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Post Modern Philosophy  
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## Porno-Paideia

### **Step One: Insert Now<sup>1</sup>**

The first step is for him to insert the DVD in the machine and press play. And then the images begin to flicker across the screen. He cannot turn away. The images create/perpetuate sensations and he reads promises of arousal on the too-red lips, simulacrum of hyperreal female desire to service male pleasure. He is transfixed, immobile, entranced by the images as they begin to undress. The hetero-tropism of male desire has taken hold, swelling within/without. But here, of course, it is difficult to tell whether this tropism is an orientation that attracts him to or repels him from the external stimulus of images of female difference/desire/service. He anticipates the porno-paideia

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<sup>1</sup> If the pornographic images are too disturbing, you can leave out the DVD portion and just read the paper as it is. If not, then place the DVD in your player. I will occasionally refer to scenes from these videos as a means of following this male “student” through the film. The “Essay Guide” menu will take you through these scenes. Although seeing the actual scenes and events that are taking place in the pornographic image may make the discussion in this paper more vivid, it is not necessary to watch the clips in order to understand what is being said. I chose these videos because I think they are the kind of pornography that apologists for porn would consider harmless. Many of them do not directly depict (obvious) violence against women (though some, especially the “gag” clips do present what I would consider violent acts). I have stayed away from the most problematic of heterosexual male porn (films with titles like “Grand Theft Anal,” “Break ’Em In” and “Assault That Ass”) in order to try to present the kinds of porn that are considered “mainstream.” Yet I think each of the films or clips that I chose remains deeply problematic in terms of its representation and treatment of the women in the films. I have restricted my focus to heterosexual pornography aimed at men because this is the kind of porn that I think is most problematic from a feminist point of view. Some of the films I chose have racist elements that are also troubling. I am aware, however, that there exists empowering feminist porn, such as that in the work of Annie Sprinkle and Fanny Fatale (see for example Straayer, 1993). There is also less feminist, but still woman-centred porn made by Candida Royalle among others (see Royalle, 2000). Furthermore there are genres of gay, lesbian and S&M porn that I do not consider (see Williams, 1993 for an analysis of S&M; Kendall, 1999 for an analysis of gay male porn and Conway, 1997 for an analysis of lesbian porn).

conferred by these moving images: an education<sup>2</sup> that will prepare him for sex with woman.<sup>3</sup>

But wait, we are getting ahead of ourselves. It is best to move slowly through this pornographic imaginary. The signs are hard to see and we might get lost along the way.<sup>4</sup>

We should stop at each scene and examine what is (re)presented<sup>5</sup> there, and what is glaring in its absence.

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<sup>2</sup> Some viewers defend pornography as a form of sexual education. For example, Ran Schwartz said, "I believe it's a harmless thing and that it's kind of educational... It's good entertainment and people can learn from watching it" (quoted in Chen, 2004). Scott MacDonald (1995: 309-310) discusses the "educational" value of pornography (with the educational in quotation marks, although it is unclear why). MacDonald thinks that pornography provides a means to "be able to examine them [women] without the embarrassment of being observed by the women" (1995: 309). Watching porn is an activity from which MacDonald believes that he has learned about female sexuality, although a few sentences later he describes the miseducation provided by porn (without naming it). MacDonald explains that the pornographic materials of his youth airbrushed away all pubic hair leading to the "shock of my life during a heavy petting session" (1995: 309). If pornography is defended as educational, it is important to look at just what it is that pornography teaches.

<sup>3</sup> Because, of course, the question of female desire (if asked at all) in pornography is always "what do *women* want?" and never, "what does *this* woman want?" (see Glazebrook, 2005). Pornographic discourse is essentializing. Hence I will use terms like "woman" and "man" and "he" to connote the homogeneity of pornographic categories. I do not mean to imply that this porno-homogeneity in any way reflects the reality of actual women or men and their actual lives.

<sup>4</sup> I am writing this paper in response to some postmodernist articles that claim that in the post modern world, with its multiple and shifting subjectivities and lack of objectivity, pornography is just a text like any other that can be read in any number of ways (see for example Chatterjee (1999), Nagel (2002), and Williams (1993), all of whom rely on some form of this position. See also MacKinnon (2000) who rejects postmodernism on grounds that the theory leads directly to this conclusion). On these theories, then, if pornography is given a bad reading it is because of what the reader brings to pornography rather than something "essential" to pornography itself. While I do not believe that depicting sex is bad in itself (and hence the damage of pornography is not "essential" to graphic depictions of sexual activities), I will argue that the majority of pornography (what I refer to as malestream pornography) is made to be read in a very specific way that is damaging to women. I contend that malestream pornography is indeed a tool for "education" as many of its supporters claim; however, it is a miseducation about sex and sexuality and is mainly an education into domination. Pornographic videos represent one vehicle by which men learn to oppress women. To demonstrate my point I will give a close textual reading of several porn films. In doing so, I align myself with Irigaray's (1985) view that the space in which we are wandering (when we view pornography) is structured by gender power. There are, however, some interesting sites of resistance in some modern porn. Specifically, the female porn actors sometimes resist the degradation of the male porn performers.

<sup>5</sup> "(re)presented" I use this term with brackets because pornography claims to represent human sexuality: the pornographer's deterministic premise, "well this is the way people are and we're just giving them what they need" (Griffin, 1981). Yet, pornography is a product of culture, a human creation, a simulacrum of human sexuality that is presented and its "reality" is only in its porno-presentation. Pornographic sexuality begins as a trace of a trace (Derrida, 1982: 23-25) of fleeting sexual feeling, but it is an education into *how* to experience sexuality, which once manifest may become real (at least for some/most (?)).

## The Scene Setup<sup>6</sup>

The story begins here, which is always (the hardest part).<sup>7</sup> Perhaps it begins by establishing the crude characterization of the performers, some rough sketch of the fantasy role they will play. The plot serves only to tell us why these people have come together, which is always already known, of course: to fuck.<sup>8</sup> Other times the film will

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<sup>6</sup> The structure for this paper follows the formulaic structure of the pornographic video. The basic formula of the porn video is nearly always the same. I have discerned this formula through my own research, and the formula is confirmed by Chris Nagel (2002). Nagel considers the porn formula to begin with the scene setup, proceed to some dirty talk during which time the performers get naked (if they are not already). The porn formula then has the woman perform fellatio while moaning to demonstrate the pleasure she experiences. The fellatio scene is often quite extended, using several camera angles. After this there may be (but is not always) cunnilingus, although even when present this act usually lasts for a much less extended period of time than the fellatio scene. Finally intercourse begins, whether vaginal or anal, and continues until the “money shot” when the man withdraws his penis and ejaculates on the woman’s body, or more commonly her face (Nagel, 2002: 78-80). Of course, the boundaries between these formulaic elements are not rigid and we may find they bleed into each other. I have separated them here for structural clarity.

The narrative structure of the pornographic film itself reinforces the idea that male pleasure is paramount (confirmed by the longer fellatio scene and the “money shot”) and that women’s pleasure is derived from giving men pleasure (the moaning during fellatio and the relatively absent attempt to give pleasure to the woman). Furthermore, because the pornographic film reaches its climax with the depiction of intercourse and the visual display of the male orgasm, the structure of the film affirms the centrality of the phallus and penetration as the only *real* indicator or form of sex. Intercourse is itself defined in terms of the penis. Princeton’s online lexical database for the English language defines ‘sexual intercourse’ as “the act of sexual procreation between a man and a woman; the man's penis is inserted into the woman's vagina and excited until orgasm and ejaculation occur” (WordNet.com), a definition in which the woman is notably inactive, simply a hole which is a means to stimulate the male penis to ejaculation.

<sup>7</sup> “which is always” malestream porn stories are relatively stable, and tend not to vary much from stock fantasies. While some authors claim that pornography transgresses boundaries and therefore has subversive merit (e.g. Laura Kipnis cited in Merish, 1998), pornographic stories are in fact quite reflective of the status quo. As Angela Carter notes, pornography is only tolerated when it serves to reinforce culturally accepted ideas. When pornography challenges the prevailing system of values it is often banned (Carter, 2000: 539). This is one reason why obscenity legislation is more often applied against lesbian or gay male porn than it is against even violent or degrading depictions of women found in heterosexual male porn. Further, as Carter writes, “Pornography, like marriage and the fictions of romantic love, assists the process of false universalizing. Its excesses belong to that timeless, locationless area outside history, outside geography, where fascist art is born” (2000: 534). Hence, far from being the pinnacle of postmodern multiplicities, pornography reinstates the modernist universalizing view from nowhere. “the hardest part” some porn directors have commented that the most difficult part of filming porn is to place the intercourse within some kind of narrative (see for example Slade, 1997: 115).

<sup>8</sup> Angela Carter argues that to fuck is the *rason d’être* of pornographic characters. They do not come together, as is often assumed by porn apologists, because of their continual, burning desire (Carter 2000: 534). They come together because they are *for* fucking.

dispense with the story altogether and begin with an off-camera male voice<sup>9</sup> asking questions of the on-screen female actor.<sup>10</sup>

“What’s your name?” he asks, and she replies (speaking only when spoken to) with a lie. She tells us about her type: Asian, Persian, French Canadian or English.<sup>11</sup> And her age, which is always eighteen or twenty (young enough to be easily confused/controlled). Then she tells us how she fits into the categories of male fantasy: “I love sex!” “I love big cocks.” She declares her desire and willingness, which is always otherwise impossible/invisible but for the possibility of articulation/repetition. The story she tells serves to turn *this* woman into the everywoman. And reciprocally, of course, everywoman is then (re)presented by/in the pleasures/pain of this woman who is always already willing and waiting to please everyman.

The man then asks her, “what are you going to do today?” and she looks puzzled. Did she not know what she was getting into? The male voice confirms that she did not, and that it doesn’t matter because it was not up to her: “You might have two dicks

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<sup>9</sup> The fact that the men in pornography are often off-camera (but for their large erections) is interesting in itself. This could mean that the men, too, are being dismembered. I think, however, that showing only the phallus (which stands in/up for everyman) may make it easier for the male viewer to identify with the male performer’s body. Since the body does not have a face, this could be him (the viewer). Furthermore, it offers an anonymity to the male performers that is not accorded to the female who is on full display. A man could act in porn without fear for his reputation, whereas the woman is all-too visible.

<sup>10</sup> This second version is more common in Internet porn, which often comes packaged in twenty-second clips. The first clip often begins with the voice of an off-camera male asking the girl superficial questions that could be answered by a near-stranger to the girl. This ensures that we know very little about her (or the character she plays? The boundary between real and simulacra is always fuzzy in pornography), but enough to know she wants sex—and that she is (barely) old enough to be filmed having sex.

<sup>11</sup> For this kind of introduction, press button 1 on the DVD “Cassandra;” “Winner of Miss Norway” and “Smoking Hot Asian American Teen Fucked Senseless.” The track “Smoking Hot Asian American Teen Fucked Senseless” also has a version of this introduction; only here we get a *very slightly* better sense of the girl’s personality. The potentially positive effects of the more lengthy introduction to “Asian American Teen” are undermined by her racist and sexist discussion of why men like Asian girls: they have tight pussies that stay tight and they serve their men by bringing them beer when they get home and doing “whatever he says.”

whether you like it or not.”<sup>12</sup> That is, if (only) *he* likes it (and then, of course, she likes it too, for their pleasure is the same).

What he doesn't see here may be more telling than what he does. He doesn't find out about what *this* woman would like to do sexually, instead he hears her repeat what the pornographer tells her she *will* like. He commands, “Tell me you like sucking dick”

‘Diana’ replies, “I love it.”<sup>13</sup>

He doesn't see the woman consent. The issue of consent is confused by the pornographic (re)presentation. Is he to understand that the woman's presence on the porn set conveys her (prior/invisible/impossible) consent? Is he to assume that some contract was established and signed by the pornographer and the performers?<sup>14</sup> Then why does she seem confused when asked what she will do? What kind of consent can be given when the questions of her (up)coming activities are followed by statements about what will happen whether she likes it or not? These, then, are the first two lessons of porn: first, that woman does not know what she (it is impossible for her to) want(s) until she is told by the pornographer (for she is always already waiting for him/everyman) and second, (and perhaps related to the first) that woman's consent is confusing and difficult to discern, and because of this, it doesn't much matter whether she says yes.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Press button 2 on the DVD “Winner of Miss Norway.”

<sup>13</sup> Press button 3 on the DVD “Winner of Miss Norway.” If she really did love it, would she need to be fed lines in this way?

<sup>14</sup> Even if she does consent to the filming of the sexual act, the distribution of the pornographic video prevents her from consenting to the *individual* viewers watching the film (Trish Glazebrook, personal communication). Hence the woman's consent is a “blanket” consent in pornography. This view of consent is then mirrored in reality in instances where the woman's sexual history is raised in rape trials: if she has consented once to *some* man, then she must have consented also to *this* man (because... why? Are all men the same? Perhaps this is also influenced by the pornographic imaginary in which “any dick will do” (press button 4 on the DVD “Winner of Miss Norway”)).

<sup>15</sup> Trish Glazebrook argues that rape-culture, “is a direct consequence of the erasure of female erotic desire, for if women have no desire, how can they ever really consent?” (Glazebrook, 2005). The first two lessons of porn interact to produce an imaginary that permits the rape of women.

### “Dirty Talk” and In/Visibility

The “dirty talk” begins soon after/continues the erasure of female erotic desire and occurs intermittently throughout the rest of the film. The woman gets naked (if she wasn’t already) and is put (at his command) on display for the man/camera/voice/him.<sup>16</sup>

“Are you a little slut? Huh? Say it. Say American words. I’m a little slut.” He commands/projects.

“I’m a little slut,” she replies, silent in her dutiful repetition/reflection.

“Yes you are. You’re a fucking whore... You little bitch... Fucking and sucking that’s what you’re good for.”<sup>17</sup> The woman here is reduced to a function.<sup>18</sup>

“You little tiger, you,” he says while the naked woman straddles his clothed body.

“You nasty little... you little slut.” She laughs.

“You’re just a little fuck toy, you little bitch” Her reply: “Yeah, am I your little fucking slut?” “Yeah that’s a good little whore.”

He calls and she answers/repeats. This/he ensures that she does not speak, she must only reflect the nameless masculine/him so that he can understand what she says.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Press button 5 on the DVD “Smoking Hot Asian American Teen Fucked Senseless.”

<sup>17</sup> Press button 6 on the DVD for four examples of the “dirty talk” of porn. The exchange with racist overtones (the actress is Persian) comes from “Winner of Miss Norway”

<sup>18</sup> This aspect of the pornographic imaginary that reduces women to their function is mirrored in political philosophy. Susan Moller Okin writes, “Philosophers who, in laying the foundation for their political theories, have asked, ‘What are men like?’ ‘What is man’s potential?’ have frequently, in turning to the female sex, asked ‘what are women *for*?’ There is, then, an undeniable connection between assigned ‘female nature’ and social structure, and a functionalist attitude to women pervades the history of political thought” (Okin, 1979: 10; italics in original). Although it may be difficult to trace causal connections between pornographic images of women and the harm that is done to women as a group (at least the evidence is controversial), it is clear that the attitudes that create women’s oppression are interrelated with the attitudes that produce pornography.

<sup>19</sup> Chris Nagel (2002) claims that the women in pornography speak more often and are more vocal about their pleasure (moaning). This was not, however, my experience while researching porn on the Internet. While there was a good deal of moaning on the part of women (and especially in those moments when there was no obvious source of their pleasure), the men generally talked more, breathed harder (which I think is a more reliable sound of arousal than the moan, which is easier to fake) and took more control. The

The light of the pornographic studio/logic is too bright to see her luminescence.<sup>20</sup> The porno-narcissistic spec(tac)ularization produces the phallic woman-for-man.<sup>21</sup> The “s/he” who is safe because she has no needs/self of her own and therefore won’t reject his (needs) demands.

The “dirty talk” of pornography reveals one of the tensions in the genre. The swear words directed mainly at the female performer serve both to objectify her as a “fuck toy” and to assert the male performer’s desire to dominate her: she is only good for the use to which he will put her. But this does not make sense because he has no interest in dominating objects. What would it mean to dominate a desk or a book?<sup>22</sup> Here in the pornographic imaginary, woman is turned paradoxically into an *object of domination*.

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one exception to this trend is the film “Smoking Hot Asian American Teen Fucked Senseless,” in which the female performer speaks a good deal throughout the film. She also moves both herself and the male actor when they are engaged in intercourse in order to assure her pleasure. This film is the only one to visually depict a female orgasm. Still, it is not a good film from a feminist perspective because she begins with a sexist and racist account of male attraction to Asians (though she does resist the pornographer’s attempt to universalize male desire by saying ‘some men’ when he asks why men like Asian women). I included this film for balance, but it was certainly in the minority in terms of the films I discovered on the Internet. Nagel was, however, reviewing pornographic videos, rather than Internet porn. This may indicate that as mainstream pornography becomes more omnipresent (now there is no barrier between the impulse to view porn and the viewing, one does not need to pay, face another person or even leave one’s living room) it may be becoming more misogynistic.

<sup>20</sup> One of the features of pornography is that it situates the actors and the viewer in a subject-object relationship in which woman is objectified and the man/viewer retains the subject position looking at the woman. The masculine objectifies and looks at the object in order to know “her.” But the pornographic imaginary is errancy, without the possibility of unconcealment (Heidegger 1993). The pornographic imaginary ensures that the object of the gaze cannot speak for herself, and hence cannot be known. The pornographic imaginary remains firmly rooted in the modernist project of projecting masculine light onto the object of study.

<sup>21</sup> Because the cinematic gaze is male (Mulvey, 1989: 19) the cinematic world is male. In man’s world woman can only exist on his terms as his Other or she remains unthought. Thus, in cinema woman ubiquitously reflects the “masculine feminine” or woman as man sees her (Gyékényesi 1999). Hence as a form of “education,” porn can never educate about what women (or this woman) want(s) but only about what men would like her to want. For men, pornography is a miseducation, whereas for women it may tell us about the cultural approval of male sexual callousness/violence and hatred of the female.

<sup>22</sup> See Griffin (1981) for a good discussion of the pornographic struggle between the desire to objectify a woman and the desire to dominate her. Griffin argues that this shows that at one level both the pornographer and the pornographic viewer know that women are not objects, “And so, his unquestioned assumption that she is an object is, really on another level of his mind, entirely questioned” (Griffin, 1981).

Yet sometimes, just sometimes, *this* woman resists his objectifications, “You dirty bastard”<sup>23</sup> she tells him back in reciprocal denigration. To his command to repeat, “Fuck my hot pussy,” she replies, “fuck *me*.”<sup>24</sup> She thereby resists the attempt to reduce her to her body parts. Even in the porno-imaginary these women are not easily accepting of their objectification/domination.

The “dirty talk” of pornography also establishes the mother/whore dichotomy “necessary” for *masculine* sexual psychology.<sup>25</sup> And what of this alleged necessity? It is not necessary that all men<sup>26</sup> think this way in order to find sexual gratification, there is no sexual male essence, until, of course, the man has decided who he will be and thereby enacts his sexuality.<sup>27</sup> But this “necessity” *is* (only) necessary for those men who will to

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<sup>23</sup> Press button 7 on the DVD “Asian American Teen.”

<sup>24</sup> Press button 8 on the DVD “Winner of Miss Norway.”

<sup>25</sup> Freud writes, “In only a very few people of culture are the two strains of tenderness and sexuality duly fused into one; the man almost always feels his sexual activity hampered by his respect for the woman and only develops full sexual potency when he finds himself in the presence of a lower type of sexual object; and this again is partly conditioned by the circumstances that his sexual aims include those of perverse sexual components, which he does not like to gratify with a woman he respects” (quoted in Straayer, 1993: 157). This to me denotes a very rigid set of gender and class stereotypes are at work in Freud’s psychological subjects. The effect of these stereotypes is to provide men with a class of women whom they do not have to consider. A question then is whether in the current social circumstances, with its omnipresent pornographic images, this class of women beneath consideration has largely expanded to include all/most women.

<sup>26</sup> For example, in Taoist conceptions of sexual relations, this kind of thinking would be harmful to male sexual satisfaction as well as to male health. The Tao of loving held that any sex when a woman’s desire is absent would be harmful to the man as well. “If the man moves and the woman does not respond... then the sexual act will not only injure the man but harm the woman” (cited in Wolf, 1997: 185). Accordingly, the words to describe females and female sexuality involve imagery of precious metals and flowers (golden lotus, cinnabar gate, golden cleft) rather than the Western versions that involve degradations and animal images (bitch, pussy) (Wolf, 1997: 182-183). I am not claiming that oriental cultures are less patriarchal or misogynist, but only that there is no single version of masculine desire that makes the degradation of women “necessary” to male sexual satisfaction.

<sup>27</sup> And this education into porno-paideia begins at the earliest moments of male sexual awakening. The porno-omnipresence ensures his easy access to pornographic (re)presentations via the Internet and the “convenience” store. So the choice is not entirely free, as the education begins before he has begun to think critically about relations between the sexes. Like Plato’s student, he is lead forcefully by the teacher/culture to the architectonic porno-patriarchy. Moreover, in many ways, the education of the porno-paideia is even *more* forceful and more complete. First there is punishment of the men who refuse to follow and are called sissies or faggots to indicate that they are not, in fact, *real* men (which again essentializes the forms of masculinity that are chosen in *this* culture). Second, the purpose of porn is to

be(cum) patriarchs and therefore must never meet a woman in equal hetero-relations. In order to dominate he must turn away from his beginnings; complete denegation of the feminine (and the) flesh.<sup>28</sup> In turning away from her he ensures the impossibility of the erotic. Hence he steals from her the possibility of her sexual power.<sup>29</sup> This is the third lesson of pornography: the women he has sex with (perhaps in contradistinction to the women he marries (?) or to men (?)) are beneath consideration, they are objects to be used and are only as good as their function to the man who is fucking. This third lesson of porn establishes an imaginary in which any adult hetero-loving relationship is bound to fail since the erotic, the sensual and even the sexual is excluded in favour of the pornographic, and the pornographic cannot occur with the woman a man loves.

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arouse (men) and encourage masturbation to orgasm, and orgasm is a powerful positive reinforcement. So pleasure becomes associated with pornographic (re)presentations. In this second lesson, women, too, are at risk because women view porn and may come to associate pleasure (or at least male attention) with these images of our subordination. Each of these lessons can be resisted through conscious reflection on what the lesson teaches, but the pornography debate so often polarized between freedom and (invisible/structural) harm only serves to make pornography seem off-limits, daring and therefore more exciting. The current cultural discourse does little to encourage the needed reflection when compared to how much it does to sublimate this reflection.

<sup>28</sup> Hence the student of pornography must follow Plato's lead out of the cave, without looking back (Irigaray, 1985). See also Griffin (1981) for an excellent description of the manner in which pornography attempts the (impossible) splitting of physical feeling from emotion. Emotion, she says, is threatening to men who will to power because it makes them vulnerable to the woman's rejection. Pornography works to destroy male emotion by first projecting the emotion on the 'woman' and denying that it is part of 'man.' But since this emotion is still a part of 'man' the pornographer must also construct a image of male callousness, which we have begun to see in this section, and which becomes much more striking in the following two sections "Fellatio (Cunnilingus (?))" and "Intercourse."

<sup>29</sup> Audre Lorde discusses the uses of the erotic as power that has been suppressed and destroyed under male models of power. For oppression to perpetuate itself, it must corrupt the sources of power that could provide energy for change. The erotic is a source of power that arises from nonrational knowledge, and hence is associated with modern concepts of 'woman.' Because of its association with women and the body, erotic power has been distorted and suppressed (Lorde, 2000: 569). One of the ways that this occurs is through the turning away from each other's feelings. Lorde writes, "To share the power of each other's feelings is different from using another's feelings as we would use a Kleenex. When we look the other way from our experience, erotic or otherwise, we use rather than share the feelings of those others who participate in the experience with us. And use without consent of the used is abuse" (Lorde, 2000: 573-574). To the extent that pornography teaches this subtle "turning away from" as "necessary" for (male) arousal, pornography also teaches abuse in sexual relations.

### **Fellatio (and Cunnilingus (?))**

Fellatio begins abruptly, for no reason, or at his command. The woman moans to show how much pleasure she gets/gives from fellating this penis. This scene is long in relation to the first two and the camera angle changes several times (always staying close). He sees the scene from above the man's shoulders, his perspective on the action. This view (he is told) is "great" as he sees the female performer looking up at him invitingly.<sup>30</sup> He sees her face, her breasts, her body and her movements. He sees the scene from the side at penis level, the view of the voyeur. But never, of course, does he see the action from behind *her* head. This would be impossible. She is not a subject and therefore cannot see.<sup>31</sup> And lest he becomes confused and thinks the woman here is moving of her own accord, he will grab the back of her head and thrust it vigorously/violently onto his penis. Her face becomes distorted, distended. Her mouth is a dehiscence to accept his cock. Her face is streaming with tears and mucous (perhaps vomit?), in response/revolt to his choking erection.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Press button 9 on the DVD "Asian American Teen."

<sup>31</sup> Here I am directly disagreeing with Chris Nagel who writes, "Some of the shots—for instance, of fellatio—give full display to the male genitalia, suggesting the 'masculine gaze' of viewers in this case places them in the position of the woman performing fellatio rather than the male recipient" (Nagel, 2000). But this shot is not from the woman's point of view, it is from the side, the perspective of the voyeur. And it is not because the woman's view would be too "bumpy" with the movement of the head, for this "bumpy" technique may be used during intercourse to give the impression of seeing through the eyes of the male "fucker" (Press button 10 on the DVD "Winner of Miss Norway"). Instead, I think, it is a cinematic technique to erase her subjectivity. The display of the penis also serves to reinforce and preserve the centrality of the phallus to hetero-porno-sexual activity. It allows men the chance to gaze on the beauty/power of their own bodies in a context where, as Scott MacDonald writes, "one of the primary functions of the female presence is to serve as a sign—to others and to oneself—that looking at erections, even finding them sexy, does not mean that the viewer defines himself as homosexual" (1995: 310). In porn, male pleasure is paramount, the phallus/penis serves as a sign of this pleasure in fellatio. Thus the viewing of porn is at the same time the ultimate expression of hetero-porno-patriarchy and a chance for men to express/experience the homo-porno-pleasure of watching the pleasure of other men. Of course, the woman/sign must be there to assure him that this is ok because his homoerotics are balanced by his hetero-misogyny. Hence he can denegate his homoerotic pleasure (which is always already on display) and keep his place as king in the hetero-patriarchy.

<sup>32</sup> Press button 11 on the DVD.

If her gagging gets his attention he asks, “Are you trying to tell us something? What are you trying to say?”<sup>33</sup> His cock is still firmly down her throat. And anyway, she cannot speak because he has not yet told her what to say/repeat/reflect.

While she is being screwed by one/another/every/man he presents her with his cock (there are, after all, more holes to be filled), “Suck, suck, suck that fucking dick. Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah suck. Go suck that dick. Suck it. Suck it. Yeah. Find that dick. Find it, find it greedy girl.”<sup>34</sup> He tells her to spit on his cock and slaps her face. He stretches her mouth because it is not yet big enough to accommodate his erection. In response she moans to demonstrate the pleasure she gets/gives when he moves her about like this.<sup>35</sup>

The pornographic “dirty talk” in the fellatio scene states the reverse of what occurs. As he asks her to speak, he prevents her speech by thrusting his cock further into her throat to near impossible depths. He ensures her silence while asking for her speech. While taking his pleasure and demanding her service, he calls her “greedy.” But who is greedy here? Her tears, her pain, her gagging are called her pleasure, her speech. The pornographic imaginary turns everything upside-down and back-to-front. The fourth lesson of porn is that the power to name allows him to call what it isn’t what it is. The camera angles assure him that this power of naming will be handed to him, through the power of the phallus, which is always already erect and ready to fuck. The woman/symbol assuages his fear that the homoerotics of gazing at the beautiful,

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<sup>33</sup> Press button 12 on the DVD.

<sup>34</sup> Press button 13 on the DVD “Winner of Miss Norway.” Notice here how the communication between man and woman in bed is reduced to the level of kindergarten-reader. With short, simple sentences that (but for their pornographic content) could be found in any “Dick and Jane” book.

<sup>35</sup> Press button 14 on the DVD.

tempting, powerful phallus will make him fall (burning faggot) into the fires of homo-emotion/desire/need. Her symbol/abuse will keep him (immaculate/dominant) in control of the pleasure/pain of her (his projected) flesh, in his proper place as patriarch.<sup>36</sup>

But this fourth lesson is difficult. He may have recoiled at the violence of this scene. He may not yet be convinced of her object/domination/simulacrum. Perhaps he hesitated at the paradox of her status/symbol of the object of domination. Perhaps he has been confused by the naming that calls what it isn't what it is. Then he must wait, and repeat the lessons that he learned before, and then he will be ready to go on. Here we might step back, pause the action. The lesson to come is harder still and the teacher/pornographer must be sure this student has learned the lesson well. If he is a good student, then this section can be skipped (and many, it seems, learn quickly).<sup>37</sup> But if he is slow to see the light then the teacher/pornographer will repeat the first four lessons through cunnilingus/display.

This repetition should be a quick reminder, easier than the first. He turns his attention/gaze to her pussy: a minute should be enough. Her getting/giving pleasure is in the display for his eyes. He opens her to make her insides outside.<sup>38</sup> See, look! This is

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<sup>36</sup> Susan Griffin (1981) argues that pornography is not, as is often claimed, a celebration of the body or sexuality. Instead, she reads pornography as a hatred of the body. The masculine principle hates his physical needs and therefore he projects them onto "woman." He then tells her that she is these qualities "slut," "whore," in short she becomes his need. He can then deny that he has these qualities because she is his opposite, his Other. She is defined as that which he is not. In pornography the rejected and projected elements are the body and physical desire. The woman becomes the scapegoat for these, and is punished for her sexual greed and her lust, which are both projections of his sexual greed and lust.

<sup>37</sup> One of the few films to embed cunnilingus into the rest of the action was "Smoking Hot Asian American Teen Fucked Senseless." Otherwise in my internet research, I found that movies either highlighted that they involved cunnilingus, or left it out altogether. The presence of cunnilingus in Internet porn, then, may be a "specialty" item, which like anal sex or S&M caters to a smaller male audience. This film is also one of the few that depicts (although it certainly does not focus on) the entire male body, including his face.

<sup>38</sup> Press button 15 on the DVD "Smoking Hot Asian American Teen Fucked Senseless." This spreading open and making in/visible of the person is done exclusively to women in mainstream pornography. Although men's bums could similarly be made visible, this act is too objectifying to be perpetrated on men.

(not) a pussy.<sup>39</sup> Remember, she is lack. There is no phallus/power here. The more visible she is made, the more invisible she becomes.<sup>40</sup> There, enough, she is in/visible/disappeared and he remembers now the lessons from before. The *hysteron proteron* of the pornographic imaginary is (re)established. He will not linger lest he forgets.

### **Intercourse (and Envelopment (?))<sup>41</sup>**

Arbitrarily, or at his command, intercourse beings. The camera angles of this scene, again, (re)present male desire. His view exchanges between the voyeur and the perpetrator: either the view of the fucker or the view of the watcher.

She screams in pain and this is recorded as pleasure (the power to name what isn't as what is).<sup>42</sup> She is immobile, ground and passivity to his active principle, and loves it.

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<sup>39</sup> This is a reference to surrealist painter, René Magritte's painting "Ceci n'est pas une pipe [This is not a pipe]" to remind the viewer/reader that what we are seeing is not, in fact, a pussy but a two dimensional representation of a pussy. If the viewer/he tried to do anything with this pussy (to taste it, smell it, or feel it, for example) he would immediately realize what it is not. But the phallogocentric worldview emphasizes the visual (Irigaray 1985) and can therefore ignore what porn is not. Because porn makes bodies visible as objects of desire, under the phallogocentric worldview the object of desire in pornography are the bodies. But this is to misname because in depicting naked bodies on a two-dimensional screen, pornography displaces the object of the viewer's desire from women in the real world onto the image of 'woman' on the screen. If he could smell taste or touch the woman on the screen, then she would not be an object. He would be able to feel her pulse and her warmth. So the woman of the porno-imaginary must be only available to the sense of sight, because the other senses might mis(?)lead him to the non-pornographic conclusion that she is *this* woman and she is real.

<sup>40</sup> One of the Calvin Klein underwear ads featuring Kate Moss was withdrawn due to accusations that it was pornographic. After the ordeal Kate Moss stated, "The more visible they make me, the more invisible I become" (quoted in Chatterjee, 1999). The display of women does not serve to make them visible, because their image is not them.

<sup>41</sup> Written on a women's bathroom stall "From a woman's perspective intercourse is envelopment."

<sup>42</sup> Press button 16 on the DVD "Real Female Orgasms." It is interesting to note the title, because what is studiously missing in this series of videos, is the representation (or reality) of female orgasm. I find this track especially disturbing because it is very difficult to read. Is the woman screaming in pleasure or in pain? The confusion of the two serves to disintegrate the distinction. It does not matter whether she likes it or it hurts, the two are the same.

Just like that, because there is no other way.<sup>43</sup> The camera/view/he is now excited (his excitement is palpable and the lesson here will be more strongly reinforced). He moves hard and fast, harder and faster still in contrast to her immobility. He changes angles frequently. Focusing now on her face and then on her pussy. Of course, more often on her cunt because that is where the action is. The pornographer ensures that he does not see her feelings, because he cannot when these are concealed by the objects into which her (his projection of) flesh has been divided.<sup>44</sup> The camera follows the sightlines of the mind-blind.<sup>45</sup> He must not know the difference between her pleasure/pain. His sensation is of course also her sensation because she exists for him and only reflects his active principle.

She screams. It is hard to discern if she is in pleasure or pain because the lessons of before have taught a studious ignorance of the difference between these two. “It hurts.

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<sup>43</sup> In this “Smoking Hot Asian American Teen Fucked Senseless” is somewhat different. The actress, Lily Thai, moves throughout the intercourse scene. When the male performer is on top, she moves both him and herself to position them for her pleasure. This is also the only film to depict female orgasm.

<sup>44</sup> The woman is visible/seen, but often behind and below his large penis, which is the central focus of the frame. The pornographic imaginary gives us a penis-eye-view of the events. The woman/symbol becomes parts, her cunt unconnected to her face. So the pornographic view separates her emotions/face from her feeling/body. Her flesh is his projection of his own unwanted need. So the pornographic view licences his separation of body and mind to help him retain control during sexual relations. Without this deliberate splitting, he might be lost inside the woman. The pornographic teaches him how not to lose himself in passion.

<sup>45</sup> In the book, *Blink*, Malcolm Gladwell documents the difficulty that autistic persons have with viewing emotionally-charged scenes (Gladwell, 2005: 214-221). A mind-blind person cannot read the expressions of others on their faces or in their body language. The mind-blind infer proper behaviour through a complex set of object-subject relations. When people who are mind-blind watch an emotionally charged movie scene they tend to focus on the objects in a scene, rather than on the emotional reactions that can be read on the faces of the performers. The objects are what is most salient to them. While the men who enjoy pornography are probably not normally mind-blind, the camera angles of pornography imposes mind-blindness on the apprehension of the scene. The pornographic gaze moves from object (pussy) to object (cock). As much or as long as “he” would like to watch her expression, the camera cuts to a view of her object: her pussy. This trick ensures that he will not identify or name her pain, and certainly that he will not stop at her request. Hence pornographic depictions of intercourse teach him not to recognize female refusal.

Ow, ow,” she says.<sup>46</sup> And even when she asks directly for this to stop, he knows that she does not yet know what she wants. Because she is always already waiting for him to tell her what she wants and he hasn’t said. “Its ok,” he says, “just breathe.”<sup>47</sup>

His moans sound unmistakably like pleasure, but hers sound (un)mistakably like pain. The fifth lesson of pornographic imaginary is to confuse pleasure and pain. Because he has called what isn’t what is, and because he has seen that her pain/pleasure is the same as his pleasure, he does not need to think about this. Her noise of pleasure/pain is of course the same as his pleasure.<sup>48</sup> The fifth lesson of pornography is to teach him ignorance of her protests. This lesson is difficult for him because (remember) he began this journey to look at, and learn from, female pleasure, so he would know what to do the next time he met a real woman.<sup>49</sup> But if he has learned well what has come before he, should learn this lesson too (and soon these lessons will be powerfully reinforced in his release). The secret to female desire is that it is not there. It is impossible for woman to want, for she is nothing. Empty space. He must give to her what she lacks. Only through his phallus can she exist.

When she speaks and asks for the end of her pleasure/pain he cannot hear her. Her words do not make sense because he has not told her what to say.<sup>50</sup> This lesson

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<sup>46</sup> Press button 17 on the DVD

<sup>47</sup> This approach to her pain is eerily reminiscent of the Lamaze coach.

<sup>48</sup> This fifth lesson accounts for the controversy over date rape. He is taught to confuse the signs of female pleasure and pain. So of course he cannot “recognize” when his pleasure caused her pain. In the pornographic imaginary his pleasure and her pain/pleasure are one and the same (which is of course not to apologize for date rape, but only to explain why to men it seems so harmless and mundane).

<sup>49</sup> Scott MacDonald sights this as the main reason that he think men watch porn (1995: 310).

<sup>50</sup> In *This Sex Which is Not One* Irigaray writes about the impossibility of woman’s speech: “not to mention her language, in which she sets of in all directions leaving him unable to discern the coherence of any meaning. Hers are contradictory words, somewhat mad from the standpoint of reason, inaudible for whoever listens to them with ready-made grids, with a fully elaborated code in hand” (quoted in

reflects the values of a rape-culture in which women consent by type. He is fucking her, and has told her she is a whore. The whore is the type that consents, always already (by category) to everyman. So he need not dwell on her senseless protests. And besides, he has put in more than his share for the release of his desire.

### **The “Money Shot”**

And now at last, there has been enough distance between the emotion and physical feeling. His penis has finally become excited enough that it might cum from his effort. And of course he must see his (own) pleasure because this is the whole point. His orgasm, of course, signals the end of the lesson. The phallus is the very definition of sex. So she tells us all over again (and of course always at his command) how she wants to feel his cum on her face.<sup>51</sup> He withdraws and masturbates his seed on her open mouth. He is aggressive with his semen, punishing her for everywoman who has been revolted at this gift he offers her.<sup>52</sup> She loves it. Smiling gratefully as his cum drips from her chin.

He asks her if she liked it and she says nothing (he has not told her what to say and she knows by now that she cannot otherwise be heard). He laughs approvingly at her silence. “Look at her! She’s speechless,” he exclaims in self-congratulations at how well he has expressed his pleasure onto her (his projected) flesh.

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Gyékényesi, 1999). The pornographic woman’s speech is similarly incoherent. If she is not repeating what he has told her to say, he cannot hear her voice or her requests for him to stop.

<sup>51</sup> Press button 18 on the DVD “Asian American Slut” and “Winner of Miss Norway”

<sup>52</sup> Scott MacDonald reads the “money shot” as a way that men can reclaim the beauty of their sexual functioning. He writes that the messages and comparisons that he has heard about semen equate it with things that are disgusting, like snot or egg. The “money shot” is a way “for men to periodically deal with the cultural context which mitigates against their full acceptance of themselves as sexual beings” (MacDonald, 1995: 311). And so in pornography he is hostile toward the woman who represents everywoman. He aggressively punishes her with his semen to restore his pride in his seed that everywoman has taken from him. I think MacDonald’s analysis is accurate. Far from teaching a love of sexuality, pornography reflects a culture that hates the erotic. But as a solution, I think pornography is misguided because it perpetuates rather than repairs erotophobia.

He asks her “was it worth the \$1,500?”

“Sure,” she says.

And then he asks, “Did you have fun?” and she says, “no.”<sup>53</sup>

### **Conclusions**

We have followed the student carefully through the porno-paideia: an education to turn him into a lover/hater of women. We have seen how the pornographic imaginary turns everything upside down and back-to-front. The more visible he makes everywoman, the more invisible she becomes. The pornographic imaginary is essentialist, making categories and types of its performers. It reinstates the modernist rationality that says a thing must be objectified and looked at in order to be known. But this phallogocentric porno-paideia makes its very aim impossible. The student came to the film to learn about woman, but when he looked all he saw reflected there was the passions of his self. The pornographic imaginary does teach some powerful lessons, but these are not lessons of love/sex/Eros. These are lessons to prepare the student for his role as patriarch.

When he returns to the real world where everywoman becomes *this* woman he will be in for the surprise of his life. When he tells her what he has learned she will think him crazy, of course. There *this* woman may not rejoice at the lessons he will bring to her. But he will not be able to ask her to speak of her pleasure. Her voice is silent in his porno-paideia. The lessons of pornography have tightly closed the space in which *this* man and *this* woman could (otherwise) have come together. He may be frustrated at her inability to see. The student who has followed the teacher/pornographer will not want to

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<sup>53</sup> Again we see that the female porno-performers resist the pornographers attempts to make her into a woman *for* him (again button 18).

dwell in this land with its particularities.<sup>54</sup> So he will return to the video where the Form of desire is clear and no longer confusing.

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<sup>54</sup> Naomi Wolf (2003) describes the “Porn Myth” that men will become libidinous for real women, but in fact men trained on pornography find “real” women cannot measure up to the porn women of their fantasies. See also Amsden (2003) where he describes the negative impact that the ready-availability of Internet porn has had on the relationships that men form with women.

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