

# Are money shots costing us too much?

Porn is just the tip of the iceberg—not the big, floaty part beneath



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point

You don't go about weeding your lawn by picking off all the heads of the dandelions and proclaiming a job well done. Nor should you go around beating up every guy your girlfriend makes out with while you're out of town (or so the police tell me). These are misguided actions against a problem that won't go away by fighting the superficial results. Instead, one must grow up and deal with the underlying issues, as it's the only way for progress to be made. So I'm begging all those of you out there that have an issue with the objectification and exploitation of women to do something productive and stop acting out against porn.

There are many weak anti-porn arguments that float around. For one thing, concerns about kids being exposed to porn don't bring up any concerns against porn itself, but rather with parenting. As well, watching too much porn is a *compulsion*, not an *addiction*—and even if porn didn't exist, these “addicts” would be doing something else compulsively to avoid their lives. And you can't claim porn encourages violence against women because, in Japan at least, when porn shifted from essentially illegal to legal from 1972 to 1995, the incidence of rape actually *dropped* by two thirds. Sounds like less violence against women to me.

This is not to say that porn is a good thing—at least, not all of it is. “Exploited College Girls,” “Barely Legal,” and similar sites make me sick. But the porn industry is *huge*, and a few ethical

dilemmas aren't going to shut down such a money-maker and its many shakers. But economics aside, just because some parts of the porn industry suck in no way means that we should attack porn as a whole. There are some terrible things the Internet has spawned, but I can't think of anyone claiming that the World Wide Web should be shut down completely. That's because people realize that in this case the problem lies with the source and not the medium.

And while it seems at first like there's a point to be made in the idea that poor young women are being forced into an industry just to make ends meet, this argument doesn't really hold water. What about all the women that have jobs they hate? What about the single mom at Wal-Mart that hates her work but has no other options? Do they deserve less attention because they're not naked? If anything, they make a lot less money than their pornographic counterparts, so how come no one champions their cause? It's because people really have a problem with sex on film, which is their personal issue, not anyone else's. If those fighting porn really cared about the women who are “forced” into it, they'd be fighting for more than just the poor porn actress who may well like her job a lot more than the underpaid retail clerk.

I know there are a lot of good intentions when it comes to scapegoating porn, but the fact remains that we were all born hard-wired for seeking out sex. Even if we existed in a society completely free from the exploitation of women, porn would still exist, and would flourish just as well as it does today. Instead, we should focus on the unwritten rules in our society that say women should be evaluated by their looks alone or that they belong in submissive gender-roles. Until we do, it doesn't matter how much of a racket you stir up against porn; you might as well be picking daisies.

The porn industry exploits and oppresses the women involved



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counterpoint

There's also a stigma attached to it: thus even if a woman views her own role in the industry innocently, very few others will, making a career change difficult if not impossible.

When Jenna Jameson published her memoir, *How to Make Love Like a Porn Star*, there was plenty of publicity surrounding the 30-year-old's rise to fame and fortune. What lacked was meaningful discussion about how her early experiences of drug addiction and rape contributed to her career choice.

Paul cites a study showing that when porn became legal in Japan, incidents of rape dropped. Could this be true—could porn actually be *protecting* women? Buying into this argument would suggest that abusing women is inevitable, unless men have an outlet like pornography to release their pent up sexual aggression.

But rape is not about sex, or needing sex, or sexual tension. It's about power. Secondly, since porn has been roaming free in Japan, other major changes have occurred too. Variables that could also have a significant impact include the feminist movement, law enforcement, sexual education, amendments to the legal definition of rape and the number of reported assaults. It's difficult enough to correlate sexual aggression with pornography—we can't summarize an entire country's sexual behaviour over 30 years.

Critiquing pornography isn't equivalent to taking an anti-sex stance or having uptight morals. Human sexuality is natural; being forced into degrading situations on camera for profit is not. Therefore the best way to confront porn is to be aware of what you're watching. Get off on it if you want, but don't ignore the bigger picture. If we lived in an equitable society, would there still be pornography? Of course. Maybe even arousing, equitable, non-violent images. Until then, forget the flowers Paul—get a close-up on the cum shot.

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