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Pornography often is seen as a fake representation of sex, bodies, and pleasure. Do feminists watch porn and if so, how do they choose the pornography that they watch?

Porn has an incentive for feminists, and that is, to provide arousal and facilitate their orgasms. Like non-feminists, it is believed that feminists would watch pornography when they were bored, needed to relax, or wanted to fall asleep. In the study conducted by Smith, Barker, and Atwood (2015), feminist respondents said they watched porn when ‘they were horny’, ‘bored’, or ‘can’t sleep.’ Other feminists said they watched porn for educational purposes as well as to cater their curiosity (Barker, 2014; Attwood et al., 2018). Many women will cite ‘educational experience’ as a reason or excuse for engaging with pornography (Juffer, 1998).

There are, however, many reasons as to why feminists should reject pornography. Almost all sexually explicit materials have presented a view of pornography that many may say is ‘distorted’ (Diamond, 1985; Longino, 1980) where women are depicted as ‘anonymous, panting playthings, adult toys, dehumanized objects to be used, abused, broken, and discarded (Brownmiller, 1975). Radical feminists believe that exposure to pornography ‘degenerates women’ and makes society believe that women are inferior to men in addition to it being appropriate for women to be abused sexually by their male partners (Brownmiller, 1975). This conceptualization of pornography has created attempts to have pornography censored in countries such as in the United States of America to promote gender equality (Dworkin &

McKinnon, 1988). This did, however, influence the legal definition of obscene material in Canada such as in *R v Butler*, 1992.

In Padgett (1989), a study was conducted where 66 individuals participated in a study looking into the effects of pornography exposure. In their meta-analysis of the effects of pornography exposure on sexual assault / rape attitudes, Mundorf (2007), reported an average effect size of $r=.15$, across 17 studies ($N=2,248$). When Padgett (1989) looked at the nonegalitarian attitudes and effects, the power of the study was only at 33% (with a one-tailed test at .05). The consequences of a failed study detecting anti-women effects has significant social ramifications which is a reason as to why feminists should reject pornography. Because there is a consistent failure to find evidence that consumers of pornography, such as feminists, are associated with views that stem towards gender inequality just means that more data needs to be collected from a larger sample.

Feminists should also reject pornography as pornography is meant to train men to be aggressive and to train women to be victims. (Dines et al., 1997; Leidholdt & Raymond, 1990). It's cases like that of Amanda Todd's as why pornography should be considered illegal in countries such as Canada. If the consumption and creation of pornography was outlawed in Canada, it would make cases such as those of Amanda Todd's easier to prosecute in my belief.

Creation of pornography, such as that of the case of Amanda Todd "showing her bare chest on BlogTV from 2009, when she was 11 years old, came up twice via motherless.com, a porn site in which the links were sent to Todd's family, friends and school" (Cleugh, 2022). Would more feminist activism to outlaw pornography have prevented the suicide of Amanda Todd? Possibly. While MacKinnon (2004) states that "pornography cannot be reformed or suppressed or banned, it can only be changed" is not true. While the "law of obscenity has never

even considered pornography a women's issue" (MacKinnon, 2004), it should be instead a global issue. Wills (1983) states that "pornography often functions as bad cop. If rape warns that without the protection of one man [women] are fair game for all" which isn't true. Even though Willis (1983) states that the "feminist criticism of sexist and misogynistic pornography is nothing new", feminists still need to criticize and action pornography to be outlawed.

While anti-porn activists may have their "heart in their right place" (Lee, 2009), issues such as sextortion in the case of Amanda Todd, and others, are still prevalent and always will be prevalent until feminists entirely, along with others, reject and outlaw pornography, including, but not limited to modern day pornography such as OnlyFans where anyone can become a "porn star" and submit pornography to the content provider.

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