

The Anti-Porn Cheat Sheet

wallet-sized

Composed by a consortium of feminist women and men.

It's just sex!

If pornography is your definition of sex, then you need to kill your television. Pornography is not sex. Pornography is a medium that uses sex. It does so by equating women's bodies to sex, by distorting and dismantling women's sexuality to conform to a packaged and marketable product. It uses this pallid definition of sex for profit, to hawk products, to counter conservatism, and to subjugate women.

This reeks of censorship!

The First Amendment protects political speech, not pornography. It does not give anyone the right to debase and dehumanize women. There is no "freedom to objectify and sell women" clause in the First Amendment. When we clamor to protect freedom of speech within this argument, we clamor for the freedom to stomp all over women as a people. The fact that porn continues to be a running "constitutional" battle in the courts is indicative of the deep sexism and misogyny in our society.

All men use porn. It's only natural!

If all men are doing it, then all men are dupes. Besides, all men don't. Porn does not show up as 119 on the Periodic Table of Elements. It is neither a building block of life nor an essential to human survival. Lots of men make a reasoned choice to not allow their sexuality to be formed by distorted and stereotypical portrayals in porn. They also refuse to be complicit in an industry that exploits women, that debases human sexuality, that feeds on human vulnerability.

Blaming porn for misogyny is like blaming the media for violence.

How is criticizing pornography the same as blaming it for all the sexism in the world? Why can't people bear to allow critique of the culture of pornography without going completely berserk? Why can't we dialogue about how and why pornography has negative impacts on societies and how and why it's related to other forms of oppression? Pornography is just as subject to criticism as all other media.

You sound more and more like a right-winger everyday!

Right-wingers are anti-porn, not to protect women, but to preserve male supremacy via family values. Right-wingers could not care less about women. Right-wingers care about maintaining the status quo, ie male-defined morality. Porn is seen as adultery and a threat to family values. I am anti-porn because it is anti-woman propaganda behind a façade of sexuality, a function of female exploitation.

They're just a bunch of pictures.

Porn is an incubator for women's oppression. Depictions of subservience perpetuate subservience in turn leads to workplace discrimination, domestic violence, assault and rape. Porn creates and maintains sex as a basis of social stratification. It systematically exploits and subordinates women via sexual imagery and the bigotry and contempt it produces, with the acts of aggression it fosters, harms women's opportunities for equality. Porn is anti-woman propaganda. ¹

Porn takes its message of misogyny from its surrounding culture, distills it into media and then feeds it back to the culture, creating a positive feedback loop which amplifies the signal and reinforces a subservient image of women.

Women buy porn, too.

"So why not pictures of gangs of women raping men, sticking broomsticks up their asses as they smile and ejaculate and say, "Encore," snipping their balls off with pliers, sticking wire up their penile openings? Why haven't pornographers saturated the market with these kinds of images to match what they've done to women? Isn't this evidence that porn is discriminatory?" ²

Porn was my sex education.

Porn is produced to the tastes of the men who buy it. So congrats: you've been educated in some guy's fantasy. And what other form of entertainment is confused as educational material? If I wanted to learn how to be an astronaut, I'd train with astronauts. I wouldn't rent *Apollo 13* and then expect NASA to stick me on the next Shuttle. You might try talking to your lover, finding out what she or he likes and dislikes and working together to find what you can enjoy *together*.

1. Adapted from Judge Easterbrook's writing for the 7th Court of Appeals in American Booksellers Association, Inc. v. Hudnut.

2. This quote from Dr. Diana Russell's article, "NADINE STROSSEN: The Pornography Industry's Wet Dream" can be found at www.dianarussell.com. Go there. Now.

Directions:
Cut along dotted line. Fold in half, then fold in half lengthwise. Then fold in half again. See, it fits in your wallet!