

The Hardcore Truth: How pornography has changed for the worse.

By Maureen Rava

Abstract: This paper aims to explore the common trends in current mainstream pornography, and the detrimental effects it can have on the public. Pornography has changed greatly throughout the decades. I want to explore the trend of today's male-female videos normalizing acts of physical aggression during intercourse and sexual acts. Another aim is to look into why these themes of aggression have become more popular throughout the past two decades, along with the impact that streaming pornography online has had. Through research including interviews, clinical studies, and news articles I wish to use real data to explain why current popular porn has a negative effect on ideas of what a "normal" male- female sexual script is, leading to negative sexual experiences for both men and women alike.

Table of Contents

Cover Page: 1

Abstract: 2

Table of Contents: 2

Introduction: 3-4

Thesis and Research Questions: 4

Method: 5

Review of Literature: 5-8

Analysis: 8-9

Conclusion: 9-10

Bibliography: 11-12

Introduction: The introduction of the video cassette brought porn into a new era. Now pornographic movies could be purchased and watched in the comfort of your own home. This led to a boom in the market of making porn. Talent were treated like superstars, sets and costumes were elaborate and expensive. Pornographic movies were produced with the same attention and care as regular movies you saw in the theater (Macmillan). The business was good until the internet came about (Nahigyan). Once the internet became something that most Americans had in their homes, porn streaming sites began to emerge.

Pornhub is the largest streaming site we know of today. The site 4 million videos of almost anything you could imagine, and some things you couldn't (Skorska). To most people this seems like a good thing. You can get as much porn as you need in a lifetime for free. What is an advantage for viewers actually hurts those involved in making porn (Macmillan). Due to the fact that everything is now expected to be free it is very hard to make decent money in the industry unless you are a well known star. Out of the millions of videos out today only a small fraction contain well known porn stars. This leads to companies going to great lengths their content to be seen and profitable (Macmillan). In America, we want bigger and better when it comes to our choice in product, show, etc (Fritz). For the porn world this leads to creating content with shock value that pushes new boundaries. This leads to the emergence of hardcore pornography.

Hardcore pornography is a genre of pornography in which physical aggression is applauded during sexual activity. Acts of aggression that happen during hardcore pornography include but are not limited to choking, slapping, spitting on, hair pulling, verbal abuse and punching, gaping, along with cum shots, urinating, vomiting, etc (Stern).

Hardcore pornography is not the only type of porn which physical and verbal aggression occur. BDSM is another type of sexual activity in which physical and verbal abuse are often performed (Fritz), yet in BDSM consent is the key to having a successful experience, safe words are established prior to any activity. In mainstream and hardcore pornography acts of aggression occur outside of consensual BDSM relationships, and in most scenes physical aggression is not verbally requested (Fritz). Meaning that acts of aggression are becoming popular and expected in our pornography outside of the BDSM category, and without verbal consent shown.

Thesis: With pressure to create content that will excite regular viewers pornography is becoming more hardcore. This is leading to themes of “abuse” and degrading acts towards women to be expected in mainstream heterosexual pornography. Our porn has a negative influence on the idea of what a “normal” sexual script is for both men and women alike.

Research Questions:

1. What are popular themes in today's mainstream pornography?
2. What are the differences between present and past themes in pornography?
3. What are the differences between BDSM and hardcore sex?
4. Why is modern pornography trending towards hardcore themes?
5. Is this bad? What are some examples?

Methods: Through using critical discourse analysis I was able to come to a conclusion about my research. It was important for my subject and hypothesis to use this research method due to the fact that my subject has to do greatly with social and gender issues. Using the critical discourse

analysis technique I was able to locate and recognize the gender issues that have pertain to my thesis.

I investigated both articles online from various magazines and journals. It was also crucial for my research to look at clinical studies to produce fact supported ideas. A big reason that clinical studies were also important to use was due to the fact that I wanted to look at real statistics that prove there is a negative correlation between watching degrading pornography and sexist views. Finally real research data included statistics about the content that was in today's pornography that supplemented my research.

I used various online articles to find out information on more of the personal stories of the porn industry. Using interviews, and articles about the Adult Video News Awards (AVNs) I was able to find real information about situations and cases of abuse within the porn industry and the industry's reaction to sexual assault as a whole. This information provided me with real life scenarios that added concrete evidence and examples of influence from hardcore pornography and the lack of attention and care for sexual assault within the porn industry.

I was able to review different hypotheses on the effects of degrading porn. Some studies suggested that there would be little to no effect, being that the viewer was able to realize pornography was fantasy rather than reality. While others believed that degrading pornography would have detrimental effects even before research was conducted. Through all the different hypotheses I was able to discover the actual result.

To summarize, I found both clinical studies, news articles and interviews all equally beneficial when gathering research to support my thesis. Interviews provided quotes, studies

provided statistics and articles provided situations that all prove my hypothesis to be leaning toward the side of truth.

Review of Literature:

Rocco and James: Rocco Siffredi is one of the first pioneers in the hardcore porn world.

Siffredi's performances brought hardcore porn into the limelight. Known as the "Italian Stallion" Rocco has performed in thousands of videos, one of his most famous he took a woman from behind while shoving her head in a toilet (Stern). People love Rocco so much that he has a biopic up on Netflix about his retirement from porn. In Siffredi's last film he has a huge orgy, in which he casts fellow porn star James Deen.

Deen has been quoted saying how much he idolized Siffredi and his work. And as a young adult he wanted to emulate Rocco's roughness. In 2015, 9 female porn stars came forward with stories of James Deen sexually assaulting them (Stern). All stories are eerily similar and include not only sexual but also violent physical assault. Deen has been known to make fun of rape online (Stern).

Unfortunately it seems that most people in the industry do not care about these accusations. In fact, a year after these allegations came to light Deen still won 2 Adult Video News Awards, and was nominated 33 times (Lodi). Along with the entire industry as a whole seeming to still stand with Deen, Siffredi came to James's defense during an interview.

Marlow Stern sat down with the Italian Stallion to get his thoughts on Deen being accused of rape. Rocco said "He started to mix work with with life. He doesn't understand that when you are home, you need to have a real break. If he does this at home, it's violent; when we

do it in front of the camera, we're making a movie. I think he got confused... I don't think he's a raper, I think he got confused" (Stern). With a person that has been in the business for nearly 10 years getting "confused" with what is consensual and what isn't during a sexual act, how do we expect viewers of porn to know? Also, how do we expect ourselves to not be influenced by such content?

We tell ourselves it's not real: One of the main arguments people make about watching and making porn is that "it isn't real"(Macmillan). Another common thought is the third person effect, which is when "individuals ascribe greater effect of the media (e.g., pornography) to others than themselves (Hald). Meaning people adopt the "it might be harmful, but not to me" attitude.

Our porn is becoming so problematic because we don't want to talk about it. If you asked almost anyone on the street which category of porn they liked you would most likely not get an answer. This is due to the fact that America loves and also hates sex. We love hinting at sex in our movies, ads and music but no one wants to talk about sex flat out, let alone pornography. A poll on Statista (a certified online database site) shows that 55% of Americans still see pornography as morally wrong in 2018 (Statista). This leads us to consuming unhealthy porn causing unhealthy sexuality for many.

The Effects of hardcore and degrading Porn: The average teenager first views porn around the age of 14 (Skorska). This is usually around the age where one's sexual development begins to sky rocket (Fortenberry). The results of viewing degrading or hardcore pornography versus erotica for young men is often increased objectification of women and adopting more hostile sexist beliefs (Skorska). This is due to the fact in hardcore and mainstream pornography

women are the target of aggressive acts 98.6% of the time (Sun). Also men are being treated for erectile dysfunction at younger ages due to sexual anxiety created by pornography (Smith).

Girls also have negative effects after continuously viewing mainstream and hardcore porn. Popular pornography increases women to accept the idea of being seen as a sexual object, along with adopting and objectifying gaze when viewing women in porn (Skorska). Studies show that women who feel objectified have increased anxiety, shame, disruptions of cognitive flow and can experience a decrease in awareness of internal feelings and emotions (Fritz).

Analysis: Although heterosexual pornography has always contained themes of sexual degradation and dominant and submissive roles, these themes are now much more evident and acts of sexual degradation are becoming more violent and normalized in today's pornography. During the 1980's degrading acts mostly consisted of the "cumshot, or money shot" acts such as spanking were also still very common within older pornography (Sun). The difference is that heterosexual pornography today often hints at themes of "abuse" towards almost always the female talent, in fact the word abuse can often be found in the title of many popular videos streamed today (Smith). Also, along with underlying themes, degrading and aggressive acts during scenes of mainstream pornography are increasing (Fritz).

This is in part due to the internet allowing for streaming websites to be set up. With the introduction of sites such as PornHub being created there was a steady decrease in the income of shooting and producing pornography, a large part being these sites are free (Macmillan). In the last few years producers have had to create edgier and often times more aggressive porn to see

any time of profit. This is in part due to the fact that older scenes have already been viewed by in some cases millions (Macmillan) which leads them to losing their appeal .

One of the most troubling things about hardcore sex and pornography becoming popular is due to the fact that it is outside of the category of BDSM. BDSM is another type of sex, which also includes acts of sexual aggression and violence and themes of “abuse”. There is large difference though between hardcore sex and porn versus BDSM, that issue being consent. During hardcore pornography acts of physical aggression are almost never requested (Fritz). Also to conduct proper BDSM sexual acts a safe word must previously be established and limits also must be established. Finally recipients of physical aggression within BDSM relationships vary from male to female depending on which partner agrees to be submissive and dominant. In hardcore pornography women are the recipients of physical aggression 96% of the time (Skorska).

Most adult American watch or have watched pornography at some point, This means that a majority of people have been exposed to the these themes. Exposure to degrading and hardcore pornography can lead to a slew of sexual problems. Along with sexual problems occurring, hardcore pornography adds to underlying cultural sexist beliefs (Hald). Sexual problems can include also adopting sexist beliefs about themselves and other women along with adopting an objectifying gaze (Fritz). As for men it can lead to erectile dysfunction and performance anxiety during sex (Smith). As for both genders, hardcore pornography does not instill any hint of consent to the viewers. This can lead to skewed ideas of one’s own sexual agency during intercourse especially for women.

After processing this literature and reviewing it I can conclude that I agree with the authors work. My hypothesis was proven correct. With themes of “abuse” and degradation in porn, sexist beliefs follow.

Conclusion:

Whether we want to believe it or not, porn is shaping the heterosexual script. This is leading to negative views and negative sexual experiences. In men it can cause misogyny and in women we are becoming more anxious about what is expected of us sexually and also adopting and learning to accept and objectifying gaze. Violent acts are becoming normal in our mainstream porn, which can result in such acts happening in sexual experiences. Our countries views on sex and pornography are making us feel guilty and shameful when it comes to what gets us off.

With themes of both extreme pornography along with a cultural view of sex being taboo the public is suffering. There is no middle ground from these two extremes in which the public can learn about sexuality openly. Like almost everything else, Americans learn about sex through the internet. This means that Americans are learning about sex through pornography.

Bibliography: Chyng Sun, Ana Bridges, Robert Wosnitzer, Erica Scharer, Rachel Liberman
A Comparison of Male and Female Directors in Popular Pornography: What Happens When Women Are at the Helm? : Psychology of Women Quarterly/ Volume 32, Issue 3: 8/11/2008

Niki Fritz, Bryan Paul: From Orgasm to Spanking: A Content Analysis of the Agentic and Objectifying Sexual Scripts in Feminist, for Women, and Mainstream Pornography :Springer Science & Business Media New York; 2017

Dennis Fortenberry MD: Puberty and Adolescent Sexuality: Hormonal Behavior pg 280-287;

7/2013

Gert Martin Hald, Neil M. Malamuth: Self-Perceived Effects of Pornography Consumption;

Archive of Sexual Behavior; 5/22/2006

Marie Lodie: James Deen Wins Two “Porn Oscars” Amid Rape Accusations; Jezebel Magazine;

1/24/2016

Hayley MacMillan: 6 Ways Porn is Different Now Than in the 1990’s; Cosmopolitan Magazine;

1/30/2017

Pierce Nahigyun: Porn Made For Women by Women; The Guardian; 3/22/2011

Maluma Skorska, Gordon Hodson, Mark Hoffarth: Experimental Effects of Degrading Versus Erotic Pornography Exposure in Men on Reactions Towards Women (Objectification, Sexism, Discrimination): Department of Psychology, University of Toronto Mississauga

Joan Smith: Porn has Changed- For the Worse (Hint, the Sex is Worse, Way Worse);

Independent Magazine ; 9/29/2015

Statista 2018; Online Statistics Encyclopedia

Marlow Stern: Rocco Siffredi on the James Deen Rape Allegations: “If he Has a Black Soul, I’m Not Sure”; DailyBeast; 9/10/2006