

In the late Seventies, America became shocked and outraged by the rape, mutilation, and murder of over a dozen young, beautiful girls. The man who committed these murders, Ted Bundy, was later apprehended and executed. During his detention in various penitentiaries, he was mentally probed and prodded by psychologist and psychoanalysts hoping to discover the root of his violent actions and sexual frustrations. Many theories arose in attempts to explain the motivational factors behind his murderous escapades. However, the strongest and most feasible of these theories came not from the psychologists, but from the man himself, "as a teenager, my buddies and I would all sneak around and watch porn. As I grew older, I became more and more interested and involved in it, (pornography) became an obsession. I got so involved in it, I wanted to incorporate (porn) into my life, but I couldn't behave like that and maintain the success I had worked so hard for. I generated an alter-ego to fulfill my fantasies undercover. Pornography was a means of unlocking the evil I had buried inside myself" (Leidholdt 47). Is it possible that pornography is acting as the key to unlocking the evil in more unstable minds?

According to Edward Donnerstein, a leading researcher in the pornography field, "the relationship between sexually violent images in the media and subsequent aggression and . . . callous attitudes towards women is much stronger statistically than the relationship between smoking and cancer" (Itzin 22). After considering the increase in rape and molestation, sexual harassment, and other sex crimes over the last few decades, and also the corresponding increase of business in the pornography industry, the link between violence and pornography needs considerable study and examination. Once the

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evidence you will encounter in this paper is evaluated and quantified, it will be hard not to come away with the realization that habitual use of pornographic material promotes unrealistic and unattainable desires in men that can lead to violent behavior toward women.

In order to properly discuss pornography, and be able to link it to violence, we must first come to a basic and agreeable understanding of what the word pornography means. The term pornography originates from two Greek words, porn, which means

harlot, and graphein, which means to write (Webster's 286). My belief is that the describe, in literature, the sexual escapades of women of pornography has grown to include any and all obscene literature and pictures. At the present date, the term is basically a blanket which covers all types of material such as explicit literature, photography, films, and video tapes with varying degrees of sexual content.

Now that pornography has been defined in a fashion mirroring its content, it is now possible to touch upon the more complex ways a community, as a society, views or defines it. Some have said it is impossible for a group of individuals to form a concrete opinion as to what pornography means. A U.S. Supreme Court judge is quoted as saying, "I can't define pornography, but I know it when I see it" (Itzin 20). This statement can be heard at community meetings in every state, city, and county across the nation. Community standards are hazy due to the fact that when asked what pornography is to them, most individuals cannot express or explain in words what pornography is, therefore creating confusion among themselves.

Communities are left somewhat helpless in this matter since the federal courts passed legislation to keep pornography available to adults. The courts assess that to ban or censor the material would be infringing on the public's First Amendment Right (Carol 28). Maureen O'Brien quotes critics of a congressionally terminated bill, the

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pornography Victim's Compensation Act, as saying "That if it had passed, it would have had severely chilling effects on the First Amendment, allowing victims of sexual crimes to file suit against producers and distributors of any work that was proven to have had 'caused' the attack, such as graphic material in books, magazines, videos, films, and records" (Carol 7). People in a community debating over pornography often have different views as to whether or not it should even be made available period, and some could even argue this point against the types of women used in pornography: "A for greater variety of female types are shown as desirable in pornography than mainstream films and network television have ever recognized: fat women, flat women, hairy women, aggressive women, older women, you name it" (Carol 25). If we could all decide on just exactly what pornography is and what is acceptable, there wouldn't be so much debate over the issue of censoring it.

The bounds of community standards have been stretched by mainstreaming movies, opening the way even further for the legalization of more explicit fare (Jenish 53). In most contemporary communities explicit sex that is without violent or dehumanizing acts is acceptable in American society today.

These community standards have not been around very long. When movies were first brought out, they were heavily restricted and not protected by the First Amendment, because films then were liked upon only as diversionary entertainment and business. Even though sexual images were highly monitored, the movie industry was hit so hard

during the Great Depression that film-makers found themselves sneaking in as much sexual content as possible, even then they saw that 'sex sells' (Clark 1029).

Films were

highly restricted throughout the 30's, 40's, and 50's by the industry, but once independent films of the 60's such as: "Bonnie and Clyde" and "Whose afraid of Virginia Wolfe?" (Clark 1029-1030), both with explicit language, sexual innuendo, and

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violence started out-performing the larger 'wholesome' production companies, many of

the barriers holding sex and violence back were torn down in the name of profit.

Adult

content was put into movies long ago, we have become more immune and can't expect it

to get any better or to go way. Porn is here for good.

Pornography is a multi-million dollar international industry, ultimately run

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organized crime all over the world, and is produced by the respectable mainstream publishing business companies (Itzin 21). Although the publishing companies are thought to be 'respectable', people generally stereotype buyers and users of pornographic

material as 'dirty old men in trenchcoats', with disposable income (Jenish 52).

Porno

movies provide adults of both genders with activities they normally wouldn't get in everyday life, such as oral pleasures or different types of fetishes. Ultimately adult

entertainment is just a quick-fix for grown-ups, as junk-food would be for small children.

Pornography's main purpose is to serve as masturbatory stimuli for males and to

provide a sexual bent. Although in the beginning, society was it as perverted and sinful,

it was still considered relatively harmless. Today there is one case study, standing out

from the rest, that tends to shatter this illusion.

The study done by Monica D. Weisz and Christopher M. Earls used "eighty-seven males . . . that were randomly shown one of four films", by researchers William Tooke

and Martin Lalumiere: "Deliverance, Straw Dogs, Die Hard II, and Days of Thunder", for a study on how they would react to questions about sexual violence and offenders

after watching. In the four films there is sexual aggression against a male, sexual

aggression against a female, physical aggression, and neutrality-no explicit scenes of

physical or sexual aggression. Out of this study the males were more acceptable of interpersonal violence and rape myths and also more attracted to sexual aggression. These same males were less sympathetic to rape victims and were noted less likely to

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find a defendant guilty of rape (Jenish 71). These four above mentioned movies are mainstreamed R-rated films. If a mainstream movie can cause this kind of distortion of

value and morality, then it should become evident that continuous viewing/use of pornographic films depicting violent sex and aggression could lead vulnerable persons

into performing or participating in sexual violence against their partners or

against a stranger.

Bill Marshall, psychology professor at Queen's University and director of a sexual behavior clinic in Kingston, interviewed one-hundred and twenty men, between the years 1980 and 1985, who had molested children or raped women. In his conclusion he found that pornography appeared to be a significant factor in the chain of events leading up to a deviant act in 25% of these cases (Nicols 60).

Rape myth is a term pertaining to people's views on rape, rapists, and sexual assaults, wherein it is assumed that the victim of a sexual crime is either partially or completely to blame (Allen 6). To help understand the rape myth a "Rape Myth Acceptance Scale" was established, which lists some of the most prominent beliefs that a person accepting the rape myth has. They are as follows:

1. A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on their first date implies that she is willing to have sex.
2. One reason that women falsely report a rape is that they frequently have a need to call attention to themselves.
3. Any healthy woman can successfully resist a rapist if she really wants to.
4. When women go around braless or wearing short skirts and tight tops, they are just asking for trouble (Burt 217).

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Pauline Bart reports that studies held simultaneously at UCLA and St. Xavier College on students, demonstrate that pornography does positively reinforce the rape myth. Men and women were exposed to over for hours of exotic video (of varying types; i.e. soft, hard core, etc.) and then asked to answer a set of questions meant to gage their attitudes of sex crimes. All the men were proven to be more accepting to rape myths, and surprisingly, over half of the women were also (Burt 123). Once again, the women in these films were portrayed as insatiable and in need of constant fulfillment. After so much exposure to women in this light from films and books, it is generally taken for granted that women should emulate this type of behavior in real life (Burt 125).

In regards to pornography perpetuating violent acts toward women, pornography defenders claim that the use of pornographic material can act as a cathartic release, actual lessening the likelihood of males committing violent acts. The reasoning is that the pornography can substitute for sex and that the 'want' to commit sexual crimes is acted out vicariously through the pornographic material (Whicclair 327). This argument, however, does not explain the crimes committed by serial killers like Ted Bundy and John Wayne Gacey, who regularly viewed pornography during the lengths of their

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between murders and rapes (Nicols 70). By saying the pornography would reduce harm to women through cathartic effects, pornography defenders display a large lack in reasoning because through their argument the rise in the production of pornography would have led to a decrease in sexual crimes, but as has been shown previously, that simply is not true.

Pornographers and pornography defenders proclaim that the link between pornography and violence is exaggerated and that the research linking pornography to sexual crimes is inconclusive. They state that the fundamentals of sex crimes are found inherently in the individuals and that the sexual permissiveness of American society

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cannot be blamed on the increase of pornography's availability (Jacobson 79).

David

Adams, a co-founder and executive director of Emerge, a Boston counseling center for

male batterers, states, "that only a minority of his clients (perhaps 10 to 20 percent) use

hard-core pornography. He estimates that half my have substance abuse problems, and

adds that alcohol seems more directly involved in abuse the pornography" (Kaminer 115). The statement made by Adams and the view that pornography does not

contribute

to the act of sex crimes is heavily outweighed, however, by the various studies connecting violence and pornography. Bill Marshall's observations on his patients and

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the examples of individual crimes originating from pornography, show this

acclimation

to be invalidated.

Some also say that attacks on pornography merely reflect the majority of feminist's disdain for men, cynically stating that people who fear pornography think of

all men as potential abusers, whose violent impulses are bound to be sparked by pornography (Kaminer 114). Researcher Catherine MacKinnon, says that "pornography works as a behavioral conditioner, reinforcer, and stimulus, not as idea or advocacy"

(Kaminer 114). However, this idea is proven to be false by the use of pornography in and

by the Serbian military. This example shows that pornography does advocate sex crimes

and that ideas of sexual violence are able to be stemmed from the viewing of pornography.

From its inception, in most cases, pornography is a media that links sexual gratification and violence together. This fact can only lead a rational mind to the

conclusion that a chain of events will begin, combining sex and violence further in the

minds of those who watch pornography and will ensure and unhealthy attitude towards women and their sexual identities. Only through discussion and individual action can the

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perpetuation of the negative impacts of pornography be swept from the closets and dark

corners of the American household.

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