising art director, Ron eventually began photographing a niche area: the disfigured, amputated, and the handicapped. Ron belongs to a community of devotees and is happily married to a woman with a double leg amputation (Bergner, 2009: 165-9).

### Daniel Bergner

The highly acclaimed journalist Daniel Bergner describes his book *The Other Side of Desire* as “journeys into the far realms of lust and longing” (Bergner, 2009:X). Bergner interviewed many individuals afflicted with uncommon desires: an advertising executive whom in his work celebrated conventional female beauty but in his own personal life was drawn erotically, inescapably to amputees, the Baroness; a female sadist with a cult like following; a band leader transfixed by his young

stepdaughter; a travelling salesman with a foot fetish that brought him not only extreme ecstasy but also abasement and shame; the necrophiliac serial killer Jeffery Dahmer who killed seventeen boys and young men, copulating with and cannibalizing the dead bodies, and a man in a committed relationship who was erotically excited by mares.

Throughout his research Bergner was often asked by those he interviewed, ‘What are you doing here with me?’ It was a question Bergner heard before when working as a journalist in war-torn Sierra Leone and a question he had heard while following the lives of men sentenced to stay locked behind bars until their death, with no chance of parole at Angola Prison in Louisiana. His constant answer to their question: “I am here with you, at the far edges of experience, in the hope that your stories will illuminate truths shared by all of us” (Bergner, 2009:X).

It is through his brilliant writing and thorough research that I am able to discuss the cases of “The Baroness” and “Roy”, summarized below.

### *Roy’s Story*

Therapist Patrick Liddle treats Roy, a bandleader who sexually assaulted his 10-year-old stepdaughter. The treatment Liddle gives is grounded in a seemingly simple idea, to acknowledge both the crime and anarchy of lust that lies within each of us in order to find self-control. The ability to be candid, open with past crimes, and discuss present urges is at the core of his treatment program.

According to Liddle the sexualization of contemporary culture only helps to cultivate desires and a culture of sex arguing, “the meta-message of our society is rape”. He describes pornography as “overwhelming” and “desensitizing”, a “launch pad for molestation, a nightmare” (Bergner, 2009: 116). For Liddle, the legal would only lead to the illicit. According to Liddle, using pornography is not a safe way for sexual deviants to gratify their desires, arguing, “That’s like an alcoholic saying, ‘I’ll only have a couple of drinks, I’ll only have low-alcohol beer’”(Bergner, 2009: 116).

As a part of Roy’s sentencing he is required to meet with Liddle several times a month for individual and group therapy sessions. The following is a transcription of the online conversations that Roy had with his stepdaughter.

Roy- “Have you been getting into any trouble lately?

Girl- “What do you mean by that?’

Roy- “I don’t know.’

Girl- “How are you looking at me?’

Roy- “I’m looking at you as a girl turning into a woman’

Girl- “What do you mean by that?’

Roy- ““You’re going to be really attractive when you grow up’

Girl- ““Do you like me that way?’

Roy- ““I’m not your father.””

After leaving a window open on his computer and inviting his stepdaughter to view the video of a man rubbing his penis on a woman’s vagina the stepdaughter notified her mother and furthered the online conversations to incriminate Roy. The following conversation is what incriminated Roy.

Girl- ““What do want again?’”

Roy- ““Any small thing you want to do”

Girl- ““Like what”

Roy- ““Let me see you”

Girl- ““What?’”

Roy- ““Bottom half’

Girl- “No, what else”

Roy- “In panties”

Girl- “Y can’t you just do this stuff with my mom? She is like me and is actually is ur own age”

Roy- “I just want to do something with you, anything”.

Roy was arrested and in court he pleaded guilty under the Alford Doctrine. Served with decades of probation and the possibility of twenty years in jail if he violates his probation he has been seeing Liddle for over a year. Aghast with himself Roy claims, “I’m so embarrassed. I can’t believe I did this. I just don’t know how I got myself there. I really don’t. It makes me sick” (Bergner, 2009:114).

### *The Baroness*

A New York based clothing designer and dominatrix known as The Baroness, is a prominent figure in the S&M community across the United States and Canada. The Baroness is just one of many professional dominatrixes who operate in and around New York State. The Baroness stands out amongst the many others and is revered in the community as the queen of misfits. Flaunting her difference around New York, the Baroness in turn gives others the confidence to do the same. In her

walks through the East Village of New York City the Baroness regards the disfigured and crippled with respect and dignity; reveling in her ability to look at these persons when most avert their gaze and avoid the lost. Instead of pretending not to notice disfigurement, the Baroness recognizes, celebrates, and accepts the differences. Describing her walks through the East Village Daniel Bergner writes, “She was willing to see them, without fear, exactly as they were, and that freed them, for a few seconds, to be themselves” (Bergner, 2009:62).

Greg, a voluntary servant to the Baroness carried with him a notebook in which he would scribble his notes. “Please, serve, obey” were the words written on one page and deeper in his notebook he had written a list titled “Reasons why I want to sever the Baroness”. His reasons were: “to fix her seamed stocking while she cracks her bullwhip. To make things easier for the baroness so she can devote more time to her fashion business and make more money and be happier, because she took her valuable time to train me to be the best slave she can ever have. To learn how to take the Baroness 16 bullwhips and never complain or cry” (Bergner, 2009: 55).

A male to female transvestite and a friend to the Baroness spoke of the merging of selves often described by sadists and masochists in an interview with journalist Daniel Bergner. She explained: “The beating here pulls out my inner female; it goes so deep; I want to receive. It’s like heroin. It takes me from a high headspace, down through all the levels, down to someplace at my core. Everything gets brighter. Everything gets amplified. This is where I learn the whole. I stay for the weekends. Leaving is agony. The other world is agony. I have a hard time coming down. I’m jonesing. The law firm was good enough to keep me on after the sex

change, but this is where I belong. It's two different words, this, and the vanilla. This one is totally alive. That one is dead”(Bergner, 2009:65).

A client of the Baroness dressed in a red latex suit, hooked up to a machine that sends voice activated electrical charges to a conductive ring around the shaft of his penis, remarked through gritting teeth, “It is about surrendering your ego”. When Bergner asked about his childhood he mockingly responded: “I was never raped by homosexual dwarves. Is this a weird way to deal with life? Consider the man who bought Mark McGwire’s seventieth home-run ball for three million dollars. Who’s weirder? (Bergner, 2009: 56).

### *Conclusion*

One could devote a lifetime to researching one specific philia or fetish, it is a complicated area of study, and single causal explanations are not sufficient to either explain or understand these philias. Nowadays, with our post-modern relativist attitudes and hesitance to judge, we often shrug and say, “Whatever turns you on” or, “Hey whatever floats your boat”, with the exception of pedophilia, rape, and non-consensual sexual activity. Yet, with all this sadism and masochism one wonders what the legal consequences are and what role the law plays in regulating this behavior. Through researching the many feminist perspectives, psychiatric approaches, personal opinions and experiences, historical documentation, and anthropological findings it appears that the presiding body of law has the final say, or the “official” stance on what is legal and illegal human behavior. Despite limitations



of the law, and however convoluted and unenforced legal sanctions may be, judicial decrees and rulings have the power to convict or acquit.

The highly publicized 1999 New York court case *People v. Jovanovic* sheds some light on the role of the law in regulating this behavior. In 1996 Oliver Jovanovic was accused of torturing and holding Jamie Rzucek captive. After meeting through an Internet chat room, Jovanovic and Rzucek began to communicate on a regular basis via e-mail and telephone. In an e-mail message to Rzucek, Jovanovic made reference to Joel-Peter Witkin's photographs of corpses and Rzucek enthusiastically replied, expressing her interest in snuff films. After discussing their interest in sadism and masochism online the two eventually met for a dinner date. Following their dinner date the pair returned to Jovanovic's apartment, where Jovanovic bound and gagged Rzucek, holding her against her will and torturing her in various ways. While Rzucek claimed that she was held against her will, Jovanovic maintained that the acts and experience were consensual, all a part of a plan the two had hatched over e-mail communication.

After a weeklong trial and refusing a plea bargain offered by the prosecution, Jovanovic was convicted and sentenced to fifteen years to life for kidnapping, sexual abuse, and sexual assault. In 1999 the conviction was overturned on appeal when e-mail communications between Jovanovic and Rzucek were used as evidence to prove the activity was consensual on both behalves. Jovanovic received support from some unlikely sources, namely Rzucek's family who claimed Rzuck had made false accusations before and was not to be trusted. After serving 20 months in prison and sustaining injuries from another inmate, Jovanovic was released.

Another interesting legal case, which happened here in Canada, involves the arrest of several Quebec high school students on child pornography charges<sup>8</sup>. Under current child pornography laws, minors who take nude photographs of their own bodies can be charged with possession of child pornography. Those who choose to *send* those photographs of themselves to others can be charged with distributing child pornography. “Sexting”, the act of sending naked pictures of oneself through mobile phones has become increasingly popular amongst young persons and advances in technology exacerbate the ability to “sext” and the potential consequences of “sexting”.

A case recently adjourned in February 2012 that prosecuted serial sex offender Graham James illustrates the limitations and failures of law. After committing 400 sexual assaults on one teenage boy and 150 more on another, James was sentenced to six years in prison. A recent article in the *Globe and Mail* titled “A Just Sentence Reflects The Horror”, suggests that because of the repeated sexual abuse on the victims the law over-simplified the case, minimizing the overall experience of the victims. The article reads: “Does the system assume that, after the first five or ten rapes, the victims were complicit — asked for it in some sense? Are they any less victims on rapes 10 through 200 than on the first 10”. Describing the actions of James as “crimes that shock the conscience” and noting that “a six-year sentence is too weak to express society’s anger and horror”, the article is a chilling reminder of the many sexual offences that go unacknowledged and the continual search for justice within

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<sup>8</sup> For more information please see: Toby Cohen, “The Arrests of Several West Quebec High School Students on Child Porn Charges Illustrate the Dangers that Await Online,” *Ottawa Sun*, December 17, 2005.

the legal system (The Globe and Mail, 24 February 2012; A12). The article also points to the under-prosecution of sexual assaults on specifically males and also the myth that sexual assault on males is a rare occurrence and an accepted occurrence at that. If a female teacher sexually assaults a young boy it should have the same legal repercussions if it were a male teacher and female student.

Legality aside, the many questions that drive Bergner's research also inspire my own research. These questions are vast and complex: "How do we come to have the particular desires that drive us? How do we become who we are sexually, whether our lusts are common or improbable? How much are we born with and how much do we learn from all that surrounds us? How much can we change and how much is locked unreachably, permanently within? What do we do with the desires that we cannot bear, the desires that we, or the society around us restrict and repress?" (Bergner, 2009: X).

The terminology used to describe a person with a paraphilia indicates the approach we take to examining the individual. Individuals can be rendered as a paraphiliac, or rather, an individual who *has* a paraphilia. This dichotomy of identity or affliction appears. Either one is defined by the paraphilia as a paraphiliac or, the paraphilia is seen as something that they have, not something that they are; a force that asserts itself dictatorially within them, defining them no more than the sick can be defined by their disease (Bergner, 2009:7).

The terminology used by various professionals attempt to classify persons and their respective philiacs or fetishes. Two things are of interest to me at this juncture, our *need* for classification and how classification affects the thing being classified.

“By regarding a phenomenon as a psychiatric diagnosis: treating it, reifying it in psychiatric diagnostic manuals, developing instruments to measure it, inventing scales to rate its severity, establishing ways to reimburse the costs of its treatment, encouraging pharmaceutical companies to search for effective drugs, directing patients to support groups, writing about possible causes in journals—psychiatrists may be unwittingly colluding with broader cultural forces to contribute to the spread of a mental disorder” (Elliot, 2000: 82).

Indeed deviation from the norm seems to be the norm— and there is a history behind this deviation documenting it. No doubt that the expectancies and allowances of the prevailing popular culture affect research, perception, and popular public opinion of sexuality. It seems impossible to tell how much biology influences our sexual desires and what role cultural forces play in formulating the pathways of our desires. My proposition is that perhaps the normal and perverse lie along a continuum rather than in separate boxes.

Finally, to conclude, it is axiomatic, since Freud that we are all sexual beings, though our sexualities may be repressed or sublimated and certainly expressed in many different degrees and styles. Some of these ways may be personally or culturally difficult, even illegal, and criminal. It is clear from sexologists and anthropologists that what is considered to be normative sexuality, varies widely from culture to culture, and changes over time (homosexuality being the classic example). It is also clear that sex and sexuality vary widely from individual to individual and may even require “treatment”. What is curious here is how the different psychologists

and psychiatrists analyze desire and paraphilia so differently, and offer such different approaches to the perceived problems.

Krafft-Ebing was the first to present case studies of a wide range of “pathological” sexualities. He offered sympathy and publicity but no treatment. Ellis initiated the social reconstruction of homosexuality as within the normal range of sexuality, given its historical normativity in various cultures, notably ancient Athens, and also its prevalence among so many distinguished citizens. Another more contemporary approach used by Dr. Greg Lehne works towards self-acceptance and offers safe(r) routes to sexual activity while giving permission to their clients. Others who take a more biologically based approach, such as afore mentioned Dr. Fred Berlin, prescribe anti-androgen drugs to quell all feelings of desire in their clients. While other researchers such as Dr. Paul Fedoroff, who argue the object of one’s desire can change; that desire is malleable, attempt to redirect the desires of their clients. There are many ways to approach various sexualities and much like Dr. Fedoroff, “I resist single answers because they all turn out wrong” (Bergner, 2009:137).

**Chapter 6: A Conclusion:**  
**My Experiment In Explanation**

*“Viewing pornography is a self-centered stab at satisfying sexual desire. It is a love-letter written to oneself.”*

*—Jonathan Morris*

*“There is hardly anyone whose sexual life, if it were broadcast, would not fill the world at large with surprise and horror.”*

*—Somerset Maugham*

*“What is peculiar to modern societies is not that they consigned sex to a shadow existence, but that they dedicated themselves to speaking of it ad infinitum, while exploiting it as the secret.”*

*—Michel Foucault*

It is axiomatic, as I have shown, that the very talking about pornography and erotica can be considered taboo or indecent. How has pornography come to stand for so many social ills in the popular imagination? What Michel Foucault describes as our “immense verbosity”, our great interest in discussing sex in various discourses and media, has been the subject of both academic and political inquiry and debate. Perhaps the production of academic and political knowledge about the speaking of sex can be seen as paralleling this “incitement to discourse” (Foucault, 1976: 33-4). The many perspectives on pornography, erotica, and sex that I have presented throughout this research project illustrate the various ways we treat and classify sexual representation and sexual behavior. It is impossible to say which approach or perspective is the most accurate for as I have shown sex is ultimately individual and thus so should our approaches and perspectives be. Varying sexualities and preferences require varying approaches.

In an attempt to bring closure to some of the complex aspects of my research this chapter is devoted to expanding upon reoccurring themes found in my research. Although I am not able to provide answers to seemingly unanswerable questions, I can provide suggestions and suggestions for future research. This chapter includes five sections which detail my findings on the classification of sexuality and sexual representation, the multifarious relationship between pornography, erotica, and the self, the power that pornographic and erotic images can contain, the increasing commercialization of sex in our culture, educational reforms on sexual health programs, and finally suggestions for future research.

### *Classification*

Our cultural insistency to classify and define what is pornographic and what is erotic can be seen throughout the history of pornography and erotica. Arguments questioning what is appropriate sexual representation and what is inappropriate sexual representation also permeate the history of pornography and erotica. Through exploring the treatment of various paraphilias and fetishes it has become evident that the insistency to label and medicalize sexual desires through psychiatric treatment is also widespread. The various approaches professionals take to working with individuals reveal not only numerous approaches to dealing with sexuality in a therapeutic community but also the wide array of sexualities possible.

In the opening pages of *The Secret Museum: Pornography In Modern Culture* Walter Kendrick writes, “The inescapable conclusion is that, sometime in the century

between 1755 and 1875<sup>9</sup>, “pornography” was born. But it must have been ancient at birth, rising from the grave instead of coming new into the world. Vampires are said to do this; so did pornography” (Kendrick, 1987: 2). In this section Kendrick is pointing out that pornography, or representations of sex, have been around for centuries and the re-naming these representations gave new life to their meaning. Once we sanction acts or representations as indecent or immoral, the mystery around these items is heightened, as is our curiosity. Once we regard an act, item, or area as ‘restricted’ or taboo then accessing accurate information about these areas proves to be difficult. Throughout his book, Kendrick suggests that the concept of pornography was invented to be a category that contained restricted forms of sexual representation to be kept away from the masses. In Kendrick’s view, the concept of pornography functions as a form of censorship.

The ultimate failure to define pornography and erotica illustrates the pitfalls of this taxonomic approach. Changing cultural conditions and contexts require rewrites and revisions to psychiatric “bibles” such as the DSM-V. Changes in gender roles and sexual attitudes cause our ideas of what is decent and indecent to change, the classic example being homosexuality. While the social construction of pornography— as we now know it— is a modern phenomenon, we are still struggling with what sort of construction we would like to build.

Although it is not the sole focus of my research, the treatment and classification of those with a paraphilia or fetish has been an interesting investigation. What astounds me most is not only the range of possible fetishes and paraphilias that individuals may have, but also the variety of approaches taken to treating, diagnosing and identifying

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<sup>9</sup> This was the first time the word pornography appeared in a dictionary.



these conditions. If we are to look back over the past forty years of the history of psychiatry we see a rapid expansion and introduction of a variety of disorders ranging from social phobia and obsessive-compulsive disorder to attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder. Carl Elliot notes that in trying to locate the possible causes for this expansion, depending on the ideological standpoint used, we can identify a range of possible explanations and causes. One could identify the marketing efforts of the pharmaceutical industry as the cause, or perhaps the increases in skill and ability of psychiatrists to identify, diagnose, and treat symptoms. Another suggestion could be a growing cultural tendency to turn to psychiatry to explain symptoms that at one time may be simply known as crime, shyness, perversity, or unhappiness (Elliot, 2000: 83). The one thing that we can be sure of is that most of these disorders or conditions are not as far from ordinary human variation at its very edge, as Elliot notes: “The lines between mental dysfunction and ordinary life are not as sharp as some psychiatrists would like to pretend” (Elliot, 2000: 84).

Yet, by labeling certain conditions to describe sexual behavior, connecting these conditions to other disorders, and providing a medical explanation to describe and treat the condition, we create a conceptual category that makes the condition a treatable disorder (Elliot, 2008: 82). Perhaps categories and names are needed, as is treatment for some individuals. However, the type of treatment that an individual should receive often seems to be unclear to both the patient and practitioner. For a select few acrotomophiles and apotemnophiles their choice of treatment is clear, and thus they take matters into their own hands (Elliot, 2008: 84). When treatment for desires such as these is irreversible, one must pause to examine the range of possibilities. I propose that efforts

should be directed towards developing and adapting approaches to treatment as opposed to taxonomy and classification.

*Pornography, Erotica, Identity, and the Self*

Pornography is human in the sense that humans create pornography, pornography depicts human subjects, and humans consume pornography. Both pornography and the production of pornography might just be more human than we are willing to admit at this time. However our interest in sex and sexuality is part of the human condition and is undeniable. Sex no longer only means heterosexual sex, vaginal sex, or sex for procreation purposes. Sex can now encompass a wide array of sexual behaviors, specificities, orientations, and attitudes. Sex can play a positive and valuable role in human life, rather than being solely about procreation, danger, or a lack of morals. What was once deemed permissive is now called sex positive, times change, paradigms shift, and ultimately attitudes to sex are not all the same.

The idea that we can speculate about someone's character and personality based on his or her private sexual desires is a prevailing notion in the popular imagination. For instance, an individual may enjoy cross-dressing in their spare time and still be regarded as a respectable business professional. Are our desires hidden within the privacy of our sexual make up as Dr. Fred Berlin suggests? And if so what are the consequences for the individual? What we can be sure of is that the various ways that desires inform identity and manifest themselves within the personhood of an individual vary from individual to individual.

Professor Bernard Arcand, author of *The Jaguar and the Anteater: Pornography Degree Zero*, takes note of changing cultural and social conditions in our world relating to pornography use stating, “Pornography is a revolution in the sense that living alone and caring mostly for oneself, being very comfortable and having great respect for others, and letting others be whatever they wish to be is a very novel thing in the history of the world” (quoted in *Pornography: The Secret History of Civilization*, 1999). Bertrand interestingly suggests that pornography and masturbation are symptomatic of a form of life generally associated with post-modernism and a highly individualized society. A strong sense of individualism combined with constant access to others online via digital technology could promote the sexual exploration of oneself. However, this is an optimistic point of view, for one could also argue that a highly individualized and digitalized society promotes loneliness and isolation and thus increased pornography use.

I like to think that pornography use indeed does have to do with an interest in the self and an interest in exploring sexuality in its various apparitions. Arcand provides us with a radically different point of view on the subject stating, “Pornography has a brilliant career. It has exactly the point of that new concern for the self, that new centrality of the self...the family has broken up, society has broken up, God is dead, the couple is in pieces, what is left? What is left is a human being, richer than ever, all alone, who is going to have a brilliant future and will realize himself or herself to the fullest. Including one detail which is not a minor detail— that is an important detail— sexual gratification which can take the form of masturbation, and that’s a radically different point of view” (in *Pornography: The Secret History of Civilization*, 1999).

It is peculiar how both personal and impersonal pornography use can be. The various ways in which people use pornography stipulate what level of engagement they wish to have with the material. Some forms of Internet pornography offer not just a static medium— something that we witness— but something that we can interact with, something that we can *do* ourselves. Some forms of pornography allow one to be an observer; others offer a participant role, and sometimes even a leading role.

Although during the Eighteenth century, masturbation was medicalized as a disease that could lead to serious health consequences, both mental and physical, yet recently masturbation has become another accepted form of sexual pleasure (Laqueur, 2003). Various sexologists and health professionals now actively promote masturbation as an important component of sexual health, as a way for men and women to experience and learn about their bodies, improve body image, and explore sexual desires (Coleman, 2002). Prescribing masturbation to men and women in sexual therapy is not an uncommon approach and masturbatory treatment has been successfully used in the treatment of a variety of sexual dysfunctions (Coleman, 2002, Tiefer, 1998).

Christine Kaestle and Katherine Allen sum up both the potential positive and negative outcomes of masturbation in their recent study that examines the role of masturbation in the sexual development of young adults. Kaestle and Allen identify the dualistic role that masturbation can play in the lives of individuals, further reinforcing that attitudes towards sex are not all the same, writing; “Although masturbation is often a solitary act, it has the power to influence intimacy with others. If stigma has produced intense feelings of shame or guilt, it can cause feelings of alienation from the community and conflicts in relationships as well as problems with self-esteem and sexual identity.

Alternatively, masturbation may lead not only to a person learning about their own sexual response and pleasure but also to a sense of autonomy and bodily integrity that may improve a person's self-esteem and sense of identity. In this way, masturbation might contribute to positive intimacy experiences and improved sexual satisfaction and health" (Kaestle and Allen, 2011:992).

Despite controversies, psychologists, sexologists, and some health professionals are of the belief that "masturbation is such a common and formative part of the sexual experiences of most adults that it should not be ignored in research and practice" (Coleman, 2002: 6). Changing attitudes toward solitary masturbation as a form of sexual pleasure combined with the anonymous environment of the Internet, the wide selection of pornography available, and the ability to locate others with similar sexual desires fuels our interest and participation in Internet pornography endeavors.

### *The Power of Eroticization and The Eroticization of Power*

The relationship between pornography and power is a complex and mysterious one. The diverse role that power plays in sex and sexual representation is often the centre of debate in the discipline of porn studies. The logical question that one might ask seems to be, 'who has the power'? Who has the power to deem what is decent and indecent? Who has the power in a pornographic or erotic work, is it the consumer, the producer, or the actor? Depending on the theoretical perspective that one chooses, each of these roles could be argued as powerful or powerless and are often supported in a convincing way. What we can assume from this is that attitudes towards sex and

the representation of sex are not all the same and could perhaps be seen on a spectrum. How we establish this spectrum —what categorizations fall at what end— is an interesting exploration that will continue to transform and unfold as each generation reinvents sexuality.

The multifaceted role the power plays in pornography is not unrelated to the role that power plays in our everyday lives and experiences. We come up against power structures in our lives everyday. Whichever theoretical perspective we take up, we can be sure of the power that pornographic and erotic images can hold. Similarly, pictures can move us to tears, to memories, to excitement, and arousal. The fact that sexual representations have the power to incite a broad range of feelings from arousal to offense is astounding. Images, much like words, have the ability to put ideas into our heads and incite emotion in our hearts. Harlequin romance novels and hard-core porn are similar in the sense that they can arouse and affirm the sexuality of a range of persons. The bottom line is the potential power that graphic representations hold for graphic representations of sex both “challenge and affirm the power of art; it is the bottom line, the ultimate proof that representation has the power to disturb, to ravish, to arouse, to console” (Nathan, 2007: 123).

### *Commercialized Sex*

In recent years, the debate on pornography has begun to address questions regarding the socio-economic conditions of the production of pornography. Altman reminds us we live in a profit driven industry that relies on the exploitation of labor and

suggests that the changes in the regulation and experience of sexuality are increasingly informed by globalization and capitalist modes of production (Altman, 2008). In a similar vein, Brian McNair discusses how “sexual imagery now permeates every aspect of advanced capitalist culture” and provides many examples from popular culture to illustrate his point (McNair, 2002:2). In his book, *Striptease Culture: Sex, Media and the Democratization of Desire* he writes that “commodified sex in all its forms, targeted at most sexual communities with the resources to indulge their preferences, is of major economic significance in the cultural capitalism of the twenty-first century” (McNair, 2002: 6).

As referenced in chapter three of this work, Harry Brod draws distinctions between commercial and personal sex in his work “Pornography and The Alienation of Male Sexuality”. Brod identifies commercial sex as sex one would have on screen for payment, and personal sex as sex that one may have for an emotional or physical experience. According to Brod, “Erotica, as a sexual art, expresses a self, whereas pornography, as a sexual commodity, markets one” (Brod, 1996:398). I agree with Brod’s distinction to an extent but am wary of his distinctions between erotica and pornography. What is it about erotica that makes this genre of more capable to depict a self than the genre of pornography, is the posturing and the acts? I argue that it is our perception.

Pornography is increasingly about the commercialized sex market and signals the greater colonization of the body by prevailing capitalist markets (Brod, 1996: 400). The inclusion of the body into the market as an item for sale is not necessarily a new phenomenon. For instance, although Canada’s Bill C-13 made it illegal for

someone to profit from the sale of female ova or eggs, the ova can fetch nearly \$8 000 dollars per egg on the black market. Across the border in the United States, a woman can legally earn this amount per contribution (Brearton, 2010). And similarly, while you cannot sell sperm for profit in Canada, U.S donors can earn up to one hundred dollars per donation, depending on height, weight, medical history, and IQ (Brearton, 2010). In a highly capitalist world where we accept the sale and privatization of natural resources and basic human needs such as water, how can we treat the sale of sex so differently? Many researchers and groups such as Maggies (Toronto's Sex Workers Action Project) work to promote safer sexual practices among sex workers and are founded on the belief that "in order to improve our circumstances, sex workers must control our own lives and destinies" ([maggiestoronto.ca/about](http://maggiestoronto.ca/about)). If we use this framework to understand pornography as the 'imperialism of the body' or better yet, as the marketing (and profiting) of one's sexuality, moral implications seem to subside and we can entertain ideas of the unity of commercial and personal sex.

### *Education*

Access to information and skills necessary to prevent negative sexual outcomes is a right of Canadian youth. However the ways this information is disseminated and what topics are covered needs revision. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, "sexual health is a key aspect of personal health and social welfare that influences individuals across their life span" (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2008:2). And thus, access to effective, broadly based sexual health education programs is an important contributing factor to the health and well being of Canadian youth (Public Health Agency



of Canada, 2008). Health Canada notes “sexual health education should be available to all Canadians as an important component of health promotion and services” (Health Canada, 2003:1).

The Public Health Agency of Canada notes the crucial role that public and private educational institutions play in promoting sexual health and sexual education mandating,

“Since schools are the only formal educational institution to have meaningful (and mandatory) contact with nearly every young person, they are in a unique position to provide children, adolescents and young adults with the knowledge, understanding, skills, and attitudes they will need to make and act upon decisions that promote sexual health throughout their lives” (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2008: 19).

And while educational institutions may be a prime resource for young adults to obtain sexual education information, the role and responsibilities of parents in educating their children about sex is also a significant contributing factor to the health and well being of Canadian youth. Studies have shown that many youth look to their parents as a source of information on sexuality and sexual behavior and that parents and guardians are indeed important providers of sexual health information (Frappier, Kaufman, Baltzer, et al., 2008).

In sum, “In order to effectively promote sexual health and overall well-being of out young people, Canadian families, schools, health care providers, public health agencies, governments, and communities must share the responsibility to provide high quality sexual health education and services” (McKay, 2009: 49). The potential that both

public and private avenues have for informing young adults is great and so we must ensure that programs and parents are not only adequately trained and equipped but also able to encompass a culturally diverse range of persons with various sexual attitudes and needs.

Important challenges remain to be addressed. Studies suggest that many gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth do not receive adequate inclusion and support from sexual education program objectives and often “receive insufficient sexual health information relevant to their needs” (Maticka-Tyndale, 2008:87). The prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases amongst young Canadians is another important issue that needs to be addressed through sexual education.

The language we use in sexual education initiatives also needs to shift. Instead of “safe sex” we should talk in terms of “safer sex”. The inability of abstinence only programs to be effective is well documented by many researchers. Alexander McKay, Research Coordinator at the Sex Information and Education Council of Canada (SEICCAN) argues, “Abstinence only programs purposefully do not teach young people the importance of consistent contraceptive use for unintended pregnancy prevention or condom use for STI/HIV infection prevention” (McKay, 2009: 51). The Public Health Agency of Canada’s 2008 *Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education* state, “Effective sexual health education recognizes that responsible individuals may choose a variety of paths to achieve sexual health (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2008: 25). The World Association for Sexology reinforces this sentiment contending that educational programs that intentionally withhold information that is necessary for individuals to make informed choices are unethical (McKay, 2009:52).

Sexual education initiatives should now cover the topics of sexuality and identity, social pressures on youth to have sex or to be “sexy”, the social construction of gender, gender stereotyping, and encompass alternative sexualities such as gay, lesbian, and bisexual. The behavioral skills needed to prevent unwanted sexual outcomes in efforts to both protect and enhance sexual health should also include discussions on sexual misconduct, conversations regarding positive self-image and self worth, and mutually satisfying relationships. Discussing new topics such as the proliferation of Internet pornography, “sexting”, and other issues relevant to today’s youth will open up the floor for further discussion. It is here at the beginning of formal sex education that we can begin to normalize aspects of our bodies and sexuality that are typically recognized as embarrassing or private (i.e. menstruation, nocturnal emission), in a way that will allow for an expansion of attitudes towards our bodies and sexuality.

### *Suggestions for Future Research*

Representations of sexuality in ‘restricted’ and unrestricted genres have been around for centuries and it does not appear that they are going anywhere quickly. I argue that it would be in our best interest to acknowledge this fact and educate ourselves accordingly. The topic of pornography, graphic representations of sexual activity, and prevailing gender stereotypes should be addressed in the home as well as in the educational system. Discussions devoted to ‘pornography literacy’ which address the conditions of production and what is intentionally not shown in the production will help us realize pornography for what it really is: hyper sexualized and sensationalized visions of desires depicted onscreen. These discussions will also illuminate the fact that unlike

videos and the sex shown in pornography and erotica, real life and real life sexual experiences have consequences.

Firstly I argue for a more contextual, less dogmatic approach to studying pornography and its varying effects. Secondly I suggest that we step away from an approach that is comparative and evaluative in nature. Future research should move away from the framework that questions to whom does pornography damage more: men or women. While I believe it is crucial to inspect various genders using different approaches, I think it is more useful to do so in a less comparative framework than the one that currently exists. I recommend that a more pluralistic approach to studying pornography and erotica should be taken up. Future research should attempt to move beyond the dualistic framework that defines pornography as either bad or good or in a pro/anti structure.

As pornography evolves, as do new digital technologies that proliferate the spread of pornography. While this area of study is relatively unexplored, scholars such as Susanna Paasonen, author of “Labors of Love: Netporn, Web 2.0 and the Meanings of Amateurism” (2010), have pioneered research that examines the origins of amateur pornography, the dynamics and divisions between producer and consumer, viewer and performer, and identify the dramatic increase in “user- generated content” (Paasonen, 2010). Similar research that explores the various ways that couples use pornography together or work together to create their own pornography would shed light on how pornography has become incorporated into the shared sex lives of partners. Further examination of female produced pornography would also be very enlightening, as would an exploration of gay and lesbian orientated/produced pornography.

An area of study often overlooked in porn studies is the relationship between pornography and male sexuality. As the gender that consumes pornography the most, the need for further research in this area is obvious. Traditionally the discussion of men and pornography has focused on the objectification of women and radical arguments by MacKinnon and Dworkin suggest that male sexuality is intrinsic to the subordination of women. Several authors suggest that pornography can incite male violence toward women and that pornography itself is the graphic representation of male domination. Very little research has examined the portrayal of male sexuality in pornography or the objectification of the male body. Emerging areas of study such as critical masculinity theory should attempt to gauge the effects of pornography on male identity and sexual practices. A Marxist analysis of the poor payment that men receive while working in a pornographic production would be interesting and would contribute to the debate about commercialized sex. In sum, the relationship between pornography and men is an area that desperately needs investigation.

It is possible that amidst the moral pandemic around pornography we have overlooked pornography's potential positive value. Studies that investigate the relationship that pornography has with the self and masturbation would be particularly interesting for it is here where I think pornography has its greatest potential.

*The End*

The twentieth century has been good to pornography and the twenty-first century continues to foster the development of new forms of both pornography and erotica. As historical and cultural obstacles such as stigma, accessibility and censorship, continue to

erode, pornography threatens to break completely free of social taboos. If pornography enters entirely into the mainstream what will pornography then be? I argue that it is not in the best interest of pornography to become completely integrated with mainstream media for the lack of acceptance which pornography relies on to be taboo also fuels our curiosity and use.

What is pornography's place within society and culture? Pornography plays many roles for many different people and relates to our attitudes. In *Pornography: A Groundwork Guide* (2007), Debbie Nathan provides us with a wonderfully articulated suggestion as to how we should deal with pornography and the pornification of society suggesting,

“If we want to depornify, we will have to accept — or better, celebrate — that interest in sex and sexual imagery is part of the human condition. In addition, we will also have to accept the seductive concepts of democracy and citizenship. After all, what could be a bigger turn-on than a world where everyone has the right to express his or her sexuality, without having to act out someone else's because of poverty, oppression, or ignorance? What could be more exciting than sex education that helps young people know who they are — not by adopting stereotyped identities such as stud, hottie, or good girl, but by understanding themselves as community members and complicated individuals? And what could be more alluring than citizens helping to make a society where big, profit-driven corporations don't decide how to use technology (including the Internet) but instead people do?

In a world like that, we would not let the government censor sexual imagery. Nor would we pay much attention to Net Nannies, anti-porn preachers and porn “addiction” counselors. Instead, we would see a riot of new movies, pictures and sounds, not to mention touches and even robots. All this would be very different from what we have now. It might take a different name. Or we might laugh at the sadness of history, and just to be funny, call it porn” (Nathan, 2007:127).

One used to have to take great steps to find pornography on-line and now you have to go to lengths to avoid pornography as you surf the Internet. The impact that pornography has on our culture is boundless and difficult to measure. The question: so what do we do to deal with all of this pornography and erotica has a variety of answers depending on perspectives, contexts, and attitudes. While the answers to this question are vast, we can begin with a call for consumer safety and critical media literacy.

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