

## Pornography: Fueling the Fire of Sexual Toxicity

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In his book *Cheap Sex* Mark Regnerus points to three factors which have produced the current ‘hook-up’ culture of what had been described as ‘psychosexual obesity’<sup>1</sup>: (1) The ubiquity of the Pill, (2) ubiquitous pornography, and (3) The advent of online dating/meeting services.<sup>2</sup>

In 1953 Hugh Hefner launched *Playboy* with a nude centerfold of Marilyn Monroe. He was clear from the start that the sexual industry would be catering to male sexual drive, and that females would be the means to that end, as he stated at the outset: “Within the pages of *Playboy* you will find articles, fiction, pictures, stories, cartoons, humor, and special features...to form a pleasure-primer styled to the masculine taste...We plan on spending most of our time inside. We like our apartment. We enjoy mixing up cocktails and an hors-d’oeuvre or two, putting a little mood music on the

phonograph and inviting in a female acquaintance for a quiet discussion on Picasso, Nietzsche, Jazz, Sex.”<sup>3</sup>

Today the landscape is much the same, sans the music and discussion. Most porn on the internet now forgoes any but the most rudimentary plot, and proceeds straight to aggressive sex with close-up shots of genitals, with the most common sequence being oral, anal and vaginal penetration followed by ejaculation on the face of the female.<sup>4</sup> Remarkable, sexologists today try to tell us with a straight face that this is “sex positive,” even when women feel coerced.<sup>56</sup> Plots today only serve to introduce the context of the sex, the most common themes today being incest, racial preferences, and teen/youth sex.<sup>7</sup> Almost 9 out of 10 scenes of the most popular videos show aggression toward women, with hair pulling, gagging, slapping, choking, and derogatory name calling.<sup>8</sup>

And it’s not just harder and more aggressive. It’s everywhere. Pornhub, the second most visited site on the net, had 92 billion people visit in 2016, enough for 12.5 videos for every person in the world. It has become the primary mode of sexual education for teens and even preteens now, with the vast majority of teens having seen sexual intercourse, including between more than two people.<sup>9</sup> Many have seen bondage and rape as well.<sup>10</sup>

This unleashing of toxic sexuality on humanity is damaging those who view it, and is addictive to those who continue to use it.<sup>11</sup> These points are vigorously opposed by the porn industry and the academic apologists who support it. They say that the only problem with porn is the shame and moral construct that religious mores place upon it. After all, it's just sex, which is natural, so it's party time! But just as the tobacco industry colluded with pro-tobacco scientists and doctors in the 50s and 60s to hide the research and confuse the public about the harms of tobacco, so the "porn professors" of today engage the press and public in a campaign of agnotology, of confusion and of disinformation about the harms of porn and its addictive nature.

Apologists try to frame the debate over pornography as a moral/religious/free speech issue, a construct engineered by societal moral police. The reality is that Internet pornography today is vastly different from the porn industry's line that it is just a conglomeration of individuals expressing themselves. Rather, it is a vast monopolistic empire, largely controlled by a few wealthy companies, with one in particular. Mindgeek owns and controls the vast majority of internet porn sites, and exerted control over both producers and performers.<sup>12</sup> Their main product today is incest, teen, and racial themes, in addition to misogynistic yet emasculated males ejaculating on the faces of females in a bizarre albeit now normalized

mammalian marking behavior. Ironically, were these themes presented in any other medium they would be roundly criticized as unprogressive. Yet because it is porn all is forgiven.

The evidence for an addictive model for porn today is so overwhelming that it requires either extreme ignorance, bias, or both. The bias is so remarkable that sexologists were successful in keeping sex and porn addiction out of the DSM-V as a behavioral addiction, while they accepted gambling! Imagine, online poker is an addiction, but not online porn. Despite the efforts of the pro-porn sexologists the ICD-11 will include compulsive sexual behavior as an impulse control disorder, so it will, for the first time, be recognized by the WHO as a mental disorder. The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM), comprised of medical doctors who treat addiction not only with counseling but also are able to prescribe medication, defined addiction in 2011 as including not only substance addictions, but also behavioral addiction such as to food, sex, and gambling under the addiction umbrella. These physicians were more sophisticated in their understanding of the biology of the brain and less susceptible to the political pressure of the pro-porn sexologists influencing the APA.

We predicted in 2011, based on the neurochemistry and the genetic engines of desire and reward in the brain, that pornography would eventually

demonstrate the same structural and metabolic changes in the brain as seen in substance addiction.<sup>13</sup> Studies out of Cambridge, Yale, the Max Planck Institute in Germany, and other institutions have substantiated these predictions, with both structural<sup>1415</sup> and metabolic<sup>161718</sup> changes being seen with increasing porn use. Only an apologist would say there is not evidence for an addictive model for porn; this web page lists 39 studies supporting such evidence<sup>19</sup>, with another page listing 16 reviews by some of the top neuroscientists in the world.<sup>20</sup>

Yet remarkably, some popular press outlets ignore this evidence and cover only apologist with close cultural ties to the industry. For instance, one paper not only dismisses evidence for an addictive model, but calls for younger people to use more porn demonstrating risky behavior so they can watch rather than do.<sup>21</sup> While these authors are widely quoted in the academic press, they invariably support the porn industry. One author recently published a book on how males can enjoy more porn pleasure which was endorsed by Pornhub (Mindgeek)<sup>22</sup>, and another attended the Adult Video News yearly awards, considered the Academy Awards of the porn industry, where she posed with producers and performers.<sup>23</sup> She also called Pornhub (Mindgeek) the ‘good guys’ publicly, and also supported exposing porn performers to the multiple STDs inherent in multipartner sex

by opposing condoms in porn, despite the recommendations of OSHA and multiple peer-reviewed papers.<sup>24</sup> Imagine a doctor attending a major banquet of the tobacco industry, posing with tobacco executives, then publishing papers proclaiming that tobacco is harmless. This is essentially the state of academic porn apologism.

Like any other addiction, pornography can decrease the brain's executive control center's ability to connect to the reward system and help the person judge whether the behavior would be prudent. The reward system is left with the brainstem powering the reward system with desire, mediated largely through dopamine. In a sense, the brain's brake pads wear out, and the person is left with unopposed desire.

Other things occur when toxic sexuality is infused into the brain's sensitive emotional axis. A study out of France found that the brain's mirror neuron system is activated in individuals watching porn; they project themselves into the film and "resonate with the motivational state" of the performers. A boy or man watching porn becomes the sexually aroused porn performer in the film, and is transposed into the film. The male performer almost always ejaculated onto the women, not in her, thus providing both a neutered masculinity for the watching male and an easier model for the watcher to model as he is doing precisely that while watching on his computer. What is

the motivational state he is seeing, modeling, and “resonating” with? Bill Margold, a prominent and now deceased male performer/producer, and spokesman for the porn industry said, “I’d like to really show what I believe the men want to see: violence against women. I firmly believe that we serve a purpose by showing that. The most violent we can get is [ejaculation in the face]. Men get off on that, because they get even with the women they can’t have. We try to inundate the world with orgasms in the face.”<sup>25</sup>

Unfortunately Bill and his fellow male performers and producers are succeeding in a global and dramatic manner. The sexual scripts of men are now being written and template in the brains of billions of men and women by Bill and the female performers he directs and exploits,. More and more, women are complaining that men want to ejaculate on their face instead of having female friendly sex with them.<sup>26</sup> And the porn professors call this sex positive for the woman? Apologists try to say female produced porn is more civilized, but this hasn’t borne out either in peer-reviewed formats<sup>27</sup> or anectodally.<sup>28</sup>

In the early 70s behavioral biologist Nikolas Tinbergen received the Nobel Prize; in his citation he was credited for describing the phenomenon of a “supranormal” stimulus.<sup>29</sup> He had done experiments where he painted plaster bird eggs bigger and brighter than normal eggs, and because the

enhanced eggs were more appealing, the birds would try to roost the fake plaster eggs in preference to their real eggs. In another experiment he painted paper female butterfly wings to be more appealing than the natural females wings in a species in which the males would be attracted to females based on the wings. When given a choice to mate with either one they preferentially chose the artificial wings over the real females. He called this a super, or supranormal stimulus, or a stimulus beyond what the animals normally encountered in nature.

Today we have millions of men and boys, and increasing women and girls, preferentially mating with electronic “wings.” Like the butterflies, they find the combination of endless novelty, anatomic enhancement, and exaggerated performance more appealing than sex with an actual person. As Naomi Wolfe said, “Today, real...women are just bad porn.”<sup>30</sup> Virtual reality porn with 3-D goggles with enhance this effect. Porn decreases, not increases, sexual pleasure and performance, despite what the porn industry says.

Consider over 60 such studies, 5 of which are longitudinal.<sup>31</sup>

As men become more culturally and sexually emasculated (literally impotent),<sup>32</sup> they learn from porn to treat women aggressive and to be entitled to sex from all women.<sup>33</sup> Sadly, this process parallel what Philip

Zimbardo has termed the “demise of guys, as women surpass men in college graduation, professional schools, and increasingly, in the workplace.

What is the answer? First, we must protect the next generation from the toxic sexuality promoted by the porn industry and its apologists. We should follow the British model and institute an “opt in” mechanism which would protect any under 18 years of age from viewing porn. The porn industry and its apologists say we should let parents be the gatekeepers, while this ludicrous plan is like placing cigarette vending machines in schools and telling parents to be responsible for their children not using them. This doesn’t work, of course, and we must quit letting the porn industry and its supporters infuse the next generation with the hate sex inherent in porn. Second, we must return to a society where adults reject the inhumanity of porn. As Pope Francis said at an academic Vatican conference last year, “We would be seriously deluding ourselves were we to think that a society where an abnormal consumption of internet sex is rampant among adults could be capable of effectively protecting minors.”<sup>34</sup>

Third, our culture increasingly is intolerant of racism and sexism, yet we celebrate both as long as people are having sex and the cameras are rolling. We must hold the porn industry to the same standard.

Fourth, we must return to a culture of respect, empathy, and compassion, which is the antithesis of modern porn culture. As one woman said of the change porn caused in her husband, ““He seemed to have gone to a different place; to comment about the women in porn and me in a cold and detached way, to say things about women’s bodies, about sexual acts which came out of his mouth with swinging bluntness. A layer of empathy had been ground away. My man, the one I had promised to love and cherish.””<sup>35</sup> We thought porn was about sexuality, but is about our very humanity. It is time to reclaim it.

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<sup>1</sup> Nancy Jo Sales, Tinder and the Dawn of the Dating Apocalypse. *Vanity Fair*, August 6, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> *Cheap Sex: The Transformation of Men, Marriage, and Monogamy*. Oxford University Press, 2017. Pg 11.

<sup>3</sup> Hugh Hefner, as quoted in *Pornland*, Beacon Press, 2010, pg. 7, by Gail Dines

<sup>4</sup> Ana J. Bridges, Robert Wosnitzer, Erica Scharrer, Chyng Sun, and Rachael Liberman. Aggression and Sexual Behavior in Best-Selling Pornography Videos: A Content Analysis Update. *Violence Against Women* 16(10) 1065-1085

<sup>5</sup> Chyng Sun, Matthew B. Ezzell, and Olivia Kendall. Naked Aggression: The Meaning and Practice of Ejaculation on a Woman’s Face. *Violence Against Women*, 2016, DOI: 10.1177/1077901216666723.

<sup>6</sup> C Marston, R. Lewis. Anal heterosex among young people and implications for health promotion: a qualitative study in the UK. *BMJ Open*. <http://dxdoi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2014-004996>.

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<sup>7</sup> SimilarWeb

<sup>8</sup> Ana J. Bridges, Robert Wosnitzer, Erica Scharrer, Chyng Sun, and Rachael Liberman. Aggression and Sexual Behavior in Best-Selling Pornography Videos: A Content Analysis Update. *Violence Against Women* 16(10) 1065-1085

<sup>9</sup> Chiara Sabina, Janis Wolak, and David Finkelhor. The Nature and Dynamics of Internet Pornography Exposure for Youth. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, Vol 11, No. 6, 2008.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Your Brain On Porn website. It provides a detailed list of the latest peer-reviewed papers showing harm, and also documenting the evidence for an addictive model for porn.

<sup>12</sup> David Auerbach, There is a Porn Monopoly, and Its Name is Mindgeek. *Slate Magazine*, Oct. 24, 2014.

<sup>13</sup> Donald L. Hilton, Jr, Clark Watts (2011). "Pornography Addiction: A Neuroscience Perspective." *Surgical Neurology International* 2011; 2:19.

<sup>14</sup> Kuhn, Simone and Gallinat, Jurgen. Brain Structure and Functional Connectivity Associated With Pornography Consumption: The Brain On Porn. *JAMA Psychiatry*, May 28, 2014. doi:10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2014.93

<sup>15</sup> Schmidt C, Morris LS, Kvamme TL, Hall P, Birchard T, Voon V. Compulsive sexual behavior: Prefrontal and limbic volume and interactions. *Human Brain Mapping* (2016). DOI: 10.1002/hbm.2344

<sup>16</sup> Voon, V., Mole T.B., Banca P., Porter L., Morris L., Mitchell S., Lapa T.R., Potenza M.N., Irvine M. (2014). Neural Correlates of Sexual cue Reactivity In Individuals with and without Compulsive Sexual Behaviors. *Plos One*, July 11, 2014

<sup>17</sup> Mechelmans, D.G., Irvine, M., Banca, P., Porter, L., Mitchell, S., Mole, T.B., Lapa, T. R., Harrison, N. A., Potenza, M. N., Voon, V. (2014). Enhanced Attentional Bias towards Sexually Explicit Cues in Individuals with and without Compulsive Sexual Behaviours. *PlosOne*. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0105476

<sup>18</sup> Gola M, Wordecha M, Sescousse G, Lew-Starowicz M, Kossowski B, Wypych M, Makeig S, Potenza MN, & Marchewka A. Can Pornography Be Addictive? An fMRI Study of Men Seeking Treatment for Problematic Pornography Use. *Neuropsychopharmacology* Sept 2017, 42(10):2021-2031.

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.yourbrainonporn.com/brain-scan-studies-porn-users#brain>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.yourbrainonporn.com/brain-scan-studies-porn-users>

<sup>21</sup> David Ley, Nicole Prause, & Peter Finn. The Emperor Has No Clothes: A Review of the 'Pornography Addiction' Model. *Current Sexual Health Reports*. DOI 10.1007/s11930-014-0016-8.

<sup>22</sup> David Ley. *Ethical Porn for Dicks: A Man's Guide to Responsible Viewing Pleasure*. ThreeL Media, Stone Bridge Press. 2016. Endorsement on Amazon page for book: "David Ley's voice brings much-needed nuance to some of the most important conversations occurring about pornography today."—pornhub

<sup>23</sup> <https://liberoscenter.com/media/> This website for Liberos, Nicole Prause's company, has a media kit. The photo of Nicole Prause with performers and producers at the annual AVN award is featured by her in this media kit.

<sup>24</sup> Rodriguez-Hart C, Chitale FA, Rigg R, Godlstein BY, Kerndt PR, Tavrow P. Sexually transmitted infection texting of adult film performers: is disease being missed? *Sexually Transmitted Disease*. 2012 Dec; 39(12):989-94.

<sup>25</sup> Bill Margold, pornography performer, quoted by Gail Dines, *Pornland: How Porn Has Hijacked our Sexuality*. Beacon Press, Boston 2010, pg xxvi

<sup>26</sup> Sun C, Ezzell MB, Kendall O. Naked Aggression: the Meaning and Practice of Ejaculation on a Woman's Face. *Violence Against Women*. 2016 DOI: 10.1177/1077801216666723.

<sup>27</sup> Sun C, Bridges A, Wosnitzer R, et al. A Comparison of Male Female Directors in Popular Pornography: What Happens when Women are at the Helm. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.2208.00439.x>

<sup>28</sup> Tasha Reign: I Was Assaulted on a Stormy Daniels Porn Set. And She Did Nothing. *The Daily Beast*. Marlow Stern, May 14, 2018.

<sup>29</sup> [https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/medicine/laureates/1973/press.html](https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/medicine/laureates/1973/press.html)

<sup>30</sup> Naomi Wolf, *The Porn Myth*, New York Magazine, Oct 20, 2003

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.yourbrainonporn.com/studies-reported-relationships-between-porn-use-or-porn-addictionsex-addiction-and-sexual#less>

<sup>32</sup> Park YP, Wilson G, Berger J, Christman M, teina B, Bishop F, Klam W, and Doan AP. Is Internet Pornography Causing Sexual Dysfunctions? A Review with Clinical Reports. *Behavioral Sciences*, 2016 Sep; 6 (3): 17.

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<sup>33</sup> Jesselyn Cook, *Inside Incels' Looksmaxing Obsession: Penis Stretching, Skull Implants And Rage*. Thousands of "involuntarily celibate" men in online forums are consumed by misogynist entitlement and a skin-deep quest for self-improvement. *Huffpost* 7/24/2018.

<sup>34</sup> Pope Francis, Vatican, private audience, Child Dignity Conference, Gregorian Pontifical University, Oct. 6, 2017

<sup>35</sup> Melinda Tankard Reist and Abigail Bray. *Big Porn: Exposing the Harms of the Global Pornography Industry*. Spinifex 2011, pg xxxi