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Exploring the Dark Side of Consumer Behavior:
Methaphor and Ideology in Prostitution and Pornography

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INTRODUCTION

Prostitution and pornography have rarely been examined within a consumer behavior context, despite their status as major sources of illicit consumption. It is estimated that consumer expenditures on prostitution total over $20 billion a year--equivalent to the domestic shoe industry (Reynolds 1986). FBI estimates for the consumption of various forms of hard core pornography total $2.4 billion a year. Soft core pornography, which includes publications such as Playboy and Penthouse, attracts an even greater number of consumers (Potter 1986, p. 15).

Pornography and prostitution constitute not only the two largest markets for the consumption of illicit sexual services (Attorney General's Commission on Pornography 1986, Reynolds 1986), but display a distinct orientation in consumer composition, as well; the majority of prostitution and pornography consumers are men (Barry 1979; Connelly 1980; Day 1988; Faust 1980). The male orientation of prostitution and pornography consumption has been present throughout history (Bullough and Bullough 1987) and is believed to flow from the ideology surrounding male and female sexuality. Writing from a feminist perspective, Faust (1980) describes male sexuality as "visual, intellectualized, impersonal, performance-oriented, and promiscuous (p. 67)..." Conversely, female sexuality is "characteristically tactile, verbal, intimate, nurturant, process-oriented, and somewhat inclined to monogamy (Faust 1980, p. 67)."

Soble (1986), writing from a Marxist vantage point, draws the same distinction: "Women are... confined by the division of labor to the realm of reproduction, nurturing, and service industries, and their participation in this realm generates a more holistic... view of persons and bodies (p. 65)." In contrast, "male sexuality involves a technical exercise;... A man sees the female body as an asexual and passive machine,... not yet 'turned on'... His sexual task is to operate this machine successfully... The woman's task is to yield, submit, [and] allow herself to be manipulated... Male sexual performance is instrumental... [It is] measured by the number of partners, the number of different parts penetrated, the number of erections achieved, the number of orgasms produced... Male sexuality is productive and quantifiable (1986), pp. 60-61)."

Some cultural historians and social scientists have proposed that the presence of this sexual ideology is responsible for the frequent status of women as property in many cultures (Bullough and Bullough 1987; Carter 1978; Dworkin 1981; Faust 1980; Soble 1986). Bullough, a historian of sexual mores and practices, states this proposition directly:

"Women basically were property. They were neither to be seen or heard. Monogamy was the normal way of life, but in practice meant something different for the man than for the woman. A woman who slept with another man was an adulteress, but a man could not only visit prostitutes, but in practice also took secondary wives as concubines... Women were always under the control of a male. Until the time of her marriage, a girl remained under the protection of her father, who was free to settle her in marriage as he thought fit. Once married, she was under the control of her husband (Bullough 1973, p. 22)."

The image of the woman as property was furthered in many early (and current) societies by the terhaturu or bride price paid by her husband to her father (Bullough 1973; Bumiller 1990). Within this view, adultery was deemed a trespass against the husband's property, and the man who injured another man's property by having intercourse with his wife had to pay monetary damages to the husband. If the offender had a wife, she was given to the father of the 'damaged' woman and sold into prostitution as compensation (Bullough and Bullough 1987).
The Sanctity of Women

The status of women as property is believed to have its roots in two sacred functions performed by women: reproduction and family nurturance. Traditionally, women’s role in the reproductive process was viewed as providing a vessel for the man’s seed. Thus, a biological imperative for the husband was to protect the purity of this vessel and assure the legitimacy of his lineage. In many societies, therefore, virginity in women came to be highly prized as a pre-condition to marriage, and fidelity (for the woman) was strictly guarded after marriage (Bullough and Bullough 1987). To prevent the woman from coming into contact with other men who might corrupt her purity, she was confined to her father’s home prior to marriage and to her husband’s home after marriage (Bullough and Bullough 1987; Bumiller 1990).

Once married, the woman’s primary duties were to bear and nurture children (preferably sons) and to maintain the household. Women’s activities in the secular sphere were severely constrained. In most historic societies, and many in the present day, women were given no education and permitted to learn no skills which would permit them to earn employment in the secular world of men. They were confined, instead, to their sacred duties and roles as daughters, wives, and mothers (Bullough and Bullough 1987; Bullough 1973; Bumiller 1990).

However, in every society there were some women who did not marry. Often this was because they were deemed damaged property — their virginity was no longer intact through rape, fornication, or incest; or their husbands had been lost through war or divorce. Thus, with no assets to sell except their bodies, these women became prostitutes. Their numbers were supplemented in several societies by female slaves, who could be sold into prostitution, and by the daughters of poor families who were sold into prostitution by their fathers out of economic necessity (Bullough and Bullough 1987).

The Commoditization of Women

In most historic circumstances, prostitutes were viewed, and are presently viewed, as profane commodities (Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry 1989). They served no sacred function, and fulfilled no family nurturance or reproductive role. Instead, their social and economic value lay in their provision of a sexual outlet for men. Because men were culturally viewed as promiscuous and aggressive by nature, they were believed to require an outlet for those tendencies which, if uncontrolled, might serve to disrupt the family structure and society, itself. Men without an outlet for their sexual aggression, the prevailing sexual ideology holds, would become uncontrollable, raping and violating the sacred vessels belonging to other men, thereby creating chaos and social disruption. Hence, the prostitute served (and serves) as the profaned vessel into which men’s violent and uncontrollable passions may be poured (Bullough 1973; Perkins and Bennett 1985). A portion of the earliest surviving writing of man, the Gilgamesh Epic (Heidel 1949) of Mesopotamia, describes well the function of the prostitute in draining off the dangerous wildness of man and permitting him to regain rationality:

"The prostitute untied her loin cloth and opened her legs, and he took possession of her comeliness. She used no restraint, but accepted his ardor. She put aside her robe as he lay upon her. She used on him, the savage, a woman’s wiles; his passion responded to her ... Enkidu had become weak, his speed was not as before. But he had intelligence, and wide was his understanding."

Hence, the reservation of the majority of women for sacred use led to the need for a smaller, profaned set of women to absorb the polluting elements of men. Whores were deemed essential to preserve the sanctity of good women — of wives, mothers, and daughters. Prostitution became a ‘necessary evil’ (Barry 1979; Bullough 1973; Bullough and Bullough 1987; Heyl 1979; Perkins and Bennett 1985).

DIRT, DISORDER, AND DANGER

Prostitutes are women whose designated social function is to preserve order by absorbing the disorder of men. Douglas (1966) insightfully defines dirt as disorder, as things out-of-place. "The whole universe is harnessed to men’s attempts to force one another into good citizenship. Thus we find that certain moral values are upheld and certain social rules defined by beliefs in dangerous contagion, as when the glance or touch of an adulterer is held to bring..."
illness... (Douglas 1966, p. 3)." By examining what is dirty and why it is considered dirty, we can come to understand what is pure.

"Dirt is never a unique isolated event. Where there is dirt there is a system. Dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter... (Douglas 1966, p. 35)." Extending Douglas' thinking to a binary structure, we may observe that there is order in dirt, as well. That which is dirty is opposed through some relation to that which is clean. In American culture, dirt (disorder) is associated with metaphors of uncleanness or ugliness (Douglas 1966). Hence, prostitution and pornography are culturally viewed as dirt. Socially, we construct metaphoric equivalencies between these two types of illicit (i.e., disordered) consumption and unhygienic concepts such as filth, trash, scum, garbage, sewage, sleaze, decay, corruption, and pollution (Carter 1978; Kendrick 1988; US Attorney General's Commission on Pornography 1986; Woodbury 1989; Yaffe and Nelson 1982). Pornography and prostitution also are likened to disease, destroying the healthy body of society (Gorman 1988) or to germs, threatening to invade consumers' minds and homes. "Sex shops are like fungus; if we don't apply the antibiotic, they'll sprout again," states a popular culture article (Woodbury 1989, p. 23). Similarly, the Oxford English Dictionary defines obscene as "offensive, disgusting, repulsive, filthy, foul, abominable, loathsome, unchaste, lustful, impure, indecent, lewd (Kendrick 1988, p. 191)," thereby intermixing elements of dirt and profane sexuality.

These populist views are in keeping with formalized, judicial opinion, as well. Curtis Bok in 1949 wrote what has become one of the most cited definitions of obscenity: "The modern rule is that obscenity is measured by the erotic allurement upon the average modern reader; the erotic allurement of a book is measured by whether it is sexually impure--i.e., pornographic, 'dirt for dirt's sake' (cited in Kendrick 1988, p. 199)"

Even so ardent a libertine as D.H. Lawrence, whose work Lady Chatterley's Lover was deemed to be pornographic until recent times, equated pornography with uncleanness:

"Pornography is the attempt to insult sex, to do dirt on it. This is unpardonable... The insult to the human body! The insult to a vital human relationship! Ugly and cheap they make human nudity; ugly and degraded they make the sexual act, trivial and cheap and nasty... They are so ugly, they make you ill... (quoted in Kendrick 1988, p. 204)."

In short, prostitution and pornography are disordered forms of consumption; they are out-of-order in society; they are irregular; they are dirt. And yet the consumption of pornography and prostitution is also viewed as necessary disorder. It is to be repressed, vilified, and condemned, but not eliminated, for such deviant consumption is also seen as vital to the maintenance of order. Prostitution and pornography exist, as Kendrick notes, (1987, p. 237) in that "strange zone where chaos subsists safely within order." They provide an appropriate haven where disordered consumption may be drained, dumped, emptied, and stored out-of-sight, but never out-of-mind.

Danger and Pollution

As Douglas (1966) observes, dirt is also dangerous. Its inherent disorder may pollute those who come into contact with it. Because they are viewed as dirt, pornography and prostitution are feared because they may leak-out of their prescribed areas and contaminate the rest of society. Thus, to contain their polluting qualities, society seeks to confine both pornography and prostitution to certain social locales and spaces. Brothels and streetwalking prostitutes are generally permitted only in certain designated areas (Heyl 1979; Schwartz 1986); often there are public ordinances prohibiting them from being near sanctified institutions such as schools, churches, and homes (Perkins and Bennett 1985). Prostitutes typically are expected to wear identifying hairstyles or apparel signifying their marginal status. In ancient societies these consisted of short and/or bleached hair, and distinctively colored shawls, usually either red or black (Bullough and Bullough 1987). Prostitutes in early cultures, as now, were prohibited from mixing with 'good' (i.e., sacred) women or children, lest they pollute them (Bullough and Bullough 1987; Perkins and Bennett 1985).

As receptacles for the uncontrolled sexual passions of men, prostitutes were both needed and feared by their male customers: needed because they served as a necessary outlet for male
promiscuity, feared because as unsanctified women they had been transformed into potent sexual objects. Because they contained the violent sexuality of so many men, each single man feared their erotic power. Perhaps he, himself, would become dominated, rather than the dominator; the prey, rather than the predator. "Though males recognized the erotic nature of the 'bad' woman, they were also fearful of her; there were dangers that her sexuality would enable her to dominate. Since sexual aggressiveness was regarded as a way of dominating others, one way the prostitute could be kept in place was by assigning her to a position outside society (Bullough and Bullough 1987, p. 24)." Hence, from early civilization to the present day, prostitutes constituted a stigmatized caste of commoditized women; persons who are systematically segregated and polluted to protect the sanctity of society.

PROSTITUTION AND COMMODITIZATION

One of the most oft-used metaphors for prostitution is that it represents sex-for-sale. Prostitutes are women who sell themselves -- their bodies -- to male consumers for money. Their illicit exchanges constitute a sexual marketplace (Reynolds 1986). These exchanges are deemed illicit (inappropriate and therefore dirty, i.e., Douglas 1966), because they are based not on mutual commitment and love, but rather on sensual pleasure and money. Both the prostitute and the consumer are profaned by the consumption transaction, because it is culturally deemed an aberration of the sacred role of sexuality in marriage and procreation (Bullough and Bullough 1987; Reynolds 1986).

As Davis describes it, "In prostitution both parties use sex for an end not socially functional; the one for pleasure, the other for money... On both sides the relationship... is a contractual, rather than personal association (1937, p. 748)." However, the outcome of their exchange creates different results for the man, than for the woman. After their transaction is completed, the male consumer returns to his roles as worker, husband, and father, while the woman remains a prostitute--a sexual commodity. She is stigmatically labelled; he is not (Heyl 1979; Ohse 1984; Perkins and Bennett 1985). The woman's role as prostitute is her primary, and in many cases, her only source of social identity. Often this identity creates profound feelings of self-loathing, repulsion, and depression in the woman (Perkins and Bennett 1985). Ironically, because the prostitute is paid for providing sexuality, her self-image becomes devalued into a product devoid of intimacy and self-respect -- a sexual commodity. In Roman times, prostitutes' commodity status was indicated by their being barred from court. They could not bear witness against others, and their word was deemed worthless, as they possessed no honor or dignity in the eyes of the citizenry (Bullough and Bullough 1987). In the present day, if a prostitute is murdered or beaten, the event is accorded low importance by police (Heyl 1979; Ohse 1984; Perkins and Bennett 1985). Prostitutes who are raped rarely bother to report the crime, recognizing that violation of their person is likely to be seen as of little consequence to those who view them already as profaned commodities (Barry 1979). One prostitute interviewed by Perkins and Bennett (1985) described her lifestyle as follows: "It was a world full of rip-offs and violence. I lost a lot of friends through it... and ultimately I was very much alone. I became very badly hooked on drugs... and in the end I was living in this one-room, cold water place with a mattress on the floor... (p. 131-132)." The emotional sordidness of prostitution drives many past drug and alcohol abuse and into a more final form of self-destruction; 15 percent of suicides handled by large public hospitals are prostitutes (Winick and Kinsie, 1971).

Given their degraded status as a caste, their propensity for drug and alcohol abuse, and their high rate of suicide, why would any woman choose to be a prostitute? Virtually no woman does choose to be a prostitute, yet throughout history women have become prostitutes (Bullough and Bullough 1987). The discrepancy between choice and action for these women is due to both economic and familial factors. First, several researchers (Heyl 1979; Millett 1970; McLeod 1982; Mitchell and Smith 1984) have noted that prostitutes primarily come from the lower socio-economic classes. Often they have little formal education and few or no marketable skills. For many, prostitution is the most viable way of earning a living (Mitchell and Smith 1984; Perkins and Bennett 1985; Reynolds 1986).

However, if economic necessity were the sole, or even primary, reason causing women to enter prostitution, then as Heyl (1979) observed, it
would be hard to explain why so many more impoverished girls did not choose this 'career.' That many poor women choose to live on substandard wages, rather than becoming prostitutes, and the fact that some prostitutes are from middle class backgrounds, suggests that more than economics is involved. One consistent factor running through the backgrounds of virtually all prostitutes is a neglectful, abusive, or violent childhood (Lovelace 1980; Sager 1989; Sawyer 1988; Sereny 1985; Weisberg 1985). Most women who become prostitutes have suffered severe emotional and physical trauma as children; many are the victims of incest or rape.

To escape abuse at home, many young women run away to a nearby city; there these "throwaways" (Barry 1979) are met by a cadre of pimps (Reynolds 1986). Pimps are expert at providing the throw-away woman with the appearance of love, warmth, and concern. The young woman responds to this and for a time varying from a few days to months, the pimp will buy her clothes, profess love for her, and make her feel secure. Once she is committed to him emotionally, the pimp employs the 'if you love me, you'll do anything for me' rationale (Barry 1979, p. 77); he demands that she have paid sex with other men. If she refuses, she is beaten. Ohse (1984) summarizes this process, which is termed seasoning, as follows: "The girls are young and naive, have often run away from home, and easily fall prey to some attention and emotional warmth. Once they are emotionally dependent, their pimp... proposes or demands that they prostitute themselves for his sake... Once the girl yields, the values she had held quickly collapse... Emotionally and financially dependent, her identity destroyed, she soon begins to accept the beatings and other ill-treatments which are due her as a 'whore' (p. 25)."

Once broken, the woman is given a new name (to further erase her former identity) and 'turned-out' on the streets. Usually the pimp will set a daily monetary quota for her to earn; if she does not earn that amount or more, she is beaten (Barry 1979). Often, prostitutes are beaten by their pimps on a regular basis simply as a means of maintaining control (Barry 1979; Lovelace 1980).

**BOUNDARIES IN PROSTITUTION**

Despite their social status as a profaned caste and their designated cultural role as receptacles of disorder, prostitutes do attempt to place boundaries between themselves and their male consumers. Among these are the physical boundaries of self-identity and the body, and the ritual boundaries of decontamination and depersonalization.

**Boundary of Self-Identity**

In an effort to protect their true selves from profanation, many prostitutes adopt a disguised, false-self in their work. This disguised self usually includes use of a wig, heavy make-up, different apparel, and the adoption of a pseudonym (Perkins and Bennett 1985; Schwartz 1986). By maintaining a false-self while performing her commoditized role as a prostitute, the woman is able to maintain some sense of personal worth and dignity. As one prostitute told Perkins and Bennett (1985, p. 79): "Work is work. I go to work to work, and when I come home and close the door, that's it... I keep my business quite separate from my home life...."

**Bodily Boundaries**

As Douglas (1966) observes, the orifices of the body provide entry points for pollution which are significant during sexual activity: "...We have noted a kind of sex pollution which expresses a desire to keep the body intact. Its rules are phrased to control entrances and exits (p. 140)." Ironically, perhaps, prostitutes also attempt to guard their bodily boundaries during profaning acts of intercourse. Virtually all prostitutes insist that customers wear a condom; this prevents the man's 'bad seed' from actually polluting the woman's body, even though the man's penis has invaded her. "[The condom] is a symbolic physical barrier between them and their clients (McLeod 1982, p. 40)." Men also see it as a barrier; in massage parlours which are often managed by men, prostitutes are not allowed to require their customers to wear condoms, because the men prefer to deposit their semen in the prostitute (Perkins and Bennett 1985, p. 225).

The mouth is another bodily boundary which the prostitute attempts to protect. Ironically, although prostitutes will perform fellatio for consumers who request (and pay) for this service, they will not kiss a customer. Kissing signifies emotional commitment and intimacy, and it is reserved for
those with whom they feel love. As one prostitute noted, "... kissing is something the guys will pay more for, but not many of the girls will do it. They say that sexual intercourse is the closest form of communication, but it's not, it's kissing... You can't fake kissing (Perkins and Bennett 1985, pp. 64-65)."

Decontaminating the Customer

Prostitutes also attempt to protect themselves from pollution by decontaminating the consumer. The consumer is viewed as a profane carrier of dirt; his coming to the prostitute in the first place is an act of disorder, and the prostitute is aware he will attempt to transfer this disorder to her. To protect herself against pollution, she engages in an elaborate cleansing ritual of the customer. The customer is taken to the woman's room and asked to undress. The woman then washes his genitals and checks them for signs of disease. (In some brothels, an antiseptic solution is applied to the consumer's penis before and after intercourse [Schwartz 1986]). After she is satisfied he is 'clean,' he is permitted to have intercourse (Perkins and Bennett 1985; Schwartz 1986). After intercourse, the woman will cleanse herself, ritually 'washing away' the pollution.

Depersonalizing the Customer

Prostitutes also seek to protect themselves by erecting an emotional barrier between themselves and the consumer. The consumer is not viewed as a person, but rather as money, a task, or an object. "I just look at them as dollar signs. I don't look at them as people," reported one woman (Perkins and Bennett 1979, p. 171).

THE IDEOLOGY OF PORNOGRAPHY

Pornography is derived from Greek words meaning "the writing of prostitutes." Therefore, any description of the life, manners, and activities of prostitutes or their customers constituted pornography (Bullough and Bullough 1987, p. 35). The Greeks invented pornographic literature, and although most of their early writings have been destroyed, references to them can be found in the works of Lucian, Alciphron, Atheneus, and Demosthenes (Bullough and Bullough 1987). The earliest pornographic visual images to come to the awareness of modern Western culture were statuary and paintings unearthed at Pompeii in 1827 (Kendrick 1988). Among these were "the erect phalluses found at many Pompeian street corners, and the statues and paintings of Priapus (a god with a large, erect penis) that adorned the foyers of private homes (Kendrick 1987, p. 10)."

With these images as its influence, the 1864 edition of Webster's dictionary defined pornography as "licentious painting employed to decorate the walls of rooms sacred to bacchanalian orgies, examples of which exist in Pompeii (quoted in Kendrick 1987, p. 13)."

Although the Greeks and Romans originated what the modern Western mind has come to regard as pornography, the ideological structure of this form of illicit consumption owes its origin to a Frenchman, Donatien-Alphonse-Francois, the Marquis de Sade (Kendrick 1987). Sade was born in 1740 to a noble and wealthy French family; at age 5 he was sent to live with his uncle, the Abbe de Sade, a clergyman known to be a pederast (Dworkin 1981); it is likely that Sade was sexually abused as a child. Upon reaching adulthood, Sade began to frequently and systematically abuse women, especially prostitutes. Often his abuses had sacrilegious overtones.

Sade's abuse of women grew so fervent that, despite his noble connections, he was finally imprisoned. During his years of imprisonment Sade produced the volumes of literature for which he is remembered and from which the term sadism originated. Sade's work encoded several themes endemic to Western culture and which communicated patriarchal norms. As Stern (1990, p. 3) notes, "Stereotypical maleness and femaleness are built into patriarchal culture and expressed in the language of both art and life." Sade's predominant theme was that women were to be used violently by men for sexual pleasure:
"... We have received from Nature the right indiscriminately to express our wishes to all women; it likewise becomes incontestable that we have the right to compel their submission... We have the right to decree laws that compel women to yield to the flames of him who would have her; violence itself being one of that right's effects, we can employ it lawfully (quoted in Dworkin, 1981, p. 98)."

Although profoundly disturbing for their violence and human degradation, Sade's pornographic writings are indisputably brilliant as symbolic devices; they established the semiotic framework for much of the Western pornography which followed. For purposes of the present analysis, we will focus on Sade's two antithetical portraits of the sacred woman and the profane woman: Justine (1785, trans. 1965) and Juliette (1789, trans. 1968). To Sade, sexual intercourse was always an act of power and domination, an act which necessarily degraded and commoditized the other (Carter 1978).

Sade's first novel, Justine, or the Misfortunes of Virtue (1785), recounted the sad, victimized life of the beautiful, blonde orphan, Justine. Ideologically, Justine represents an image of the virtuous, sacred woman. She is kind, gentle, and submissive; she does what she is asked to do; she is completely feminine and obedient to men's wishes. And, as Carter (1978) notes, "her reward is rape, humiliation, and incessant beatings (p. 38)."

After escaping from a friend's house, Justine takes refuge in a forest monastery called St. Mary-in-the-Woods. The monastery combines two powerful sacred images: the natural forest and a sanctified religious institution, but as is typical of Sade, this imagery is inverted. Instead of finding sanctuary, Justine finds that she has entered "a microcosm in which a small group of privileged men operate a system of government by terror upon... kidnapped women... Brought here by force, the girls are released [from sexual torture] only through death (Carter 1978, p. 42)." The women imprisoned in the monastery have been reduced to their sexual function; once that commodity has been used up, they are 'dispatched.'

Sade narrates Justine through several more adventures, each more damning and degrading than its predecessor, relentlessly pressing home his primary thesis: sacred women must be profaned; the more ardently they cling to their virtue, submit obediently to their oppressor's wishes, and suppress their own sensuality, the more violently they must be violated. Thus, proposed Sade, does Evil triumph over Good, the profane drive out the sacred, and virtue find its deserved punishment. "In a world where women are commodities, a woman who refuses to sell herself will have the thing she refuses to sell taken away from her by force (Carter 1978, p. 55)."

Sade proposes that for women profanation is inevitable; either they will choose to profane themselves (by abandoning virtue) or they will have profanation forced upon them.

In contrast to the sanctified, suffering Justine, Sade next narrates the story of her antithetical sister, the wicked, greedy, whorish Juliette. In Juliette, or the Prosperities of Vice (1978), Sade describes what he conceives as the most powerful and dangerous member of all humankind--a woman who has become a "perfect whore." Juliette is more profane than any man, because she has consumed the profane essences of many men; therefore, her sexual appetite is stronger, her material greed more predatory, and her capacity for cruelty more ravenous.

As Carter (1978, p. 79) observes, "The life of Juliette proposes a method of profane mastery... She is a woman who acts according to the precepts of a man's world and so does not suffer. Instead she causes suffering... [Juliette] is rationality personified... Her mind functions like a computer programmed to produce two results for herself -- financial profit and libidinal gratification... She is a New Woman in a mode of irony."

Sade's pornographic work is powerful because it consistently pits one set of archetypal symbols against another; in his narratives, cultural icons clash and, in an inversion of the fairy tale, Chaos always triumphs over Order. On the side of Chaos he arrays all the major symbols of male dominance: money, greed, power, the phallus, control, aggression, and violence. Yet even though Sade's libertine protagonists always triumph, they pay a price for their profane victories. "During the hell-game, the libertine is himself as much in hell as his victims are, and they can at least escape from it by dying. He
cannot (Carter 1978, p. 149)."

METAPHOR AND IDEOLOGY IN CURRENT PORNOGRAPHY

Flowing from and extending beyond the works of Sade, current societal perspectives of pornography embrace three metaphors. The first is that pornography serves as the anchor for all society’s profane consumption activities. Pornography, in this view, is depicted as the link-pin connecting a set of illicit consumption behaviors: gambling, prostitution, drugs, alcoholism, crime, and violence (Potter 1986).

A second view of pornography, emphasized in much of the social science literature on this topic, as well as some semiotic analyses, depicts pornography as concentrated profanation. In this view, pornography stands in opposition to all that society holds sacred and pure. It desecrates women, children, and the home; it mechanizes sexuality; it links sexuality with violence and death; it glorifies feces, urine, semen, and bestiality -- all of which are profane products or actions. Social science (e.g., Donnerstein, Linz, and Penrod 1987) has embraced this metaphor in its efforts to track the damaging effects of pornography upon ‘good’ people. The third metaphor envisages pornography as both symptom and symbol of male power. Promulgated primarily in feminist writings, this image of pornography emphasizes the phallocentric nature of much current pornography and views it as a potent force in the continuing degradation and repression of women (Dworkin 1981; Faust 1980; Kappeler 1986). We will examine each of these perspectives in turn.

Pornography As An Anchor for Other Profane Activities

A prominent metaphoric image applied to current pornography is that it serves as an anchor or site for a collection of other profane consumption activities. In this view, once pornography has taken hold of a given locale, its inherently profane nature attracts a collection of other illicit activities. Pornography to many (e.g., Kendrick 1987), signifies the deepest, darkest form of illicit consumption, and it is around pornography that other deviant forms of consumer behavior congregate -- gambling, the selling of stolen property, prostitution (the selling of one’s self), drugs, alcohol and crimes against property.

After an extensive examination of the national pornography industry, Potter (1986, pp. 154-155) noted, "The retail pornography industry is part and parcel of the business which provides illicit services... At the retail level we have observed that connections with prostitution occur in 71% of the cases; connections with gambling occur in 36% of the cases; connections with drug trafficking occur in 64% of the cases; and fencing operations occur in 36% of the cases. The connection between retail pornography and other forms of vice is clear. [Additionally] in 36% of the cases, pornography involving children was available either on site or by referral... In 65% of the cases... pornography featuring acts of extreme violence [e.g., mutilation, torture, and death scenarios] was available... Pornography interfaces and overlaps with a wide variety of other crimes."

Pornography as Profanity

Several observers have noted that pornography signifies the profane half of a cultural dialectic (Bloom 1988; Carter 1978; Kendrick 1987). In its essence, pornography signifies all that is forbidden, impure, disordered, disturbed and disturbing, taboo and destructive to the social contract (Bloom 1988). Pornography is intended to defile, desecrate, and disrupt the social order; "an invisible machinery [that] works an empire of signs of defeat for the state (Bloom 1988, p. 12)."

"It is indeed a symbol of anarchy (Kendrick 1987, p. 219)."

A current popular pornographic genre is snuff films -- perhaps the ultimate Sadeian vision -- in which women’s bodies are systematically raped, mutilated and dismembered until the ultimate state of profanation -- violent death -- is achieved (Day 1988, p. 99). In such narratives, "The dead become objects not of fear but of desire, in a secret restless wanting for the forbidden... (Bloom 1988, p. 16)."

Yet another is the current fascination with the desecration of children. Pornographic magazines with titles such as "Torrid Tots,""Dirty Little Girls," and "Lillitots," and films with names like "Lolita Love," and "Little Ones in Love," depict children aged 3 to 11 engaged in acts of oral, anal, sado-masochistic, and bestial intercourse with other children, animals and adults (Burgess and Clark 1984; O’Brien 1983; Potter 1986). The intent in these offerings is to "demystify the
sacred" (Carter 1978), to transform the pure into the impure, the clean into the unclean (Douglas 1966). Pornography as a distillation of the profane is deemed potent and dangerous (Douglas 1966); it threatens to transform those who come into contact with it into polluted carriers -- persons capable of contaminating others.

This metaphor of pornography -- as a source of profane infection, a contagious disease of disorder and chaos -- informs many current investigations of pornography in the social sciences. Among the major works in this area are studies by Donnerstein (Donnerstein 1983; Donnerstein and Linz 1986; Donnerstein, Linz, and Penrod 1987) and Malamuth (Malamuth 1986; Malamuth and Briere 1986) and their associates. Their findings support the metaphor of pornography (especially violent and degrading forms of pornography) as a potent polluting agent:

"Violent pornography influences attitudes and behaviors in subtle and indirect ways. Viewers come to cognitively associate sexuality with violence, to endorse the idea that women want to be raped, and to trivialize the injuries suffered by a rape victim... Men may become more willing to abuse women physically (Donnerstein, Linz, and Penrod 1987, p. 20)."

In keeping with this metaphoric image of pornography as a contagious source of profanation, Donnerstein et al (1987) advocate that protective measures be taken before consumers are exposed to pornographic media. "Messages could be constructed that inform subjects about the effects of exposure to violent pornography... (Donnerstein et al, 1987, p. 187)." Thus, they propose that inoculations of discounting information may enable consumers to ward-off the damaging effects of violent pornography.

Pornography as Male Power

Those who depict pornography as symbolic and symptomatic of male power base their view on the fact that pornography is primarily produced and consumed by men (Brownmiller 1975; Dworkin 1981; Faust 1980; Kappeler 1986; Steinem 1983; Lederer 1980). For example, Dworkin (1981, p. 24) writes:

"The major theme of pornography as a genre is male power, its nature, its magnitude, its use, its meaning. Male power as expressed in and through pornography is... the power of self, physical power over and against others, the power of naming, the power of owning, the power of money, and the power of sex."

In this feminist view, the pornographic representation of male power -- even though transmitted in an illicit consumption context -- has a reinforcing effect on sexist attitudes and male domination in mainstream society. "In celebrating male power over women... it serves the interests of the social order in which it appears, despite the fact that the social order marginalizes it (Day 1988, p. 89)." Thus, women's dignity and right to selfhood may be damaged by pornography (Kappeler 1986). Feminists propose that pornography accomplishes this end in two ways; first by depicting women as commodities to be used as men desire (Bloom 1988, Dworkin 1981), and second by depicting women as pseudo-men. In keeping with the commoditization view, Brownmiller (1975, pp. 442-443) writes:

"We and our bodies are being stripped, exposed and contorted for the purpose of... viewing women as anonymous, panting playthings, adult toys, dehumanized objects to be used, abused, broken, and discarded."

Further, in this view women not only are reduced to commodities, they are further reduced to body parts (Soble 1986), to orifices of pleasure. "Whoever is the pornographic victim... is constantly reduced to the condition of mere orifice. In pornography, with its emphasis on anatomical detail, the who is always translated into the what (Bloom 1988, p. 20)."

A related theme feminists have observed in pornography is that it depicts women as pseudo-men; that is, instead of acting as women normally do during intercourse, the women shown in pornographic narratives act as men do--performance-oriented, aggressive, and promiscuous. "Women [in pornography] are portrayed as approaching sexual activity the same way as men do, living up to masculine fantasies of the sexually assertive, instantly aroused, uninhibited woman, who never has a headache, never asks for affection, and [who] climaxes as easily as she is aroused. She is in fact a man in disguise (Faust 1980, pp. 19-20)." Goldstein and
Kant (1973) describe a common variation of this narrative theme in which the woman's long-dormant passion is unleashed by the erotic ministrations of a potent male. This has been extended in recent pornography to depictions of rape in which the woman, at first terrified and resistant, is transformed into a passionate, aroused figure who then aggressively makes love to her attacker (Goldstein and Kant 1973).

Feminists, in an effort to combat the male ideology of pornography, have proposed that pornography be governed by anti-discriminatory regulations (Kappeler 1986, pp. 11-17); that is, they propose that certain pornographic representations which they believe act to inhibit women's civil liberties should be prohibited. The first drafting of an ordinance banning such representations was approved by the City Council of Minneapolis, Minnesota in December 1983 (Kendrick 1987).

DISCUSSION

Although the metaphorical imagery and cultural ideology of pornography and prostitution have been discussed here at an analytical level, it is important to bear in mind the real-life impact which they may have upon consumers. The ideological worldview which both pornography and prostitution appear to propagate is one in which women are viewed -- and consumed -- as something less-than-human: as objects, products, and commodities. Even in their 'sanctified' roles as wives, mothers and daughters, women may be ideologically construed -- and behaviorally treated -- as property belonging to men. Whether in a sacred or profane context, their social status was, and in many aspects still is, that of male property.

Pornography and prostitution are not so much causes of the female status described, as they are manifestations and carriers of an underlying societal ideology of sexuality. This ideology holds that men, by their nature, are masters and possessors, and that women, by their nature, are servants and possessions. As long as this ideology remains in force, efforts to eliminate pornography and prostitution through legislative, judicial, political, or economic efforts are destined to fail.

Specific images may be outlawed, suppressed, destroyed, and condemned, but the ideas which give rise to them will continue to generate an infinite set of successive images to take their place. It is the ideology of sexuality that must first be altered, if the images of men's and women's roles as consumers and consumed are to be eliminated. It is a decision that each of us, as individuals, and collectively as a society must be willing to make: to no longer view ourselves or others as commodities.

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