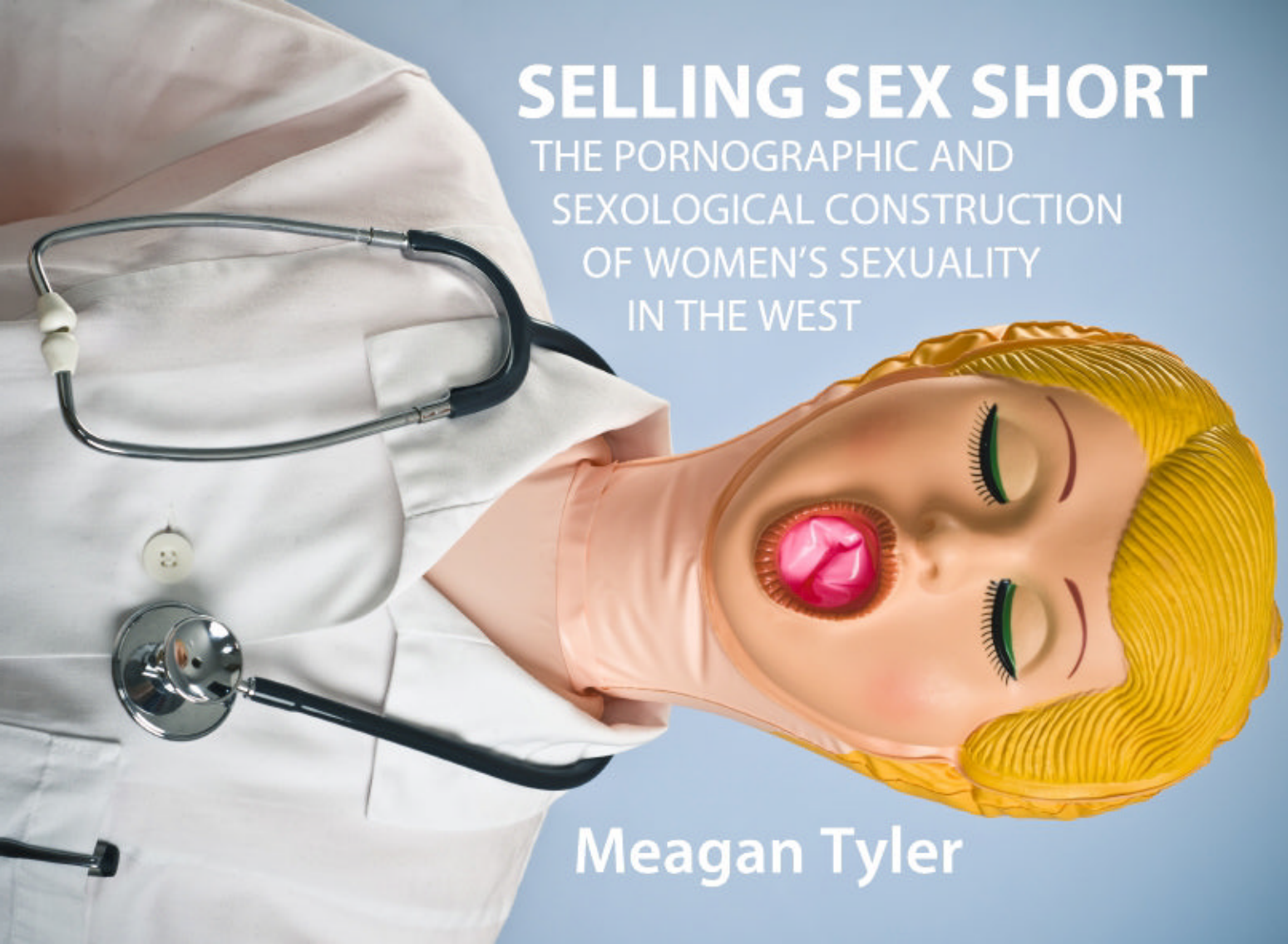
SELLING SEX SHORT

THE PORNOGRAPHIC AND SEXOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTION OF WOMEN'S SEXUALITY IN THE WEST



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The Pornographic and Sexological Construction of Women's Sexuality in the West

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AASECT	American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors and Therapists
AVN	Adult Video News
BDSM	Bondage, Discipline and Sadomasochism
CATW	Coalition Against Trafficking in Women
COYOTE	Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics
ED	Erectile Dysfunction
FSD	Female Sexual Dysfunction
HSDD	Hypoactive Sexual Desire Disorder
HSRC	Human Sexual Response Cycle
ICDC	International Consensus Development Conference
ISD	Inhibited Sexual Desire
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
SAR	Sexual Attitude Reassessment
SST	Sexual Script Theory
WAP	Women Against Pornography
WHISPER	Women Harmed In Systems of Prostitution Engaged in Revolt

INTRODUCTION

This book aims to explore and explain the model of sexuality currently being constructed through the industries of pornography and sexology (the "science of sex") in the West, in particular the United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia. The book focuses on five trends which have occurred or intensified during the last decade, namely: the pornographication of culture or the mainstreaming of pornography, the rise of extreme and violent sex acts in mass-marketed pornography, the resurgence of sexology, the creation of "female sexual dysfunction" (FSD), and the rise of "porn stars" as sex experts. While there is now an emerging body of literature, both popular and academic, which is beginning to document some of these trends only a handful of sources currently engage in critical feminist analysis. This book takes up the task of attempting to fill this gap by applying a feminist analysis that understands the current trends within pornography and sexology as political issues which affect the status of women. Ultimately, this book is about how pornography and sexology are selling sex short.

In the last decade the industries of pornography and sexology have entered into a period of substantial growth. The US-based pornography industry now produces more than 10,000 titles a year and worldwide the pornography industry grosses in excess of $60 billion worldwide (Sarikakis & Shaukat, 2008). More than $10 billion of this is accounted for by profits from the US alone (Williams, 2007). It is estimated that the US pornography industry has doubled in size in less than a decade. This boom in pornography industry profits has been built on several factors, including the success of DVD and internet technology (Maddison, 2004), as well as the rise of extreme sex acts such as bukkake, ass-to-mouth and double and triple anal penetration (Jensen, 2007). During this same period of significant financial growth, pornography, and the sex industry more generally, have gained increasing acceptance and influence in the West, particularly in regard to popular culture. Stripping and pole dancing have become redefined as new forms of exercise, mainstream publications such as *Time* and *The Economist* report on the financial successes of the pornography industry as "just another business" (Dilevko & Gottlieb, 2002), and Jenna Jameson, arguably the world's most famous porn star, has become a household name. Pop culture references to pornography in

fashion and advertising can even be said to have developed a degree of "cultural chic". The pornography industry has often actively sought this type of mainstream attention and validation. Pornography giant *Playboy* for example, has found great financial success in merchandising, allowing an extensive range of goods to be emblazoned with the famous "bunnyhead logo". It is important to note that while these processes of pornographication, or mainstreaming pornography, have created a "soft" or more acceptable image of pornography, the content of mainstream pornography itself has, almost simultaneously, moved toward increasingly violent and degrading content.

Mirroring the changes in pornography, over the past decade the sexology industry has seen both its profits and public profile increase significantly. After a period of stagnation in the late 1980s and early 1990s, sexology, and its most prominent subsidiary, sex therapy, have benefited considerably from the immense medical and popular interest in the release of Viagra for the treatment of erectile dysfunction. The subsequent search for a similar pharmaceutical "cure" for women's sexual "dysfunctions" has also attracted significant research and public attention particularly after the now widely published claim that 43 percent of American women suffer from some form of FSD (Laumann et al., 1999). In order to address this apparent epidemic, sexologists have variously endorsed the use of drugs to facilitate vasocongestion (Berman & Berman, 2001; Berman et al., 1999; Miyagawa, 2005), the elevation of testosterone levels through pills, patches and creams (Apperloo et al., 2003; Berman & Berman, 2001; Berman et al., 1999; Guay, 2007; Van Anders et al., 2005) and the use of sex aids such as the Food and Drug Administration approved "clitoral therapy device" which is supposed to simulate the sensations of oral sex (Fishman & Mamo, 2001). The promotion of Viagra and the invention of FSD have undoubtedly helped fuel the growth in sexology industry profits but the relatively uncritical acceptance of these developments in the popular media has also bolstered sexology's authority over popular conceptions of sexuality. An investigation of the links between pornography and sexology is therefore particularly timely, for as the financial weight and cultural influence of these industries continue to grow, an analysis of what type of sexuality pornography and sexology are promoting becomes increasingly necessary.

In order to provide a thorough analysis of the model of sexuality promoted by sexology and pornography, this book can be seen as loosely separated into four sections. Firstly, the theoretical framework is set out, then there is a section on pornography, followed by a section on sexology, and finally the drawing together of pornography and sexology and the

conclusion. Chapter one sets up the overall framework and explains the links between pornography, prostitution and harm. Chapters two and three deal specifically with pornography and pornographication. Chapters four and five focus on sexology and sex therapy, and chapter six and the conclusion emphasise the links between pornography and sexology. Each part of the book builds toward providing an explanation of what model of sexuality pornography and sexology are currently constructing for women, and seeks to answer one key question. The first part of the book asks: How do pornography and prostitution fit within theories of the social construction of sexuality? The second part asks: What model of sexuality is the pornography industry promoting for women and how is it popularised? The third part asks: What model of sexuality are sexology and sex therapy promoting for women and how is it popularised? And the final part asks: What are the material links between the pornography and sexology industries? It is concluded that pornography and sexology have a profound influence on the social construction of sexuality and that they provide mutually reinforcing models of what that sexuality should be. It is argued that the sexuality promoted by sexology and pornography closely resembles the sex of prostitution and that this is a model of sexuality that sells sex short. It is a model that makes it difficult for women to realise sexual pleasure and a model that relies upon and reinforces sexual inequality between women and men. It is a model that needs to be questioned and overturned if future generations of women want to achieve sexual liberation.

I argue in this book that radical feminism is particularly well positioned to offer an analysis of the ways in which sexology and pornography are affecting the cultural construction of sexuality and the position of women. Sexuality has always been an area central to radical feminist theory and both sexology and pornography have been highlighted by radical feminists as institutions which have been of primary importance in shaping dominant cultural conceptions of sexuality (e.g. Barry, 1995; Dworkin, 1994; Jackson, 1984, 1987, 1994; Jeffreys, 1985, 1990, 2005; MacKinnon, 1989, 1993; Russell, 1998; Scully, 1985). However, a radical feminist approach is often controversial, unpopular, or both, so some further explanation is in order.

The analysis of the relationship between pornography, prostitution and sexuality offered by radical feminists has faded from favour within in the academy in recent times. As Stevi Jackson notes, after the so-called “sex wars” of the 1980s, “taking a radical feminist perspective poses its own problems – not least the necessity of correcting misapprehensions currently in circulation about what radical feminism is” (Jackson, 1996, p.

22). It is thus necessary to briefly explain what adopting a radical feminist framework means in the context of this book, and through this explanation, put to rest some of the more common misrepresentations of radical feminist theory.

In *Re-Thinking Radical Feminism*, Kathy Miriam claims that radical feminist analysis remains significant because it offers both "a critique of gender as a category of hierarchy and [a] projection of social formations beyond male dominance" (Miriam, 1998, p. 7). That is to say, it offers critical opposition to the system of male dominance as well as providing, in Miriam's terms, the "moral imagination" to conceive of a system in which women could be better off (Miriam, 1998). This book is primarily focused on the former, that is, using radical feminist analysis to critique the way in which sexuality is constructed rather than offering up new ways of understanding and constructing sexuality, although the concept of an ethical sexuality as a way forward is discussed in the conclusion.

The naming of the social system of male dominance is an important element of radical feminist theory but the concept of male dominance remains an area in which there are often misconceptions. It is sometimes assumed, for example, that male dominance refers to a system in which *all* individual men dominate *all* individual women, *always*. Related to this is the more commonly expressed idea that in naming men as a dominant social class, radical feminists believe all individual women to be forced into the role of helpless victims. Firstly, as Miriam (2005) has argued, this is a false representation of the radical feminist position. Outlining structures of dominance does not equate to arguing that individuals are wholly powerless. Secondly, the critique is also misguided as the focus on the individual overlooks one of the most valuable insights of radical feminist theory, which is the importance of *social institutions*. While social institutions are not completely separate from individual action, they operate at a level above the individual, as Denise Thompson (2001) explains:

> Male domination…is a social system, a matter of meanings and values, practices and institutions. While social structures are maintained through the commitment and acquiescence of individuals, and can be eroded by the refusal of individuals to participate, they have a life of their own, and can continue to exert their influence despite the best efforts of the well intentioned (Thompson, 2001, p. 8).

This is not to suggest, Thompson adds, that the system of male dominance is "monolithic and inexorable" (p. 12). On the contrary, she notes that one of the great strengths of feminism has been exposing and

naming male domination *as domination*. The exposure in itself is a challenge to the existing order, as "social domination operates most efficiently to the extent that it ensures compliance by being disguised as something else, and not domination at all" (Thompson, 2001, p. 8).

Related to the concept of male domination is the radical feminist understanding that women constitute a sex class. This understanding is based in a belief that women share a common oppression (Jaggar, 2005). The concept of women as class is generally traced back to Kate Millett's groundbreaking text *Sexual Politics*. In *Sexual Politics* (1971) Millett posited that men and women were socialised into "basic patriarchal polities" where men as group were bestowed with superior status and power over women as a group (p. 26), an idea which has since been employed by a number of prominent radical feminists (e.g. Barry, 1979, 1995; Dworkin, 1993; Jaggar, 2005; MacKinnon, 1989; Pateman, 1988; Wittig, 2005). As with the concept of male dominance, the idea that women constitute a class is often misrepresented. It is sometimes claimed, for example, that suggesting women are a class equates to stating that all women experience oppression in exactly the same way, or that there are no divisions among women (Ramazanoglu, 1989). As Caroline Ramazanoglu (1989), clarifies, however, "[r]adical feminists who take this line do not necessarily deny significant class divisions between women, but they argue that it is the gender struggle to which feminist politics must be first addressed" (p. 102). She suggests, therefore, that the labelling of women as a class is a unifying strategy that is useful for political activism.

Naming women as a class may be useful in terms of rhetoric and activism but the purpose can be seen to go beyond political strategy. Monique Wittig (2005) has argued, for example, that naming women as a class is an important way of emphasising that gender is socially constructed. Wittig states that to name women as a class "is to say that the category 'woman' as well as the category 'man' are political and economic categories not eternal ones" (p. 160). Understanding women as a class therefore connects individual experiences of harm and exploitation to ideology and systems of structural oppression. In this way it is a particularly useful concept for this book as most chapters seek to emphasise the connections between the material reality of women's lives in prostitution and pornography to the social construction of women's sexuality more generally.

Employing terms such as "male dominance" and "women's oppression" can also be seen as an important way of reinforcing the political implications of feminist insights regarding the social construction of sexuality. Thompson (2001), for example, critiques the common use of the term

"social construction" as being too neutral. Thompson suggests that to speak only of the social construction of sexuality says nothing of the power relations which are involved in the constructing or who benefits from the outcome. Catharine MacKinnon also mentions this problem in *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State*:

> [I]t has become customary to affirm that sexuality is socially constructed. Seldom specified is what, socially, it is constructed *of…Constructed* seems to mean influenced by, directed, channelled, like a highway constructs traffic patterns. Not: Why cars? Who's driving? Where's everybody going? What makes mobility matter? Who can own a car? Is there a pattern that makes all these accidents look not very accidental? (MacKinnon, 1989, p. 131 [emphasis original]).

Radical feminist theory, however, does allow for asking these questions. The analysis does not end with simply stating that sexuality is constructed, but rather extends to allow for judgements to be made about different models of sexuality. This is particularly important when trying to evaluate whether or not a system is harmful for women.

Radical feminists offer strong critiques of the social construction of sexuality under systems of male dominance, and a number have further highlighted sexuality as an area which actually continues to create and reinforce women's oppression (MacKinnon, 1989; Jeffreys, 1990). As Diane Richardson (1997) has noted, such critiques have often led to radical feminism being attacked as both essentialist and anti-sex. The tag of essentialism is rather easily disproved, as radical feminist writing shows a conscious and clear commitment to the broad theory of social constructionism, especially in regard to gender and sexuality. Indeed, the idea that sexuality is *political*, therefore *social*, and able to be changed through social action, is a central part of the radical feminist project (Richardson, 1997, 2000; Shulman, 1980).

The anti-sex label is more difficult to shift. This label is generally employed by critics as a way of dismissing radical feminist analysis altogether, as though being against sex is so clearly absurd that it undermines the entire body of theory. As Dorchen Leidholdt (1990) has argued, it also draws on the more common use of anti-sex as an "age-old antiwoman slur" used to silence women who resist dominant cultural expectations of how women should behave sexually. While there were certain individual women, and even groups within the feminist movement in the 1970s and 1980s that openly advocated an anti-sex position, for example, Women Against Sex (see: Southern Women's Writing Collective, 1990), it is not these activists to which the label is commonly

applied. Rather it is applied to radical feminists who critique heterosexual sexual practices, sadomasochism and pornography. As Richardson argues in *Rethinking Sexuality* (2000), this misrepresentation may well result from the failure of oppositional, so called "pro-sex" theorists, or sexual libertarians, to interrogate their own definitions of what constitutes "sex". In other words, labelling a critique of dominant, existing constructions of sex and sexuality as a critique of all sex, shows an inability to imagine how sex might be changed to become something not currently prescribed by dominant models.

In contrast, radical feminists have taken up the challenge to conceive of a sexuality outside of male dominance and can therefore offer an extended critique (Miriam, 1998). Radical feminists, most notably radical lesbian feminists, have theorised new models of sexuality that focus on intimacy, embodiment, pleasure and equality. Nett Hart (1996), for example, attempts a "reformulation of desire" which is not "cluttered by heteropatriarchal experiences and expectations" in the edited collection *An Intimacy of Equals: Lesbian Feminist Ethics* (Mohin (ed)., 1996). She suggests an embodied sexuality in which "violation is unimaginable":

> What I am looking for is an embodied sexuality, a relationship that begins in the meeting of heart to bone, skin to tongue, rather than a sexuality that originates in the mind and is translated to physicality (Hart, 1996, p. 74).

Such a position is clearly not anti-sex, but it does challenge dominant constructions of what sex should be.

Despite the benefits of applying radical feminist analysis to the areas of sexology, pornography and the social construction of sexuality, radical feminism is not the dominant analytical framework through which these subjects are understood. Instead, sexual libertarian and postmodern approaches to pornography have become prominent within academia over the past two decades (Attwood, 2002; Eaton, 2007) and this has largely resulted in the de-politicisation of academic analyses of pornography. In addition, as pornography and pornographic imagery are gaining increasing acceptance in popular culture, the traditional feminist analysis of pornography as objectifying or dehumanising women is becoming increasingly seen as out-dated (Williamson, 2003). Moreover, there are some theorists and pornographers alike (e.g. Johnson (ed)., 2002; Mason, 2005; McElroy, 1995; Taormino, 2005) who have begun to appropriate the language of feminism to support the pornography industry claiming, for example, that watching or performing in pornography offers women sexual liberation. Similar feminist rhetoric is employed by sex therapists

and media commentators who couch the search for a "women's Viagra" in terms of women's sexual rights (e.g. Berman & Berman, 2001).

As this book aims to show, however, the use of feminist language in support of pornography and sexology confuses rather than clarifies what model of sexuality these industries are actually constructing for women. To borrow from Thompson (2001), this is domination operating more effectively because it is disguised as something other than domination. Given these changes in popular and academic discourse surrounding pornography and sexology, the importance of applying a radical feminist analysis, which exposes sites of male domination, becomes even greater. As psychiatrist and FSD critic Leonore Tiefer has noted, "a feminist analysis seems especially called for to expose how the rhetoric of equal sexual rights conceals the subtler operations of power" (Tiefer, 2001, p. 91). Indeed, offering an analysis of how the pornographic and sexological models of sexuality prescribe certain unequal power relations between men and women is a central theme explored in this book.

Chapter one develops a further exploration of this feminist analysis as it relates to pornography and prostitution. This chapter provides the evidence and analysis for two of the main arguments that underpin the book, namely that pornography is a form of prostitution and that pornography and prostitution cause harm to women. The harms of prostitution and pornography are analysed at some length through an evaluation of a number of sociological studies and relevant feminist theory, both radical and non-radical. The argument is made that what defines prostitution as harmful is not an element of monetary exchange but rather the model of sexuality which is involved. It is then argued that if pornography is a form of prostitution, pornography can also be seen as harmful. Moreover, it is argued that pornography can be understood as a particularly harmful and extreme form of prostitution. This idea is taken up further in chapter two.

Chapter two offers an analysis of the model of sex promoted in pornography and examines the rise of violent and extreme sex acts in mainstream, mass-marketed pornography. For more than a decade, academic defences of pornography as either harmless or liberating have proliferated but, in contrast, there is acknowledgement from within the pornography industry that during the last ten years mainstream pornography has become more violent, degrading and extreme, increasingly involving physical harm to performers (Amis, 2001; Anderson, 2003; Ramone & Kernes, 2003). It is posited in this chapter that the differing explanations of pornography from inside and outside the industry can be at least partially explained by academic defences of pornography focusing almost

exclusively on consumption while overlooking the conditions under which pornography is produced. An argument is made for the importance of considering the content of pornography through the production process and focusing in particular on the harm that is inflicted on women through the production of mainstream pornography. The content and production of pornography is explored in the remainder of the chapter through an analysis of the US pornography industry publication *Adult Video News* (AVN). This analysis shows that violent and extreme sex acts are not only prevalent in mainstream pornography but that producers expect these acts to appeal to consumers. Such evidence strongly undermines the prevailing approaches to pornography within the academy which represent violence and degradation as peripheral to, or unrepresentative of, current mainstream pornography (e.g. McKee, Albury & Lumby, 2008). It is concluded that evidence from within the industry should inform feminist analyses of pornography and pornographication.

The issue of pornographication, or the mainstreaming of pornography, is taken up in chapter three which considers the way in which the model of sex found in pornography is being popularised. Following on from chapter two, it is argued that a feminist analysis of the mainstreaming of pornography needs to be based on an understanding of the current content and production of mainstream pornography. Such a position is largely absent in current popular and academic understandings of pornographication which have tended to either reify the trend as potentially liberatory or decry it as the vulgar over-commodification of the "private" realm of sexuality (c.f. Boyle, 2010). Neither of these positions is informed by the trends which are actually taking place within the pornography industry. While the amount of literature on the mainstreaming of pornography is rapidly increasing, it is as though no-one has thought to ask what it is exactly that is being mainstreamed. It is therefore put forward in chapter three, that the pornographication of culture needs to be understood as the mainstreaming of a harmful model of prostitution sex and perhaps even as the mainstreaming of eroticised violence against women.

Having established that pornography promotes a model of prostitution sex which is particularly harmful for women, chapters four and five deal with the model of sex promoted in sexology, the scientific study of sexuality, and how it is popularised through sex therapy and self-help books. Chapter four focuses on the bio-medical model of sexuality and related feminist critiques, before moving on to a discussion of recent trends in sexology and sex therapy. Through a feminist analysis of recent sexological literature, the creation of FSD is highlighted as a significant change that has put increased pressure on women to meet the sexual

demands of their partners. The medicalised conception of sexual desire which informs the FSD model is singled out as being problematic for women, and the sexological construction of desire is compared to the pornographic rape myth. It is argued that the current sexological model of desire makes it difficult if not impossible for women to be able to rationally refuse heterosexual intercourse within a relationship and therefore this model, in effect, requires women to be constantly sexually available, an element of the sex of prostitution. It is concluded that there are significant similarities between the model of sex found in systems of prostitution and the model of sex promoted for women through the supposedly reputable and medically based science of sexology.

Chapter five continues the critique of the sexological model of sexuality through an analysis of sex self-help books written by renowned sexologists. Sex self-help books are of particular interest as they are one of the most prominent mediums through which the findings from scientific sexology are transmitted through to the public and popular culture (Irvine, 1990; Potts, 2002). They are therefore one way in which the sexological model become popularised, and can be seen to have an influential role in constructing normative notions of heterosexuality (Potts, 2002). The self-help literature considered in this chapter details the concrete action therapists and sexologists expect men and women to take in order to achieve the ideal model of sexuality. Five therapist recommended texts are analysed in depth. A feminist analysis of these texts shows quite clearly what is expected of women within the medical model of sexuality. It is argued that the sex self-help books promote a harmful model of sex which encourages women to actively, sexually service men at the cost of their own pleasure and comfort. It is further argued that the model of sex present in these texts contains significant similarities to the model of prostitution sex outlined in chapter one.

Finally, the two areas of sexology and pornography are brought together explicitly in chapter six with an analysis of the material links between the pornography and sexology industries. As there is only very limited literature which deals with pornography and sexology in conjunction, this chapter focuses on documenting the various ways in which pornography and sexology intersect. These intersections include the use of pornography in sexology research, the use of pornography as a form of sex therapy, the endorsement of “sex education videos” by sexologists and the rise of porn stars as the new sex “experts”. A variety of sources are drawn on, from sex advice books written by pornography performers to sexological literature from respected medical journals. It is concluded that the sexological and pornographic models of sexuality can be seen as

mutually reinforcing. It is proposed that one way of understanding these intersections is that the promotion of pornography within sexology has afforded the pornography industry a degree of legitimacy, which may have in turn fuelled the now popular concept that pornography stars are the ultimate authorities on sex. The collusion between these industries makes it increasingly difficult for women to escape this model of sex, a harmful model that mirrors prostitution sex and is based on the eroticising of women's inequality. The possibility of imagining and moving beyond this model of sexuality is discussed in the conclusion.

CHAPTER ONE

MAKING CONNECTIONS: PORNOGRAPHY, PROSTITUTION AND HARM

This chapter provides the theoretical grounding for two premises on which much of this book is based. First, is the concept that pornography and prostitution are inseparable, that pornography is in fact, a form of prostitution. A variety of data is used to support this proposition, which is based in both feminist theory and the lived experiences of women in prostitution and pornography. The second proposition is that prostitution (and therefore pornography) is harmful. There is now growing sociological research into the experiences of women in prostitution that shows that a significant majority are severely harmed by their involvement in prostitution, from violence at the hands of pimps and johns to the painful psychological experiences of dissociation and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). This chapter also suggests that that prostitution (and therefore pornography) may be seen as *inherently* harmful. This controversial suggestion is also based in both feminist theory and sociological evidence. Central to this last proposition is the concept of "the sex of prostitution", the idea that there is something fundamental about prostitution that makes it harmful not only to the women directly abused in it, but also women as a class. Finally, the chapter leads into a brief discussion of the increasing normalisation and cultural validation of the sex of prostitution, or in Kathleen Barry's terms "the prostitution of sexuality" (Barry, 1995).

Connecting Pornography and Prostitution

Pornography and prostitution are often, both popularly and legally, conceived as completely separate entities. In many nations of the industrialised West, for example, prostitution is either illegal or officially discouraged by authorities while pornography frequently occupies a more privileged position, sometimes recognised as representation or even art (Spector, 2006a). The US offers a prime example. Prostitution remains

illegal everywhere in the US except for certain parts of the state of Nevada while pornography, in contrast, is not only legal but has been afforded protection through a number of court decisions which have defined pornography production as primarily an issue of free speech (Spector, 2006a). Social attitudes in the US are also said to substantially differ on the issues of prostitution and pornography, as Jessica Spector points out in her edited collection on philosophical approaches to both industries: "A quick comparison of legal practices and societal attitudes toward prostitution and pornography reveal a dichotomy of thought: prostitution is illegal and socially condemned in much of the United States, while pornography is generally legal and increasingly considered more socially acceptable…" (Spector, 2006a, p. 3).

As many feminists have argued, the difference in approaches defies the reality of pornography production. There are numerous ways in which pornography and prostitution are intimately connected, including practical crossovers such as the use of pornography by pimps to "season" or train women for prostitution (Giobbe, 1990; Silbert & Pines, 1984; Stark & Hodgson, 2003), the use of pornography by johns to request certain acts from women in prostitution (Farley et al., 2003) and the business links between prostitution and pornography enterprises (Taylor & Jamieson, 1999). There are also more conceptual links, for instance, the idea that pornography is the "public relations arm" of prostitution (Raymond, 1995) or the notion that pornography fuels growing demand for prostitution (MacKinnon, 2006). These connections will all be explored in this chapter as well as the idea, central to much feminist work, that pornography *is* prostitution.

Pornography as part of the global "sex industry"

One way of understanding the links between pornography and prostitution is to consider pornography as part of the global sex industry. The business of pornography is now worth in excess of $60 billion worldwide (Sarikakis & Shaukat, 2008). To put this in perspective, the global pornography industry is, at the time of writing, thought to approximate the size of the national GDP of Vietnam or the Slovak Republic (World Bank, 2008). The production of pornography in the United States alone is thought to be worth more than $10 billion annually (Williams, 2007). The production of pornography is also now vital to the economy of the state of California (Simpson, 2005) where the majority of the world's commercial pornography is made (Milter & Slade, 2005). Pornography is worth more than the popular US movie and music markets

combined (McNair, 2002). In Australia, although the domestic production of pornography is virtually non-existent (McKee, Albury & Lumby, 2008), the sale of pornography has been estimated at more than (AU) $1.5 billion annually (Sarikakis & Shaukat, 2008).

Thanks largely to this substantial wealth, the pornography business is now being taken seriously in economic circles. Pornography is seen to lead the way in piloting new communications technology, for example, and providing a business model that other non-pornographic enterprises can follow (Dilevko & Gottlieb, 2002). Pornography, perhaps in part because of its burgeoning profits, is also increasingly considered a legitimate form of business (Taylor & Jamieson, 1999). This is, no doubt, part of the cultural trend toward the mainstreaming of pornography, which is the subject of chapter three. What is particularly interesting about commentary on pornography as business in this context is that it is so often viewed in isolation, replicating the common conceptual split between pornography and all other areas of the sex industry. Yet, pornography is intimately linked economically to other forms of prostitution. Ian Taylor and Ruth Jamieson emphasise these links in "Sex Trafficking and the Mainstream of Market Culture" which covers the business side of mainstreaming pornography on television and its possible relationship to trafficking in women (Taylor & Jamieson, 1999). Taylor and Jamieson predict that with increasing demand for pornographic content on television, employees of legitimate television production companies will one day fulfil the role of pimps and traffickers, sourcing new "stars" both locally and overseas. They take a particular interest in Manchester, which it is suggested, could be an important case study for further research: "The ongoing relationship between the companies involved in the production of television sex programmes, the phone sex companies and brothels in particular localities like Manchester ought to be the subject of careful study, both in respect of cross-overs of ownership, management and recruitment of sex workers…" (Taylor & Jamieson, 1999, p. 271). Clearly, it is expected that there will be overlap or at least connections between the ownership and / or management of these legal and increasingly accepted branches of prostitution.

Indeed, there are a variety of interconnections between different types of prostitution both legal and illegal. Traditional forms of prostitution, such as brothel and street prostitution are often linked, not only to each other, but to other forms of prostitution which tend to be considered more acceptable such as pornography, stripping, phone sex, peep shows and mail order bride services (Stark, 2006). Indeed Sophie Day and Helen Ward suggest that the increased social acceptability of licit forms of

prostitution such as stripping is likely fuelling an increase in men's use of women in more traditional, and often illegal, forms of prostitution (Day & Ward, 2004; see also Ward et al., 2005). As Christine Stark (2006) contends in "Stripping as a System of Prostitution", it is clear that both legal and illegal strands of the prostitution industry, including pornography, intertwine:

> Women and girls in prostitution rings are often used simultaneously in multiple systems of prostitution. Prostitution ring pimps use women and girls in mainstream venues such as strip clubs as well as underground prostitution venues where attendance is restricted. For instance, there are women who travel the mainstream strip circuit and they are simultaneously used as sex slaves in pornography shoots carried out by prostitution ring pimps. Other women are prostituted in a brothel during the day and used in pornography during the evenings (Stark, 2006, p. 46).

The movement of women from one form of prostitution to another is also suggested by Taylor and Jamieson (1999). It can be inferred from their article, although it is never explicitly stated, that the "recruitment" of women for pornography, or "television sex programmes" is likely to centre around those already involved in forms of prostitution, either brothel prostitution or phone sex lines.

Both Stark (2006), and Taylor and Jamieson (1999), mention that the links between pornography and prostitution are not only those of business ownership but that individual women are likely to be used in more than one form of prostitution, including pornography. This speculation is supported by much of the evidence which is currently available about women's experiences in prostitution. In a study of more than two hundred women in prostitution in Chicago, for example, Jody Raphael and Deborah Shapiro found that 54 percent of women who began in street prostitution moved on to other forms of prostitution, "mostly in escort services, exotic dancing, *pornography*, and parties" (Raphael & Shapiro, 2002, p. 25 [emphasis mine]). Furthermore, the most comprehensive study to date on the experiences of women in prostitution, led by psychologist Melissa Farley, collated information from more than 800 people involved in prostitution, in nine different countries. The vast majority of respondents were women (Farley et al., 2003). Almost half of all those surveyed (49 percent) reported having had pornography made of them while in prostitution (Farley et al., 2003, p. 46). That this experience is reportedly so common is one reason why it is difficult to maintain a practical distinction between pornography and prostitution.

In addition to women moving from traditional forms of prostitution to pornography, according to those within the industry, it is also common for women performing in pornography to move to work in prostitution. Often, to supplement their limited income from pornography, women, even well known "porn stars", are working in strip clubs and brothels (Simpson, 2005). According to David Aaron Clark, a writer / director of pornographic films, there has also been an increase in "adult performers" working for escort services. He suggests this has been accompanied by a change in attitudes amongst porn stars, who at one time believed their work to be "fundamentally different" from prostitution, but no longer maintain such a firm distinction (quoted in Reed, 2006). Thus, it makes little practical sense to draw such a clear distinction between pornography and prostitution as there are clearly material links between the two and considerable crossovers in the experiences of the women involved.

Pornography as training for prostitution

Another way in which prostitution and pornography are frequently interlinked is through the use of pornography for "seasoning" or training women and girls in prostitution (Giobbe, 1990; Raymond 1995; MacKinnon, 2006; Stark & Hodgson, 2003). The use of pornography is a strategy often employed by pimps to show women what will be expected of them in prostitution. In research conducted by the prostitution survivors' group WHISPER (Women Harmed in Systems of Prostitution Engaged in Revolt), 30 percent of those women interviewed reported that pimps used pornography as a tool to instruct them on how to prostitute (Giobbe, 1990). MacKinnon (2006) also notes that the use of pornography as "seasoning" was mentioned by a number of prostituted women during the hearings into the anti-pornography ordinances in the US. She mentions one woman in particular who "told how pornography was used to train and season young girls in prostitution and how men would bring photographs of women in pornography being abused and say, in effect, 'I want you to do this,' and demand that the acts being inflicted on the women in the materials be specifically duplicated" (MacKinnon, 2006, p. 251). Such testimony also suggests that johns or "clients" of prostituted women attempt to use the pornography as a type of instruction manual. Returning to Farley's research project, 47 percent of those interviewed, reported that they were "*upset* by an attempt to make them do what had been seen in pornography" (Farley et al., 2003, p. 46 [emphasis mine]). Again, it is clear that prostitution and pornography interlink.

Pornography as prostitution

While popular and legal thinking on prostitution and pornography both tend to imagine a divide whereby prostitution and pornography are completely separate, the belief that prostitution and pornography are fundamentally different also prevails in much academic literature. It is this "dichotomy of thought" in academic literature, which is the primary focus of a recent edited collection *Prostitution and Pornography: Philosophical debate about the sex industry* (Spector (ed), 2006). Spector notes that in liberal approaches to prostitution, both those that are pro-prostitution and those that favour restrictions, the focus is on the individual woman in prostitution (in her terms, the "individual worker", p. 9). In liberal approaches to pornography there is an observable shift away from this individual-centred approach, and instead the "social value of expressive liberty" is emphasised. In arguing for the social value of protecting pornography as expression, the focus shifts from production and the "rights" of the individuals involved in production, to the "rights" of consumers (Spector, 2006b, p. 430). As Spector shows, this is a serious inconsistency which creates flawed liberal analyses of pornography in which the "individual worker" fades from view completely, "as if no pornography were live-actor pornography at all" (2006b, p. 435).

Radical feminist analyses of pornography, in highlighting the harm done to women in both consumption *and* production, do not suffer from the inconsistency evident in traditional liberal approaches. Instead, radical feminist theorists have tended to maintain an emphasis on the fact that "live-actor pornography" as Spector puts it, does involve real people performing real acts (e.g. Dines, Jensen & Russo, 1998; Dworkin & MacKinnon, 1997; MacKinnon, 1993; Russell, 1998). When considering pornography from the position of production, that is, understanding that real people performed real acts in order for it to be produced, it becomes difficult to see how theorising on pornography has become so abstracted from prostitution. Rebecca Whisnant addresses this issue directly and argues that "[p]ornography is the documentation of prostitution" (Whisnant, 2004, p. 19). By way of example, Whisnant provides a rather lengthy but very valuable hypothetical situation which is reproduced below:

> Suppose Fred is making money by selling Gertrude's sex act to Harvey and reaping part or all of the proceeds. In short, Fred is a pimp. It then occurs to him that with this new technological innovation called the camera (or video camera, or webcam, etc.) he could sell Gertrude's sex act not just once, to Harvey, but many thousands of times to many thousands of

> different men…The structure, logic, and purpose of Fred's activity have not changed. He is still a pimp. He has simply become more savvy and enterprising…The basic elements of Gertrude's experience, similarly, have not changed: she is still exchanging sex acts for money. The only member of our original trio now having a significantly different experience is Harvey, who now has his sexual experience 'with' (at, on) Gertrude at some technological remove. He may like it this way or he may not, but keep in mind that he is getting the goods at a much lower price, with greater anonymity, and with the added benefit of not having to see himself as a john (Whisnant, 2004, p. 20).

Whisnant also counteracts the claim that pornography is somehow qualitatively different from prostitution because men are paid for sex in pornography too: "So essentially, a male prostitute has entered the scene and is now participating alongside the female prostitute. But what of it? The basic structure of pimp, prostitute, and customer remains intact" (p. 20). The only significant change between the original prostitution and the finished product of pornography is the experience of the consumer. Considering pornography from the production side, from the position of the women used in its making, pornography looks a lot more like prostitution than something which is completely separate.

A number of writers and theorists employing a radical feminist analysis have gone further and argued that pornography *is* prostitution (Dines & Jensen, 2006; Dines, Jensen & Russo, 1998; Farley et al., 2003; MacKinnon, 2006; Russell, 1998; Whisnant, 2004). Gail Dines and Robert Jensen, for example, refer to Hugh Hefner, founder of the *Playboy* pornography empire as a pimp, "as someone who sells women to men for sex" (Dines & Jensen, 2006, n.pag.). Arguing along the same lines as Whisnant, they maintain that "[w]hile pornography has never been treated as prostitution by the law, it's fundamentally the same exchange. The fact that sex is mediated through a magazine or movie doesn't change that, nor does that fact that women sometimes use pornography. The fundamentals remain: Men pay to use women for sexual pleasure" (Dines & Jensen, 2006, n.pag.). Farley, in her extensive research into the harms of prostitution, puts it rather more simply: "Pornography is a specific form of prostitution, in which prostitution occurs and is documented" (Farley, 2003, p. xiv). Diana Russell, maintains the focus on what happens to the women in prostitution: "Does it really make sense that an act of prostitution in front of a camera is more acceptable than the same act performed in private…These women are not simulating sex. They are literally being fucked…" (Russell, quoted in Jeffreys, 1997, p. 232).

The understanding that pornography is prostitution is also common to a number of works written by those from within the pornography and prostitution industries (Almodovar, 2006; Lords, 2004; Reed, 2006). This position is argued even by those who vigorously defend the so-called "sex industry" (e.g. Reed, 2006). In 2005, for example, a woman charged with "promoting prostitution" by running an escort business in Manhattan, attempted to claim she should be afforded the same legal protection as pornographers because there was no meaningful distinction between pornography and prostitution (Fass, 2005). In an attempt to defend prostitution as a form of "private artistic expression", another industry insider, Theresa Reed (a.k.a. "Darklady"), links prostitution and pornography together in her work: "the primary difference between being a porn star and being a whore is the presence of the camera…" (Reed, 2006, p. 256). Norma Jean Almodovar, a "retired prostitute" and "sex worker rights advocate" also argues that a camera is the difference between pornography and prostitution, even referring to pornography as "prostitution on camera" (Almodovar, 2006, p. 151). Furthermore, Almodovar notes that while she disagrees with many aspects of the radical feminist understanding of prostitution, "I do agree with these [radical] feminists that pornography and prostitution are one and the same" (p. 158). The fact that a number of radical feminist *and* pro-prostitution activists are in agreement on this issue is certainly powerful evidence in support of the contention that pornography is simply prostitution by another name.

Pornography as a particularly harmful form of prostitution

Both pro- and anti-pornography activists have emphasised the similarities between prostitution and pornography, even arguing that pornography can be considered prostitution with a camera. From the perspective of the women used in pornography, it can also be conceived of as a *particular type* of prostitution that contains specific harms which are additional to those found in other forms of prostitution (MacKinnon, 1993). Pornography is thus conceived not simply as prostitution, but as a particularly pernicious form of prostitution. This can be seen in two separate ways; that pornography is likely to require more physically extreme sex acts, and that the filming and subsequent distribution of pornography causes increased psychological harms to prostituted women. This is not to suggest that there are any forms of prostitution which are not harmful, nor is it to instigate an argument about the relative merits of one form of prostitution over the other. The purpose is, however, to point out the inadequacies of those arguments which have claimed pornography to

be harmless or at least less harmful than other forms of prostitution (e.g. Johnson (ed)., 2002; McElroy, 1995). As the discussion below will suggest, it is more likely that the opposite is the case, and that pornography may in fact carry *additional* forms of harm.

Firstly, pornography can be understood as a particularly harmful form of prostitution because it generally requires particularly extreme forms of sex. Women in pornography, for example, are frequently required to be penetrated for long periods of time, sometimes for multiple hours on end (Bisch, 1999; Jensen, 2007). Indeed the aim of much pornography is to show sex acts which continue for extended periods of time. This is in sharp contrast to traditional forms of prostitution where women recurrently speak of employing methods which facilitate ending the sexual interaction as quickly as possible (e.g. Hoigard & Finstad, 1992; O'Connell Davidson, 1995a). The types of sex acts required also differ. In traditional forms of prostitution for example, fellatio and vaginal intercourse (separately or in combination) are the most frequently performed sex acts (Jeal & Salisbury, 2004; Monto, 2001). While these sex acts are still common in mainstream pornographic videos they are increasingly mixed with more extreme acts such as double penetration (vaginal and anal penetration simultaneously) and double or triple anal penetration (Anderson, 2003; Ramone & Kernes, 2003). It is unlikely that these acts are regularly performed in traditional prostitution, especially given that the majority of traditional prostitution acts involve the sexual servicing of one individual john at a time (Monto, 2001).

That women report being "used up" very quickly within the pornography industry also suggests that increased harms may be involved. While many women reportedly only last a number of months in the pornography industry, during which time they engage in progressively more extreme sex acts in order to gain contracts (Amis, 2001; Jensen, 2007; Ross, 2007), a number of studies have found the average time spent in traditional forms of prostitution to be between five and ten years (Dalla, 2000; Farley et al., 2003; Parriott, 1994; Potterat et al., 1990).

There are also additional harms to women brought about by the distribution of pornography. In the following excerpt, MacKinnon challenges readers to imagine the harms of pornography from the perspective of women used in its making:

> You hear the camera clicking or whirring as you are being hurt, keeping in time to the rhythm of your pain. You always know that the pictures are out there somewhere, sold or traded or shown around or just kept in a drawer. In them, what was done to you is immortal. He has them; someone, anyone, has seen you there, that way. This is unbearable. What he felt as he

> watched you as he used you is always being done again and lived again, and felt again though the pictures… (MacKinnon, 1993, p. 4).

Here, the trauma that many women experience after having escaped systems of prostitution / pornography is highlighted, in particular having to continue living with the knowledge that the pornography can still be viewed by others, including their original abusers. In her book *Public Rape* (2004), Tanya Horeck notes that one of the more unique aspects of MacKinnon's argument is that she persistently questions "how technologies of vision not only replay and repeat women's original trauma, but *produce a new dimension of pain*" (p. 83 [emphasis mine]). This new dimension of pain involves not only the distress of knowing that the pornography can continue to be viewed, therefore continuing the abuse, but also knowing that it may contribute to the cycle of prostitution for other women. One survivor's account of her time in prostitution explains this pain quite clearly:

> The man who prostituted me showed me pictures of what he was going to do to me and he would 'practice' on me what was happening in the picture. That's how I learned what to do for the trick. The hard thing is, I know the pornography he made of me is being used to hurt others. (quoted in Stark & Hodgson, 2003, p. 21).

It is this repeating cycle of prostitution / pornography which informs the final link to be considered in this chapter; pornography as the "public relations arm" (Raymond, 1995) of prostitution.

Pornography as propaganda for prostitution

The final way in which pornography and prostitution can be understood as interlocking is through the idea that pornography use helps fuel the use of women in other forms of prostitution. There are two slight variations of this argument; that pornography affects the cultural understanding of what is acceptable in regard to sex and the rights of women (e.g. Barry, 1996; Raymond, 1995), and that pornography directly affects demand for prostitution (e.g. Barry, 1995; MacKinnon, 2006). The first version is that pornography use (and its increasing acceptability) helps to both create and reinforce societal attitudes that the purchase of women is acceptable, thus creating an environment in which prostitution is more likely to flourish. Janice Raymond, for example, put forward this proposition in a submission to the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, on behalf of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women

(CATW), stating: "Pornography is the public relations arm of the sex industry. It teaches men and boys to view and treat women and girls as prostitutes, and as sex merchandise available for a price (Raymond, 1995, n.pag.). Along similar lines, it has been suggested that pornography is propaganda for prostitution (Jeffreys, 1997) and that pornography glamorises prostitution, disappearing its harms (Farley & Kelly, 2000).

The second version of the argument is that pornography use encourages *individual* men to seek out the "real thing" and use prostituted women (MacKinnon, 2006). This is suggested by MacKinnon, for example, who argues that "[p]ornography helps create that desire [for prostitution]. So the relation between the two is ultimately circular: pornography supplies the objectified sexuality of male dominance, both creating and filling the demand for the trafficking that is prostitution…" (MacKinnon, 2006, p. 253). Taylor and Jamieson (unintentionally) offer support for MacKinnon's analysis when they suggest that further research is needed into tracking the relationship between "growth of local markets in pornography and patterns of immigration of sex workers into that locality" (Taylor & Jamieson, 1999, p. 271). From a feminist perspective, this appears to be an expectation by the authors that increasing pornography production in a particular area may lead to growth in trafficking of prostituted women to that same area. Once again, the relationship between pornography and prostitution is considered an intimate one. Indeed, it would be difficult to gain a complete understanding of one without taking into account the other.

Despite prevailing social, legal, and academic attitudes to pornography, which split it from prostitution altogether, there is substantial evidence to the contrary; that pornography and prostitution are closely connected if not one and the same. On both a practical and conceptual level, pornography can be understood as fundamentally the same as prostitution. Both primarily involve the purchase of women for the purpose of sexually pleasing men and the presence of a camera does not substantially alter this arrangement. From a radical feminist standpoint, it is imperative that any understanding of pornography is informed by the position of women used in its production, and from this angle, pornography can be recognised either simply as prostitution or as a particularly harmful form of prostitution.

The Harms of Prostitution

Understanding pornography as a form of prostitution is an important step in attempting to recognise the harms of pornography. The most

prominent feminist theorising on pornography from the 1980s tended to address pornography's effects on women and society generally rather than the effects of pornography on the women used in its making. A significant focus for both anti-pornography feminists and those defending pornography was whether or not the *consumption* of pornography by men harmed women. Perhaps as a consequence of this, and of the ever present false distinction between pornography and prostitution, there is very little evidence on the harms done to women in the *production* of pornography. Furthermore, there is no academic research on the subject.

While studies of women in street and brothel prostitution are growing, there has been no comparable inquiry into women in pornography. There are, however, as this chapter has thus far demonstrated, such extensive similarities between pornography and prostitution that it can be considered at least probable that the harms experienced by women in prostitution are also experienced by women in pornography. The remainder of this chapter will draw on feminist research regarding prostitution to explain not only the harms associated with prostitution, but also the concept of the sex of prostitution. It is held that the findings of this research can readily be applied to pornography as well. Moreover, emphasising the harms of prostitution and pornography is particularly important in the current climate, where a glamorised version of prostitution and pornography, that either overlooks or downplays the issue of harm, has become prominent both in the academy and in popular culture.

Traditionally, social science and medical literature has focused on the social harms of prostitution, most often harm to the community in the form of threats to social order or public health. During the 1980s and 1990s the focus, especially in medical literature, was on the transmission of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), especially HIV-AIDS (Barnard, 1993; Farley & Kelly, 2000). Rarely, during this time, were studies conducted which assessed the harms of prostitution from the perspective of women and girls in prostitution. However, during the last decade there have been a number of important sociological studies conducted, which have begun to more thoroughly document the experiences of prostituted women and girls (e.g. Dalla, 2000; Downe, 2003; Farley et al., 2003; Kramer, 2003; Nixon et al., 2002; Raphael & Shapiro, 2002; Ross et al., 2003; Tutty & Nixon, 2003). There are three significant types of harms to women which become evident from these studies. First, is the increased likelihood of experiencing violence, second are psychological harms, in particular post-traumatic stress and dissociation, and lastly, the experience of harm which appears to be intrinsic to prostitution.

A number of authors have written about the increased likelihood that women in prostitution will experience violence (Farley et al., 2003; Parriott, 1994; Nixon et al., 2002; Vanwesenbeeck, 1994). Violence at the hands of pimps and violence at the hands of "clients" are most often the focus of attention, but as Kendra Nixon and colleagues have suggested, women in prostitution also tend to become targets for "other prostituted women, and intimate partners, as well as representatives from mainstream society and the police" (Nixon et al., 2002, p. 1023). They also add that women in prostitution are more likely to experience suicidal ideation and self-harm. These harms are commonly overlooked in non-feminist literature on prostitution, where the primary risk is seen to be transmission of STIs. As Nixon et al. point out, while STI transmission is certainly of serious concern, "the risk of injury and death from violence is considerable…Violence and abuse were dominant themes in the women's narratives…" (Nixon et al., 2002, p. 1036). Indeed, the women interviewed often spoke of the frequency of extreme violence, and noted how it eventually appeared normal:

> I have seen girls thrown into fences, licks[1] from their boyfriends. I have grown to think that it's common. We see that down here all the time. If something bad happened, I wouldn't have known the difference. That to me would have just been normal. (Nixon et al., 2002, p.1024).

Indeed high incidences of physical and sexual assault have been found in most substantial studies on the experiences of prostituted women. Ruth Parriotts' study of prostituted women in America found that 85 percent of her respondents reported having been raped while in prostitution, 90 percent reported being physically assaulted during their time in prostitution, and 50 percent of the overall sample reported being beaten "once a month or more often" (Parriott, 1994, n.pag.). Also in the United States, Mimi Silbert and Ayala Pines (1982) found that 70 percent of their sample of women in street prostitution had been raped, and approximately two-thirds had been physically assaulted. Such findings, indicating extremely high rates of physical violence – considerably higher than those within the general population – are further corroborated by the most comprehensive study on prostitution and violence to date (Farley et al., 2003). The research by Farley and her team, involved a survey of 854

[1] The term 'licks' is generally slang for flogging, beating or thrashing. It connotes the use of violent force. See: Allsopp & Allsopp (2003, p. 345).

women, girls, men and transgendered people[2] in nine countries, on five continents, about their experiences in prostitution. They found that 73 percent had been physically assaulted while in prostitution, and more than half of the overall sample (57 percent) had been raped while in prostitution. Approximately a third of the overall sample reported having been raped more than five times while in prostitution (Farley, et al., 2003, p. 43).

Of the prominent themes in sociological research into women's experiences in prostitution, it is the frequent and extreme experiences of violence that are generally assumed to be unrelated to women's experiences in pornography. The picture of endemic violence and rape is not one which fits well with the glamorised version of "porn-chic" which has become so prominent in the popular media.

The violence involved in prostitution may also seem unconnected to pornography as it is argued by pro-sex industry writers that the high rates of violence against women in prostitution are generally a result of prostitution's illegal status in many countries (e.g. Jenness, 1990; Kempadoo & Dozema, 1998; Outshoorn, 2004; Vanwesenbeeck, 1994). This illegal status, however, is often not the case with pornography which tends to be afforded greater legal and social acceptability. According to pro-prostitution / pro-legalisation arguments, the sorts of violence experienced by women in prostitution would not be experienced by women in pornography. It has also been put forward, most prominently by prostitution apologist Ronald Weitzer, that studies on violence in prostitution focus too heavily on street prostitution which he claims is far more linked to violent crime than those forms of prostitution, such as brothel and escort prostitution, which occur indoors (Weitzer, 2000, 2005, 2007). Similarly, his argument would suggest that pornography, as a form of "indoor prostitution", would not contain the same types of violence as those described in the above studies. However, as outlined below, there are a number of flaws in these arguments.

Claims by sex worker rights organisations that legalised forms of prostitution are inherently safer for prostituted women are forcefully undermined by the work of Mary Sullivan in her in depth study of legalised prostitution in the state of Victoria, Australia (Sullivan, 2007). Sullivan's study demonstrates the ways in which women in legalised brothel prostitution are still likely to experience many of the risks associated with illegal street prostitution, such as exposure to STIs and violence at the hands of johns and brothel owners / pimps. Her work also

[2] It should be noted that of the 854 people surveyed, the vast majority were women (Farley et al., 2003).

undermines Weitzer's arguments about the safety of "indoor prostitution". Weitzer has argued in a number of pieces that while street prostitution is harmful, brothel prostitution (and indeed all forms of indoor prostitution), are safer if not virtually unproblematic for both johns and prostituted women (Weitzer, 2000, 2005, 2007). He has also criticised a number of feminists, including Farley, for focusing on street prostitution but extrapolating their findings to cover prostitution as a whole. Such criticisms, however, do not hold up against Farley's work, for example, which does include women (and girls, men and transgendered people) from several forms of prostitution (Farley et al., 2003). It was found in the extensive research by Farley et al. (2003), that experiences of rape while in prostitution did not substantially differ across various forms of prostitution, including brothel, street and strip-club prostitution. As the final report notes: "Prostitution is multi-traumatic whether its location is in clubs, brothels, hotels / motels / john's homes (also called escort or high class call girl prostitution) motor vehicles or the streets" (p. 60).

In regard to pornography specifically, the claims of Weitzer and others, advocating legalisation, are further undermined by the limited evidence which is available from those with experience in the pornography industry. The experiences of Linda Marchiano (known as Linda Lovelace during her time in pornography) and Jenna Jameson, two of the most well known women to have appeared in pornography, for example, clearly illustrate the use of violence and coercion within the pornography industry. Marchiano, detailing her experiences in the autobiographical *Ordeal,* wrote about how she was physically and sexually abused by her husband Chuck Traynor, who also served as her pimp, prostituting her in pornography and selling her to other men (Lovelace, 1980). Jameson similarly writes about the abuse she endured at the hands of her husband / pimp Rodney Hopkins while she was a contract girl for the Wicked pornography production company (Jameson, 2004). In her autobiography, *How to Make Love Like a Porn Star: A cautionary tale* she describes the fear she experienced when appearing in pornographic movies that her then husband directed. Jameson devotes a chapter of her autobiography, titled "Rod's Revenge", to detailing the way in which he abused her on numerous sets during the break-up of their marriage. She mentions being "ripped to shreds" while being forced to have sex in sand during the filming of *Conquest*, fearing being cut by broken glass while filming *Pure*, and at one point fearing electrocution in *Wicked Weapon* (Jameson, 2004, p. 434-37).

Both these women were pimped by their husbands and subsequently suffered serious abuse within the pornography industry. The argument that

pornography is somehow inherently safer than street prostitution is difficult to maintain when even Jameson, one of the world's wealthiest and best known porn stars, speaks out about the abuses she has suffered while in the industry. It is also unlikely that such incidents are isolated. As will be discussed further in the next chapter on the current content of commercial video pornography, there is mounting evidence from within the pornography industry itself, that women are regularly required to submit to acts of real (not simulated) violence in mainstream pornography production.

Arguments that legalisation or indoor prostitution reduce or eliminate harm also overlook an important part of sociological studies and radical feminist theorising on prostitution, that is, the concept that harm is intrinsic to prostitution acts. Again, Farley's project provides support for the contention that there is something about prostitution that is inherently harmful, particularly in regard to psychological health. One of the elements of the study by Farley et al. (2003) was to assess the frequency of symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) among people working in a variety of types of prostitution. According to the most authoritative diagnostic text on mental disorders, *the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (DSM) produced by the American Psychiatric Association, PTSD can occur after exposure to:

> [E]xtreme traumatic stressors involving direct or indirect personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury; threat to one's personal integrity; witnessing an event that involves death, injury or a threat to the physical integrity of another person; learning about unexpected violent death, serious harm, or threat of death or injury experienced by a family member or other close associate (quoted in Farley et al., 2003, p. 36).

Given the high rates of violence experienced by prostituted women, it is not surprising that high rates of PTSD were also found, as Farley et al. state: "most prostitution, most of the time, includes these traumatic stressors" (Farley et al., 2003, p. 36). Of the overall sample, 68 percent met the DSM criteria for a diagnosis of PTSD (p. 47), a similar rate to that seen among combat veterans (p. 37).

The research further dispels the myth that street prostitution is violent and harmful only because it is street-based, while other forms of prostitution, particularly brothel prostitution reduce levels of harm. Instead, the Farley et al. (2003) study, in particular the research carried out in Mexico, suggests that rates of PTSD are similar across various types of prostitution including street prostitution, brothel prostitution and stripping

(p. 48-49). The authors suggest this is due to the intrinsically damaging nature of prostitution, and further support this claim with research comparing women in street prostitution with women street vendors in South Africa (p. 60-62).

Farley et al. (2003, p. 60) cite a study undertaken by William Pick, Mary Ross and Yasmin Dada (2002) into the reproductive and occupational health of women street vendors in Johannesburg. In the study on the experience of street vendors it was found that the majority of the several hundred women surveyed reported being "not comfortable" with their working environment. The two most common reasons given for this were, "lack of shelter and dirt" and "noise" (Pick, Ross & Dada, 2002). Farley et al. then compared the research on the street vendors to their own study of women in prostitution in a similar neighbourhood of Johannesburg, and the results are illuminating. The rate of physical violence was found to be more than ten times greater for women in prostitution. While only 6 percent of the street vendors reported having been physically assaulted, 66 percent of women in prostitution reported physical abuse (Farley et al., 2003). While Pick, Ross and Dada (2002) found that only 7 percent of their street vendor respondents reported being sexually harassed, 56 percent of women in street prostitution reported having been raped at least once (Farley et al., 2003). Farley et al. conclude that:

> Since the poverty, proximity to drug dealers, experience of street life and civil war were the same for both the street vendors and prostitutes, the large differences in their experiences of sexual and physical violence can be attributed to *the nature of prostitution itself* (p. 62 [emphasis mine]).

Such research thoroughly supports the contention that there is something inherently harmful about prostitution (and, therefore, pornography). It also thoroughly undermines Weitzer's (2005) claim that it is only by virtue of being outdoors that street prostitution is harmful. To recognise what is actually at the centre of making the prostitution exchange harmful requires an understanding of what constitutes sex in prostitution.

The sex of prostitution

Due at least in part to the success of pro-prostitution lobby groups and activists, prostitution is increasingly being understood at both a popular and policy level as the legitimate sale of sexual services. A similar concept is used in much liberal theory, where the term "prostitution" is used

interchangeably with the term "commercial sex". The focus in these narratives on prostitution is primarily on the element of economic exchange. It is the *sale* of sex or sexual services, that is, the *commercial* aspect, which is seen as defining prostitution. Even in liberal and socialist work that is critical of prostitution, the focus still often remains on the potential for prostitution to be *economically* exploitative (e.g. O'Connell Davidson, 1995b; Overall, 1992). Indeed, prostitution can be viewed as economically exploitative, and a compelling case can be made on ethical grounds that sex is something that should not be available for sale (Satz, 2006). However, from a radical feminist perspective, these approaches are severely flawed as they do not account for the intrinsically harmful nature of prostitution. To focus primarily on the economic dimension of prostitution obscures what is really at the centre of prostitution: sex. This is not to dismiss prostitution as "just sex", in the way many apologists have, but to understand that prostitution involves a particular kind of sex premised on inequality and gendered hierarchy. It is not just the *exchange* of something for the sex that is at issue. The concern is rather the type of sex which is actually required, a type of sex which is fundamentally harmful to women, both the women directly involved in performing it and women as a class (Barry, 1995). The different ways in which the sex of prostitution has been conceived as harmful to women will be explored in this final section of the chapter.

One reason that the harms of prostitution can be seen as intrinsic is that the acts performed in it, euphemistically known as "sexual services", cannot be separated from the person, usually a woman, involved in performing them. As a number of feminists critical of the practices of prostitution have argued, it is better conceived as the purchase of rights over another person. Julia O'Connell Davidson, in her sociological work on prostitution, has argued, for example, that "although prostitution is popularly defined as the exchange of sex or sexual services for money and / or other material benefits, it is better conceptualised as an institution which allows certain powers of command over one person's body to be exercised by another" (O'Connell Davidson, 1998, p. 9). While this is a useful starting point, it does ignore one crucial part of the radical feminist understanding of prostitution: the importance of gender. To understand prostitution fully, as Pateman (1988) has argued, we must question why there is a demand from *men* which fuels the prostitution of *women*. It is thus more reflective of social reality to say that prostitution involves the purchase of rights to sexually use a *woman's* body (Pateman, 1988).[3]

[3] This is not to say that there are no prostituted men or boys (there are, of course). The existence of prostituted men and boys, however, does not disrupt the concept

Indeed, Kathy Miriam (2005) points out that it is this male demand for sexual access to women's bodies through prostitution that so often goes unquestioned in postmodern and libertarian "sex work" literature.

However, it is not just a woman's body that is used in acts of prostitution. The person or self cannot be separated from either the body or the sexual services performed in prostitution. As Allen (1988) has noted, the argument that women simply contract out their bodies in prostitution is deeply unsound, as women's relationship to their bodies is not one of ownership; the self and the body are not so easily separated. Pateman makes a similar argument about the integral link between body and self in *The Sexual Contract* (Pateman, 1988). Sociologists Hoigard and Finstad (1992) also describe the intimate connection between a woman's body and her sense of self in their research on prostitution in Norway: "We are in our bodies – all the time. We are our bodies. When a woman prostitutes herself, her relationship to her body changes…" (Hoigard & Finstad quoted in Jeffreys, 1997, p. 271). Indeed, this contention is borne out in the experiences of thousands of prostituted women in numerous sociological studies which have found that what is done to their bodies in prostitution has severe emotional and psychological consequences including dissociation and PTSD (Farley et al., 1998, 2003; Kramer, 2003; Nixon et al., 2002; Parriott, 1994; Ross, Farley & Schwartz, 2003).

Dissociation is often used as a coping mechanism by women in various forms of prostitution, from street prostitution to stripping and pornography. It can be viewed as an attempt by prostituted women to separate what is happening to them in prostitution from their own concept of self (Ross, Farley & Schwartz, 2003). As Pateman explains: "the integral connection between sexuality and sense of the self means that, for self-protection, a prostitute must distance herself from her sexual use" (Pateman, 1988, p. 207). It has also been found to be common for women to try and psychologically escape the violence and abuse which is done to them in prostitution by using drugs and alcohol. A study of prostituted women in Arizona, for example, found that 70 percent of respondents reported drugs and / or alcohol use in order to "detach emotionally" while in prostitution (Kramer, 2003). Approximately half the women in studies by Kramer (2003) and Parriott (1994) responded that being high was

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of prostitution as a system in which men buy women. Firstly, the buyers remain almost exclusively men, whether those prostituted are women, men or children. Secondly, within the institution of prostitution, and even within the system of male dominance more broadly, the buyer will always remain *socially male* (superior) and the prostituted person always *socially female* (inferior) regardless of biological sex (Leidholdt, 1990; MacKinnon, 1989).

necessary while performing acts of prostitution. It is telling, however, that these strategies are never fully successful; ultimately the acts can never entirely be separated from the self. As Ross, Farley and Schwartz (2003) note, neither dissociation nor substance abuse "fully shield the traumatized person from despair, demoralization, and hopelessness" (p. 206).

Ross, Farley and Schwartz (2003) suggest that given the extreme violence experienced so frequently by women in prostitution it is not surprising that there are also high rates of dissociative disorders. Indeed, such a correlation can be seen as quite logical. However, as Barry (1995) has argued, the use of dissociation as a coping method can also be found in women who have not experienced brutal trauma. She notes that maintaining emotional distance and dissociating is similar to "what female teenagers, lovers and wives report in the experience of objectified sex" (Barry, 1995, p. 31). She posits that it is the nature of the sex itself, which is harmful, and it is precisely the type of sex which is inherent in prostitution that forces women to dissociate in order to survive:

> Commodification is one of the more severe forms of objectification; in prostitution it separates sex from the human being through marketing. Sexual objectification dissociates women from their bodies and therefore their selves (Barry, 1995, p. 29).

Barry's suggestion is that sexual objectification not only defines prostitution but also constitutes one of its harms. She notes that the sex of prostitution is the "reduction of oneself to sexual object" (p. 61), and that this objectification can be seen as destroying human dignity (p. 33). Similarly, in *The Idea of Prostitution*, Sheila Jeffreys conceives of objectification as an integral part of prostitution, describing it as "eroticised hierarchy and objectification" (Jeffreys, 1997, p. 218). The harms which are unavoidably attached to objectification are neatly outlined by prominent pro-feminist and anti-pornography campaigner John Stoltenberg: "every act of objectifying occurs on a continuum of dehumanization that promises male violence at its far end" (quoted in Jeffreys, 1997, p. 59).

Such claims that objectification is deeply harmful can seem almost passé in an environment where sexist and objectifying imagery of women in the media is often termed by advertisers and cultural commentators as "ironic" (Whelehan, 2000; Williamson, 2003). Sadly, common understandings of objectification and sexism have become so depoliticised in much academic and popular writing that they are sometimes described not only as harmless, but even fun; something that both women and men can now enjoy in an era that has supposedly overcome sexism. What is missing is an analysis of the position of "object" and its relative powerlessness in

relation to the position of "subject". Or, as Susanne Kappeler (1986) describes, an analysis of how gender is culturally constructed to make women into objects and men into subjects. Also missing is the understanding that objectification is a process of dehumanisation that robs women of their full self-hood and, as Barry (1995) argues, their fundamental human rights. These feminist conceptions of the harms of objectification are necessary for creating an understanding that the sex of prostitution is intrinsically harmful.

To put forward that prostitution inherently involves the objectification of women also implies that there is a fundamental inequity involved in the sex of prostitution. Prostitution relies on the two parties, buyer / man / subject and bought / woman / object, being unequal. Farley et al. (2003) mention this in the introduction to their research:

> In prostitution there is always a power imbalance, where the john has the social and economic power to hire him / her to act as a sexualized puppet. Prostitution excludes any mutuality of privilege or pleasure: its goal is to ensure that one person does *not* use her personal desire to determine which sexual acts do and do not occur – while the other person acts on the basis of his personal desire (Farley et al., 2003, p. 34 [emphasis original]).

Therefore, the sex of prostitution involves not only objectification, but requires the sexual servicing of the (male) buyer. The woman's body is used by the buyer but it is more than that, she must also service him as he desires. According to O'Connell Davidson, she is to have no sexual autonomy: "The essence of the prostitution contract is that the prostitute agrees, in exchange for money or another benefit, not to use her personal desire or erotic interests as the determining criteria for her sexual interaction" (O'Connell Davidson, 2002 quoted in Monto 2004, p. 178). She must sexually service her client with no regard for her own sexual pleasure. The sex of prostitution then is certainly not about women's pleasure, but rather can be seen as defined by ignoring women's pleasure. Furthermore, the sex required in prostitution does not allow for an acknowledgement of the prostituted woman as a person or subject, but rather is premised on the use of her as an object. As Barry notes, in prostitution, sex "is reduced to the act of male masturbation that has nothing to do with the woman as human being…" (Barry, 1995, p. 34). Or, in Jeffreys' terms, the sex of prostitution continues "irrespective of her wishes and personhood" (Jeffreys, 1997, p. 213).

In instances where it is just a body that is required, the oppression of the sex of prostitution is rather obvious. The sex is, as Barry suggests, clearly reduced to an act of male masturbation in which the woman is both

objectified and dehumanised. There are reports from women in prostitution that this "object" for male masturbation is indeed sometimes what they provide (O'Connell Davidson, 1998). As O'Connell Davidson reasons, there must, therefore, logically be "some clients who take pleasure in passivity – perhaps because they find an erotic charge in the idea of a woman or child submitting to sexual acts they visibly do not want…" (O'Connell Davidson, 1998, p. 143). The oppression here is obvious, not least because of the clear similarity to rape. Knowing that the sex of prostitution has nothing to do with women's pleasure, but that prostituted women must submit to it anyway, can provide a sense of power for the buyer / john. The sexualisation of hierarchy and power difference is clearly evident.

While it is possible to characterise the sex of prostitution as the sexual servicing of men by women, where women submit "to sexual acts they visibly do not want", it is important to understand that it is generally *more* than the use of a passive body which is required. In both feminist theorising on prostitution and sociological studies of johns, it is often noted that male buyers of prostituted women want a response that indicates some form of emotional intimacy or sexual desire. In one study of johns, O'Connell Davidson (1998) notes that while some limited numbers of men are content to completely objectify prostituted women and are even quite open in viewing them as sub-human, most men require at least a semblance of enjoyment from the women they use. Martin Monto (2004), in his overview of research on "customers" of prostituted women, notes that while some men try and justify or rationalise their use of women in prostitution as a legitimate market exchange, when the actual sex of prostitution is in question, "there is also ample evidence that customers often seek to minimize or ignore the economic aspects of prostitution encounters" (p. 173). He explains further:

> Many johns object to sexual encounters that seem like nothing more than impersonal exchanges, with qualitative accounts showing frustration or anger toward prostitutes who are nonchalant, indifferent, cold, hurried, or seemingly do not care (Monto, 2004, p. 174).

It is clear from such studies that a significant portion of men require not just a body, but a body that "performs as self" (Barry, 1995, p. 34). This can sometimes make the oppression of prostitution more difficult to discern, as it can appear on the surface level as though these men have some interest in women's pleasure. Barry also mentions this tendency: "Western men, particularly more 'liberal' ones, often require from Western women an enactment that is sexually active and responsive as

well as emotionally engaged" (Barry, 1995, p. 34 [emphasis original]). That johns require this enactment of women is actually a particularly cruel aspect of the sex of prostitution. While it may appear to indicate a desire for a more "real" sexual experience, it can be more accurately seen as an integral part of gaining further control and power over prostituted women who must pretend to enjoy the encounter.

O'Connell Davidson (1998) maintains that the need for johns to see a believable reaction of pleasure in prostituted women is based in the need to control. She explains that if a prostituted woman does not put on the appropriate "show" for a john, this may be read as disrespectful, "a refusal to be completely 'bought' / controlled by his money / power" (O'Connell Davidson, 1998, p. 142). Pateman takes this analysis even further, and likens it to the relationship between master and slave:

> Women engaged in the trade have developed a variety of distancing strategies, or a professional approach, in dealing with their clients. Such distancing creates a problem for men, a problem which can be seen as another variant on the contradiction of mastery and slavery. The prostitution contract enables men to constitute themselves as civil masters for a time, and like other masters, they wish to obtain acknowledgment of their status (Pateman, 1988, p. 207).

Women are expected to feign enjoyment, in a believable manner, in sex which is founded on their own objectification and dehumanisation. That johns command the power to demand that women feign this enjoyment reinforces just how fundamentally unequal the parties must be in order for the sex of prostitution to function. Indeed, this chapter has proposed that inequality is a defining element of the sex of prostitution. It has also been argued that objectification is a defining element of prostitution, along with sexual service: the requirement that women meet men's sexual demands irrespective of their own desires (Jeffreys, 1997). Finally, the expectation that women should actively meet these demands and "perform as self" (Barry, 1995) or feign enjoyment, can also be seen as a key element of the sex of prostitution although not an essential one. That is to say, the sex of prostitution is the sexual servicing of men by women, it is premised upon inequality and it is inherently objectifying. It also often requires that women pretend to enjoy their subordination and exploitation.

These defining elements of the sex of prostitution can also be seen to exist in pornography. While there is very little research into the experiences of women in pornography specifically, as discussed above, there is significant reason to believe that their experiences would be very

similar to the experiences of women in other forms of prostitution. Furthermore, stemming from the idea that pornography *is* prostitution, the sex of pornography can also conceptually be seen as the sex of prostitution. Referring to the concept of pornography as filmed prostitution, Barry phrases it most succinctly when she describes pornography as "the graphic representation of prostitution sex" (Barry, 1995, p. 55). Jeffreys also notes the connections between the two, stating that pornography is "a particular kind of sex premised upon and constructed out of women's subordination and men's domination just like the sex of other forms of prostitution" (Jeffreys, 1997, p. 235).

The prostitution of sexuality

The sex of prostitution, however, is not only limited to prostitution. As this book aims to show, the sex of prostitution has become so normalised that it is often presented as an ideal model of sex for everyday heterosexual relationships. Indeed, the normalisation of the sex of prostitution can be traced back to the sexual revolution:

> The sex that was being constructed through sexology and pornography in the sexual revolution can be seen to be the sexuality of prostitution. The sexologists and pornographers accepted the female servicing of men's ruling-class sexuality in prostitution as simply what good sex was, and sought to normalise this and promote it to non-prostituted women as their sexual liberation and sexual responsibility to their husbands (Jeffreys, 1997, p. 41).

Barry outlines some more contemporary threads of this trend in *The Prostitution of Sexuality* (1995). She notes the normalisation of prostitution and its increasing validation and legitimacy in the West. Barry argues that while the sex of prostitution is clearly harmful to those women directly used in systems of prostitution, the prostitution of sexuality harms the status of women more generally. She conceives of the normalisation of prostitution and the increasingly public sexualisation of women in "post-industrial, developed societies" as an extension of men's control over women and in particular women's sexuality. The prostitution of sexuality becomes "the continuous reconfiguring of sex 'on men's terms' to sustain women's subordination" (Barry, 1995, p. 37). This is not to say that all women consequently come to experience the same extreme harms that women directly involved in systems of prostitution often experience. The point is to show that prostitution is a harmful model on which to base sexuality, and it is this model which is becoming increasingly legitimised.

The prostitution of sexuality infuses the defining elements of prostitution sex into what are generally considered non-prostitute, everyday heterosexual sexual relations. This creates a climate in which the social construction of women's sexuality becomes constant sexual availability to men. Barry strikingly depicts the prostitution of sexuality as "the public colonization of women for male sexual servicing" (Barry 1995, p. 55), and compares this to expectations of women in marriage. This public sexualisation / colonisation of women found in post-industrial societies is, according to Barry, in contrast to feudal societies which tend to privatise the sexual control of women primarily through marriage (p. 53-61). Equating or comparing prostitution and marriage may not seem a particularly novel concept. As long ago as 1790, Mary Wollstonecraft referred to marriage as "legalised prostitution" (quoted in Pateman, 1988, p. 190) and Simone de Beauvoir famously compared marriage and prostitution in *The Second Sex*, stating that while a wife is "hired for life by one man; the prostitute has several clients who pay her by the piece" (quoted in Pateman 1988, p. 190). The focus in each, much like common definitions of prostitution employed today, is on the exchange. The understanding is that in prostitution a woman is paid by many men *in exchange* for sexual access to her body and in marriage a woman is offered financial security by one man *in exchange* for exclusive (and often unfettered) sexual access to her body.

The analysis of prostitution offered by Barry (1995) does not share the same focus on exchange, and thus differs in a crucial way. By focusing on the harm that exists within *the sex of prostitution itself* rather than in the exchange, the prostitution of sexuality can be seen to extend beyond the marriage contract and into heterosexual relationships in which there is no obvious financial exchange: in teenage dating for example, or adult heterosexual relationships where a woman is financially independent. Elements of the sex of prostitution become incorporated into everyday norms of sexuality and therefore the harms of prostitution sex become extended, to a degree, to all women.

It is a central contention of this book that sexology and pornography are the main forms through which the sex of prostitution is currently promoted. The sexual saturation of society, which Barry describes, is not saturation by "just sex" but again, a particular model of sex - the sex of prostitution - which is increasingly filtering through to popular culture from pornography. The increasing acceptance of pornography and the pornographication of culture, which are explored in the next two chapters, can be seen as central ways in which the sex of prostitution is becoming legitimised and even idealised within popular culture today

CHAPTER TWO

CONTENT IN CONTEXT: SEXUALITY AND MAINSTREAM PORNOGRAPHY

> As usual, the pornographer himself is more honest and more astute about pornography than are the cultural experts engaged in defending it.
> —Susanne Kappeler[1]

As discussed in the previous chapter, pornography is a form of prostitution. It is, in Kathleen Barry's words "the graphic representation of prostitution sex" (Barry, 1995, p. 55). Pornography can even be seen as a particularly harmful form of prostitution that requires women to engage in extreme and violent sex acts. This chapter continues the discussion of exactly what type of sexuality is required in, and promoted by, current mainstream pornography. The main subject of analysis in this chapter is the US pornography industry publication *Adult Video News* (AVN). Insider accounts from directors, producers, performers and distributors, which can be found in AVN, offer important insights into how the industry itself represents the pornography it produces. Unlike the increasingly popular academic analyses of pornography which tend to detach the product of pornography from its context as part of a multi-billion dollar industry, this chapter considers pornography from the perspective of production with a view to understanding what model of sexuality is currently being constructed and promoted by the pornography industry.

Accounts from those within the industry, such as those found in AVN, help to provide a more comprehensive picture of how pornography is produced and marketed. These are important elements that are often overlooked in academic and popular literature, which favours concentrating on consumption. Of particular interest in this chapter is the open acknowledgement within the industry that mainstream pornography is becoming more extreme and increasingly violent. Such reports are in stark

[1] Susanne Kappeler *The Pornography of Representation* (1986, p. 61).

contrast to common academic defences of pornography which tend to claim an absence of violence and instead emphasise "diversity" within modern pornography (e.g. McKee, Albury & Lumby, 2008; Williams (ed)., 2004). It is argued here that insider accounts seriously undermine such academic defences of pornography. Furthermore, it is proposed that accounts from within the pornography industry tend to support radical feminist claims about pornography, in particular that it promotes a model of sexuality which eroticises objectification, hierarchy, violence and women's submission.

Academic Representations of Pornography

There has been a paradigm shift in academic research on pornography in the last ten to fifteen years. While both feminist and non-feminist pornography research in the 1980s tended to be based in political and sociological analysis, dominant understandings of pornography (and pornographication) within the academy today tend to "incorporate many of the theoretical perspectives and preoccupations which have become central within Cultural Studies" (Attwood, 2006, p. 93). Cultural studies scholar Feona Attwood, for example, has noted that these new academic studies of pornography are hallmarked by a de-politicised approach that tends to focus on the potential meanings of pornography and the nature of pornography as a "text" (Attwood, 2006). As part of these changes in dominant academic approaches to pornography there has also been a shift away from anti-pornography feminist analysis.

In the 1980s there was significant disagreement in feminist circles over the social function of pornography and the radical feminist analysis of pornography was attacked by liberal and libertarian feminists with increasing frequency during the 1980s and into the 1990s. Liberal feminists, concerned with state power and state intervention in "private" sexual matters, contended that anti-pornography feminists were trying to enforce a dangerous regime of censorship (Duggan & Hunter, 2006). These liberals primarily defended the right of individuals to have pornography rather than debating the merits of its content. Libertarian feminists, on the other hand, argued not only that pornography should be protected, but also celebrated for its potential to sexually arouse (e.g. Hollibaugh, 1984; Rubin, 1984). The argument put forward by libertarians was that sexual pleasure should simply be explored rather than subjected to sustained political analysis.

The liberal and libertarian perspectives on pornography have gained significant coverage within the academy (e.g. Assiter & Carol, 1993;

Church-Gibson (ed)., 2004; McElroy, 1995; Rodgerson & Wilson (eds), 1991; Snitow & Thompson (eds)., 1983; Strossen, 1995; Vance (ed), 1984). In these works, pornography is represented as harmless, if not positively beneficial. Wendy McElroy, for example, claims that "[p]ornography is one of the most benevolent ways a woman can experience who she is sexually" (1995, p 132), while Nadine Strossen states that "[a]t the most basic level, porn provides information about women's bodies and techniques for facilitating female sexual pleasure…" (1995, 166). The split between radical feminists and liberal and libertarian feminists in the 1980s eventually saw a significant decline in public feminist activism against pornography, and the radical feminist position became increasingly muted (Leidholdt, 1990). These changes paved the way for the dominant analyses of pornography and pornographication that are found in the academy today.

More recent academic research on pornography tends to avoid engaging with the feminist debates around pornography and the significant body of literature which emerged as a result of them. Writers such as Linda Williams, Jane Juffer and Constance Penley claim to have moved beyond the type of feminist debates found in the "sex wars" and consequently these authors often simply dismiss or ignore feminist critiques of pornography altogether. In the introduction to Williams' edited collection *Porn Studies* (2004), for example, feminist debates are framed as out of touch, from a time when pornography was not a "fully recognizable feature of popular culture" (Williams (ed)., 2004, p. 1). Instead, the focus is, as Attwood (2006) suggests, on the variety of ways in which individual consumers may interpret pornographic "texts" or "pornographies".

Much of this research is being undertaken in what British scholar Brian McNair has called "a spirit of excited inquiry" (McNair, 2002, p. 63). This often celebratory research comes largely at the cost of critical inquiry. There is little critical attention now offered in an academic context on the content of pornography from a consciously feminist perspective (c.f. Boyle (ed) 2010; Dines, 2010). Instead, the cultural studies focus on the individual and possible readings of "texts" continues to dominate. As a consequence of this, questions about social power have become obscured. For example, the importance of asking who is in the majority of mainstream pornography and who is watching the majority of pornography are often overlooked in favour of concentrating on unusual or obscure examples of pornography. As Karen Boyle (2006) argues in relation to *Porn Studies*: "Women and heterosexual couples may be increasingly targeted by pornographers but the fact remains that

pornography is largely premised on men buying sexual access to women and other men. How can we move beyond sexual politics in this context?" (Boyle, 2006, p. 3 [emphasis mine]). Boyle seeks to emphasise that pornography must be seen within the greater context of sexual inequality in which it is manufactured and consumed, and that any analysis of pornography which lacks an understanding of this context is severely limited.

Reviving a radical analysis

As outlined in the introduction, the radical feminist position on pornography focuses on harm, both the direct harm to women in the production of pornography and the more indirect harm to women as a class through consumption. Radical feminists have also understood pornography as a form of prostitution, and have highlighted it as influential in creating and reinforcing male dominance. The material presented in this chapter supports the radical feminist contention that pornography causes harm to those women who are used in its making. The material considered here also adds weight to feminist claims that pornography constructs a model of sexuality that is harmful to women. Indeed, it even adds weight to claims put forward by writers who are often considered to be at the extreme end of the radical feminist spectrum.

In this chapter, Andrea Dworkin's understanding that pornography creates and reinforces women's sexual subordination as outlined in "Against The Male Flood: Censorship, pornography and equality" (1993), will be compared to the descriptions of pornography produced within the pornography industry itself. It is particularly illuminating to use Dworkin's analysis, as her work is often highlighted as extreme, even in comparison to other radical feminist works (Jones, 2002, p. 369-370). Yet, as this chapter shows, her analysis is largely supported by accounts from within the industry about the content and meaning of mainstream, commercial pornography.

In "Against the Male Flood" (1993), Dworkin argues that pornography both reinforces and creates women's subordination to men, it is "the material means of sexualizing inequality" (p. 266). Firstly, Dworkin claims that any social subordination of one group to another has four elements: objectification, hierarchy, submission and violence. She explains further, that in regard to the subordination of women these elements are sexualised: "In the subordination of women, inequality itself is sexualised: made into the experience of sexual pleasure, essential to sexual desire" (p. 265). Subordination for women, therefore, is experienced not just on a

social level, but also on a personal and intimate level. According to Dworkin, pornography is one of the most important material means of sustaining this system of subordination. She states that the four elements of subordination: objectification, hierarchy, submission and violence, are integral to pornography. As Robert Jensen (2007) explains, this does not mean, "all pornography includes all these elements, but all these elements are present throughout contemporary pornography" (p. 53).

Objectification, in Dworkin's words, occurs when a human being "is made less human, turned into a thing or commodity, bought and sold" (Dworkin, 1993, p. 266). This shares much in common with Barry's (1995) concept of commodification as a severe form of objectification which destroys human dignity and robs women of their self-hood. In these analyses, objectification causes harm and dehumanises whomever is subject to it. Objectification and commodification can be seen as inherent parts of commercial pornography in much the same way that Barry argues they are inherent parts of prostitution. That is, people must be bought and sold in order for systems of prostitution (including pornography) to function.

Hierarchy, according to Dworkin (1993), can be simply defined as the setting of one group above another (p. 266). In the case of women, she argues that the hierarchy which enforces women's inferior status as compared to men, is created and reinforced by the social construction of sexuality: "Women are physically integrated into the society in which we are held to be inferior, and our low status is both put in place and maintained by the sexual usage of us by men…" (p. 266). In other words, one of the ways in which the sex-class system of male dominance is enacted, is through sex. One of pornography's harms, Dworkin argues, is that it eroticises this hierarchy.

It is important to understand that the issue is not just that pornography depicts hierarchy or inequality, but that it attempts to make these conditions sexually arousing. MacKinnon argues similarly in *Towards a Feminist Theory of the State* (1989) that pornography "fuses the erotization of dominance and submission with the social construction of male and female" (p. 197). In eroticising hierarchy, pornography can be seen not just as representing women's subordination but endorsing it. As Anne Eaton (2007) has posited, pornography endorses women's inequality "by representing women enjoying, benefiting from, and deserving acts that are objectifying, degrading, or even physically injurious…" (p. 682). Furthermore, she suggests this endorsement is most evident when considering that pornography producers aim to make these objectifying, degrading and harmful acts sexually arousing to the viewer. Therefore,

pornography that eroticises hierarchy or inequality can be seen to promote a harmful model of sex, which furthers women's subordination.

Dworkin (1993) considers submission to be a further element of this subordination. That is to say, the system of male dominance, which operates as a hierarchy, is understood as inducing women's compliance and obedience. She explains that oppressed groups often internalise the demands of those with power, learning to anticipate the demands of the powerful group before they are even made (p. 66). This ultimately results in a situation where the oppressed group may even be seen to accept what is being done to them. Moreover, the compliance of the oppressed group is used as justification by those with power to show that the hierarchy is in fact inevitable and perhaps even natural. In regard to pornography, this element of submission relates most clearly to the representation of women accepting or enjoying degrading or harmful acts being done to them. While signs of women's enjoyment in pornography are taken by some commentators to mean that pornography is not oppressive (e.g. McKee, Albury & Lumby, 2008), Dworkin's analysis suggests instead, that a lack of women's resistance to these acts may simply indicate that the model of sexuality promoted under male dominance is all pervasive. Or perhaps, that women come to internalise this model of sexuality themselves. It is important to note, however, that the fact that women may accept this model does not mean that it is harmless (Dworkin, 1993).

In regard to violence as an element of subordination, Dworkin (1993) suggests that it is generally "systematic, endemic enough to be unremarkable and normative" (p. 267). Several feminists, including Dworkin, have argued that this is certainly the case with pornography (Dworkin, 1981; MacKinnon, 1989; Russell, 1998; Russell (ed)., 1993). Dworkin argues, furthermore, that in pornography, violence, like hierarchy, is made sexual. That is to say, violence becomes an element of sexuality which women are expected to accept and even enjoy. It is argued in this chapter that the elements which Dworkin describes, in particular the erotising of hierarchy and violence, are certainly recurring themes in intra-industry dialogues about the content of contemporary pornography. In eroticising, and thereby endorsing objectification, hierarchy, submission, and violence, it is argued that pornography is constructing a harmful model of women's sexuality that reinforces and recreates women's inequality.

Consumption and Production

Much of the current academic work on pornography focuses on the consumption of pornography and the potential interpretations of

pornography by consumers. This focus is problematic not only because it frequently divorces interpretations of pornography from their social context but also because an almost exclusive focus on consumption overlooks the importance of production. While the emphasis on consumption in pornography research is evident in the recent cultural studies turn it has also existed in older approaches. There has been a significant concentration of work on the consumption of pornography and the role of consumers in previous approaches, both those which have sought to defend pornography and those which have sought to critique it. This is perhaps most obvious in the well publicised laboratory-style experiments which attempted to measure men's reactions to pornography and their subsequent inclination to endorse violence against women (e.g. Fischer & Grenier, 1994; Malamuth & Ceniti, 1986; Malamuth & Donnerstein, 1984). There are also more recent studies by academics and journalists that have aimed to interrogate what consumers say about their own pornography use (Kingi et al., 2004; McKee, 2005a; Loftus, 2002; McKee, Albury & Lumby 2008; Paul, 2005).

Such research into pornography consumers' attitudes and viewing habits has thus far produced largely contradictory evidence. Australian scholar Alan McKee cites work by journalist David Loftus, for example, in an attempt to show that male consumers are not involved in enjoying the sexual degradation of women as anti-pornography feminists suggest:

> [T]hey not only do NOT find violence against women or domination of women sexy, they are specifically turned off by such behaviour on the rare occasions they see it in pornography, and most haven't seen any…they have not sought ever more vivid, kinky and violent pornography… (Loftus quoted in McKee 2005a, p. 75 [capitalisation original]).

These claims, however, are directly contradicted by research undertaken by Pamela Paul (2005). In her interviews with male pornography consumers, Paul found that some did seek out more degrading and violent pornography and that after a period of using mainstream pornography some men began seeking out child pornography. Recent research on this particular area of consumption is therefore remains inconclusive.

In *The Porn Report* (McKee, Albury & Lumby, 2008), a recent academic study on pornography in Australia, claims are also made about consumers' positive relationships to pornography. The book received significant press coverage on its release, and was heralded as moving the debate on pornography forward by presenting "the facts" on pornography rather than ideologically based arguments (e.g. Holden, 2008; King, 2008; Knaggs, 2008). Many of "the facts" given in *The Porn Report* relate to the

findings of a large scale survey of pornography consumers. McKee, Albury and Lumby found that approximately one third of adult Australians consume pornography and that, rather unsurprisingly, the vast majority are men (83 percent). In discussing the effects of consumption, the authors rail against previous, predominantly feminist, research that has tended to highlight the negative effects of pornography consumption. Instead, they claim that researchers have managed to get this issue "spectacularly wrong" as only seven percent of their survey group reported experiencing negative effects as a result of pornography use (McKee, Albury & Lumby, 2008, p. 83). Indeed, a majority (57 percent) of respondents reported positive effects. Focusing only on consumers' self-reported pornography use has severe limitations, however, especially if the "voices" of those consumers are accepted uncritically, as they largely are in *The Porn Report*. As Michael Gilding quipped in his brief review of McKee's research "[j]ust because a self-selecting group of pornography consumers say that pornography is good for their mental health and marriages does not make it so" (Gilding, 2004).

This is not to say that there is no value in analysing pornography consumption. A number of feminists have written about the importance of understanding the harm that may result from the consumption of pornography and its effects on societal attitudes towards women (e.g. Itzin (ed)., 1992; Dworkin & MacKinnon, 1997; MacKinnon, 1993; Russell, (ed)., 1993; Russell, 1998). However, this focus on consumption has often come at the cost of analysing the production side of pornography. As Gail Dines, Robert Jensen and Ann Russo (1998) have noted, any understanding of pornography which is based solely on consumption practices will be lacking. They instead argue for the importance of analysing the production and distribution processes of the pornography industry.

Ignoring the production processes of pornography and focusing only on potential interpretations serves to separate pornography from its context. As Gail Dines and Simon Hardy have separately argued, the persistent focus on consumer interpretation has resulted in much work presenting pornography as though it is created in a social and political vacuum (Dines, 1998), almost "by accident" (Hardy, 1998). Hardy argues that in order to understand the "text" of pornography, the intentions of the producer must be taken into account: "whatever the function of pornography actually is, we must assume that it is performed by design and not by accident, so that we are concerned here with the purposes and intentions of the producer…" (Hardy, 1998, p. 47). Dines argues for the

importance of placing pornography within the context of the pornography industry itself:

> Pornography is often mistakenly referred to as 'fantasy', as if the images just appeared from nowhere and are produced in the private head of the consumer. Missing from this position is an analysis of the actual workings of the industry located in the concrete world of capitalism. Because methods of financing will ultimately affect the nature of the content of pornography, it is a mistake to assume that analysis of the text can take place divorced from analysis of the economic realities of pornography production (Dines, 1998, p. 62).

As these critiques highlight, there is significant need for research on pornography production, both understanding the intentions of producers and contextualising pornography as a product produced by a multi-billion dollar industry. The remainder of this chapter, therefore, will focus on the background and development of the US pornography industry, the content of recently produced, commercially available video pornography and the ways in which this pornography is understood *within the pornography industry*. The way in which content is represented by producers and marketed to distributors and customers will be considered as well as the material realities that women face when performing within the pornography industry. To date, these areas have received scant attention, and it is hoped that further research into such aspects of pornography will provide a more thorough understanding of pornography which is grounded in the social and economic contexts in which it is actually produced.

Pornography as an industry

Robert Jensen opens his chapter on the production side of pornography in *Getting Off: Pornography and the end of masculinity* (2007) with this simple sentence: "The first and most important thing to understand about the pornography industry is that it is an industry" (p. 79). The statement seems rather obvious, but in much of the writing that extols the virtues of pornography, there is little acknowledgement that pornography businesses aim first and foremost to make a profit. While, in recent literature, estimates of the worth of the US pornography industry are often cited, this is rarely related to the overall analysis. Such is the case in *Porn Studies,* for example*,* where Williams notes in her introduction the size and financial weight of the US pornography industry, but it is rarely mentioned again. Williams states that in the US alone "[s]even hundred million porn videos or DVDs are rented each year…this is a mind-boggling figure"

(Williams, 2004, p. 12). Yet the individual pieces that appear in *Porn Studies* take little account of what generates the bulk of these figures, mass market pornography produced for an audience of heterosexual male consumers (Boyle, 2006). Instead there are explorations of the obscure: "the pleasures of Japanese pornographic comics for women" (Shamoon, 2004, p. 77-104), for example, and of texts that may arguably be read as pornographic, such as the infamous *Starr Report* (which detailed the affair between Monica Lewinsky and former US President Clinton), but are not marketed as pornography. The discussion of pornography as a multi-billion dollar industry begins and ends largely in the introduction.

The tendency of pornography's supporters to overlook pornography *as an industry* was highlighted as long ago as 1981, in Andrea Dworkin's groundbreaking and controversial work *Pornography: Men possessing women*. Dworkin exposed the hypocrisy of the traditional Left in opposing large capitalist business yet at the same time praising pornography as revolutionary and as providing sexual freedom. She famously ends one section of her book by stating that "[t]he Left cannot have its whores and its politics too" (Dworkin, 1981, p. 209). Jensen (2007) argues that this contradictory approach which overlooks pornography as an industry still exists in much writing on pornography today. He maintains that by ignoring the industry which is responsible for pornography production, authors create unrealistic representations of pornography, as if it were produced altruistically by "artists" who simply wish to explore human sexuality. He notes:

> In abstract discussions about sexually explicit material…a focus on the reality of pornography drifts off into musings about the nature of 'sexual expression' that ponder the 'transgressive' nature of pornography. Such discourse obscures the reality that the vast majority of pornography is produced to turn a profit, and those profits are substantial (Jensen, 2007, p. 79).

There is certainly widespread acknowledgement that the profits from pornography are substantial. In a recent business analyst report, one of the major US pornography production houses, Vivid, was reported as having annual revenue of approximately US$100 million (Caslon Analytics, 2007). Exact figures on the worth of the broader industry are debated, but the most often quoted figure at the time of writing is US$60 billion worldwide (Sarikakis & Shaukat, 2008).

The financial success that the pornography industry is currently experiencing has been built on a number of changes that have occurred during the past half-century. The formation of pornography *as a*

recognised industry is often traced back to the original release of *Playboy* in 1953. In *Obscene Profits: The entrepreneurs of pornography in the cyber age*, one of the few texts to examine the financial underpinnings of the pornography industry in any depth, Frederick Lane states that: "It is important to remember that 45 years ago, it was a single entrepreneur that laid the foundation of the pornography industry as we know it today" (Lane, 2000, p. 293). Dines concurs:

> While there are many different paths that can be taken to explore the growth and development of the industry, many would lead to late 1953, when *Playboy* first appeared on newsstands. The phenomenal success of the magazine played a major part in transforming the industry from an under-the-counter 'sleazy' endeavour to a multibillion-dollar-a-year industry (Dines, 1998, p. 38).

Furthermore, as will be discussed in the following chapter, this could also be seen as the beginning of the mainstreaming of pornography. Prior to the 1950s, pornography businesses did exist, but the pornography itself was largely out of public view. In the US and UK, it was circulated most often through underground networks and mailing lists (Cocks, 2005). The emergence of *Playboy*, as Dines (1998) suggests, began the movement of pornography from something typically out of public view to something for sale on very public news-stands. Increasing exposure and readership also allowed pornography to become much more profitable.

The 1970s was another important marker for the growth of pornography as an industry. By the 1970s, moving image pornography was reaching a much wider audience, and pornographic films were being shown in movie theatres in the US more widely than ever before (Lane, 2000; Williams, 1999). The success of the film *Deep Throat* is often highlighted by pornography researchers as an important point at which pornography gained greater profits and greater public acceptance. Linda Williams states, for example:

> By 1972 hard-core pornography had become a household word, growing even more familiar through shortening to 'porn' and 'porno'. For the first time, cinematic works containing hard-core action were reviewed by the entertainment media and viewed by a wide spectrum of the population, including, most significantly, women…*Deep Throat* was undoubtedly the best known title (Williams, 1999, p. 99-100).

Tod Hunter, a writer for leading US pornography industry magazine *Adult Video News,* makes a similar claim about the importance of *Deep Throat* in laying the foundations for the current success of the industry. He

suggests that: "Today the radio waves are filled with references to adult…All this stems from the phenomenal success of the seminal *Deep Throat*" (Hunter, 2002).

It is worth noting here that references to *Deep Throat* in many pro-pornography works, such as William's *Porn Studies,* fail to mention the conditions of its filming. While *Deep Throat* is lauded by pornography industry insiders for helping to create the industry as it stands today, the film is also documentation of the sexual abuse of Linda Marchiano (Linda Lovelace at the time of filming). In 1980, Marchiano made public the abuse she had suffered at the hands of her husband and pimp Chuck Traynor during filming, in her autobiography *Ordeal*. She famously stated that "every time someone watches that film, they are watching me being raped" (Marchiano quoted in Dworkin, 1989, p. 1). To leave out a discussion of Marchiano's abuse when referring to *Deep Throat* is a considerable omission, and can again be seen as overlooking the material conditions under which pornography production takes place.

The rise of video pornography

The use of video constitutes a further significant event in the building of the current pornography industry. The 1980s saw the beginning of widespread use of camcorders, video and video cassette recorders (VCRs) in homes (Lane, 2000; O'Toole, 1999). These changes affected the pornography industry in two significant ways. Firstly, these technological developments changed patterns of consumption. Moving image pornography was no longer limited to cinemas and sex shops but could also be consumed in the home. In the lengthy pro-porn work *Pornocopia*, Lawrence O'Toole describes the advent of video as a positive change for consumers: "The video story started out as a glorious revolution of greater access, portability, a broadening out of the hard-core culture to places the cinemas couldn't reach" (O'Toole, 1999, p. 104). Feminists, such as anti-prostitution activist Evelina Giobbe, have also singled out the move to video as an important change (Giobbe, 1990). Giobbe argues that the infiltration of pornography into the home actually created further harms to women: "With the invasion of the home by pornographic cable programs and video cassettes, the 'good wife' has become equated with the 'good whore', as more and more women are pressured into emulating the scenarios of pornography" (Giobbe, 1990, p. 76). There is little doubt that the camcorder, video and VCR radically changed pornography consumption patterns. It is less frequently noted, however, that the camcorder, video and VCR also changed production patterns, as pornography became

significantly cheaper to produce (as compared to film). The use of video thus paved the way for an ever increasing number of pornography productions to be filmed and distributed, and also helped pornography businesses substantially increase profits (Lane, 2000).

The most recent change in the pornography industry is often cited as being the rise of the internet, and there is certainly substantial anecdotal evidence about the pervasiveness of pornography online. In light of these trends, there is a need to defend using video / DVD pornography as the basis for analysis. Firstly, there is overlap between video and internet pornography; pornography produced primarily for video / DVD, for example, is available to download or buy online through pay-per-view and mail-order sites (Caslon Analytics, 2007). From a research perspective, the information on video pornography is much easier to gather and it is much more reliable. Video pornography is also most closely related to the central theme of this book as it is video pornography and the video pornography production houses which are considered mainstream and seem to have gained the most recognition in popular culture (McKee, Albury & Lumby, 2008). This chapter therefore focuses specifically on the pornography industry's most popular and profitable branch, video pornography.

Content changes in pornography

Over the last fifty years, as the pornography industry has become much larger, more public, and more profitable, the content of pornography has also undergone significant change. Copies of *Playboy* magazine from the 1950s and 1960s, for example, tended to only show "cheesecake" photos, semi-naked women in sexualised poses, sometimes with partial exposure of breasts (Meyerowitz, 1996). This is what once passed as pornography and it often caused controversy. In 1963, for example, Hugh Hefner was arrested in the US on obscenity charges over the printing of photographs of Jane Mansfield exposing a naked breast in that year's June issue of *Playboy* (Sullivan, 1997). In Australia, the same issue was deemed to be "obviously pornographic" and was seized by customs officials. Consequently, the next fifty-one issues were also banned from importation and *Playboy* did not appear back on Australian shelves until 1967 (Sullivan, 1997). It is difficult to imagine that the same imagery appearing in a pornographic magazine today would cause any controversy in either the US or Australia. On the contrary, the style of photographs favoured in 1960s *Playboy* "once considered disreputable, now grace billboards, calendars, television, movies and magazines" (Meyerowitz, 1996, p. 9).

The infiltration of pornographic imagery into popular culture and more acceptable forms of media, (part of the processes of pornographication discussed in the next chapter), causes pornographers to continually push boundaries. As historian Joanne Meyerowitz explains "[w]ith bare breasts available as quasi-legitimate entertainment, pornography inched toward other taboos…As imagery once considered obscene reemerged as 'cheesecake' and 'borderline material', pornography searched for different conventions in which to present illicit sex" (Meyerowitz, 1996, p. 12). In terms of video pornography, since the 1970s the filming of vaginal penetration, external ejaculation (also known as "the money shot") and fellatio have become commonplace (Williams, 1999), and by the early 1990s anal sex had also become a mainstay of mainstream pornographic films (Dines, 1998).

The 1990s also saw the rise of new and more extreme genres of pornography, in particular, gonzo and wall-to-wall (Anderson, 2003; Ehrlich, 2002; Jensen, 2007). While in the 1970s and 1980s the majority of mainstream pornography could be placed in the category of a "feature" - that is incorporating many Hollywood-style movie conventions and following a plot - gonzo and wall-to-wall pornography do not include a plot line (Amis, 2001; Jensen, 2007). In many commentaries these two types of pornography are collapsed into one, but pornography industry magazine *Adult Video News* offers a minor distinction: wall-to-wall videos are "[a]ll sex productions without plot structures. A series of sex scenes that may or may not include a connecting device" (quoted in Jensen, 2007, p. 56). Gonzo is slightly different, and is defined as "[p]orno verite or reality-based porn, in which performers acknowledge the presence of the camera, frequently addressing viewers directly through it" (quoted in Jensen, 2007, p. 56). It is predominantly though the gonzo style that hardcore pornography and the sex acts within it have become more extreme. Gonzo pornography is now one of the most common forms of pornography available on video (Amis, 2001; Anderson, 2003; Jensen, 2007).

Adult Video News and the Content of Mainstream Pornography

There has been, and continues to be, significant debate within academic circles about the content of mainstream pornography. The content of pornography has been of interest to feminist scholars and activists for decades but, as mentioned earlier, it has also recently become a popular subject of analysis within film and cultural studies. A number of

writers now analysing the content of pornography, position their work as a radical break from traditional feminist analyses (e.g. Klein, 2006; McKee, 2003; McKee, 2005b; Williams, 2004). A particularly contentious issue is the dehumanisation and objectification of women as well as the depiction, and / or actual inflicting of, violence against women in pornography.

While many feminists have argued that pornography often contains violence against women, many pro-porn writers have suggested that these claims are, at best, exaggerated. Some pornography advocates have based such criticisms on their own anecdotal experiences (Assiter & Carol, 1993), while others have undertaken content analyses (McKee, 2005b; McKee, Albury & Lumby, 2008), or questioned consumers about their experiences (Loftus, 2002). In these approaches, pornography is largely taken out of its context as an industry. There is also little or no discussion about how those within the industry, producers in particular, perceive the issues of violence and degradation. An analysis of *Adult Video News* (AVN), the leading US pornography industry magazine, also known as the US "porn industry bible" (McElroy, 1995, p. 171) offers such insights. As Suzanne Kappeler aptly notes in *The Pornography of Representation*, "the pornographer himself is more honest and astute about pornography than are the cultural experts engaged in defending it" (Kappeler, 1986, p. 61). In keeping with Kappeler's assertion, and as a way of maintaining focus on the often-overlooked production side of the pornography industry, the following analysis of the content of mainstream pornography is based primarily on material from AVN. The content in AVN tends to directly oppose current academic analyses of mainstream pornography as non-violent or less violent than in previous decades. Instead, it suggests that pornography is becoming more extreme and even more harmful to women, supporting Dworkin's (1993) analysis that pornography promotes a model of sexuality that requires and reinforces women's subordination.

Adult Video News (AVN)

Adult Video News is the US pornography industry's main trade publication. It is released monthly and is generally several hundred pages in length. A significant portion of the print version[2] is filled with advertising for pornography. AVN covers a range of issues that are likely

[2] A digital version identical to the print copy is also now available online, but my own research was conducted via the *AVN* archives which housed only original content (i.e. articles and reviews with no advertising) from all issues between February 1998 to May 2006. These were available at:
http://www.adultvideonews.com/archives/index.html but are no longer online.

to be of concern to those within the pornography industry. These include legal threats to production and latest trends within the industry, as well as interviews with performers, directors and producers. It is marketed predominantly to pornography distributors and vendors and it is shipped, at request, free for a year to any video store in the US. There are also certain sections such as the "Bestseller Charts" and "Editor's Choice" (reviews), which are clearly aimed at distributors and vendors. The Editor's Choice section is particularly important as each month's reviews of the latest pornography releases carry significant weight within the industry. These are generally reviews of mainstream titles that the editors believe will be easily marketable and highly profitable for both the production companies and vendors. At the end of most Editor's Choice reviews there is a section which includes marketing and retailing advice to vendors, and in some there is also the suggestion of nominations for one or more AVN awards.

The annual AVN awards are the pornography industry's supposed equivalent of Hollywood's Oscars (Ross, 2007). Production companies and individual performers vie for the awards as a way of increasing sales. AVN awards for particular titles are often used as marketing tools by distributors,[3] and winning an individual award affords a porn performer a better chance of negotiating a higher pay rate in future films (Ross, 2007, p. 16). Both the Editor's Choice reviews and the interviews with directors and producers of pornography within AVN offer useful insights into the production side of the pornography industry, particularly with regard to the rise of extreme and violent pornography.

There have been no comprehensive academic studies of AVN to date, but the publication is sometimes briefly mentioned in works dealing with pornography (e.g. Dines, Jensen & Russo, 1998, p. 60; Jeffreys, 2005, p. 78; Jensen, 2007, p. 56; McElroy, 1995, p. 171; Ross, 2007, p. 39). There is also a passing reference to an informal analysis of AVN in *The Porn Report* (McKee, Albury & Lumby, 2008). The authors state:

> During our three years of formal, funded research, we subscribed to *Adult Video News* (AVN), the US trade journal for the porn industry. In her survey of all three years' worth of AVNs Kath was struck by the images

[3] For example, the following online pornography retailers in Australia use AVN awards as recommendations for particular titles: Gallery Entertainment (www.galleryentertainment.com), Adultshop (www.adultshop.com), AO Movies (www.aomovies.com) and Uncut DVDs (www.uncutdvds.com.au). Adultshop in particular has adopted this approach, and it is now possible to search their DVD catalogue by AVN rating.

> and language used to market porn to US buyers. Although an actual sexual fetish for humiliation is rare, even in the BDSM scene, a substantial amount of porn was marketed as if audiences and producers alike believe that sex is inherently degrading and that female porn performers should be humiliated for being sexual (McKee, Albury & Lumby, 2008, p. 171).

As will be discussed further on, the language used to market pornography in AVN is indeed, quite striking. It is rather a leap of logic, however, to claim as McKee, Albury and Lumby do, that the descriptions found in AVN emanate only from the assumption that women should be humiliated for being sexual. They dismiss the possibility that the sexual humiliation of women is something that may hold erotic value for male pornography consumers even when, as they point out, distributors regularly emphasize the humiliation of women as a useful selling feature. To suggest that this humiliation stems only from women being "sexual" ignores the extreme and violent content of much mainstream pornography.

The rise of extreme pornography

Unlike various academic defences of mainstream pornography, within the pornography industry itself, there is open acknowledgement that the acts required are becoming more extreme and are increasingly pushing the physical and emotional limits of the women who perform them (e.g. Anderson, 2003; Ehrlich, 2002; Ramone & Kernes, 2003). In August 2002, for example, AVN ran a cover story on the "25 events that shaped the first 25 years of video porn", one of which was the "Mid-1990s – Porn turns extra hard":

> It wasn't until the mid-to-late '90s that porn took a turn for the extreme…There was the requisite 'spit and gape' maneuver [sic], where a guy would stretch his partner's asshole as wide as it would go, and then hock up a good-sized loog into it. Anal and d.p. became a requirement; soon it became the 'airtight' trick (a cock in every hole), the ultimate-in-homoerotic-denial position (double anal), mega-gangbangs, choke-fucking, peeing, bukkake…even vomit for a brief unsavory period. We can only wonder what'll [sic] hit next (Ehrlich, 2002, n.pag.).

The trend continued, and "harder" pornography became the norm. In 2003, AVN ran a cover story titled "Harder, Faster: Can porn get any nastier?" The author, AVN editor Acme Anderson, noted:

> There's no question there's been a turn for the harder in the XXX in recent years. In the mid-1990s, double penetration seemed to be the bar for nasty.

> Then came the massive gangbangs, such as the Houston 620 in 1999, bukkake vids (also 1999) and today…throat fucking, ass to mouth, double-vaginal and double-anal penetration is [sic] not uncommon (Anderson 2003).

The variety of acts described in these AVN excerpts are likely to require some further explanation for those readers not familiar with pornography industry terminology. Double penetration, or DP as it is commonly labelled in the industry, refers to a woman being anally and vaginally penetrated simultaneously. Bukkake refers to the practice of multiple men (sometimes numbering in excess of a hundred) ejaculating on a woman's face, and has been described by forensic psychologist and hate crimes expert Karen Franklin as "symbolic group rape" (Franklin, 2004, p. 29). Acts are classified as "ass to mouth", or ATM in the porn industry, when "a man removes his penis from a woman's anus and, without cleaning it, places it in her mouth, or the mouth of another woman" (Jensen, 2007, p. 59). ATM is recognised even within the industry as unhygienic and potentially dangerous. Jensen suggests that its appeal to the male pornography consumer is based in the dehumanisation and degradation of women (Jensen, 2007, p. 59). Lastly, the Houston 620, to which Anderson refers, was the filming of "porn star" Houston been penetrated vaginally and anally in excess of 600 times in one day by hundreds of different men. Some days later she described the pain of the process, mentioning having to ice her swollen genitals because it felt as though she was "on fire": "I literally started crying and I needed off. I mean I *hurt.* And I was exhausted" (Bisch, 1999, n.pag. [emphasis original]).

As Jensen (2007) explains, these new and extreme sex acts, which are rapidly defining current pornography, are at the very least taking a physical toll on women's bodies. There is also some concern being expressed within the industry about the physical consequences of more extreme acts. Pornography director and performer Francesca Lé was quoted in Anderson's 2003 "Harder, Faster" article, for example, on the changing expectations of porn performers. She stated: "I think it [porn] has gone to its limit legally and maybe physically. I don't know how much more a person can take" (quoted in Anderson, 2003, n.pag.). Also in 2003, AVN printed a round-table discussion between eight high-profile pornography directors (Ramone & Kernes, 2003), which appeared to confirm both the trend toward extreme pornography and the concern within the industry about its limits. One serious issue of contention between the eight directors was whether or not the push for more extreme pornography, particularly violent pornography, was a positive or negative

shift within the industry. A significant point of agreement, however, was that pornography the directors themselves labelled as "sexually violent" and "abusive" is becoming both more common and more popular with consumers (Ramone & Kernes, 2003).

One of the directors present at the round-table, Jules Jordan, a noted gonzo pornography director, complained that in the face of these trends, it is becoming increasingly difficult to produce something different as "it seems everyone wants to see a girl doing a d.p. [double penetration] now or a gangbang, but fans are becoming a lot more demanding about wanting to see the more extreme stuff" (Jordan quoted in Ramone & Kernes, 2003, n.p). When asked to clarify what he meant by "extreme" Jordan said: "more gangbangs, group scenarios, and you get more of the rougher stuff and the puking…" (quoted in Ramone & Kernes, 2003, n.pag.). In a 2001 interview with AVN, another famous gonzo pornography director / producer, Max Hardcore, mentioned the pressure he feels "to ratchet it up, to make it more abusive" (Hardcore quoted in Hentai, 2001, n.pag.). Hardcore claims this pressure comes from "fans and contemporaries in the industry"; he elaborates: "[They] would say things like 'That's great the way you were very hard on the girl and it looked like she was in tremendous discomfort – ready to cry' and all that" (Hardcore quoted in Hentai, 2001, n.pag.). Hardcore is clearly suggesting here that his fans and contemporaries enjoy seeing women in emotional or physical discomfort. While Hardcore is considered "one of the pioneers of extreme pornography" (Hentai, 2001, n.pag.), he is no longer considered to be a marginal figure within the industry and his popularity continues to increase. As Jensen notes "while it is tempting to see Hardcore as a fringe character, his movies are for sale on most of the major pornography websites and he has a loyal fan base" (Jensen, 2007, p. 73). From these inside-the-industry accounts, there is significant acknowledgement that the sex acts required in mainstream pornography have become steadily more extreme and harmful over the last decade.

Editor's Choice reviews and the eroticising of violence against women

The content of the Editor's Choice reviews in AVN also suggests that the type of pornography produced by those like Max Hardcore is permeating the industry and becoming increasingly mainstream. In order to integrate an industry perspective on violence in pornography, a content analysis of *Adult Video News* was undertaken in 2006, with a particular focus on the "Editor's Choice" reviews from all 2005 editions of AVN. An

interpretive content analysis was chosen in order to allow for flexibility and also to avoid the problems of decontexualization often associated with more traditional quantitative content analyses involving pornography (for an outline of these problems see: Dines, Jensen & Russo, 1998).

In order to consider the extent to which violence was mentioned in the Editor's Choice section, one years' worth of reviews was singled out for content analysis. As the AVN archives were removed from public access in mid-2006 the last remaining complete calendar year of reviews was chosen, in total, amounting to 103 reviews over 12 issues (January-December, 2005). The text from each review was then searched electronically for key words which could be defined as describing violent acts. The definition of violent acts was drawn from Yang and Linz (1990):

> Violence was defined as occurring whenever a person intentionally imposes or attempts to impose hurt, abuse, or force upon another person. Such behaviour might include slapping, hitting, spanking, pushing, pulling hair or clothes, striking with fist or kicking, severe beating or fighting, using a weapon or threatening with one, confinement, bondage, kidnapping, torture, dismemberment, mutilation, attempted or actual suicide, and attempted or actual murder (Yang & Linz, 1990: 33).[4]

The coding of specific terms for violent acts was drawn from both Yang and Linz (1990) and Barron and Kimmel (2000).[5] Acts of sadomasochism

[4] Examples of *sexually violent* behaviour were similar: "The violent component might include slapping, hitting, spanking, pulling hair, being rough in other ways, sexual harassment, bondage and confinement, coercion with weapons, mud wrestling, sadomasochism, and sexual mutilation and murder immediately preceding, during, or after sex (Yang & Linz, 1990, p. 33). NB: Yang and Linz did not use a lack of visible consent as a requirement for coding acts as violent.

[5] Rather than simply counting the terms as they appeared in an electronic search, each term was analysed in context before it was included as describing a violent act in order to avoid incorrect coding, for example, where words could have multiple meanings depending on context. The reviews were also read in their entirety to ensure that violent acts which were missed due to slight differences in wording or spelling errors could be included. As a result of reading the terms in context, however, it became apparent that the AVN editors frequently used violent terminology in order to describe otherwise 'normal' sex acts being performed. Indeed, this occurred so frequently that some of the context of the AVN reviews is lost without taking these terms into account and understanding that even seemingly 'non-violent' acts are often described in violent terms. As a consequence of this, the reviews were analysed for instances of descriptions of violent acts and also instances of violent terminology to describe non-violent acts.

were coded as violent for reasons explained below and a full list of terms can be found in the appendix.

It is important to note that the following analysis is not intended to support the idea that there is always a clearly discernable difference between violent and non-violent pornography. The point is rather to highlight the way in which the pornography industry treats the issue of violence in its own content. Moreover, the fact that descriptions of violent acts do appear frequently in AVN is important information in an academic environment where mainstream violent porn is often considered non-existent.

In 2005, AVN printed 103 reviews of new release pornography titles. The full text of 98 of these reviews was still available online through the AVN archives during the data collection process in 2006. The majority of pornography which was selected for the 2005 Editor's Choice reviews was labelled by AVN as either wall-to-wall (31 of 98) or gonzo pornography (28 of 98), both styles of so called "reality porn". This trend reflects the overall shift in the industry away from film and plot based productions to the "reality" genres that tend to return greater profits (lower production costs) and trial more extreme sex acts (Amis, 2001; Jensen, 2007). These genres of pornography are now considered thoroughly mainstream. By contrast, only 7 of the 98 reviews were of 'specialty' titles, the category which contains fetish or fringe productions.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, there are a number of pro-pornography scholars who have down-played the prevalence and extremity of violence in mainstream pornography. Of particular relevance in the Australian context is the work of Alan McKee, (McKee, 2005b; McKee, Albury & Lumby, 2008). In contrast to content studies from the US which have found violence against women to be relatively prevalent in pornography (Monk-Turner & Purcell, 1999; Yang & Linz, 1990), McKee claims that only 2 percent of the scenes analysed in his project contained violence against women (McKee, 2005b, p. 285; McKee, Albury & Lumby, 2008, p. 53). In 1990, communication scholars Ni Yang and Daniel Linz found that 46 percent of X-rated tapes in their sample contained "sexual violence and violence" (Yang & Linz, 1990, p. 35). They also note that the rape of a woman by a man was found to be the most common form of violence depicted (p. 35). McKee, on the other hand, claims: "the narrative trope of a woman learning to enjoy her own rape has vanished from mainstream pornography" (McKee, 2005b, p. 288).

As the two studies were published some fifteen years apart, it is theoretically possible that these differences could be the result of drastic

changes in the content of pornography during this time period.[6] In *The Porn Report* (McKee, Albury & Lumby, 2008) this is certainly the claim. It is suggested that the content of current pornography has changed substantially from the "bad old days" of the 1970s, when the feminist critique of pornography was at its peak, to a modern era of diverse pornography that liberates rather than oppresses women. The authors claim that *The Porn Report* presents the "facts" on the current content and consumption of pornography in Australia (p. xiii) but the section on content, which is based on McKee's 2005(b) article, is rather unsound. There are considerable conceptual and methodological problems. The issue of objectification, for example, is limited to a depiction of women as *passive* objects as though the purpose of feminist critiques of the objectification of women was simply to make sure that women were active in sexual encounters. While there is some acknowledgement of critiques that have focused on the privileging of male sexual desire, again the argument is reduced to an issue of how many minutes were spent per video on showing men performing cunnilingus versus women performing fellatio.

The opportunities for coding acts as violent in *The Porn Report* also appear to have been severely limited by the use of Robert Baron's definition of violence as "[a]ny form of behaviour directed toward the goal of harm; or injuring another living being who is motivated to avoid such treatment" (quoted in McKee, Albury & Lumby, 2008, p. 52). This definition, as McKee (2000b) notes, rules out coding acts of bondage and discipline or of sadomasochism (BDSM) as violent, as, according to McKee, "they include no intent to harm and no motivation to avoid such treatment" (McKee, 2005b, p. 282). In *The Porn Report,* this approach is justified as "commonsense" for, the authors argue, if someone enjoys a violent act then it is clearly no longer violent. In sum: "If they [the actors] seemed to be enjoying it, it didn't count as violence" (McKee, Albury & Lumby, 2008, p. 53).

Such reasoning, however, is severely flawed, particularly in regard to an analysis of pornography. On a conceptual level, it makes little sense to claim that BDSM practices contain no "intent to harm". While BDSM advocates may assert that the ultimate aim of their practices is to promote sexual arousal or orgasm, this does not rule out the immediate intent to

[6] It may also appear that geography could have played a part in these differences as Yang and Linz (1990) conducted their study in America while McKee, Albury and Lumby (2008) conducted theirs in Australia. As McKee et al. note, however, the vast majority of pornography available in Australia comes directly from the US, so this is unlikely to have been an important factor.

harm. Even if the harm creates sexual arousal, and is claimed to be "consensual" it does not suddenly become un-harm (Green, 2001). On a more practical level, coding an act as violent *only* if the person *appears* motivated to avoid the violent act / harm, renders the violence in the vast majority of pornography invisible. Furthermore, McKee, Albury and Lumby (2008) state that it seemed like commonsense to not code as violent acts where participants were shown "enjoying themselves" or if they "requested the behaviour" (p. 52). The fundamental problem here is that women in pornography are frequently shown enjoying their own abuse, humiliation and degradation. Titles such as the bestseller *Jenna Loves Pain* (Ramone, 2005c) make this claim particularly obvious. As Dworkin has argued "[p]ornography says that women *want* to be hurt, forced and abused…that women say No but mean Yes – Yes to violence, Yes to pain" (1994, p 152 [emphasis original]). It is therefore, clearly problematic to avoid coding such acts as violent.

McKee, Albury and Lumby are not alone, however, in their claims about the non-violent nature of current mainstream pornography. In *Pornocopia*, O'Toole asserts that there is no violence in mainstream pornography and that "one reason you don't find violence in porn is because it's illegal…" (1999, p 46). Even Hardy, who is relatively sympathetic to feminist analyses of pornography writes:

> In pursuit of this argument [that pornography objectifies women] anti-porn feminists have often overstated the degree of violence to be found. It is important to remember that, as a market commodity, pornography cannot afford to be too extreme or controversial (Hardy, 1998, p. 63).

Indeed, Hardy is correct in so much as pornography has to be broadly popular to make a significant profit. However, his argument does not account for the current mainstream pornography market. "Extreme" pornography is often what appears on the bestseller lists (Amis, 2001; Anderson, 2003; Hentai 2001). Moreover, while scholars like McKee and Hardy continue to deny, or at least down-play the existence of violence, dehumanisation and degradation in mainstream pornography, those within in the industry itself are quite open about the existence of these themes, as the following analysis of the AVN Editor's Choice reviews suggests.

The Editor's Choice section of AVN contains reviews of latest release pornography, pornography which is deemed by the editors to be "good porn". As the following excerpts show, what tends to define "good porn" for the editors is commercial potential for vendors and the potential sexual arousal of consumers. Of the 98 available AVN Editor's Choice reviews from 2005, 33 contain acts that are described by the reviewers as violent.

Of these 33 reviews, 14 use violent terminology to describe a particular sex act, for example, women are described as being "savagely pounded" (Ramone, 2005a, n.pag.), "impaled" (Ramone, 2005b, n.pag.) or "brutally subjugated" (Rutter, 2005c, n.pag.). In 24 of the reviews, there are clear descriptions of violent acts, for example slapping, hitting or choking. This equates to approximately a quarter of all the 2005 reviews containing descriptions of violent acts, a figure much more in line with the findings of Monk-Turner and Purcell (1999) and Yang and Linz (1990) than with McKee (2005b). Indeed, such a high figure suggests that, within the industry, violence in pornography is understood to be systemic rather than isolated.

In some of the Editor's Choice reviews, reference is made to a violent act simply in passing. In the January 2005 review of *Ass Quake*, for example, there is passing mention of "spitting and tit and face slapping" (Rutter, 2005a, n.pag.) as though they hold no specific importance. Similarly in the March review of *The Story of J* there is a brief reference to "gentle knife play" (Anderson, 2005, n.pag.), with no further comment. At other times, however, the violent or extreme nature of the sex is actually highlighted. In *Tales From the Crack*, for example, editor Mike Ramone notes that the wall-to-wall release is "rougher and harder than the vast majority of the competition", and recommends that vendors "stock deep" as "there's no way this can't be a monster mover" (Ramone, 2005g, n.pag.). Also in January 2005, the gonzo production *Spent* was reviewed as a "solid, oh-so satisfying sex release", including a scene where "Asian goddess Katsumi (wearing a hot little kimono ensemble) is bent like a lithe little fuck doll over her friend's knee. Her teeny tiny ass gets smacked crimson with his belt…" (Katz, 2005, n.pag.). Racism and misogyny intertwine here, and as is frequently the case in pornography, an Asian woman is fetishised as passive and compliant (Dines, Jensen & Russo, 1998; Jensen, 2007). This example can also be seen as in keeping with Dworkin's (1993) descriptions of eroticised submission, hierarchy and violence, promoting a model of sexuality in which women are subordinated.

What is most striking, however, is that extreme, violent, or degrading acts are often highlighted in favourable terms by the AVN editors, specifically for their potential to sexually arouse consumers. The suggestion is repeatedly made that the more extreme the sex acts, the better the pornography. In the May review of *Neo-Pornographia,* for example, Mark Kernes writes:

> Finally, Julie Night gets anal-ized [sic] by dildos, buttplugs and three guys, with more d.p. and double anal – and in the finale, Nicki spoons cum from Julie's ass to her mouth! Now, that's pornography! (Kernes, 2005, n.pag.).

Similarly in November, Peter Warren deemed *Squealer* "a masterpiece" highlighting that it was "unrelentingly filthy, full of dirt-streaked bodies, d.p.s [sic], double anal, slapping, tying, gagging, spitting, asphyxiation, you name it" (Warren, 2005). The fact that these acts are singled out as being arousing rather than problematic further supports Dworkin's (1993) contention that violence in pornography is not an aberration but is actually the norm. These acts of violence are not considered by the editors to be barriers to the enjoyment of consuming pornography but rather an integral part of the enjoyment of consuming pornography.

The endorsement of violent acts as sexually arousing is most obvious in the December review of *Service Animals 21*. The name itself suggests a problem for those wishing to argue that women are not objectified, but are instead "in charge" in modern pornography. Predictably it is women who are shown to be the "service animals" on the box cover, submissive and dehumanised as the title implies. *Service Animals 21* is a gonzo production directed by Joey Silvera, who also appears on camera in a number of scenes. In the review, AVN editor Jared Rutter writes glowingly of Silvera's work:

> Silvera builds his intros patiently, and they burst aflame with often explosive eroticism. Here, three (at least) sequences are classic. In the first scene, Sandra Romain locks Karina Kay in a closet in order to 'break her down'. It's an experiment in sexual control and perseverance. Sandra and two guys in leather work the younger girl over with lotsa [sic] choking, but it's Sandra who does the d.p. and double anal (Rutter, 2005b, n.pag.).

In one of the most obvious endorsements of violence against women in the reviews, a scene with lots of choking is described here not only as classic but containing "explosive eroticism". In one of the other "classic" scenes Rutter describes, it is the eroticising of child sexual abuse that is cause for heightened sexual arousal:

> Kara, just 18, from Ohio, is a blue-eyed teen angel who seems to have been born with a fully developed talent for tease. Joey feeds her ice-cream and fondles her small breasts. Trent Tesoro fucks her, but she returns the next day to blow Silvera, old enough to be her grandfather. The scene teeters on the cusp of the forbidden but doesn't quite fall. Guaranteed stroke fodder (Rutter, 2005b, n.pag.).

Presumably Rutter describes this scene as almost "forbidden" in reference to the representation of either paedophilia or incest ("old enough to be her grandfather"), again eroticising hierarchy and abuse. Instead of being a problem, Rutter suggests this creates greater arousal, "guaranteed".

The review ends with the following retail advice: "This super-hot series is not a hard sell." Rutter's advice is supported by the AVN most-rented and best-seller lists, in which the *Service Animals* series frequently appear (Ramone, 2005e, 2005f).

As with *Service Animals 21,* many of the AVN reviews include marketing notes or retail advice about the commercial value of a particular title. Of the 98 reviews considered here, only one contained retailing advice that suggested the title would not have wide consumer appeal. The specialty production *Go Fuck Yerself 3* was given the cautious marketing tag "stock carefully", and offers some insight into what is now deemed to be pushing the boundaries in the area of legal, US-made pornography. Marc Star's review of *Go Fuck Yerself 3*, begins with an overview:

> Take equal parts female masturbation and equal parts angry biker beatdown [sic] and the result is the next generation of Extreme originality. Five girls willingly subject themselves to the bald, tattooed Coffee Ron's merciless beatings – while masturbating. These aren't titillating floggings. When Ron whacks these girls, they jump (Star, 2005, n.pag.).

Star also notes that the women who are beaten, cry, "squirm, jump and howl in pain". The box cover shows a woman strung up as a human punching bag, and "Coffee Ron" posed next to her wearing boxing gloves. This is an example of how extreme the violence has become in pornography at the margins of the legal industry. While the advice to retailers may be "stock carefully" this is not illegal or underground pornography, but rather legal pornography created by a production company which, in 2003, was said to have turned a profit of almost US$50 million (Huffstutter, 2003). It can certainly be said, therefore, that at least *some* mainstream pornography clearly eroticises and endorses violence against women.

Attitudes within the industry

While the content of mainstream pornography, as seen through a trade industry publication, offers some insights into what is considered "good" and marketable pornography within the industry, it still leaves the questions about the intent of the producers unanswered. The round-table discussion between eight high-profile pornography directors and two AVN editors, printed in AVN in 2003 (Ramone & Kernes, 2003), however, is illuminating in regard to the attitudes of those actually producing mainstream pornography. Interestingly, there was significant debate about the effects of pornography, and again, unlike many academic defences of

pornography, some of the directors believed that pornography, in particular extreme and violent pornography, had an effect on constructing norms of sexuality. Veronica Hart, often claimed to be a "feminist pornographer", went on record as saying:

> [W]e're helping create this culture. We are. We're part of the culture…I know people do view this stuff and get affected. It's not politically correct as pornographers to ever say that. We've been hiding behind that defense that what we do doesn't do anything, but we're sitting in a room of people who have been brought up on pornography, and I see it getting more and more and more and more extreme (Hart, quoted in Ramone & Kernes, 2003, n.pag.).

Director Ed Powers added that he believed the extreme pornography was creating a cycle whereby men act out sex from pornography not only in their personal lives with girlfriends and wives, but seek to enter the pornography industry themselves as a way of abusing women. Powers begins by stating that men who want to trick or coerce women into extreme and violent sex acts can easily shield themselves through the pornography industry. He states: "All the guy has to do that wants to do it, is go down to Jim South's office or go to any other agency and start making his own movies, and that's what's happening" (Powers, quoted in Ramone & Kernes, 2003, n.pag.).

Arguing against AVN editor Mike Ramone's claims that men are not affected by consuming pornography, Powers states:

> You're talking about effect, that somebody's gonna [sic] go out and act it out right? I'm saying, they're gonna [sic] come in this business and act it out…if you're saying that it doesn't necessarily mean that someone's gonna [sic] act it out, just look at who's the next person coming in this business out of nowhere, and why is he doing it? How about the guy, who I hear all the time…who gets the girl to have him represent her, and the next thing you know, she's drugged and he's on top of her in his house? And these guys who are finders and agents are doing the same, feeding off our business in the same way that you say won't happen (Powers quoted in Ramone & Kernes, 2003, n.pag.).

Powers' testimony suggests that acts, which would clearly be considered sexual violence in an everyday context, are no longer considered violent once they are made into pornography. Indeed, Powers' claim that men who seek to abuse women use the pornography industry as a type of cover for their actions, suggests a continuity between sexual violence and pornography more generally. Again, a claim from within the industry

supports a radical feminist analysis, in this case the analysis of the close relationship between pornography and violence against women.

While the effects of violent pornography were debated amongst the directors at the round-table, there was general agreement that violent pornography is becoming a pressing issue for the industry. Some, such as Jerome Tanner, voiced their disapproval of the glamorising of violence, but at least one director present extolled the virtues of violent pornography. Mason, one of the few high-profile female directors in the industry, explained her intentions quite clearly, stating:

> I definitely have political motives in what I do. I mean, I'm trying to get a point across…I'm trying to show that a lady doesn't have to be treated like a lady all the time; that a woman can express herself in whatever way she sees fit, even if that is being abused or roughed up or slapped around or choked (quoted in Ramone & Kernes, 2003, n.pag.).

So not only is there pornography which is interpreted by reviewers to be violent and abusive, there is also pornography which is clearly intended by producers to be violent and abusive. The misogyny behind the particular pornographic construction of women's sexuality to which Mason adheres has been well exposed by feminists as harmful, especially in regard to perpetuating the belief that women welcome and subsequently enjoy sexual assault (Caputi, 2003; Gavey, 2005; Russell, 1998; Russell (ed)., 1993; Scully, 1985; Burt, 1980). The pornographic myth that women enjoy their own sexual abuse is not only repeated here but is presented as liberating. Moreover, this is an admission by a prominent pornography director that the aim of her productions is to show women being abused, once again strongly contradicting many academic defences of pornography.

Martin Amis' oft quoted article "A Rough Trade" (2001), for *The Guardian* newspaper, also provides some industry perspectives on the move to more extreme and violent sex acts. Amis interviewed a number of industry insiders for the piece, including John Stagliano, a pornography director / producer specialising in anal sex. Stagliano mentions his work with Rocco Siffredi, one of the most famous male actors in pornography:

> I was the first to shoot Rocco. Together we evolved toward rougher stuff. He started to spit on girls. A strong male-dominant thing, with women being pushed to their limit. It looks like violence but it's not. I mean, pleasure and pain are the same thing, right? (Stagliano quoted in Amis, 2001, p. 5).

Stagliano is quite candid in admitting that his own move toward filming "rougher" or more violent sex is intertwined with male dominance: "a strong male dominant thing". However, he simultaneously claims that the rougher acts which push women "to their limit" are not "violence" per se, as the women enjoy them: "pleasure and pain are the same thing right?" Presumably, he intends this statement only to refer to women, as it is not men being pushed to their limits. The characterisation of pleasure and pain being one and the same for women is reminiscent of the 19th and early 20th century sexological construction of women's sexuality (Jackson, 1984). For example, one of the founders of the study of sexology, Havelock Ellis, claimed that pain and submission were fundamental elements of female sexuality. He stated that it was easy "to trace in women a delight in experiencing physical pain when inflicted by a lover, and an eagerness to accept subjection to his will" (Ellis, 1987, original 1913). It seems that while the push toward violent pornography may be new in its extremity, the attitudes underlying it may simply be the same misogynist conceptions of women's sexuality that have existed for centuries.

Furthermore, those male performers, like Rocco Siffredi, who are responsible for carrying out the violent and extreme sex acts in gonzo pornography are revered by the writers at AVN. In a 2005 cover story titled "The Men of Porn", for example, there was a section on "The Wrecking Crew":

> Though we refer to them affectionately as the 'Wrecking Crew', affection has nothing to do with the way these relentless warriors attack the various orifices of their female co-stars…it's not simple Johnson rigidity that has endeared the Wrecking Crew to the fans. These studs have the bravery to rise above tiresome issues like warmth, caring and – God Forbid – tenderness that can plague hardcore on screen boning (Stokes, 2005, n.pag.).

The recurring theme of violence and degradation making "real" or good quality pornography appears again in this excerpt. The theme of women enjoying abuse also reappears, and it is claimed that women enjoy the violence these men act out: "Call it Stockholm Syndrome, call it undiluted maleness…all we know is, it works on the fairer sex, who never fail to bow down to the Wrecking Crew's unremitting commitment to excellence in the field of fucking" (Stokes, 2005, n.pag.). Similar to the glorified nature in which violence is described in the Editor's Choice reviews, here it is the men responsible for enacting the violence who are held in high regard. This is promoting a model of sexuality in which men are glorified for being violent. Indeed, the reference to Stockholm

Syndrome suggests that even industry insiders may consider this to be an abusive form of sexuality. In promoting men as dominant, it simultaneously creates women's role as submissive: women "bow down" to the wrecking crew, and are expected to enjoy their abuse and submission.

Insider perspectives and pornography as reality

In works defending pornography, it is not uncommon to find the claim that sex acts, in particular extreme or violent acts such as those found in gonzo pornography, are faked just as a death or shooting may be faked in a Hollywood movie (e.g. McElroy, 1995; O'Toole, 1999; Rubin, 1993). Similar arguments are often made by liberals and libertarians in regard to pornography as "fantasy" or cultural studies theorists in regard to pornography as representation. O'Toole emphasises the issue of representation specifically in regard to violent pornography: "porn is the *representation of a simulated sex act* between consenting performers, whereas rape is a real act of violence…" (O'Toole, 1999, p. 34 [emphasis mine]). The intimation here is that there can be no *real* rape or violence in pornography. It seems ironic that in some instances it is claimed by pornography advocates that the acts themselves are fake, but the performers' projected enjoyment is real. For example, Marty Klein, a trained sex therapist, rails against those (predominantly feminists) who claim that women are coerced and humiliated in pornography. He writes: "since critics don't perceive depictions of women's pleasure as pleasure, but rather as twisted male fantasy, they can't see mutuality…" (Klein, 2006, p 246). As MacKinnon has mused, "[o]ne wonders why it is not said that the pleasure is simulated and the rape is real, rather than the other way around" (MacKinnon 1993, p 28). Indeed, accounts from those within the pornography industry tend to support the radical feminist analysis that pornography is real and that real women suffer in the making of it.

In regard to the "realness" of pornography, the AVN director's roundtable again provides some revealing discussion. Hart is quoted as being strongly against claims that pornography production is similar to Hollywood film production:

> But here lies the difference: We know that when somebody gets shot in mainstream movies, they're not really dying, they're not really getting shot. The thing about our business is that it's been real. The people weren't just pretending to fuck; they were really fucking….So we've based our business on, 'What you see is really what's going on' (Hart, quoted in Ramone & Kernes, 2003, n.pag.).

Radical feminists have often emphasised the realness of pornography, and Hart's quote is actually reminiscent of some of MacKinnon's theorising: "In pornography, the penis is shown ramming into the woman over and over; this is because it actually was rammed up into the woman over and over" (MacKinnon 1993, p. 27).

The AVN roundtable also contains dialogue on the experiences of women on set, and their very real reactions to the acts they are expected to perform. Pornography director Jerome Tanner notes for example that the industry is "glorifying violence in sex", and elaborates about some of his experiences on set: "[i]f you've been on set where the guy is mouth-fucking her and the woman is throwing up – not voluntarily; involuntarily – she's tearing, she's convulsing…To me, that's violence…" (Tanner quoted in Ramone & Kernes, 2003, n.pag.). The directors' discussions strongly contradict the defence that characterises pornography as fantasy. In the actual context of pornography production Tanner outlines, O'Toole's clear differentiation between consensual *representations* of sex, and "real rape" seem rather blurred.

Performers themselves have also begun to speak out about the abuse they are suffering on set during filming. Regan Starr for example, gave interviews to AVN (Ross, 2000) and to the mainstream press (Amis, 2001) about the violence she suffered while on the set of *Rough Sex*.

> I got the shit kicked out of me. I was told before the video – and they said this very proudly, mind you – that in this line most girls start crying because they're hurting so bad…I couldn't breathe. I was being hit and choked. I was really upset and they didn't stop. They kept filming. You can hear me say, 'Turn the fucking camera off', and they kept going (Star quoted in Amis, 2001, p. 5).

Starr further elaborated that she had been "traumatised" by the incidents, and that the male actor on set ("Mickey"), had been encouraged by director Khan Tusion to physically hurt her:

> He was allowed to hit hard, choke hard and to pull hair hard. There were times when he slapped me so hard that he left a mark. He choked me while lifting me off the ground. He shoved my face into the cement floor. He threw me over his shoulder, cutting off my air. Choking me was one of the worst things…Mickey was not being false about it. He was hurting the girls. He was given the green light to hurt the women for the effect of the video (Starr quoted in Ross, 2000, n.pag.).

The *Rough Sex* series became controversial even within the industry after Starr's account became public, and the line was pulled from

production in 2000 (Ross, 2000). However, this did not prevent director Khan Tusion from going on to produce the same sort of violent pornography with a different name. By 2004 he was directing his even more successful *Meatholes* series (Ramone, 2006) and soon enough another woman came forward to describe the violence she had suffered. Nicki Hunter spoke on her Los Angeles radio show about her experience on set. She described the series by saying:

> This is porn but they dig so deep into the person's head - this is supposed to be degrading…They want you to cry. They want you to really, really cry. They want you to have an emotional breakdown right there. They want to see it all and then they want to fuck you while you're crying. They will literally beat you up in the process…I got punched in the ribs. I am completely bruised up… (Hunter quoted in Ross, 2004, n.pag.).

Although she did not originally state which film set the abuse occurred on, it was later revealed by AVN to be the *Meatholes* series which continues to be profitable for distributor JM productions (Ramone, 2006). In June 2005, for example, *Meatholes 2* was one of the top 40 DVD and video pornography rentals in the US (AVN, 2005). It can therefore be deduced that pornography, which depicts actual violence against women, is more than just a fringe market.

By focusing on accounts from those within the industry, it becomes clear that the current content and practices of pornography promote and reinforce women's subordination and should therefore continue to be subject to sustained feminist analysis and criticism. The content of AVN suggests that pornography is becoming more violent and more extreme, and this seriously undermines many current academic approaches to pornography, which have sought to show its potential for sexually liberating women. The analysis of accounts from within the industry also shows that violent and extreme content exists, in Hardy's (1998) terms, by design and not by accident. Furthermore, content that not only depicts harm to women but is actually made through the harming of women is promoted by sectors within the pornography industry as a way of creating greater sexual arousal and heightening appeal to male consumers. It can be said that the model of sexuality presented in mainstream pornography is a harmful model of sexuality for women. This is a model which sells sex short. Interestingly, the perspectives from within the US pornography industry tend to support radical feminist arguments about the violent and degrading content of pornography and also, to a degree, radical feminist arguments about the significant influence that pornography has on the social construction of sexuality.

The issue of the pornography industry's influence on the social construction of sexuality is explored in much greater depth in the following chapter on pornographication. Unlike the increasingly popular academic analyses of pornography emanating from film and cultural studies, which detach the product of pornography from its context as part of a multi-billion dollar industry, the next chapter draws on the analysis of pornography as an industry, in order to build a contextualised analysis of pornographication. Furthermore, it will be argued, based on the preceding analysis of AVN, that what is being mainstreamed is a harmful model of women's sexuality that promotes the eroticisation of objectification, hierarchy, violence and women's subordination.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PORNOGRAPHICATION OF CULTURE AND THE PROSTITUTION OF SEXUALITY

This chapter deals with the promotion of the pornographic model of sexuality in the mainstream, also known as the mainstreaming of pornography or pornographication. Unlike much of the existing literature on this phenomenon, pornographication will be understood here as directly linked to the pornography industry. Viewing pornography through an industry perspective, as outlined in the previous chapter, undermines de-politicised views of pornography as harmless, or as "just representation". Instead, pornography can be seen to endorse a harmful model of women's sexuality which eroticises violence and is based in inequality. If pornographication is the mainstreaming of pornography, then what is being mainstreamed, can be said to be extreme sex acts and violence against women. It will be demonstrated that pornographication is the popularising of the pornographic model of sexuality, and it will be argued here that pornographication is one way through which pornography is gaining increasing influence over the social construction of sexuality. Again, this argument is at odds with much of the existing literature. There has still been little published, for example, which attempts to understand pornographication from a feminist perspective (cf. Dines, 2010; Jeffreys, 2005). Thus, this chapter works towards providing a framework through which further feminist analysis may be possible.

To this end, an outline of what pornographication is understood to be within the academy is provided after a preliminary discussion of definitions and the presentation of a number of illustrative examples. The flaws in the current dominant approach to pornographication are analysed, in particular, the conflation of pornographication and sexualisation, and the lack of attention paid to the pornography industry's role in the mainstreaming of pornography. It will be argued here that pornographication must be seen as directly related to the pornography boom described in the previous chapter and, furthermore, that it should be seen as promoting a particular model of sex which is harmful not only to the women directly

used in producing it but also to women as a class. It is concluded that pornographication can be best understood as a form of the prostitution of sexuality (Barry, 1995).

Defining Pornographication

The pornographication of culture in the West is becoming an increasingly acknowledged trend in both the mass media and the academy. For more than a decade, cultural commentators, journalists and scholars have been noting changes in the accessibility and acceptability of pornography, as well as the ways in which pornography and pornographic imagery are fragmenting and blurring into traditionally non-pornographic forms of popular culture. These trends, often referred to as the mainstreaming of porn or "porn chic", take a variety of forms. The mainstreaming of pornography has been documented in areas as diverse as popular music, higher education, clothing and fashion, high art, sport and technology. At this time, however, pornographication is still relatively under-theorised (Attwood, 2006), and there is a distinct lack of feminist analyses available (c.f. Boyle (ed)., 2010; Dines, 2010; Jeffreys, 2005;).

The trend towards pornographication is still a reasonably new area of academic study and as such the development of definitions of porn chic, pornographication and the mainstreaming or normalisation of pornography have been relatively ad hoc. The majority of the literature on pornographication has emerged in the years since 2000, and while a number of authors cite the work of McNair, there is often little acknowledgement within works on pornographication that there is any pre-existing literature to be built upon. Thus, multiple, varied understandings have been created simultaneously by different scholars focusing on different areas. It is therefore useful to provide an overview of these definitions and, using aspects of each, create a more inclusive definition of pornographication that can allow for understanding the implications that the mainstreaming pornography may hold for women and the social construction of sexuality.

The term "pornographication" is used throughout this book to denote changes in the production, accessibility and acceptability of pornography, as well as the ways in which pornography and pornographic imagery are fragmenting and blurring into traditionally non-pornographic forms of culture. It will be used interchangeably with "the mainstreaming of pornography". This understanding draws on a variety of definitions which have been alternately termed pornographication (McNair, 1996, 2002; Stø, 2003), porn chic (Duits & van Zoonen, 2006; Harvey & Robinson, 2007;

Jeffreys, 2005; McNair, 1996, 2002; McRobbie, 2004; Sørensen 2005), the mainstreaming of porn (Dilevko & Gottlieb, 2002; Dines, 1998; Hall & Bishop (eds)., 2007; McNair, 1996), the "normalization of porn" (Poynor, 2006), and pornification (Aucoin, 2006; Paasonen, Nikunen & Saarenmaa (eds)., 2008; Paul, 2005). These various understandings will be compared in the following sections.

Pornographication

The term pornographication first appears in Brian McNair's 1996 work *Mediated Sex: Pornography and post-modern culture.* McNair's work is often cited as the first in depth academic study of the use of pornographic imagery and references in mainstream popular culture (e.g. Attwood, 2002; Smith, 2007; Sørensen, 2003). His initial understanding of pornographication was quite narrow. In *Mediated Sex* (1996) McNair defines the "pornographication of the mainstream" as: "the incorporation of pornographic imagery and iconography into a variety of popular culture forms, such as advertising, popular fiction and Hollywood cinema" (p. 137). Indeed, much of the book is devoted to specific examples of the use of pornographic representations in popular art, television and movies. The focus remains firmly on how images and representations of sex similar to those found in pornography are now appearing more frequently in media forms that are firmly entrenched in popular culture. Ane Stø in her paper on the "pornografication of youth culture", presented at the Third Baltic Sea Women's Conference, uses a similar definition, explaining that "[t]he term pornografication [sic] is used to describe the phenomenon where other cultural media borrow expressions from the pornographic industry" (Stø, 2003, n.pag.). This still only offers a relatively limited understanding of the processes of pornographication, concentrating again on media, but it at least extends pornographication beyond the realm of popular culture to potentially include forms of more respectable or "high culture" overlooked by McNair's original definition.

Porn / Porno chic

In 2002, McNair released another work on pornographication, titled *Striptease Culture: Sex media and the democratization of desire*. In this book, McNair regularly employs the term "porno-chic" which he defines as:

> [T]he representation of porn in non-pornographic art and culture; the pastiche and parody of, the homage to and investigation of porn; the post-modern transformation of porn into mainstream cultural artefact for a variety of purposes…advertising, art, comedy and education (McNair, 2002, p. 61).

This excerpt has found further influence since it was lifted directly by Linda Duits and Liesbet Van Zoonen in their notable article "Headscarves and Porno-Chic: Disciplining girls' bodies in the multicultural society" (2006) which appeared in the *European Journal of Women's Studies*. This definition of porno-chic extends McNair's previous, limited definition of pornographication. The focus is no longer only on popular culture specifically, the terminology shifts to "art and culture". The porno-chic definition also includes forms of culture outside media, evident in the inclusion of comedy and education. The definition, however, still remains significantly flawed. Firstly, McNair continues the highly dubious separation of pornography from porn chic, that is, as soon as pornography is used for advertising, art or comedy it is automatically no longer pornography. To this end, McNair clearly states that "porno-chic is not porn" (p. 61). Contrary to McNair, it is argued further on in this chapter that such an assertion fundamentally misunderstands the processes of pornographication which operate not only to filter pornographic imagery into the mainstream but also to further legitimise pornography itself. Secondly, McNair (1996, 2002) represents pornographication and porno chic as relatively unproblematic, even positive developments, which have led to a society more open and accepting of sexual representation. His definitions fail to include any way of understanding porno chic as a political issue that may potentially affect the status of women.

A number of feminist scholars have adopted broader understandings of porn / porno chic which, it will be argued here, can be seen as much more useful in understanding the political implications of pornographication for women. Sheila Jeffreys, for example, uses the term pornochic in *Beauty and Misogyny: Harmful cultural practices in the West* (2005) to explain the way in which pornography now constructs standards of beauty and fashion. She explains: "The values of pornography, and its practices, extended outwards from magazines and movies to become the dominating values of fashion and beauty advertising, and the advertising of many other products and services" (Jeffreys, 2005, p. 67). The explanation here is not just that the *representation* of pornography has been adopted in mainstream media forms but also the values and practices of pornography. The values and practices of pornography present serious harms to women, as Jeffreys (2005) goes on to argue: "It makes looking as if you are in the

sex industry chic and thereby helps sex industrialists by normalizing their business of the international traffic in women" (p. 75). The normalisation of pornographic representations in the mainstream can be seen as directly linked to the normalisation of pornography and the sex industry more broadly. Recognising these links creates a greater understanding of the material context in which pornographication is actually occurring.

The importance of understanding normalisation as an aspect of porn / porno chic is taken up in the definitions provided by Bockelmann (quoted in Harvey & Robinson, 2007) and Sørensen (2003, 2005). Nicola Bockelmann uses the term "porn-chic" to describe "the infiltration of representations of pornography into mass culture, thereby becoming an accepted, even idealized cultural element of the mainstream" (Bockelmann quoted in Harvey & Robinson, 2007, p. 68). Although the focus here returns to *representations* of pornography Bockelmann highlights not only the acceptance or normalisation of such representations but also the trend towards elevating pornographic imagery to the status of an ideal. Annette Sørensen follows a similar line in her work on "the pornophication of public space" in Denmark (2003, 2005). She uses the terms "porn chic" and "the mainstreaming of pornography" interchangeably to designate "the cultural processes by which pornography slips into our everyday lives as a commonly accepted and often idealised cultural element" (2003, n.pag., 2005, n.pag.). Note here that Sørensen refers directly to pornography rather than simply representations of pornography but, like Bockelmann, she highlights the way in which pornography is not just accepted but even idealised.

The Normalisation of Porn / The Mainstreaming of Porn

The issue of normalisation is also taken up directly by Rick Poynor in *Designing Pornotopia: Travels in visual culture* (2006). Much like the influential writings of Brian McNair, Poynor adopts an almost celebratory approach to understanding the impact of pornographication; he notes that "[i]n the last decade, the rapid normalization of porn and the complete turnaround in social attitudes to it is one of the most momentous developments in everyday life" (Poynor, 2006, p. 132). The labelling of these changes as "momentous" puts a rather more positive spin on pornographication than the outlook offered in the feminist analyses of Sørensen (2005) and Jeffreys (2005). It is important to note, however, that despite such differing interpretations regarding the *outcome* of pornographication it can be seen that there is widespread agreement that

pornography has gained increasing public acceptance and that this is both a significant and relatively recent trend.

The concept of "mainstreaming pornography" is also employed by many scholars and popular writers. Much like the term "normalisation", "mainstreaming" is often used in reference to pornography's position as a normal or mainstream fixture of culture. For example, Katherine Kinnick (2007) argues that the trend towards mainstreaming is clear as "the line between pop culture and porn culture is blurring, as the sexual themes, language and production techniques that have made porn a multibillion dollar industry are increasingly, and intentionally, cropping up in mainstream music, movies, TV and video games" (p. 7). As with McNair's initial definition of pornographication, it is pornography's influence on *popular* culture that is emphasised. Unlike McNair, however, Kinnick does contextualise pornography as a multibillion-dollar industry, offering some understanding that the financial weight of the pornography industry may play a role in the blurring of pornographic and popular culture.

Juris Dilevko and Lisa Gottlieb (2002) also highlight the way in which the burgeoning pornography industry itself has helped to make pornography inseparable from popular culture. In reviewing statistics on the profits of the pornography industry and the widespread consumption of internet pornography Dilevko and Gottlieb (2002) state that: "These figures suggest more than just a proliferation of pornographic materials. They introduce a larger issue – the difficulty in distinguishing between pornography and mainstream entertainment. Pornography can no longer be treated as the domain of fringe elements of society" (p. 114). This acceptance of actual pornography in the mainstream must be seen as integral to the processes of pornographication more generally, such as the use of pornographic imagery in traditionally non-pornographic forms of culture.

Pornification / Pornophication

The terms "pornification" and "pornophication" are used predominantly in literature dealing with the Scandinavian context. Pornification, for example, is used throughout the collection *Pornification: Sex and sexuality in media culture,* edited by three Scandinavian researchers (Paasonen, Nikunen & Saarenmaa, 2007). In *Pornification* the focus is still limited to media but the editors do offer a more in depth definition of process. They state that pornification operates on three levels. The first concerns changes in media technology and the expansion of the pornography industry and the second involves changes in media regulation which have seen

pornographic imagery infiltrate public space. Finally, the third level, referred to as "porno chic" is defined as the "sexualization of culture" (p. 8). The third level is problematic as it conflates pornographication and sexualisation, a common (mis)understanding of pornographication that will be discussed later in this chapter.

Sørensen (2005) applies a similar, but ultimately more useful, three pronged approach with the term "pornophication" in her work, also based in the Scandinavian context. Sørensen states that the processes of pornophication can be broken up into "three interacting tendencies": volume, clean-up and fragments. Volume relates to the increasing amount of pornography available and also the ease with which pornography has become more available. There is significant cross-over here with the first level of pornification as outlined by Paasonen, Nikunen and Saarenmaa (2007). Like these authors, Sørensen highlights the importance of changes in media technology which have created new and more anonymous ways for consumers to access pornography. The second tendency noted by Sørensen is the clean-up, which relates to the increasing legitimacy of pornography, in particular, the way in which pornography and the pornography industry have become widely covered topics within the mainstream media. This aspect of pornophication is most like the definitions offered by scholars using the terms mainstreaming or normalisation of pornography. The third aspect of Sørensen's definition is fragmentation, denoting the way in which "there is an increasing use of figures, stylistic features and verbal expressions" (2005, n.pag.) which draw on pornography. It is this final area which tends to be the most visible. Often referred to as porn chic in other literature, this is the aspect which is most commonly the primary focus in both academic and popular work dealing with pornographication.

Porn chic, or fragmentation, describes the way in which pornographic referencing and imagery are being adopted outside the pornography industry and subsequently being taken into the mainstream. It is this last aspect that too often stands *as* pornographication. However, as Sørensen (2005) shows, there are other intersecting aspects of these processes, namely the rise in the production and consumption of pornography and the increasing legitimacy of pornography, which should not be separated out. It is argued in this chapter, that a feminist analysis of pornographication must include all three of these elements, as this allows for the contextualisation of pornographication as firmly related to the pornography industry itself. All these aspects need to be included in order to understand that pornographication promotes and legitimises a harmful model of sexuality for women. That is, pornographication sells sex short.

Paths to Pornographication

As the phenomenon of pornographication has only recently become an area of study within the academy, information about, and possible explanations of, pornographication are still rather sketchy (Attwood, 2006). In order to give a more detailed picture of how pornographication operates, this section of the chapter offers a number of examples, drawn from previous work on pornographication, as well as adding some new examples from the Australian context. The three areas outlined by Sørensen: volume, clean-up and fragments, are each be considered in turn.

Volume: production and consumption

The pornography industry is now in a period of significant growth. The US industry alone is said to be worth more than $10 billion (Vadas, 2005). While exact figures are debated, there is general agreement that pornography, in the US at least, grosses more than the popular movie and music markets combined and continues to grow (McNair, 2002). This rise in profits has been accompanied by a proliferation of actual content. The US industry now produces in excess of 11,000 pornographic videos per annum (Milter & Slade, 2005) and in the US more than 700 million pornographic films are rented each year (Williams, 2007). Many commentators have noted that the porn industry boom, fuelled by increasing consumption of pornography, has been facilitated by technological advancements such as DVD, cable television and the internet which have made access to pornography both easier and cheaper. It has been theorised that consumers are now more likely to purchase and watch pornography as this can be done quickly and anonymously in the privacy of their own homes without having to travel to a sex shop or red light district (Bakker & Taalas, 2007; Maddison, 2004; O'Toole, 1999). These changes have seen pornography consumption not only significantly increase, but become far more widespread. In other words, it is not simply that pre-existing pornography consumers are consuming more pornography, but that the consumer base for pornography has itself been expanded.

The situation in Australia fits this trend toward increasingly widespread pornography consumption. In *The Porn Report* (McKee, Albury & Lumby, 2008), for example, it is claimed that conservative estimates of pornography consumption indicate that one third of all Australian adults "use some kind of sexually explicit materials – videos, DVDs, magazines or on the internet" (p. 25). Furthermore, the authors claim that such rates

are representative of broader patterns, as similar consumption rates have been found in surveys of "other Western countries" (p. 25). There is also evidence to suggest that these rates will steadily increase as young people - teenagers to those under 25 years of age - are far more likely to have consumed pornography than previous generations (Flood, 2007; Flood & Hamilton, 2003; Rogala & Tydén, 2003, 2004).

The increasing consumption of pornography by young people has been of particular concern in the Australian context (Flood, 2007; Flood & Hamilton, 2003). Researchers Michael Flood and Clive Hamilton released a report through the Australia Institute in 2003, which illustrated the widespread nature of pornography consumption among teenagers in Australia. Flood and Hamilton found that pornography use among boys aged 16 and 17 was extensive. Almost three quarters (73 percent) of their male survey respondents admitted to having watched an X-rated pornographic video, while more than one fifth (21 percent) stated they watched an X-rated video at least once a month. The rate of consumption for girls on the other hand was markedly lower. Only 11 percent of girls admitted to having watched an X-rated video. Flood and Hamilton note that unlike the boys who were often regular consumers of pornography "[t]ypically, girls watched pornography only once, because a boyfriend or somebody wanted them to or because they were curious, and then did not watch it again" (p. v).

In dividing experiences of pornography exposure by gender, Flood and Hamilton add important context to the discussions about rising pornography consumption in the West. When rising pornography consumption is mentioned in regard to pornographication, exactly who is doing the consuming is not always discussed. The proliferation of pornography is simply taken to be the proliferation of everybody's pornography consumption. For example, writing on the now mainstream status of pornography, Linda Williams states "No longer the province of upper-class men, or as it later became, all men, it [pornography] is now available to men, women, and sexual minorities…" (Williams, 2007, p. 77). Indeed, pornography may now be available to a wider demographic, but availability does not equal consumption. That is to say, it is clear, particularly along gender lines, that consumption is not equally spread. When pornography consumption is decontextualised, and made into an issue of "availability", it can be easy to overlook that the vast majority of pornography is produced for the consumption of heterosexual men (Jensen, 2004, 2007). A further problem regarding work on availability and the demographics of consumption is that it tends to suggest that if more pornography was made to cater to women, or to "sexual minorities",

rather than heterosexual men, then pornography consumption would become unproblematic. Such arguments overlook the material conditions of pornography production and the exploitation involved in systems of prostitution. It remains imperative to understand that pornography consumption is increasing, but also to note that the consumption of pornography has not increased equally across all demographics and that heterosexual men still constitute the majority of the pornography market.

The clean up: legitimising pornography

An important element of pornographication is the legitimising of pornography. Pornographication is not simply the increasing consumption of pornography and the increasing representation of pornography, it is also the greater *acceptance* of pornography. This greater acceptance of pornography can be found in both the popular press and the academy and often extends to positive or glamorised representations of pornography. These positive representations help legitimise the pornography industry and obscure the harms that women experience in the production of pornography. The legitimising of pornography is considered here through two specific examples: the pornographication of business and the pornographication of the academy.

The clean up (1): pornography as "just business"

During the recent period of rapid financial growth for the global pornography industry, cultural attitudes to pornography in the West have shifted. The extent of this shift is summarised quite simply by Williams (2007): "to think of pornography as obscene is, today, something of an anachronism" (p. 75). In her explanation of the "clean-up", Sørensen (2005) notes that one of the most prominent ways in which pornography has become legitimised has been through the coverage that the pornography industry has received in the mainstream media. Dilevko and Gottlieb (2002) track this aspect of pornographication back to the infiltration of pornography into regular business and the subsequent coverage of pornography as "just another industry" in the mainstream business media. They explain that the increasing financial weight of the pornography industry has led to increasing interest from "legitimate" or non-porn business. This change has moved pornography from being a fringe industry into the mainstream. For example, as long ago as 1998, *The Economist* ran a piece which argued that the sex industry needed to be placed "where it ultimately belongs – as just another branch of the global

entertainment industry" ('The sex industry', 1998). Since then, the understanding that the industries of prostitution and pornography are "just businesses" has become increasingly accepted, as journalist Robert Lusetich noted in *The Australian* in 2003:

> Pornography's new found legitimacy was never more evident than when the prestigious University of Southern California business school invited Stephen Hirsch, Vivid entertainment founder, to address students from the same podium previously occupied by such captains of industry as Microsoft founder Bill Gates and former Chrysler chairman Lee Iaccoca. Hirsch spoke of 'market share' and 'production values' but never once mentioned the 'p'-word, pornography. Instead he spoke of 'content' as if he were the head of a major Hollywood studio, or for that matter, any mainstream business. "Ten years ago, I don't think I would have been asked to speak in front of that class" says Hirsch…"*We're already past the acceptance stage. At this point we're just talking about a business as a business*" (Lusetich, 2003, p. 13 [emphasis mine]).

What is so striking about the presentation of pornography as just a business like any other is that it strips pornography, and the broader industries of pornography and prostitution, of their context. While there is ample discussion of the profits of pornography businesses, there is no acknowledgement of how exactly the profits are made, that is, there is no acknowledgement of the harm done to the women who are bought and sold for the purposes of producing this particular aspect of "the global entertainment industry". In the case of Hirsch, the obfuscation goes so far as to avoid even mentioning the word pornography when speaking about the profits earned from one of the biggest and most well known pornography production houses in the world, Vivid (Caslon Analytics, 2007). Indeed, this is one way in which "the clean-up" operates: counting the profits without considering the harms. It would be difficult for the industry to maintain a clean image if the women who are "sexually used to make the visual materials that form the vast majority of the industry's output" (MacKinnon, 2005, p. 18) were acknowledged.

Focusing on the financial weight of pornography to the exclusion of all else has also been a successful strategy for pornography industry lobbyists seeking to legitimise their business as Dilevko and Gottlieb explain:

> The porn industry's political clout is directly tied to its economic clout. On a recent visit to California's state capitol, lobbyists distributed a fact sheet with the following statistics: "20,000 Californians, including 12,500 dancers, employed by 175 exotic clubs in the state; an estimated $31 million in state sales tax from the rentals of 130 million adult videos, and

> nearly $1.8 billion in Internet sales and traffic nationwide" (Dilevko and Gottlieb, 2002, p. 117).

It is important to note that the pornography industry actively lobbies to become recognised as "just another business" but the role of the industry itself in these processes of normalisation and mainstreaming is often overlooked in academic analyses of pornographication. The industry has also created awards shows and industry exhibitions in order to continue its push into the mainstream. The Sexpo exhibitions in Australia are but one example.

Sexpo is a sex industry exhibition held annually, which features stalls for a variety of vendors, predominantly those in the sex industry, including sex shops, strip clubs, escort services and pornography distributors (Sullivan & Jeffreys, 2002). The popularity of Sexpo reached such heights by 2002 that the *Australian Financial Review* reported on its patronage and profits (Cave, 2002). Journalist Michael Cave noted that more than 75,000 people were expected to attend over a two day period and that "over the past five years, Sexpo has become the biggest exhibition of its type in the southern hemisphere" (p. 2). Sexpo organiser David Ross was also quoted in the article, stating that: "Every year it becomes a little more respectable to come in here…It's good business" (Ross quoted in Cave, 2002, p. 2). The article offers some further explanation:

> Ross attributes the exhibit's lasting success to the fact that it doesn't focus on hardcore porn, instead softening the image by mixing porn with erotica and other products not directly related to sex: holiday resorts, wineries and spas. This has made the exhibition more attractive to the nearly 5,000 women who made up a large section of the opening day crowd (Cave, 2002, p. 2).

It becomes evident in such examples that there is a conscious strategy on the part of the pornography industry to promote a "softened" version to the mainstream while intentionally keeping hardcore pornography, responsible for the majority of the industry's profits, off the public agenda. As will be discussed further on in relation to Playboy Enterprises, this strategy tends to use women as vehicles for legitimising pornography while at the same marketing the real product of hard-core pornography almost exclusively to men.

The 2002 Sexpo is also worthy of note because the organisers had flown US pornography star Ron Jeremy out to appear at the exhibition. Jeremy's subsequent "tour" is a prime example of just how mainstream and acceptable pornography has become in Australia. The *Financial*

Review claimed that Jeremy's inclusion marked "the coming of age of Sexpo" (Cave, 2002, p. 2), but Jeremy's appearances were not only limited to the sex industry exhibition. As part of the tour, Jeremy made an appearance at the thoroughly mainstream music store HMV in Pitt Street Mall, in the heart of Sydney's central shopping district. It was reported in *The Sun-Herald* that between 400-500 people attended the HMV event in order to "to catch a glimpse of their idol. Some even managed to meet him or get his autograph" (Thomas, 2003, p. 10). Jeremy's Australian tour was met with seemingly uncritical acceptance. As journalist, Brett Thomas, noted:

> During his visit to Australia, Jeremy did the usual radio and TV chat show rounds as well as giving thoughtful interviews to the serious broadsheet newspapers. Just like any other touring celebrity. It was a further sign of how accepted and mainstream the sex industry has become…it appears to have evolved into a legitimate form of entertainment (Thomas, 2003, p. 10).

Ron Jeremy's tour exemplifies the degree to which the consumption of pornography has gained social acceptability in Australia. The fact that hundreds of Sydney residents were willing to cue for the autograph of Ron Jeremy certainly attests to that. It is not only this consumer-based aspect of pornographication, however, which defines the way in which pornography has become normalised. The problem, as Sørensen suggests, is not only that consumers have become more accepting of pornography but also that media coverage of pornography has become more accepting, sympathetic or even celebratory. In such a context, where the pornography industry is becoming normalised and even portrayed positively, the exploitation of women, which is involved in the production of pornography, is lost.

The clean up (2): pornographication of the academy

The normalisation of pornography in the popular media is also reflected in new academic approaches to the study of pornography. Over the past ten to fifteen years there has been a paradigm shift in academic research on pornography. During the 1980s and 1990s, feminist debates about the meaning and social impact of pornography were at the centre of the majority of writing on pornography. While libertarian and liberal feminists became bitterly opposed to radical feminists on the issue of pornography, there was generally an underlying assumption in writings from both sides that the question of how to understand pornography was a political issue. This is to say, the liberals argued that censorship was

politically problematic, the libertarians that any state legislation relating to sexuality was inherently reactionary, and the radical feminists contended that pornography was implicated in promoting and maintaining women's subordination. Dominant understandings of pornography within the academy today, however, have been stripped of these political understandings, with some authors even claiming to have moved beyond these feminist debates (e.g. Juffer, 1998; Williams, 2004). One example of this trend was the 2004 call for papers for a pornography themed issue of *Critical Sense* a "cultural and political theory" journal run by graduates from UCLA Berkeley:

> The fierce debates that erupted in the 1980's over the production, distribution, and consumption of pornography look to many today to be terribly dated, sealed off (thankfully?) in another era: we've been there and done that…We do not seek to rekindle or rehash the so-called 'sex wars' over pornography… (quoted in Lee, 2005).

There is a tendency to portray feminist theory on pornography as outdated, as though it is no longer relevant to understanding the explosion of pornographic imagery that is currently occurring. Having moved away from feminist analyses of pornography, which are grounded in politics, the dominant approach to pornography in the academy can now be seen to "incorporate many of the theoretical perspectives and preoccupations which have become central within Cultural Studies" (Attwood, 2006, p. 93). This typically postmodern approach tends to focus on various ways in which a pornographic text may be read by individuals, obscuring dominant cultural understandings and questions about social power (Boyle, 2005). This paradigm shift can be seen as part of the processes that have functioned to legitimise pornography. In this sense the academic study of pornography has become part of "the clean-up".

In this new academic approach, pornography becomes just another genre of film or just another facet of popular culture, each as legitimate as the next. The definition of pornography offered by the editors of *Pornification,* for example, is indicative of this trend: "Pornography, as understood in this volume, is a phenomenon of media culture and a question of mass production" (Paasonen, Nikunen & Saarenmaa, 2007, p. 2). Linda Williams in her introduction to the edited collection *Porn Studies*, explains how this type of depoliticised approach is a break from the past:

> The porn studies of this volume diverge markedly from the kind of agonizing over sexual politics that characterized an earlier era of the study

> of pornography. Where once it was deemed necessary to argue vehemently against pro-censorship, anti-pornography feminism for the value and importance of studying pornography, today porn studies addresses the veritable explosion of sexually explicit materials that cry out for better understanding (Williams, 2004, p. 1).

Williams further explains that: "pornography is emphatically part of American culture, and it is time for the criticism of it to recognize this fact" (Williams, 2004, p. 2). In these excerpts Williams misrepresents the anti-pornography feminist approach as no longer relevant and furthermore suggests there is no recognition within anti-pornography writing that pornography has become firmly entrenched and normalised as part of culture. It is important to point out, however, that radical feminists, who have agonised and continue to agonise over the sexual politics of pornography, have actually been at the forefront of predicting the pornography industry boom and pornography's subsequent legitimation and infiltration of the mainstream. It was as far back as 1985, for example, that Catharine MacKinnon wrote:

> Pornography is a harm of male supremacy made difficult to see because of its pervasiveness, potency, and, principally, because of its success in making the world a pornographic place…Women live in the world pornography creates… (MacKinnon, 1985, p. 20).

In a 2005 piece for *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, MacKinnon reflected on more than two decades of feminist efforts to have the problems of pornographication recognised:

> The pornography industry is a lot bigger, more powerful, more legitimate, more in everyone's face today than it was a quarter of a century ago…Sexual objectification and violation does not happen all by itself. Real social institutions drive it. Pornography does, powerfully, in capitalist mass-mediated cultures. If nothing is done, the results will keep getting worse. We told you so (MacKinnon, 2005, p. 18).

There are other feminist critiques of pornography which have also been concerned with the prevalence of pornography and its increasing normalcy as part and parcel of everyday culture (e.g. Barry, 1995; Caputi, 2002; Dines, 1998). Indeed, it could be argued that one of the central radical feminist concerns regarding pornography is its widespread use and social acceptability. Williams' suggestion that feminist critics of pornography have not taken its status as part of "American culture" into account can rather quickly be disproved, but her comment can also be interpreted in

another way. Clearly anti-pornography feminists have noted the increasing normalisation of pornography but they have not accepted this situation as the way things ought to be. The intimation that can be drawn from Williams' comments is that critics should not only acknowledge that pornography is becoming legitimised as a normal part of everyday culture, but that this situation should be accepted rather than problematised.

The uncritical exploration of pornography within the academy has also led to what James Atlas (1999) referred to in *The New Yorker* as the "pedagogic enshrinement of porn" (p. 60): the teaching of porn studies in universities, particularly those in the US. These recently created courses on pornography, most situated within the cultural or film studies model, have proliferated over the last decade. Such courses are "focused on questions of genre, interpretation, heteronormativity, taste and style" (Paasonen, Nikunen & Saarenmaa, 2007, 18). One of the more prominent of these courses is run by film studies Professor Constance Penley at the University of California at Santa Barbara. She offers a course in which there is a "porn marathon day" which features a number of films including "*John Wayne Bobbitt: Uncut*; *Getting His Goat*, a sepia-toned stag film from 1923; and *Buried Treasure*, a cartoon, circa 1930, from a major animation studio depicting the antics of a hapless man and his immense, dancing anthropomorphic penis" (Dilevko & Gottlieb, 2002, p. 122). Penley encourages her students to analyse pornography as just another genre of film rather than engaging with debates about its worth or harm. She states: "I study pornography to see what it consists of, not debating whether it is art or deviant. I also teach it as another genre of film, like Westerns or science fiction" (quoted in Dilevko & Gottlieb, 2002, p. 122). This depoliticising of the academic study of pornography can be seen not only as reflecting the process of normalisation but also as part of the process of normalisation itself.

Fragments: pornography and pop culture

The majority of literature on pornographication focuses on this final element of fragmentation: the slippage of pornographic referencing and imagery into the mainstream. This section provides some background to the current trend of pornographication by linking current examples to earlier trends in the mainstreaming of pornography: firstly, the release of the pornographic movie *Deep Throat* and porn-chic in the 1970s, and then the pornographication of music and art in the 1980s and 1990s. Following this background, more recent examples dealing with the pornographication of sport and fashion are given to highlight the speed with which the

process of pornographication has intensified and the extremes to which it is now pushed.

Fragments (1): Deep Throat begins porn chic

The current pornography boom is often traced back to the so-called "golden age" of pornography production in the 1970s, and in particular the release and subsequent success of the pornographic film *Deep Throat*. The same is true of work on the trend towards pornographication. The advent of *Deep Throat* is often highlighted as a turning point in the legitimisation of pornography in the public sphere. McNair, for example, offers this introduction to "porno-chic" in *Striptease Culture*:

> Let's begin by recalling that, as a label, porno-chic is not new, first being used in the early 1970s to describe the remarkable box office success of *Deep Throat, Behind the Green Door*, and other feature-length, hard-core pornographic movies released around that time in the United States. Those were the days when…it was considered 'chic' to be seen queuing for entry into a cinema showing *Deep Throat* or *The Devil in Miss Jones* (McNair, 2002, p. 62).

Similarly, Susanna Paasonen and Laura Saarenmaa (2007) in "The Golden Age of Porn: Nostalgia and history in cinema" note that: "The mainstreaming of pornography is indebted to the success of feature-length hardcore films of the 1970s" (p. 23). They single out *Deep Throat* for specific attention, and further add that Linda Marchiano (Lovelace at the time of filming), who played the main role, "was the first porn performer to gain mainstream fame. She gave a face and a name to porno chic…" (p. 25). Those within the industry also single out *Deep Throat* as an important turning point at which pornography went mainstream. The *Adult Video News* feature "25 events that shaped the first 25 years of video porn", for example, begins with the release of *Deep Throat* in 1972:

> Adult stopped being a dirty little secret and became part and parcel of the entertainment mainstream when Frank Sinatra unspooled *Deep Throat* (starring Linda Lovelace and Harry Reems) for Vice President Agnew at Sinatra's residence, Johnny Carson joked about the film on *The Tonight Show* in the early 70s, and reporters Woodward and Bernstein dubbed their informant 'Deep Throat'…Today, the radio waves are filled with references to adult, Jenna Jameson is a household name…All this stems from the phenomenal success of the seminal *Deep Throat* (Hunter, 2002, n.p).

What is often left out of these discussions is the abuse that Linda Marchiano suffered at the hands of her husband and pimp, during filming (Marchiano, 1980). Paasonen and Saarenmaa (2007) observe that in works which elevate *Deep Throat* as "a symbol of free sex and free speech" Marchiano's story of prostitution and domestic violence must be erased in order for the narrative to make sense (p. 26). This, of course, calls into question the accounts of those like McNair (2002), who seek to show *Deep Throat*, and the related trend of porn chic as, not only harmless, but potentially liberatory. However, McNair is the only scholar to date, who has attempted to track the trend towards pornographication comprehensively. He states that the 1970s era of "porno chic" came to an end with the predominantly feminist anti-pornography campaigns of the late 1970s and early 1980s (McNair, 2002). As these campaigns died down, and the feminist movement split, it was not long before the trend towards the public mainstreaming of pornography was evident once again.

Fragments (2): the pornographication of art

McNair (2002) traces the more recent explosion of public representations of pornography, which he refers to as a "revolution" (p. 33), to an art exhibition by Jeff Koons, titled *Made in Heaven*. The exhibition was first shown in full in 1991 and consisted of photos of Koons and his then wife and former pornography star Ilona Staller, more often referred to as La Cicciolina (the name she took while in pornographic films), engaging in a number of sex acts. The works mainly consisted of large photo-based oil paintings, borrowing extensively from pornographic imagery and bearing titles such as *Blow Job,* and *Glass Dildo*. *Exaltation* included the use of the "money shot": a staple of pornography where a man ejaculates onto the body of a woman. McNair notes that in *Exaltation* "Koons' penis is obscured, although his post-ejaculatory sperm can clearly be seen trickling down the side of Cicciolina's face…" (McNair, 2002, p. 65). The exhibition created significant controversy and the overtly pornographic imagery used in the *Made in Heaven* series led one *New York Times* art critic at the time to claim that the works were "not fundamentally different from what one might see in *Hustler* magazine…" (Kimmelman, 1991). Despite the controversy surrounding the release of Koons' now infamous works, McNair notes that the series did eventually become "culturally validated as art" (McNair, 2002, p. 66). A breakthrough in the public acceptance of pornography and pornographic conventions, "*Made in Heaven* pioneered what would become the even more commonplace cultural flirtation with the form and content of pornography" (p. 66).

Indeed, Koons' work can be seen as having paved the way for the use of pornographic conventions by other artists. Although they are best known for their work in fashion photography, Juergen Teller and Terry Richardson have both also branched into the art world. Teller gained notoriety for his 2004 collection of photos titled *Louis XV*. The series includes pictures of himself and actress Charlotte Rampling in a variety of nude poses, some of which borrow from the style of gonzo pornography with bad lighting and amateur style shots (Callender, 2004). Richardson, however, goes much further with what is often labelled the "pornographic aesthetic". His fashion work for Sisley, for example, is said to epitomise porn chic and has included images of spanking, prostitution and bestiality (LA Weekly, 2004). These controversial images are often difficult to discern from mass marketed pornography.

The same blurring can be found in Richardson's "artistic" work. A 2004 exhibition of Richardson's photography in New York was described by *The Observer*'s Sean O'Hagan as consisting of "self-made images of Terry thrusting, rucking, prodding, pumping and sometimes grinning at the camera like a nerd let loose in porno heaven" (O'Hagan, 2004, n.pag.). O'Hagan goes on to describe some of the individual photos:

> Here Terry is being serviced by two babes, who could be, may well be, fashion models. Here he is receiving a blow job from a girl who, for some reason, is trussed up in a suitcase, just her head, and open mouth protruding. And here he is being fellated by another girl crammed into a dustbin (O'Hagan, 2004, n.pag.)

It is later explained in O'Hagan's article that the girl in the dustbin has a name: Alex, and that she is young woman who works in Richardson's office. Richardson, however, is quick to deny claims that such works are either pornographic or exploitative: "I don't use porn…I don't like to exploit anybody. That's not my bag" (quoted in O'Hagan, 2004, n.pag.). This is somewhat at odds with his later statement about the personal motivation behind his work: "maybe it's the psychological thing that I was a shy kid, and now I'm this powerful guy with a boner, dominating all these girls" (quoted in O'Hagan, 2004, n.pag.). As Jeffreys argues, this trend towards pornographication clearly holds implications for young women working in the fashion and art industries:

> Where once young women had to sexually service men to gain jobs in the fashion and entertainment industries, there is now an extra spin. They might have to be photographed and exhibited as well (Jeffreys, 2005, p. 75).

As explained in chapter one, the harms that women experience as a result of having pornographic images of themselves created can be severe and long lasting (MacKinnon, 1993; Stark & Hodgson, 2003). That this may now be expected of young women and accepted as part and parcel of making art should be serious cause for concern. It does suggest the normalising of a particularly harmful model of sex.

Fragments (3): the pornographication of music

Another event which is often highlighted as having had an impact on the mainstreaming of pornography is the release of Madonna's *Sex* book and *Erotica* album. McNair (2002) makes grand claims about the influence of *Sex* and *Erotica*, and in part of his pro-pornography narrative, claims that Madonna was one of the first popular artists to "appropriate the transgressive qualities of porn in a mass market context" (p. 66). He also notes that the *Sex* book "strongly influenced the sexual culture and politics of the 1990s…" (p. 69). In *Sex*, Madonna was shown engaged in a variety of staged sex acts including "fantasy rapes", group sex and sadomasochism. A typical example is the final set of pictures in *Sex* which show Madonna "and her fictional friends – Bunny, Dex, Stella, Chiclet and the Stranger – working through a typical pornographic narrative of multiple sexual encounters" (p. 66). McNair portrays the release of these works as a positive sign of increased sexual liberalism. He adds that *Sex* and *Erotica* contributed to "the creation of a cultural climate within which it became possible to treat porn as just another subject – not one which had to be ritually demonized as morally evil or politically reactionary, but could be treated as having some aesthetic interest and validity in itself" (p. 69).

McNair's analysis of Madonna's influence in moving the public view of pornography beyond debates about morals and politics also rather neatly sums up the prevailing academic view on pornography generally, that pornography should be treated as a subject just like any other, understood as simply a matter of genre and aesthetics. This depoliticised understanding also dominates work on pornographication. Contrary to this trend in academic analyses, Jeffreys (2005) has written about the negative consequences for women of Madonna's endorsement of pornography and prostitution. Jeffreys singles out the "cult" created around Madonna as "an important element in normalizing the prostitution look in high fashion" (p. 75). She argues that Madonna and the *Sex* book served to take "men's

sadomasochistic and prostitution fantasies out of brothels and pornography into the malestream entertainment industry" (p. 77). Moreover, that:

> She [Madonna] markets the practice of prostitution to young women as a form of women's empowerment. The effect is that she has contributed significantly to normalising prostitution and making it publicly acceptable to portray women as prostitutes in fashion and advertising generally (Jeffreys, 2005, p. 77).

While Madonna's influence may well still be evident in porn-chic fashion, it also extended to normalising prostitution and pornography within the music industry, in particular with regard to music videos, one area of popular culture where the mainstreaming of pornography is now especially evident. Joseph Kahn, for example, a popular music video director, mentioned the weight of Madonna's influence in a 1999 interview with *The New York Times*:

> Madonna started it all, with the 'Erotica' CD and the 'Sex' book, by becoming a *porn star*. She made herself into one, and the kids picked up on that. There's a huge market of teenagers who grew up without the taboos (Kahn quoted in Hamilton, 1999, p. 1 [emphasis mine])

Just as Koons paved the way for Teller and Richardson in the world of art and photography, Madonna has paved the way for artists like Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera in the world of music. Spears and Aguilera are both (in)famous for performing in ways which draw on pornographic styles and conventions, as journalist Ariel Levy explains in relation to Aguilera:

> [S]ex work is frequently and specifically referenced by the style or speech or creative output of women in general. Consider the oeuvre of pop singer Christina Aguilera, who titled her 2003 album *Stripped*…mud wrestled in a humping fashion in her video *Dirrty* [sic], and likes to wear assless chaps (Levy, 2005, p. 31).

While pornographic references in music videos are often noted by scholars and cultural commentators, it is less often noted that there are material links between the mainstream music industry and the pornography industry. Britney Spears offers a poignant example. Spears, who has a fan-base of predominately young women in their early teens, hired Gregory Dark, "a notorious director of pornographic movies" to create the video clip for her single 'From the Bottom of My Broken Heart' in 2000 (Sturges, 2004, p. 9). Indeed, Greg Dark was known in the porn world

specifically "for making the worst pornography, a pornography of transgression and violation" (Junod, 2001, n.pag.). This has not prevented Dark from carving out a successful new career. Since leaving the pornography industry, Dark has made a name for himself in the mainstream and has now directed more than 100 video-clips (Junod, 2001). Not only does this example show the material links that now exist between the pornography industry and the mainstream entertainment industry, but it also suggests that the pornographic model of sexuality is being marketed to young teenagers and even pre-teen girls.

Fragments (4): the pornographication of sport

One area of culture which has received less attention in academic writing on pornographication is sport. In Australia the pornographication of sport, or rather women's sport, is one area which highlights how quickly the fragmenting of pornography has occurred and how quickly it has gained public acceptance. Over the last ten to fifteen years, Australian sportswomen have appeared naked in magazines and calendars ostensibly in efforts to raise the profile of their respective sports. This trend is generally traced back to the "Golden Girls of Sport" calendars which were released in Australia in the mid 1990s and featured naked female athletes, predominantly those competing at Olympic level (Bourroughs & Nauright, 2000; Mikosza & Phillips, 1999). Successful hurdler and heptathlete Jane Flemming famously appeared on the cover of the first calendar wearing only gold body paint. Many of the poses contained within the Golden Girls calendars conformed to a "pin-up girl" style and others closely mirrored soft-core pornography. As Janine Mikosza and Murray Phillips note in their reading of a number of the images:

> The photographs in the *GG* [Golden Girls] calendar can be described as 'soft porn', with codes such as long styled hair, cosmetics and poses connoting the sexualised female…[the] calendar subscribes to the particular codes and conventions that produce a 'natural' femininity which views women as sexually active and available (Mikosza & Phillips, 1999, p. 8).

As is common with such "pin-up" imagery, the photography featured in the Golden Girls of Sport series would probably no longer be considered risqué, but there was considerable debate at the time in Australia about the photos featured in these calendars. While Flemming explained to the media that the purpose of the calendars was to raise money and awareness for women's sport, there was public scepticism

about her claims. For example, Rhonda Bushby wrote an article for *The Australian* newspaper in 1996 titled "Pin-up pics can cloud memory" in which she argued that the promotion of sexualised images of women in sport were an undesirable result of the unequal status between the media attention and sponsorship offered to men's and women's sports (Bushby, 1996, p. 29). Caroline Overington, writing for another prominent Australian paper, *The Age,* noted that: "In short, Flemming's argument appears to be that calendars such as these are the only way women can get publicity. In saying so, she is endorsing the unfair imbalance that exists between men and women in sport" (Overington, 1995, p. 36). Overington also argued that "[i]n the long term, posing near nude does not empower women" and predicted that the imagery in such publications would become more explicit over time (Overington, 1995, p. 36).

Overington's prediction was confirmed in 1999, with the release of a nude calendar featuring the Australian women's soccer team, known colloquially as the Matildas. In media interviews at the time, members of the team expressed a similar rationale to that offered by Flemming and the Golden Girls: that women's soccer needed greater publicity and financial security (Yallop, 2000). The calendar included full-frontal nudity and the adoption of pornographic conventions was particularly obvious in the media invitation to the launch event which featured a cropped photo from the calendar, showing Amy Taylor, a Matildas defender, topless, leaning towards the camera and acknowledging its presence, in a pose reminiscent of advertisements for the sex industry. Sports commentator Karen Tighe went on record as saying that the full picture of Taylor, which accompanied the month of June, looked as though it came from a copy of *Playboy* (Hannan, 1999). The calendar was deemed to have been at least a partial success in terms of publicity. The initial print run was reported to have been only 5,000 copies, and this was subsequently lifted to 45,000 on the strength of pre-publication interest alone ('Nude Footballers Kick Up a Fuss', 1999). The calendar's release was featured in news services in a number of countries worldwide and also resulted in a (AU) $100,000 sponsorship deal for the team (Yallop, 2000). However, the Matildas calendar, like the Golden Girls calendar before it, did receive some critical press, including "Matildas Waltzing into a Storm" (Hannan, 1999, p. 5) in the *Sun-Herald* and "Eight Cents Apiece: The Naked Truth" in *The Sunday Age* (Saltau, 1999), in reference to the amount of money each Matildas player received per calendar sold.

By 2004, only five years after the release of the Matildas calendar, the critical press coverage of "soft-porn" images of Australian female athletes had declined. Such images had moved from being problematised in the

mass media to being, not only accepted, but even celebrated. In the lead-up to the Athens Olympics in 2004, *Black+White* magazine, published "The Athens Dream" featuring nude photographs of Australian athletes, both men and women (Phillips, 2004). In contrast to the calendars, *Black+White* magazine is a more "coffee-table style publication, consisting of mainly 'art' photographs and designed for an upmarket audience" (Mikosza & Phillips, 1999, p. 11). Despite the different intended audiences, much of the imagery in *Black+White* is similar to that found in the Matildas and Golden Girls calendars. The women featured in "The Athens Dream", in particular, basketballer Lauren Jackson, were shown in soft-porn style poses similar to those from the Matildas and Golden Girls calendars. For example, the image of Jackson which was used as the cover for "The Athens Dream", showed her topless, wearing noticeable lipstick, and with long blonde hair extensions covering her nipples ('Notorious nude athletes', 2006).

The cover image of Jackson neatly conforms to the soft-porn codes set out by Mikosza & Phillips (1999): "long styled hair, cosmetics and poses connoting the sexualised female" (p. 8). Indeed, a description of the photo which appeared in the *Seattle Times* when the magazine was released, gestures towards the sexualised nature of the image: "Wisps of Jackson's bleached-blond hair dangle over her creamy skin" (Evans, 2004, n.pag.). The cover image resulted in significant press in the US, as Jackson was, at the time, a high profile player for the Seattle Storm in the US Women's National Basketball League. The *Seattle Times* article (Evans, 2004) and another article in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (Barns, 2004) both noted that while the images were likely to cause controversy in the US, in Australia they were considered acceptable. Greg Barns wrote in the *Post* that "Jackson's decision to appear on the front cover of "Athens Dream" has not met with any public criticism in Australia" (Barns, 2004, p. B7). Instead, the magazine was met with positive publicity, the high-circulation *Herald-Sun*, for example, ran a story titled "Stars bare all for gold and glory" (Phillips, 2004), while Melbourne based newspaper *The Age,* ran with "Olympians shed clothes for art" ('Olympians shed clothes', 2004).

The construction of the images of sportswomen featured in "The Athens Dream", and the calendars, clearly drew on pornographic conventions. As cultural commentators argued in the mid to late 1990s, the existence of these images should be seen as resulting from the inferior status of women in sport (Bushby, 1996; Overington, 1995). Overington (1995) went further and claimed that the images themselves were likely to hinder rather than advance attempts at gaining equality for women. Such arguments are compelling, but within a five-year period this criticism was

largely abandoned in the Australian press in favour of celebration. This represents a significant change in the acceptance of pornographic imagery in the public sphere in a very short period of time and attests to the speed at which the trend towards pornographication often moves. It also suggests that as pornographication has intensified, public critiques have waned, making the importance of developing a critical feminist analysis even greater.

Fragments (5): the pornographication of fashion

The final area of "fragmentation" to be considered in this chapter is the pornographication of fashion. Even outside academic literature dealing specifically with pornographication, fashion has been highlighted by social commentators and academics as an area which has adopted pornographic conventions, particularly those of sadomasochism. Susan Faludi (1991), for example, argued that the emergence of "the threat of discipline" in fashion trends of the late 1980s was part of the wider backlash against feminism. Within more recent work on pornographication both popular and academic, fashion continues to be a significant focus (e.g. Bishop, 2007; Duits & Van Zoonen, 2006; Jeffreys, 2005; Levy, 2005; Robinson & Harvey, 2007). Fashion is a particularly notable area of fragmentation as it has been at the forefront of pushing pornographic imagery and styles (Trebay, 2004) and it also provides some of the most obvious and extreme examples of pornographication.

The issue of the fashion industry's role in pornographication has already been covered to a degree in the fragmentation of pornography into art and music, which shows the extent to which these various forms of pornographication overlap. Madonna, for example, is seen as having popularised pornographic fashion and it is fashion photographers such as Terry Richardson who are having their pornographic works culturally validated as art. As with the other examples of mainstreaming pornography, there are also more material links between fashion and the pornography industry. It is not only pornographic conventions that are adopted in fashion and fashion advertising; in addition there are more direct crossovers such as the use of pornography performers in mainstream advertising for clothing and footwear, as well as product placement within pornographic films. In 1999, *Adult Video News* reported that the Vivid pornography production company had struck a deal with Ecko clothing to have pornographer performers "wear Ecko apparel prominently in forthcoming video releases" (Batson, 1999, n.pag.). In 2003, the footwear brand Pony employed porn models, including Jenna Jameson, for an

advertising campaign to promote its range of shoes (Elliot, 2003) and in 2005 designer Betsey Johnson had her new clothing range worn by *Playboy* models at its catwalk Launch (Levy, 2005).

Former Vice President and General Manager of Pony, Come Chantrel, explained the rationale behind his company's advertising campaign thus: "When I grew up in the 80s in Paris, models were the ultimate feminine ideal. For the 20-year-old kid, porn stars have replaced what models used to represent" (Chantrel quoted in Elliot, 2003). According to Chantrel, the use of porn stars in mainstream advertising campaigns works because the pornographication of youth culture has progressed so far that young people now view women who perform in pornography as "the ultimate feminine ideal".

The pornographication of fashion offers examples, not only of the extent of the normalisation or idealisation of pornography in the mainstream as seen with Pony shoes, but also of the extremes to which pornographication has now been taken. The fashion trends singled out by Faludi in *Backlash* (1991), such as sadomasochism and the infantilising of women, have not only reappeared but have been taken even further. Faludi notes that in the 1980s:

> There was a reason why their designs continued to regress into female infantilism, even in the face of a flood of market reports on aging female consumers: minimizing the female form might be one way for designers to maximize their authority over it. The woman who walks in tiny steps clutching a teddy bear…is a child who follows instructions (Faludi, 1991, p. 187).

The infantilising of women is no longer limited to the clutching of teddy bears on catwalks. The Pierrot Knitwear show for New York Fashion Week in 2004, for example, took its reference point directly from child pornography. The show involved a photographer following models around a stage which was designed to look like an amateur pornography set (Levy, 2005). The models were made-up to look like young girls, some were even dressed as school girls.

In 2005, Jeffreys warned that the increasing use of pornography in fashion photography and advertising could lead to more extreme forms of sexual exploitation of women: "it may not be long before the advertisements which already exist on billboards and in magazines in which women kneel in front of men as if about to service them sexually will feature actual fellation" (Jeffreys, 2005, p. 75). Indeed this is almost exactly what has transpired. In 2006, the French clothing label Shai produced hard-core pornography to sell its latest range (Babej & Pollak, 2006). French porn

performers were shown wearing Shai clothing before engaging in a range of sex acts. The pornography was published on the internet at www.sexpacking.com as an interactive fashion catalogue, the viewer could roll over the moving images to see descriptions and prices of various items of clothing (Babej & Pollak, 2006). Fashion brands are not only implicated in the promotion of prostitution and pornography but are evidently now directly involved in its production, buying women to sell clothes.

(Mis)Understanding Pornographication

Much of the available work to date which deals with the mainstreaming of pornography is focused on providing specific examples of pornographication. As this is a relatively new area of study, the literature often ends at offering definitions of pornographication and documenting relevant examples. Pornographication as a process remains under-theorised. To date, few authors have offered a cohesive understanding of pornographication and its possible meanings. There are, however, implicit assumptions about the meaning of pornographication that emerge in the body of literature currently available. Two of the more prominent, and it is argued, flawed, assumptions will be analysed here in some depth, namely that pornographication is synonymous with sexualisation and that pornographication is exclusively a process of consumption. It will be suggested that pornographication should be understood as a process of production, not just consumption and that, furthermore, pornographication is not simply "sexualisation" but rather the promotion of a particular model of sex which is harmful to women.

One of the more common ways of understanding the mainstreaming of pornography is to position it as an issue of sexualisation. In much of the available literature, the explosion of pornographic imagery and references to pornography in popular culture are presented as simply the explosion of sexualised imagery and references to sex and sexuality in popular culture. Pornography becomes synonymous with sex. For example, in Attwood's review of a variety of literature dealing specifically with the mainstreaming of pornography, she frames the issue as "the study of sexualization" (Attwood, 2006, p. 81). Paasonen, Nikunen and Saarenmaa (2007), in the introduction to *Pornification* state that the infiltration of pornography into popular culture "connects to the general sexualization of culture, or the mainstreaming of sexuality…" (p. 8) and moreover, that pornography plays an important role in breaking taboos because it "makes sex public" (p. 14).

McNair also argues for the positive influence of pornography in breaking taboos (McNair, 1996; 2002) and his work offers particularly useful examples of the common conflation of pornographication and sexualisation. In *Mediated Sex* McNair explains his initial rationale for having investigated pornographication thus:

> That contemporary capitalist societies have become 'obsessed' with sex – in the form of art and popular culture, as well as in pornography, in fashion and in advertising – was the main starting point for this book, and the common threat weaving through the different aspects of sexual culture which have been examined (McNair, 1996, p. 170).

The majority of his book, however, is dedicated to the ways in which *pornographic* imagery is infiltrating art, popular culture, fashion and advertising. Instead of this trend being positioned as part of an increasing obsession with pornography, it becomes an obsession with sex. This reverts to the idea, often employed in non-feminist works that pornography and prostitution are "just sex". This conflation obscures the fact that pornography is not just sex, but a particular model of sex, indeed, a particularly harmful model of sex, which focuses on the sexual arousal of men and the objectification of women.

The conflation of sex and pornography is also evident in *Striptease Culture* (2002), where McNair uses the terms "cultural sexualization" (p.7, 111, 205), "sexualization of contemporary capitalist culture" (p. 100) and "sexualization of mainstream culture" (p. 81). These often appear to be used interchangeably with McNair's concept of pornographication[1] and the associated terminology of "the pornographication of the mainstream" and "porno-chic". Moreover, McNair equates pornographication with an increasing public interest in sex and sexual representation:

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[1] McNair does provide a footnote on page 216 which separates out pornographication from sexualisation to a degree. He states: "*Notwithstanding the argument by writers such as D. Kirk Davidson that 'pornography is encroaching on mainstream television' through the treatment in sitcoms, dramas and daytime talk shows of previously taboo topics like rape, prostitution and child abuse…This encroachment constitutes part of the sexualization of popular culture, to be sure, but not 'pornographication' as I described it in the previous chapter*." This is the only clear statement McNair offers to suggest that there is any discernable difference between instances of pornographication and sexualisation. He offers no explanation as to why the normalisation of prostitution in public discourse cannot be considered under the banner pornographication and the commercialisation of sex more broadly.

> Porno-chic was (and continues to be) a further stage in the commodification of sex and the extension of sexual consumerism to a broader mass of the population than have previously had access to it…[P]orno-chic would not have happened in the absence of popular demand for access to and participation in sexual discourse (McNair, 2002, p. 87).

There are two key problems with the understanding of porn-chic presented in this excerpt. Firstly, there is the issue of commodification. McNair's contention that porn-chic is a stage in the commodification of sex is oft repeated in literature on pornographication. While commodification is sometimes represented as the problematic application of the marketplace to the "private" realm of sexuality (e.g. Hamilton, 2003; Kinnick, 2007), McNair argues that the greater commodification of sex has resulted positively in greater choice for consumers. He frequently refers to this process as the "democratization of desire". What is generally missing in these accounts is an understanding of the relationship between commodification and objectification. Commodification, far from being harmless, can be seen as a severe form of objectification, which creates dissociation and dehumanisation (Barry, 1995). When this relationship is taken into account, it remains difficult to maintain that commodification is simply the democratisation of desire. Secondly, and related to the misrepresentation of commodification, is the issue of exactly what model of sex is being demanded by consumers in this process of pornographication and who is doing the demanding. As Vicki Mayer (2005) argues in regard to academic commentary on the "sexualisation of television":

> Critical media scholars must begin to unravel the myth that the presence of sex on television reveals a popular demand for more sex in popular culture. The word 'popular' here is key, for it ignores the political economy that fosters and supports the production of television, as well as the word 'sex' which ignores the particular constructions of gender, race and age in the specific contexts of their production, distribution and exhibition (Mayer, 2005, p. 302).

McNair's representation of the mainstreaming of pornography as the "democratisation of desire" is also problematic from a feminist perspective as it suggests pornographication is an organic process, a type of bottom-up social movement where (gender-less) people have demanded greater access to pornography and pornographic imagery and this has been delivered as requested. As Attwood (2006) has pointed out, at the very least this "implies a rather too direct relation between radicalism, demand,

capitalism and media output" (p. 82). It also represents pornography as somehow the legitimate representation of a community's combined sexual desires, once again, as though pornography is not a specific model of sex but rather represents all there is know about sex. There is no analysis of power, of how certain people's desires are given preference over others. In other words, there is no discussion of how pornography is made, still by and large, for a *male* audience with a central objective being *men's* sexual arousal (Hardy, 1998; Jensen, 2004, 2007).

Lastly, McNair's theorising of pornographication as democratisation highlights another common assumption underlying much work on pornographication: that it is predominantly, if not exclusively, created through consumption. Just as the academic study of pornography has tended to focus on consumption, so too the study of pornographication has tended to ignore production in favour of a focus on the practices of consumers. For example, the documenting of pornographication frequently concentrates on the "fragmentation" process, that is the fragmenting of pornographic imagery and pornographic references into the mainstream (Sørensen, 2005). The theorising of this fragmentation process generally only extends to a reading of pornographic imagery and its possible meanings. When explanations of fragmentation are offered they tend to only consider the process from one direction, which is that mainstream advertisers, musicians and fashion designers benefit from the use of pornography as a way to appear "edgy". What is missing is an understanding that the pornography industry also benefits from this pornographication. While some works make mention of the size and financial weight of the pornography industry itself (e.g. McNair, 2002; Rich, 2003), there is almost no acknowledgement of the impact this may have on the cultural trend toward pornographication. It is almost as though the pornography industry is thought to have no role in promoting the mainstreaming of its own products. It is argued in the remainder of this chapter that in order to truly understand the implications of pornographication, the role of the pornography industry must be considered.

The production of pornographication

In contrast to the current academic literature dealing with pornographication which tends to focus on consumer demand for pornography, it is contended in this book that the pornography industry itself plays an important role in mainstreaming its own products. The following section of this chapter will consider the production of

pornographication and its effects through two examples: Playboy Enterprises and the pornography industry in Hungary.

Production (1): the case of Playboy Enterprises

In attempting to understand pornographication from the perspective of production, the activities of businesses within the porn industry provide useful evidence. The example of Playboy Enterprises demonstrates the way in which the pornography industry is intentionally cultivating pornographication for its own ends. For most of the 1990s, Playboy Enterprises, the corporate wing of the *Playboy* empire, operated at a loss. It was only after a significant restructure that the company again turned a profit in the early 2000s (Ligerakis, 2004). Part of the restructure involved the licensing arm of Playboy Enterprises, and the subsequent changes allowed the famous "bunnyhead logo" to be printed on an extensive range of goods; from clothes and jewellery, to mobile phones and stationery.

The sale of such items, in particular the *Playboy* clothing range, has proved to be very successful. In 2007, *The Wall Street Journal* reported that first quarter profit for Playboy Enterprises nearly doubled purely on the strength of growth in its licensing segment, which had increased by 77 percent (Spain, 2007). Indeed, in the same quarter, revenue from the entertainment division, that is the division responsible for the production of the pornography, actually fell (Spain, 2007). Playboy Enterprises CEO Christie Hefner (daughter of founder Hugh Hefner) noted that "[t]he quarter's results demonstrate our belief in the very significant upside of our licensing business…" (quoted in Spain, 2007, p. B2). In the third quarter of 2007, revenue from licensing rose again to reach more than (US) $10 million (Associated Press, 2007).

While Christie Hefner may extol the virtues of revenue gained directly from licensing and merchandising it is not only the financial benefits that drive the *Playboy* merchandising push. The company is also actively involved in promoting its own forms of pornographication with a view to increasing its legitimacy. Indeed, Hefner is on record as stating that revenue is not the primary purpose behind the distribution of *Playboy* merchandise (Barnicle, 2002). Rather, *Playboy* paraphernalia is considered important because it allows the company to create a certain image. In Hefner's words: "it's a way of extending the brand and it does allow people to participate a little bit in the *Playboy* lifestyle" (quoted in Barnicle, 2002, n.pag.). The target audience for the lifestyle branded products is young women and girls, mostly those who are too young to legally access the pornography that Playboy Enterprises produces

(Barnicle, 2002; Inside Retailing, 2004; Levy 2005, p. 39-42). This situation was recently highlighted in the marketing industry publication *Brand Strategy*:

> While most people around the world know Playboy in its original incarnation as a magazine, it has now extended into many areas in a bid to become a broader lifestyle brand. Many of its consumers might not come into contact with its core publishing product at all (Brand Strategy, 2008, n.p).

The strategy of marketing to teenage girls has been particularly successful in Australia, which is the best performing market for the *Playboy* "lifestyle range" (Ligerakis, 2004). In a 2004 survey conducted as part of BrandTrends, "an in-depth research study of entertainment and sports brands in Australia", almost half of the female teenagers (aged 15-19) surveyed, reported having purchased a Playboy branded product (Inside Retailing, 2004).

The success of this promotional strategy has not gone unnoticed in the legitimate, non-porn business world. For example, the Australian marketing industry magazine *B&T* noted in 2004 that:

> Industry observers say Playboy has employed a strategy of marketing the brand to the mainstream media as playful and tame, while reserving the more risqué aspects for its TV coverage. Brand experts say this distinction is important and will assist the brand in maintaining a 'clean' image (Ligerakis, 2004).

The objective appears to be the promotion of a glamorised "chic" version of pornography in mainstream popular culture, which *intentionally* conceals or misrepresents the pornography that is actually responsible a significant section of the company's profits. Playboy Enterprises is therefore intentionally cultivating this particular form of pornographication. Far from being a process of democratisation, pornographication, in this instance, is a conscious bid by a significant player in the pornography industry to increase its legitimacy and create an acceptable "porno chic" image separate from hard-core pornography.

The example of Playboy Enterprises cultivating, or even creating, forms of pornographication for its own ends, not only highlights that the process of pornographication is at least partially top-down, but also that pornography, and the companies that produce pornography, are intimately connected to the mainstreaming of pornography. While this may seem to be a self-evident proposition, this is not how it is treated within the

relevant literature. It seems limited at best to attempt to develop an understanding of the meanings and consequences of mainstreaming pornography without actually considering what it is that is being mainstreamed. What happens within the pornography industry, and also in pornography the product, should be seen as central to developing a critical feminist analysis of pornographication.

Production (2): The case of the Hungarian pornography industry

Considering the role of pornography production in pornographication also offers another perspective on possible effects. As discussed at length in this chapter, the literature on the mainstreaming of pornography tends to focus on the infiltration of pornographic imagery into the public sphere. An area that has received almost no attention to date, however, is the infiltration of the *production* of pornography into everyday life. In areas where pornography is frequently produced there are consequences for the local population and these bring to light the very real and material effects of pornographication.

The case of Hungary, as outlined by Katalin Szovery Milter and Joseph Slade (2005), offers some insight into how these effects take shape. Hungary is a useful example as it is a central location for much of the pornography production taking place in Europe: almost a quarter of pornographic films produced in Europe are made in or around its capital, Budapest (Milter & Slade, 2005, p. 173). Like the case of California in the US, pornography production has become an important part of the Hungarian economy. Indeed the Hungarian government encouraged the making of pornography after the fall of the Soviet Union in an effort to prop up the flagging economy and increase state revenue (Milter & Slade, 2005). Today "[b]y virtually all accounts the porn industry is one of the most buoyant sectors of the Hungarian economy" (p. 180) and some government officials still view pornography as at least a partial solution to the country's unemployment problems (p. 182). According to Milter and Slade, the pornography industry has taken hold in Hungary at least partially as a consequence of US based pornographers seeking out cheap labour and tolerant authorities. In short, it is cheaper to buy women in Hungary than in the US. The authors also note that US pornographers have reportedly bribed officials to let them film in prohibited locations such as tourist attractions, high schools, libraries and even on public transport. This has resulted in pornographication of a kind not considered in the current literature. As Milter and Slade explain:

> [M]any Hungarians are appalled that their cultural heritage is for sale and that porn seems woven into the fabric of life. Visiting a mineral bath or coffee shop, two of Budapest's signature pleasures, now carries the risk of a citizen's stumbling onto a naked couple being video-taped (Milter & Slade, 2005, p. 182).

The example of Hungary brings the reality of pornographication into sharp focus. Increasing pornography consumption has been met by increasing pornography production and this has to occur in real places, through the use of real women. It also shows how this commodification and exploitation of women becomes "woven into the fabric" of everyday life.

Towards a Feminist Analysis of Pornographication

A feminist analysis of pornographication must take into account these aspects of production. As argued in the previous chapter, considering the production of pornography can be one way of ensuring that what happens to women in the making of pornography remains a focus of analysis. In regard to theorising pornographication, the content of pornography and the material conditions of pornography production must be included in any attempt to understand the meanings of pornographication. Having documented, in the previous chapter, the extensive use of degradation and violence against women as selling points in mass-produced pornography, it becomes imperative to understand the mainstreaming of pornography as the mainstreaming of a harmful model of sexuality. One way of achieving this may be to understand pornographication as a form of the prostitution of sexuality. Indeed, Kathleen Barry's (1995) description of her concept of the prostitution of sexuality covers much of what is discussed in the current literature on pornographication. She explains that the prostitution of sexuality is the normalisation of prostitution that takes place with "higher levels of economic development in post-industrial societies" (p. 53) and that this is linked to the increasing sexual objectification of women in the public sphere. This analysis shares much in common with McNair's (2002) description of pornographication as a phenomenon of late capitalism that relates to the sexualisation of culture. However, as discussed earlier, unlike McNair, Barry does take into account the way in which sexualisation occurs, she argues that it is the sexualisation of women for the consumption of men that fuels the prostitution of sexuality. Her analysis offers a useful corrective for understanding pornographication. The following excerpt neatly sums up Barry's explanation of this process:

> In post-industrial, developed societies, when women achieve the potential for economic independence, men are threatened with loss of control over women as their legal and economic property in marriage. To regain control, patriarchal domination reconfigures around sex by producing a social and public condition of sexual subordination that follows women into the public world. Sexual exploitation is individualized to fit the domination of economically independent women…Pursuing work in industrialised sectors, women are removed from men's control of them in the family. The social control of women is reinforced in the public world by invoking women's consent to the prostitution of sexuality (Barry, 1995, p. 53).

This moves the analysis of the mainstreaming of pornographic, sexualised imagery, from the depoliticised "democratization of desire", to a more concrete understanding of the power relations behind pornographication and the prostitution of sexuality. Given that prostitution and the model of sex performed in prostitution have been well exposed by feminists as both harmful and detrimental to women's interests, it can be reasoned that the popularisation of pornography, that is the graphic representation of prostitution sex (Barry, 1995, p. 55), is similarly not in women's interests.

It is also important to understand that the mainstreaming of pornography and the promotion of prostitution have material consequences, not only for the women who are used in producing the pornography, but also women as a class. Porn stars are now being promoted in popular culture as the ultimate feminine ideal and this trend should be serious cause for concern as it can be seen as the mass glamorisation of women's sexual exploitation. Furthermore, the importance placed on pornography as an ideal in the mainstream has begun to infiltrate everyday sexual practices. Pornographication has not only affected the more obvious public forms of sexual representation but also the more hidden realm of everyday heterosexual sex practices. Naomi Wolf notes this change in the introduction to the new edition of *The Beauty Myth*, released in 2002:

> The influence of pornography on women's sexual sense of self – which was just beginning to take hold at the time this book was first written – has now become so common that it is almost impossible to distinguish the role that pornography plays in creating their idea of how to be, look and move in sex from their own innate [sic] sense of sexual identity. Is this progress? I don't think so (Wolf, 2002, p. 5).

Barry also foresaw this trend in 1995, when she wrote of the influence pornography was having on constructing "the normative model for sexual

behavior". She further explains that: "sex that is bought in the act of prostitution and promoted in pornography does not look significantly different from that which is taken in rape, pressured in teenage dating, and apparently given in many private relationships" (p. 59). The pornographication of culture can be seen as an important part of this prostitution of sexuality. It glamorises and normalises the harmful sexual objectification and degradation of women that is central to the sex industry. It takes a model of sexuality in which human beings are bought and sold and normalises it as an acceptable and even ideal model of sexual interaction. In doing so, the process of pornographication sells sex short. It makes it increasingly difficult for women, especially young women, to imagine and demand a sexuality based on equality and pleasure.

CHAPTER FOUR

SEXOLOGY AND WOMEN'S DESIRE: FROM FRIGIDITY TO FSD

While the model of "prostitution sex" is increasingly becoming idealised in popular culture, this model is also becoming increasingly legitimised through medicine. In fact, Kathleen Barry has highlighted pornography and sexology as the two main institutions through which prostitution becomes normalised: "In the industrialised world…the sexuality of normalized prostitution, has been deployed through the science of sex, sexology, and its counterpart, pornography…" (Barry, 1995, p. 55). The role that the "science of sex" specifically plays in the prostitution of sexuality will be the subject of the next two chapters on the construction of sexuality in sexology and sex therapy. This chapter provides background on the history of sexology and the current construction of women's sexuality and the next chapter analyses, in greater depth, the model of sexuality that sex therapy currently recommends for women. It is argued that sexology, in promoting a biologically determinist model of sexuality, legitimises men's demands for sexual access to women. Moreover, it is argued that the suggestions offered by sex therapists, which "teach" women to meet these demands, share much in common with the model of sex required in systems of prostitution.

Exploring the sexological model of sex and the social construction of sexuality is particularly apt at this time, as sexology is currently enjoying a period of immense medical and popular interest. The release of the drug Viagra for the treatment of Erectile Dysfunction (ED), and the subsequent search for treatments to "cure" Female Sexual Dysfunction (FSD) has resulted in levels of media coverage not seen since the boom period of the 1970s. These new developments in sexology are consistently represented by those within the discipline as "cutting edge". This chapter, however, aims to put these recent trends in historical and cultural context and to highlight the way in which continuing themes in sexology, particularly the coital imperative and a focus on men's pleasure, can be traced from the

1890s and early 1900s right through to the current day. It will be argued that supposedly "revolutionary" new diagnoses and treatments share much in common with those practised over the last hundred years. Finally, drawing on previous feminist criticism, it is argued that sexology continues to construct a model of sexuality which promotes women's constant sexual availability to men. Furthermore, it promotes this above any genuine interest in women achieving sexual pleasure, thereby advocating and reinforcing women's sexual inequality.

A Brief History of Sexology

The history of sexology as a scientific discipline is just over a century long. In this time, the scientific study of human sexuality has had a profound impact on the way in which sexuality is conceived both within science and more broadly in popular culture (Potts, 2002; Irvine, 1990). The birth of sexology is often identified as an important event in moving the dominant discourse of sexuality away from religion and firmly into science and medicine. In an effort to consolidate the sexological model of sex, sexologists have laid claim to all legitimate knowledge in matters relating to sex, with the ultimate aim that "[s]exology would serve, virtually unchallenged, as the arbiter of culturally normative sexual behaviour and gender relations" (Irvine 1990, p. 9). Historians, sociologists and feminist scholars often highlight the important role that sexology has played, and continues to play, in the social construction of sexuality in the West but there is some debate over whether the influence of sexology on cultural norms of sexuality has been a positive or negative development for women. While male historians and sociologists have often viewed sexology as a positive and liberating force (e.g. Brecher, 1970; Bullough, 1994; Robinson, 1976; Weeks, 1985), feminist scholars have sought to show that sexology has tended to simply validate a model of heterosexuality which gives preference to men's sexual demands (e,g, Jackson, 1984, 1994; Jeffreys, 1985, 1990; Potts, 2002).

More recently, it has been those from within the field of sexology who have come to represent the discipline as supporting the sexual rights of women, particularly in regard to pleasure. It is argued, in this and the following chapter, however, that much of the women's rights rhetoric in sexology "conceals the subtler operations of power" (Tiefer, 2001, p. 91). By placing the current trends of sexology in historical context and applying a critical feminist analysis, it can be seen that women are not so much empowered through sexological practice, as is so often claimed, but rather are moulded to conform to the demands of their (male) partners.

This preferencing of men's sexual demands is particularly apparent in the area of FSD and the "conceptually murky" (Irvine, 1990, p. 215) area of desire disorders. Building on previous critiques of twentieth century sexology, it will be argued that sexology, through the concept of FSD and, most notably, hypoactive sexual desire disorder, is constructing normal sexuality for women as constant sexual availability to men. This model, not only enforces men's unfettered sexual access to women as the standard for heterosexual relationships, but also undermines the possibility of women's sexual autonomy and shares much in common with harmful pornographic rape myths.

The birth of sexology: Havelock Ellis and frigidity

The foundation of sexology, the scientific study of human sexuality, is most commonly traced back to the late nineteenth century and it is the works of writers such as, Iwan Bloch, Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Henry Havelock Ellis and Sigmund Freud, that are generally cited as having formed a theoretical grounding for the new science (Béjin 1985a; Bland & Doan, 1998; Irvine, 1990). While it is Bloch who is credited with having defined the discipline in the early twentieth century,[1] British sexologist Havelock Ellis is often singled out as most influential. Historian Paul Robinson (1976) has even likened his impact on sexology to that of Einstein's on modern physics. Prominent figures in early sexology such as Havelock Ellis are frequently depicted as trailblazers, emancipating men and women from the restraints of Victorian prudery. It is often also argued that the introduction of the sexological model was particularly beneficial to women, as they were no longer restrained by religious ideology, which defined them as asexual, and were instead expected to enjoy sex (or at least coitus) in much the same way as men (e.g. D'Emilio & Freedman 1988; Robinson, 1976).

With the establishment of sexology as a respectable science, resistance to the sexological norms of sexuality consequently became couched in terms of health and illness. Resistors came to be seen as "diseased". In early sexological literature, women who did not fit the new sexualised norms, were labelled "frigid", or sometimes deemed to be suffering from "sexual anaesthesia" (Jackson, 1994; Jeffreys, 1985). The work of Havelock Ellis was especially significant in the development of these sexological ideas about women's appropriate role in heterosexuality (Jackson, 1994). Indeed, many of his assumptions about human sexuality,

[1] Bloch first coined the term: *Sexualwissenschaft*, literally, the theoretical study of sex. The English term 'sexology' comes directly from this. (Haeberle, 1983).

including the understanding that heterosexuality and coitus are underpinned by biological imperatives, can still be found in more modern sexological literature (D'Emilio & Freedman 1988; Jackson, 1987; Nicolson, 1993).

Havelock Ellis has been described as the first "sexual modernist" (Robinson, 1976, p. 28) and as a "pioneer of sexual frankness" (Weeks quoted in Potts, 2002, p. 23). His work, in regard to the importance of sexual pleasure, has been described by Robinson (1976, p. 21) as amounting to "a plea for the sexual rights of women". Havelock Ellis' most famous works, the *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, which were published between 1897 and 1928, are among the first to be recognised as defining sexology as a distinct discipline. These studies were presented by Ellis as objective scientific accounts of the "natural" practice of sex. Such claims to scientific objectivity were also common amongst his peers, as, in an effort to obtain legitimacy and protect the emerging field from criticism and censorship, early sexologists typically sought to establish sexology as a "serious science" of objective "facts" (Irvine, 1990). Through his "scientific" studies, Havelock Ellis came to conceive of a biological imperative underpinning all "sexual urges", and he dictated that coitus was the preferred means to release such impulses, which he believed to be largely uncontrollable.

As a result of his conviction that coitus was a "natural" act, those lacking the biological urge to participate in it were deemed by Ellis to be "abnormal" and most likely adversely affected by the "distortions of modern society" (Weeks, 1989). In other words, Havelock Ellis believed that healthy men and women were biologically determined to engage in coitus, but that societal prescriptions about sex could interfere with this natural functioning. Ideally, social rules and regulations governing sex would be abandoned so that coitus could be freely enjoyed by heterosexual couples. Ellis then used this theory of social distortion to explain women's common disinterest in coitus (he had found in his own research that significant numbers of women displayed an aversion to coitus). He did not feel that women's disinterest was natural or inevitable, but rather a conditioned response which could and should be overcome. Under this new sexological model, women who disliked coitus became labelled as abnormal. Ellis referred to such abnormal women as suffering from the illnesses of "sexual anaesthesia" or "frigidity":

> [A] state of sexual anaesthesia, relative or absolute, cannot be considered as anything but abnormal…the satisfaction of the reproductive function should be at least as gratifying as the evacuation of the bowels or bladder (Ellis quoted in Jackson, 1994, p. 116).

This was inevitably the case, according to Ellis, because coitus was as natural a "need" as any other healthy bodily function.

By the 1920s, the concept of the frigid woman had become highly influential within the discipline of sexology and frigidity was the dominant way that women's disinterest in coitus was understood (Jeffreys, 1990). The 1920s also saw sexological concepts begin to gain popular currency. As the concept of the frigid woman became a staple of sexological literature, it also entered popular consciousness (Jackson, 1994). The consolidation of the sexological model was accompanied by claims that the illness of frigidity was rampant amongst the female population: "From the 1920s through to the 1940s, medical reports estimated that frigidity afflicted anywhere from 25 percent to 75 percent of American women" (Hoberman, 2005, p. 89). Through the deployment of this concept of frigidity, sexology, in its foundational years, began to define the majority of women as fundamentally sexually abnormal.

The apparent epidemic of frigidity can also be seen as part of the broader changes in sexual norms, which occurred during the 1920s, including the "sexualization of women" (D'Emilio & Freedman, 1998). While the dominant perception of women's sexuality in the West during the 19th Century centred around abstinence and disinterest, the so-called first sexual revolution of the 20th century, brought with it the expectation that women should want to engage in coitus and ideally find the practice enjoyable. Sexologists began imparting advice that placed coitus at the centre of marital happiness and fulfilment (Jackson, 1994; Jeffreys, 1985). When it became apparent to sexologists that many women were not conforming to these new expectations, frigidity and sexual anaesthesia became prominent ways of understanding their resistance. These understandings were backed by the authority of medicine, and were claimed by sexologists to be based in objective, scientific fact.

Feminist theorists have since suggested, however, that the concept of the frigid woman served as a powerful tool of social control which effectively pressured women into "adjusting themselves to men's sexual behaviour…" (Jeffreys, 1985, p. 164). Thus, the apparent sexological focus on women's pleasure in coitus was not as straightforward as a number of commentators have implied. Indeed, Margaret Jackson (1994) argues that far from promoting women's sexual rights, the sexological model of sexuality pioneered by Ellis and his contemporaries tended to function as a way to coerce women into heterosexuality and marriage. Furthermore, the notion of the frigid woman served to restrict women's ability to choose whether or not to engage in coitus. Rather than being seen as a decision not to participate, refusal of coitus became an illness.

This was a very important shift that is said to have "reshaped relationships between men and women during the twentieth century" (Hoberman, 2005, p. 85). It is this sexological model of normal sexuality, focused exclusively on heterosexuality and coitus, which formed the foundation of the discipline that would later be built upon by Masters and Johnson in the 1960s and 1970s.

Sexological revolution: Masters and Johnson

Sexology entered a significant boom period during the 1960s and 1970s, the second "sexual revolution" of the 20th century (Irvine, 1990; Jeffreys, 1990). In the decades following the publication of Alfred Kinsey's controversial studies *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (1953), sexology continued to gain legitimacy, and increasingly, public interest. It was in this changing climate, that William Masters, a gynaecologist, and Virginia Johnson, a one-time psychology student,[2] are said to have "revolutionised" the discipline of sexology. Masters and Johnson are credited with having had a significant impact on both the research and clinical practices of sexology. Their work *Human Sexual Response*, first published in 1966, is frequently cited as "groundbreaking", especially in terms of the "public dissemination of knowledge about the human body and the physiological facts of sexual functioning" (Irvine, 1990, p. 68). *Human Sexual Inadequacy* (1970), which outlined what would later become the sub-discipline of sex therapy, is also considered by those within the field to have been groundbreaking. For example, in their introduction to the 1989 edition of *Principles and Practice of Sex Therapy*, prominent sexologists Sandra Leiblum and Raymond Rosen describe *Human Sexual Inadequacy* as "the landmark book that radically changed the manner in which sexual problems were conceptualized and treated" (Leiblum & Rosen, 1989a, p. 1). Masters and

[2] Virginia Johnson's background is alternately reported as, a nurse (Heiman quoted in Loe 2004, p. 34), a behavioural scientist (Potts 2002), and a former journalist and music student (Simmons 2002). More commonly she is referred to as having been a psychology student / research assistant (Irvine 1990; Laumann et al. 1994). Although Masters and Johnson are frequently represented as relatively equal partners in research, it is worth noting how their 'partnership' came about. William Masters had already completed some initial research (mainly with prostituted women) before searching for a female *assistant.* Rather than basing his choice on academic qualifications, Masters specified age (late twenties or early thirties), marital status (either married or divorced, not single) and also that she must be a mother (see: Irvine 1990, p. 79).

Johnson are said to have not only drastically changed the practice of sexology, but also profoundly affected the way in which "sexuality in modern times is conceptualised" (Jackson, 1994, p. 106). Therefore, it is crucial to consider the work of Masters and Johnson, as their ideas can be said to have had considerable influence on the social construction of sexuality in the West.

Together, *Human Sexual Response* (Masters & Johnson, 1966) and *Human Sexual Inadequacy* (Masters & Johnson, 1970) came to form the basis for the sub-discipline of modern sex therapy, which has since become sexology's "most visible, lucrative and widespread enterprise" (Irvine, 1990, p. 187). These works marked a significant shift away from treating sexual dysfunction or "sexual distress" as a set of primarily psychological problems. Instead the treatment model of Masters and Johnson was based on physiology. As well as being based on Masters and Johnson's belief in the importance of physiology to sexual functioning, this move can be seen as an attempt to hide behind what feminist sociologist Janice Irvine has termed "the white coat of authority" (Irvine, 1990, p. 191). In other words, Masters and Johnson, like Havelock Ellis before them, sought to represent their work as scientific and fundamentally objective. This, in part, served as a way to protect their work from censorship and critique.

Like Havelock Ellis, Masters and Johnson have also been singled out for praise by historians. Robinson, for example, has written of the "female bias" contained in their work, even claiming: "women have no better friends among the major sexual theorists of the century" (Robinson, 1976, p. 158). It is worth noting, however, that Masters and Johnson continually rejected the label "feminist" being applied to their work. For instance, on one occasion, when asked if she was a feminist, Virginia Johnson replied "[n]ot remotely" (Irvine, 1990, p. 89). In contrast to Robinson's representation of Masters and Johnson as concerned with women's sexual rights, Irvine (1990) has argued that the work of Masters and Johnson tended to preference men's sexual interests. She notes that while Masters and Johnson gave little or no attention to such issues as sexual violence or the oppression of women, "they constantly rail against the disproportionate sexual burden shouldered by men" (p. 197). Moreover, Jeffreys (1990) has highlighted the way in which Masters and Johnson sought to reaffirm coitus as the primary sex act, despite their knowledge that it continued to be an act that many women professed to find objectionable. Margaret Jackson (1984) has argued in a similar vein, stating that the purpose of much of Masters and Johnson's sex therapy was not to provide "cures" for

dysfunction, "but to maintain coitus at all costs" (p. 81-82). This particular problem within sex therapy is taken up in greater depth in the next chapter.

One of the most enduring legacies of Masters and Johnson is the Human Sexual Response Cycle (HSRC): the key concept found in *Human Sexual Response* (1966). The HSRC contains four phases: excitement, plateau, orgasmic, and resolution, and is supposedly based on hundreds of hours of laboratory observations of heterosexual couples engaging in intercourse (Tiefer, 2004). Masters and Johnson sought to have the HSRC recognised by both their peers and the general public as "real science". They consciously drew on the authority of medical science and frequently emphasised their objectivity. The research on which the HSRC is based, however, can be seen as far from objective. Although Masters and Johnson universalised their results, the sample was skewed to fit pre-determined notions of healthy, normal, sex; that is heterosexual intercourse, culminating in orgasm for both partners. Couples selected for the initial clinical observations had to have a "positive history of masturbatory and coital orgasmic experience" (Masters & Johnson, 1966, p. 311). This criterion actually ruled out a sizeable majority of women from their sample. According to research conducted by Kinsey just prior to the publication of *Human Sexual Response*, 42 percent of women reported never having masturbated to orgasm (Tiefer, 2004, p. 42). Furthermore, in research conducted by Shere Hite in the early 1970s, 70 percent of women reported that they did not reach orgasm regularly from intercourse (Hite, 1976, p. 135). Therefore, the "normal" model of heterosexuality which Masters and Johnson promoted, did not reflect the experience of most women. Instead, it can be seen to have continued the earlier sexological tendency to categorise the majority of women as sexually unhealthy or abnormal.

While the work of Masters and Johnson reinforced earlier sexological tenets about the nature of heterosexuality and the desirability of coitus, in some ways it also marked a significant shift in the discipline. Their work created profound changes in regard to models of treatment. Masters and Johnson rejected the traditional psychological approaches to sex therapy and instead promoted a treatment model based on physiology (Irvine, 1990; Leiblum & Rosen, 1989a). The psychological aspects of sex were deemed to be secondary at best, to the physiological. Therefore, according to this model, sexual problems needed to be addressed through behavioural and technique training. Sexual enjoyment was thought to be based almost completely on correct positioning and genital stimulation. This focus on the physiological can be seen as the beginning of what has become known as the medicalisation of sex therapy (Irvine, 1990; Loe, 2004; Potts, 2002).

The influence of Masters and Johnson within the sexological establishment also created change in regard to the concept of frigidity and the proposed treatments for this "disorder". Before the release of *Human Sexual Inadequacy*, the term "frigidity" was still widely used in sexological discourse (Masters & Johnson, 1986, p. 502), but this soon changed in the "post-Masters and Johnson era" (Leiblum & Rosen, 1989a). Today the term rarely appears in sexological literature. Therapist and clinician Sandra Leiblum gives the following explanation for why frigidity has been abandoned as a "disease category":

> [T]he old practice of identifying the sexually unresponsive woman as 'frigid' was not only pejorative and insulting but unhelpful in identifying the particular aspect of her behavior that was problematical. Was she lacking in sexual interest or desire generally, or did she simply not like her present partner? Did she fail to become aroused, or, conversely, did she readily lubricate but fail to achieve orgasm? Did she complain of pain during sexual activity? Lumping all of these problems under the rubric of frigidity did little to serve either the woman or the professional attempting to help her (Leiblum, 2001, p. 160).

Unlike feminist critiques, which have sought to undermine the entire concept of frigidity and expose it as a tool of social control rather than scientific fact (e.g. Jeffreys, 1985), Leiblum's explanation suggests that the only flaw in the original concept of frigidity is its lack of nuance. The concept of the problematic, sexually disinterested woman has not disappeared, but rather has been split into a multitude of supposedly more precise diagnostic categories. Again, it is Masters and Johnson who are credited with having begun the move to understand frigidity as a set of different disorders, such as "anorgasmia" and "female sexual arousal disorder" each in need of separate treatment (Leiblum & Rosen, 2000, 1989b).

Part of Masters and Johnson's new diagnostic system to replace the concept of frigidity was the dysfunction of "anorgasmia", or the inability to orgasm (Masters & Johnson, 1986). While their diagnostic system is still represented within the discipline as fundamentally progressive, it can also be seen as an example of how embedded old sexological assumptions remain in modern sexology. The various categorisations of anorgasmia, for example, tend to contradict the assertion that Masters and Johnsons' work was a marked leap forward, and instead show a continuing fixation with the importance of coitus. According to the 1986 publication *Human Sexuality*, there are differing types of anorgasmia that can be suffered by women, including "situational anorgasmia", which applies to women who have experienced orgasm on one or more occasions, but only under certain

circumstances. The example supplied is of a woman who is orgasmic when masturbating, but not when being "stimulated" by her partner (p. 502). The situation is considered more serious, however, when the "stimulation" by a partner is penetration of the vagina with a penis, as this warrants an entire category of its own: "coital anorgasmia" (p. 503). Despite Masters and Johnson's own acknowledgement that a number of researchers have found that the majority of women do not experience orgasm resulting from coitus, they still proclaim that a lack of orgasmic response is "not within normal parameters" (p. 503). In effect, Masters and Johnson can be seen as having continued the sexological tendency to pathologise women who do not enjoy penetrative heterosexual sex. This belief in the "problem" of coital anorgasmia can still be found in contemporary sexology literature today. For example, in an article from the *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy,* which appeared in 2000, psychologist Aaron Pierce claims that coital anorgasmia remains one of the "classic problems" in sex therapy (Pierce, 2000, p. 257).

Desire: the failure of Masters and Johnson

Although Masters and Johnson became "unrivalled authorities" in the field of sex therapy, they did face sporadic criticism within the discipline of sexology over several aspects of their work. One of the few criticisms of Masters and Johnson that consistently appears in contemporary sexological literature on sexual dysfunctions, is the issue of sexual desire: in clinical terms, fantasies about sexual activity and the desire to engage in sexual activity (American Psychiatric Association, 1987, 2000). Indeed, Irvine (1990) suggests that their lack of attention to the issue of sexual desire created a "clinical crisis" in sexology during the 1980s (p. 65). In *Human Sexual Response* (Masters & Johnson, 1966), the four stages of the HSRC are given as: excitement, plateau, orgasmic, and resolution. The cycle *begins* with excitement, which is most closely associated with disorders of arousal (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Today, due largely to the work of Helen Singer Kaplan, sexologists diagnose sexual problems that *precede* arousal, that is, problems of sexual desire, or more accurately, the *lack* of sexual desire. It is these disorders of desire that have come to dominate the practice of sex therapy over the last 20 years.

During the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, sex therapists reported a marked change in the types of sexual problems that they were expected to treat. Increasingly, clinicians were being presented with problems of desire, or rather, low desire, which they soon found were difficult to fit into the existing model of diagnosis, and even more difficult to treat.

Kaplan's work aimed to solve these growing problems, providing a new model of sexual response for diagnosis, and new treatment options. In 1979, Kaplan's *Disorders of Sexual Desire and Other New Concepts and Techniques in Sex Therapy* was released, and in the years following, it had a considerable impact on most diagnostic categories for sexual dysfunction (Irvine, 1990; Janata & Kinsburg, 2005). Kaplan's main contributions were the "triphasic model" of sexual response and the concept of sexual desire as a medically definable entity.

The triphasic model of sexuality that Kaplan proposed was designed to replace the HSRC proposed by Masters and Johnson. Kaplan sought to replace the categories of excitement, plateau, orgasmic, and resolution with desire, arousal, and orgasm. This new model, she claimed: "makes sense out of and organizes the data about the sexual response and its disorders, and also promises to improve the clinical management of the sexual dysfunctions" (1979, p. xviii). Kaplan's model marks another instance of the increasing medicalisation of sexuality within sexology. While the model of Masters and Johnson was clearly skewed by numerous personal and cultural biases, their stated aim was to accurately document sexual arousal to orgasm. In contrast, Kaplan intended to make the data fit a model whereby each phase matched a diagnostic category of a particular disorder or illness. Kaplan's redefinition of central sexological concepts was highly influential. By 1980, Inhibited Sexual Desire (ISD) was an official diagnosis in the third *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*[3] (American Psychiatric Association, 1980). Her commitment to a fundamentally biological basis for desire has also been enshrined in contemporary sexology (Janata & Kinsburg, 2005).

Kaplan tended to make sweeping claims about the nature of sexual desire. In the first chapter of *Disorders of Sexual Desire* she notes: "[t]he neurophysiologic and neuroanatomic bases of sexual desire have not yet been delineated with the same degree of accuracy as other drives such as hunger, thirst, and the need to sleep" (Kaplan, 1979, p. 9). Without referencing any relevant evidence, Kaplan places her new concept of sexual desire in context with activities, such as eating, drinking and sleeping, which are required for survival. In this regard, Kaplan is not offering anything new; such assertions about sex as a biological urge are common throughout both modern and antiquated sexological works.

[3] All editions of the DSM since 1980 have maintained some mix of Kaplan's model with that of Masters and Johnson. In name, all four phases of the HSRC are maintained, in effect, however, Kaplan's concept of desire replaces the original notion of excitement put forward by Masters and Johnson. See American Psychological Association (1980, 1987, 2000).

Indeed, feminists have argued that one of the problems this presents for women is that notions of uncontrollable sexual desire have historically helped justify men's sexual violence, in particular rape on the grounds of biological urge or necessity (Gavey, 2005; Jackson, 1994). The notion of men's immutable sexual "needs" has also fuelled arguments that promote prostitution as inevitable and even necessary (Miriam, 2005). However, Kaplan's understanding of sexual desire was new in some ways, especially in regard to its simplicity. Kaplan argued that the control of the sex drive in men and women could be reduced to an issue of levels of testosterone; "the 'libido hormone' for both genders" (1979, p. 14).

While Kaplan believed that "healthy" levels of sexual desire had a hormonal basis, she did not understand a lack of sexual desire in the same, biologically determinist, way. In much the same way that Havelock Ellis argued that social repression could obscure the natural human urge for coitus, Kaplan believed that psychological repression could cloud or repress the "natural" experience of desire for sexual contact (Janata & Kinsburg, 2005). In other words, Kaplan believed that sexual desire existed as a physiological response largely controlled by hormones but that this response could be repressed by strong psychological disturbances. Kaplan termed this psychological repression "Inhibited Sexual Desire" (ISD) and recommended that it be treated with intense psychoanalysis (Kaplan, 1979). While Kaplan's theories on sexual desire became widely accepted, her suggested psychoanalytic therapies to resolve the problem of ISD were found to be largely unsuccessful (Janata & Kinsburg, 2005; Leiblum & Rosen, 1989b). Consequently, during the 1980s and most of the 1990s, sex therapists struggled to find a "cure" for low sexual desire. Due in part to the problem of treating the desire disorders, some practitioners began noting that the field had become "stagnant" (Schover & Leiblum, 1994). On the one hand, theories of sexual response were changing, and diagnostic categories were becoming more precise, but on the other, available treatments were still largely limited to those proposed by Masters and Johnson decades earlier.

The cognitive-behavioural style of Masters and Johnson was reportedly particularly ineffective in regard to treating desire disorders, leading some clinicians to joke that all the "easy cases" had disappeared (Kleinplatz, 2003). The continuing rise in diagnostic categories, but lack of treatment options to match, even caused some clinicians to question the future of sex therapy altogether (Kleinplatz, 2003; Leiblum & Rosen, 1989a; Tiefer, 2004). As the effectiveness of much of Masters and Johnson's treatment regime was placed in doubt, pharmacological interventions were increasingly sought, in particular, as a solution to erectile dysfunction

(ED) or the inability to maintain an erection adequate for sexual activity (American Psychiatric Association, 2000, p. 545). Although a variety of pharmacological treatments were trialled for both desire disorders and ED over the years, up until the late 1990s, none had been especially successful. None, that is, until Viagra.

Contemporary Sexology

> Looking back, we can pinpoint a watershed event that marked the advent of the new era of sexual pharmacology. On March 29, 1998, sildenafil citrate (Viagra) was approved as the first orally active agent for the treatment of erectile dysfunction. (Leiblum & Rosen, 2000, p. 3)

The "cultural event" of Viagra

The release of Viagra is seen by both clinicians and cultural commentators to have fundamentally changed the direction of sexology research and the treatment of sexual disorders in sex therapy. The now widespread use of Viagra can, in many ways, be seen as a triumph of the increasing emphasis on the physiological, which began with Masters and Johnson in the 1960s. The search for pharmacological treatments has emerged largely from the belief that physiological etiologies underlie most, if not all, of the sexual dysfunctions (Bancroft, 2002; Kaschak & Tiefer (eds)., 2001; Leiblum & Rosen, 2000). The ability of Viagra to provide men with "erections sufficient for penetration", has thus spurred further research into possible physiological causes of other dysfunctions, often with the attitude that it is only now that the "real" causes of dysfunction are being identified. The success of Viagra has also generated immense interest in trials of pharmacological treatments for a variety of forms of FSD.

The effects of Viagra's success have not been limited to the medical arena. The now relatively common use of Viagra has also had a considerable impact on popular conceptions of sexuality, in particular, sexuality and aging. This has involved the expectation that heterosexual couples in their 60s and even 70s will continue to engage in coitus and that slightly younger couples will engage in coitus more often (Loe, 2004; Potts et al., 2003; Potts et al., 2004). Some sexologists claim that the popular impact of Viagra has been so great that it could be considered a "cultural event" (Goldstein & Heiman quoted in Loe, 2004, p. 132).

The sexological literature on Viagra frequently touts notions of change and progress, as though this breakthrough represents a new era divorced from pre-Viagra sexology. In many ways, however, the advent of Viagra

has served to reinforce pre-existing sexological and popular ideas about sex and sexuality, in particular, the primacy and importance of coitus. As Nicola Gavey (2005) suggests: "[n]othing perhaps provides such a compelling demonstration of the current vitality of the coital imperative than the marketing and uptake of Viagra…" (p. 124). In keeping with traditional sexological theory, rather than being understood as merely a *form of sex*, coitus continues to be understood *as sex*. The same conceptualisation is also prevalent in popular culture, indeed, it is "arguably the most robust of all contemporary norms of heterosexual sex" (Gavey 2005, p. 124).

While Viagra has reinforced the narrow concept that "real sex" is coitus, it has also broadened the boundaries of who is expected to participate in such "real sex". Erectile Dysfunction is diagnosed mainly in men over the age of 50, and it is these men that are Viagra's primary target market. Prior to Viagra, sex therapists often encouraged older men, or men with chronic ED, to shift their focus to non-penetrative forms of sex (Tiefer & Malman, 1989). At present, however, the continually expressed objective of sildenafil treatment is the achievement of vaginal penetration by the penis (Potts et al., 2003; Potts et al., 2004). The widespread use of Viagra has therefore had consequences for women, in particular women with male partners over 50. As the research of Annie Potts and her colleagues in New Zealand has shown, many women whose partners are prescribed Viagra feel immense pressure to engage in coitus so as not to "waste" a pharmacologically induced erection, while others resent the reintroduction of penetrative sex after a number of years without (Potts et al., 2003). These problems are exacerbated by the fact that, in the sexological model, this impact on women remains largely invisible. The sexual dysfunctions are understood to be personal, individual matters of physiology rather than relational issues. The use of Viagra, then, tends to be perceived by clinicians as an individual matter between a man and his doctor (Gavey, 2005). Indeed, Gavey argues that this view is so entrenched that "one could be forgiven for thinking momentarily that women were at best sideline participants in heterosexual men's sex" (Gavey, 2005, p. 130). The importance of coitus continues to be emphasised, as it has been in the past, with little regard for the sexual interests of women.

The post-Viagra era and Female Sexual Dysfunction (FSD)

The year 1998 is very important in terms of the contemporary practice of sexology. Not only was Viagra approved for use, but the first of a series

of annual conferences on "New Perspectives in the Management of Female Sexual Dysfunction" was also held in Boston. The 1998 conference, aimed at "consensus development", was a "pharmaceutical-industry-funded, invitation-only" gathering which has since been immensely influential in determining the direction of research into, and treatment for, FSD (Loe, 2004). The meeting itself marks a shift which has become increasingly apparent over the last five to ten years; sexology's fixation on "dysfunctional" women. While during the 1980s and most of the 1990s the focus was on men's sexual dysfunctions (in particular ED), since the widespread use of Viagra, the emphasis has moved to women (Winton, 2002, 2001). On the whole, those within the discipline view this change as a positive step forward, particularly in regard to women's sexual rights (Kaschak & Tiefer (eds)., 2001). There is a prevailing attitude that sexology thus far has paid little attention to women and this is finally being rectified. Leiblum and Rosen (2000), for example, happily report that: "women are sharing some of the spotlight in this post-Viagra period" (p. 1). Similarly, many therapists and researchers are encouraging more research into the effectiveness of sildenafil and hormone replacement therapy on arousal in women and accurate ways to measure women's sexual satisfaction, because apparently "so little is known" in this "emerging field" (Berman et al., 1999).

The suggestion that sexology has somehow not considered the sexual problems of women in the past, however, is a serious misrepresentation of history. The various disorders that women have supposedly been afflicted with over the last century, for example, frigidity, nymphomania, hysteria, anorgasmia and now "sexual aversion" and "female sexual arousal disorder", have been well documented (e.g. Cole & Rothblum (eds)., 1988; Greer, 2003; Hite, 1976; Jackson, 1984, 1987, 1994; Jeffreys, 1985, 1990; Maines, 1999; Potts, 2002; Tiefer, 2004; Ussher, 1997). This history of sexology's interaction with women is rarely, if ever, acknowledged by those designated as leaders in the field. Sociologist Mieka Loe (2004) suggests that this is often the result of a concerted effort to ignore particular sections of the history of sexology. She notes that at the 2001 Boston conference an FDA medical officer "pleaded" with experts to "remember medicine's long history of abusing women…" (p. 153). Despite such attempts, "[v]ery few sexual dysfunction experts talk about FSD as related to historical understandings of women's sexuality" (Loe, 2004, p. 131).[4] The assertion that the search for pharmacological treatments to solve women's sexual problems is "new" is also dubious given the

[4] Loe (2004) does mention, however, that Leiblum's acknowledgement of the category of frigidity (quoted earlier) is a rare exception (p. 131).

(often unacknowledged) decades-long history of attempting to treat sexual "illnesses" with testosterone (Hoberman, 2005).

It is not surprising that sexologists and sex therapists are wary of discussing sexology's history, as recognising the historical and cultural context of sexology would most likely pose a threat to the authority of the discipline. The theory and practice of sexology rests on biological determinism and hence a rejection of the claim that sexuality is socially constructed. Sexologists claim complete knowledge of sex and sexuality, maintaining that these can be reduced to functions of the human body and, as the human body is considered universal, sexologists universalise their results (Irvine 1990; Jackson 1994). To consider the differing ways that physicians and sexologists have constructed ideal female sexuality over the last hundred years would indeed threaten the claim that the current understanding is definitively correct. As Irvine notes:

> It is a striking example of the changing ideological construction of sexual norms over the last century that, in the 1980s, low interest in sex would be considered a major problem within sexual medicine (Irvine, 1990, p. 216).

The striking change is, of course, in reference to the typical 19th century belief that women interested in sex were somehow deviant, mentally ill, or diseased. Psychologist Jane Ussher also notes this change in *Fantasies of Femininity* (1997):

> So whilst the nineteenth-century woman who showed too much sexual drive was at risk of being defined as deviant or dysfunctional (as a 'nymphomaniac'), in the late twentieth century it is women who are unable to experience desire or orgasm who are at risk of being categorized as 'ill' (Ussher, 1997, p. 256).

The medical construction of women's sexuality is certainly not as universal and biologically grounded as many practitioners wish to portray it. What is acceptable and unacceptable even within the relatively narrow sexological model has undoubtedly changed over time. In order for current sexological practice to appear coherent, however, the history of this change is, as Loe (2004) points out, often simply ignored. On the rare occasions when the inconvenient elements of sexology's history are mentioned, practitioners tend to distance current practice from past "errors" (Loe, 2004). The message is, that sexologists in previous decades or centuries may have been misguided in their beliefs, but today sexology presents "the truth" about sexuality.

One of the most valued "truths" of modern sexology is that there is an epidemic of sexual dysfunction. In women, the most common problem is said to be lack of sexual desire, that is, lack of fantasies about sexual activity and / or lack of desire to engage in sexual activity (American Psychiatric Association, 1987, 2000) and increasingly also lack of receptivity to initiation by partner (Basson et al., 2000). The most widely quoted statistics on FSD, for example, originated in an article published in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* during 1999: "Sexual Dysfunction in the United States: Prevalence and predictors" (Laumann et al., 1999). Its authors found that 43 percent of women in America suffer from some form of sexual dysfunction and that they are most likely to fall victim to "low sexual desire". According to the report, men are unlikely to suffer a similar fate. While 22 percent of women are supposedly afflicted with low sexual desire - making it the most common dysfunction in women - low sexual desire was the least prevalent dysfunction found in men, at a rate of only 5 percent. Given sexology's recent focus on desire disorders, the gap in rates of "low sexual desire" for men and women is particularly revealing. As is the case with so many of the categories of sexual dysfunction, women become "implicitly pathologised" (Ussher, 1997, p. 258).

Women and the Desire Disorders

In *Disorders of Desire* (1990), Janice Irvine reflects on how extraordinary it is that interest in sex has become an issue for the medical profession. She notes that from the perspective of an outsider it seems clear that medical categories are being wrongly applied to a social construct. She also notes how quickly sexological ideas about the biological nature of sexual desire were validated within the discipline of sexual medicine and popular culture. These changes in sexological and popular conceptions of sexuality have had a profound effect on the lives of women. The invention of the disorders of desire has served to reaffirm that male sexuality and the desire for vaginal penetration is normal, while women who resist the demands of their male sexual partners are deemed abnormal, and possibly diseased. It is argued here that this conception of sexual desire requires normal female sexuality to be constructed as constant sexual availability to men. Women who do not fit this model, or who are suffering from the illness of "female sexual dysfunction", are increasingly being prescribed testosterone to "cure" their low sexual desire. Moreover, on closer reading, it can be seen that there is little or no room within the diagnostic and treatment models of the desire disorders to understand that women may

rationally refuse sex with men. It will be shown that with the proposed adaptation of the DSM criteria to include receptivity, women may be placed under even greater pressure to acquiesce to the sexual demands of their male partners. The sexological model of desire, therefore, reinforces male dominance through legitimising the idea that men are entitled to demand sexual access to women (Jackson, 1984).

Defining desire

The primary diagnostic tool for sexual dysfunctions is the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM), produced by the American Psychiatric Association. There are two diagnostic categories in the 2000 edition, the DSM-IV-TR, for the desire disorders: Hypoactive Sexual Desire Disorder (HSDD) and Sexual Aversion. The definition of HSDD is given as: "Persistently or recurrently deficient (or absent) sexual fantasies and desire for sexual activity. The judgement of deficiency or absence is made by the clinician…" (quoted in McAnulty & Burnette (eds), 2006, p. 123). It is also noted that for a correct diagnosis, the disturbance must cause "marked distress or interpersonal difficulty" (quoted in McAnulty & Burnett, 2006, p. 123). The DSM definition of Sexual Aversion is given as: "persistent or recurrent extreme aversion to, and avoidance of, all (or almost all) genital sexual contact with a sexual partner" (quoted in Golstein & Davis, 2006, p. 327. Again, it must cause "marked distress or interpersonal difficulty".

There are a number of problems within the DSM definitions of these two "disorders". One of the major conceptual dilemmas, recognised even by those within the field, is conceiving and defining "normal" levels of desire (e.g. Clayton et al., 2006; Davis et al., 2005). There are no objective criteria, for example, given for the desire disorders listed in the DSM. The diagnosis is left up to the clinician's interpretation of what is normal. Furthermore, clinicians are not provided with a reference point to guide their interpretations. It is rather alarming to find, that on closer inspection, an entity with no objective diagnostic criteria is classified as a disorder.

The issue of objective criteria is further complicated by the problems associated with medical attempts to "measure" sexual desire. The concept of being able to quantify sexual desire can itself be seen as quite nonsensical. Using the DSM criteria, it is difficult to know if desire could be quantified as the total number of sexual thoughts, or the total number of sexual thoughts in addition to the total number of sexual activities. Any attempt to define these in a way that can be measured is fraught with difficulty. There have, however, been attempts by sexologists to develop

ways of gauging a person's sexual desire. In order to try and measure women's desire, for example, a system known as the "Sexual Desire and Interest Inventory – Female" has been developed by therapists and researchers (Clayton et al., 2006; Spector et al. 1996). It is noted in the inventory questions that "sexual activity" denotes "sexual caressing, genital stimulation (including masturbation) or intercourse" (Clayton et al., 2006, p. 129). Although "sexual caressing" is still vague, the focus on genital stimulation and the specific mention of intercourse reveals the continuing preference within sexology for coitus to be seen as the primary sex act.

Another significant problem with the sexological concept of desire, is that only one end of the continuum is considered "dysfunctional". While hypoactive sexual desire, that is lack of or low sexual desire is understood to be a medical problem, there is no accompanying disorder of *hyper*active sexual desire, thereby implying that there is no such thing as too much sexual desire. The possibility of including a category of "hypersexuality" in the DSM-III-R was debated during the mid to late 1980s and while some therapists and researchers supported the concept, for the most part it was severely criticised, predominantly due to a lack of supporting clinical evidence (Leiblum & Rosen, 1989). Sociologists, most prominently Levine and Troiden, also attacked the notion of hypersexuality as "conceptually flawed, subjective, value-laden, and an example of pseudoscientific codifications of prevailing erotic values rather than bona fide clinical entities" (quoted in Leiblum & Rosen, 1989, p. 349). Although the same critique could easily be applied to hypoactive sexual desire, there is no recognition that it too is merely the "pseudoscientific codification of prevailing erotic values", and there is no significant debate in sexology questioning low sexual desire as a distinct clinical entity.

It is quite clear from the contrast between hypo- and hyper-sexual desire, that the disorders of desire are defined by whichever subjective norms of heterosexuality the medical profession regards as (un)acceptable. Too much desire is never a problem (or certainly not a medical problem), while low desire is thought to constitute an illness of epidemic proportions. Thus, in contemporary sex therapy, pressure is continually placed on the partner with low sexual desire in order to make them submit to sex more often (Schnarch, 2003, p. 292). In practice, as outlined below, this tends to result in women being pressured to submit to more sex more often and being required to sexually service their male partners, regardless of their own desires.

The DSM definitions of HSDD and sexual aversion display no overt bias in regard to gender. The criteria are written as though they could

equally apply to both men and women. This belies the practice of sexology, however, where the desire disorders are viewed as fundamentally female problems. Hypoactive sexual desire is alleged to be the most prevalent sexual disorder among women (Basson et al., 2000; Berman et al., 1999; Laumann et al., 1999; Weeks & Gambescia, 2005;). Indeed, throughout the history of sexology, the desire disorders have been seen as fundamentally female problems. As long ago as 1913, psychotherapist Alfred Adler concluded that some 80 percent of all women were sexually non-responsive (Greer, 2003) and in the 1960s, Masters and Johnson claimed that women's lack of interest in sex was causing mass marital breakdown across the United States (Irvine, 1990). Today, at the more extreme end of the desire disorders, the diagnosis of sexual aversion "is applied almost exclusively to female patients" (Leiblum & Rosen, 1989b, p. 24). An analysis of sexual aversion, therefore, offers fertile ground to explore how *women's* sexual desire is actually envisaged within the discipline of sexology.

Sexual aversion is seen as the more serious of the desire disorders, and it is limited to the "avoidance of, all (or almost all) *genital sexual contact* with a sexual partner" (quoted in Golstein & Davis, 2006, p. 327 [emphasis mine]). Genital sexual contact is once again seen as having primary importance, and the example provided in the DSM-IV-TR, further illustrates which types of "genital contact" are viewed as most crucial. Under "diagnostic features" it is noted that aversion may be limited to particular activities such as vaginal penetration (p. 541). Moreover, a woman's avoidance of "genital contact" with men is seen as so grave, that it is often termed "sexual anorexia" by medical professionals (Beresford, 2006). The ongoing sexological theme of sex drive mimicking hunger is taken to the extreme and the avoidance of sex is thus likened to a life-threatening illness. There is no evidence provided to suggest that either sexual aversion or low sexual desire directly pose any health problems for women, let alone causing comparable trauma to anorexia, but this has not prevented sexologists and sex therapists from claiming that sexual desire disorders can diminish a woman's quality of life (e.g. Basson et al., 2000; Berman et al., 1999).

The treatment of desire disorders as a significant "quality of life" issue for individual women is relatively new within the discipline of sex therapy. In the 1987 edition of the DSM, for example, the "impairment" and "complications" of sexual dysfunction were viewed as rather limited. In fact, the earlier edition of the DSM specifically mentions that sexual dysfunctions rarely impair an individual's functioning. Instead, the 1987 edition emphasises that the major impairments and complications

associated with the sexual dysfunctions are limited to the disruption of sexual relationships. (American Psychiatric Association, 1987, p. 292).

There is no mention under either "impairment" or "complications" of any health risks associated with sexual dysfunction. Rather it is *relationship problems* that pose the risk. This concept of sexual desire as a relational issue, however, has become largely superseded. Researchers are now attempting to gather research that shows participation in heterosexual sex (usually specifically coitus) promotes good health (Atkins, 2006; Lewis, 2006), and that a lack of sex (coitus) leads to deteriorated health,[5] or diminished quality of life (Basson et al., 2000; Berman et al., 1999). At this stage, however, the only evidence provided in the DSM is that lack of sexual desire can cause disruption to sexual relationships (American Psychological Association, 1987, 2000). Understanding that the desire disorders are an interpersonal, rather than individual, medical matter is a crucial point. There is no objective number of sexual acts or thoughts that is deemed to indicate a "normal" or healthy level of desire, rather the appropriate level of desire is determined by the expectations within a particular sexual relationship. The sexual desire disorders, therefore, encompass mainly women who are not willing to engage in certain sexual activities (usually coitus) *as often as their male partners would like*.

Conceiving women's unwillingness to perform particular sex acts as a type of medical disorder presents serious problems. It makes it difficult to see how women's refusals of sex can be taken seriously in this context. Ussher explores this point in relation to the medical categorisation of "sexual phobias", the category under which sexual aversion is listed. Rather than being represented as a rational choice, or genuine refusal, she notes "we are told in a recent textbook on sex therapy that an aversion to fellatio is the most common "sexual phobia" in women" (Ussher, 1997, p. 258). Ussher further explains how the use of these diagnostic categories continually sustains men's pleasure, often at the cost of women's pleasure:

> Yet as fellatio is generally acknowledged to be one of the sexual activities on the top of the list of sexual preferences of many men (it certainly is in pornography), it is clearly very convenient to position as 'ill' the women who won't play this particular game (Ussher, 1997, p. 258).

[5] This is also the continuation of a previous theme in sexology. During the 1920s, women were informed that frigidity, or lack of intercourse, would result in a number of disease and minor ailments. These ranged from fatigue and migraine to arthritis and gastric ulcers. These claims continued among sexologists and therapists well into the 1950s. See: Jeffreys (1990, p. 24).

The current treatment regime for hypoactive sexual desire further illustrates the way in which sex therapy legitimises the demands of heterosexual men for sexual access to women.

Manufacturing desire

Since the release of Viagra, considerable research has been directed toward trying to find pharmaceutical "cures" for those sexual dysfunctions primarily diagnosed in women. In regard to the desire disorders, most interest has been in the administering of testosterone. The prescription of testosterone for a lack of desire in women relies on a number of key sexological assumptions. As stated previously, Kaplan (1979) believed that testosterone was the "libido hormone" for both men and women and many other sex researchers have since followed her lead (e.g. Basson, 2003; Berman & Berman, 2001; Davis et al., 2005; Van Anders et al., 2005). Thus, it has been reasoned that women with low desire must have low levels of testosterone, also known as "androgen deficiency" (Apperloo et al., 2003). Currently, however, there is only a small amount of validated data surrounding testosterone levels in women and sexual desire, and much of it is contradictory (Davis, 2005). Furthermore, what represents a "normal" level of testosterone for women at different points in the lifecycle is also highly contested. Despite these significant issues, hormonal therapy for low desire remains firmly on the agenda.

Irwin Goldstein, a urologist and prominent authority on female sexual dysfunction, has led attempts to further a hormonal understanding of women's sexuality (Loe, 2004). At a significant conference on female sexual dysfunction, he was quoted as saying:

> Isn't it amazing that it is only now in the year 2000 that we are understanding these things? For hundreds of years women have had low levels of testosterone, and we're only seeing this now. So the psychological is important and all, but we've got to get women up to normal levels! (Goldstein quoted in Loe, 2004, p. 150).

Goldstein's comments are a clear example of the continuing sexological notion that women, in not meeting men's sexual demands, must be either diseased or abnormal. The concept of most, if not all, women being biologically abnormal or suffering some form of "deficiency" is rarely questioned by those who favour prescribing testosterone as a way of increasing women's "receptivity" to sexual initiation by men, as the case studies below demonstrate.

The Berman sisters – Laura, a psychologist, and Jennifer, a urologist – are two of the most famous sex researchers / sex-therapists in the area of female sexual dysfunction. They are renowned in medicine and popular culture, publishing widely in addition to having their own television and radio shows. The Bermans have also been described as being at the "forefront" of the medicalisation of sexuality (Hartley, 2002). In their book *For Women Only: A revolutionary guide to reclaiming your sex life* (2001), multiple case studies are included to illustrate the new ways that sexual dysfunction in women can now be treated. The treatment in *For Women Only,* however, is almost exclusively the prescription of hormones (usually testosterone), sildenafil citrate (Viagra), or a combination of the two. The following case of "Debra" is typical.

According to the Bermans' account, Debra and her husband have four young children. Before the birth of the children, they would engage in intercourse four or five times a week, but now, only once or twice. Debra says that she is quite uninterested in sex, but is seeking treatment because twice a week is "not at all what her husband wanted" (Berman & Berman, 2001, p. 162). Despite the Bermans' admission that once or twice a week is "hardly a bad average with a house full of young children" (p. 163) Debra still undergoes the Bermans' rigorous testing and measuring procedures. The tests reveal "no serious hormonal reason for her loss of libido" (p. 163). In fact, the Bermans are surprised to find that according to their own tests, Debra is completely physiologically "normal" but this does not prevent them from prescribing her a "low-dose testosterone cream" (p. 163).

There are a number of revealing aspects to Debra's case study. The definition of Debra's treatment rests with her husband. Sex twice a week is "*not at all what her husband wanted"*. The Berman's offer no counter to this, and the husband's demands are allowed to stand uncontested, his "right" of unfettered sexual access is validated. Furthermore, the Bermans confirm her husband's belief that Debra is the problem by putting her through extensive testing. The decision to treat Debra after discovering that she is, by their own criteria, completely normal may seem quite unusual, but the Bermans actually represent a growing trend in sexology: the administering of (usually) testosterone to women who are known to be healthy and within normal hormonal ranges. The suggestion is that elevating testosterone levels *beyond* normal ranges may be what is required to stimulate sexual desire in women (Van Anders et al., 2005).

Desire as receptivity: No means yes?

It is important to clarify exactly what it is that clinicians are attempting to stimulate when they prescribe these drugs. While the DSM criteria would suggest that even the existence of "sexual thoughts" would indicate the presence of desire, clinicians do not frame their work as being based on the need to enhance or improve a patient's sexual thoughts. Instead, a specific model of women's sexuality is now rapidly (re)gaining acceptance within sexology: receptivity to sexual initiation by a partner. In other words, whether or not a woman is receptive to her partner's sexual advances is being proposed as a way to gauge whether or not a woman is experiencing healthy levels of sexual desire. It is argued here, that this model restricts women's sexual autonomy, assumes men's entitlement of sexual access to women's bodies, promotes coercive sex, and mirrors pornographic rape myths. The receptivity model ultimately constructs ideal female sexuality as constant sexual availability to men, a key element of the prostitution of sexuality (Barry, 1995).

Rosemary Basson, a well-regarded professor of psychiatry and gynecology, has been highly influential in shaping current medical conceptions of women's sexual desire. Departing from the Masters and Johnson model of sexual response which attempted to "make the two genders sexually symmetrical" (Maurice, 2005, p. 70), Basson has proposed that women's experience of sexual desire is fundamentally different to men's experience. She argues that most healthy women are not aware of any sexual desire, or in her words, a feeling of need or hunger, *before* any sexual stimulation begins (Basson 2005, p. 44). In sexological terms, she argues that arousal in women *precedes desire*, not the other way round. Thus women's sexuality is understood as fundamentally responsive. Delegates at the International Consensus Development Conference (ICDC) on FSD in 1998 also suggested that the existing model of symmetrical sexual response did not suit women's experiences of sexual desire, or at least lack of sexual desire (Basson et al., 2000). In an attempt to modify current classifications to better reflect women's experiences, it was proposed that receptivity should be included as a criterion in new diagnostic categories (Leiblum, 2002). Hypoactive sexual desire disorder was then defined by the relevant panel as "the persistent or recurrent deficiency (or absence) of sexual fantasies / thoughts and / or desire for or receptivity to sexual activity, which causes personal distress" (Basson et al., 2000, p. 891). Many panellists "lauded this definition as superior to the previous one..." (Wood, Koch & Mansfield, 2006, p. 140), while other clinicians offered only qualified support (Meston, 2001). The most pressing issue, even among critics of the new addition, seems to have

been that receptivity was left undefined (e.g. Everaerd & Both, 2001; Wood, Koch & Mansfield, 2006). It will be shown here, however, that the implications of these modified diagnostic categories pose serious problems for women in heterosexual relationships.

The updated diagnostic category for hypoactive sexual desire disorder proposed at the ICDC is largely based on the model of female sexual response expounded by Basson (Basson, 2000, 2001, 2005). In Basson's model, physical arousal as a result of stimulation by a partner may precede (conscious) desire. There is very a real danger that this concept is simply reviving the "sleeping beauty" model of women's sexuality, which was furthered by such early sexologists as Theodore van de Velde who proposed that "women are to be sexually awakened by men" (Everaerd & Both, 2001, p. 137). While Everaerd and Both (2001) question whether or not these parallels are intentional, at least one ICDC delegate was comfortable with perpetuating the sleeping beauty myth as a normal model of women's sexuality: "The definition implies that women may not consciously experience desire internally but that it can be *awakened by a partner*..." (Leiblum, 2002, p. 61 [emphasis mine]). While this was supposedly a step forward, the "new" model of women's sexual response it seems to endorse the much older sexological notion of women's sexual dependence on men.

Basson (2005) also provides further explanation of her receptivity model in terms of women's motivations for engaging in sexual activity. As women are not expected to experience sexual desire, as it is commonly understood, it is other incentives, such as to "placate a needy (and increasingly irritable) partner" (p. 46), that motivate women to engage in sex with men. Rather than viewing this situation as highly problematic for women, Basson suggests that such incentives only "*superficially* appear unhealthy" as:

> When the experience proves rewarding for the woman such that part way through she herself starts to feel – that she, too, would not wish to stop – it becomes unclear whether the original reasons (to placate / do one's duty) are truly unhealthy (Basson, 2005, p. 46).

Such a model is not only problematic for women, but is also potentially quite dangerous. The important question of what happens *before* a woman feels as though she "would not wish to stop" is left unanswered. Furthermore, if up until "part way through" a woman *is* wishing to stop, surely she is submitting to either unwanted or coercive sex.

Basson's suggestion that this experience is negated by some later "reward" can also be seen to mirror the common rape fantasy theme found

in pornography (Smith, 1976). Women are expected to at first resist the rape (sexual initiation / stimulation), but if men persevere, women will eventually take pleasure in it (experience desire). The misogyny behind this pornographic rape myth has been well exposed by feminists, especially in regard to perpetuating the belief that women welcome and subsequently enjoy sexual assault (e.g. Burt, 1980; Gavey, 2005; Russell, 1998; Russell (ed) 1993; Scully, 1985). That this new "scientific" model of women's desire so closely mirrors the pornographic rape myth should be serious cause for concern. Again, this model of sexuality promotes the idea that men's demands for sexual access need to be met by women, irrespective of an individual woman's own sexual desires.

Basson's model represents the type of female "desire" sex therapists and pharmaceutical companies are attempting to manufacture: constant receptivity to a male partner's sexual demands.[6] If this version of sexual desire becomes the new standard for women's sexual response, it is also difficult to see how women will be able to refuse unwanted intercourse in heterosexual relationships and still be understood as healthy and normal. This is particularly concerning given the recent push towards (potentially harmful) pharmacological and hormonal intervention for women deemed to have low levels of desire. Perhaps pre-empting such concerns, Seagraves and Woodard (2006) explain the important difference between a desire disorder and desire discrepancy:

> A large group probably represent what clinicians have referred to as desire discrepancy. In other words, the woman has normal sexual desire, but her desired frequency of sexual activity happens to be lower than the desired frequency of her partner...She may or may not have started the relationship with a higher level of desire for sexual activities (Seagraves & Woodard, 2006, p. 414).

They also add that: "Clearly most clinicians would not recommend pharmacological interventions for these...women" (p. 414). It is also clear, however, that some clinicians *will,* in fact, recommend pharmacological or hormonal interventions in just such cases.

The previous example of Debra, who presented at the Bermans' clinic because having sex twice a week "was not at all what her husband wanted" (Berman & Berman, 2001), clearly fits the description provided by Seagraves and Woodard (2006). Debra's desired frequency is simply

[6] I use the term male partner here, as the sexological assumption is always one of heterosexuality. Indeed, the sexual dysfunctions tend not make sense outside the context of heterosexuality. See: Boyle (1993).

lower than her husband's and should, therefore, be seen as an issue of desire discrepancy. This is not what transpires, however, and Debra, even after being found to be completely physiologically normal, is treated with testosterone to increase her desire. It is surely not unreasonable to presume this trend is going to continue, especially given that some clinicians now believe elevating testosterone beyond normal levels may be what is required to stimulate greater sexual desire in women. For example, the authors of a recent study on "androgen administration" for women with low desire note that:

> Although the etiology of HSD [hypoactive sexual desire] is complex and multifaceted, it appears that hormonal treatment may be effective in increasing sexual desire, perhaps even for women who do not show baseline androgen deficiency (van Anders et al., 2005, p. 182).

Within this model, where even healthy women can expect to be medicated, there is little or no room for women to be understood as rationally refusing sex with men. It would appear that the only way for women to be confident of avoiding a diagnosis or treatment of a desire disorder is to remain constantly sexually available to their male partners. This model of sexuality simultaneously pathologises non-compliant women, while validating men's sexual demands as natural. Men's sexual demands are left unquestioned, thus reinforcing the assumption that men are entitled to demand sexual access to women.

The following example from an international medical conference on FSD, recounted by Loe (2004), further illustrates the typical way in which androgen deficiency is currently understood within sexology. During a paper at the 2001 FSD consensus conference in Boston, Andre Guay, a professor of medicine at Harvard and a leading authority on androgen deficiency, projected a cartoon to his audience. It depicted "an older man being offered Viagra by his doctor, and a woman, presumably his wife, standing behind the doctor, holding up a sign that reads "SAY NO" (Loe, 2004, p. 150). In regard to the use of Viagra, Guay stated that around "one third" of wives "resent the introduction of compulsory sex into their marriage after getting used to years of no intercourse" (p. 150). He went on to explain that the woman in the cartoon therefore "represented a typical case of androgen deficiency…" (p. 150). The concept of a healthy woman rationally refusing intercourse is apparently unthinkable. The resentment of compulsory penetrative sex in a relationship is thought to be the symptom of a clinical disease rather than a reasonable or understandable response. The woman is represented as irrational, not knowing her own mind, in this case due to lack of testosterone.

The addition of receptivity as an element of desire was, according to clinicians, supposed to help counter the primacy of the male model of sexual desire (Basson et al., 2000). However, within the context of lived heterosexual relationships it may actually reinforce male sexual demands. Under the receptivity model, the interpersonal issue of desire discrepancy can quickly become seen as a personal problem with a woman's lack of receptivity to sexual initiation. Receptivity may also simply be reviving the sleeping beauty model of women's sexuality, which undermines women's sexual autonomy and ability to refuse unwanted sexual activity. Indeed, it is difficult to see how women could find space within this model to be understood as rationally refusing unwanted heterosexual intercourse in committed relationships. Furthermore, the adoption of a receptive model of women's desire may even promote coercive sex and the continuation of pornographic rape myths.

These problems certainly call into question the common representation of sexology as progressive and concerned with the sexual rights of women. The importance of coitus is still held as a fundamental tenet of sexology today, just as it was a century ago. The concepts of heterosexuality as biologically driven and of heterosexual desire as a medical issue of biological functioning also remain pervasive and, as feminists have often argued, put women at a serious disadvantage in heterosexuality and reinforce the idea of a male sex right (Jackson, 1984). Under this model, women are expected to adjust themselves to men's sexual "needs". Exactly what this adjustment entails is the subject of the next chapter on sex therapy and the promotion of the sex of prostitution.

CHAPTER FIVE

SEX THERAPY: PROMOTING THE SEX OF PROSTITUTION?

As discussed in the previous chapter, there has been a renewed interest, both in popular culture and in medicine, regarding the scientific study of sexuality in the last decade. In terms of popular culture this interest has manifested itself in a number of ways, including a proliferation of products such as sex aids, how-to guides on TV, video / DVD and the internet, as well as popular self-help books, creating a boom in the "market for heterosexual sex" (Potts, 2002, p. 48). This chapter focuses on one of these products in particular: sex self-help books. Sex self-help books are particularly important as they are one of the most prominent mediums through which the findings of scientific sexology are transmitted through to the public and to popular culture more generally (Irvine, 1990; Potts, 2002). Sex self-help books therefore have a prominent role in the social construction of sexuality. This chapter explores exactly what model of sexuality such texts promote for women through an examination of several high-profile sex self-help books, all written and widely recommended by qualified sexologists and sex therapists. It will be argued that in promoting the eroticising of inequality and the active sexual servicing of men by women, these texts are constructing an ideal model of sexuality for women that closely mirrors the sex of prostitution. In doing so, these texts narrow our vision of what sexuality is and limit women's attempts to achieve sexual equality. Sexologists are, essentially, selling sex short.

Background

The relationship between sex advice literature and the sexual lives of women has often been a subject of feminist investigation. Some critics have argued that the prominence of biological determinism in the literature maintains "discourses of conservative socio-biology" (Boynton, 2003, p. 237) which reinforce submissive and harmful gender roles for women (Jackson 1994, Potts, 2002). Others have exposed the propensity of sex

therapists to blame women for relationship problems (Altman, 1984; Jeffreys, 1990) and to preference male sexual demands (Jackson, 1987; Melody & Peterson, 1999; Potts, 2002). Despite this feminist criticism current sex advice literature is still commonly represented by both clinicians and the popular media as highly beneficial for women. Some sexologists even claim that their work may constitute "feminism's next frontier" (Berman & Berman, 2001, p. xiv). This chapter contests such notions and it is argued that a critical analysis of these texts shows that the interests of men are promoted over the interests of women. Moreover, the idea that women should sexually service men is exposed as a prominent theme in the sex self-help literature.

Drawing on feminist analyses of prostitution, in particular those of Barry (1995) and Jeffreys (1997), the concept of the sex of prostitution will be employed as a way of understanding how women's sexuality is constructed through these self-help texts. The sex of prostitution is taken here to be synonymous with the sexual servicing of men. The sex of prostitution is seen not as simply "sex" but as a particular construction of sex in which women's pleasure is deemed unimportant and the sexual demands of men remain paramount, where a woman's body is used "irrespective of her wishes and personhood" (Jeffreys, 1997, p. 213). As outlined in chapter one, the research on prostitution suggests that there are four key elements which can be seen to define prostitution sex: inequality, objectification, the sexual servicing of men, and the requirement that women must be active in meeting men's sexual demands. The sex of prostitution is also understood as harmful to women, both the women directly involved in performing it, and women as a class. In terms of the sex self-help books analysed in this chapter, harm is inflicted on women as individuals primarily through the promotion of prostitution sex as an ideal model of sexuality, which they should be performing in their heterosexual relationships. Harm is inflicted on women as a class predominantly though the way in which these books contribute to the normalising of prostitution, or what Barry (1995) refers to as "the prostitution of sexuality". Using the sex of prostitution in this context can also complicate the simple and oft used male / active, female / passive dichotomy. Women are not expected to be passive within the texts considered here but, in keeping with the sex of prostitution, are expected to *actively* sexually service men and, furthermore, learn, or at least pretend, to enjoy it.

Sex advice literature and sex therapy in the 1970s

Sex advice literature emanates from the sexological sub-discipline of sex therapy established by Masters and Johnson. Their 1970 publication *Human Sexual Inadequacy* is said to have laid the foundations for the current sexological understandings of sexual dysfunction. Along with the creation of various categories of dysfunction, Masters and Johnson developed and trialled their own "cures" for sexual problems, pioneering what would later become the scientifically validated techniques of sex therapy. The work of Masters and Johnson marked a shift away from the fundamentally psychological understandings of sexuality that had dominated early sexology to a model based primarily on physiology. This shift was most prominent in the treatment process of sex therapy that Masters and Johnson advocated. After Masters and Johnson became influential, the treatments for sexual dysfunction became based on sexual technique rather than the traditional approach of psychotherapy, a change that revolutionised the field of sexology (Irvine, 1990). While this change is sometimes identified by historians as having been beneficial for women, feminist critics have questioned this representation. Margaret Jackson (1984), for example, has argued that Masters and Johnson's treatments for sexual dysfunction, in effect, worked to "maintain coitus at all costs, regardless of contraindications for women" (p. 181-182).

The sexological emphasis on coitus is certainly not limited to the work of Masters and Johnson; the coital imperative is an integral concept to most sexological theorising. Indeed, Paula Nicolson (1993) has identified the coital imperative as one of the most dominant discourses in modern, mainstream sexology. She further notes that in sexological texts, it is often not enough that intercourse simply takes place, but that the male has to "be active and the female passive… the male has to prove his masculinity and overcome the female's feigned resistance" (p. 160). This male / active, female / passive dichotomy was also promoted through more popular sex instruction manuals of the 1970s, and this will be discussed further below, in relation to *The Joy of Sex* (Comfort, 1975).

The changes that Masters and Johnson brought with them to the field of sexology increased popular interest in the discipline. During the same time that the ideas of Masters and Johnson were being incorporated into academic sexology, there was a significant increase in the production of a popularist version of sexology: how-to sex manuals. The burgeoning popularity of such books during the 1970s was "widely interpreted as a sign of cultural liberalisation" (Altman, 1984, p. 115). Published at the height of the sexual revolution, *The Joy of Sex: A gourmet guide to lovemaking,* is one of the most famous examples of texts from this era.

The "editor",[1] Dr Alex Comfort, makes much of the book's revolutionary break with the past. He states in the preface that: "It is the first book to be based on the knowledge of 1973 not 1873 – the researches [sic] of Maslow, for example, rather than the opinions of Krafft-Ebing…" (Comfort, 1975, p. i). However, in the section on bondage, Comfort describes the practice as "a harmless expression of sexual aggression" and refers to the work of Havelock Ellis, a contemporary of Krafft-Ebing, to support his belief that it increases sexual feeling (p. 123). As discussed in the previous chapter, any appeal to the work of Havelock Ellis can also be seen as problematic for women, as Ellis tended to claim that male dominance and female submission were the desirable result of unchangeable biological differences between men and women (Jackson, 1984).

The Joy of Sex, as the title suggests, is purportedly about making sex fun, and the introduction contains reassurances that it is quite acceptable for the reader to decline some of the practices, which are detailed in the text, if they feel uncomfortable about performing them. Contained within the entries themselves (listed like a cook-book under "starters", "main courses" and "sauces and pickles"), however, is a different message that reinforces the importance of meeting men's sexual demands. In the comprehensive section on clothing, Comfort (1975) explains to the reader that certain "turn ons" for men come from "elementary biology", and he likens the wearing of certain clothes by women to using lures to catch fish (p. 24). He then explains which outfits men are likely to be "biologically" aroused by and why. Corsets are a turn on because they "suggest tightness and helplessness" (p. 24). Leather, especially if it is tight, shiny and black, is sexy because it "suggests acceptance of the aggression of sex" (p. 24). Comfort's advice reaffirms the sexological discourse of women's submission and men's dominance. In this instance, women are encouraged to be "helpless" and to "accept aggression" as their proper, submissive role in heterosexuality.

Indeed, Comfort (1975) adds compelling reasons as to why women should fulfil this submissive role. He offers further advice to women who may be resistant to his suggestion of corsets and leather, instructing them to focus on the happiness they can bring to their spouse, rather than their own sexual enjoyment. Moreover, Comfort states that there will likely be negative consequences for women who do not comply. He states that refusing to act out certain fantasies or even showing an unfavourable reaction to a partner's fantasies is what "lands people in the divorce court

[1] No other authors are listed as having contributed to the book, but Comfort is named as an editor.

for incompatibility…So, if he likes you to look like a cross between a snake and a seal, wear what he gives you" (p. 24). Women are told that their refusal to participate in such humiliating rituals will result in the termination of their relationship. As Jeffreys (1990) notes, "[t]he superficial friendliness of the book breaks down when women's resistance to men's sexual demands is under discussion and naked threat shows through" (p. 120). It is through a closer analysis of sections such as this that Jeffreys argues the true purpose of *The Joy of Sex* is revealed: "It is a handbook which will teach women their new role in the sexual revolution, the servicing of male sexuality…" (p. 120). It will be argued in the remainder of this chapter that the concept of women being required to sexually service men, a key element of the sex of prostitution, is still a dominant theme in current sex self-help literature.

Current Sex Self-Help Books

Recent critiques of relationship manuals and sex self-help books have tended to focus on bestselling and popular works, in particular, John Gray's *Mars and Venus* series (e.g. Crawford 2004; Potts, 2002; Zimmerman, Haddock & McGeorge, 2001). The problem is that such popular works are often written by unqualified "experts" (John Gray's "PhD" from a non-accredited, correspondence school is a case in point) and can easily be dismissed as having little to do with the scientifically legitimated practice of modern sex therapy. As a result, the fact that the recommendation of sex self-help books by qualified and highly respected sex therapists is very common is often overlooked. To try and address this gap in research, the books analysed in this chapter are all written and recommended by qualified therapists and sexologists, with a view to understanding how heterosexual relationships are represented in works which are, not only popular, but are also considered to be medically authoritative.

In order to determine the initial direction of research, a pilot survey of sex therapy practitioners in the United States and Australia was conducted during 2005.[2] All respondents noted that they did use self-help books in

[2] In total, thirty therapists were contacted via electronic mail. In Australia, fifteen therapists practicing in capital cities were contacted at random through their advertisements in the *Yellow Pages*. Only therapists that specifically mentioned offering sex therapy were contacted. In the US, fifteen therapists were contacted through their largest professional body, the American Association of Sex Educators, Counsellors and Therapists (AASECT). Practitioners were asked if they ever recommended self-help books to their clients and, if so, which were their top

their practice, and only one therapist replied that they did not regularly employ such materials. The most commonly recommended text was *The New Male Sexuality,* written by Bernie Zillbergeld. For women, the most commonly recommended title was *Becoming Orgasmic: A sexual growth program for women,* by Julia Heiman and Joseph LoPiccolo. The only other title that was repeatedly listed was *Passionate Marriage: Keeping love alive in emotionally committed relationships,* by David Schnarch. Only one book by an Australian author was recommended: *Urge: Hot secrets for great sex,* by Gabrielle Morrissey.

These results mirror those of a more comprehensive study published in *The Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy* (Leiblum, Althof & Kinsberg, 2002). According to the study, conducted in 2000, the recommendation of self-help books to patients is widespread in the US. The authors analysed responses from 52 members of AASECT, all practicing sex therapists. Overall, the most commonly recommended book was *Passionate Marriage*. On the subject of "female sexuality" the top two titles were *For Yourself*: *The fulfilment of female sexuality,* written by Lonnie Barbach, and *Becoming Orgasmic*. The most overwhelming consensus among the therapists surveyed was in regard to *The New Male Sexuality*, which received 80 percent of the recommendations on the subject of "male sexuality". Texts which were both repeatedly recommended in the pilot survey and were the most highly recommended in the study by Leiblum, Althof and Kinsberg (2002), were automatically chosen for analysis. These were: *Passionate Marriage* (Schnarch, 2003), *Becoming Orgasmic* (Heiman & LoPiccolo, 1992) and *The New Male Sexuality* (Zillbergeld, 1993).

In addition, two more recent publications were selected: *Urge: Hot secrets to great sex* (Morrissey, 2005), and *For Women Only: A revolutionary guide for reclaiming your sex life* (Berman & Berman, 2001). Both of these works were published too recently to have been included in the study by Leiblum, Althof & Kinsberg (2002), and thus, their selection requires further explanation. *Urge* was chosen partially in order for an Australian text to be analysed alongside those from the US. This particular title was also chosen as it sold exceptionally well in Australia, and has been translated and sold in the UK, US, Europe and Russia (Keenan, 2005). *Urge* was written by one of Australia's most prominent sexologists, Dr Gabrielle Morrissey, described on her consulting firm's website as "Australia's pre-eminent sexologist" (bananas-and-

three titles. There were eleven responses. While this is obviously a small (and not necessarily representative) sample, the intention was not to *prove* which resources were most commonly used, but to determine the initial direction of research.

melons.com.au, 2007). She has appeared on numerous television shows, ran her own radio show in 2005, and for some time, wrote a sex advice column in *The West Australian* newspaper (bananas-and-melons.com.au, 2007). Morrissey is also well respected in her field as a sexologist. She runs her own sex therapy consulting firm, Bananas and Melons, and established a Masters program for Forensic Sexology at Curtin University in Western Australia (bananas-and-melons.com.au, 2007). In addition to numerous conference papers and several journal articles, Morrissey has also published three popular sexology titles: *Sex in the Time of Generation X* (1996) and *Urge: Hot Secrets for Great Sex* (2005), and *Spicy Sex* (2006). Her work can be seen as leading the way in Australian sexology, both professionally and in terms of popular culture.

There are also a number of reasons for the inclusion of *For Women Only: A revolutionary guide to reclaiming your sex life* (Berman & Berman, 2001). While the text is recommended by some practitioners,[3] the prominence of the book's authors is the main basis for selection. It is difficult to discuss current trends in sex therapy, particularly in regard to women's sexual problems, without some reference to the Berman sisters. Laura Berman, a psychologist, and Jennifer Berman, a urologist, are renowned in both medicine and popular culture. *For Women Only* is, so far, the only self-help title they have written together. The sisters established the Female Sexual Medicine Center at the Los Angeles campus of the University of California (UCLA): one of the first treatment facilities in the world to focus specifically on women's sexual dysfunctions (Champeau, 2001). They have since launched a national chain of sex clinics across the US (Cassels & Moynihan 2005, p. 188), just as Masters and Johnson did when they revolutionised sex therapy during the 1970s. Aside from frequently publishing their research in leading sex-therapy journals, the Bermans have also attained celebrity-like status in the US. They have appeared on television shows such as *Good Morning America* and *Oprah*, and have been featured in countless women's magazines (Hartley, 2002). The Bermans are frequently described as being at the forefront of research into women's sexuality: "due to their widespread exposure and involvement in the first centres to practice this new sexual medicine, these two women can easily be regarded as leaders in the field…" (Hartley 2002, p. 108). *For Women Only* can thus be regarded as indicative of recent trends within sex therapy, as well as an indicator of trends that may become increasingly mainstream in the near future.

These five sex self-help books will be analysed, initially, in relation to the dominant sexological assumption of "sex drive", or more specifically,

[3] This is according to my own informal survey of sex therapists.

the notion that heterosexuality is biologically driven. The problems faced by practitioners when women seem to lack this "drive", is also discussed and the enforcement of heterosexual sex through therapy is highlighted. Secondly, the texts are analysed individually, exposing the way in which the rhetoric of women's sexual empowerment often has little to do with the advice or treatment programs contained within them. Women's pleasure is certainly not the paramount concern that the titles and blurbs of these works may suggest. Instead, the self-help books encourage the eroticising of inequality and the sexual servicing of men by women, often requiring women to actively meet men's sexual demands, all key concepts of the sex of prostitution.

Biological determinism and the enforcement of sexual access to women

Most of the texts employ clear, biologically determinist statements as an explanation of the science behind sexuality. Such statements maintain that there is a biological drive underpinning heterosexuality, making it seem both natural and inevitable (Nicolson, 1993). In *Urge,* for example, the reader is told:

> Humans have less than a handful of primal urges. Our very, very, basic drives include the needs to eat, drink, sleep and screw (Morrissey, 2005, p. 122).

In *Becoming Orgasmic* the message is very similar:

> [M]any of our *basic biological drives* require an environmental cue or signal to make us aware of them. For example, if you are busy and distracted, you may not realise you are physiologically hungry until you smell food or look at your watch and realise it's way past meal time. Sex drive works even more strongly in this way – it takes some real-life cue to make you aware of your *sexual needs* (Heiman & LoPiccolo, 1992, p. 165 [emphasis mine]).

Sex is presented by these authors as a biological necessity, equated with the importance of eating food or drinking water. The desire for sex is an uncontrollable urge, or biological drive, which can be felt even more strongly than hunger. It is this type of assertion that feminists have critiqued in much older sexological works. The problem for women is that the concept of sexual drive and notions of uncontrollable sexual desire have historically helped justify men's sexual violence, in particular rape,

on the grounds of biological urge or necessity (Jackson, 1984; Gavey, 2005). The construction of men's sexual desires as biological "needs" is also often used as a justification for the existence of prostitution (Miriam, 2005).

It is explained in these texts that sexual "needs" cannot be met by just any sexual activity. "Sex" is shorthand in sexology, as in popular culture, for heterosexual intercourse; coitus. If there is any confusion still surrounding the logic behind this equation, *The New Male Sexuality* provides ample clarification:

> Although there's no doubt that social conditioning plays a role in reinforcing the belief that intercourse is *the* sexual act, common sense requires us to acknowledge that the desire for sexual intercourse is also, perhaps, mainly, caused by something else…All of us, women and men, are programmed to want intercourse. That much is fact, and it is folly to ignore or deny it (Zillbergeld, 1993, p. 75).

The author, Bernie Zillbergeld (1993) also offers a more blunt and informal version of this reasoning a page later: "He has a pole, she has a hole, so it seems only natural that the pole should go in the hole" (p. 76).

Here, the discourses on the importance of penetration and "natural heterosexuality" are neatly intertwined. It is not surprising to find that Zillbergeld does not make mention of homosexual relationships at any point in the text. Instead, the reader is constantly reminded that heterosexual intercourse is the pinnacle of all sexual activity and this is justified in terms of biology. Zillbergeld's claim that women "are programmed to want intercourse", however, highlights an internal contradiction within sexological understandings of sex. While sexuality is understood to be biologically determined in sexological theory, much of the practice of sexology is focused on teaching people how to have sex. Sexologists and sex therapists have focused, in particular, on teaching those women who have somehow missed out on their "programming" and do not want to engage in intercourse (Jeffreys, 1990). Indeed, all of the analysed self-help texts, at some point, address the "problem" of women who lack an interest in coitus.

Both the depiction of coitus as the primary sex act, and the importance of treating women who do not share this view, are prominent in *Becoming Orgasmic*: *A sexual growth program for women* (Heiman & LoPiccolo, 1976 / 1992). For example, the chapters are listed so as to privilege heterosexual intercourse. The chapters begin with acts considered preliminary, such as masturbation, and work their way up to the chapter titled: "Intercourse – Another form of mutual pleasure". Despite the

inclusion of "mutual" in the chapter title, less than ten pages later it is stated that: "Another fairly common concern of women is the occasional experience of some sort of pain or discomfort during intercourse" (Heiman & LoPiccolo, 1976, p. 165). Moreover, the authors add that: "It is not unusual for a man to get more enjoyment from intercourse than a woman" (p. 166). Exactly why the authors believe it is so important for women to reach this stage of this program (which is purportedly about women's sexual pleasure) when it is now clear that they may actually derive quite negative experiences from it, is not explained. The apparent contradiction between a focus on women's pleasure and the expected reality of women's discomfort is not acknowledged within the text.

In *Urge* (Morrissey, 2005), Morrissey describes this sort of program as "training", which is really a more accurate term for what women are expected to go through. She notes that "[t]raining moves through several phases: masturbation, sensate focus, mutual masturbation, and intercourse" (Morrissey, 2005, p. 173). In the section on "orgasmic training" for intercourse Morrissey adds: "this is the final frontier in the land of anorgasmia" (p. 179). Just as *Becoming Orgasmic* acknowledges that intercourse may not bring pleasurable experiences for women, in *Urge* the differences in pleasure for men and women are also noted:

> At this stage, a man who can't come should hop back on the therapist's couch for more mental unblocking. A woman at this point should remember that she's 'come a long way, baby' and not being able to come during intercourse is normal for millions of women (Morrissey, 2005, p. 180).

Given that a lack of pleasure in intercourse is considered such a common experience for women in these texts, it remains unclear why women should embark on this kind of orgasmic training at all, or why intercourse should continue to be seen as the "final frontier".

This contradiction goes to the core of sex therapy. Popular sexology still purportedly focuses on mutuality and women's pleasure, yet a closer reading of these texts suggests that women's pleasure is continually subordinated to men's sexual "needs". Just as *The Joy of Sex* warned women that putting their own comfort ahead of the sexual pleasure of their male partners could, "land them in the divorce court", sex therapists today counsel women on either "choosing" sex or losing their marriages. This is an ongoing theme, for example, in *Passionate Marriage* (Schnarch, 1997). In *Passionate Marriage*, it is claimed that current sex therapy has moved beyond the old practice of pressuring a partner with "low sexual desire" into simply submitting to sex more often (Schnarch, 2003, p. 292). The

author, Dr David Schnarch, claims that "[t]oday, some therapists know better…" (p. 293) and it is clear that he considers himself to be among this enlightened group. Yet, the comprehensive case studies contained within *Passionate Marriage* show that women with low sexual desire are instructed by Schnarch to engage in sex more often, in order to meet the sexual demands of their male partners.

Passionate Marriage includes multiple case studies, which are described at length. One example is the case of Audrey and Peter. Audrey is less interested in sex than Peter and it has been causing tension in their marriage for some time. Only two pages after claiming that pressure should not be placed on the partner with less sexual desire, the following conversation between Audrey and the therapist (Schnarch) is documented:

> [Schnarch] "I won't pressure you to have sex – but you will probably have to choose what you want."
>
> [Audrey] "Like what?"
>
> [Schnarch] "You may have to choose between having sex and not being married."
> (Schnarch, 2003 p. 295)

Rather than a remarkably progressive shift, the change seems merely semantic. Schnarch does not instruct Audrey that she *must* have sex, instead he tells her she has a "choice". She could "choose" not to have sex, but this would mean the dissolution of her marriage. Audrey later protests that this is not a real choice at all and says she will accept neither having to have sex more regularly, nor the end of her marriage, in addition, she openly objects to the pressure she feels. Schnarch seems to believe that Audrey has somehow missed the point of his original message, and replies: "Yes, you feel 'pressured' to have sex. But the pressure is part of your choice. You agreed to monogamy – not celibacy!" (p. 304). The exchanges between the couple and Schnarch illustrate just how integral Peter's sexual access to Audrey is deemed to be to their marriage contract. All of the suggested "compromises" about the terms of their marriage involve Audrey having intercourse with her husband. Audrey is thus made responsible for meeting her husband's sexual demands, irrespective of her own wishes. The model of ideal sexual relations in marriage outlined by Schnarch in this case, therefore, shares much in common with the sex of prostitution, which includes the use of a woman's body "irrespective of her wishes and personhood" (Jeffreys, 1997, p. 213). It also enforces

Peter's "right" of sexual access to Audrey, indeed it suggests that their relationship is contingent upon his sexual access to her.

Similar stories can be found in *For Women Only* (Berman & Berman, 2001), which also contains numerous case studies. The authors, the Berman sisters, make much of their woman-friendly approach, even claiming that their work could be classified as part of "feminism's next frontier" (Berman & Berman, 2001, p. xvi). The title is supposed to outline their ideology, that this is a book written "by women for women" and focused on equality and sexual empowerment of "the whole woman" (Hartley, 2002). However, judging from their own accounts of treatment sessions, women rarely present at the Bermans' clinic because they themselves would like help. Nicole, the first case mentioned, describes her lack of interest in sex thus: *"It's been very stressful. I feel bad for my partner"* (p. 5). Nicole is not alone. Sarah is looking for treatment because her partner "takes it personally" that she does not orgasm during intercourse. As a result of the tension this "problem" is causing, Sarah reports that they are *"close to separation"* (p. 168). Janet's "dysfunction" is her inability to orgasm with her husband (she reports being orgasmic during masturbation) and she explains why she presented for treatment: "*My husband said to me a little while ago, 'What are we going to do if we can't fix this problem? Live without sex? We can't. We'll have to get a divorce"* (p. 126).

The similarities between these women's stories and the case in *Passionate Marriage* are striking. Marriage is clearly dependent on women participating, and perhaps even orgasming, in intercourse as often as their male partner requires. It appears that sex therapists are willing to collude with these demands. Thus, despite claims about the cutting-edge nature of modern sex therapy, it shares much in common with sex advice from earlier decades, which reinforced men's sexual demands and positioned women as responsible for fulfilling them.

However, the case studies in these texts also unmask an important difference in the current, therapist-recommended texts. As discussed above, sexological advice literature from the 1970s has tended to reinforce a male / active, female / passive model of heterosexuality. Feminist critics have noted the use of this traditional active / passive model in contemporary, popular self-help relationship manuals. Zimmerman, Holm and Starrels (2001) note, for instance, the promotion of men as active and women as passive in John Gray's bestselling *Mars and Venus* series. They offer the following excerpt from *Mars and Venus on a Date* (1997) as an indicative example:

> The wisdom of dating rituals is to define the roles of man as giver and woman as receiver. Dating rituals are designed to assist a woman in relaxing and letting a man take care of her needs. They reinforce this most important pattern: the man doing things to fulfill the woman's needs and the woman graciously receiving (Gray quoted in Zimmerman, Holm & Starrels, 2001, p. 169).

Such advice is not repeated in the contemporary, therapist-recommended texts. Far from being positioned as passive "receivers", women are encouraged to be very active in meeting the sexual demands of their male partners.

The stories in *For Women Only* (Berman & Berman, 2001), for example, show that the passive acceptance of men's sexual advances is no longer enough for women to be considered "healthy" in current sexology. The male partners in *For Women Only* are depicted as being concerned not only about the lack of intercourse in their relationships, but also their wives' lack of desire for sex, and lack of enjoyment during sex. If anything, these men are demanding that their female partners become *more active*. These demands can also be seen as in keeping with the sex of prostitution. Barry (1995) notes that although the sex of prostitution has "nothing to do with woman as human being", men still require "an enactment that is sexually active and responsive as well as emotionally engaged" (p. 34). Women are required to be more than passive objects. As will be shown in the following analysis of the texts, within current therapist-recommended sex advice literature, women are required to be *active* agents, not in pursuit of their own pleasure, but rather, active *in the sexual servicing of men*. In other words, women are told to mimic the sex of prostitution in their everyday heterosexual relationships. It is also worth noting that this advice to women differs substantially from the advice aimed at men, which, in contrast, tends to promote the pursuit of individual pleasure. By way of comparison, it will be shown that men are not expected to sexually service women.

"Gender Neutral" Texts

The first two self-help books analysed in this chapter, *Passionate Marriage* (Schnarch, 2000) and *Urge* (Morrissey, 2005), are represented by their respective authors as gender neutral, that is, not aimed specifically at either men or women. *Passionate Marriage* is purportedly aimed at heterosexual couples, and the intended audience for *Urge* appears to be men and women with sections on sexual techniques for both. A closer reading, however, reveals that texts are predominantly aimed at women.

"Gender neutral" texts (1): Passionate Marriage: Keeping love and intimacy alive in emotionally committed relationships

Passionate Marriage (Schnarch, 2000) is, overall, the most recommended book by AASECT therapists in the US (Leiblum, Althof & Kinsberg, 2002). It is not structured as a how-to of sexual techniques and positions, like many of the other texts included here, but is centred more on attitudes and communication involving sex. The book's author, Dr David Schnarch, is now a director of a Marriage and Family health centre but was an associate professor of Psychiatry and Urology for almost 20 years. His qualifications reflect an increasing tendency in the field of sex-therapy for professionals to hold not only medical qualifications relating to psychiatry or psychology, but also qualifications in physiologically based specialisations, such as urology and gynaecology.

The focus of *Passionate Marriage* is "reaching your sexual potential" (Schnarch, 2000, p. 75-100). The purpose of this is twofold: remedying sexual dysfunction and preventing sexual dysfunction. Schnarch explains his reasoning for this approach in a section titled "Your Sexual Potential: Electric sex":

> If you can get aroused and reach orgasm the way you usually do it, you might challenge, *why change?* Here's the answer: all you need is a minor variation in touch or meaning to reduce total stimulation below your threshold, and *voila!* Sexual dysfunction! (Schnarch, 2003, p. 88 [emphasis original]).

Describing dysfunction as only a minor slip away for any healthy individual is quite unusual. Classifying sexual dysfunction in this way rather cleverly extends the intended audience of this book out to, potentially, anyone. Not only must those with forms of sexual dysfunction seek help and treatment, but even those who would be medically categorised as "functional" should seek preventative measures to ensure that they too do not fall victim to dysfunction. This excerpt also contains the insinuation that there is a correct way of doing sex, that in not following the correct formula, individuals may put themselves at greater risk of becoming dysfunctional. According to Schnarch, therefore, it is imperative that everyone learns the correct model of sex.

Schnarch explains that this correct model can be achieved by "pursuing your sexual potential", which appears to be a euphemism for entering sex-therapy, the focus of much of the book. "Pursuing your sexual potential", involves two main components: the first is learning the techniques of "doing, being done, and fucking" and the second is acknowledging

"normal marital sadism". An entire chapter of *Passionate Marriage* is devoted to "doing, being done, and fucking". While the concepts of "doing" and "being done" remain rather vague, the concept of "fucking" is discussed in some depth. Schnarch notes that the term "fuck" has violent connotations, but suggests that his patients should embrace rather than fear them (p. 268-272). He justifies the use of the term "fucking" because, in his words "it keeps the issue of sexual intent and aggression center-stage" (p. 262), and he later notes that, "[f]ucking does involve some aggression and force" (p. 270). This eroticisation of force unmistakably presents problems for women, and this is actually briefly acknowledged in the text: "sexualised aggression too often fuels degradation, abuse and rape…" (p. 270). Such concerns are quickly brushed aside, however, as Schnarch bemoans that sexual aggression has been "banished from the bed", which he believes is a problem because "healthy aggression does play a role in healthy fucking" (p. 270). It is never made clear exactly how couples are supposed to differentiate between "healthy aggression" and sexual assault. Perhaps this is because there is very little discernible difference.

Schnarch's other key concept is "normal marital sadism" which he claims is "observable in every family" (Schnarch, 2003, p. 311). It is supposedly about acknowledging the "bad" that exists in everyone, and accepting that "at some point spouses are bound to use torture to achieve their ends" (p. 311). While the use of the word torture may conjure up images of heinous domestic abuse, Schnarch intends the term to carry a completely different meaning. Under the banner of torture he includes refusing sex, and also acquiescing to a partner's demands for sex but not really putting in, which he also has a term for: "mercy fucks" (p. 313). In his early discussion of normal marital sadism, Schnarch appears unbiased but it eventually becomes clear that he believes women to be the main culprits. In regard to "mercy fucks", which he considers to be sadistic because one partner is withholding what the other wants (that is active engagement in sex), Schnarch comments: "[y]ou let your partner climb on top of you to get *him* off your back" (p. 313 [emphasis mine]). Women who do not enjoy actively meeting their male partner's sexual demands are considered so dysfunctional in *Passionate Marriage* that they are labelled as sadists who enjoy "torturing" their partners. Thus, in the most widely recommended text by registered therapists in the US, significant pressure is placed upon women to learn to enjoy sexually servicing their male partners.

"Gender neutral" texts (2): Urge: Hot secrets for great sex

Urge (Morrissey, 2005) is somewhat different from the other titles considered here. Although the author, Gabrielle Morrissey, is one of Australia's most prominent sexologists / sex-therapists, *Urge* is written mostly in (often crude) vernacular and sometimes slang. This is a return to a style seen in the sex manuals of the 1970s, where no distinction was made "between cases and anecdotes, between clinical data and locker room stories" (Altman, 1984, p. 122). While this may not sound like a particularly prudent approach, English professor Meryl Altman (1984) has shown, that this is actually a very successful strategy for inscribing ideology. The "storytelling" aspect of the text "elicits identification and self-modelling" while the use of expert knowledge ensures the contents are still considered valid "information" (p. 122).

In an approach reminiscent of *Passionate Marriage*, *Urge* (Morrissey, 2005) is not aimed specifically at those with sexual problems. It could, theoretically, be for anyone. In keeping with this broad appeal, it is never stated that the title is intended only for women, however, most of the suggestions in regard to techniques, enhancement and overcoming sexual problems (which covers most of the book) relate specifically to women.[4] One such example is the section on "blow jobs". Morrissey states that "[e]very girl should have a blowjob bag of tricks" (p. 105) and tells women what is required if they want to become "top job blowers". First, women need to learn how to deep-throat:

> It's generally not too difficult to get his cock down your throat, but it is challenging to get your throat to accept its presence there. A penis is flexible and will bend in your mouth and down your throat. Your throat though will want to close off and eject it right out of there, at first. Tricks to calm the gag reflex are to think about relaxing the throat, breathing deeply and evenly, and occasionally swallowing the saliva that builds up in your mouth…The best way to learn to deep-throat is to suck on a few lozenges, which slightly numbs the throat, then practice with a dildo (a shot of tequila beforehand wouldn't go astray either) (Morrissey, 2005, p. 108).

It is quite unusual for a sex therapist to be so open in declaring that these sex practices have very little to do with women's pleasure or even

[4] This is also in keeping with the self-help books of the 1970s in which women were the primary targets for treatment. For a discussion of this issue in relation to such seminal works as *The Joy of Sex,* see: Jeffreys (1990), in particular chapter three.

comfort. Dr Morrissey clearly expects that women will derive no pleasure at all from the practice of deep-throating, and will most likely find it quite abhorrent. She simply offers women ways to endure it: numbing your throat with non-prescription anaesthetic and consuming alcohol.

Deep-throating, on its own, however, is not considered enough to be a "top-blower" in *Urge*. Women also need to learn how to swallow ejaculate, even if they already know they do not like to: "the choices are limited: put up with the taste, learn to love it, or learn the trick to down the hatch" (Morrissey, 2005, p. 110).[5] Such advice is very similar (albeit in a more blunt tone) to sex therapy published decades ago. The issue of women's dislike for swallowing semen during fellatio, for example, appears in the 1970s publications of both *Becoming Orgasmic* (Heiman & LoPiccolo, 1976) and *The Joy of Sex* (Comfort, 1975). Anxiety over swallowing semen can also be found in popular sex magazines of the time, such as *Forum*, where "women gave each other tips on how to make their situation bearable" (Jeffreys, 1990, p. 114). Jeffreys notes that:

> They [women] advised each other on how to swallow semen in the same way in which they would advise each other on how to remove red wine stains from the carpet in another kind of women's magazine. Fellatio was a new kind of housework (Jeffreys, 1990, p. 114).

Urge provides ample evidence that this form of sexual labour is still very much required within heterosexual relationships today. Women are advised, just as they were decades ago, that sexually servicing men is what constitutes "great sex".

In comparison to the other texts, *Urge* also contains the most overt endorsements of the sex industry as a model upon which women should base their intimate relationships. Several of the texts condone pornography use but in *Urge* the sex of prostitution is considered not only acceptable but is held up as some sort of ideal. The reader is informed in the chapter titled "I Wanna Be A Porn Star!" that: "[t]oday's adult industry, from porn to prostitution, reflects *our* modern sexual tastes.." (Morrissey, 2005, p. 261 [emphasis mine]). Although prostitution is apparently a reflection of *our* sexual tastes, two pages later, statistics are quoted showing that one in six Australian men have "paid for sex" while the figures for women are one in nine hundred (p. 263). The composition of *our* sexual tastes hardly seems balanced. The endorsement of pornography is reiterated further on: "[B]efore dismissing porn as 'a guy thing' check out the porn flicks made

[5] Morrissey later explains that the down the hatch 'trick' is in fact deep-throating. See: p. 111.

for women and heat yourself up for your own rendition of boogie nights[6] at home" (p. 269). The industries of sexology and pornography intertwine here as women are encouraged, by a qualified sex therapist, not only to consume pornography, but to mimic pornography, that is the "graphic representation of prostitution sex" (Barry, 1995, p. 55), in their own sexual lives.

Gender Specific Texts

The remaining sex advice literature analysed in this chapter is clearly aimed at either men or women, rather than both. *Becoming Orgasmic* (Heiman & LoPiccolo, 1976 / 1992) and *For Women Only* (Berman & Berman, 2001) are aimed at women, while *The New Male Sexuality* (Zillbergeld, 1993), is intended only for a male audience. It is interesting to contrast the approaches of the texts aimed at women with *The New Male Sexuality,* as they are markedly different. While women are encouraged to place the sexual demands of their male partners above their own pleasure and "learn" to engage in the practices their partners may want, men are not given similar advice. Men are not encouraged to overlook their own desires in order to sexually service women but rather are given advice on how to achieve a sexual relationship that meets their own desires. What results is a very narrow model of sex. A model which leaves little room for women's sexual autonomy and pleasure.

Gender specific texts (1): Becoming Orgasmic: A sexual growth program for women

Becoming Orgasmic (Heiman & LoPiccolo, 1992) is one of the most commonly recommended books by therapists on the topic of "female sexuality" (Leiblum, Althof & Kinsberg, 2002). It is written by prominent sexologist, Julia Heiman, a professor of psychiatry (who became the director of the Kinsey Institute in 2004), and Joseph LoPiccolo, a professor of psychology. It is aimed at women who cannot orgasm at all, not with a male partner, or not during intercourse. In other words, it is aimed at women deemed to be sexually dysfunctional in some way. First published in 1976 and substantially updated in 1992, it is set out as a step-by-step guide for women on how to achieve orgasm. Despite having been originally printed some 30 years ago, *Becoming Orgasmic* shares much in

[6] The term "boogie nights" is in reference to the Hollywood film of that name, which is a fictional account of the Californian pornography industry in the 1970s (Anderson, 1997).

common with the more recent *Urge* (Morrissey, 2005). As the following examples demonstrate, the sex of prostitution is promoted through offering advice to women that suggests they should overlook their own discomfort to meet the sexual demands of their male partners.

The introduction to *Becoming Orgasmic* makes grand claims about the successes of the program laid out in its pages. Statistics are quoted such as "90 percent of women learn to orgasm during masturbation…80 percent with their partners…and 35 percent during intercourse" (Heiman & LoPiccolo, 1992, p. xi). It is pitched as though it is a book about women's sexual pleasure, but after several chapters a different picture emerges. There is repeated coaxing throughout the text, such as "if this is a bit scary, go slowly" (p. 150) or "[i]t would be natural if you felt somewhat uncomfortable" (p. 37), presumably to help the reader overcome her fears. By chapter eight: "Sharing self-discovery with a partner" (which is masturbation in front of a partner), it is apparent that women's sexual pleasure is not the focus of attention:

> You do not need to believe that masturbation is enjoyable or valuable to your sexual relationship in order to do this exercise. The primary purpose here is simple: to show your partner what you've learned about yourself (Heiman & LoPiccolo, 1992, p. 118).

The primary focus has shifted to earning the approval of a male partner. Toward the end of chapter eight the authors also concede that: "Women sometimes find it difficult to experience pleasure during this exercise" (p. 118). Indeed, the instructions in *Becoming Orgasmic* frequently advise women to engage in practices that they are not expected to enjoy. In the previous section, outlining the coital imperative in sexological texts, it was shown that women are often not expected to enjoy coitus, even though this is generally the alleged pinnacle of their sexual growth. Coitus, however, is not the only sexual practice which women are expected to find objectionable. In *Becoming Orgasmic* women are also encouraged to overcome their, fear, dislike, discomfort or pain in regard to both oral and anal sex.

It seems somewhat peculiar from the outset, that a book on teaching women how to orgasm, includes a section on how to enhance techniques for practicing oral sex on men. The authors, however, do not acknowledge this irregularity at any point. Instead, just as in *Urge*, the focus remains on ensuring women will allow men to ejaculate in their mouths:

> Some women do not find the taste of or consistency of this fluid unpleasant and usually swallow it…However, if the woman does not wish to swallow

> ejaculate, it is possible to learn to position her mouth in such a way that when the man ejaculates, she merely holds the fluid in her mouth and afterward rinses it out or disposes of it into a tissue (Heiman & LoPiccolo, 1992, p. 183).

It is difficult to imagine how this "technique" would help women "reach their orgasmic potential" or even be helpful to those women who find the taste or consistency of semen unpleasant. It also reinforces that the spectrum of options for women in sex is severely limited. If women wish to complete their "sexual growth program" they can either swallow semen or hold it in their mouths, they cannot refuse to have men ejaculate in their mouths at all, or refrain from performing oral sex altogether.

There are also striking similarities between the instructions given to women in these texts, and the instructions given to prostituted women by pimps and brothel owners (Sherman-Heyl, 1977). The parallels are particularly obvious in regard to enforced military prostitution. In *Let the Good Times Roll* (Sturdevant & Stoltzfus 1993), for example - which is about the sexual abuse of women in Asia by American GIs - there are several first-hand accounts of how trafficked women were forced to perform sex acts, and particularly oral and anal sex. In regard to oral sex, one woman, "Glenda", recounts her experience of "servicing" American soldiers: "the first time I gave a blow job, I threw up outside. I didn't know that throwing up outside is banned. I carried a small towel with me after that" (p. 122). It seems that if women experience any discomfort, displeasure or revulsion when performing oral sex on men this is not to be shown in either systems of prostitution or, according to sex advice literature, within committed heterosexual relationships.

In *Becoming Orgasmic,* the message that women should not expect to achieve sexual pleasure is also evident in regard to anal sex. Heiman and LoPiccolo state "if any discomfort does occur, try again some other time" (1976, p. 184; 1992, p. 232). Physical discomfort is clearly not seen as an acceptable reason for women to abandon sexual practices. The therapists instead provide training methods on how to make the situation bearable, but the reader is warned that it may take "several sessions" before penetration by a penis can take place. Women are again expected to follow the model of prostitution sex, that is, to sexually service men, even at the cost of their own pleasure or comfort. It is difficult to see how this model of sexuality is in women's interests and it is extremely concerning that this model is being actively promoted by qualified sex therapists as a blueprint for couples to follow in their heterosexual relationships.

Gender specific texts (2): For Women Only: A revolutionary guide to reclaiming your sex life

The authors of *For Women Only* (Berman & Berman, 2001) claim, as the subtitle suggests, that their approach to sex therapy is revolutionary, a break from the past. However, much of what they present in this text can be seen as "business as usual" (Hartley, 2002). The Bermans' approach to women's sexual health displays a number of direct links to earlier sexological writing. For example, they sympathetically portray one of the founders of sexology, Henry Havelock Ellis, as a fellow revolutionary. Evidently unaware of the feminist critiques of his work, the Bermans refer to Havelock Ellis as having had "a positive impact on women's attitudes towards their sexuality" (Berman & Berman, 2001, p. 28).

The Berman sisters situate themselves as having "begun where Masters and Johnson left off" (Berman & Berman, 2001, p. xiii), and it is clear that their work is linked to the type of sex therapy created by Masters and Johnson. For example, just as Masters and Johnson used extensive laboratory testing to support their new brand of sex therapy, the Bermans too, place great weight on the importance of scientifically measuring sexual function. Routine physiological tests are performed in almost every case that the Bermans detail in *For Women Only*. One such test is carried out in order to measure a woman's "vaginal compliance". Vaginal compliance is defined as "the ability of the vagina to relax and lengthen" (Berman & Berman, 2001, p. 6). The Bermans offer no further explanation to this, which makes it appear as though it should simply be self-evident that women must be penetrated, and therefore an acceptable level of vaginal compliance is necessary. The assumption that coitus is, and should be, the primary sex act in women's heterosexual relationships is evident throughout the text.

The Bermans do not advocate women's autonomy in the realm of sexual pleasure, instead, women's sexuality is conceived as firmly tied to the act of heterosexual intercourse. This is particularly evident in discussions of "sexual arousal disorder". According to the Bermans, women who suffer from sexual arousal disorder cannot "attain or maintain *adequate* genital lubrication or swelling…" (Berman & Berman, 2001, p. 19 [emphasis mine]). At this point in the text, it is not explained what the lubrication and swelling must be adequate for. Some pages later, however, it is explained that swelling is necessary to ensure "that the outer vagina will in effect, grip the penis upon insertion" (p. 31). Similarly, lubrication is deemed to be necessary because it makes "insertion of the penis into the vagina smoother and easier" (p. 58). It appears the Bermans, like many of

their colleagues before them, believe that women become aroused purely for the purpose of engaging in coitus, a practice which many of these sexologists note, does not tend to bring most women a great deal of sexual pleasure.[7]

Women who do not achieve adequate lubrication, blood flow, or swelling are subsequently labelled by the Bermans as dysfunctional. What is particularly surprising about the Bermans' work, however, is that if their own testing shows that a woman is physiologically normal, but still displaying a disinterest in sex, they tend to disregard their clinical tests and prescribe some form of pharmacological treatment anyway. The treatment in *For Women Only* is almost exclusively the prescription of hormones (usually testosterone), sildenafil (Viagra), or a combination of the two. The case of "Debra" (Berman & Berman, 2001, p. 162-3), detailed in the previous chapter, is again, an illustrative example. Debra presents for treatment at her husband's request, and although the Bermans admit that they believe there is nothing abnormal about the frequency of sexual intercourse in Debra's relationship, they still conduct extensive physiological testing. Upon finding that Debra is, according to their own criteria, completely normal, the Bermans persist with prescribing her a hormone-based treatment (p. 163). It is clear that the definition of Debra's "dysfunction" rests with her husband. Sex twice a week, it is explained, is "*not at all what her husband wanted"* (p. 162). The Bermans offer no counter to this, and the husband's demands are allowed to stand uncontested.

Indeed, men's sexual demands are consistently given preference in *For Women Only*. In the world of the Bermans, women's sexual experiences remain limited to simply meeting men's sexual demands, although there is some suggestion that women will ideally learn to enjoy this state of affairs. Lucy, for example, has been recently hospitalised for severe depression after discovering her husband was having an affair with a close friend of hers (Berman & Berman, 2001, p. 105-107). She presents at the Bermans' clinic trying to save the marriage by rediscovering her interest in sex with her husband. The Bermans prescribe Viagra to increase her blood flow and she subsequently states that this has improved her relationship with her husband because, in her own words: "I think he felt it was a rejection of him" (p. 106).

In another example, Susan presents after years of having been frustrated by sex with her husband (p. 65-68). She describes her

[7] Women's frequent lack of enjoyment in practicing heterosexual intercourse is mentioned in several of the texts considered here but numerous studies also confirm this. See for example: Hite (1976) and Holland et al. (1998).

experience by saying: "*I would just lie there and feel like, "Oh my God, this is what it must feel like to be raped"* (p. 65). Such a statement suggests a high level of psychological distress during sex, but the Bermans prescribe Viagra for Susan's "problem". Although these scenarios clearly involve the male partners of these women, the sexual issues within these relationships are not represented in *For Women Only* as relational. The Bermans essentially reduce women's sexual problems to individual matters of biology and, in the process, reinforce the idea that it is the women who are both dysfunctional and responsible for fixing the relationship by making themselves more sexually available. The Bermans' proposed "solutions" also share much in common with those of Masters and Johnson. The primary focus is on ensuring that women continue to engage in coitus with their male partners, regardless of their own desires and physical pleasure. The ideal model of sexuality promoted for women in *For Women Only* seems to be constant sexual availability, the same model that is promoted through the prostitution of sexuality (Barry, 1995).

Gender specific texts (3): The New Male Sexuality

The New Male Sexuality (Zillbergeld, 1993) stands in stark contrast to the books aimed at heterosexual couples and also the books aimed at women. The author, Bernie Zillbergeld, was a renowned clinical psychologist but was also an outspoken critic of the increasing medicalisation of sexuality, in particular, the shift in sexual medicine to classify all "difficulties" as medical dysfunctions (Rinkleib Ellison, 2002). This is an attitude which stands in direct opposition to the views of many sexologists writing on female sexuality. Indeed, Zillbergeld's critical outlook in regard to the medicalisation of sexuality sets him apart from all the other authors considered in this chapter. In keeping with this critical outlook, rather than focusing on dysfunction, *The New Male Sexuality* tends to emphasise normalcy and diversity within sexual functioning. A substantial amount of the book is dedicated to reassuring men that they are "normal". The first two chapters are about the unrealistic expectations of sexual performance that are placed on men. The second section is on "sexual reality" with chapter titles such as "What is this thing called a penis?" and "Am I normal or what?", both focused on reassuring men about their penis size. No such reassurances about unrealistic expectations are offered to women in either *Becoming Orgasmic* or *For Women Only*.

The remaining sections of *The New Male Sexuality* are aimed at "better sex" and "resolving problems". Unlike the format of the other books considered here, these chapters are not a how-to guide in the sense of

either self improvement, or sexual technique. Instead, the author provides a conversational guide on how to manipulate a female partner into acquiescing to a variety of sexual demands. This is in stark contrast to the literature intended for women. While women are expected to conform to the demands of their partner, by simply "giving in" (as in *Passionate Marriage*), or medicating themselves (as in *For Women Only*), men are told how to get what they want.

The "better sex" and "resolving problems" sections contain elaborately detailed scenarios with conversation suggestions for men to attempt with their partners. In one scenario, Zillbergeld explains what to do if men want to have more sex in their current relationship. It is titled "Opening negotiations with your partner":

> Here's a statement you might want to make if you're not getting as much sex as you want.
>
> YOU: Thanks for agreeing to do this. I think it's important for us. I love making love with you. It's close and loving, and fun. I just wish we did it more often. I don't mind getting turned down sometimes. I know you're tired or not in the mood or have something on your mind. But when I get turned down five or six times in a row, I feel unloved. That gets me in a real funk, and I withdraw. I know this isn't good for us, but I don't know what else to do. I feel lost and give up. 'What's the point of being together?' is what it feels like. (Zillbergeld, 1993, p. 547).

The first strategy is guilt ("I feel unloved"), followed by threatening to end the relationship if things do not change ("what's the point of being together?"). In the first section of this chapter, where frequent intercourse was detailed as a necessity in heterosexual relationships, the words of distressed women seeking medical solutions to save their relationships were recounted. Understanding what men are told in their sex advice literature may go someway to explaining why many women, such as those described in *For Women Only*, seek out sex therapy. Men are encouraged to threaten the permanence of their relationships in order to get their female partners to agree to more sex, more often. Again, there seems to be very little room in this model of heterosexual relationships for equality and mutual pleasure.

The New Male Sexuality is filled with examples of these "conversation starters" which can be used when the reader (male partner) has a particular request to make. The imagined conversations follow a strikingly similar pattern. Rather than providing for honest communication and negotiation, Zillbergeld presents ready made "solutions" which are designed to meet men's sexual demands. Indeed, *The New Male Sexuality* provides advice

that discourages men from entering into genuine negotiations about the desires of each partner and instead provides scenarios that enable men to either impose their "solution", or manipulate their partner into acceptance.

The following scenario highlights the way in which men are instructed on how to impose their expectations of sexual labour on to women. Here Zillbergeld explains what to do if men feel "too tired" to have sex as often as they may desire it:

> YOU: I have less interest in sex than before, because I'm feeling exhausted and overwhelmed most of the time, especially in the evenings…when I'm tired and overwhelmed, sex just seems like one more burden. I realize that sounds terrible, but that's how it feels. I would like to change…But to make a change, something has got to give. If you're up to discussing it, I can go over some things I'd like to stop doing or do less often.
>
> HER: Go ahead.
>
> YOU: The first thing is meals. When you proposed that I cook half the meals, I thought it was a great idea. But now I don't. I'm not good at it, and it's a tremendous strain. After picking up food on the way home, cooking and serving it, I'm a wreck and not up for sex or anything. I want to stop cooking. I'm willing to pick up something already cooked and serve it, but that's all I can do (Zillbergeld, 1993, p. 450).

It is difficult to discern exactly what the primary concern here is. Is unclear if the preferred outcome is increasing the amount of sexual encounters a man can have or decreasing the amount of housework he has to perform. Fortunately for the man in question, with this method, both ends can be achieved simultaneously. The more subtle message contained within this passage, however, is that sex is work. The cooking has to be done, and the sex has to be performed. In this particular instance it is assumed that the woman will be responsive to the proposed "solution" which requires her to perform both more sexual and household labour. However, *The New Male Sexuality* also includes plans for when the suggested conversation starters are met with resistance from a partner.

In one example, the reader is instructed on how to coax a reluctant woman into performing her required duties: "go over the list of sexual options with her and see what she's willing to do for you when you're in the mood and she isn't" (p. 558). It is not considered a possibility within *The New Male Sexuality* that women might simply refuse sex altogether when "not in the mood". Instead, women must be constantly sexually available and ready to service a male partner whenever sexual labour is demanded. Women's own desires on the other hand, are represented as

rather unimportant, and this is highlighted when Zillbergeld warns against the possible misuse of his strategies:

> It will not work to make her feel guilty. Many men do this. When their partners turn them down, they sulk for days until the partner gives in because she feels so guilty. This giving in is hardly a joyous event. It's clear she's doing it out of guilt, and with resentment for being coerced (Zillbergeld, 1993, p. 558).

Although Zillbergeld warns against the blunt use of guilt for the purpose of manipulation in this extract, as evidenced in the earlier excerpt (where men are encouraged to say they "feel unloved") the more subtle use of guilt is deemed to be acceptable. The problem with blatantly employing guilt as a strategy, he explains, is not that is disrespectful to ignore a partner's refusals, or that men should not use coercion in order to obtain sexual access to their partners, but that "the result is hardly ecstatic sex" (p. 558). The central problem is that *men's* pleasure is at stake. Zillbergeld apparently perceives that the sex performed under outright coercion is simply less enjoyable for men than the sex which can be achieved through more subtle manipulation. Again, this fits with Barry's analysis of prostitution, which suggests that women are required to be actively involved in sex, fake sexual interest or sexual response, and further, to enact "emotional engagement" in order to better fulfil men's sexual desires (Barry, 1995, p. 34).

In a sense, the advice offered in *The New Male Sexuality* may help explain the stories of women seeking treatment for sexual dysfunction. Women presenting for treatment report to therapists that they feel pressured by their partners to perform certain types of sex more often than they want to. The stories in *For Women Only*, detailing situations in which women are fearful of being divorced or losing their relationships, are certainly not surprising given the strategies recommended for men. Men are encouraged to pressure their partners and women present for treatment feeling pressured. Ultimately, there is no suggestion of genuine compromise in either the books aimed at women, or *The New Male Sexuality*, intended for men. Instead, women are expected to adapt their behaviour to suit the "needs" of their male partners. It is not proposed in any of the texts, for example, that women should attempt to convince their partners to have less sex, or even that they should request a partner to refrain from attempting sex or sexual contact when it is not welcome. Women's own desires are made mere afterthoughts, while the maintenance of coitus and men's pleasure remains paramount. These themes should be of serious concern, particularly as sex self-help books have historically

had a significant impact on trends in sexual practices. If Potts (2002) is correct, and sexological texts and self-help books are influential in "constructing normative notions of heterosex" (p. 48) then the sex of prostitution will now likely be part of normative notions of heterosex.

Women are ultimately provided with very few options in this sex self-help literature, which is not only extremely popular, but also legitimised through widespread recommendation by therapists. While the authors of sex self-help books often profess to promote sexual empowerment for women, a feminist analysis of these texts exposes the way in which this rhetoric obscures the construction of an ideal model of sexuality in which women and men are made fundamentally unequal. That is to say, women are expected to meet men's sexual demands even when this conflicts with their own pleasure, desire or even physical comfort. It has been argued here that the biological determinism that underpins this literature, promotes men's sexual access to women, and results in the classification of non-compliant women as dysfunctional and in need of treatment. The treatments offered in this advice literature further belie suggestions that women's sexual pleasure is perceived as important in sexological writing. Excerpts from these texts show that women are frequently instructed to engage in practices that they are likely to find objectionable or even painful. Women are instead encouraged to actively sexually service their male partners, a key element of the sex of prostitution.

Through the last two chapters, the right of men to gain sexual access to women has been highlighted as an ongoing theme in sexological literature. Furthermore, it has been argued that in promoting men's sexual desires as biologically determined "needs", sexology and sex therapy are constructing an ideal model of sexuality that reinforces women's subordination. In this model, healthy women are expected to be constantly sexually available and must meet men's sexual demands by sexually servicing them, irrespective of their own wishes. The construction of women's desire in this context becomes one of dependence on men as women's sexuality is deemed to be responsive rather than autonomous. Indeed, sexologists continue to suggest that women need to be "sexually awakened" by their male partners (e.g. Leiblum, 2002). This construction of ideal heterosexuality makes it difficult for women to refuse unwanted sexual contact and also shares concerning parallels with harmful pornographic rape myths. Therefore, on a conceptual level, the model of sex promoted in sexology can be seen to share much in common with the model of sex promoted through the sex industry, namely prostitution and pornography. This idea is elaborated upon further in the next chapter where the material links between the industries of pornography and

sexology are explored and it is suggested that the pornographic and sexological models of sexuality can be seen as mutually reinforcing.

CHAPTER SIX

"SPECTACULAR SEX"? PORNOGRAPHY AND SEXOLOGY COLLIDE

The previous two sections of this book have outlined the model of sex promoted in pornography and the model of sex promoted in sexology. It has been argued that pornography, as a form of prostitution, promotes a harmful model of women's sexuality, based on inequality and objectification. Similar themes have been highlighted within the sexological model of sex, in particular, the eroticising of women's sexual subordination. Together, these chapters have demonstrated that there are significant similarities between the model of sex promoted by the pornography industry and the model of sex promoted by the sexology industry. Both models can be said to endorse the sex of prostitution and reinforce women's sexual inequality but such conceptual links are only part of the equation. While pornography and sexology are generally perceived to be completely separate entities, this chapter explores the ways in which pornography and sexology are materially interconnected. The 'cultural artifacts' (Reinharz, 1992) which will be analysed here include sexology texts, sex self-help books, sexological websites and popular sex advice literature written by self-proclaimed porn stars. Through an analysis of sexology texts, sex self-help books, sexological websites and popular sex advice literature written by porn stars, it is concluded that the enterprises of pornography and sexology are mutually reinforcing.

History

In popular consciousness, sexology and pornography are generally conceived as very separate enterprises, but in reality, the history of these two areas has frequently intertwined. Historian H.G Cocks (2004), for example, has noted the links between the distribution networks for pornography and scientific works on sexuality in the early 20th Century, just as sexology was becoming a recognised discipline. By the 1920s, sexologists were concerned that their "serious books of sexual instruction"

were circulated along the same networks as mass-marketed pornography (Cocks, 2004, p. 465). While pornographers welcomed this relationship, as it offered them "the cachet of intellectual seriousness", the sexologists feared that the connection to illegal materials could undermine their new science (p. 481-482).

These circumstances radically changed, however, as pornography became increasingly socially acceptable. By the 1960s, sexologists were seeking to further their relationships with the growing pornography industry (Collins, 2003, p. 134-164). Sex advice columns in pornographic magazines were one of the most prominent ways that this relationship developed, affording the pornography industry increased legitimacy, and sexology a new way of marketing itself to the masses (Collins, 2003). This relationship between sexology and pornography continued throughout the latter decades of the 20th century and, as this chapter shows, it is still evident today.

Sex surrogacy and prostitution

Modern sex therapy has, since its inception, frequently intersected with pornography and the sex industry more generally. In the 1960s and 1970s, for example, during the initial years of sex therapy as a recognised practice, the use of "sex surrogates" by "humanistic" sexologists was common (Gabbard, 1989). The practice began with Masters and Johnson, two of the most influential figures in the establishment of modern sex therapy. During the 1970s, Masters and Johnson supplied female surrogates for unmarried or unpartnered men (Noonan, 1999; Jeffreys, 1990, p. 139). The surrogates, who Masters claimed were volunteers, were required to have sex with the men as often as their course of "therapy" required. The use of surrogates eventually became more widespread but the practice remained controversial. In the 1970s, some therapists argued strongly against the use of surrogates, even claiming that their use was a thinly disguised form of prostitution (Gabbard, 1989, p. 141; Noonan, 1999). After legal threats over the use of surrogates, Masters and Johnson eventually abandoned the practice but many other therapists, predominantly in the US, continued to use surrogate therapy well into the 1980s. By the 1990s, the use of surrogates had all but disappeared, or at least any practitioners continuing surrogate therapy were not willing to admit to doing so on public record (Irvine, 1990, p. 89).

In the new millennium, however, the use of surrogates has re-appeared as an issue in sex therapy. Although surrogate therapy is no longer widespread, there is certainly evidence that it does still occur. At the 2007

World Sexology Conference in Sydney, for example, Australian therapist Dr Brian Hickman presented a study on the successful use of surrogates in his Melbourne practice (Hickman, 2007). While surrogate therapy is still controversial, Hickman is a well-respected member of the therapist community and a former president of the Australian Society of Sex Educators, Researchers and Therapists (Hooton, 2003). A related trend in the US has been the rise of "sexological bodywork" (Tiefer, 2006, p. 370). Bodyworkers can be seen as somewhere in between therapists and surrogates. Sexological bodyworkers are trained sexologists, unlike surrogates, but engage in "touch therapy", that is physical activities such as erotic massage and masturbation coaching with clients, thus setting them apart from regular sex therapists (sexologicalbodywork.com, 2008). This can be seen as a return to the humanistic stream of sexology, which tended to emphasise hands-on experience over scientific objectivity.

Some therapists, including prominent FSD critic and psychiatrist, Leonore Tiefer, have treated the return of humanistic sexology sympathetically. Tiefer (2006) goes so far as to defend the practice of surrogacy as distinctly separate from prostitution because the process "was to teach matters of the heart more than the genitalia" (p. 364). If the primary purpose of surrogacy was about emotional instruction, however, it remains unclear as to why therapy could not have been undertaken by a regular therapist with no sexual contact. It also overlooks the considerable demands placed on the surrogate. While she[1] may well fulfil multiple roles, including emotional support and non-sexual physical intimacy, she is also expected to provide sexual intimacy and sexual pleasure for a client in return for a fee. Her sexual interest and her sexual pleasure are not the purpose of the interaction, the function is very much one of sexually servicing the male client, a fundamental aspect of the sex of prostitution (Barry, 1995).

Given that Masters and Johnson pioneered the use of sex surrogates, it is not surprising that the practice closely resembles prostitution. In fact, it is in keeping with their understanding of the relationship between prostitution and normal or ideal heterosexuality. Many of the supposedly revolutionary sexual techniques, which Masters and Johnson are credited with developing, are actually based on Masters' research with prostituted women (Jeffreys, 1990, 1997, p. 37-40). Masters considered prostituted women to be experts on human sexual response and recorded their "tricks" for making men orgasm, later incorporating them into his practice of sex

[1] The vast majority of surrogates are women. While there is some evidence that men have occasionally been used as surrogate partners for women in therapy, this is highly unusual. See: Irvine (1990) and Noonan (1998).

therapy. Masters took prostitution to be a representative, if not ideal, version of sex. He did not consider the power inequality involved in prostitution to be a problem (Jeffreys, 1990). Nor did he consider it problematic that women in prostitution were being paid to meet men's sexual demands regardless of their own sexual interests or desires. Rather, the techniques that prostituted women employed to make men orgasm became the basis for marital and couples therapy in the 1970s. According to Masters, all women could benefit from learning how women in prostitution serviced men sexually.

The concept of prostitution as an ideal model for heterosexual relationships was also taken up by Dr Alex Comfort in *The Joy of Sex* (1975). Comfort bemoaned Western cultural norms that prevented prostitution from being considered an art form (Comfort, 1975, p. 210). Like Masters, Comfort believed that all women could learn from prostituted women and courtesans of other times and cultures, who, according to Comfort, were a "repository of the art of pleasing" (1975, p. 210). Indeed he states: "what we call whores' tricks ought to be called lovers' tricks" and informs women that if they become proficient at such "tricks" they need not fear "commercial competition" (p. 210). Once again, the idea is that the model of sex found in prostitution should be held up as an ideal for other women to follow in order to keep their male partners happy. In this way, during the fledgling years of modern sex therapy, prostitution became reinforced as the model of sex that should be mimicked by women in everyday heterosexual relationships.

SAR and pornography

The newly established discipline of modern sex therapy also drew on pornography or "the graphic representation of prostitution sex" (Barry, 1995, p. 55), as an important tool for understanding human sexuality. Watching pornography was taken to be an important part of training sex therapists. This was done through what became known as "Sexual Attitude Reassessment" (SAR) workshops, First trialled in the late 1960s, SAR workshops involved therapists watching pornography, usually on multiple screens simultaneously, for several hours at a time, over the course of a two day period (Irvine, 1990; Reiss, 2006). These sessions became known informally as "fuckarama" (Reiss, 2006) and there was some expectation that participants may touch and interact sexually with each other during a workshop. At various intervals, the film exhibitions would cease, and participants would break away to discuss their own emotional reactions to the materials (Irvine, 1990). The main purpose of this practice was

purportedly to desensitise professionals to various forms of sex to which they may not be accustomed. Homosexual sex, group sex, and sadomasochism were reportedly common themes (Reiss, 2006). The eventual aim was that therapists would interrogate their own prejudices and therefore not be judgemental about the potential sexual preferences of their patients.

The sex to which the therapists were becoming desensitised, however, was the sex of prostitution. The materials used in the SAR workshops were generally a mix of hard-core pornography and "professional" films produced by pharmaceutical companies (Irvine, 1990, p. 94) or therapists themselves (Reiss, 2006). While there were claims that the films produced specifically for the SAR workshops were markedly different from pornography, Irvine (1990) suggests that this distinction was largely a false one: "the line between acceptable professional sex films and exploitative pornographic ones is often tenuous" (p. 94). Indeed, the distinction between the professional and the pornographic became even more tenuous when the Playboy Foundation began funding SAR workshops in the early 1970s (Reiss, 2006, p. 63). By this stage, the workshops had become so popular among medical professionals that SAR components were being integrated into university medical courses all over the US (Reiss, 2006).

At the height of the SAR trend, medical professionals could attend up to eight days of "training", which consisted mainly of watching pornographic films (Reiss, 2006). Furthermore, therapist Ira Reiss has recounted that in his time attending various SAR programs, the focus of the "training" became not just the desensitisation to various sex practices shown, but the acceptance and even promotion of the various sex practices shown:

> [I]t became clear that this support of broad experimentation was more than just permission giving – it was presented more as a demand to experiment. There was a negative label applied to those who spoke up and said they didn't want to try a particular type of sexual behavior…To me, this was just a new Procrustean bed that demanded that all people fit into what some of the SAR people saw *as the ideal way to live sexually*. In that sense, it was not really different from the old sexual dogma that said we all should be virginal outside of marriage. Now, instead of no sex, you were expected to try as wide a variety as possible. That was called 'liberation' (Reiss, 2006, p. 64 [emphasis mine]).

Reiss' criticism bears a striking resemblance to Jeffreys' (1990) critique of sexual revolution sexology as reinforcing libertarian ideology about sex. That is, sex was to be understood outside of politics and ethics,

and be seen instead as simply a range of practices "so that according to this analysis, the wider the range of practices the more liberated the sex" (Jeffreys, 1990, p. 91). As Jeffreys argues, however, far from liberation, in practice this resulted in a prescriptive approach that required women to engage in a broader range of practices at their male partners' requests. The SAR model creates the same problem. Through the SAR workshops, therapists and medical professionals were becoming indoctrinated into understanding the sex acts depicted in pornography as normal and even ideal sex practices for all heterosexual couples to follow.

The SAR format created some controversy in the 1980s, especially in the wake of feminist challenges to pornography. After a SAR style "media extravaganza" held during the 6th World Congress of Sexology in 1983, for example, an Australian sex educator was quoted as saying that: "We are all liberals and more comfortable with ourselves than other people, but some of us feel that the adult film scene is almost totally destructive" (quoted in Irvine, 1990, p. 4). The SAR workshops withstood such challenges, however, and by the 1990s continued to be so widespread that the peak professional body for sex therapists in the US, AASECT, released a set of standards to govern them (Robinson et al., 2002). Moreover, SAR screenings are still shown as part of standard medical training in some universities (Robinson et al., 2002) as well as being shown to therapists at various institutions such as The Kinsey Institute (Irvine, 1990) and The Institute for the Advanced Study of Human Sexuality (Tiefer, 2006).

Current Practices

The use of pornography in sexology is not limited to the training of professionals. The promotion of pornography in sexological writing is both candid and common. In addition to the ongoing use of SAR workshops, the intertwining of pornography and sexology can be seen in two other main areas: the use of pornography in sexological research and the recommendation and use of pornography in sex therapy.

Pornography in sexological research

The use of pornography in sexological research often appears incidental. When measurements are taken to test a patient's or research subject's arousal, pornography is regularly used to ensure that the subject is in fact aroused. This is considered so standard, that the selection or type of "erotic materials" does not usually warrant comment by the researchers involved (Janssen, Carpenter & Graham, 2003). It is taken for granted that

any material labelled as "pornography" will arouse any man or woman watching. For many years this posed as a relatively unquestioned truth in sexology. Indeed, the idea that pornography guarantees a subject's physiological and psychological arousal is so entrenched that researchers often express confusion when women report a lack of arousal after exposure to pornographic materials:

> A typical clinical technique is to hook up a woman to the photoplethismograph, show her erotic material, and monitor her response. Frequently, women who register some vaginal lubrication will report lack of arousal. The clinician will then correct the woman, advise her that she is, in fact, sexually stimulated, and provide her with the proof from the monitoring device (Irvine, 1990, p. 162).

According to psychologist Wendy Stock (1988), the material shown to women in this type of clinical testing was typically hard-core pornography. In her words, it was pornography that had "little to do with mutual, egalitarian interaction, and a lot to do with rape" (Stock, 1988, p. 36). Sexologists were, therefore, expecting women to become aroused at the sight of other women being dominated, coerced or assaulted. Despite the content, it is still entirely possible that some women may experience physiological arousal as a consequence of watching such pornography. As feminists have argued, in circumstances where women are taught from a young age to eroticise their own subordination, it is not surprising to find that women have physiological responses to material that degrades and humiliates them (Jeffreys, 1990, p. 303-5; Kitzinger, 1995; Segal, 1994). This does not mean that women regard such experiences as positive or psychologically enjoyable. Within sexology, however, all sexual response is taken to be positive, as good in and of itself. The sexological canon does not contain the terminology or conceptual framework to cope with the idea of a negative sexual response (Jeffreys, 1990, p. 303-5). Therefore it cannot explain or understand that women may experience physiological arousal and yet report that they do not feel aroused. According to clinicians, healthy women cannot exhibit a physical sexual response and simultaneously report a lack of subjective arousal. Although this assumption is now slowing being questioned, sexologists have tended to ignore the possibility that women may not have enjoyed watching the pornography that has been shown to them (Rupp & Wallen, 2007).

This clinical use of pornography has occasionally been subject to criticism from within sexology. In the 1980s this criticism was often coupled with an awareness of feminist campaigns against pornography (Irvine, 1990). Some therapists even questioned the idea that pornography

should be used in sex research at all. In more recent times, this criticism has become more muted and, instead of abandoning the use of pornography altogether, therapists are advocating the use of pornography specifically designed for women. The suggestion is that women may need "woman-centred" pornography in order to become both subjectively and physiologically aroused. For example, in a recent article, "Selecting Films for Sex Research: Gender differences in erotic film preference" (Janssen, Carpenter & Graham, 2003), it is suggested that women's dislike of pornography is best explained by an historical lag: "because one of the primary themes in erotic films *has been* dominance of men over women and exploitation of women, women may have developed negative attitudes toward sexually explicit films" (p. 244 [emphasis mine]). Such attitudes are no longer necessary according to the authors, as "woman-centred" and "woman-made" films are now widely available. To support their claims, the authors note that they believe women are *less likely* to experience "disgust, anger, shame, and distress in response to the woman-made films" (p. 244). Presumably then, there is still a possibility that some women *will* continue to experience disgust, anger, shame and distress in viewing some of these materials. Yet there remains an expectation that these same materials are supposed to aid sexual arousal. The problems associated with this contradiction are not discussed. Also, the authors do not provide any evidence to support the assumption that there is a clearly discernable difference between pornography made by and for men and pornography made by and for women. Therefore, the entire concept remains unsubstantiated.

As a result of the move to recognise "women-centred" pornography, however, sexologists have begun to present a slightly more nuanced version of their past assumption that *all* pornography causes arousal in *all* sexually healthy men and women. In terms of research and treatment with women, it is now assumed that "woman-centred" pornography should cause arousal in normal, healthy women. The Berman sisters, frequently cited as being at the cutting edge of FSD research, use "women-centred" pornography as part of their lengthy testing procedures. The case of "Nicole" is given as a typical example:

> Nicole was given a vibrator and a pair of 3-D surround sound and video glasses. These glasses allow for uninterrupted erotic visual stimulation. Nicole was to watch an erotic video, designed and produced for women through the glasses and stimulate herself in private with the vibrator for 15 minutes (Berman & Berman, 2001, p. 7).

The goal of this, they explain, is for Nicole to become "maximally aroused" so that they can test her blood flow, and the use of an "erotic video" is considered a means to this end. She is being told to watch and become aroused by pornography. In other words, she is expected to become sexually aroused, by watching the use of other women in a form of prostitution.

The Berman sisters make sure that readers know their patients are not being trained to watch just any pornography, but pornography "designed and produced for women" because this is promoted as more appropriate. Clinicians often assert that pornography produced by, or for, women does not feature "dominance of men over women and the exploitation of women" (Janssen, Carpenter & Graham, 2003, p. 244). This reasoning is flawed on two levels. Firstly, the exploitation of women within pornography is not limited to those productions that feature overt domination. Pornography, as a form of prostitution, can be understood as harmful irrespective of themes of domination and submission (see chapter one). Secondly, as the following examples show, recommended "women-centred" pornography does indeed include themes of men's dominance over women.

A typical example of so-called "woman-centred" material is Candida Royalle's video series. Royalle's films are some of the most recommended by sex therapists (Leiblum, Althof & Kinsberg, 2002, p. 226; Royalle, 2004). Royalle is a former porn star turned pornographer and is the first pornographer to become a member of the American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors and Therapists (AASECT). Royalle was invited to join AASECT "due to the message of positive sexuality in her films" (Feminists for Free Expression, 2005, n.pag.). In her recent sex advice book, Royalle (2004) offers her own recommendations to women. She suggests that women watch her film *My Surrender*, in particular the scenario where a married couple play "the professor and the naughty school girl" (p. 31). According to Royalle, this scene involves the professor teaching the naughty school girl (his wife) a lesson for misbehaving: "he bends her over his desk and administers 'corporal punishment'…the two…proceed to have hot and heavy sex, starting off with him *making her* perform oral sex on him" (p. 31 [emphasis mine]). It seems rather clear that this "woman-centred" film does involve the primary theme of men's dominance over women.

Further useful examples of frequently recommended "woman-centred" pornography can be found in titles directed by Veronica Hart (e.g. Striar & Bartlik, 1999; Davis Raskin, 2002, p. 193). Like Royalle, Hart is a former porn star. One of her more famous productions, as a director, was the film

Taken, which received an *Adult Video News* (AVN) award nomination in 2002. It features the central theme of a woman being kidnapped by a stranger and then drugged and bound (Kernes, 2001). AVN editor Mark Kernes (2001) describes the kidnapper as "alternately *dominating* and caressing his prey" in several scenes during the film ([emphasis mine]). In a typical representation of the pornographic rape myth, the central character, who, in this version, has been kidnapped, is eventually shown enjoying sex with her attacker (Kernes, 2001). Again it is difficult to see how such content can be clearly differentiated from mainstream pornography marketed to men (see chapter two). The themes of male domination and exploitation of women highlighted by Janssen, Carpenter and Graham (2003) are also clearly evident in pornography marketed to women.

Pornography as therapy

While pornography is often used as a means to induce arousal in clinical testing, therapists also frequently recommend pornography as a way for individuals and couples to "enhance" their sex lives. This type of advice has developed within the discipline over the last few decades. The recommendation of pornography to patients is now both accepted and widespread in sexology but this was not always the case. In the original 1976 version of *Becoming Orgasmic,* for example, therapists Heiman and LoPiccolo provided the following advice in regard to sexual "enhancement":

> For some people, enhancement may mean trying new intercourse positions, exploring different, non-intercourse activities, acting out some fantasies, or having sex at a different place or time. For other people, new partners, group sex, or swapping partners may be the directions they choose for enhancing their sexuality (Heiman & LoPiccolo, 1976, p. 179).

Note, there is no mention of pornography. By 1992, however, the updated edition reads:

> For some people, enhancement may mean trying new intercourse positions, exploring different, non-intercourse activities, acting out some fantasies, or having sex at a different place or time. For other people, new partners, group sex, *renting X-rated movies*, or swapping partners may be the directions they choose for enhancing their sexuality (Heiman & LoPiccolo, 1992, p. 228 [emphasis mine]).

In almost twenty years, the only change is the addition of "renting X-rated movies". Some of the most respected and well-known figures in sex therapy have supported this move towards pornography-as-therapy. Bernie Zillbergeld, a prominent sex therapist and author of *The New Male Sexuality*, believed that the use of "erotic materials" was "mainly beneficial" (Zillbergeld, 1993, p. 113). Another prominent figure, Helen Singer Kaplan, one of the first sexologists to theorise sexual desire, was quoted in the mid-1990s as referring to pornographic videos as "non-chemical aphrodisiacs" (Kaplan quoted in Striar & Bartlik, 1999, p. 60). Kaplan was a long time supporter of using pornography in therapy and in her influential text *The New Sex Therapy* (Kaplan, 1974) even suggests that as pornography "helps stimulate healthy fantasies", it should be prescribed by clinicians to help in the treatment of sexual dysfunctions (Slade, 2000, p. 974).

Today, pornography is still openly prescribed by therapists as a way of treating dysfunction. In a 2007 episode of the popular *Oprah Winfrey Show,* for example, sex therapist Gail Saltz, a trained psychiatrist, extolled the virtues of pornography for women suffering from FSD:

> Forty-three percent of women have some sort of sexual dysfunction. They have trouble with desire or they have trouble with arousal. And this [pornography] is a tool to use if you need help feeling more desirous [sic], feeling more aroused or something to increase the pleasure of your sexuality… (Saltz quoted in Winfrey, 2007, p. 16).

Furthermore, the use of pornography in therapy is now so widely accepted that the journal *Sexual and Relationship Therapy* even includes an "Internet and Multimedia Review" section, which can be used to suggest new "erotic materials" for clients (e.g. Black, 2006; Hall, 2006).

It is important to note that while the above examples focus on women, the recommendation of pornography in sex therapy tends to be for couples rather than individuals (Striar & Bartlik, 1999). Pornography, or "erotic material" as it is more commonly referred to in sexology journals, is predominantly seen by therapists as a way to "add diversity to a monogamous relationship" (Striar & Bartlik, 1999, p. 61). In one of the few academic articles to actually address this practice in sex therapy - "Stimulation of the Libido: The use of erotica in sex therapy" - therapists Striar and Bartlik (1999) claim that pornography is particularly beneficial for "couples with incompatible sexual fantasies" (p. 61). They further explain their rationale with the following example: "For instance, it can be used to introduce a partner to a new mode of sexual experience that he or she might otherwise find distasteful or unacceptable" (p. 61). In this

instance, qualified therapists are suggesting that pornography should be used as a tool when trying to convince an unwilling partner to perform a sex act that they do not wish to engage in.

Many women's experiences suggest that pornography is frequently used as a coercive strategy in heterosexual relationships, with or without therapist recommendation. The public hearings for the Dworkin / MacKinnon ordinances in the United States during the mid-1980s, and women's testimonies recorded for the US Attorney General's Commission on Pornography (known as the Meese Commission), also during the 1980s, provided substantial evidence that men use pornography as a tool to manipulate and coerce women into having certain types of sex (Dworkin & MacKinnon, 1997; Russell, 1998). At times these accounts suggested pornography was being used as a way to groom wives and girlfriends into accepting certain sex acts. For example, one woman, during the ordinance hearings, stated "I could see how I was being seasoned by the use of pornography…" (quoted in Russell (ed)., 1993, p. 51). Women who testified before the Meese Commission gave similar stories. One woman stated:

> He told me if I loved him I would do this. And that, as I could see from the things that he read me in the magazines initially, a lot of times women didn't like it, but if I tried enough I would probably like and I would learn to like it (quoted in Russell, 1998, p. 144).

Another women explained how pornography had been used by her husband as a blueprint for their own sex lives:

> Once we saw an X-rated film that showed anal intercourse. After that he insisted that I try anal intercourse. I agreed to do so, trying to be the available, willing creature that I thought I was supposed to be. I found the experience very painful and told him so. But he kept insisting that we try it again and again (quoted in Russell, 1998, p. 144).

The second testimony is revealing in a number of ways. While it is clear that the idea for this sexual activity came directly from the pornography, this woman also notes that she felt as though she should agree to it, to be a "willing creature", regardless of her misgivings. The idea that women should "experiment" and perform sex acts that they do not wish to, has become a popular model of women's sex role in heterosexual relationships since the sexual revolution of the 1960s (Jeffreys, 1990). It is an idea frequently reinforced and legitimised through sexology, even today. Women are still encouraged to sexually service their

male partners, even if they have no desire to do so, or experience pain or discomfort while doing so (see chapters four and five). The woman also notes that the subsequent performing of the act found in pornography was, for her, "very painful". This was clearly not a pleasant or desirable experience for her, but these issues are not considered to be problems in medical sexology. Instead, men's use of pornography as a coercive strategy becomes validated as a way for couples to achieve sexual "enhancement".

Similar to the literature on pornography and sexological research, there is also some acknowledgement in the literature on pornography and therapy, that women may not enjoy watching mainstream pornography marketed to men. In *Becoming Orgasmic,* for example, Heiman and LoPiccolo note that:

> A portion of pornography (like most other fiction) is about human degradation, hostility toward women, and destructiveness and humiliation. You may want to avoid these materials, as they will inevitably support any negative feelings you may have about yourself as a sexual person (Heiman & LoPiccolo, 1992, p. 81).

In this excerpt the therapists begin by representing pornography as fiction, a common trope in libertarian and pro-pornography works (Russell, 1998). The pornography that Heiman and LoPiccolo subsequently recommend, however, including X-rated videos and *Playboy* magazine, is certainly not fictional. Real women are used to make these materials. It is also suggested in this excerpt that good pornography is available and should be clearly differentiated from bad pornography, which contains themes of degradation and hostility towards women. Aside from the fact that any clear distinction between "good" and "bad" pornography is questionable at best, the therapists do go on to recommend mainstream pornography such as *Playboy* which has been well exposed by feminists as objectifying and degrading to women (e.g. Dines, Jensen & Russo, 1998; Russell (ed)., 1993).

Therapists Striar and Bartlik (1999) also note that there can be problems associated with the recommendation of mainstream pornography to women and suggest that women may instead prefer a new "sensitive genre of film created by and targeted for females" (p. 60). Again, films by Candida Royalle and Veronica Hart are mentioned as particularly good examples. There is still an expectation contained in the article, however, that healthy women should enjoy some level of objectification and degradation in pornography. The authors warn fellow therapists: "*some* women with a history of sexual abuse *may* respond negatively to erotica

that degrades or objectifies females" (p. 62 [emphasis mine]). Sexually healthy women are expected to be aroused by such pornography. Responding negatively to objectifying or degrading material is taken to be a symptom of past abuse rather than a rational or healthy reaction.

Even after taking into account the risk of negative responses, Striar and Bartlik remain very positive about the potential for pornography use in therapy. Another way in which pornography can prove useful, they explain, is through "giving the viewer permission to model the behavior" (p. 61). A more detailed analysis of what exactly it is in the material that couples are expected to "model" provides further evidence of the problems that pornography-as-therapy presents for women. Even at the more respectable end of therapist-recommended pornography, acts of sadomasochism and multiple penetration can be easily found. Take for example, the Sinclair Intimacy Institute, run by a "well known and respected sexologist", Mark Schoen (Black, 2006, p. 117). It offers a "Sinclair Select" range of mainstream pornography videos, which can be ordered over the internet. Customers are assured that the range is vetted by therapists and educators who choose only "high quality sex positive productions" (Sinclair Intimacy Institute, 2007a, n.pag.). Among the extensive list of "sex positive productions" are *The New Devil in Miss Jones*, *Jenna Loves Pain*, and *Deep Throat*. While these may not seem alarming at first, the content of these films can be seen as far from "sex positive" for women.

Deep Throat is a particularly revealing choice given the circumstances surrounding its production. Linda Marchiano (Linda Lovelace at the time of filming) detailed her extensive abuse at the hands of her husband and pimp in *Ordeal*, explaining how she was forced, sometimes at gunpoint, to perform in pornography (Lovelace, 1980). She once stated that: "every time someone watches that film, they are watching me being raped" (Marchiano quoted in Dworkin, 1981). That such a film is labelled "sex positive" by the Sinclair Institute therapists should be serious cause for concern. *Deep Throat,* however, is not an isolated case. An AVN review of *The New Devil in Miss Jones,* for example, carried a glowing recommendation for the film: "The sex is universally good and downright edgy, with the piercing, double penetration and flogging in the closing scene…" (Pike-Johnson, 2005b, n.pag.). *Jenna Loves Pain* also received endorsement from the editors at AVN, particularly for its themes of bondage, discipline and sadomasochism (BDSM). Far from being a mild fetish title, editor Mike Ramone stated that "*Jenna Loves Pain* raises the bar for what is possible in pure BDSM titles" (Ramone, 2005c, n.pag.),

and that it includes an abundance of "high-end latex fetish ware" and "authentic BDSM action" (Ramone, 2005c, n.pag.).

In addition, it is clear that therapists do intend for women to directly mimic acts found in such pornography. Striar and Bartlik (1999), for instance, inform therapists that accessories to "complement" domination and submission fantasies can be easily found in sex stores and catalogues, in particular "whips, restraints and blindfolds" (p. 61). Furthermore, the promotion of domination, submission and other sadomasochistic practices can be found in therapist recommended "sex education" videos.

Like a textbook: sex education videos

Therapy-based, sex education videos are one of the most obvious ways in which the industries of sexology and pornography intertwine. Australian sex therapist Jo-Anne Baker notes that in the early days of video pornography in the 1980s it was often women who had performed in the sex industry that produced and performed in videos for the (then) emerging sex education market. She states "[t]he same video porn pioneers produced the new sex education videos…" (Baker (ed)., 1999, p. 190). These crossovers between pornography and sexology in the "education market" continued into the 1990s. The pornography giant *Playboy,* for example, released a set of "instructional videos" which included commentary by one of America's most famous sex therapists, Dr Ruth Westheimer (Eberwein, 1999, p. 197). *Playboy,* however, is a relative bit player in this particular market, and there is now a wide variety of instructional / educational series available, some considered legitimate by therapists, and others not.

At the more legitimate end, the most commonly recommended sex education videos in sex therapy are those from the *Better Sex* series, put together by the Sinclair Institute (Black, 2006; Hall, 2006; Eberwein, 1999; Kleinplatz, 1997; Leiblum, Althof & Kinsberg, 2002; Striar & Bartlik, 1999). These are videos purportedly designed to instruct and enable couples to experience greater sexual pleasure. According to Dr Judy Seifer, one of the therapists involved in developing the *Better Sex* series, couples should use the videos "like a textbook. Stop the tape; freeze the frame, like rereading a chapter" (quoted in Eberwein, 1999, p. 193). They include explicit sex scenes, which, in the majority of cases, are acted out by couples who the viewer is told are "happily married" (Eberwein, 1999, p. 200). Although the real identities of the actors are not provided, some former prostituted women and porn stars are known to have performed in such educational materials (Hartley, 2006; Monet , 2005, p.

125). The main difference then between mainstream pornography and "educational" materials such as the *Better Sex* series, is the presence of a qualified sex therapist appearing intermittently throughout the explicit sex scenes (Irvine, 1990; Kleinplatz, 1997; Monet, 2005).

These educational materials have their critics, even from within sexology. Therapist Peggy Kleinplatz (1997), for example, has noted the similarities between the "fantasy sex" of pornography and the sex found in education videos. She argues that what results, is the "marketing of unabashed pornography dignified and masquerading as educational materials" (p. 40). Another therapist, Jules Black (2006) concurs that the bulk of the sex education genre is invariably "an excuse for soft porn" (p. 117). Much like the use of "woman-centred" pornography, these educational videos can serve as a starting point in attempts to manipulate women into accepting more mainstream, hard-core pornography. As former porn star Veronica Monet explains in her recent sex advice book:

> You might like to begin your quest for *proper porn* by purchasing an instructional video. Although these videos show real sex acts, they tend to do it with an academic flair. Consequently, x-rated footage is interspersed with instructional commentary from a doctor or sex therapist. My husband and I actually appeared in one of these videos…However, this approach is an admittedly *mild introduction to porn and is intended to be so* (Monet, 2005, p. 125 [emphasis mine]).

The similarities between mainstream pornography and sex education materials have also been exposed by English Professor Robert Eberwein. In *Sex Ed: Film, video and the framework of desire* (Eberwein, 1999) he writes that: "Some of the elements in the tapes display pornographic conventions, and in some cases activities familiar from pornographic movies actually appear" (p. 199). Eberwein gives a number of examples from the *Better Sex* series to illustrate this point, including women shown naked but still wearing high heels and the use of the "money shot", where men are shown ejaculating onto women (p. 199). The producers of the *Better Sex* series, volume 7, also admit to their close relationship with mainstream pornography. After "a pornographic sequence in which a caged man and two women dressed as stone age characters engage in a number of sexual activities…" a title card appears on the screen stating that "[t]he fantasy scenes in this program were selected by sex educators *from popular adult videos*" (Eberwein 1999, p. 199 [emphasis mine]). Therefore, at least some of the content in these "educational" materials is taken directly from mainstream pornography.

Further links between mainstream pornography and sex education videos are evident in regard to the Sinclair Institute's *Better Sex* Kits, which include not only an "award winning video" but also sex toys. One such kit is titled "Smart Maid". Potential buyers are told: "Dressing up and looking sexy for your partner is part of any healthy relationship according to Volume 2 of the Better Sex Video Series" (Sinclair Intimacy Institute, 2005b). The dressing up, however, is only expected of women (there are no outfits available for men at the time of writing), who, in this instance, must wear an "upstairs maid costume". The sexual excitement that men are expected to experience from a woman's servitude is highlighted: "At your service! Playful and sexy fantasies will come alive when she wears this sheer maids [sic] set" (Sinclair Intimacy Institute, 2005b, n.pag.). Themes of dominance and submission are frequently promoted through the *Better Sex* series. This is particularly obvious in the 'Tie Me Up, Tie Me Down' Kit which includes "Japanese wrist and ankle cuffs" in addition to a leather blindfold (Sinclair Intimacy Institute, 2005c). It is not surprising to find that it is a woman who is shown modelling the "educational" BDSM wear (Sinclair Intimacy Institute, 2005c).

The idea that couples use these materials "like a textbook", to borrow Dr Seifer's phrase, can again be seen as the medical legitimation of ways in which men already use pornography in heterosexual relationships. For example, one woman who gave evidence during the Dworkin / MacKinnon ordinance hearings explained the way that her husband had used pornography in their marriage:

> [W]hen he asked me to be bound, when he finally convinced me to do it, he read in the magazine how to tie the knots and how to bind me in a way that I couldn't get out. And most of the scenes that we – most of the scenes where I had to dress up or go through different fantasies were the exact scenes he had read in the magazines (quoted in MacKinnon & Dworkin (eds)., 1997, p. 113-114).

Indeed, her husband appears to have used the pornography very much like a textbook, complete with instructions on how to bind his wife. It is unclear exactly what percentage of women are faced with scenarios such as this, but in the late 1980s, feminist sociologist Diana Russell found that approximately 10 percent of women in the US reported being forced into sex acts they did not want, as a result of pornography (Russell, 1988). It could well be reasoned that this rate may now be much higher, as the consumption of pornography among adult and adolescent populations in the West appears to be rising. Moreover, it is believed that a considerable amount of these consumers integrate their pornography use into sex with a

partner (Häggström-Nordin, Hanson & Tydén, 2003; McKee, Albury & Lumby, 2008). In the Australian context, for example, a recent survey of more than a thousand adult pornography consumers found that 59 percent reported having applied something they had seen in pornography in their own sex lives (McKee, Albury & Lumby, 2008, p. 36). Adding medical authority to this practice makes it increasingly difficult for women to resist this pornographic model of sexuality in their own relationships.

Porn Stars as Sex Experts

The commonplace use of pornography as an educational tool in sex therapy, and as a research and diagnostic tool in clinical sexology, only partially explains the connections between pornography and sexology. Increasingly, and perhaps in part as a result of, the legitimacy that sexology has afforded the pornography industry, women who perform in pornography and women prostituted in other areas of the sex industry are now being constructed as sex experts. For example, in the edited collection, *Sex Tips: Advice from women experts around the world* by therapist Jo-Anne Baker, porn stars, sadomasochist practitioners and prostituted women appear alongside therapists as the "experts" (Baker (ed), 1999). Some porn stars / prostituted women have even released their own sex advice literature. Recent titles include: *How to have a XXX Sex Life* (Anderson & Berman, 2004), *Sex Secrets of Escorts: Tips from a pro* (Monet, 2005), *How to Tell a Naked Man What to Do* (Royalle, 2004), *Nina Hartley's Guide to Total Sex* (Hartley, 2006) and *Dr Sprinkle's Spectacular Sex* (Sprinkle, 2005). Rather than competing with the self-help literature produced by sexologists, the sex advice given in these books often draws on sexological ideas about sex, and simply reinforces them with examples from pornography and prostitution. Much like the therapist-recommended, sex self-help books in the previous chapter; the pornography- and prostitution-based advice literature often references notions of women's sexual autonomy while encouraging women to sexually service their partners. Throughout these texts, pornography is promoted as a way of "teaching" good sex and, again mirroring sexological advice, women are encouraged to overcome "inhibitions" and learn to eroticise their own submission.

Pornographers recommend sexology

That sexologists and therapists recommend pornography as part of legitimate medical practice should now be well established, but it is

important to note that, in addition to this, pornographers recommend sexology. In the porn-star authored texts considered here, there are several instances where sexologists, and / or sexological concepts, are referenced to support certain pieces of advice. This is most obvious in *Dr Sprinkle's Spectacular Sex* (Sprinkle, 2005), which is not surprising given that the author, Annie Sprinkle, is a famous ex-porn star who has recently become a qualified sexologist. In *Spectacular Sex*, Sprinkle quotes Masters and Johnson (2005, p. 104), recommends Dr David Schnarch's *Passionate Marriage* (p. 280) and references the APA definitions of sexual dysfunction (p. 71). She also discusses the work of prominent therapists Leonore Tiefer and Ellyn Kaschak in regard to FSD (p. 71).

Sexological concepts also appear in *How to Tell a Naked Man What to Do* (Royalle, 2004) and *Nina Hartley's Guide to Total Sex* (Hartley, 2006). In *How to Tell a Naked Man* (p. 173-76), Royalle recommends the therapeutic technique of sensate focus, initially developed by Masters and Johnson (Masters & Johnson, 1970). Nina Hartley (2006) also draws on the work of Masters and Johnson in *Total Sex*. Although she does not mention Masters and Johnson by name, her explanation of sexual response under the heading "Understanding the Cycle" (p. 44) is an exact description of Masters and Johnson's Human Sexual Response Cycle (HSRC). Hartley begins by saying that:

> Only during the past few decades has human sexual response been studied in a scientific manner, but we have learned a great deal…It's generally agreed that our response cycle breaks down into four phases: excitement, plateau, orgasm and resolution (Hartley, 2006, p. 44).

What makes this a particularly obvious reference to Masters and Johnson is that it is in fact not generally agreed that the sexual response cycle can be broken down into these four phases (Tiefer, 2004), but they are the exact phases that Masters and Johnson used in their HSRC model (Masters & Johnson, 1966, 1970). Finally, *Sex Secrets of Escorts* (Monet, 2005, p. 272-78), *Spectacular Sex* (Sprinkle, 2005, p. 280-88) and *How to Tell a Naked Man* (Royalle, 2004, p. 209-218) each include a resources section. All three books direct readers to the American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors and Therapists (AASECT).

Pornography as authority and prostitution as ideal

Unlike sexology-based, self-help books, the appeal to expertise in the porn star sex advice literature is not medical. The authors are positioned as experts due to their experience in the sex industry. According to *XXX Sex*

Life (Anderson & Berman, 2004), for example, the "Vivid Girls" (contracted porn stars for the Vivid production company) are "uniquely qualified to offer helpful hints and insider advice to the rest of the world" because "[o]n camera, they live out sexual fantasies every day…" (p. x). The blurb of *How to Tell a Naked Man* (Royalle, 2004), claims "[n]o one knows how to bring women's sexual fantasies to life better than Candida Royalle". This is supposedly on the basis of her experience starring in "twenty-five adult film classics" and later becoming a pornographer herself. Veronica Monet's credentials are given in *Sex Secrets of Escorts* (Monet, 2005) as "having worked as an erotic model, porn actress, prostitute, escort, and courtesan" as well as some training in Tantra and "Ancient Sacred Prostitution" (front matter). In addition, presumably to bolster her authority on sexual matters, Monet notes that she has had sex with 1869 clients (p. 4). Nina Hartley also references quantity as a reason that she should be considered an authority on "the truth about sex":

> How do I know? Through twenty-five years as a sexual adventurer, sex performer, sex activist and sex educator…I've had sex on camera well over a thousand times with literally hundreds of different partners… (Hartley, 2006, p. 3).

The idea seems to be the more partners the better. That extensive experience of sex in prostitution automatically makes you an authority on the experience of all sex. There is no recognition that there are different models of sex or that a model, which relies on the buying and selling of women, may not be one which everyone wants to emulate.

The appeal to the authority of experience is particularly interesting in *Spectacular Sex* (Sprinkle, 2005). Sprinkle draws on both her experiences in the sex industry and her sexology training, which is instructional in and of itself (p. 4-6). There is no expectation that the advice stemming from one would be any different from the advice stemming from the other. In other words, the information gained about sexuality from within the prostitution and pornography industries is considered completely compatible with the information gained about sexuality from within sexology. However, Sprinkle relies far more heavily on her experiential credentials than her academic credentials. While she appears on the cover in a white lab coat and does make mention of her PhD in human sexuality at several points in the book, she tends to base her authority predominantly on her experiences in pornography and prostitution. For example, in the section titled "My Unusual Credentials" (p. 4-6) she spends considerable space outlining her experience in prostitution including time as a porn star, an erotic masseuse and a dominatrix, but only two lines are given to

explain her qualifications in sexology. Her time in prostitution is highlighted as the main reason for her expertise: "I've done it every which way…having sex with literally thousands of people!...I've amassed an incredible collection of life experiences…I think it laid the perfect foundation for me as the creator of this sex-life makeover program" (p. 5).

In appealing to experiences of prostitution as a source of authority, these authors often strip the sex of prostitution from its social and political context. There is rarely any acknowledgement, for example, that in prostitution it is men who make up the vast majority of buyers and women who make up the vast majority of the bought (Farley (ed)., 2003; Jeffreys, 1997). There is also no mention of the systemic and often horrific abuse that women suffer while in systems of prostitution (Farley (ed)., 2003; see also: chapter one). To put things in context, these are books that offer sex tips based on a system that involves inherent power imbalance. It is a system in which women are paid to sexually service men with no regard for their own pleasure, a system in which women are frequently terribly physically abused, suffer from dissociation, and also post-traumatic stress disorder (Farley (ed), 2003). It is a system in which women's inequality is fixed, and yet it is this model which is held up for all women to mimic in their own sexual lives.

After establishing that the authors have extensive experience in prostitution and pornography, each of the books offer women the chance to learn the "tricks of the trade". The most obvious of these statements is the introduction to *Sex Secrets of Escorts* (Monet, 2005) which promises that "[y]ou will learn sexual techniques that are the staple of paid sexual services…" (p. viii). Echoing Dr Alex Comfort's instruction some decades ago that women should learn "whore's tricks" in order to become better lovers (Comfort, 1975, p. 210), these books suggest that the experiences of women in prostitution and pornography are worth emulating in everyday, non-prostitute relationships. Indeed prostitution and pornography are often represented in these texts as ideal models for women to follow. Monet continues to explain in *Sex Secrets of Escorts*, for example, that ideally couples should be:

> [F]ree to explore their true sexual desires without fear of being judged or ridiculed. This is the level of acceptance that men experience with escorts, and it is a level of acceptance that all relationships should embody (Money, 2005, p. 16).

Monet does not mention that this level of acceptance is expected of escorts because they are being paid to please their male clients. The acceptance in this model is certainly not mutual, but rather is dependent on

women being under contract to meet men's sexual demands, regardless of their own desires. Indeed, as O'Connell Davidson has argued, ignoring personal desires is a defining element of prostitution: "The essence of the prostitution contract is that the prostitute agrees, in exchange for money or another benefit, not to use her personal desire or erotic interests as the determining criteria for her sexual interaction" (O'Connell Davidson quoted in Monto 2004, p. 178). In other words, she must sexually service her client with no regard for her own sexual pleasure. While, as discussed in the preceding chapter, sexological literature often promotes this version of the sex of prostitution to women, in the porn star-authored, sex advice literature, the recommendation is simply more obvious. Women are directly told to mimic the actions of porn stars.

Learn to love it: overcoming inhibitions and women's pleasure

For much of the twentieth century sexologists encouraged men and women, but particularly women, to overcome their inhibitions about sex. It was, and arguably still is, believed that social mores prevent people (especially women) from discovering their ideal "natural" sexuality. Feminists, however, have shown the way in which the accusation of inhibition functioned to medicalise and undermine women's legitimate and rational resistance to particular sex practices (Jackson, 1994; Jeffreys, 1985, 1990). As a result of the unsubstantiated belief in the dangers of inhibition, sexologists and sex therapists often encourage women to "learn" correct sexual practices and overcome their inhibitions. In practice, this leads to women being required to meet the sexual demands of their supposedly less inhibited male partners (Jackson, 1984; see also chapter five). As the following examples suggest, the advice in the porn star authored books follows a strikingly similar format. In these works men's sexuality is generally taken as a given, either biologically determined or virtually unchangeable, while women are advised to overcome any feelings of inhibition they may have about performing particular sex acts. Moreover, women are instructed that they must learn to love performing any act that is requested of them.

On the issue of inhibitions, the introduction to *How to Have a XXX Sex Life* (Anderson & Berman, 2004) is typical. The authors state that: "This book is about taking your own sex life to a higher level, to a place where inhibitions fall away…" (p. xi). Ideal sex is represented as the loss of all inhibitions and, it is later explained, that pornography is the perfect model for achieving this as: "porn is a world where inhibitions are erased" (p. 5). Indeed, women are especially encouraged to overcome any inhibitions

they may have regarding pornography. For example, in *How To Tell a Naked Man What To Do*, Royalle states: "Don't ever feel like you must do something that you don't want to do. However, it's always good to be open and at least give something a try. You might want to ask yourself exactly why you don't want to watch x-rated movies…" (Royalle, 2004, p. 65). Royalle also explains that once women have agreed to watch pornography with their partners, they will most likely be required to watch things they do not wish to. She states: "Maybe he wants something nasty and you want something softer…It's simple: take turns! And don't do it begrudgingly" (p. 70). Monet offers similar advice in *Sex Secrets of Escorts*:

> I would encourage you to embrace any frustration or anger you have about pornographic magazines and movies while keeping an open mind…I am confident that you can find porn you can enjoy if you are willing to give it a try…you owe it to yourself to maximise your potential for sexual enjoyment (Monet, 2005, p. 124).

The use of pornography is promoted here as representing women's sexual interests. However, just like Royalle, Monet later undermines her own assertion by admitting that women will likely be confronted with material they dislike: "Give yourself a chance to get past your initial embarrassment or perhaps feelings of disdain" (Monet, 2005, p. 130). The implication is that these feelings of disdain or unease about watching pornography are somehow unfounded. It becomes clear that despite the initial validation that women should embrace their feelings of anger about pornography, or should refuse to participate in sexual activities that they do not wish to, the underlying message is that women are not entitled to feel this way and must work on overcoming their "inhibitions".

The message regarding inhibitions is similar in both *Total Sex* (Hartley, 2006) and *Spectacular Sex* (Sprinkle, 2005). In *Total Sex,* Nina Hartley outlines her top ten fundamental tips, one of which is "listening to your instincts": "If you don't want to do a particular thing, don't do it" (Hartley, 2006, p. 17). Two pages later, however, tip number eight seems incompatible with her initial advice:

> Don't judge another's path to pleasure. Deep and abiding intimacy occurs only in an atmosphere of acceptance and emotional safety. If what your lover wants isn't illegal (i.e., involving minors, family members, or livestock), try to have an open mind and heart…You might be amazed what you can *learn to enjoy* (Hartley, 2006, p. 19 [emphasis mine]).

According to Hartley, the only sex acts that women can reasonably refuse are paedophilia, incest and bestiality. Everything else should be accommodated and, ideally, women should adjust their own sexual desires to the point that they can experience enjoyment when performing whatever a partner demands of them. In *Spectacular Sex* (Sprinkle, 2005), Annie Sprinkle also suggests that women should learn to enjoy unwanted sexual experiences. In a section on resolving sexual differences within a relationship, Sprinkle offers several solutions for women who are "not in the mood" when their lover requests sex. Solution number four is:

> Choose to go ahead and have sex, accept and eroticise the fact that you don't really want to. Just be okay with not being that into it. Sometimes having sex when you don't really want to can be cathartic, interesting, and a relief in a strange way. Or you might end up actually getting into and enjoying the sex, which can often happen (Sprinkle, 2005, p. 192).

In this excerpt, women are told to accept the unwanted sex or, ideally, find a way to eroticise their acquiescence to the unwanted sex. This advice also bears a striking resemblance to Professor Rosemary Basson's concept of women's sexual desire (Basson, 2001, 2005, see chapter four). Basson (2005) has posited that women's sexual desire is fundamentally responsive and thus women should agree to what is initially unwanted sex, in the hope that they will eventually experience some enjoyment or pleasure in it. Yet again, the advice to women from pornographic and sexological experts is remarkably similar.

Eroticising inequality: dressing up, dirty talk and sadomasochism

The recommendation of pornography as an educational tool is common to all of the books considered in this chapter. *How to Have a XXX Sex Life* (Anderson & Berman, 2004), however, is the most explicit in encouraging women to directly mimic activities that are required of porn stars. The following examples from this text illustrate the way in which women are expected to engage in practices that are not for their own pleasure and, furthermore, eroticise their own subordination and degradation.

The suggestion that women should directly imitate porn stars is evident from the outset in *XXX Sex Life.* The introduction, for example, includes tips on "How to be more like a Vivid Girl" (p. xi), and women are later encouraged to shave or wax their pubic areas in order to look more like the women in pornography (p. 17). Under the heading "Bare Essentials" readers are told that in pornography from the 1970s and 1980s women

generally have visible pubic hair, but today in the adult industry "women's pubic areas are often bare" (p. 17). The advice from the Vivid girls is simple, "[g]o and get waxed" (p. 17). The authors provide only a very limited explanation of why this is necessary, stating that some women "like the way it looks" while others find it can "heighten a woman's sensitivity during oral sex" (p. 17). The practice of waxing or frequent shaving is passed off as something that women do for themselves, possibly even to increase their pleasure during sex. Further down the page, however, the Vivid Girls are surprisingly forthright in showing just how damaging and painful these practices can be for women:

> Vivid Girl Mercedez says, "I shave the morning of a scene. If I shave the night before I could wake up with a little stubble. I use tweezers to get out the ingrown hairs."
>
> And Sunrise adds, "I do it every day. I use skin tone Clearasil afterward to prevent ingrown hairs. And if my skin is chafed or raw from too much sex, I use Neosporin. It really helps you heal; I have it in every drawer of my house." (Anderson & Berman, 2004, p. 17).

Although the authors originally suggest that the waxing and shaving of women's public areas is to improve women's pleasure, it is difficult to uphold this pretence when their own "experts" instead tell women that they will require the frequent use of tweezers, acne cream and antibiotic ointment.

Women are also "educated" about the importance of "sexy clothes" in these texts. In *XXX Sex Life*, for example, men's' sexual attraction to women is explicitly outlined as the reason why women should dress in a particular manner. The section on clothing begins with a simple statement: "Hands down, the women's clothing item sexiest to most guys is high-heeled boots and shoes" (Anderson & Berman, 2004, p. 20). Royalle concurs in her clothing section of *How to Tell a Naked Man*: "Men like to see women in high heels" (Royalle, 2004, p. 113), as does Monet in *Sex Secrets of Escorts*, stating that the majority of men "absolutely adore" high heels (Monet, 2005, p. 13). Such sentiments are not new. As far back as the 1920s, sexologist Havelock Ellis wrote about the commonality of men's foot fetishism, even declaring that its existence was so prevalent that it could be considered normal (Jeffreys, 2005, p. 129-30).

This does not explain, however, exactly what it is about the wearing of high heels that is supposed to be so attractive. The instructions in *XXX Sex Life* offer some indication: "Just for the record, the higher and tighter the boots, the sexier they are" (Anderson & Berman, 2004, p. 20), and it is

here that *XXX Sex Life* most closely mirrors the famous sex advice from *The Joy of Sex* (Comfort, 1975). As discussed in the previous chapter on sex self-help literature, in *The Joy of Sex*, Dr Alex Comfort is prescriptive in his directions about what women should wear in order to sexually excite men. "Tightness" is one aspect of clothing that Comfort repeatedly tells women will be attractive to men, because it suggests helplessness and "the acceptance of the aggression of sex" (Comfort, 1975, p. 22).

Indeed, the wearing of high heels more generally can be seen as signalling helplessness in women. As Jeffreys (2005) has argued, this is made particularly clear by the testimony of foot fetishists. One such fetishist, William Rossi, explains that men gain pleasure from seeing women wearing high heels due to the resulting "insecurity and discomfort" that women experience. Furthermore, the excitement also stems from "forcing them to be more dependent upon masculine support" (Rossi, quoted in Jeffreys, 2005, p. 139). A central theme of submission emerges. Rossi adds that high heels limit women's movement and make them walk awkwardly, this he says, "suggests a degree of helpless bondage" (Rossi, quoted in Jeffreys, 2005, p. 139).

Both the sexology-based *Joy of Sex* (Comfort, 1975), and pornography-based *How to Have a XXX Sex Life* (Anderson & Berman, 2004), illustrate that it is the overtones of domination and submission that "experts" expect men to find sexually arousing. In both books women are encouraged to dress up in sadomasochist fetish gear. In *XXX Sex Life*, women are directed to imitate the dress-codes of a particular porn film featuring "[t]high-high red or black patent-leather platform boots, leather collars with studs, suede chaps over thongs, tight ripped t-shirts and biker hats with chains…" (p. 21). The authors do not offer the reader any possible justification for why these "erotic ensembles" are arousing to men. However, very similar costumes for women are outlined in *The Joy of Sex* and Comfort does provide some reasoning. He tells readers that men find "blackness, leatheriness [sic], sadistic-looking buckles…tied-upness, slave bangles…" arousing on women because they suggest a "mild threat" and "submission" (Comfort, 1975, p. 21).

The eroticising of women's submission, and sometimes outright degradation, in the porn star advice literature is also displayed in the sections on "dirty talk". Both *How to Have A XXX Sex Life* (Anderson & Berman, 2004) and *How to Tell a Naked Man* (Royalle, 2004) contain sections on "dirty talk". Royalle's *How to Tell a Naked Man* is the more moderate of the two. In "Talk Dirty to Me" Royalle on the one hand tells women that they need not "imitate those bad porno movies" (p. 165), but at the same time states "there could be a time and place" for women to use

the stereotypical porno phrases: "Oooh yeah baby fuck me harder" and "Yeah baby, nail me to the bed" (p. 165). The advice is similar in *XXX Sex Life*, although the authors here actively encourage women to watch and copy dialogue directly from pornographic movies. They are also rather blunt in declaring the sexual appeal of degradation: "When most people think of 'talking dirty' they think of using nasty, even degrading language to make it hot. When it works, it works well" (Anderson & Berman, 2004, p. 49). For further information, readers are directed to watch the pornographic film *Swoosh*, in which "the talk is raunchier, with lines like 'Is that what you want, you fuckin' filthy whore?' Or 'Take it, bitch'" (Anderson & Berman, 2004, p. 49).

Australian sexologist Gabrielle Morrissey offers similar advice in *Urge: Hot secrets for great sex* (2005), where women are again the targets of degrading "dirty talk". Morrissey says that dirty talk is "designed to arouse" (p. 421). To support this contention she supplies the example of a man telling his partner to: "'Bring your wet cunt over here, I want to fuck it good'…" (Morrissey, 2005, p. 422). It is not made clear whether such a statement is supposed to be arousing to men, women or both, but Morrissey does acknowledge that in non-sexual contexts women may find such statements deeply offensive: "A woman in the bedroom might find it horny for her man to shout, '*Fuck you're a nasty bitch, yeah'*, but if he growled anything like that in the kitchen, he'd probably receive a walloping...Tone, intent and context are everything" (p. 424 [emphasis original]). The context is important because according to both sexologists and pornographers, the degradation and subordination of women is acceptable so long as it is sexual. Women should not be degraded or verbally abused in the kitchen, but the bedroom is considered to be completely beyond claims of respect and equality.

The enterprises of sexology and pornography interlink frequently, both materially and conceptually. Materially, mainstream pornography is used in both sex research and sex therapy. In sex research, if women do not report positive sexual responses to pornography, this can be taken as an indicator that they are unhealthy or abnormal. In sex therapy, pornography is presented as a textbook to provide instruction on sexual technique. The genre of educational / instructional videos is another site of material interconnection. Renowned sex therapists have provided commentary in, and endorsement of, sex education videos, even those developed by major pornography production houses (Eberwein, 1999, p. 197). These trends have served to help legitimise pornography. Indeed pornography is now broadly considered so legitimate as a model for healthy and attainable sexuality, that porn stars are producing their own sex advice literature. On

a conceptual level, the material produced by the pornography industry and the material produced by the sex therapy industry is strikingly similar, particularly in regard to instructions for women. The advice offered by porn stars and sex therapists encourages women to mimic pornography, perform sex acts they do not wish to in order to please a male partner, and learn to enjoy their own degradation and abuse as sexually exciting. Ultimately, the model of sexuality being constructed by the pornography and sexology industries, sells sex short. As pornography and sex therapy continue to provide mutually reinforcing understandings of what sex should be, it makes it increasingly difficult for women to step outside this model and make claims to a sexuality which is based on equality and respect, one that fundamentally rejects systems of prostitution as an ideal model of sex. The experience of sex can, and should, be more than an experience of servitude.

CONCLUSION

I have sought, in this book, to expose and explain the model of sexuality currently being constructed through sexology and pornography in the West. In many ways this was an ambitious project, not least because sexology and pornography have so rarely been considered together in academic writing. Contrary to this tradition, I have emphasised the ways in which the sexology and pornography industries intersect and reinforce each other. I have suggested that these intersections can be seen when considering the type of sexuality that sexology and pornography promote: a sexuality which eroticises inequality, endorses objectification, and encourages the sexual servicing of men by women. On the basis of this, I have argued that pornography and sexology promote a model of sexuality which closely resembles the sex of prostitution, and is therefore harmful to women. In other words, the construction of sexuality through pornography and sexology sells sex short. As this mutually reinforcing model of sexuality becomes increasingly pervasive it limits our potential vision for what sexuality might be.

In making this argument about the harms of pornography and sexology it has been necessary to reject a number of prevailing trends in the academy and in popular culture. It has, in recent times, for example, become popular to tout pornography and prostitution as potentially liberatory, as sources of women's empowerment rather than women's oppression (e.g. Johnson (ed)., 2002; McElroy, 1995; Nagle (ed)., 1997). Much of this writing focuses on the individual and the potential for "agency" and thus tends to overlook the structural inequities on which the system of prostitution relies (Miriam, 2005). Such pro-prostitution works stand in stark contrast to radical feminist theory which has often held that prostitution is the epitome of women's sexual exploitation and has focused on a more structural analysis which situates prostitution in the context of male dominance (Barry, 1995; Dworkin, 1992; Jeffreys, 1997; Miriam, 2005). A structural approach has been particularly important in putting together this book, as the main focus has not been on how individuals make sense of socially constructed norms of sexuality, which would certainly be an important area for further research, but rather what the norms themselves actually consist of.

The pro-prostitution literature frequently also suggests that there is something special about women in prostitution that differentiates them from non-prostituted women, for example, that women in prostitution are "sexually generous" in nature (Queen, 1997) or that their experiences have given them specialist knowledge that other women do not possess (Hartley, 2006; Monet, 2005; Sprinkle, 2001, 2005). Radical feminists, on the other hand, have tended to emphasise the commonalities between prostituted and non-prostituted women for, as Kathleen Barry (1995) points out, the idea that women should be separated in this way can be seen as a construction of misogyny rather than a reflection of reality. In *The Prostitution of Sexuality* she states that:

> [W]e must go back to the original premise of radical *political* feminism: that the personal is political and therefore, the separation of them, - the 'whores' – and us – 'the women' – is utterly false, a patriarchal lie. And that means we must talk about sex. The sexuality of today. Not only in pornography. Not only when it is explicitly 'against our will' (Barry, 1995, p. 10 [emphasis original]).

Indeed, linking these ideas came to form a central part of what this book is about. Sexual violence, pornography, and to a lesser extent, prostitution, have continued to be the focus of much feminist research and debate but are rarely linked to the sex practices of everyday heterosexuality (c.f. Gavey, 2005; Kitzinger, 1993; MacKinnon, 1989). Rather than separating prostitution out from everyday non-prostitute sexual exchanges, I have sought to consider the connections, and frequently employed the concept of the sex of prostitution in order to do this. Again, relying heavily on Barry (1995), I have taken the harm of prostitution to stem from the model of sex required in prostitution, not from the component of monetary exchange that is so often considered to be the defining element of prostitution. Based on feminist theory and sociological evidence, I have argued that the sex of prostitution is based upon inequality, objectification, the sexual servicing of men by women, and often the requirement that women feign enjoyment during the act/s of sexual service. As my research progressed, it was the connections, rather than the differences between the sex of prostitution and the model of sex being sold to women en masse through pornographication and sex therapy, that continued to resonate.

The need to overcome false distinctions in order to make connections also became evident in my research on pornography as a form of prostitution, particularly in regard to the commonly held notion that pornography and prostitution are clearly separate entities. As discussed at

length in chapter one, a belief in the distinction between pornography and prostitution is evident not only in popular culture, but often, also in law (Spector, 2006b). I have suggested, instead, that based on radical feminist theory, sociological studies, and accounts from women in the prostitution and pornography industries, pornography is better understood as a form of prostitution, and perhaps even a particularly harmful form of prostitution.

Making connections between the pornography industry and the processes of pornographication also presented challenges. In some influential theorising, in particular, work by Brian McNair (1996, 2002), pornographication is represented as being almost entirely separate from pornography itself. While a number of academics have now published on the issue of the mainstreaming of pornography, exactly what it is that is being mainstreamed is often left out of the discussion. In contrast, I have argued, that in order to understand pornographication and the model of sexuality that is being mainstreamed, we need to understand what is being produced by the pornography industry. Furthermore, I have argued for the importance of looking at what those within the pornography industry have to say about the content that is now being produced for mainstream audiences.

The evidence from *Adult Video News* suggests that there is general agreement, in the US at least, that the production of mass produced pornography increasingly requires more degrading and violent sex acts to be performed. Again, such evidence is in contrast to recent academic studies, such as *The Porn Report* (McKee, Albury & Lumby, 2008), which posit that mainstream pornography contains little or no violence. Ultimately, in linking these intra-industry dialogues about the content of pornography to the processes of pornographication, I suggest that the mainstreaming of pornography can be seen as the mainstreaming of a harmful model of sexuality, which is based in inequality and eroticises violence against women. Moreover, if pornography is a form of prostitution, the mainstreaming and normalisation of pornography can be seen as the mainstreaming and normalisation of prostitution, or what Barry has termed the prostitution of sexuality, that is, the "reconfiguring of sex on men's terms to sustain women's subordination" (Barry, 1995, p. 37).

It has been my contention here that sexology and sex therapy play an important role in the prostitution of sexuality, and indeed Barry (1995) does mention that pornography and sexology should be seen as key institutions in this process. In chapter four, I outlined the way in which sexology has historically promoted a model of sex which has reinforced male dominance. Arguing against clinicians who claim that modern sexology promotes women's sexual interests, I have suggested that the

model of "normal" sex that is constructed in contemporary academic sexology requires women's constant sexual availability to men, an element of the prostitution of sexuality.

While the sexological model of sexuality is legitimised through medicine, it is also popularised, most prominently, though self-help or sex advice literature. Sex self-help literature shows, in detail, how sex therapists expect the sexological model of sex to play out in everyday heterosexual relationships. The ideal relationships represented in such texts not only promote women's constant sexual availability to men, but also encourage the eroticising of power difference, and instruct women to actively sexually service their male partners. What is encouraged, in these books, I therefore argue in chapter five, closely mirrors the sex of prostitution.

The industries of sexology, pornography and prostitution are not only linked through the model of sex that they promote as ideal. As discussed in the final chapter, there are significant material links between the pornography and sexology industries, both at present, and historically. I put forward that what we are witnessing is the pornographication of sexology and the scientific legitimation of pornography. The processes of pornographication involve not only the increasing exposure and influence of pornography but also its increasing legitimacy. It is my contention in the final chapter that the promotion of pornography in sexology and sex therapy has conferred upon pornography a degree of scientific legitimacy, which has, in turn, fuelled the rise of porn stars being represented as "sex experts".

Ultimately, it would appear that pornography and sexology still hold extensive influence over the social construction of sexuality in the West. These two industries are not only promoting a strikingly similar model of sex, but are materially intertwined. Thus, I conclude that through this mutual reinforcement, it is made far more difficult for women to resist the harmful model of prostitution sex that is being endorsed by both. It is for this very reason that a critique of the pornographic and sexological model of sexuality has become so necessary.

As I note in the introduction, radical feminism is a particularly useful body of theory on which to base such a critique. Indeed, Kathy Miriam (1998) has observed that one of the great strengths of radical feminism is critique. She argues that naming and opposing male dominance, in itself, makes a great contribution, and it is on this critical level of naming and opposing that much of this book has been based. Robyn Rowland and Renate Klein (1997) also mention the worth of this process in *Radically Speaking*, stating that: "[t]he creation of a radical feminist knowledge

itself…represents an act of women's resistance" (p. 35). Certainly, I do believe in the importance of simply having produced a radical feminist analysis that critiques the construction of sexuality through pornography and sexology. Indeed, during the (re)writing of this book, creating such an analysis has felt increasingly important. Over the last ten years, the pornography and sexology industries have boomed, both in terms of financial weight and in terms of cultural influence, while at the same time academic critiques of these trends have been few and far between. This has been particularly evident in regard to pornography where academic literature has tended to be at best depoliticised and at worst celebratory. In recent times, a prominent feminist anti-pornography position has been lacking, particularly in the popular media (Eaton, 2007). It apparently appears to a new generation of young people that opposition to pornography is based solely in religious conservatism (Bennett, 2005). It is, therefore, imperative to continue to publicise and promote the feminist anti-pornography position, if only to show that there are alternate, valid, and secular ways in which to oppose this model of sexuality.

Miriam (1998) also notes that the second great strength of radical feminism is the "projection of social formations beyond male dominance" (p. 7), that radical feminists have had the "moral imagination", or even the "utopian imagination" to conceive of a system in which women may achieve genuine equality. Similarly, Rowland (1997) has written of radical feminists' "anticipatory vision" and commitment to "constructing a new kind of society with feminist ethics and politics as its base" (p. 81). Regrettably, a thorough discussion of what these equitable social formations might look like in regard to sexuality is beyond the scope of this book. I do, however, wish to offer a brief discussion here of the possibility of moving beyond the model of prostitution sex.

An Ethical Sexuality / A Humane Sensuality

Moving beyond the sex of prostitution and imagining something different is a subject I have been frequently questioned about during the course of my (brief) research career. It seems that many people accept the critique but are left to wonder what else exists, and this realisation in itself has been confronting. That is to say, the sex of prostitution appears to have become so all encompassing as a model of normative or even ideal sexuality that imagining something different or separate from it has become incredibly difficult. On a more positive note, such interest in moving beyond this harmful model gives the impression of a desire for change, that many of us want something more: a new model, a blueprint

for transformation. However, this too has proved confronting when I have found myself at times with so little to offer. Sadly, a way forward, a new vision of sexuality, remains under theorised in feminist literature.

This is not to say that there has been *no* theorising of a sexuality based on equality, and radical lesbian feminists in particular paved the way for this type of analysis (e.g. Frye, 1991; Jeffreys, 1990, 1993; Harne & Miller (ed)., 1996; Mohin (ed)., 1996). Sheila Jeffreys, for example, in critiquing heterosexuality as fundamentally the eroticising of inequality, put forward the concept of eroticising equality and sameness in *Anticlimax* (1990). Similarly, Marilyn Frye (1991) has discussed the limits of heterosexuality and the exclusion of lesbian experience in the narrow definition of what counts as "sex" under patriarchy. Indeed, she suggests that the social construction of sex is so male dominated that it is seen as almost nonsensical in both popular culture and sexual science to attempt to understand how women experience sex without men. She ultimately argues that the term "sex" may have to be abandoned altogether and proposes instead a new, expanded perception of "doing it" which places women's pleasure at the centre:

> Let it be an open, generous, commodious concept encompassing all the acts and activities by which we generate with each other pleasures and thrills, tenderness and ecstasy, passages of passionate carnality of whatever duration or profundity (Frye, 1991, p. 314).

Janice Raymond (1986) has also written of the problems associated with trying to define an autonomous sexuality for women in a system that she terms "hetero-reality", a system in which women are thought to exist for men. As a result of such critiques of sexuality under heteropatriarchy, and the beginnings of imagining a new model of sexuality for women, there have been a number of important works published which have subsequently explored and questioned ideal models of lesbian feminist sexuality (Barrington, (ed)., 1991; Frye, 1991; Jeffreys, 1993; Harne & Miller (eds)., 1996; Mohin (ed)., 1996; Thompson, 1991).

In contrast, there are very few projections of a new vision of heterosexuality. One powerful exception can be found in Andrea Dworkin's groundbreaking book *Intercourse* (1987), in which she made an impassioned appeal for a new model of heterosexuality. Dworkin stated that what women want is:

> [A]n experience of equality and passion, sensuality and intimacy. Women have a vision of love that includes men as human too…these visions of a humane sensuality based on equality are the aspirations of women…They

> are an underground resistance to both inferiority and brutality, visions that sustain life and further endurance (Dworkin, 1987, p. 129).

Heterosexual feminists themselves, however, have been much less inclined to project new visions of sexuality. In the edited collection *Heterosexuality* (Wilkinson & Kitzinger (eds)., 1993), for example, which has been labelled "a unique and important contribution to discussions on heterosexuality" (Rowland, 1997, p. 80), heterosexual feminists, when asked to interrogate their own heterosexuality, seemed more inclined to defend what already existed rather than suggest what could be possible. The lack of a "utopian imagination" (Miriam, 1998) in regard to sexuality may well be another result of the sex wars, which, in effect, suppressed a great degree of radical feminist theorising and activism (Leidholdt, 1990). Certainly, very little has been produced in the last decade on the issue of envisioning a new, non-oppressive sexuality for women in the same way that it was produced in the 1980s and early to mid 1990s. Perhaps the decline of radical feminism in the academy since the sex wars has meant that less has been produced in recent times.

It does appear, however, that now is a most important time to again be discussing and publicising new models of sexuality. One concept which has frequently intersected with my own work has been that of a sexuality based on feminist ethics, that is, a sexuality which includes what so many feminists have argued is imperative: a rejection of harm and inequality. In some ways, I fear the simple idea of an ethical sexuality sounds weak, almost so self-evidently fundamental that it is not worth stating, but in the current context of the burgeoning porn industry and the primacy of the biologically determinist model of sexuality endorsed by sexology, it can also seem revolutionary. Simply placing sexuality in the realm of ethics and politics is an affront to the well-entrenched popular and scientific belief that sexuality stems from immutable biology. A feminist sexual ethics recognises that sexuality is not fixed and so can be subject to change. Furthermore, it suggests that decisions can be made about what is right and wrong in regard to sexuality, which directly contradicts popular libertarian notions that all sexual expression always represents a good in and of itself. A feminist sexual ethics recognises that sexual expression or pleasure which is contingent upon inequality or harm should be named as oppression rather than liberation.

This is not to suggest that sexuality can easily be changed. To say that sexuality is socially constructed does not mean it is merely imagined or determined only at the level of an individual's choosing. Indeed, feminists have sometimes expressed their own frustration at how difficult it can be to "change our erotic life, even when we do consciously desire to" (Segal,

1994, p. 124). Under a system of male dominance, there are, of course, issues of structural power and inequity at stake that make it particularly difficult for women to create an autonomous sexuality which eroticises equality, to say nothing of overcoming socialisation into a subordinate sex class. It is these links between the structural and the personal which are so often lost in existing work on sexual ethics.

The existing literature dealing with sexual ethics is highly problematic. Much of it stems from religious tradition (e.g. Grenz, 1997; Kolnai, 2005; Farley, 2006) or is based in a highly individualist framework (e.g. Carmody, 2003, 2005). Aurel Kolnai's work, for example, originally published in the 1930s, displays a belief in a sex drive determined by nature, and in the primacy of heterosexual intercourse and marriage as the most normal and ethical forms of sexuality (Kolnai, 2005). More recently, in sociological based work, Moira Carmody (2005) has employed Foucauldian theory as a way of understanding the importance of individuals being able to determine their own sexual ethics in intimate relationships. She also draws on Gayle Rubin's influential *Thinking Sex* (1984) and rejects the idea that any sexual practices can be labelled as either inherently "good" or "bad". Carmody suggests instead that individuals can determine for themselves which practices are right and wrong and can negotiate ethically between "pleasure and danger". She states that these ethics are based in "negotiation in which care of the self is linked to care of the other" (p. 477). The analysis largely separates individual experiences from structural power inequities and also subsequently separates out individual sexual practices from their political and social meanings. The "negotiation" between pleasure and danger, for example, is left relatively unexamined as though the threat of sexual violence will inevitably exist and thus ways to negotiate pleasure in spite of this threat are proposed as the only way forward.

A *feminist* sexual ethics, however, needs to be able to propose an ethical model of sexuality that ultimately will not have to involve the negotiation of the threat of violence as the only way of achieving pleasure. As Adrienne Rich (1979) argued some thirty years ago, feminism is more than just a "frivolous label" it is "an ethics, a methodology, a more complex way of thinking about, thus more responsibly acting upon, the conditions of human life" (p. 213). In order to achieve this ethical change, from a radical feminist perspective, it is also vital to be able to label particular sexual practices, for example, rape, coercive sex, prostitution and pornography as oppressive and deeply harmful rather than reducing such acts to matters of individual preference. Here, again, linking a

structural analysis to individual experience proves to be of primary importance.

As I have argued throughout this book, the model of sexuality that is being constructed through sexology and pornography closely resembles the sex of prostitution, and this model is gaining increasing cultural influence and acceptance in the West. It is the sex of prostitution that is now being promoted as the ideal model for women to follow in their everyday heterosexual relationships. That this model exists, and can be promoted as ideal for all women, stems from the existence and acceptance of prostitution. This is the acceptance of a system where men's rights of sexual access to women are paramount and women's sexual pleasure it considered irrelevant. Under these conditions it is difficult for women to successfully "negotiate" a sexuality that rejects objectification and the sexual servicing of men. As long as systems of prostitution exist, and are defended as either inevitable or as transgressive, rather than opposed as harmful, this particular model of women's sexual oppression can continue to be forced on all women. If, instead, prostitution was recognised as harmful, and harm in sexuality was recognised as unethical, the promotion of the sex of prostitution as an ideal model of sexuality could also clearly be deemed unethical. Exposing and labelling prostitution as a harmful model of sexuality, and delegitimising it, therefore, becomes an important part of being able to imagine the achievement of an ethical sexuality for all women: a sexuality which, first and foremost, rejects sexual pleasure that is contingent upon harm to self or other, but more than that, allows for embodied pleasure, equality and autonomy.

Perhaps, as Frye suggests, our concept of sexuality is now so diminished that in imagining something new, a new terminology is also required. Perhaps we could move from an ethical sexuality to one day achieving Dworkin's notion of humane sensuality. Whatever the name, an opposition to the sex of prostitution should remain a primary aim in efforts to achieve a model of ethical sexuality. The importance of feminist theorising in this area must not be forgotten, as it is indeed these visions for the future that "sustain life and further endurance" (Dworkin, 1987, p. 129) in the ongoing feminist struggle for sexual liberation: an issue which goes to the heart of women's subordination and, ultimately, also women's freedom.

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APPENDIX

Combined list of acts coded as violent or sexually violent taken from Yang and Linz (1990) and Barron and Kimmel (2000).

Verbal aggression (3 descriptions)
Slapping (9 descriptions)
Hitting (1 description)
Spanking (2 descriptions)
Pushing / Shoving
Pulling hair or clothes
Biting
Pinching
Choking (3 descriptions)
Striking with a fist / Closed fist punch (1 description)
Kicking
Severe beating or fighting (5 descriptions)
Using a weapon (1 description)
Threatening with a weapon
Confinement (2 descriptions)
Bondage (7 descriptions)
Kidnapping (2 descriptions)
Torture
Dismemberment
Mutilation (1 description)
Attempted or actual murder
Being rough in other ways (2 descriptions)
Mud wrestling
Sadomasochism (5 descriptions)

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