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Erotic Transgressions: Pornographic Uses of the Victorian

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EROTIC TRANSGRESSIONS: PORNOGRAPHIC USES OF THE VICTORIAN

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of English

by
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation argues that while pornographic film asserts itself as the rebellious cousin to the literary and cinematic canon, it nonetheless relies on a particular Victorianness, transgressing and drawing on its perceived repressions and perversions for pornography's own ostensible subversiveness. Through an analysis of pornographic adaptations of Lewis Carroll's *Alice* books, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, this project shows that the rupture and rearticulation of social and corporeal propriety constitutes pornography's persistent appeal. These predominantly American pornographic texts, spanning 1974—2012, appropriate canonical British icons as a way of refuting the old world (framed as sexually repressed yet hypocritical) and establishing a postmodern American sexual identity (framed as sexually liberated and culturally savvy). Hardcore pornography is distinct in its unsimulated representation of sex, and its peculiar position at the intersection of legal, cultural, and spatial categorization and control. "Erotic Transgressions" shows the way pornography highlights postmodern culture's interest in Victorian sexuality as a way of navigating our own fractured sexual identities. An analysis of these neo-Victorian texts reveals the intersections between public/private and desire/disgust in pornographic eroticism, and exposes the complicated ways in which consumers use pornography as a paradoxically disruptive and regulating medium.

INTRODUCTION SKIN FLICKS

Skin houses the body and it is figured in Gothic as the ultimate boundary, the material that divides the inside from the outside....Slowly but surely the outside become the inside and the hide no longer conceals or contains, it offers itself up as text, as body, as monster. The Gothic text, whether novel or film, plays out an elaborate skin show. – Judith Halberstam, *Skin Shows*, p. 7

“Pornography’s favorite terrain is the tender spots where the individual psyche collides with the historical process of molding social subjects” – Laura Kipnis, *Bound and Gagged*, p.167.

The terrain of pornography, the “tender spots” of the cultural psyche, is the primary focus of this project; another focus is the ways in which the Victorian era serves as a primary tender spot for pornography in postmodern culture.

“Pornography’s ultimate desire,” Kipnis argues, “is exactly to engage our deepest embarrassments, to mock us for the anxious psychic balancing acts we daily perform, straddling between the anarchy of sexual desires and the straitjacket of social responsibilities” (167). When Kipnis speaks of pornography’s delight in transgressing and violating social mores, however, she resists turning the same lens of interrogation back on to pornography itself. In this project, I ask, what of pornography’s own delicate balancing acts? In speaking the unspoken, what does pornography itself leave unsaid? What, in its careful construction of sex and sexuality, does pornography (and its consumers) anxiously straddle?

When people speak of “pornography,” typically they mean a specific, recent, visual pornography, likely moving image pornography. Much of this perception has to do with the shifting definitions and meanings of pornography which, as Walter Kendrick demonstrated in his 1987 book *The Secret Museum*, is an unstable category

impacted by cultural context, legal definitions, and technology. What was considered “pornography” decades ago, might now be perceived as “art.” Yet, another way we locate “pornography” has to do with nostalgia. In this way, *Playboy* is rarely what we mean when we say “porn,” and neither is the frankly pornographic literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth century.¹ This tendency is evidence of what Walter Kendrick calls “the post-pornographic era,” a post-1960s culture in which print is never pornographic and visual media is a threat (213).

By far the most common question I am asked when explaining my project is, “Are you anti or pro?” My explanation that I actively resist such a binary is met with frustration, and sometimes hostility, not only by those who identify as “anti-porn” but also by those who identify as “pro-porn.” My stance poses a threat to both groups, indicative of the danger such a binary poses to productive feminist discourse and work. Having identified as anti-porn during my teenage years, and “pro-porn” in my 20s, I entirely understand this defensiveness from both sides. It is a defensiveness rooted in the dominance of the anti-porn feminist position on the one hand, and on the other hand a reaction to what seems to be a hypersexualized culture in which the degradation of women has become the norm.

The bottom line here is that porn is represented in culture as a monolith.² Porn is seen as all the same, to the point where one can make claims to love or hate the entirety of a genre, to permit or to ban the entirety of an industry. This kind of binary is dangerous and unproductive. Peter Lehman articulates my own position astutely:

If positions on pornography are staked out in this “pro” or “anti” fashion, I clearly come down on the side of pro-porn: I believe

pornography can be complex, meaningful, and pleasurable and that it should be studied to enhance our understanding of sexuality and culture, not to fuel hysteria. The problem for me, however, lies in the very categorization of pro- and anti-porn. The polarity is a false and even dangerous one. ("Introduction" 20)

Yet clearly, this is not really "pro" porn. It is merely "not anti-porn," and if one is not anti, then one is automatically categorized as pro, a frustrating dilemma that closes off meaningful discourse. My colleagues are not asked if they are "pro" or "anti" their field of inquiry, and if this binary were to be erected, how would they identify? The problem with such a binary is not just that anti-porn discourse ignores the complexity and diversity of porn, but also that those who identify as "pro" porn are uncritical of the genre in just as simplistic a way as anti-porn feminists are critical.

Lehman reflects, "In an effort to correct the fear and hysteria surrounding porn, some scholars have gone too far in the direction of simply embracing it as clearly not being the evil object so many writers and people in our culture imagine it to be, as if that means we should not be concerned about race, class, and gender depictions that we are so rightly concerned about in other genres" ("Introduction" 20). Indeed, I was guilty of this for a short but significant time in my graduate studies. After discovering that pornography is far more diverse, complex, and interesting than I had led myself to believe (without having actually seen any pornographic films), I found myself celebrating *all* pornography in libertarian fashion; viewing pornography in a utopian way in which "sexual power is removed from any social or political context and instead becomes an attribute available to any individual alert enough to claim it" (Chapkis 22). I now regard this two year period of my life as critical in reaching a more balanced, sex radical approach to

pornography; one that “explicitly situate[s] sex within a culture of male domination; sex is understood to be constructed by this culture without being fully determined by it” (Chapkis 23). As Carol Vance explains in the introduction to *Pleasure and Danger*,

Sexuality is simultaneously a domain of restriction, repression, and danger as well as a domain of exploration, pleasure, and agency. To focus only on pleasure and gratification ignores the patriarchal structure in which women act, yet to speak only of sexual violence and oppression ignores women’s experience with sexual agency and choice and unwittingly increases the sexual terror and despair in which women live. (1)

In this way, sociopolitical context is critical to understanding and analyzing sexual representation, and moves the question of sexuality beyond that of mere consent, and sexual representation beyond that of mere freedom of speech.

Defining Pornography

“The difference between pornography and erotica is lighting.” – Gloria Leonard, adult film performer and editor of *High Society* magazine.

In her now-famous 1978 *Ms.* article, “Erotica and Pornography: A Clear and Present Difference,” Gloria Steinem set out the distinction between pornography and erotica, arguing that “‘erotica’ is rooted in ‘eros’ or passionate love, and thus in the idea of positive choice, free will, the yearning for a particular person.... ‘Pornography’ begins with a root ‘porno,’ meaning ‘prostitution’ or ‘female captives,’ thus letting us know that the subject is not mutual love, or love at all, but domination and violence against women” (23).³ Wendy Chapkis describes feminists of Steinem’s ilk as “pro-‘positive’ sex feminists,” arguing that “from this perspective, then, sex can be divided between its ‘positive’ expression in passionate love and its

violent articulation in pornographic objectification” (13). Such a perspective genders good sexuality female and bad sexuality male, in Chapkis’s view.

While Chapkis distinguishes “pro-‘positive’ sex feminists” from “anti-sex feminists” (as she refers to Andrea Dworkin, Catharine MacKinnon, and Susan Griffin), both groups nevertheless fall under the general rubric of “anti-porn feminism,” with one group allowing for the value of a vague category of “erotica.” In this way, the distinction between pornography and erotica is similarly problematic to the distinction of anti- and pro-porn. Indeed, Whitney Strub remarks,

early feminists envisioned and sometimes created an alternative pornography in which women held erotic agency. The anti-porn introduction of a distinction between pornography and ‘erotica’ in the late 1970s helped suppress this vision, both by rendering a ‘feminist pornography’ inherently oxymoronic and by outlining the qualities of erotica in such a way as to deprive female sexuality of any pleasurable prurience, reintroducing femininity to a movement initially predicated on the annihilation of gender roles. (214)

A large part of the argument over pornography lies in the struggle over definitions. How to define “pornography” has become a pivotal feature of much of the discourses surrounding pornography, with the bulk of these discussions ultimately concluding that a clear definition of pornography is impossible.

Robert Jensen notes that for many “pro-pornography” theorists, foregrounding the difficulties inherent in defining pornography is a “strategy” that Jensen refers to as “the ‘definitional dodge’” consciously intended to “avoid confronting the core issues that pornography raises” (51). Jensen positions himself as a continuation of the Dworkin/MacKinnon brand of anti-porn feminist criticism, and while I agree with his perspective on “the ‘definitional dodge’” in part, Jensen’s own definition ignores the complexities of pornography in favor of his own

rhetorical strategy; namely, positioning pornography traditionally as “the graphic sexually explicit material sold for the purpose of arousing and satisfying sexual desire,” as well as “a specific kind of sexual material that helps maintain the sexual subordination of women” (53). Jensen distinguishes between “pornography” and “pornographic,” explaining that “the task is to analyze pornography (in the first sense, as a description of a type of material easily identifiable in the market) to determine if it is pornographic (in the feminist sense, as an expression of male-supremacist sexual ideology)” (54). While I find this perspective too narrow-minded an approach to adequately analyze pornography, Jensen does highlight the important distinction between “pornography” and “the pornographic,” the latter of which has been applied to a wide variety of genres, mediums, and individual texts usually to connote a perceived excess or sensory indulgence.⁴

The task of defining pornography seems significantly more pressing of an issue than the same task applied to other genres, because defining something as pornography, with all the ideological and political baggage that comes with such a definition, can often be interpreted as an accusation. As John Ellis points out in his 1980 meditation on the subject, the “combination of vagueness and moralism” that tends to characterize definitions of pornography “produces a real blockage in the analysis and the production of representations alike” (25). This leads to a situation where “‘pornography’ as a label always threatens to engulf any sexual representation that achieves a certain level of explicitness” (25). In this sense, a science-fiction film that incorporates graphic sexual activity will always be deemed (and likely dismissed) as a porn film before the science-fiction genre is addressed as

a central component, or even analyzed as a genre intersecting with the genre of porn. Furthermore, all genres, particularly in the postmodern era, blend with each other in a way that makes definitions of such genres very difficult, and certainly unstable. Ellis explains,

There will be no one unitary definition of 'pornography' but rather a struggle for predominance between several definitions. These definitions will work within a context defined by several forces: the current form of the pornography industry and its particular attempts at legitimization; the particular form of the laws relating to obscenity and censorship; and the general mobilization of various moral and philosophical positions and themes that characterize a particular social moment. (27)

Thus, while pornography can be defined according to the pornography industry, as Jensen suggests, it is important to note also that the industry itself, and its product, is shaped by prevailing systems of classification and legislation. In this way, it is simply not satisfactory to define pornography according to whether or not it is produced by an industry that is itself shaped by a vague and moralistic notion of what should be confined to pornographic spheres.

With this in mind, Wendy McElroy's "value-neutral definition" is instructive: "Pornography is the explicit artistic depiction of men and/or women as sexual beings" (51). McElroy clarifies that she has intentionally "excluded the intention of the author or producer. I have also excluded the reaction of the reader or viewer" (51). I find these exclusions of particular use when approaching pornography, as traditional definitions have almost always included intention of author and response of consumer as part of the definition. Yet, ultimately it is a culturally dishonest definition. Like it or not, social categorization and exhibition do define the genre to an extent. Furthermore, like horror, the intended effect on the consumer is

indeed an important facet. Nadine Strossen, for example, defines pornography “in short” as “sexual expression that is meant to, or does, provoke sexual arousal or desire” (18). Such a definition is the dominant one, reflecting the dictionary definition as well as the popular one. While incorporating the desired effect on the consumer is important, such a rigid scope significantly limits an understanding of pornography in its exclusion of pornographic films that have a variety of different kinds of sex represented, including scenes that highlight unpleasant, unsatisfactory, or unwilling sexual activity. It is often difficult to assess the intent or reception of such scenes, and this narrow approach—assessment of whether they are intended to be, or are received as, arousing—inevitably hinders a more in depth and useful analysis.

Williams provides a definition in her 1989 book, *Hard Core*, that subtly yet significantly revises the intent/reception definition. Williams carefully defines film pornography “as neutrally as possible, as the visual (and sometimes aural) representation of living, moving bodies engaged in explicit, usually unfaked, sexual acts with a *primary intent* of arousing viewers” (29-30 italics mine). Williams’ subtle revision of traditional definitions expresses that there can be a variety of intentions, the primary of which is arousal, allowing her to expand on the ways in which pornographic film often approaches sex as a problem, depicting “bad” sex and “good” sex as a way of telling a story (*Hard Core* 120-152).⁵

Williams also suggests incorporating two other perspectives into her definition: Annette Kuhn’s characterization of pornography as “produc[ing] meanings ‘pivoting on gender difference’” and Beverly Brown’s idea that

“pornography reveals current regimes of sexual relationships as ‘a coincidence of sexual phantasy, genre and culture in an erotic organization of visibility’” (*Hardcore* 30). Incorporating these cultural and gendered perspectives into an analysis of pornography is important, even if they are not explicitly incorporated into a rigid definition. Bearing these perspectives in mind are imperative to an understanding of pornography in a way that avoids the sweeping and condemnatory anti-porn approach; an approach that dismisses the diversity of female experience and excludes so much complex and contradictory material. It also avoids the blinkered libertarian feminist approach that tends to ignore the problematic, equally contradictory, and often highly disturbing trends in many pornographic texts.

A Brief History of Twentieth Century Feminism and Pornography

The anti-porn feminist position is seen as a development of the late 1970s, and especially the 1980s, while the 1960s and 1970s are regarded as largely devoid of any feminist attention to pornography at all. Andrea Dworkin, Robin Morgan, Catharine MacKinnon, Susan Brownmiller, Susan Griffin, and Diana Russell are remembered as spearheading a women’s movement that, collaborating with the National Organization for Women (NOW), targeted pornography as the central evil that not only reflected but also produced violence against women.⁶ Furthermore, as Dworkin and MacKinnon famously argued, pornography *constituted* violence against women.⁷ Yet, as Whitney Strub notes in his 2011 history of the relationship between censorship and conservative politics, *Perversion for Profit*, in the late-1960s and 1970s there existed a thriving feminist discourse that merely listed pornography as

one area in which symptoms of a widespread cultural misogyny might be found. “Pornography” as a category did not preclude feminist pornographic creation, and the distinction between pornography and erotica was not yet an issue. Indeed, the focus tended to be on how to improve pornography, not set it off as an always already misogynistic category beyond recovery (Strub 222). Strub notes that, when questioned as to why feminists had not addressed pornography prior to the late 1970s, Robin Morgan remarked, “Many of us have been coerced into silence” (quoted in Strub 213). Yet, as Strub demonstrates, in the late 1960s and early 1970s “[a]s the movement coalesced, feminists recognized the importance of accessing the institutions of the media, and they confronted its sexist barriers accordingly. Pornography surfaced in some of these efforts, but feminists never saw fit to place it in a position of centrality in women’s oppression” (217). Indeed, whereas currently the issue of whether there can indeed be “feminist pornography” is hotly debated or dismissed as an oxymoron (Kelly), prior to the anti-porn movement feminists believed there was important work to be done in envisioning a feminist pornography. Later, in the 1980s, queer feminists in particular would take issue with the staunch anti-porn feminist agenda that did not take into account the importance of sexually explicit media in the LGBTQ movement, and more generally as part of queer experience. Magazines such as *On Our Backs*—an “anti-establishment, lesbian sex magazine” (Bright “Birth” 33)—worked to counteract the anti-porn juggernaut, and subsequently experienced censorship, most troublingly from other feminist groups (Strossen 149-151). Indeed, anti-porn censorship

ultimately silences and hurts marginalized groups far more than it does dominant, patriarchal discourses.⁸

Strub's argument illuminates how late 1960s and early 1970s feminism organized around a more generic gender oppression, and demonstrates the extent to which 1980s anti-porn feminism ultimately aided new right political agendas in the form of stigmatizing and punishing marginalized sexualities. Yet Strub does not address the difference in technologies, audience, and proliferation of pornographies. Addressing the comparative lack of access and amount of material produced in the late-1960s and early 1970s, as opposed to the porno chic era of the 1970s, the VHS revolution of the 1980s, and the internet age of the present (complete with portable devices on which to view pornography virtually anywhere, for free), not to mention the shifts in genre and content, is critical to an understanding of how feminist perspectives on pornography have taken shape.

Prior to the early 1970s, that watershed moment when "porno chic" is said to have been incepted by *Deep Throat*,⁹ the hardcore feature film did not exist. The white coater, sexploitation film, and nudie cutie did exist, however, as ways of depicting sexual material while skirting around the law. The mode of exhibition was the adult movie theater, and obscenity law rested on the 1957 *Roth* decision, the case which officially freed Henry Miller's *Tropics* and D.H. Lawrence's unexpurgated *Lady Chatterley's Lover* among other texts (Heins 171, De Grazia 280-326). On the back of the *Hicklin* standard from 1868, the *Roth* decision introduced the clause that, in order to be judged obscene and therefore not protected by the First Amendment, a text must be "utterly without redeeming social importance" (Heins 171).¹⁰ It was

the 1973 case, *Miller v. California*, however, in tandem with a post-1960s culture of sexual revolution and post-civil rights independent American cinema, that would prove to be the catalyst for a new era of porno chic. Part of a five-case revisit of obscenity law, *Miller vs. California* introduced a new three-pronged test for judging obscenity:

- whether "the average person, applying contemporary community standards" would find that the work, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest,
- whether the work depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by the applicable state law,
- whether the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value

It was thanks to the various amendments to the *Roth* decision, as well as the more general relaxation in censorship following the end of the Hays Code era, that led to the proliferation of sexploitation and nudie films, not to mention the publication of *Playboy*, yet it was the *Miller* test in all its ambiguity and the court's permissive attitude regarding obscenity prosecutions that created an environment in which hardcore feature films would dominate sexual media. As Marjorie Heins explains, the confusing and vague nature of the three-pronged test is advantageous to pornography in its "almost infinite flexibility. That is, as 'contemporary community standards' change, the law evolves as well" (172). And with rapid developments in technology, specifically the internet and portable electronic devices, the very "community" whose standards we rely on for such judgments becomes more difficult to locate. Currently, legal controls over sexual media take what Heins calls

“primarily indirect, noncriminal forms” leading to a “highly schizophrenic contemporary culture in which the rawest of sexual information thrives alongside a climate of moralizing and relentless child protection rhetoric” (172-173). This has recently manifested in a relentless anti-trafficking rhetoric that fails to acknowledge a difference between sex work and trafficking, and often results in the persecution of sex workers.¹¹

The development of feminist discourses on pornography can be seen as reacting to technological shifts, in turn impacting pornographic content, as the inception of porno chic of the 1970s occurs simultaneously with the beginning of anti-porn feminism. Meanwhile, the inception of VHS occurs simultaneously with anti-porn feminism’s peak. In Chuck Kleinhans’s essay, “The Change from Film to Video Pornography: Implications for Analysis,” he provides figures regarding the transition from film to video, showing that within a matter of a few years the consumption of pornography went from exclusively theaters to exclusively home video, while the industry went from producing around 120 features a year in 1983 to around 400 features a year in 1987, around 40 of which were shot on film (156-157). While the introduction of the VCR in late 1970s shifted industry practices and consumption somewhat, it was the reduction in cost of the VCR by the end of the 1980s that proved to have the most impact through widespread availability of videotapes, and affordability of the VCR itself. In 1979-1980, the VCR cost around \$1000, yet by the end of the 1980s they cost around \$200 for a basic model (157). Today, the almost obsolete DVD player costs under \$30, and the majority of pornography is consumed online for free.

The current resurgence in anti-porn feminism can likewise be seen as a reaction to the internet, tube sites, and smartphones. Indeed, as Clarissa Smith and Feona Attwood argue, while the current antiporn movement has its roots in Dworkin and MacKinnon, “the particular model of ‘healthy’ sex inherent in these arguments has less to do with gender than with a view of the world that is highly suspicious of reason, culture, technology, and representation itself” (“Emotional Truths” 42). This new form of antiporn feminism relies on a “complex narrative of nostalgia and futurology” (43) to assert its message, neatly encapsulated in the phrase, “not your father’s *Playboy*” (Smith and Attwood “Emotional Truths” 43), ironically characterizing the media forms Dworkin and MacKinnon fought against as somehow more innocuous than the current state of things.

Hardcore pornography, anti-porn feminists argue, is everywhere. The buzz words are “mainstreaming” and “pornification.”¹² Yet, where is the pornography? Certainly not on television or at the cinema. Indeed, pornography is watched in private, anonymously, hence the desire for tube sites and free porn: no names, no credit cards, and no trace of having consumed pornography at all (as long as you remember to delete your browsing history). Technologies of pornography have evolved to cater to a consumer who wants entirely anonymous porn consumption (Barss 259-262), and yet mainstream media capitalizes on the contradiction of widespread porn consumption coupled with widespread silence and denial on the issue.

In this way, the presence of pornography in the mainstream takes shape in porn star autobiographies, reality television, Hollywood biopics, academic studies,

and documentaries. This is what is meant by “porn isn’t mainstream; the mainstream has been ‘porned’” (Sarracino and Scott x). Meanwhile, massive amounts of actual hardcore pornography is being consumed via torrents, streaming sites, tumblr, and even twitter, which porn stars have coopted as a machine with which to market themselves, interact with fans, and blur the line between fantasy and reality.¹³ Furthermore, pornographic literature has enjoyed a recent surge in popularity and media coverage. Many would attribute this to *Fifty Shades of Grey*, yet the novel itself grew out of a thriving (female) slash fiction community who have quietly been writing and reading pornography in huge numbers for the last four decades.¹⁴ This sharp divide between mainstream appropriation and pornographic text is symptomatic of the areas of silence and shame surrounding explicit sexual representation and sexual desire itself.

Changes in technology and wider availability of pornography in the home are not the only catalysts for changes in feminist theory. The 1990s saw major developments in genre analysis, queer theory, and an academic interest in porn studies that moved beyond the anti/pro divide. This was also a time when porn became a form of home entertainment on a widespread level and video rentals were at an all-time high. What critics often overlook when speculating on the dangers of easy accessibility of porn is that the ease of production means multiple new voices—voices formerly marginalized—are now being heard. This tendency has only grown with the advent of the internet, with feminist and queer porn movements becoming increasingly popular. In this way, the relationship between

feminism, pornography, and technology must be regarded as non-linear, sometimes contradictory, and deeply affected by sociopolitical context.

While the anti/pro binary regarding feminism and porn still persists, and indeed has experienced something of a resurgence thanks to anti-porn writers such as Gail Dines and Robert Jensen,¹⁵ since the 1990s feminist porn scholarship has been complicating the binary, refusing to adhere to strict anti or pro camps. The contributions of queer theorists and sex workers to this discourse have expanded the discourse to account for the many blind spots, contradictions, and inconsistencies present in anti-porn feminism. In recent years, this work has been predominantly accomplished in anthologies,¹⁶ most significantly *Porn Studies*, ed. Linda Williams (2005), *Pornography: Film and Culture* ed. Peter Lehman (2006), *Porn.com: Making Sense of Online Pornography* ed. Feona Attwood (2010), *Hard to Swallow: Hard-Core Pornography on Screen* eds. Claire Hines and Darren Kerr (2012), and *The Feminist Porn Book* eds. Tristan Taormino, Constance Penley, Celine Parrenas Shimizu, and Mireille Miller-Young (2013). This last contribution is perhaps most significant in that it brings together sex workers, filmmakers, and scholars for the first time, indicating an important shift that incorporates the voices of sex workers as scholars.¹⁷ In addition, in addressing “feminist porn” specifically, this anthology resists the common insistence on only studying so-called “representative examples” of “mainstream” porn.

While the 1980s is predominantly remembered as the heyday of anti-porn feminism, the mid- to late-1980s is also the era that marked the beginning of porn studies, an academic field which cemented itself in the 1990s. In the mid-1980s and

especially the 1990s, through a coalescence of queer theory, feminist media studies scholars, and a reaction to the anti-porn 1970s and 1980s, a spate of feminist academic work that complicated the pro/anti binary appeared, and introduced the discipline “porn studies.” Carol Vance’s 1984 edited collection, *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality*, stemmed from the controversial (to anti-porn feminists) 1982 Scholar and Feminist IX Conference at Barnard College entitled, “Towards a Politics of Sexuality.” The resulting collection of papers brought scholars and activists together in one volume, including Dorothy Allison, Alice Echols, Kate Millett, Cherrie Moraga, and Gayle Rubin, amongst others. The conference was controversial because Women Against Pornography (WAP) protested the conference for not inviting members of the anti-porn movement, printing a leaflet that singled out conference presenters by name. After *Feminist Studies* published the leaflet and protest, there was further outcry and *Feminist Studies* issued an apology that condemned the leaflet, and invited responses from the named conference participants. This led to an outpouring of resistance to anti-porn feminism from Gayle Rubin, Pat Califia, and Carole Vance, amongst others (Strub 259-260). This public discussion opened up a discourse in academic that would create a porn studies field that avoided the pro/anti binary.

A 1983 anthology, *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality* (ed. Ann Snitow et al), also contributed to this discourse which acknowledged and embraced the complicated sexualities of women that the anti-porn movement failed to allow; a discourse which was enriched over the course of the next fifteen years or so by such queer theorists, sex workers, activists, and artists as Michael Foucault, Judith Butler,

Annie Sprinkle, Carol Queen, Susie Bright, Lynne Segal, and Pat Califia.¹⁸ However, it was Linda Williams' 1989 study of the genre of porn, *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the "Frenzy of the Visible"* that put porn studies on the academic map. It is not hyperbole to suggest that all studies of pornography since *Hard Core* including my own are influenced by and have benefitted from Williams's groundbreaking and daring work.

Still, one of the persistent problems within feminism is the disagreement over sex work and pornography. The term "postfeminist" is often leveled at those who are not anti-porn. Yvonne Tasker defines "postfeminism" as "a set of assumptions, widely disseminated within popular media forms, having to do with the 'pastness' of feminism, whether that supposed pastness is merely noted, mourned, or celebrated" (1). In addition, postfeminism is seen as privileged, ignoring the various intersecting oppressions, and focusing on the individual.

Sexuality is seen as a core component of postfeminism, as Tasker explains:

Postfeminist culture works in part to incorporate, assume, or naturalize aspects of feminism; crucially, it also works to commodify feminism via the figure of the woman as empowered consumer. Thus, postfeminist culture emphasizes educational and professional opportunities for women and girls; freedom of choice with respect to work, domesticity, and parenting; and physical and particularly sexual empowerment. (2)

Yet, to lump all those who are not anti-porn into "postfeminist culture" is a dismissive move, simplifying decades of feminist work in connection to pornography, at the same time as simplifying and dismissing the feminist work currently being done in response to a shifting culture. Thus, when Angela McRobbie regards the feminist complication of pornography and sex work as a silencing or

dismissal of feminism, she dismisses any feminist work on pornography that does not summarily condemn it as “postfeminist”—not *real* feminism—and frames these distinctions in terms of different generations. McRobbie asserts,

the new female subject is, despite her freedom, called upon to be silent, to withhold critique in order to count as a modern, sophisticated girl. Indeed, this withholding of critique is a condition of her freedom. There is quietude and complicity in the manners of generationally specific notions of cool and, more precisely, an uncritical relation to dominant, commercially produced, sexual representations that actively invoke hostility to assumed feminist positions from the past in order to endorse a new regime of sexual meanings based on female consent, equality, participation, and pleasure, free of politics. (34)

What McRobbie fails to see is that such feminist work is not a “rejection” of feminism; it is an evolving discourse, responding to feminist work that many women find deeply problematic and have been arguing against for decades.

The idea that an anti-porn feminism constitutes “real” feminism and any efforts to complicate the discourse is tantamount to uncritical “postfeminist” celebration is both depressing and frustrating. The fact that Linda Williams, a feminist scholar by no means uncritical of pornography—indeed, the thesis of her book *Hard Core* is that pornography is built around male, phallogocentric desire—is cited by Robert Jensen as a “prominent pro-pornography feminist scholar” is evidence of how simplified and restrictive this discourse has become.¹⁹ Granted, there is uncritical celebration of some sexual representation and commodification, but to uncritically disregard *all* feminist work on the subject that is not uncritically condemnatory is an unfortunate symptom of the pro/anti binary.

Genre

Pornography operates in ways unique to any other genre due to its primary role as an elicitor of sexual arousal. For this reason, the films (even the heavily narrativized features) are episodic, allowing for selective viewing and replay.²⁰ In this way, as Peter Lehman has noted, films are often not watched in their entirety, with patrons—even during the age of the porn theater—watching select sex scenes and skipping large portions of the full feature. In “Revelations About Pornography,” Lehman critiques Linda Williams’s textual analysis-heavy *Hard Core*, asserting, “Porn may never have been suited fully to the feature format” (92). He adds,

That some porn today has willingly cast off the degree of narrative and characterization typical of the theatrical feature and embraced short, unrelated segments may have less to do with economic necessity and technology (stories can be told cheaply on video) and more to do with a sense of liberation from the constraints of a narrative respectability that did not sit well with much of the pornographic impulse. (95)

Indeed, Williams acknowledged this in her epilogue to the second edition of her influential book, noting that “it is possible, as Peter Lehman has pointed out, to overemphasize a period that, unlike the ‘classical’ cinema, has actually been quite brief” (296). She goes on,

a hard-core moving-image form that once looked (to me at least) like the teleology of all visual sexual representation is now beginning to look more like a short blip in an otherwise fairly consistent history of more ‘interactive’ engagements between bodies of spectators and machineries or networks of vision—whether the whirring projectors of the stag party, the remote controls of VCRs, or the “mouse” of interactive games. (300)

Just a few years later, we can now add the rapid clicks on various websites, and the touch screens of smartphones.

The impulse behind a desire for pornography to be respectable in traditional Hollywood terms comes, in my experience, from those who watch and appreciate “film” and suspect pornography of not really being “film,” but trying very hard to live up to it.²¹ As Clarissa Smith usefully points out, criticism of “bad acting” in porn “is to equate acting with speaking and perhaps performance in a body genre, such as pornography, is about more than lines being spoken with feeling” (“Reel Intercourse” 196). Traditional narrative, Smith contends, mediates the prurience of watching unstimulated sex: “the specific excesses of ‘real’ sex are tamed by more respectable narrative dimensions. In other words, so long as these people talk before and after their sexual congress, viewers will be expected to do more than feel physically moved by what they have seen” (“Reel Intercourse” 197). Indeed, John Champagne argues that pornography’s “potential to disrupt established ways of working in film” (76) has been blunted by the academy’s emphasis on close analysis and the treatment of porn as a genre amongst other film genres:

Often claiming to be value neutral and free from ideological underpinnings, close analysis necessarily supports the film scholar’s claims to approach his or her material ‘disinterestedly,’ if not ‘objectively.’ With its insistent demands of bodily response, pornography, however, threatens to violate such claims. It hazards to close up the necessary distance between investigating subject and invested object. (77)

In Champagne’s view pornography cannot be understood and analyzed through close reading. Kleinhans, however, is resistant to such a move, arguing that we should not “discard textual studies. Rather, they need to be more firmly grounded in an understanding of reception and the realities of diffusion, especially institutional ones. The goal should not be simply to construct a canon of film/video porn. We

need to understand pornography's full social and cultural significance, including its most marginal and disreputable areas" (162). In spite of apparent disagreement, what can be taken away from both Kleinhans and Champagne, amongst others, is that the profound effects of social and historical context, as well as viewing practices, on the content of pornography—the "wide weave of forces beyond the grasp of a discipline dedicated primarily to reading films" (Champagne 77)—must be taken seriously into account.²²

In addition, the sexual fantasies and viewing practices of the viewer/viewers impact the "narrative" and the genre. Michael Gamer usefully reframes pornography (and by extension the Gothic) as "not so much a kind of writing as a category of reader response" (1046). In this way, pornography is less a genre defined by a specific set of conventions, and more a genre defined by the cultural climate in which the text is generated. Genre, as Gamer states, "can be imposed from without" (1052). Similarly, Andrew Ross asserts, "Pornography, for the most part, provides a stimulus, base, or foundation for individual fantasies to be built upon and elaborated. It merely provides the conditions—stock, generic, eroticizable components such as poses, clothing, and sounds—under which the pleasure of fantasizing, a pleasure unto itself, can be pursued" (196-197). Emily Shelton takes this further, noting that while a specific sexual predilection is assumed to be "genre," in reality genre "functions principally in pornography as an elaborate and obsessively detailed alibi for the overdetermined issue of viewer desire" (123). Sexual fantasy—the narratives played out in the mind of the masturbating spectator—meet with the more concrete and linear narratives of the pornographic

film to create a unique and temporary pornographic narrative, not reducible to traditional Hollywood cinematic forms.

Just as traditional notions of narrative are complicated in and by pornography, so the notion of authorship in a traditional sense is disrupted by both spectatorial viewing practices (viewers authoring their own fantasies as they intersect with the film text) and porn's peculiarly performative and improvisational nature. While many pornographic films have writers and directors, often these directors are also cameraperson and performer. Furthermore, the porn performer controls the performance of his or her scene in ways that are unique to hardcore visual media (Smith "Reel Intercourse"). With the rise of gonzo, or reality porn, the sense of the performer-author is more present than ever, but the blurring of reality and fantasy, commitment to "authenticity," and concomitant performer-authorship of content, has existed since the origins of hardcore pornographic film. After the Golden Age, and the development of the "porn star," this tendency increased, and has increased with every advancement in technology. The twitter generation ensures that the line between "real" person and "porn star" is more uncertain than ever, and pleurably so for the many viewers who willingly invest in this blurred line for erotic appeal. Pornography has become a sort of interactive *cinema verité* in which there are multiple authors.

Horror and Porn

"Gothic sex has a fetishistic quality that sends tremors, shudders, and shivers through the sensitive frame of a novel's heroine—not to mention its readers. The sexuality is terrifyingly omnipresent....Sex infuses everything, even if it is not always acted out in these novels" (Perry 398).

It is no coincidence that the most popular adapted Victorian texts for porn are Gothic; moreover, that they deal in monsters, the *abhuman*—“a not-quite-human subject, characterized by its morphic ability” (Hurley 3)—and duality. This duality is perhaps the most significant of the themes, offering up a terrain against which to situate sexuality as the animalistic, low, and taboo side of a dual self; the dangerous yet exciting and forbidden monster that lies beneath the surface of respectable society (Dryden).

Much of the feminist criticism on horror and the Gothic utilize “pornography” as a genre against which to frame horror, and vice versa. The reason for the apparent usefulness of this move is the many consistencies between these genres, and significantly the differences that can put each genre into greater relief. Specifically, comparing and contrasting these genres highlights some of the societal hypocrisy held toward representations of sex on the one hand, and violence on the other, and the ways in which sex and violence intersect differently in porn and horror.

Gothic, Judith Halberstam argues, “may be loosely defined as the rhetorical style and narrative structure designed to produce fear and desire within the reader” (2). In contrast, pornography *caters* to fears and desires within the reader/viewer. Like the Gothic, however, pornography also “marks a peculiarly modern preoccupation with boundaries and their collapse” (Halberstam 23). Gothic and pornography are also conservative genres that perpetuate social norms even while

they transgress them. As Halberstam explains, in terms that are equally applicable to pornography,

The production of sexuality as identity and as the inversion of identity...in Gothic novels consolidates normal sexuality by defining it in contrast to its monstrous manifestations. Horror, I have suggested, exercises power even as it incites pleasure and/or disgust. Horror, indeed, has a power closely related to its pleasure-producing function and the twin mechanism of pleasure-power perhaps explains how it is that Gothic may empower some readers even as it disables others.
(17)

It is no surprise, then, that the adaptations under analysis in this project are based on the very same novels that Halberstam focuses on in her study of the Gothic.²³

Isabel Pinedo puts it bluntly when she asserts that horror trades in the “wet death” while pornography trades in the “wet dream” (61). Pinedo goes on to characterize both types of film as genres that “dare[] not only to violate taboos but to expose the secrets of the flesh, to spill the contents of the body” (61); genres that “are obsessed with the transgression of bodily boundaries” (61). Williams makes similar connections in her influential 1991 essay, “Film Bodies,” in which she collectively refers to horror, pornography, and melodrama as “body genres,” looked down on as “low” due to “the perception that the body of the spectator is caught up in an almost involuntary mimicry of the emotion or sensation of the body on screen along with the fact that the body displayed is female” (270). Significantly, Williams claims that of the three genres of excess, “pornography is the lowest in cultural esteem, gross-out horror is the next lowest” (269), reflecting the degree of concern society has expressed over the dangers of such “gratuitous” genres: the more excessive and “low” the genre is perceived to be, the greater the threat it poses to its audience, and society at large. These concerns also mirror the degree to which the

film provokes a “jerk,” as Williams calls it, with pornography providing the most visceral, messy, and blatantly sexual “jerk” of all.

While horror and porn have been shown to have intersecting tropes, pleasures, and audiences, it is also important to recognize the degree to which the genres borrow from each other. Horror has been recognized as a genre that trades in sexualized depictions of violence—or, to put it in a less condemning way, addresses the psychological intersections of sex and violence. Carol J. Clover, in her landmark study of modern horror films, *Men, Women, and Chainsaws*, describes slasher films as “encroaching vigorously on the pornographic” (21), arguing that slasher films engage in a pleasurable form of “gender-play” where the sexes are not what they seem, and “gender is less a wall than a permeable membrane” (47) that viewers are able to navigate fluidly. The cross-gender identification, and sadomasochistic pleasure that Clover argues is at work when watching horror, are evidence of what Williams believes to be a form of “problem solving.” Horror films, like all body genres, temporarily resolve unconscious sexual anxieties. Horror, pornography, and melodrama, Williams asserts in “Film Bodies,” can be explored as “genres of gender fantasy” (277), with horror serving to ameliorate castration anxiety for its sexually precarious adolescent audience, and pornography serving to work through “the problem of the origin of desire” (278). Pornography, Williams explains, “is the genre that has seemed to endlessly repeat the fantasies of primal seduction, of meeting the other, seducing or being seduced by the other in an ideal ‘pornotopia’” (278). Pornography, in part, reassures viewers by creating “the utopian fantasy of perfect temporal coincidence” (278). It should be noted, however,

that this framework does not apply to all forms of pornography, a genre that is far more diverse than popular opinion generally allows. Williams articulated this herself in *Hard Core*, where she outlines the different forms present within the genre, stressing that not all sexual activity depicted is intended to arouse, nor do all pornographic texts present the viewer with a “pornotopia.”

Such connections between two very popular and very maligned genres have helped theorists unravel how each genre operates, while additionally highlighting where, how, and why the genres intersect with each other. However, Williams expresses concern that a theoretical preoccupation with the horror genre as a way of analyzing pornography operates on a set of unexamined assumptions: “To swerve away from pornography before examining any examples, into a discussion of the (related) horror-film genre is to allow an assumed a priori notion of violence presumably shared by both genres to stand in for the hard-core essence of pornography” (*Hard Core* 29). Nevertheless, as already mentioned, sexual elements have been present in horror perhaps since its germination in literature. Meanwhile, pornography, the less studied of the two genres, has had a vibrant history of horror-themed films, often parodies. These films, which can be seen as “filling in the gaps” or literalizing the themes in horror films, often satirize and complicate the gendered and sexed representations of their filmic or literary source material. Suffice to say, what pornography’s appropriation and interpretation of more mainstream filmic and literary genres has to say about both itself and the genres it imitates is worthy of discussion. It is a valuable starting point in the study of how pornography intersects with the mainstream, how popular culture reflects and reacts to sexuality,

and what pornography has to say about it, particularly in a time where pornography is more visible and accessible than ever before.

From my perspective, the most obvious unifying element between horror and pornography is the centrality of an active and dynamic female protagonist, one who often embodies an intriguing combination of typically masculine and feminine qualities. Indeed, growing up surrounded by questionable female role models in other genres of film and literature, horror and erotic texts have provided a somewhat paradoxical source of empowerment for me. Clover queries the use of the female victim-hero for male audiences, suggesting that first, the horror film has a greater emphasis on the victim side of the equation and that male audiences are more comfortable experiencing and identifying with suffering through the woman, and second that the female body itself “with its enterable but unseeable inner space, has for so long been a fixture in the production of the uncanny” (18).

While it might seem transparently obvious why a woman might be the focus of sexual transgressions in pornography, as “porn” has come to also take on the unspoken markers of “heterosexual” and “for men,” it is critical to pose such a question. As I argue in this project, the pornographic interest in the nineteenth century demonstrates the way social transgressions of inside/outside, public/private are at the core of pornographic appeal. Unstated in this thesis is the fact that, for the most part, this transgression utilizes the female body to achieve its aims. While this project incorporates more than just heterosexual porn, and certainly a major component of my argument is the way porn’s insistence on heteronormativity belies its homosocial and homoerotic dynamics, the fact remains

that the dominant type of pornography in modern culture is that which depicts men doing sexual things to women.

This very phrase, “doing things to women,” requires further analysis, incorporating gendered notions of sex, power relations, and spectator identification. As Clover reflects in her analysis of the female victim-hero in horror, the male viewer may simply be taking pleasure “in watching, from some safe vantage or other, women screaming, crying, fleeing, cringing, and dying, or indeed...in the thought of himself as the cause of their torment” (18-19). This is the most common anti-porn perception of the male porn consumer, in turn regarding the sex act itself as violence to women.²⁴ Clover states, “I have no doubt that horror cinema offers such pleasures....I do not, however, believe that sadistic voyeurism is the first cause of horror. Nor do I believe that real-life women and feminist politics have been entirely well served by the astonishingly insistent claim that horror’s satisfactions begin and end in sadism” (19). The same can be said of pornography.

Complicating this simplistic perception of how men interact with pornographic media and the women on screen, however, is the fact that culturally it is incredibly difficult to see sex acts outside of their gendered power dynamics.²⁵ The very act of a penis entering a vagina is seen as an act of penetration, domination, and degradation of the woman. For this reason, a more complex assessment of representations and meanings of sex must be strived for. As Williams notes, “Sex, in the sense of a natural, biological, and visible ‘doing what comes naturally,’ is the supreme fiction of hard-core pornography; and gender, the social construction of the relations between ‘the sexes,’ is what helps constitute that

fiction" (*Hard Core* 267). Thus, the act of intercourse as an act of violence done to women is a cultural fiction rooted in the primacy of the phallus and the fiction that the penis *is* the phallus. While pornography perpetuates this notion to a degree, it is also a site for its complication and deconstruction through re-vision (Sabo).

The contradictory and incohesive nature of the films in this project tells us something about pornography that differs from what anti-porn, or even pro-porn, people would have us believe: these films show that pornography is diverse, not inherently misogynistic, and not inherently transgressive; that they all share a desire to transgress, even if only in the most mundane of ways. This mundanity, though, is something to be taken as seriously as the more surprising films. Furthermore, a note on the films in this project and the focus of the project: what might seem an esoteric topic and very specific argument can also be extended to suggest something of pornography as a whole: the impulse toward transgression, duality, crossing lines, opening up. In addition, while some may dismiss the films in this project as "exceptions that prove the rule," or as unusual and therefore invalid, in reality much of pornography proves to hold the exceptional in the interstices of the mundane; the mundane permeating the exceptional. Some of these films are truly unusual within or without porn (*Through the Looking Glass* comes to mind), but for the most part the films gathered here range from big budget, big studio efforts (*Jekyll and Hyde*) to the underground and frankly bemusing (*The Bride's Initiation*) to the everyday disposable. They cover a range of eras, budgets, and significance within the genre, and I feel this is testament to the degree to which I am not only speaking of a niche subgenre of neo-Victorian porn; I am using these films

to explore the genre of pornography as a whole. I also want to note that in the majority of textual studies, scholars are not demanded to focus only on “the representative.” Indeed, focusing on the exceptional is the norm. The fact that porn scholars are expected to explore a genre as a monolithic whole, and then only through its most generic and uninspiring efforts is not only unfair, but also inevitably fails to understand the genre or pornography *through* this very myopic exclusion.

In this project I explore how porn, operating as a postmodern genre, attempts to re-insert an illusory “truth” into mainstream texts, exposing a perceived hypocrisy inherent in texts that either simulate, avoid, or dismiss sex acts—what Constance Penley refers to as the “trashing” of the mainstream; an indulgence in what is “always already” trash by its very nature, thereby satirizing and often subverting the “mainstream.” It is my aim to move beyond simplistic, dichotomous, and moralistic critiques of pornographic texts in an effort to examine pornography as a significant and signifying genre, one that, as Kipnis points out, “has quite a lot to say” (161). What I am interested in is what this genre has to say about the mainstream and canonical culture it is assumed to be so different from, as well as what it has to say about itself.

This discourse between legitimate and illegitimate, canonical and subcultural, is at the core of this project. How and why do pornographic films adapt and appropriate Victorian literature and culture? What do these adaptations tell us about pornographic film, about the source texts being adapted, and about postmodern interpretations of the Victorian era? In chapter one, “Behind Closed

Doors: Social Taboo and Spatial Transgression in Neo-Victorian Adult Film,” I analyze pornographic films set during the Victorian era. These neo-Victorian films, I argue, highlight hardcore’s reliance on class- and gender-related spatial transgression for erotic appeal, boundaries of public and private that the films specifically associate with Victorian social structures. The films’ tension between perverting the repressed and exposing the perverse illuminates a self-reflexive pornographic heritage and demonstrates the peculiar tension between sexual repression and sexual perversity evidenced in cultural understandings of both the nineteenth-century and modern day pornography. I argue that in such films as *Hot Cookies* (1977), *Bedtime Tales* (1985), *Memoirs of a Chambermaid* (1987), and *Victorian Love Letters* (2010), nineteenth century material culture and technology, including written text, clothing, furniture, and domestic space, is eroticized in pornographic film specifically in connection with gender and class. Furthermore, as in the case of *A Scent of Heather* (1981) and *Family Secrets* (2010), miscegenation, incest, and marriage contracts are positioned as both curiously Victorian and inherently pornographic. In so doing, Victorian sexuality is seen as simultaneously regressive and perverse, as well as intimately tied to the transgression of strict class boundaries; boundaries that, the films seem to suggest, are no longer present in the enlightened present day.

In chapter two, “‘It’s My Own Invention’: Sexual Subjectivity, Authorship, and Femininity in Pornographic Adaptations of Lewis Carroll’s *Alice* Books,” I explore female subjectivity and the question of gender and “authorship” in pornography through querying pornographic adaptations of Lewis Carroll’s *Alice* books. These

films, I argue, use the Alice narrative to play out fantasies of sadomasochism, operating as recuperative projects that rescue Alice from her pawn status and position her as object, subject, and author within the pornographic text. I demonstrate the ways in which cultural understandings of the *Alice* stories are used by pornographic filmmakers to depict Wonderlands as fantasy spaces for developing, containing, and directing female sexual subjectivity, as in Bill Osco's musical comedy *Alice in Wonderland* (1976), or as dangerous sites of sexual exploration, as in Jonas Middleton's dark psychological thriller *Through the Looking Glass* (1976). I conclude this chapter by analyzing recent female-made Alice adaptations, and the ways in which Alice and the format of the original stories lend themselves to a twenty-first century gonzo format with S/M leanings.

In chapter three, "He Was Wild When He Was Young': Gender Fluidity and Queer Sexuality in Pornographic Adaptations of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*," I explore the paradoxical increasing rigidity of sexual categories, gender identity, and the representation of both in pornography and society as a whole through an analysis of pornographic films based on Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde*. I argue that hardcore adaptations of the novella expose the instability of gender inherent to gothic fiction and pornography. I reveal how the Victorian taxonomy of sexuality has shaped pornographic representations through a close reading of three films: the straight comedy *The Erotic Dr. Jekyll* (1976), the gay comedy *Dr. Jerkoff and Mr. Hard* (1997), and the big budget Vivid feature *Jekyll and Hyde* (2000). Stevenson wrote his "penny dreadful" at a critical moment in the history of sexuality; a time when sexual preference did not yet define

identity, and terms such as “homosexual” did not yet classify a lifestyle choice. The increased visibility of specific sexual identities in the late-twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and intensified scrutiny over which sex acts and behaviors in pornographic representations constitute “gay” or “straight,” generate later texts that paradoxically appear more sexually conservative in “speaking the unspoken,” while Stevenson’s unspoken ambiguities mobilize transgressive readings.

In chapter four, “‘Strange Legacies of Thought and Passion’: Sexual Identity and Technologies of Desire in Pornographic Adaptations of Dorian Gray’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray*,” I continue my analysis of the relationship between pornography, sexuality, gender identity, and media through a close analysis of two films based on Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray: Take Off* (1974) and *Gluttony* (2002). Both of these films, like the novel on which they are based, are haunted at the margins by the cultural significance of Oscar Wilde, and a post-HIV/AIDS pornographic legacy that can shed light on the current state of gay and straight pornographies. This chapter deals primarily with two films: Wash West’s 2000 gay video, *Gluttony* and Armand Weston’s 1978 straight film *Take Off*. While the *Alice* adaptations displace issues of age, in these films Wilde’s novel serves as canvas upon which to play out concerns regarding historical, cultural, and individual age in connection with sexuality. Both films utilize the *Dorian Gray* narrative as a way of eroticizing American history, as in *Take Off* Dorian embodies a series of Hollywood icons, such as James Cagney and Humphrey Bogart, while in *Gluttony*, American history is related through gay porn history, with Dorian embodying specific pornographic moments from several decades, each marked by the particular

technologies of that period. In this way, the films signal the affective relationship between technology, American culture, postmodernism, and sexual representation.

In chapter five, “I Want to Suck Your...: Gender, Sexuality, and the Economy of Bodily Fluids in Pornographic Adaptations of Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*,” I explore the status, meaning, use, and absence of gendered abject bodily fluids in pornographic adaptations of Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*. I argue that *Dracula*, the most adapted text and character in pornographic film, provides pornography with a template upon which to explore the queer and sadomasochistic sexual themes raised by the novel, in particular the queer use and displacement of bodily fluids. My analysis of Shaun Costello’s *Dracula Exotica* (1982) demonstrates the way in which the traditional “money shot” is disrupted by the incorporation of the *Dracula* mythology. With so many bodily fluids—milk, blood, semen—exchanged and displaced in the novel between men and women, pornography has an excess of material to work with, and yet *Dracula Exotica* frames the narrative around a Count who cannot ejaculate. Likewise, *The Bride’s Initiation*, a heterosexual film, depicts a Count who drinks the semen of kidnapped men, and concludes with the Count declaring his love for a man. Hardcore film, I argue, operates on anxious ground similar to that in Stoker’s novel, simultaneously representing and resisting (masculine) sexual anxieties.

I conclude with “It’s Just Porn: The Desire for Meaninglessness and the Importance of Pedagogy,” where I address the possible futures of pornography, analyzing current debates over teaching pornography, concerns over mainstreaming, and what this might bring to bear on the pleasures of pornographic transgression.

A word on “adaptation.” I use this term in a sense that incorporates both appropriation, adaptation, and the notion of what Paul Davis calls “culture texts.” All of the novels addressed in this project are a) public domain, and b) culture texts. While many of these films do indeed faithfully adapt the original text, offering “a more sustained engagement with a single text or source than the more glancing act of allusion or quotation,” as Julie Sanders defines it, many of them appropriate the source text: “carr[ying] out the same sustained engagement as adaptation but frequently adopt[ing] a posture of critique, even assault” (Sanders 4). Sanders’ phrasing here is strikingly similar to what “porning” does.²⁶ Or, as Edward Buscombe would have it, “stealing”: “One way of supplying at least a modicum of narrative structure is to steal it from elsewhere, and so porn films have habitually been parasitic on other genres, giving us pornographic thrillers, horror, science fiction, even musicals, and, of course, the western” (27). In reality, the process of porning is a much more complicated affair than fucking in costumes.

Pornographic adaptations and appropriations of sacrosanct canonical classics are a textual assault on the mainstream, and indeed, as this project will show, this is a key pleasure of pornography. Adaptation and appropriation, Sanders goes on, are also “involved in the performance of textual echo and allusion” (4), performances that reflect Paul Davis’s concept of “culture texts.” Culture texts are collectively remembered texts unfixed from the words of the text’s author, repeatedly retold, reimagined, dispersed through cultural discourse, and constantly in the state of creation. Culture texts change “as the reasons for its retelling change”

(Davis 4). In this way, it is useful to regard these pornographic films as “porning” or “trashing” canonical texts that have become culture texts.

These pornographic adaptations are both drawing on and contributing to the creation of the culture text. Some of the films merely use characters with costumes made famous by repeated visual representation (Count Dracula and Alice being the easiest to depict), some utilize a simple concept that has become a well known culture text while some demonstrate a more involved knowledge of the original text and adapt the novel into a new era, a new character’s narrative, or some other pornographic appropriation (Vivid’s *Jekyll and Hyde* is a good example of this as it follows Jekyll’s daughter, but demonstrates an intimate understanding of Stevenson’s prose and includes oft-forgotten characters such as Utterson). Then there are the anomalies, in particular *Through the Looking Glass* (1976) which tells a tale quite divorced from Carroll’s story, and yet appropriates key notions, iconography, and characters in order to tell the story of a fragmented adult woman unable to reconcile with the incestuous father-daughter abuse she experienced as a child.

Richard Burt, in his analysis of pornographic adaptations of Shakespeare, contends that porn adaptations of the classics “can...function as porn spectacle intended to arouse the nonacademic viewer and as a textual, sublimated reading of a classic designed to interest the academic viewer (who may also, of course, be aroused)” (84). Burt’s point goes some way toward answering a bewildered question that I have been asked by academics on multiple occasions: “Who watches these films?” Yet, as the following chapters demonstrate, and Burt also asserts, the

“structural impossibility” of porn adaptation is more complex than the reduction to a discussion of arousal, academic and non-academic. Rather, audiences and their responses, and the pornographic texts themselves, are unpredictable, fluid, and contradictory. As Burt goes on, “the adaptation also draws attention to a reflexive element of porn, opening up a paradoxical dynamic: on the one hand, the classic sublimates the porn, creates a critical distance on the sex; on the other, the classic makes porn even sexier by deferring desire, a deferral registered in the puns of so many porn spin-offs” (84). This paradox is central to my interrogation of the meeting of high and low, good taste and bad taste, repressed and perverse, and the spoken and unspoken.

I contend that adult film responds to the allegedly "high art" nature of mainstream film/art by emphasizing porn's "low class" status, joyously perverting classic literature as a way of emphasizing pornography's alleged authenticity and transgressive nature. Indeed, pornographic adaptations can arguably tell us more about sexuality (or the perceived absence of it) in literature, canonical works, and mainstream culture than any other genre, yet still the pornographic representation does not “show all.” We are able to ask questions about the original text being adapted simply by asking of the pornographic work, “Why this text?” As Kipnis asserts, pornography's opponents “seem universally overcome by a leaden, stultifying literalness, apparently never having heard of metaphor, irony, a symbol—even fantasy seems too challenging a concept” (163). Kipnis goes on to argue that pornography, so often claimed to have a contaminating, “pornifying” effect on mainstream culture, in fact has a much more complex “dialectical

relation...to mainstream culture [that] makes it nothing less than a form of cultural critique. It refuses to let us off the hook for our hypocrisies” (166). This dialectical relationship is what I find most intriguing about pornography and is the focus of this project: the adaptation, appropriation, and critical reflection on other areas of culture, as well as pornographic culture itself; what Cindy Patton recognizes as a “critique of the mass media’s role in invoking but never delivering sex” (132).

Pornography has a strong tradition of mimicry and “speaking back” to the legitimate mainstream, dating back to its earliest recorded origins (Sigel), and continuing in various forms through to the porn parodies of the twenty-first century. Williams notes of the first hardcore feature films of the 1970s, “hard-core narratives went about imitating other Hollywood genres with a vengeance, inflecting well-known titles and genres with an X-rated difference” (*Hard Core* 120) while Cindy Patton argues that the porn videos of the 1980s and 1990s “represent sex” in ways that Hollywood refuses to: “Clearly, their contingent relation to Hollywood’s sexual elisions provides an erotic and humorous critique of the mass media’s role in invoking but never delivering the sex” (132). Postmodern media in general enjoys parodying and referencing other media forms and texts, and pornography is no exception. The difference is that pornographic film, in its impulse to use sex as the primary signifier in narrative cause and solution, utilizes specific mainstream texts in a way that suggests the unspoken sexual content of the original material. In this way, porn thrives on the unspoken at the same time as it claims to rupture these unspoken elements.

In reality, porn is composed of a series of constructed representations just like any other media form, and it relies on the unspoken for much of its eroticism. It would be a mistake to regard hardcore pornography as inherently liberating or “honest” simply because it “shows everything.” In fact, it does not “show everything.” As Williams is careful to point out, pornography is a set of constructed signifiers, not an unmediated depiction of real sex: “Sex is an act and more or less of ‘it’ may be revealed but...it is not a stable truth that cameras and microphones either ‘catch’ or don’t catch. It is a constructed, mediated, performed act and every revelation is also a concealment that leaves something to the imagination” (*Screening Sex 2*). David Andrews speaks to the approach to hardcore as transgressive, particularly in the field of porn studies, reflecting, “Such an approach may even suggest that hard-core is *intrinsically* subversive—a piece of essentialist nonsense that invites students to mystify porn as Porn” (56). Likewise, hardcore is not intrinsically in line with hegemonic, patriarchal ideals. With this in mind, hardcore pornographic film is a particularly interesting postmodern medium in terms of the ways it speaks back to its more legitimate cousins, canonical literature and Hollywood cinema.

What all of these films do is attempt to speak the unspoken of the original texts; texts that are perceived to suggest *something* sexual, but displace that sexuality onto something else. Pornography attempts to speak that absence through unsimulated sex acts. But what does this *speak*? What is liberated from the source text, what is spoken, and what is left unsaid? In addition, what is liberated within the pornographic film from speaking *through* the Victorian? The result is a mass of

films that are problematic, contradictory, and above all reveal the many discursive threads running through this diverse body of film. Porn is not a monolith, nor is it inherently transgressive or degrading. It is, however, hyper-aware of its own construction and the way it is regarded by “mainstream” culture. “Pornography seems to live on perpetual standby to represent the nadir of culture,” Kipnis argues, “on call to provide the necessary opposition to culture’s apex, which is, of course, the canon. It’s indicative of just how much the canon needs pornography as the thing to mark its own elevation against” (182). In turn, as this project demonstrates, so too does pornography need the canon.

¹ There have been several excellent studies of pre-twentieth century, pre-cinematic pornographies. See for example, *The Bawdy Politic in Stuart England, 1660-1714: Political Pornography and Prostitution* by Melissa M. Mowry (2004); *Mighty Lewd Books: The Development of Pornography in Eighteenth-Century England* by Julie Peakman (2003); *The Invention of Pornography 1500-1800: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity*, ed. Lynn Hunt (1996); *International Exposure: Perspectives on Modern European Pornography, 1800-2000*, ed. Lisa Z. Sigel (2004); *Governing Pleasures: Pornography and Social Change in England, 1815-1914* by Lisa Z. Sigel (2002); and *The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England* by Steven Marcus (1966). I go into these particular pornographies in more detail in chapter one.

² A major element of this monolithic “porn” is that it is heterosexual, degrading to women, and created by men for men. This is made especially clear to me when, without fail, people assume I study heterosexual porn. Academic studies of pornography help to perpetuate these heterosexist assumptions by almost exclusively focusing on heterosexual porn without any explanation. See my chapter on *Dorian Gray* for a fuller discussion of heteronormativity and pornography.

³ In taking the origin words so very literally, ignoring cultural developments that have shaped what we *now* call “pornography,” Steinem unwittingly categorizes *all* non-heterosexual sex media as “erotica.” Steinem evades this inevitability by parenthetically noting, “(Though, of course, homosexual pornography may imitate this violence by putting a man in the ‘feminine’ role of the victim)” (23). This clarification is problematic in a couple of ways: first, in making an allowance to fit

homosexuality into her definition of pornography, Steinem exposes the impossibility of maintaining an antiquated notion of “pornography” and “erotica.” Second, Steinem’s characterization of homosexual males in feminine victim roles adheres to a rigid and troubling gender binary in which there is little room for a “bottom” to be anything other than a victim. Furthermore, it simplifies homosexuality and gay porn in a way that can only be regarded as dismissive.

⁴ A recent genre that has been labeled “pornographic” is the graphically violent horror sub-genre dubbed “torture-porn” by its detractors, typified by such horror films as *Hostel* (2006) and the *Saw* franchise (2004-2009) (Edelstein). Similarly, television shows or editorials in which food is lingered over in close-ups have been regarded as displaying food “pornographically.” As Anthony Bourdain puts it, “the glorification of food as a substitute for sex.” It would appear that imagery deemed “gratuitous”—excess for the sake of excess—is “pornographic.”

⁵ What constitutes “arousal” is another vague and distinctly untouched issue with regard to pornography.

⁶ Key texts by these authors are *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape* by Susan Brownmiller (1975), *Pornography: Me Possessing Women* by Andrea Dworkin (1979), *Pornography and Silence: Culture’s Revenge Against Nature* by Susan Griffin (1981), and *Feminism Unmodified: Discourses on Life and Law* (1987) by Catharine MacKinnon. Robin Morgan is perhaps most notable for coining the phrase “Pornography is the theory, rape the practice,” a phrase still referenced to this day, and one which encapsulates the anti-porn belief that pornographic representation is directly related to sexual violence.

⁷ While both authors argued this point in their theoretical work, it became part of the public discourse after Dworkin and MacKinnon drafted an ordinance that would ban pornography as a violation of women’s civil rights. See Nadine Strossen’s chapter, “The Fatally Flawed Feminist Antipornography Laws” in *Defending Pornography* (59-82).

⁸ Nadine Strossen documents this unfortunate tendency on the part of government to use anti-porn ordinances and obscenity law to persecute marginalized peoples, namely those of the LGBTQ community, exhaustively in her book, *Defending Pornography*. Strub documents these cases also, in chapters seven and eight of *Perversion for Profit*.

⁹ *Boys in the Sand*, a hardcore gay feature, was released to theaters in the previous year, yet it is *Deep Throat* that is persistently credited as marking the beginning of porno chic. In addition, Linda Lovelace, the star of *Deep Throat*, is regarded as the first bona fide porn star, yet Casey Donovan—star of *Boys in the Sand*—should arguably be given this title. This narrow view of porn history is suggestive of the ways in which heteronormative society renders porn “straight” and creates a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy. Pornography is accused of being heteronormative, but the importance of gay, lesbian, and queer porn must be ignored in order to make such an accusation.

¹⁰ The requirement that a text must be judged “taken as a whole” was introduced in a 1933 case in which James Joyce’s *Ulysses* was put on trial.

¹¹ Boyd, Danah. “What Anti-Trafficking Advocates Can Learn From Sex Workers: The Dynamics of Choice, Circumstance, and Coercion” *The Huffington Post* Aug. 16 2012.

¹² See for example, *Pornified: How Pornography is Damaging Our Lives, Our Relationships, and Our Families* by Pamela Paul (2006) and *The Porning of America: The Rise of Porn Culture, What It Means, and Where We Go From Here* by Carmine Sarracino and Kevin M. Scott (2009).

¹³ For recent analyses of pornography and authenticity in the digital age, see “Behind the Scenes of Straight Pleasure” by Sanna Härmä and Joakim Stolpe in *Porn.com* (107-122); “Art School Sluts: Authenticity and the Aesthetics of Altporn” by Feona Attwood in *Hard to Swallow* (42-56); and “Reel Intercourse: Doing Sex on Camera” by Clarissa Smith in *Hard to Swallow* (194-214).

¹⁴ See Part II of Constance Penley’s *NASA/TREK: Popular Science and Sex in America* (1997) and “Welcome to Bisexuality, Captain Kirk’: Slash and the Fan-Writing Community” by Henry Jenkins in his book, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (1992).

¹⁵ This resurgence is documented in a positive light in the 2012 book *Anti-Porn: The Resurgence of Anti-Pornography Feminism* by Julia Long; the resurgence is critiqued in Clarissa Smith and Feona Attwood’s essay, “Emotional Truths and Thrilling Slideshows: The Resurgence of Antiporn Feminism” in *The Feminist Porn Book* eds. Tristan Taormino et al (2013).

¹⁶ In my opinion, anthologies do the majority of work on pornography due to the lack of scholars solely dedicated to porn studies. This lack is likely due to the perceived dangers of researching porn; dangers in the form of few job prospects, difficulties researching/accessing the material, and in general a hesitancy to dedicate one's life to studying this particular media form.

¹⁷ There have been significant publications that voice sex worker experiences, but do not integrate these voices with those of scholars. See for example, *Sex Work: Writings by Women in the Sex Industry* eds. Frederique Delacoste and Priscilla Alexander (1987), *Whores and Other Feminists* ed. Jill Nagle (1997), and *Naked Ambition: Women Who Are Changing Pornography* ed. Carly Milne (2005). Porn star autobiographies are ubiquitous, and importantly the internet has created an anonymous space for sex workers to blog about their life and work experiences. These blogs have become sites of political work and activism, aiding in a thriving sex workers' rights movement that has rapidly grown over the last ten years. Previously illegal behavior, such as exchanging tips and information, can now be done online as opposed to in print or verbally, thus eliminating police interference, as well as reaching a far wider audience.

¹⁸ Michel Foucault's work on sexuality in his three volumes of *The History of Sexuality* has influenced almost all subsequent writings on pornography, including my own. The same can be said of that of Judith Butler, especially *Gender Trouble* in which she articulates the now-common sense notion of gender performativity. Butler also wrote specifically about pornography, challenging the arguments of Catharine MacKinnon, in her essay, "Burning Acts: Injurious Speech." See also Annie Sprinkle, who is a porn star and performance artist, a founding member of Club 80 (a group of porn performers which is credited with initiating the feminist porn movement), and who authored *Hardcore From the Heart* (2001) and *Post Porn Modernist* (1998); Carol Queen, *Real Live Nude Girl: Chronicles of a Sex Positive Culture* (1997); Lynne Segal, ed. *Sex Exposed: Sexuality and the Pornography Debate* (1992); Pat Califia founded Samois, a lesbian BDSM organization (1978-1983), and has published several fiction and non-fiction books focused on BDSM, lesbianism, and butch/femme sexuality including contributions to *Coming to Power: Writings and Graphics on Lesbian S/M* (1981); Susie Bright founded the lesbian magazine *On Our Backs* (1984-1991), wrote for several porn industry publications, and has authored many books, including *The Sexual State of the Union* (1997).

¹⁹ "Just a Prude? Feminism, Pornography, and Men's Responsibility" (2005) <<http://uts.cc.utexas.edu/~rjensen/freelance/justprudes.htm>>

²⁰ Such selective pornographic viewing spans sexual classification. As noted in *Wrangler: Anatomy of an Icon* (2008), gay porn theaters would screen gay porn star Jack Wrangler's heterosexual films with specific times listed on the marquee to let gay customers know when Wrangler's scenes would play.

²¹ In my interactions with fans and industry workers of all eras, there is a noticeable division that has complicated my research. In general, golden age fans desire all pornography to be like it used to be—"real film"—while fans of modern day gonzo desire little plot, and more sex, because, in their view, that is what porn is about: sex. Why bother with plot? This division has impacted my own project as my interest in pornography of all eras appeals to and alienates both groups. One of the most interesting aspects of my journey with this project has been what fans and industry people *desire* of my project, and the divisions that have materialized in this sense.

²² Champagne continues his argument in a provocative and radical direction in connection to gay male pornography in particular, asserting that "Faced with the challenge of coping with these forbidden texts, film studies in the heteronormative academy relies on the practice of close analysis to contain the threat and promise—both for men and women, straight and gay—of gay pornography and the porno arcade" (77). I personally can attest to the pressure to maintain an unusual critical distance, and as a result, while this project moves beyond close analysis, it is nevertheless firmly rooted in that tradition. In this way, my approach to pornography and the varying reactions I have encountered regarding my research, reemphasizes the validity of Champagne's argument. See also Jose B. Capino's essay, "Homologies of Space: Text and Spectatorship in All-Male Adult Theaters" *Cinema Journal* 45.1 (2005): 50-65.

²³ Michelle A. Massé links (heterosexual) pornography and the Gothic more explicitly, regarding the Gothic as merely a romanticized and implicit demonstration of the very same motivations as in pornography: "The two genres are linked by their similar ideological messages; in conservative versions, their only difference is in choice of vehicles. ...The depiction of explicitly genital sexual practice which is pornography's *métier* can be simply a difference in degree, not in kind, from the Gothic's more genteel abuse" (108).

²⁴ The assumption that all pornography is about male sexual mastery is simplistic and flawed, assuming that all consumers interact with the films in the same way, and assuming that all porn subgenres are alike. See David Loftus's study, *Watching Sex: How Men Really Respond to Pornography* (2002) which demonstrates the diversity of ways in which men experience and respond to porn, showing that men often identify with the women in pornography. While the popularity of girl-girl porn

with heterosexual men may seem to contradict the idea that male sexual mastery is a component of pornographic pleasure, this fails to recognize the way the male spectator functions as a third person in the scene. See Shelton, "A Star is Porn" and Zizek, "Looking Awry." Marty Klein's work on the reasons why men watch pornography is useful in this regard, as he demonstrates how pornographic films are used to assuage real life anxieties and crises of masculinity. See his essay, "Pornography: What Men See When They Watch."

²⁵ Indeed, a 2012 study showed that the brain processes images of male and female bodies differently; male bodies as whole, and female bodies as parts. In other words, women in sexy pictures were objectified while sexy images of men were not. P. Bernard, S. J. Gervais, J. Allen, S. Campomizzi, O. Klein. "Integrating Sexual Objectification With Object Versus Person Recognition: The Sexualized-Body-Inversion Hypothesis." *Psychological Science*, 2012; 23 (5): 469-471.

²⁶ Here I use the term "porning" in a distinctly different way from Carmine Sarracino and Kevin M. Scott in their book, *The Porning of America*. In this book they explain they do not use the term literally, but rather metaphorically: "'porning' can be understood as a cultural metaphor that applies to areas apparently disconnected from actual porn" (114). In this way, "porning" for Sarracino and Scott seems to mean the culture of sexualization, violence, and humiliation, hence chapters that address politics, comic books, and Abu Ghraib alongside porn star autobiographies and porno chic of the 1970s. I find the use of the term in this context troubling and somewhat sensationalistic.

CHAPTER ONE
BEHIND CLOSED DOORS: SOCIAL TABOO AND SPATIAL TRANSGRESSION IN
NEO-VICTORIAN ADULT FILM

“For the transgression to work, it must be played out against a background of normality” – Umberto Eco, “How to Recognize a Porn Movie,” p. 224

“Sexually repressed Victorian England is the fertile crescent of sexual deviance” – Shaun Costello, Adult Film Director¹

In his review of the notorious German video, *Extra Terrestrial: Die Ausserirdische* (1995), popularly known as *E.T. The Porno*, online B-movie reviewer The Cinema Snob exclaims, “This movie takes place in the Victorian era? Why? What the hell is the point of that?” (“E.T. the Porno”). His question is a useful one to begin this chapter, as it is the central question behind the analysis of all of these films: what is the point of setting a pornographic film (let alone a pornographic sci-fi film) in the Victorian era? In the film, E.T. is sent to Earth on a mission to examine the population’s “strange customs.” An omnipresent voice informs E.T. on departure, “this Earth is a place inhabited by strange beings with strange customs that will perhaps leave you scared.” These “strange customs” are sex acts, which intrigue E.T. enough to gradually get involved. What is interesting about this relatively plotless and amateurish production is that the filmmakers committed to setting it during the Victorian period, complete with costumes, period furniture, and stilted dialect. This suggests that the premise of alien beings learning about sexual customs would do best to visit the Victorian era, where according to this film human sexuality and its strangeness is most emphasized. E.T. explains to the humans, “On my planet we do not have this custom, therefore I was invited to come to this planet to learn more of the earthlings. To learn of your ways to act, to think, and to get pleasure.” The

Victorians, the film suggests, are the best version of “earthlings” from which to learn these things.

The Cinema Snob’s baffled query suggests a certain level of incompetency on the part of the filmmakers (perhaps deservedly so, though the costumes and sheer gusto of the endeavor are somewhat impressive). Yet, the sheer number of pornographic films from various decades and genres that employ the Victorian period for a multitude of purposes suggest that there is indeed a point to setting films of a sexual nature in the Victorian period. More generally, there is a point to using postmodern notions of the Victorian in modern pornographic film as a tool in the cultural problem solving that such body genres perform. The Victorian period, more than any other, has been a popular source for working out cultural anxieties during the latter part of the twentieth century and there are few signs of the waning of this trend. Neo-Victorian fictions, “contemporary fiction that engages with the Victorian era, at either the level of plot, structure or both” (Hadley 4), have increased in quantity and popularity over the past five decades, demonstrating a postmodern interest and need for “the Victorians” as a way of shaping and understanding modern culture. As Louisa Hadley asserts, “Rather than merely being another manifestation of that [wider] cultural fascination...neo-Victorian fictions seek to both reinsert the Victorians into their particular historical context and engage with contemporary uses of the Victorians which efface that historical context” (6).

John Kucich and Dianne F. Sadoff argue that in the postmodern age of self-surveillance, the Victorian is privileged “as its historical ‘other’” (xi) because first,

“the postmodern fetishizes notions of cultural emergence” (xv), and second, “the network of overdeterminations shaped by economics, sexuality, political struggle, and technological forms privileges the Victorian period as the site of historical emergence through which postmodernism attempts to think its own cultural identity” (xxv). It is unsurprising, then, that as soon as the hardcore feature became prolific in the wake of the 1973 *Miller v. California* obscenity ruling, pornographic film took to appropriating the Victorian as part of its generic function, considering the special sexual symbolism that notions of “Victorian” hold for postmodern culture. Mainstream media utilizes and rewrites Victorian culture with an emphasis on sexuality, so it is almost inevitable that pornography should do so. It is also instructive when considering pornographic uses of the Victorian, to simply note, as Jennifer Green-Lewis does, that, “We can see the Victorians....The Victorians are visually real to us because they have a documentary assertiveness unavailable to persons living before the age of the camera” (31). Unstated in this observation is the fact that the earliest forms of visual pornography in a modern sense depicted Victorians, complete with Victorian garb and styling (Sigel *GP*).

It is striking how little distance into the past the average consumer considers the history of pornography, or that it has a history at all considering the low status of such a medium. If “that” has a history, one might argue, it must surely be art. As Walter Kendrick notes, one development of obscenity law has been to broaden what is considered art and regard everything left over as “porn.” But porn *does* have a history. Or, more importantly, our cultural understanding of porn has a history, and is grounded in this history, affected by legal, scientific, artistic, and political

discourse. Lisa Z. Sigel explains, “Pornography as source material provides insight into the social imaginary” (2), but pornography is not a document of sexual fact: “It acts as a mirror—or, more accurately, a series of broken mirrors—that reflects, refracts, and distorts a picture of sexuality....Pornography is caught in an intimate relationship with broader society, even though it remains tied to the realm of possibilities” (2-3). Simon Joyce says similar things about the postmodern idea of “the Victorians,” arguing that “we never really encounter ‘the Victorians’ themselves, but instead a mediated image like the one we get when we glance into our rearview mirrors while driving” (3). Condensed in this allegory, Joyce goes on, is “the paradoxical sense of looking forward to see what’s behind us, which is the opposite of what we do when we read history in order to figure out the future” (3). Also condensed in this allegory is the “recognition of a surprising (and perhaps frightening) closeness to our past that occurred at different times and to different people throughout the twentieth century” (3). Joyce’s and Segal’s use of the mirror image as a way of seeing two mediated, postmodern constructions with which Western culture is presently obsessed, is useful in opening an examination of the ways in which pornographic film and the Victorian intersect.

In the remaining chapters, I analyze pornographic film adaptations of late-Victorian texts in an effort to understand not only how pornographic film operates as a genre, but to see what pornographic film has to say about itself, the genres with which it intersects, and the Victorian culture that it is appropriating. In turn, just as for Sigel pornography reflects the sexual imaginary of its consumers, so these films illuminate the complex ways in which pornography and its consumers make use of

“the Victorian.” In this chapter, I will explore and analyze a collection of pornographic films that, rather than adapting a specific text, make use of the Victorian in more general ways, appropriating costume, customs, imagery, and other symbolism that postmodern culture associates with the Victorian era. I want to question what it is about the Victorian period that renders it enduringly attractive to hardcore filmmakers and consumers alike, in turn questioning our fascination with the Victorian period in general.

One of the defining characteristics of the postmodern age is its nostalgia for the past; a historicity that, rather than being truly historical, instead constantly revisits other historical periods in a self-conscious effort to grasp a present-day identity. Many writers have identified the Victorian era as the most useful period for consumers to revisit in order to satiate a variety of present day needs, needs that constitute a “crisis of postmodern historiography” (Kucich and Sadoff ix). The 1980s and 1990s, Kucich and Sadoff argue, “located the Victorian age as historically central to late-century postmodern consciousness” (xi), with a particular interest in Victorian sexuality. The Victorian era is used by postmodern consumers as a monolithic set of principles and morals to process things about the present day, in a way that indulges in consumerism rather than critiquing it as the modernists are supposed to have done. Victorian sexuality is a particularly popular site of postmodern, or “post-Victorian” (Sadoff xiii), reimagining, and as a genre that privileges the sex act as a solution or answer to cultural problems (Williams *Hardcore*), pornography and its consumers reimagine and use the Victorian in sexually specific ways; they “porn” the Victorian era. Related to this “porning” of the

Victorian era, Cindy Patton observes that pornographic lampooning of Hollywood reflects “an erotic and humorous critique of the mass media’s role in invoking but never delivering the sex” (132) stressing that “types of sex are rarely presented as taboo in themselves, only as representationally taboo—what Hollywood or television is unwilling to show” (132). Similarly, Laura Kipnis asserts, pornography’s “greatest pleasure is to locate each and every one of society’s taboos, prohibitions, and proprieties and systematically transgress them one by one” (164). In this way, to porn is to disrupt; to render visible those sexual and off/scene aspects of mainstream culture which are typically hidden.

Yet what remains unspoken in this act of pornographic transgression? Michel Foucault contends that the transgression and the limit rely on each other; that “transgression incessantly crosses and recrosses a line which closes up behind it in a wave of extremely short duration, and thus it is made to return once more right to the horizon of the uncrossable” (“A Preface” 34). Thus, pornography thrives upon the binary oppositions and hypocrisies of Western culture—oppositions and hypocrisies neatly encapsulated in a postmodern notion of Victorian sexuality—and obsessively enacts a “theatrics of transgression” (Kipnis 164) scene after scene, film after film.

In the majority of these films and the blurbs they utilize, a simplistic binary distinction is made; one that can be seen reflected in postmodern American culture itself: Old/New, Victorian/Modern, European/American. A handy example of this tendency in action is the press release for *My Mother’s Best Friend Vol. 4: Lost in Time* (2011) posted on the adult film site Adult DVD Talk. The film is part of an older

woman/younger man series that flirts with incest, and is a period piece. The publicist states, “it’s set in the Edwardian Era and has a Jane Austen look to it.” When a porn consumer remarks, “My first thought is that Jane Austin [sic] wasn’t an Edwardian. She was a Georgian and died 80 years before the start of the Edwardian period,” the writer of the press release responds, “I was describing more the style of the porn as Jane Austen not the time period—as in period piece with forbidden love and great costumes” (“Jane Austen Porn”). Likewise, *The Naughty Victorians* (1983) is referred to by Robert Rimmer, a prolific and respected adult film reviewer who wrote several volumes of porn reviews as well as essays on the films and the industry, as “a funny spoof on eighteenth century pornographic novels,” and presumes it is English-made (it was a United States production). Similarly, the specific 1915 setting of *Bedtime Tales* is simultaneously referred to as “Victorian” in the film’s dialogue, while the blurb states it is an era “when even a hint of ankle could be considered scandalous.” On the other hand, “Of course, behind closed doors they were showing off a lot more than just ankles!” Films such as this demonstrate a pornographic rhetoric that trades in the eroticism of the sexual practices of the supposedly repressed, but viewed from the vantage point of the supposedly sexually enlightened. At the same time, the era of the sexually repressed is also the era of sexual hypocrisy, which is ripe for pornographic exploitation.

The antiquity of Victorian Europe is both disdained and erotically indulged in pornography. Writing, clothing, uptight language, traditional gender roles, and repressive institutions are seen as old-fashioned and to be scorned even while they are explored at length for pornographic appeal. Likewise, many reviews find the

language used in these neo-Victorian films to be amusing in their properness, yet also praise a perceived accuracy and authenticity. The appeal of proper language used to describe pornographic activities seems to lie somewhere at the intersection of social transgression, humour, and postmodern superiority. Indeed, reviews of *A Scent of Heather* (1981), a Gothic tale of accidental incest discussed below, are telling in their belief that first, the film is Victorian and possibly set in England (in spite of references in the film to neighboring Pennsylvania), and second, that “modern” technology featured in the film must be an error on the part of the filmmakers. Such assumptions reveal two postmodern beliefs: that the Victorian period did not have the advanced technologies we enjoy today, and that pornographic films have low production values, scant background research, and are generally produced with a disdain for details. Rimmer writes:

It's a gothic romance in an English castle, complete with subdued lighting and believable costuming, even down to the ladies' underwear. There are only one or two anachronisms, such as the ladies wearing heels too high, an electric bedroom light and a modern telephone. The acting of Paul Thomas, R. Bolla and Veronica Hart is exceptional, and the dialogue is a laughing, happily corny 1980s version of Victorian conversation. (128)

Rimmer refers to the mansion as a castle, the location as English, and the conversation as Victorian, in spite of several indications in the film that suggest otherwise. Adult film historian and reviewer Dries Vermulen dates the setting much later, but similarly comments on the use of electric lights: “it does a good job of recreating the early 20th century and more specifically Hollywood depictions thereof, occasional anachronisms (such as electric lights!) notwithstanding.” In reality, incandescent light bulbs were being developed for commercial use in the

late nineteenth century, and while it still may have been unusual for a household to use electric lights until the 1920s, the seeming absurdity of *A Scent of Heather's* use of such bulbs lies more in a postmodern notion of Victorianness than it does in facts. Furthermore, it is tempting to posit that if this were a big budget Hollywood production, these reviewers would have questioned their assumption prior to writing the article, as opposed to assuming a superiority of knowledge to the bumbling pornographers.

While many tend to think of the Victorians as publicly proper, and privately perverse (Marcus), Sigel argues that such distinctions of legitimate and underground, of private and public, in the nineteenth century are not as clear cut as popularly believed. When introducing her focus on “‘minor’ writers (what else could pornographers be but minor?)” (*GP* 10), Sigel clarifies that “the gulf between the realms of sub rosa writings and fine literature diminishes upon closer inspection. A substantial overlap existed between pornography and the respectable publishing trade for much of the nineteenth century” (*GP* 10). In short, Sigel asserts, “Pornography is not the ‘underworld’ of Victorian literature, and the attempt to segregate it as such does an injustice to the complicated world of British society and cultural production” (*GP* 10). Likewise, Victorian consumers should not be simplified in such a manner as a “norm” and an “other.” Simon Joyce challenges such an approach that examines the “other” while “leav[ing] uninterrogated that ‘official’ view as a normative pole of definition” (5). In this way, pornographic appropriations of the Victorian point toward a deconstruction of such binary thinking, even as they rely on such binaries for erotic transgression. These films can direct us toward

viewing our recent history as a continuum; a paradoxical one, but a continuum and a cycle nonetheless. Furthermore, the films usefully present a paradox: on the one hand, the films utilize the Victorian in a way that posits “us” against “them,” while on the other hand the films operate under a tacit understanding of some form of Victorian sexual activity and perversion. In this way, these films seem to simultaneously suggest both sexual repression and sexual liberation in both the Victorian and the post-Victorian.

Sigel notes that “An analysis of the period between 1815 and 1914 can help clarify our current debates over pornography by showing how certain social and sexual formations solidified” (*GP* 9). Likewise, an analysis of postmodern uses of this period of sexual formation can clarify our understanding of Western culture, sexuality, and the ways in which pornographic film operates. Not only is the Victorian period regarded as the origin of modern sexuality—a “break” in sexuality—but it is also, consciously or not, regarded as the origin of modern pornography and fetishism thanks to a nineteenth century fascination with taxonomy and sexology (Kendrick 68-71), and shifts in technology, particularly the printing press and visual media such as photography and the postcard. As Sigel observes, between 1880 and 1914, “pornographers stripped away characterization, plot, and setting and opened up room for an intense formulaic focus on specific sex acts” (*GP* 82). Yet Sigel resists the way “critics have lambasted these works for diminishing the artistry of writing about sexuality and for the growing perversity they displayed,” arguing that a new consumer culture of “specialized texts for specialized tastes” amongst the leisure classes are intimately connected to such

proliferation of perversity (*GP* 82). As the pornographic film examples in this project suggest, our modern understanding of pornography is rooted in the Victorian era, where not only did penetration become a core theme (Sigel *GP* 94), and fetishes become central to narrative, but also “the consumption of desire for its own sake, rather than in the quest for ‘liberty’ or the ‘scientific’ truth about sexuality” (Sigel *GP* 93) became newly emphasized.

When reviewing stylistic shifts in pornography, it is evident how cyclical both the trends and arguments are regarding this fluctuating genre. Sigel’s description of the decreased importance of context and characterization of the late-nineteenth century, citing the “‘full moon,’ which excluded all unnecessary ‘props’ like torsos and limbs” (*GP* 105), is reminiscent of the “stag” films and loops of the early-20th century, which in turn is reminiscent of the shift away from features of the 1970s golden age and toward what is now known as “all-sex,” “wall-to-wall,” or “gonzo.” In 1991, AVN reviewer Steve Austin asked, “What’s the difference between the old silent 8 millimeter loops and the video features of today?” His answer: “The guys take their sox [*sic*] off now” (Jennings 226). The common link between these different moments of crisis is new technology, whether it be the still camera, the motion picture camera, the video cassette recorder, or the internet. Also common to each crisis is the assumption that the sex act outside of traditional narrative is meaningless, or paradoxically corrupting, and the fact that these forms of media are available to an ever-widening audience—the “unwashed masses.”

That film pornographers have adapted Victorian pornography speaks to the fact that we regard the Victorians as simultaneously perverse and repressed.² Peter

N. Stearns argues that scholars of the early twentieth century constructed a stereotype of “the repressed Victorian” (47), which led to the cultural truism that the Victorians were “responsible for creating the sex-negative culture that twentieth century ‘moderns’ have rebelled against” (47). In an attempt to revise this stereotype, more recent scholars have unwittingly establishing a new stereotype of Victorian sexuality that is in Stearns’s view “overly sanguine” (47). The truth, Stearns asserts, is a combination of the two stereotypes: Victorians regarded sex as a powerful force that could lead to good or ill depending on whether the sex act was “sensual” or “spiritual” in nature. According to Stearns, “The Victorians imagined a drama of an omnipresent powerful sex drive propelled towards pleasure but susceptible to the dangers of excess and ruin. Self-control and the spiritualization of desire would make possible an autonomous self and a healthy society” (49). In the case of pornographic uses of the Victorian, a careful drawing on both the repressed and the sanguine stereotypes of Victorian sexuality is employed: while the pornographic adaptation utilizes the repressed stereotype as a way of “exposing” or “opening up” some kind of off-limits group of people, the appropriation would not work without an accompanying sense that what was really going on was much more dirty and perverse. As Carmine Sarracino and Kevin M. Scott ambivalently observe, “The main difference, then, between Puritanism and porn is that instead of fleeing from sex, porn, proceeding from the same premises, indulges in it transgressively and promiscuously” (200). Pornographic appropriations of the Victorian trade in the public/private, sensual/spiritual split that Stearns delineates, both upholding these divides and deconstructing them.

The history of Victorian pornography sheds light on the paradoxical and binarized way in which pornographic film uses “the Victorian.” On the one hand, as the blurb for the 1985 vignette film *Bedtime Tales* so astutely puts it, it is an era “when even a hint of ankle could be considered scandalous.” On the other hand, “Of course, behind closed doors they were showing off a lot more than just ankles!” Not only does this demonstrate a pornographic rhetoric that trades in the eroticism of the sexual practices of the supposedly repressed, but it also frames this eroticism in terms of strictly separated spheres of public and private. These suggested themes are played out more graphically in the film’s first scene, set in “Victorian” 1915, a period positioned as the starting point of a journey through the sexual ages, followed by the prohibition era, the jazz age, the 1950s, and finally the year *Bedtime Tales* was made, 1985. The Victorian era may be synonymous with sexual repression, traditional gender roles, and the private nuclear family, but it is also an era associated with the creation and development of sexology and modern medicine, reflected in *Bedtime Tales*. These scientific developments established a *scientia sexualis* that, in the more malignant cases, Foucault refers to as a “pornography of the morbid...characteristic of the *fin de siècle* society” (54).

Foucault goes on,

What needs to be situated, therefore, is not the threshold of a new rationality whose discovery was marked by Freud—or someone else—but the progressive formation (and also the transformations) of that “interplay of truth and sex” which was bequeathed to us by the nineteenth century....Misunderstandings, avoidances, and evasions were only possible, and only had their effects, against the background of this strange endeavor: to tell the truth of sex. (*History* 56-57)

Pornography, as Linda Williams (*Hard Core*) and others have argued, takes up the same mantle, and more recently has been blamed for its failures in providing sex education to a nation of individuals denied open discourse on issues of sexuality.³ Sigel's contention that "Pornography and sexology influenced each other at the margins of their disciplines" ("Overly Familiar" 116) reflects a heritage present in pornographic film of the late twentieth century. Not only are pornographic films categorized according to sexual preference, perversion, and persuasion, but also neo-Victorian films utilize naïve sexology discourse as a way of instigating illicit sexual activity. Films such as *Bedtime Tales* demonstrate a postmodern, tongue-in-cheek awareness of the absurdity of Victorian sexual hypocrisy: the characters use feigned innocence and medical objectivity as a way to initiate sex, suggesting that the Victorian era used serious medical inquiry as an alibi for salacious and perverse exploration.

Bedtime Tales opens with a shot through a keyhole, a voyeuristic shot employed, along with other devices such as telescopes and reading glasses, in very early films such as *Scenes on Every Floor* (1902) to transition to a close-up. "The force behind the shift to close-up," as Williams observes, "is often...the desire to see more of the female body in detail" (*Hard Core* 66). In *Bedtime Tales* "we" are spying on a woman, later revealed to be chief maid Miss Cummings (Colleen Brennan), undressing in her room, immediately establishing an eroticized separation of private and public, as well as positioning "us," the viewer, as the voyeuristic subject peering into this private scene. Soon it is revealed that the subject spying through the keyhole is a man in bedclothes, Walter (Tom Byron), crouched down and

masturbating—“in another three years he’ll be in the trenches in France,” the narrator explains, “but now he’s a virgin about to experience his ultimate dream.” At this point, the woman being spied on notices she is being watched, gathers up her clothes, and bursts through the door. Her initial horror quickly transforms into agitated opportunity, as she hastily makes excuses for Walter’s misconduct, and failure to follow the rules of “[respecting] a woman’s privacy.”

During this initial conversation, several topics particular to turn-of-the-century Victoriana, and the initial years of the twentieth century, are raised and, by association, employed in erotic discourse. On her way to establishing a reason for initiating sexual contact with Walter, Miss Cummings mentions the uses of prostitutes in the city “who can satisfy those needs....I don’t condone these women, but that’s what they’re there for.” She nervously appropriates sexology and sexual terminology, such as “masturbation.” “The common word for it is ‘frigging,’” Miss Cummings rambles on in a flustered state,

to—frig oneself. I—I’ve heard that a young man may permanently exhaust himself by overdoing it. It can do permanent damage....I would suspect that the reason for that would be that the young man, in the heat of his passion, may perhaps grab his, uh—penis, I believe it’s called—so hard that he might cause some certain strain or damages. I wouldn’t want you to injure yourself, Walter.

Echoing the Victorian panic over masturbation (Kendrick 88-90), Miss Cummings utilizes such sexual “science” as a way of accomplishing results quite in the opposite direction. Suggesting that “maybe just this once I can assist you in your needs and stroke it in a safe and proper way,” but insisting she must not watch, Miss Cummings’ actions employ repressive sexual knowledge of the Victorian period as a means to achieving the pornographic purpose. In its mockery of the belief in the

dangers of masturbation, the scene also demonstrates the paradoxical nature of such taboos: that they are perversely apt to be used in attaining goals contrary to their intention. In this way, the sexual conduct between the two quickly escalates in the name of teaching and learning. This, combined with the couple's difference in age and station, frames the sex according to hierarchy, yet with the working class woman positioned as authoritative over the higher-class, virginal male.

At the point of escalating beyond mutual masturbation, Walter's sister, Annie (Kathlyn Moore), walks in and halts proceedings as they all look at each other, stunned. Annie immediately assumes the opposite of what is occurring, crying, "He had his thing out, Miss Cummings—you were holding it away from yourself! He was attacking you!" Annie's assumption is rooted in gender norms and their cultural associations with sexual behavior, norms that here are used and transgressed for humorous and erotic purposes. For Annie, the fact that Walter's "thing" was out, means that Walter was attacking Miss Cummings. Miss Cummings, too, is following a gendered sexual script by playing out a scenario that in some way adheres to the gendered sexual rules of her culture: she is unable to simply declare a desire to have sex with Walter. In order to do so, she must frame it according to an acceptable gender role: that of sexual supervisor. Annie, too, is interested in getting involved sexually, but she doesn't accept the ruse of sexual education that Miss Cummings and Walter attempt to put forth. Walter offers, "you wouldn't want me to cripple myself would you? I could injure myself from uncontrollable self abuse!" Annie rolls her eyes, asserting, "That's a big fat lie, Walter. Don't you believe it Miss Cummings—he does it all the time. I know—I've seen you!" She subsequently

usurps her position as the lowest tier of the group in terms of class, gender, and age, and blackmails them into letting her participate, threatening to “tell.” Virginal Annie is savvy to the absurdity of the excuses proposed by Walter, but she attributes such coercive scripts to Walter due to his gender. In turn, her desires are met through her own exploitation of the situation presented to her. The implications of gender, class, and age are constantly in flux, and the three participants’ social positions are pleasurably exploited and transgressed, due to the fact that this is occurring in a doubly-transgressed private sphere.

The scene escalates through a series of acts, discussed verbally by those involved, as each participant talks the others through their performance, their desires, and the state of their arousal, until the two virgin siblings, Walter and Annie, engage in penetrative missionary intercourse. The act is presented as a deflowering, again verbally talked through, and the final “money shot” is itself unconventionally presented in integrated form. Walter appears to be approaching climax, when Miss Cummings suddenly panics and cries out, “Oh my god! Don’t come inside her!” grabs his penis, and manually stimulates him to a standard “money shot,” rendered nonstandard by its narrative integration. Effectively, the money shot is periodized—in an era where birth control was not freely available, and pregnancy outside of wedlock would mean ruin, it is imperative that Walter not “come inside her.” In this way, the Victorian setting subverts pornographic convention, and narratively justifies it at the same time.

While *Bedtime Tales*’ uses a chronological, historical structure, with the Victorian era positioned as the origin of modern sexuality, two other films—*Hot*

Cookies (Dir. Howard Ziehm, 1977), and the German film, *Extra-Terrestrial: Die Auserirdische*, a.k.a. *E.T.: The Vagina* (Dir. Lidko and Siggi Entinger, 1995)—use a science-fiction format as a way of suggesting that the Victorian era is key to understanding human sexuality in general. Both films depict aliens from another planet attempting to understand humans, for benevolent educational purposes in *E.T.*, and for malevolent educational purposes in *Hot Cookies*. While the films have different things to say, they both suggest that looking at and interrogating the Victorians' sexual life can tell us something about our own modern sexual life; both the diagetic "us" of an alien planet, and the non-diagetic "us" of 1977 and 1995. Such science-fiction-historicist approaches revisit a constructed Victorian era as a way of addressing and questioning "our" sexuality in a way that simultaneously distances and implicates the present and the past. Jameson's vision of a postmodern world where "we can no longer imagine a future at all....where a formerly futurological science fiction...turns into mere 'realism' and an outright representation of the present" (*Postmodernism* 286) is instructive when addressing those hardcore films that utilize science-fiction conventions as a way of (literally) visiting the past. The films frame the Victorian period as in some way formative in terms of "human sexuality," which in pornography is always the present day sexuality. In this way, pornography allows modern viewers a degree of sexual superiority, while at the same time indulging in a notion of private Victorian sexual perversion and lust.

Hot Cookies suggests something similar to *E.T. The Porno*, but with a more complex approach. The film harnesses its vignettes using the narrative thread of a mysterious, specialist bookstore in which a man and his daughter, Melissa (Serena),

reside, and into which a man, Mr. Mueller (Ken Scudder), enters looking for “unusual erotica” after seeing a newspaper advertisement inviting people to “explore the erotic twilight.” Expecting to be shown “a collection of books,” he is surprised to be led into a back room where Melissa, an “erotic sorceress,” resides. Melissa and her father are in fact aliens investigating and ensnaring humans, capturing them in paintings during sexual activity. They show the paintings to Mr. Mueller, and eventually capture him in a painting following his own sexual outburst. Through a series of vignettes, one of which is set in the Victorian era, the film suggests the threat to any given planet’s race is sexual perversion, sociosexual transgression, and promiscuity.

The Victorian vignette in the film bears this idea out also. As with all the films addressed in this chapter, historical period and class status are literally worn by the characters: costume, and the class status these costumes signify, are eroticized in ways that fetishize the Victorian period and its rigid divisions of class. At the root of all of these fetishized areas is the division of public and private spheres: in terms of geography (inside and outside), in terms of the body (clothed and unclothed), in terms of class (rights to privacy), and in terms of gender (the penetrator and the penetrated; the looker and the looked at). These spheres are not fixed, and their fluidity is testament to the pornographic pleasure in establishing boundaries so as to transgress them.

Two women, Patrice (Isolde Jensen) and Delores (Lenore Grant), marked as upper class by their clothing as well as by the fact that they are being driven in a horse and cart by a manservant, are gossiping about their friends’ suspected sexual

escapades and stop for a picnic. Already, their chatter regarding what the couple could have been doing in the barn—"I can imagine!"—establishes notions of public and private sexuality, and secrecy. Once at their picnic, the three of them get very drunk on red wine, and the driver passes out. Disappointed, the women decide to stumble off up the hill through the woods to "have fun by ourself!" The spectacle of their multi-layered skirts being dragged through the underbrush, and subsequent removal of these dresses to use as blankets, emphasizes the erotics of excessive costuming and its removal. As all of the pornographic period pieces in this chapter demonstrate, multiple layers of clothing, and the repressive, upper class aesthetics of Victoriana in general, are eroticized through the paradoxical promise of more excess to transgress.

Such excess of clothing is matched by the decadence of the women's drinking, which continues during the foreplay of their scene, and swiftly becomes a sexual tool. While in a "69" position, significantly with their undergarments still on but pushed aside to reveal breasts and genitals, Patrice starts pouring wine onto Delores' vulva while she licks it, and then moves on to vaginally penetrate her with the half-full bottle, the red wine sloshing around inside the bottle and, presumably, Delores' vagina. Meanwhile, Delores is anally fingering Patrice. It is a scene that calls to mind Bakhtin's carnivalesque banquet imagery, where "eating and drinking are one of the most significant manifestations of the grotesque body" (281).⁴ Patrice's use of the wine to consume, then penetrate, and then consume again, presumably combined with Patrice's sexual fluids, evokes a grotesque blurring of lines between consumption and expulsion, as well as the interchangeability of orifices. Following

this, the two women lie next to each other and masturbate themselves to climax—a notably unusual conclusion to a scene where a man is present. The punch line emphasizes the erotic suspicion of sexual goings-on in supposedly sexually repressed private spheres, as Patrice asks, “Have you ever done that before?” and Delores responds, “Yep. Remember Sister Agnes?”

Significantly, this sex scene occurs outside, whereas all other scenes addressed in this chapter occur within the confines of private domestic space, usually marked by class. Here, two upper class women engage in lesbian sex outside, on top of their class-marked grand dresses. Yet, similar to *Bedtime Tales*, a man is spying on them throughout—the driver wakes up, and goes to watch the women. The difference is, he is not spying on conventionally “private” space, yet it is rendered private, and the man’s spying voyeuristically transgresses class boundaries that are the reverse of those constructed by *Bedtime Tales*, but does not transgress to the point of participating—an unusual move in a genre that typically would take advantage of any suggested sexual combination.

While pornography is typically seen as a masculine genre, made by men for men, period costume dramas and heritage film are typically seen as feminine genres, ones that privilege and glorify the feminine, domestic, private sphere maintained by middle-class Victorian culture. In addition, such aesthetic productions are often seen as sexist as they maintain a stifling feminine domestic space, and reinforce nostalgia for gender hierarchy and class boundaries. Fashion, and lingerie in particular, has been critiqued as a site of the perpetuation of such gendered spheres (Wilson). Susan Faludi argues in *Backlash* that lingerie of the 1980s “celebrated the

repression, not the flowering, of female sexuality. The ideal Victorian lady it had originally been designed for, after all, wasn't supposed to have any libido" (189). Faludi's perception of Victorian female sexuality is not quite accurate, as already discussed, and her critique of lingerie as harking back to an age where female bodies were painfully restrained and women embodied a more ideal, pure notion of femininity, is not quite accurate either.

Jane Juffer's analysis of Faludi's argument is instructive in considering the uses of Victorian aesthetics in pornography, particularly the use and eroticization of Victorian gowns and undergarments. Juffer argues that "the nostalgia for a more contained body and a more 'secret' sexuality within the trappings of Victorian, imperialist England" (146) evident in the Victoria's Secret catalog is not simple "backlash." Rather, "the sale and consumption of lingerie...illustrate the contradictions and gaps in the attempts to reassert a bounded private sphere; for [Victoria's Secret], the emphasis on privacy is undercut by the appeal to women as consumers in pursuit of their own pleasures—versions of the New Woman" (147). Such gaps and contradictions are also present in pornography, especially in the medium's reliance on notions of feminine privacy for the successful transgression of these same notions. As Laura Kipnis points out, "pornography would be nowhere without its most flagrant border transgression, this complete disregard for the public/private divide" (171). Yet it would be more accurate to say that pornography is constantly regarding the public/private divide, and the divide is constantly being renegotiated as part of the pornographic impulse. Juffer argues that the classically beautiful models of the Victoria's Secret catalog "can freely cross boundaries of

public and private” but that this mobility “is tied to class mobility” (160). Ultimately, Juffer asserts, “Victoria’s Secret is ambiguously nostalgic, contradicting Faludi’s emphasis on a backlash that seeks to return women to some previous, pure notion of femininity. The catalog wants to claim *both* a tradition and a rearticulation of femininity” (161). The reliance on class privilege for such rearticulations is connected to the palatable and clean female bodies depicted in the catalog; the models link “place and body in a manner that distinguishes the catalog from the public and tasteless” (Juffer 158) distinguishing them from the “material, defiantly vulgar, corporeal” bodies of pornography (Kipnis 132). The films addressed in this chapter utilize Victorian aesthetics in a way that establishes and deconstructs boundaries, exploits and maintains class and gender divisions of public and private, and clothing is a major component of this gesture. As Green-Lewis notes, the Victorian in postmodern culture “designates an aesthetic, rather than a precisely historical, concept” (31), and in the predominantly visual medium of pornography, visual symbolism of the Victorian is a frequently adopted method of expressing cultural sexual messages.

The written word is at an uneasy intersection between the visual, the aural, and the literary. Kucich and Sadoff point out the way “the technologies of postmodern media culture fetishize or are haunted by Victorian cultural documents” (xxiii), and pornographic film is no exception. *Lesbian Adventures: Victorian Love Letters* (Dir. Nica Noelle, 2009) and *Memoirs of a Chambermaid* (Dir. Eric Edwards, 1987) nostalgically eroticize writing as a pre-modern communication technology by setting it in opposition to the postmodern technologies of tape

recording, cell phones, and other modern communications, in turn highlighting and transgressing class and gender boundaries. Sadoff observes that “technological subjects” in the postmodern world “respond to stress in their environments by drawing their subjectivity inward (and, by implication, constituting the nineteenth-century interiority we associate with the scene of reading and the consumption of literature)” (xiv). This “technologically produced anxiety” is explicitly borne out in Noelle’s *Victorian Love Letters*. As the blurb explains, “In a magical time before email and cell phones, there were only letters. Sweetheart Video rewinds to simpler and more erotic times in this beautiful film about Victorian passions, repression, and undeniable lust.”

Using a vignette format, Noelle presents four scenes in which a sexual encounter is instigated by a love letter. Interestingly, the scenes do not utilize the written word, nor verbalization of the written word, beyond the initial premise; the erotics of each scene are in fact grounded firmly in Victorian aesthetics, particularly costuming, with an emphasis on excess material, bodies spilling out of tightly bound undergarments, and sexual contact made through the gaps and holes in the extra-material bloomers each woman wears. As the DVD promises, it “Featur[es] authentic Victorian dresses and undergarments, shot and filmed in an [*sic*] real Victorian mansion.”

Memoirs of a Chambermaid also utilizes period costuming, yet foregrounds the written word, articulated verbally, as the primary site of eroticism. Indeed, Noelle’s sex scenes are long, relatively unmediated,⁵ and aurally punctuated only by the sounds of sexual activity, while *Memoirs* features sex scenes that frequently end

without the typical money shot, and are often disrupted by narrative interruptions and editing. There is very little visual emphasis on penetration—the “meat shot”—and great emphasis on reading, writing, and articulation of desires. As the male love object Jason repeatedly states to his lover, in place of traditionally pornographic articulations of physical lust, “I love it when you write.”

In their own distinct way, *Victorian Love Letters* and *Memoirs of a Chambermaid* paradoxically eroticize the written word in a way that frames literature as feminine and private, yet at the same time disrupt this boundary by depicting it visually on video. Again, by articulating fetishized components of private Victorian culture in postmodern film pornography, the cultural boundaries that establish gender and class norms are reinforced in order to be “trashed” by the pornographic impulse. In this way, gender and class implications of public and private spheres are complicated and leveled only to be reestablished for further transgression.

Postmodern nostalgia for a Victorian, contained sexuality is evidenced in *Victorian Love Letters*, as well as in Noelle’s boy-girl series, *Tales of Victorian Lust*, produced by Sweet Sinner. *Victorian Love Letters* eroticizes the written word, yet in visually articulating sexual activity the written word is usurped by the visual, and the aesthetics of Victorian femininity become the focus of contained sexuality and its release. The erotics of each scene rely less on the premise of the written word, and more on the concept of the bound, private body and its imminent exposure. Yet, while Juffer’s focus is on the clean, “orifice-less” bodies of the Victoria’s Secret catalogue, the female bodies in *Victorian Love Letters*, while perhaps not grotesque,

are certainly uncontained both visually and aurally. The use of corsets, with breasts spilling from the top, sights and sounds of sexual fluids, and the loud and often messy female orgasms, emphasize the way pornography relies on the concept of feminine, private, contained space for pornographic pleasure just as much as its deconstruction composes the scene. Graphic, noisy depictions of cunnilingus, then, are only emphasized by the framing of a tightly-laced Victorian boot in shot. In this sense, Noelle's emphasis on "the private-public division that has worked, as many feminists have documented, to contain female sexuality within a traditional definition of home" (Juffer 148) is played with in nostalgic ways (for example, the women engaging in tea, before suggesting nervously that they go upstairs so that no one will see them) at the same time as these divisions are deconstructed by their unmediated documentation on film. The "sense of propriety" and "appeals to privacy, British sophistication" that Juffer locates in the Victoria's Secret catalog (153) are contrasted by the representations of sex, and by the diversity of female bodies on display. The female performers used in the film vary in age and body type (though not in race, other than in Noelle's interracial feature *Family Secrets* discussed below) and each scene trades in the erotics of age and class, featuring two women who contrast in age, and by extension social position.⁶

The hierarchical nature of such age difference is marked in two of the vignettes ("Petulant Little Girls" and "Secret Muse") by verbal and physical chastisement of the younger partner, recalling and eroticizing a bygone era where the categories of "adult" and "child" were distinct and reinforced by society (Sarracino 32-33). Such demonstrations of age hierarchy are prominent in "Petulant

Little Girls” where Magdalene punishes Nicole for writing love letters with an open hand spanking over Magdalene’s knee, which eventually becomes a caress. Likewise, in “Secret Muse,” Julia Ann jealously demands to see the letter Zoe is writing, leading to a physical struggle for the letter, which swiftly turns into a passionate kiss. Such scenarios utilize the public exposure and shame of a privately enacted, written sexual desire through a publicly represented medium in pursuit of erotic pleasure. The remaining two vignettes, “The Answer” and “A Midsummer Tryst,” also trade in such secret desires, depicting clandestine passions between women that are only articulated via the written word, are nervously approached in person, and enacted with very little verbalization. The written word, then, serves to foreground a sense of feminine privacy and silent, contained sexuality in much the same way as corsets and boots. But costuming and aesthetics, as well as their removal, are privileged as the more material indicators of containment and exposure in the visual medium of video pornography.

Memoirs of a Chambermaid also utilizes the written word, yet trades in it more consistently for erotic affect, again using gender and class hierarchy within domestic spaces as a platform from which to deconstruct these very same boundaries. However, while *Victorian Love Letters* is more graphic, it does less to dismantle the concepts of class and domesticity in a narrative sense. *Memoirs of a Chambermaid* is softer, less graphic, but narratively goes further in breaking down the gender and class hierarchies that operate within the domestic Victorian home. Romance novelist Amy Rogers (Krista Lane) rents an old Victorian house for the summer in the hopes of finding inspiration for her next book. Experiencing writer’s

block, Amy looks around the house one evening and discovers a diary in the attic written in 1887 by a maid, Molly Mae. The diary details her secret sexual relationship with Jason, the youngest son living in the house, who she meets for trysts in their secret place, the attic. As Amy starts to plagiarize Molly's diary, recording her readings of the diary on her tape recorder, she has increasingly sexual and intense experiences with apparitions of those characters involved, and falls in love with Jason. After considering that she may be going crazy, Amy also ponders that perhaps she *is* Molly. At the diary's and the film's conclusion, Jason disappears and Amy is miserably lonely and heartsick. She picks up a pen, and begins to write, and suddenly we see Amy in Molly's clothes, back in the Victorian era with Jason. Meanwhile, the present-day narrative returns to its opening scene, where Molly is arriving at the same house, herself now the novelist, hoping to rent the place for the summer for inspiration. Both women are smiling knowingly, with evident pleasure and satisfaction.

The film functions from within a gendered sphere of romance, writing, and reading, as Amy is a modern woman who writes erotica, privately reading the erotica of another woman from a hundred years ago. Furthermore, the film is co-written by a woman (the director's wife), and appears to have a feminine address in the traditional sense: lack of emphasis on money and meat shots, a visual focus on male bodies and female self-pleasure, and a consistent sexual attention to reading and writing that *Victorian Love Letters* lacks. Williams argues in *Hard Core* that the privileging of the money shot and meat shot are characteristic of a presumed heterosexual, male gaze, while the pornography produced for women typically

avoids such phallogentric representations of sex. Candida Royalle's company *Femme*, for example, uses medium shots of full bodies, and puts less emphasis on always already erect penises that ejaculate to signal the end of the scene. For Williams, the significance of *Femme* is "its serious attempt to visualize women's desire in a genre that has consistently continued to see sex...from the viewpoint of the phallus" (247). Yet, Williams is also careful to note that "The problem does not lie in the show of the penis itself; the elimination of the money shot does not address the root problems of power and pleasure that only *appear* to reside in this display" (247). In this way, *Memoirs* is not subversive simply in its lack of emphasis on money and meat shots. In fact, it could be argued that the lack of explicitness renders the male and female bodies more contained, smooth, and tidy, while the bodies on display in other films discussed are bawdy, out of control, and vulgar, embodying a more serious transgression of corporeal propriety and cultural boundaries.

Nevertheless, *Memoirs* does transgress these boundaries, but through narrative and language rather than physical displays of bodies and bodily functions. While *Victorian Love Letters* simply utilizes the love letter as a means of transitioning into visual pornography, *Memoirs* commits to its premise of the written and spoken word. By utilizing a supernatural, time-shifting format, contrasting technologies of sexuality and feminine subject positions are engaged and addressed in eroticized ways. Molly's diary is adapted from its private, written form into a cassette recording of the spoken voice of a modern, single career woman who produces her erotica for mass consumption on an electric typewriter, and tapes

her ideas while lounging naked in the bath, drinking red wine. Most striking is Amy's use of the microphone, which is itself sexualized when Amy's recordings instigate a visual representation of the words, and Amy begins to lick and fellate the microphone before moving it downward, presumably to stimulate herself.

Furthermore, Amy subverts the traditional notion, present in both classical cinema and Gothic literature, that the actively inquisitive, desiring woman must either be a masochistic victim or be punished. Williams, discussing the female look in classical cinema, observes that those heroines who appear to have a "powerful female look" are eventually punished, "undermin[ing] the legitimacy and authentic subjectivity of this look" ("When the Woman Looks" 17). "The woman's gaze is punished," Williams adds, "by narrative processes that transform curiosity and desire into masochistic fantasy" ("When the Woman Looks" 17). The manner in which Amy becomes consumed by Jason could be argued to replicate masochistic trends in Gothic literature and the romance novels that Amy herself writes. Yet, while Amy's return to the Victorian period, replacing Molly, might appear to be a willing relinquishing of her modern independent subjectivity for the sake of a man, it is in reality more complex. First, Amy only takes Molly's place after the class divisions of the family household have been transgressed, and Jason and Molly's secret relationship has been freed. Second, the film ends in a way that suggests a cyclical, indefinite trading of places between working class, Victorian Molly and middle class, independent, modern Amy. Just as the Victoria's Secret models enjoy an "erotic mobility" that allows them to "freely cross boundaries of public and private" (Juffer 160), so Molly and Amy trade places in a way that transgresses the

class privileges that are typically necessary to such mobility. The implication of a Twilight Zone-esque indefinite cycle suggests that Molly and Amy may enjoy the pleasures of multiple constructions of gender and class indefinitely. While Noelle visually and aurally transgresses the boundaries of proper femininity and public/private divides, Edwards transgresses these divides narratively while putting less emphasis on the physical transgressions of a contained feminine body. Both films, however, maintain and deconstruct boundaries in their pornographic use of gendered and classed domains of public and private Victorian sexuality.

A consistently popular way that social taboos and the public/private divide are transgressed in pornography is through incest, particularly within the domestic, modern nuclear family. Nineteenth century England saw not only the rise of the modern nuclear family, but also a rise in concern over incest within these families.⁷ These concerns were related primarily to working class families and their perceived close quarters (Sigel "Overly Affectionate Family" 101), yet in reality incest was occurring in all classes of family, and not only in abusive situations but also in an effort to maintain kinship and powerful family connections. Marriage between cousins and in-laws "was a characteristic strategy of the new bourgeoisie" (Kuper 27). The new domestic environment of the Victorian middle class—one that prized brother-sister intimacy, privacy, and the repression of sexual desire—has been argued to be a breeding ground for incestuous feelings (Kuper 39). At the same time, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) and the National Vigilance Association (NVA) were fighting to implement incest laws to resolve the many documented cases of incestuous abuse, primarily committed by

fathers against daughters. In spite of these efforts, the Punishment of Incest Act was not passed until 1908, a delay that Sigel attributes to a strong commitment to keeping the ideology of the modern family intact; an ideology that the implications of incest would threaten to tarnish (“Overly Affectionate Family” 103). Unsurprisingly, the period between 1880 and 1908 also saw a surge in the pornographic, incestuous, middle-class novel.

The intersections and connections between marriage, class, and incest coalesce and are eroticized in 1981’s *A Scent of Heather* (Dir. Bill Milling), and demonstrate the way pornography obsessively and repeatedly transgresses social boundaries for erotic appeal. The plot concerns Heather (Veronica Hart) and her arranged marriage to Frederick (Paul Thomas), the family gardener’s son. The marriage is arranged in order to stop Heather’s family fortune from being willed to the founding hospital. On Heather and Frederick’s wedding night, moments prior to sexual intercourse, Frederick’s uncle Roy (Larry Strange) delivers a letter explaining that Heather and Frederick have the same mother and are half-siblings. Heather is eager to continue their marriage in spite of the news, but Frederick demands they both take a vow of chastity and live in separate quarters. This vow is broken by both of them in various ways with various partners of lower social standing, until they enter a suicide pact: they will consummate their forbidden love and then kill themselves. Just as on their wedding night, Uncle Roy arrives moments prior to intercourse to reveal that they are *not* siblings after all. While Heather is thrilled, however, Frederick is confused and put off. The taboo of incest has become of great erotic significance for Frederick; following the revelation that they are not blood

relatives, “not even cousins,” Frederick is no longer interested in Heather and leaves.⁸ She takes up with the chauffeur (R. Bolla), and disposes of her wedding ring.

A Scent of Heather exposes the erotics of incest, and the connections between incest, marriage, family, and class in a way that the myriad other incest-themed pornographic films only suggest. Ultimately, *Heather* suggests not only that marriage is an antiquated and repressive institution, but also that there is something perverse about the institution itself—at least as perverse as incest, and as capable of mobilizing taboo desires in spite of its ostensible conventionality and traditional site of proper social relations.⁹ In her analysis of the popularity of incestuous pornography in 1880s England, Sigel argues that incest porn is directly connected to the rise of the middle class and the private nuclear family which becomes “the site of forbidden desire” in place of the aristocratic locales of the eighteenth century Gothic novel. In addition, these late nineteenth century novels reflect dramatic changes in social structure through a reliance on power dynamics for erotic tension; power dynamics rooted in age, social class, and sex. Yet, as I argue in this chapter, this reliance on power dynamics is coupled with and is mobilized by a pleasurable transgression of “the limitations placed on sexuality in that society” (Sigel 113). Just as it is suggestive that pornography, sexology, and social upheaval of the *fin-de-siècle* occurred in tandem, so it is suggestive that the golden age of pornography, civil rights movements, and the inception of the postmodern age occurred in tandem. Furthermore, the drawing on nineteenth-century texts and locations, as well as use of Gothic and horror themes, in the earliest stages of the pornographic feature illuminates the erotic uses of the Victorian period for an

emerging postmodern era. The “roughie” can be seen as the 1970s equivalent of the 1880s incest novel, in this respect. As Sigel remarks, “When such pitched battles over sexuality occurred in public, little wonder that violence over gender and sexuality played out in fantasy” (115). Yet, in 1980s pornography especially, a different response to such cultural crisis is visible, resting at the troubled intersection between political progression and capitalism: the marketing of pornography to women. *Heather* situates itself as a film of the post-women’s liberation, early 1980s through its celebration of Heather’s independence. It is likely not coincidence that this American-set film also ends with a gesture toward a modern, liberated woman who has no need for marriage. While the film is narratively dominated by patriarchal voices in letters addressed to Heather—dictating her marriage, her sexual activity, and even her death—it is Heather who closes out the film by inviting Tom the chauffeur back to her home, pushing his face between her legs, and tossing her wedding ring on the floor.

Pornography is almost as preoccupied with racial identity as it is with gender and sexual identity. That is to say, Western culture, particularly the U.S., is almost as preoccupied with race as it is with gender and sexuality, and issues of race are automatically tied to issues of kinship, family, and bloodlines, if only at the margins. Race and colonial history haunt the margins of nineteenth-century English canonical literature, particularly around the *fin-de-siècle*. While Dorian Gray witnesses the “half-caste in a ragged turban and shabby ulster” (Wilde 157) during his slumming expedition to the east end opium dens, and Carmilla is accompanied by “a hideous black woman, with a sort of colored turban on her head” (LeFanu 22), in

pornography (visual and written) non-white characters are either conspicuously absent or fetishized front and center. Neo-Victorian pornography, as this project can attest, typically glosses over colonial history or the connections between class and race. However, non-white characters do infrequently appear at the margins in ways that are suggestive of these intersections: Vanessa Del Rio is the Latina maid in *Heather* and the cocaine smuggler-cum-vampire nemesis in *Dracula Exotica* (see chapter five), and Henrietta's chauffeur (and operator of the motion picture camera) in *Take Off* is African American (see chapter four). Race holds a peculiar and prominent position within pornography, a position inherited in part from the pornographies developed in colonial Europe.¹⁰

Sigel describes the way Victorian and Edwardian pornographic photographs were infused with racial and sexual politics from the past in her description of an image of a nude black woman: "the description intensified the meanings of race by using signs of a racial system that no longer existed":

Slaves. Negresses. A Young planter orders one of them to take off all her clothes. He then seats himself on horseback upon her, chastifying [sic] her violently with a whip, and when the climax of his sensual evolutions has been reached, she has to pump his penis [sic] with her big lips whereby she finally receives as her reward a full avalanche [sic] of her master's sperm in her mouth. \$6.25 for 20 cabinet portraits. (107)

As this advertisement demonstrates, pornographies have long drawn on antiquated notions of sex, class, and race in order to eroticize transgressions of the present. As Sigel points out with regard to the advertisement above,

In the eighteenth century, a consumer could buy a slave—could in fact buy a Negress. However, by 1903, at the time of the catalogue's publication, slavery had been effectively outlawed. Nonetheless, the description puts the idea of slavery onto the flesh of the individual

woman whose picture had been taken. The description encouraged a transference of imagined qualities like blackness, whiteness, bondage, domination, luxury, and pain onto the image. (107-108)

The same transference is encouraged not only by the more explicitly racist interracial (IR) pornographic film series' such as *Little White Slave Girls* or *Inseminated by 2 Black Men* (see below), but also in more subtle rhetorical ways, such as "interracial" in modern porn only referring to black men and white women.

Nica Noelle's 2010 feature, *Family Secrets*, draws on the same eroticization of family and incest as *Heather*, but incorporates race in a way *Heather* does not. It is an unusual addition to the interracial subgenre in its fetishization of race, but refusal to verbalize racial difference, and simultaneous transgression of race and class expectations. As Noelle acknowledges, "I find interracial relationships and their depictions incredibly erotic. And obviously, the more forbidden the relationship due to society, family, age, whatever the case may be, the more interested I am in telling that story."¹¹ However, Noelle was not interested in utilizing racially charged language nor verbally acknowledging race: "I'm very put off by the blatant racism and stereotypical depictions of African Americans and interracial relationships in most porn films, even today....as a result of my refusal to depict racial stereotypes, the film got very little promotion and publicity."¹² Race is never mentioned in the film, in spite of the erotically charged interracial unions that exclusively make up the film. Class, age, gender, implicit incest, and the division of public and private have the effect of sublimating race while emphasizing it at the same time.

Noelle's conflicting goals of simultaneously de-racializing and fetishizing race which prompt the nineteenth century setting also take on historical and political meanings, despite her intentions of resisting racist pornographic representations, and recast them in romantic trappings for an audience of undetermined sex, race, and class. It is provocative to consider which is more troubling: the softened, romantic period piece, or the vulgar, pornographic gonzo that eroticizes inequality rather than ignoring it. While the film does not verbalize racial difference orally, however, it does verbalize it visually and representationally. The juxtaposition of black and white would need explicit verbalization in a modern context if it were to be suitably fetishized for pornographic appeal. In her attempt to both fetishize *and* silence, Noelle sets the action in an environment that silently casts the action as illicit and taboo: sex between blacks and whites in a modern context becomes "miscegenation" in a nineteenth century context. It is telling that, in a modern pornographic context obsessed with interracial sex, Noelle resists explicitly racist terminology yet still desires to represent interracial sex as an erotic coupling different from sex between people of the same race. In this way, intentionally or not, *Family Secrets* alludes to the nineteenth-century influence on current desires and rhetorical trends in interracial hardcore. Sigel's observation that in the nineteenth century, "Gender roles, the family, the racial order, and heterosexuality contained paradoxes that pornography elaborated in ways that both supported and undercut official morality" ("Introduction" 13) applies here, as does Williams's contention that "To recognize racism that has generated these fantasies does not suggest that the function they fulfill today is racist in the same way" ("Skin Flicks" 302). While in

the nineteenth and early-twentieth century, pornography was produced and consumed by white, affluent males (Sigel *GP*), now the production and consumption of these products are radically more complex. This is reflected in the shifting address of interracial pornography. For example, the DVD for *Little White Slave Girls* (2002) reads: “Oh No! All Slave Girls will be Ass Fucked! That’s right! Finally things have changed! Now it’s our turn! For hundreds of years, little white chicks could do whatever they wanted—acting like God’s gift! Now they must do what we say!” Homosocial racial tensions between men are played out violently through the white female body, if only rhetorically (the content of the video does not typically reflect the violence of the rhetoric, and in this way exactly mirrors Segal’s Edwardian photographs discussed above). While the white female body is, as in the majority of heterosexual pornography, ostensibly the object of sexual desire, however, the black male body is integral to the erotic meaning of this white female body and is sexualized for the male spectator.

The pornographic obsession with black males and white females is currently most potent in the United States where the vast majority of “interracial” porn is produced, and where white women state on their model information whether they do interracial or not.¹³ Fan communities frequently remark (accurately or not) on the fact that European female performers do not have the same restrictions or classifications regarding race, and much of the interracial pornography produced in the U.S. utilizes the rhetoric of slavery to code race on the bodies of both the black male and the white female. Thus, it is both instructive and ironic that Noelle’s film is set in the United States (where, through a postmodern lens, this story must

naturally take place as the location of traumatic race relations) yet also presented as Victorian and rooted in the European. As the DVD blurb declares, “Sweet Sinner’s innovative Victorian-era series continues in this volume of interracial love, forbidden lust, and unspeakable secrets.” Relocating to the United States, but maintaining “Victorianness,” demonstrates the extent to which race is seen as a U.S. history, while the nineteenth century belongs to a European, Victorian heritage.

Family Secrets tells the story of two families, one black and one white, who grew up together. Following the death of their father, Sammy (Sammy Grand) and Dane (Dane Cross) must leave their mother, Rayven (Rayveness), to try to find work in order to pay off their father’s debts. Formerly very well off, the now-destitute family are unable to find work in their community due to their formerly high social standing. Their mother sends them to live with Luxe (Deluxe), her best friend and former housekeeper, and Luxe’s family: her husband Sean (Sean Michaels), a scholar, her daughter Alia (Alia Starr), her son Wolf (Wolf Hudson), and Alia’s fiancé Nat (Nat Turner)¹⁴. Wolf is much lighter skinned than the rest of the family (he is played by Dominican-American Wolf Hudson), and the film suggests that he is the offspring of an ongoing love affair between Rayven and Sean.

Over the course of the film, there are several interracial couplings, one of which (Sammy and Nat) is incestuous though not by blood, and not to their knowledge. The film ends on a cliffhanger following the reunion and intercourse of Rayven and Sean. The couplings, while not technically incestuous, all hint at incest: Dane has sex with Alia, the girl he grew up with in the same household, Wolf masturbates and fantasizes having sex with Sammy while Nat watches and protests,

Sammy has sex with Nat, her step-sister's fiancé, and Rayven has sex with her secret love Sean. The inversion of class in the film—Luxe's family is one of intellectuals, while Rayven's formerly-prosperous white family is destitute and must seek help from them; Wolf, the resentful bastard child, spurns his family's scholarly pursuits in favor of manual labor—serves to sublimate the erotics of race in favor of class and kinship. Scowling at the family's first evening meal with Sammy and Dane, Wolf spits, "I don't have any interest in sitting in a classroom. I like physical work." "But you come from a family of intellectuals!" Sammy exclaims. "I didn't say I couldn't hide behind a book and read Shakespeare all day. I just don't want to," Wolf responds, adding, "People think labor is mindless, but really it's the purest form of mathematics." The family find Wolf's attitude amusing, and toast to his "lack of pretention" and "courage of his convictions" yet Sammy also scoffs, "even if it does leave him with calloused hands!" The physical marks of his labor are distasteful, especially when he has the option of rising above it. Race and class are highlighted as intersecting identities, and class is eroticized more prominently than race through Wolf's preference to "work with his hands" while intellectualism is eroticized through suggestive lines about "teaching."

Class issues are introduced as a way of emphasizing strict nineteenth-century social structures, also represented through clothing and the constant use of doors and rooms, which in turn emphasizes the taboo of miscegenation even while it sublimes the more violent implications of fetishizing race. By focusing on class and family secrets within one domestic space, the traumatic history of miscegenation is sublimated but still eroticized. In this way, while it is true that, in

Sigel's words, miscegenation in pornography allows "the transgression of social hierarchies without the reordering of society" (*Governing Pleasures* 98), such representations that acknowledge and play with histories of class and race in a modern pornographic climate that typically effaces these histories, especially within the context of kinship and bloodlines, is an important interruption of standard racist rhetoric of popular culture, pornography included. At the same time, Noelle romanticizes these transgressions in a way that effaces the violence of such unions.

The cultural work pornography does is integral to individual and collective working out of postmodern crises relating to sexuality, gender, and desire, often in problematic ways. The Victorian proves a useful source for such work, and pornography as a genre can point us toward more general postmodern anxiety over corporeality, spatial relations, and authenticity in an age of heightened technology and a perceived decline in individuality and intimacy. As Green-Lewis suggests, "Desire for authenticity may be understood in part as a desire for that which we have first altered and then fetishized, a desire, perhaps, for a past in which we will find ourselves" (43). In this sense, the enduring pornographic use of the Victorian can illuminate not only cultural perceptions of the past, but cultural attitudes toward our own sexual identities, as well as the pornographic medium itself.

¹ Costello, Shaun. E-mail interview. 12 April, 2012. Costello directed *The Passions of Carol* (1975), a modern retelling of Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, and *Dracula Exotica* (1980), discussed at length in chapter six.

² *The Diary of My Secret Life* (Dir. P. Talbot Drummer, 1971), *Autobiography of a Flea* (Dir. Sharon McKnight, 1976), and three adaptations of the Edwardian novel, *A Man With a Maid: An English Tragedy* (c. 1920-1926), *The Naughty Victorians: An Erotic Tale of a Maiden's Revenge* (Dir. Robert Sickinger, 1982), and *A Man With a Maid*:

Tales of Victorian Lust (Dir. Nica Noelle, 2009). I was able to identify *An English Tragedy* as an adaptation of *A Man With a Maid* thanks to the stills, plot, and character names provided in *Dirty Movies: An Illustrated History of the Stag Film 1915-1970* by Al Di Lauro and Gerald Rabkin (38), though they do not identify it as related to this novel.

³ See Gail Dines, *Pornland: How Porn Has Hijacked Our Sexuality* (2011). See Cindy Gallop's website *Make Love Not Porn* for a sex positive effort to counteract this problematic situation no more pleasing to pornographers than it is to anti-porn campaigners. In fact, in lieu of advances in open discussion of pornography, its conventions, and its status as representation and entertainment, porn companies have created sex education lines that deviate from the usual tropes of pornography, instead using the culturally designated site of obscene sexual discourse to attempt to educate where parents and governmental institutions refuse to. Nina Hartley spearheaded this trend in 1994 with her *Nina Hartley's Guide to...* series, and says of the project, "My sex education tapes were designed to counter our culture-wide 'sexual illiteracy' through a blend of factual biological, anatomical, physiological, historical and cultural information coupled with explicit demonstration and a touch of titillation" (205).

⁴ Sigel notes in *Governing Pleasures* that one of the more popular subjects of pornographic postcards in the 1890s was "sexualized images of food" (123). Sigel reflects, "Postcards mocked the pretensions of the upper classes, as libertine literature had, and returned the protean body—the pissing, farting, sexualized body—to the gaze of the masses" (123). Such indulgence in this protean body can be seen in almost all of the films discussed in this project, and is indicative of a perceived pre-modern "bawdiness."

⁵ Sweetheart Video state in their "About Us": "Sweetheart Video is committed to quality and realism. We never 'cut' during the sex scenes, loop footage, or 'position' the girls during their encounters. This allows our viewers to fully experience, if vicariously, the entire sexual encounter in real time as it occurred."

⁶ This is typical of most Sweetheart and Sweet Sinner productions, featuring titles such as *Lesbian Daydreams: Older Women, Younger Girls*, the *Mother Lovers Society* series, and *Legends and Starlets*. In a manner reflective of pornography's dependence on public/private divisions in order to transgress them, these titles foreground the difference in age between performers, celebrating the pleasures of maturity and experience at the same time as they reemphasize age distinctions of "younger" and "older."

⁷ See *Feminism, Marriage, and the Law in Victorian England, 1850-1895* by Mary Lyndon Shanley; *The Brother-Sister Culture in Nineteenth-Century Literature: From Austen to Woolf* by Valerie Sanders; *Incest & Influence: The Private Life of Bourgeois England* by Adam Kuper; and *Family Likeness: Sex, Marriage, and Incest from Jane Austen to Virginia Woolf* by Mary Jean Corbett.

⁸ The fact that they are half-siblings should not be mistaken for the film's avoidance of more intimate relations. After all, one of the most successful series in porn is *Taboo*. There are plentiful examples of all manner of incestuous couplings in hardcore, some of which involve actual blood relatives, usually twins. Rather, the film's choice to make them half-siblings is to highlight the cross-class coupling between gardener and lady of the house.

⁹ Pornographic film typically only invokes the institution of marriage as a way of demonstrating its inadequacies. Common storylines involve wives who, dissatisfied with inattentive husbands, embark on sexual adventures (*Easy*, 1978), or the similar plotline in which a couple explore the swinger lifestyle as a way of aiding their stale marriage (*Never Sleep Alone*, 1983). Incest narratives often employ this narrative, as in the popular series, *Taboo* (1980-1986), and the hardcore miniseries, *Taboo: American Style* (1984). Another variant on this narrative is the married woman who moonlights as a porn performer (*The Smiths*, 2012, *Careful, He May Be Watching*, 1985). Gonzo porn represents sex as entirely divorced from marriage, occurring within a "pornotopia."

¹⁰ See Bernardi, Daniel. "Interracial Joysticks: Pornography's Web of Racist Attractions." *Pornography: Film and Culture*, ed. Peter Lehman. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 2006. 220-243; Collins, Patricia Hill. "Pornography and Black Women's Bodies." *Gender, Race and Class in the Media: A Text-Reader*, eds. Gail Dines and Jean M. Humez. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995. 279-286; Cowan, Gloria and Robin R. Campbell. "Racism and Sexism in Interracial Pornography: A Content Analysis." *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 18 (1994): 323-338; Dines, Gail. "King Kong and the White Woman: *Hustler* Magazine and the Demonization of Black Masculinity." *Journal of Violence Against Women* 4.3 (1998): 291-307; Williams, Linda. "Skin Flicks on the Racial Border: Pornography, Exploitation, and Interracial Lust." *Porn Studies*, ed. Linda Williams. London: Duke UP, 2004. 271-308. For work that focuses specifically on nineteenth-century pornographies, see Colette Colligan's essay "Anti-Abolition Writes Obscenity: The English Vice, Transatlantic Slavery, and England's Obscene Print Culture," Lisa Z. Sigel's *Governing Pleasures* especially the chapter "Filth in the Wrong People's Hands: Postcards and the Expansion of Pornography" (119-155), and "The Colonial Harem: Images of Suberoticism" by Malek Alloula, in *Feminism and Pornography*, ed. Drucilla Cornell.

¹¹ Noelle, Nica. E-mail interview. 20 April, 2012.

¹² Noelle, Nica. E-mail interview. 20 April, 2012.

¹³ The reason for such listings is in order to book shoots. It is common for a white female performer to put off doing interracial until later in her career, and then to perform it as a landmark “first” for the starlet, which is then advertised as a selling point for that film. The same is true of other sex acts, such as boy/girl (for an exclusively girl-girl performer), anal, and gangbangs, perceived to be in some way transgressive.

¹⁴ Nat Turner’s name invites comment. African American performers occasionally employ stage names that connote slavery seemingly as a form of reclaiming as well as exploiting the hypermasculine associations of this connotation. See also the performer Mandingo.

CHAPTER TWO
“IT’S MY OWN INVENTION”: SEXUAL SUBJECTIVITY, AUTHORSHIP,
AND FEMININITY IN PORNOGRAPHIC ADAPTATIONS OF LEWIS CARROLL’S
***ALICE* BOOKS**

When I explain my project to colleagues and friends, they are typically eager to hear which texts have been adapted by pornographers. On hearing that *Alice in Wonderland* is one of these texts, they often respond with a mixture of apprehension and disgust, or a roll of the eyes as if to say, “Of course.” These *Alice* adaptations are the ones people are the least anxious to hear about, or that appear to confirm existing concerns about pornography. Alice is a child in Carroll’s stories, and in discussions of “pornography” the specter of “child pornography” often looms nearby. Considering Alice is the creation of a man subsequently suspected of pedophilic desires,¹ the prospect of pornographers exploiting this character in sexually explicit ways understandably makes some people uncomfortable. And yet, this perception implies that mainstream adaptations—the Disney film, for example—or even the original stories themselves are not exploiting the image of the girl in sexualized ways. In this way, it is instructive that hardcore pornography is a genre that, in spite of its usual exploitation of iconography of youth, opts instead to focus on an adult Alice and the process of maturity, more interested in the processes of female sexual subjectivity than the innocence of youth.

As thoroughly detailed in Will Brooker’s *Alice’s Adventures: Lewis Carroll in Popular Culture*, the cultural meaning and perception of Alice, both text and character, has been deeply influenced by a combination of media attention to Carroll’s relationship with Alice Liddell, Carroll’s photographs of nude children,

psychoanalytic theory, and feminist interpretations—studies which, according to Brooker, “formed the basis for an understanding of Carroll that persists to the present day” (xvii). Alice and her Wonderland, the meaning of her image and journey, have become culture texts. Brooker notes, “Carroll and Alice currently circulate as cultural myths, cultural icons” (xiv), myths and icons that perform particular functions for twenty-first century consumers. The same can be said for all the works of fiction, and the characters within them, addressed in this project, yet Alice is particularly notable as “a more broadly based creature than many other literary characters, not dependent upon the vision of one creator alone” (Pilinovsky 175). Alice, as Helen Pilinovsky argues, stands apart as a culture text due to “the taboo issue that is central to the cultural fixation with *Alice*: the circumstances surrounding its composition” (176). Namely, Carroll and the suspicions surrounding his love of children, Alice Liddell in particular.

Pornographic adaptations of *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* tend to incorporate the various analyses of girlhood, womanhood, and sexuality into narratives of adulthood and female sexual exploration. While Carroll is ambivalent about Alice’s maturation at best, and resistant and controlling at worst, narrative pornography of the golden age presents sexual regression as not simply undesirable but outright destructive. Female sexual maturation is presented as a necessity and a pleasure. In later adaptations, the shifts in pornographic format ironically enable a return to the episodic Alice structure, exploring the sadomasochistic elements of the *Alice* stories in connection to female sexual subjectivity, in turn revealing the complex nature of pornographic authorship.

Considering the breadth of Brooker's project, his handling of the topic of pornography is both disappointing and revealing. The publishers saw fit to include a review quote from *Choice* in the jacket blurb that exclaims, "he looks at the illustrations for various versions of the tales, fictional writings, and appropriations of the Alice figure in other cultural contexts such as films, video games, web sites, *and even pornography*" (my italics). Yet the only mention of pornography in the book is via a dismissal of pornographic film as appropriate or suitable for analysis within a chapter on film adaptations. The last paragraph of the chapter announces, "Explicitly sexual images of Alice in Wonderland do exist, but they remain across a cultural boundary, in the category of pornography" (227). This apparently is reason enough not to investigate, in spite of Brooker's attention to art films such as Jan Svankmajer's "surreal Czech animation of 1989" *Alice* (200). Considering that both Bill Osco's and Jonas Middleton's pornographic adaptations were released at mainstream cinemas in their softcore versions, it is debatable which of these films is the furthest across the "cultural boundary," but it is nevertheless fair to say that culturally "pornography" as a genre is isolated in terms of structure, consumption, and critique.

It is also instructive to consider Brooker's positioning of pornography as "across a cultural boundary" when addressing adaptations of late-Victorian literature and culture, as so many of them explore spatial transgressions and dual personalities in connection with sexuality. This is particularly true of *Alice* adaptations, as the source text's heroine is literally transported to another realm where double meanings are the norm. Furthermore, the *Alice* books are plagued by

doubles: the “real” Alice Liddell and the fictional character; Charles Dodgson and Lewis Carroll; and the dichotomized readings of these relationships as either pure or perverse, innocent or sexual. As a source for pornography, then, the *Alice* books might appear to be dangerous ground, and yet aside from *Dracula*, Carroll’s young heroine is the most adapted text discussed in this project.

Built for Porn: Structure and *Alice*

In their essay on the Aldous Huxley Disney adaptation that never was, “Huxley’s ‘Deep Jam’ and the Adaptation of *Alice in Wonderland*,” David Leon Higdon and Phill Lehrman assert that while *Alice* “has tempted a number of film directors,...it has never received a fully satisfactory adaptation” (57). Part of this failure is to do with the structure of Carroll’s narrative: “Huxley’s immediate task...was to create a live-action frame tale which would not only provide the transitions into Wonderland but also successfully tame the episodic nature of Carroll’s book” (61). This need to *tame* the original text’s structure not only highlights the non-linear, nonsensical narrative of the story, but also signals the way pornography differs from traditional narrative. Rachel Falconer observes the ways in which the concept of an underworld Wonderland has served authors striving to embody a space “outside (or beneath) the normal spaces of social interchange” (9), and pornography in particular enjoys appropriating this notion for its separated, pornotopian purposes. The fact that *Alice* works so well for pornography² (so well, indeed, that the *Alice* stories have survived intact even in the gonzo age, as discussed

below) indicates the episodic nature of hardcore, and is suggestive of why some critics believe pornography to be antithetical to art and literature.³

As discussed in the introduction, the content of pornography is profoundly affected by legal and technological shifts, resulting in fairly well defined “ages.” The Golden Age (1972-1986), during which films were shot on film and many writers, directors, and performers worked in mainstream productions; The Silver Age, or video age (1986-late-1990s) which saw a decrease in production values, increase in output, and less focus on narrative; and the gonzo age (late-80s to present, but thrived with the advent of the internet), which saw a decline in the feature, increased amateur content, and gonzo’s domination of the industry. The 1970s were characterized by ambitious and often guerrilla filmmaking that reflected an opportunistic reaction to shifts in obscenity law, as well as an idealistic attitude toward the promise of adult film. During this time, hardcore porn was making more money at the theaters than Hollywood, and shared ad space with “legitimate” cinema.⁴ In addition, the feature porn film was exhibited in cinemas both XXX and mainstream; at this time, it was quite common to film a softcore version for release in mainstream cinemas, as was done with both *Alice in Wonderland: A XXX Musical* (1976) and *Through the Looking Glass* (1976).

This practice impacted the content of and approach to those films as broader distribution opportunities meant higher potential earnings, and therefore bigger budgets, higher production values and more of an effort to mimic traditional Hollywood narrative. In the twenty-first century, pirating, tube sites, and home entertainment have made it easier than ever before to consume pornography

anonymously and for free. The switch to video, then the Internet, and the deconstruction of porn films into porn scenes, mean that the format and exhibition of pornography has changed dramatically.⁵ I do not intend to make evaluative claims, but rather to highlight the difference in what pornography is and was in terms of structure, and to point to the fact that *Alice* has survived this shift in format in a way other texts have not, thanks to its pre-made pornographic structure.

In addition to the structure of Carroll's narrative, Alice's visuality is highly significant in its popularity as pornographic text. Alice's visuality was established in the form of Tenniel's illustrations, and has become the iconic image of "Alice" through various adaptations, but particularly the Disney film. As noted in chapter one, one of the reasons Victorian culture and society is so fascinating to postmodern culture, and particularly to visual mediums, is that the Victorians are our most recent "historical" ancestors that we can *see*. The popularity of Alice as pornographic heroine is no doubt partially to do with the fact that she is such a recognizable figure. Alice's signature dress and hair, and the Tenniel illustrations of these features in the original texts, elevate Alice to a visual realm that few literary characters rival. It should also be noted, at the risk of pointing out the obvious, that Alice is a girl—the only female protagonist studied in this project, and also the only protagonist studied who does not undergo a pornographic sex change. There are no gay male *Alice* adaptations; no male Alices in hetero productions. Apparently, as Carol J. Clover surmised in her study of slasher films, it is easier to masculinize a woman than it is to feminize a man. This is further borne out by the fact that several male characters from the books appear as females in several of the adaptations.

The Alice costume itself, conceived by Tenniel's illustrations, but also strongly influenced by the Disney manifestation of blue dress, white pinafore, knee-high socks, and long blonde hair secured in an Alice-band, is widely available in adult sizes both as party costumes and lingerie. Of the films and videos covered, the Disney incarnation of Alice is utilized in *Wonderland* (2002), *Fetish Fairy Tails: Alice in Summerland* (2005), *Tormented* (2009), *Malice in Lalaland* (2010), *Alice* (2010), *Alice: A Fairy Love Tale* (2010), and on the advertising at least, *Alice in Wonderland* (1976).⁶ The remaining films I was able to view that actually appropriate specific characters from the texts use an all-white dress, often with a pinafore or apron design, complete with signature long hair and knee socks, which in some ways harkens back to the original black and white illustrations. The Disney vision of Alice and her Wonderland acquaintances is so dominant, having "gained a monopoly on the next generation's fantasies" (Ross 223), that all manner of lingerie and Halloween costumes are based around the blue dress. As Brooker points out, however, even Disney's realization of Alice and Wonderland owes a debt to Tenniel: "the stockings and black strapped shoes, the waisted dress and white apron, the blond hair held back with what became known, in her honour, as an Alice band" (105). Yet, as Brooker admits, "it is striking how immediately that blue and blonde says 'Alice' to a readership used to Tenniel and to Disney's simplified adoption of his design" (127). In this way, a performer only need have blonde hair and blue lingerie in order to be suggestive of Alice.

Costume recognition and accessibility in itself, while it might seem trivial, lends the *Alice* texts to low budget genres such as pornography. Combined with the

episodic, vignette structure of the original texts, the *Alice* books require very little modification or budget in the transition to pornographic film, particularly those subgenres with no pretense toward an involved narrative. Yet, within those hardcore films that appropriate the familiar costume and imagery of the most popular visualizations of Alice and the members of Wonderland (and, in some cases, Looking-Glass Land), there is a broad spectrum of motivations, characteristics, and sexual representations that shed light on how culture reads and absorbs the *Alice* books and their mythology, as well as how pornographic film situates itself in relation to such a childhood classic.

“The Dream-Child”: Sexuality and Womanhood in *Alice in Wonderland*

Wonderland is similar to what Steven Marcus calls a “pornotopia,” a timeless, placeless space where everything is designed to facilitate and connote sex with no consequences; a space where it is “always bedtime” (269) and where language “is a prison from which [pornography] is continually trying to escape” (279). Similarly, U. C. Knoepfelmacher regards Wonderland as “an anti-linguistic otherworld” (153) where Carroll is able to indulge in “self-rejuvenation” (158), “regressive hostility to growth and sexual division” (5), and to use his heroine as an “authorial surrogate” (8). James Kincaid argues, “The *Alice* books are, above all, about growing up, and they recognize both the melancholy of the loss of Eden and the child’s rude and tragic haste to leave its innocence” (93). This focus on growing up in tandem with a resistance to this very process is perhaps the most obvious reason for the popularity of the *Alice* books in hardcore pornography—the journey from girlhood to

womanhood via experience and consumption hold much in the way of sexually suggestive imagery and concepts. In addition, the containment within narrative, particularly in the films of the twenty-first century, of this process is presented as sexually alluring.

Consumption of food and drink figure prominently in *Wonderland*, and in Victorian literature in general, and culturally connotes sexuality. Helena Michie observes that hunger “figures unspeakable desires for sexuality and power” (15), arguing that Victorian culture displaces this hunger onto metaphor. Alice is “a greedy little girl who tastes drinks and cakes as soon as she falls into Wonderland” (Talairach-Vielmas 49). For this reason, Nina Auerbach regards Alice as an active figure in *Wonderland*, while “the core of [her] nature, too, seems to lie in her mouth” (39). Auerbach muses in a footnote, “Does it go too far to connect the mouth that presides over Alice’s story to a looking-glass vagina?” (39). In pornotopia, it does not. She later provides evidence that suggests Carroll himself associated eating with sensuality and mouths with original sin (40).

Laurence Talairach-Vielmas also locates food and eating as central sexual signifiers within the stories, noting that in Victorian writing in general, “food always acted as a veiled metaphor for sexuality, most improper in the respectable Victorian woman” (54). But rather than viewing Alice as “explod[ing] out of Wonderland hungry and unregenerate” (Auerbach 46), Talairach-Vielmas sees Alice’s “voyage into womanhood” as “a journey into powerlessness” (10). Food is not a source of sexual agency and exploration. On the contrary, “the food she finds in Wonderland systematically seems to punish her acts of self-assertion, as if the luring treats which

peppered her adventures were devised to tame her appetite from within” (10). Rather than escaping the prescriptions of femininity and proper gendered behavior, “[h]er dream does not enable her to escape reality and to enter a wonderland where she can give vent to her appetites” (61).

Certainly, Alice is obsessed with food and drink, and her journey is a seemingly never ending trail of edible items that often have a physical impact on her, and sometimes a psychical one. While she is certainly “curious,” active and on the move, and consumes whatever edible things she comes across, it is difficult to fully embrace Auerbach’s reading that Alice is in control of her own physical changes and emerges from Wonderland “hungry and unregenerate.” Indeed, the Dormouse’s cautionary tale of the children stuck in the treacle well initially engages Alice, as she “always took a great interest in questions of eating and drinking” (Carroll 49), and yet the story has a subordinating effect, as Alice’s attitude changes from that of anger to politeness and humble promises to stop interrupting. Her desire to hear the story stems from a desire to hear about food, and yet the story warns against consumption, and Alice’s desire prompts her own self-silencing. Furthermore, the trial of the tarts, which results in Alice’s violent awakening from her dream, begins with further desirous thoughts and self-restraint on Alice’s part: “In the very middle of the court was a table, with a large dish of tarts upon it: they looked so good, that it made Alice quite hungry to look at them—‘I wish they’d get the trial done,’ she thought, ‘and hand round the refreshments!’ But there seemed no chance of this; so she began looking at everything about her to pass away the time” (73). Alice’s desire for the tarts goes unsatisfied, as Talailach-Vielmas observes, and

yet Alice does not avert her eyes from “everything about her” and ultimately her verbal outbursts and physical growth have the effect of disrupting and then dismantling proceedings, leading to the ambiguous “fright” and “anger” (83) Alice experiences before waking up. As Jennifer Geer observes, “For an instant, Alice assumes a position directly contrary to those prescribed by domestic ideology or ideals of girlhood” (9). Yet, any lingering ambiguity regarding Alice’s empowerment and subversive agency is quickly stifled by “a transition back into the domestic” (Geer 10) and the anonymous narrator’s instruction that it was “a wonderful dream” (Carroll 84). Finally, there is Alice’s older sister’s vision of her little sister as “a grown woman....how she would keep, through all her riper years, the simple and loving heart of her childhood; and how she would gather about her other little children, and make *their* eyes bright and eager with many a strange tale” (86). Thus, the domesticating framework of the real world defangs Alice’s subversive adventures.

Bill Osco’s *Alice in Wonderland* (1976) appears to consciously subvert the sexually condemnatory attitude that emerges from Carroll’s *Wonderland*. As Helen Pilinovsky notes, “Reversing the polarity of the original Victorian narrative, the 1976 *Alice* rejects the notion of a glorified childhood. This twentieth-century *Wonderland* conveys that maturity—physical, sexual, and emotional maturity—can be magical, and that there’s little to fear from the inevitability of growing up” (182). Osco’s Alice begins as a young and sexually inexperienced woman, “just not that kind of girl,” who rejects her would-be boyfriend William’s advances. Alice is a librarian, and the film opens with her in the famous blue dress, her hair tied up,

arguing with William. “Who said I wanted *that* kind of girl?” he cries. Alice responds, “You’ve made it clear any number of times!” William associates her abstinence with age, claiming, “The body is all grown up, but the mind is still a little girl’s....You’ve got all the right equipment, but you don’t know how to put it to work.” After he leaves, Alice muses to herself, “Maybe I am missing something. Could it be that important?” She decides to get back to her librarian duties, and the next book to process is *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, which she admits she has never read. She sings a song about all the things she has missed out on because she “was too busy growing up” concluding, “I wanna live!” shakes her hair down, and starts daydreaming: “Sure I can grow up all over again—I can at least try.” Alice didn’t grow up correctly, and she is determined to set things to rights.

Mr. Rabbit appears, saying he is late for the Queen’s party, and disappears through the looking glass. Alice follows with much the same gusto as Carroll’s heroine, crying out, “Here I come!” Unlike Carroll’s story, though, Alice’s journey through Wonderland is characterized by encouragement of sexual desires, which are conflated variously with growing up, exploring your imagination, trusting what feels good, and being yourself. Sexuality and appetite are not condemned or punished. In fact, Alice is put on trial for her “chastity” and is found guilty. Her punishment is to “go down on the Queen.” For a heterosexual pornographic film, there are a number of deviant and queer sexualities on display, and the overwhelming message of the film is to shake off the guilt and shame women are socialized to internalize as part of their sexuality.

This Wonderland is a place where perversions mingle with naivety, rendering any dirtiness clean, or meaningless. For example, the King has no understanding of Alice's meaning when she tries to explain her desire to wait until marriage by using terms such as "clean, unblemished, spotless." He assures her, "I won't put any spots on you, I like you just the way you are." In this pornotopian Wonderland, such connotations are meaningless. Similarly, when a trial is suggested to assess Alice's chastity, the only rationale for such an event is that it is in Carroll's book. The Queen cries out, "Trial? A trial? Where is it written that we have to give you a trial?" The Hatter hands the King a copy of *Alice's Adventures* and exclaims, "It says so right here in this book." Thus, they do, suggesting the limiting and punitive nature of Carroll's text; indeed, any source text for a film adaptation. At the same time, the fact that Alice is on trial for chastity ironizes Carroll's puritanical attitude toward sexuality. Roger Ebert, in his review of the film, exclaims that it will have Carroll "spinning in his grave." Indeed, the trial does not end with the court attacking Alice. The Wonderland inhabitants have been nothing but supportive of Alice throughout the film, and the trial is followed by a segment titled "Fun in Wonderland," a whacky series of orgiastic imagery and visual jokes that frequently conflate food and sex. Two women kiss while eating a grapefruit, and Rabbit turns down the King's offer of a ménage à trois saying, "No thank you sire, I just had a prune Danish."

The sexual activities within Wonderland are unorthodox and occasionally queer. Not only does Alice enjoy inter-species sex with the Scrugs and Humpty Dumpty, she also participates in interracial cunnilingus with the King. Earlier in the

film, Alice chastises a southern belle who is on top of a Black Knight—literally, an African American Knight—having sex. Alice sings, “What’s a nice girl like you doing on a Knight like this?” and “Why don’t you settle down, get married, raise a family./ In a house with a white picket fence filled with kids and little puppy!” The song is followed by a White Knight running up and shouting accusations of “cheating.” He pulls the woman off, and yells, “Don’t you ever lay your hands on him again!” revealing that the Black Knight is in fact his lover. They walk away to the palace with their arms around each other. This punchline makes a mockery of Alice’s concern over the couple’s interracial public lovemaking, her urging for a traditional domestic arrangement, and avoids any homophobic mincing on the part of the homosexual couple. Finally, Tweedledee and Tweedledum are brother and sister, rather than two brothers, and enjoy a harmonious sexual relationship with no concern for real-world notions of incest. Such transgressive sexualities abound in this pornotopian, musical Wonderland—all the more reason for disconcertion following Alice’s emergence from her dream.

Alice wakes up to find William, returning to apologize. “I came back to talk to you,” he says, “I was thinking over those things...some of those things you said...” Alice interrupts him and says, “It’s all right....There’s nothing between us—except your shirt.” What follows is a romantic love-making scene which focuses predominantly on fellatio and penetrative intercourse, followed by the money shot, and yet Alice’s own climax as narrative signifier is ostensibly the reason for the scene; the visual and symbolic demonstration of her growing up and achieving womanhood. “Oh, there’s so many things going on inside of me!” she cries,

approaching orgasm. It is here that the film cuts to a close-up of William's ejaculation, then cuts back to Alice's orgasmic facial expression. In this way, the film conflates male and female pleasure, with the male climax privileged as the site of orgasm for both parties. Following a freeze-frame on Alice's ecstatic face, we see a series of images that appear to function as displaced visionings of Alice's sexual pleasure, much like the bells ringing and the bombs exploding of Linda's orgasm in *Deep Throat* (Williams *Screening Sex* 133-134): Alice rides on horseback topless, joyfully slides down a river waterfall naked, and frolics with William in the forest. Linda Williams has spoken at length in her book, *Hard Core*, about the difficulties in visually representing female orgasm, and this is an instructive example of the ways in which hardcore has typically worked around it, if in fact they bother to try to represent it at all. Indeed, it is worth praising the film for attempting to foreground Alice's orgasmic awakening, even if the filmmakers then fall back on the requisite money shot.

What is potentially more problematic is the post-script, which informs the viewer that "ALICE SETTLED DOWN/GOT MARRIED/RAISED A FAMILY/IN A HOUSE/WITH/A WHITE PICKET FENCE/FILLED WITH KIDS/AND A LITTLE/ARF! ARF!/PUPPY." The irony of this conclusion is made explicit in the subsequent note: "BE SURE TO/PICK UP A COPY/OF/ALICE'S NEW BOOK/'FEAR OF SHRINKING.'" In an allusion to Erica Jong's 1973 novel *Fear of Flying*, which introduced the notion of the "zipless fuck," these final words are suggestive of sexual subversion of the domestic, regressive impulse of Carroll's Wonderland. That said, it is made clear in the concluding sex scene and subsequent montage that she *does* settle into a

monogamous, heteronormative relationship with William, characterized by androcentric sex acts, even if this does not involve white picket fences and a puppy.

“Which is to be Master”: The Spectre of Paternal Control in *Through the Looking Glass*

Carroll’s authorial presence in *Looking-Glass* is distinctly different from that of *Wonderland*. As Knoepflmacher argues, Carroll is more willing to allow Alice some agency, even authorship, and seems resigned to the inevitability and necessity of maturation. Yet, the suggestion that Alice is merely a figment of the imagination—a creation inhabiting the Red King’s dream—undermines much of the agency Alice is permitted. Koepflmacher allows that “Although Carroll pulls rank on Alice, he is perfectly content to let her be his stand-in for the duration of the *Looking-Glass* games. He can afford to nap while this able agent carries out his design” (200). Reluctant and regressive, then, but an improvement on the sadistic authorial presence of *Wonderland*. Yet, in *Looking-Glass* Carroll renders the presence of an anonymous masculine force more profound by questioning whether or not Alice even exists; she may be part of the Red King’s dream. As Auerbach notes, “The question that weaves through the book is no longer ‘who am I?’ but ‘which dreamed it?’ If the story is the dream of the Red King (the sleeping embodiment of passion and masculinity), then Alice, the White Pawn (or pure female child) is exonerated from its violence, although in another sense, as she herself perceives, she is also in greater danger of extinction” (42).

Through the Looking Glass (Dir. Jonas Middleton, 1976), easily the most unusual, dark, and horrifying of the *Alice* adaptations, as well as the most loose,

offers up a vision of what might happen when a woman does not mature sexually, does not author her own sexual identity, and instead remains under the authority of an abusive paternal author. In this way, while very different in tone from *A XXX Musical*, *TTLG* conveys essentially the same message warning against sexual regression. Catherine Burgess (played by Catharine Burgess) is an emotionally vapid socialite wife and mother, living in the same mansion she herself grew up in, and suffering from mental disturbance ever since her father (Jamie Gillis) died six years prior. Memories of her father and the incestuous abuse she experienced as a child plague her mind, and she routinely escapes to the attic where she masturbates before the huge mirror while discoursing with her reflection as though with her father. Her image is of herself, but her voice overlaps that of her father, and when a mysterious figure in the form of her father appears in the mirror and crosses into her world, Catherine is gradually lured into a sexual hell on the other side of the Looking Glass. Looking Glass Land reflects and enables Catherine's regressive sexuality, retarded by the trauma of father-daughter incestuous abuse, and is a sexual hell rather than a pornotopia. Catherine embodies a "female schizophrenia of authorship" (Gilbert & Gubar 78) that speaks to the tensions of authorship within the source text, female sexual subjectivity, and pornography.

Auerbach observes in a footnote that "Alice of *Looking-Glass* [is] a truly passive figure" (35). Alice is literally a pawn: "the dominant metaphor of a chess game whose movements are determined by invisible players spreads her sense of helplessness and predestination over the book" (42). *Looking-Glass* renders Alice more powerless than she appeared to be in *Wonderland* through an overwhelming

sense that she is not author of herself, in spite of the fact that she is presented as having more authorial command than ever before. In addition to the suggestion that she is authored by the Red King through his dream, the anonymous narrator inserts his voice much more so than in *Wonderland*, and finally Carroll's bitter presence as author of all is tangible from beginning to end in a way not felt in *Wonderland*.

Deborah Ross disagrees, regarding Carroll as "empower[ing] his young female audience (the real Alice Liddell and her sisters as well as the future generations of his readers) by telling them it was good to dream. He also encouraged their authorship of their own dreams by allowing them to participate in the creation of these stories, a participation chronicled in the stories themselves" (214). From this perspective, Alice is not only more than a mere pawn, she is a co-author of her dreams. In *Looking-Glass*, Ross goes on, "Carroll also permits Alice, temporarily, to escape his own authorship" (215) in the woods in which names are forgotten.⁷ Yet, outside of these woods, *Looking-Glass* has a noticeably strong narratorial presence; this anonymous narrator appears to know the Alice of *Looking-Glass* much more intimately than that of *Wonderland*, and he inserts himself as moderator and observer several times in the text. These shifts in narrative focus have a distancing and objectifying effect on Alice, as well as raising questions about who is really in control of her narrative.

This issue of narrative control can be seen in feminist interpretations of gonzo vs. feature porn; that gonzo fetishizes the female body and invites sadistic, scopophilic desire on the part of the (presumed) male audience. Ironically, commentators often state that women prefer sex with a story, and there is a

pervasive sense that pornography without a narrative, or sex without context, is both more exploitative and less valuable as a text. It's "just sex" and therefore more focused on women's bodies as sole sex objects. Yet, this perspective does not address the performers as sexual subjects, *performing* sex. This perspective has recently been taken up by feminist pornographers, who are committed to depicting "real" sex, navigated by the performers themselves.⁸

In *Looking-Glass*, Alice is even more at risk of extinction than in *Wonderland*, and in more ways than simply death; Alice is at first "invisible" (11), then is told by the Rose that she is "beginning to fade" (24), loses her name (44), is told by Tweedledee that she is "only a sort of thing in [the Red King's] dream!" and that if he wakes up "you'd go out—bang!—just like a candle!" (57), and that she is "not real" (58). Yet, at the same time, Alice is bold and assertive; she is excited by the notion of escaping from the controls of real life, declaring, "Oh, what fun it'll be, when they see me through the glass in here, and can't get at me!" (9), and once she is in Looking-Glass Land, once again looking for the garden, she pretends to argue with the house, asserting, "I'm not going in again yet. I know I should have to get through the Looking-glass again—back into the old room—and there'd be an end of all my adventures!" (19). Such an assertive attitude is dampened, however, by the fact that Alice is variously asserting herself to kittens, houses, and often herself. When it comes to running down and looking at the giant insects and flowers, Alice behaves strangely, "checking herself just as she was beginning to run down the hill, and trying to find some excuse for turning shy so suddenly" (34), and starts talking to herself again.

Alice's position as a pawn in a chess game is similarly ambiguous in terms of agency: while she is indeed a pawn in an anonymous player's game, she is also transgressing boundaries, visually represented by a block of stars on the page that signal Alice's move into a new square, one square closer to her goal of reaching the Eighth Square where she will become Queen "and it's all feasting and fun" (32). Here, the "feasting and fun" that Alice partook of so greedily in *Wonderland* has become more of a fasting for Alice. She notes in the opening pages that she shouldn't mind going without "fifty dinners at once"—"I'd far rather go without them than eat them!" (5), unwillingly eats a very dry biscuit (31), takes no plum cake for herself (109), and eventually is attacked by the food at the feast prompting her to destroy the meal by pulling up the table cloth (151-52). When she does attempt to buy an egg at the shop, she is skeptical about their quality—"They mightn't be at all nice, you know" (78)—and the egg grows larger and larger, eventually turning into Humpty Dumpty. This world is a far cry from the bountiful and hungry world of *Wonderland*, where Alice was constantly eating and drinking, and adds to the impression of Alice as more subdued and peripheral, as if wasting away.

Alice's "ghost-like" (Auerbach 42) presence is matched by a more dominant masculine controlling presence over the narrative. Carroll takes a lot longer in getting to Looking-Glass Land than *Wonderland*, providing a lengthy description of Alice indoors playing with Dinah's kittens and musing over punishments: playfully threatening the kittens, and then considering her own bad behaviours and potential punishment. It is not long before the narrator breaks in with a past-tense, first-person thought: "And here I wish I could tell you half the things Alice used to say,

beginning with her favourite phrase ‘Let’s pretend’” (5-6). Later, the narrative is interrupted once again, as the narrator describes Alice in the rowing boat, “bent over the side of the boat, with just the ends of her tangled hair dipping into the water—while with bright eager eyes she caught at one bunch after another of the darling scented rushes” (75) and “with flushed cheeks and dripping hair and hands, she scrambled back into her place” (77). Such wistful observation has the effect of rendering Alice the “dreamchild” in a more objectifying way than *Wonderland*, not least because the narrator is observing Alice in the same location where the original tale was told by Carroll himself. Yet, there is an ambivalence directed toward Alice’s maturation; even though Carroll interrupts and overshadows his heroine, he also permits agency and authorship throughout the text. Hence, Knoepfmacher’s contention that “The *Looking-Glass* Alice...is quite deliberately presented as a mirror image of the narrator who dominated the heroine of the *Wonderland* text” (209-210). At the same time, Carroll’s presence, pathetic and indulgent as it may be, is persistent.

Perhaps most jarring is the narrator’s aside regarding the White Knight who, it appears, represents Carroll himself saying goodbye to Alice as she goes off to become an adult woman. The narrator explains,

Of all the strange things that Alice saw in her journey Through The Looking-Glass, this was the one that she always remembered most clearly. Years afterwards she could bring the whole scene back again, as if it had been only yesterday—the mild blue eyes and kindly smile of the Knight—the setting sun gleaming through his hair, and shining on his armour in a blaze of light that quite dazzled her. (125)

It is a melancholy scene, and one in which the desires of the narrator, or the White Knight, are palpable: for Alice to cherish this moment more than the others and to

recall it in dazzling fashion. Yet, she does not shed the tears the Knight was expecting, and Alice runs off thoughtlessly rather than giving him an emotional goodbye. It is this sense of melancholy, verging on bitterness, that characterizes the masculine authorial control over Alice in *Looking-Glass*. It is a presence Kincaid sees as

invit[ing] our hostility and aggression....The necessarily ambivalent attitude toward Alice reinforces a rhetoric which shifts the direction of its hostile wit and therefore...makes it impossible for the reader to find a consistent position or a comfortable perspective. Along with the warmth and sentimentality is a truly dark cynicism and a point of view which can only be called misanthropic. (93)

Even Knoepfmacher, who persuasively argues that Alice is allowed far more agency and authorship than in *Wonderland*, concedes that by at the end of the story, Carroll “can no longer bring himself to endorse Alice’s maturation” (224) and renders her climactic crowning a violent farce: “Queen Alice has been dethroned. As far as Carroll is concerned, she should have left off at square seven” (226). Middleton’s film positions Catherine and her father in a similar dynamic to that of Alice and Carroll, but as a way of demonstrating the damaging effects of regressive female sexuality and dominating paternal control.

Talairach-Vielmas notes of the *Alice* books, “A male voice lurks behind the text and controls the female voices” (51). This sinister notion of Carroll (and perhaps authors in general) as puppet master correlates with the notion made famous by Laura Mulvey of the voyeuristic, sadistic male gaze exercised by cinema-goers, and appealed to by traditional narrative cinema. Films that are considered “body genres” (Williams “Film Bodies”), such as horror, melodrama, and especially pornography, tend to elicit a deeper concern regarding spectatorial involvement

with the text than other more “legitimate” genres. Typically, research focuses on spectator identification and potential effects on these spectators, presumed to be heterosexual men (Williams *Hard Core* 187-89). In a sense, with pornographic film, an anonymous male spectator is partial author of the text, which is emphasized by various generic discursive addresses. These addresses position the heterosexual male viewer as the focus of the film’s address, made most obvious by subgenres such as POV, but also through subtle stylistic moves such as the performer making eye contact with the camera. Yet regardless of genre, mainstream heterosexual pornographic film tends to operate according to the notion of a spectre-like masculine voyeuristic presence hovering at the margins of the frame. Middleton’s film, which deviates from traditional hardcore in many ways, foregrounds the masculine, patriarchal sexual voyeur as a manipulative force on a sexually disturbed woman as well as an integrated part of her own psyche, inciting if not controlling her sexual desires. Just as Alice is allowed authorial agency, only to have her entire existence called into question, so Catherine’s sexual agency is undermined by the fact that she is living under the paternal influence of her father and a demon.

In 1976, the year of the film’s release, Middleton described his film as a “psychological thriller, supernatural sex, not really a porno” (Slade 151), adding that with this film he is “trying to upgrade the genre” (151). More recently, in 2010, Middleton described his film as “artsy-fartsy....but it’s quite Fellini-esque, and it’s quite risqué” (Lindsey). Joseph W. Slade, also writing in 1976, concurs that it is “arty,” yet adds that it is “not always tasteful” (149). Slade observes that “recent attempts to enhance the genre have fastened on decadent aristocrats in elegantly

perverse settings” (154), recognizing the industry’s attempts to move away from “American vulgarity by drawing on Victorian English and French erotic vocabularies” (154). Yet, as is demonstrated by all of the films addressed in this project which draw from canonical literary sources, with vulgarity and social-sexual transgression arguably the primary impulse of pornography, the results of such hybrids are often more grotesque and contradictory than a by-the-numbers porno movie. Slade suggests this paradox with his efforts at describing Middleton’s film, acknowledging the artiness of it, and attributing a “pseudo-elegance” to the project, yet allowing that “parts of that film are extremely distasteful” (154). “When Middleton tries to jettison formulas,” Slade argues, “he is usually grotesque” (154), concluding “Middleton’s intent loses itself between slickness and coarseness” (154). Thus, ironically, attempts to deviate from formulaic representation result in grotesqueries and tastelessness, ostensibly central characteristics of the hardcore genre.

The opening shot of Middleton’s film sets the symbolic stage, as hands peel a white face-mask down from Catherine’s stoic face in close-up, suggesting a dual-persona. At the same time, shots of her running about in a garden, chasing an apparition of her father are cut into the scene as she cries out, “Papa! Where are you? Papa!” Catherine, it is revealed, is in the salon, and nearby friends gossip about her strange behavior during their social visits at her house: “I will say she can be a very gracious hostess, but one never really feels comfortable. Her manners are so fine, it’s like she learned them in school. You know what she reminds me of? One of those wind-up dolls!” Catherine is the adult embodiment of the rigorously trained

Alice, a girl who repeats her lessons dutifully, and is the picture of middle-class, Victorian girlhood. Yet Catherine is also something else, as one of the other friends suggests in noting her scandalous attire at the Country Club: "I mean, it was so sheer that you could see right through it when the light was behind her." Catherine is a well-trained girl, a vacuous Stepford Wife, and a sexually scandalous subject of titillating gossip all rolled into one.

Catherine invites a married couple, new to the area, for dinner that night, and it becomes clear that she is eager to escape her life, house, and social situation, at the same time as she is bound to remain due to intangible forces. Catherine seems haunted as she recounts memories of her father in a robotic, wistful fashion, telling her guests how envious she is of their extensive travels. "Yes, Catherine needs to get away," her husband Richard dryly notes. Catherine looks vaguely up, and in a blank voice explains, "Don't get me wrong though, I really love this place. I really love it. I've lived all my life in this house. I was born here—you can't imagine all the wonderful memories it holds for me." Her guests glance about uneasily, and Richard explains that after Catherine finally consented to have the house redecorated, she insisted on cramming all the "junk" in the attic. "But it's not junk Richard," she remarks quickly and coolly. Subsequent events that night demonstrate that Catherine has been drinking and on medication since her father's death, that she has a tense and sexless marriage, and seeks refuge in the attic where her childhood bedroom furniture is stored, including a large and impressively-framed looking glass.

The first scene before the looking glass occurs this night after she has instigated and then rejected sexual intercourse with Richard. Escaping to the attic, Catherine changes into a white dress that she pulls from the closet, and begins discoursing with herself as she masturbates before the looking glass. Just as Alice is so fond of scolding herself and talking as though she were two people, so Catherine performs two roles—that of herself and her father—and enacts sexual scenarios from her past. Also, just as Alice’s authorial agency is illusory, so Catherine’s domination of these sexual activities are regressive and rooted in an abusive, incestuous past. All the scenes of this nature are edited in such a way as to blur the lines between self and reflection: Catherine’s body position barely shifts when the shot cuts from “real” image to reflected image, and her reflected image’s voice begins to merge with that of her father’s. Catherine asserts, “I’m getting so grown up. No wonder everybody stares at me the way they do....Wouldn’t you like to see? To touch me?” “Anything for you,” her “father” replies, “Anything for you Catherine. Catherine. Catherine, I love you Catherine.”

The initial scene reaches its apex when translucent green hands reach out from the looking glass toward Catherine’s naked body as she masturbates. When she sees the creature’s face, in the image of her father, she recoils but stays; the fingers snake up her legs and enter her vagina, and through a point-of-view shot the film depicts the interior of Catherine’s vaginal canal, like a rabbit-hole rendered explicitly Freudian. Catherine writhes in orgasmic ecstasy as the creature, now fully manifest in her world, growls and leers, digitally stimulating her, when suddenly a

knock at the door startles her back to reality. The creature is gone, and Catherine's glance at the looking glass is inflected with both fear and longing.

Catherine's later confrontations with the looking glass are more bold, and demonstrate Catherine's lust for her own image while embodying her father for sexual stimulation. Two particularly significant instances occur before Catherine is finally seduced into the hell of Looking-Glass Land. First, Catherine crosses over temporarily and encounters what appears to be her father in a terrifying scene that categorizes the film as part of the horror genre. Catherine again discourses with her reflection, which takes on both her voice and her father's. Catherine is more confident, asserting, "you're just a mirror....You hung in my bedroom when I was growing up. I knew you—very well." Catherine's association between sexuality and her own image, stemming from her father's abuse as well as her classed and gendered position in life, are further emphasized here as she says, "You're delicious," and responding, "Yes I am. I really am. See, there's nothing to be frightened of. Mirrors have always been kind to me. I'm delightful to look at." Her persona is indulgent and childish during these moments, reveling in self-adoration at the same time as she is embodying her father's adoration of her child-body.

Yet a shift occurs here, as the creature she thought to be her father begins to tempt her into its world, promising her "sensations you've never imagined. Pleasures you've always deserved." Catherine submits, and crosses over to find a particularly grotesque mad tea party. Instead of the tea and cake of Carroll's Wonderland, a naked woman in a mask crouches on all fours on a rotating cake dish, as the tea party guests, dressed in extravagant finery, inspect and comment on her

in nonsensical and aristocratic tones. As they cram their mouths with food, a man bearing a likeness to the Hatter observes she is “Well brought up and magnificently stuffed.” “She’d sit beautifully on your face,” a woman remarks. “Quite accomplished, but not as meaty as I” says another, taking a bite out of a leg of roast chicken. The scene deteriorates into gluttony and sexual acts, as the guests insert a carrot into the crouching woman’s vagina, eat food while engaging in all manner of sexual activity, and consume semen freshly ejaculated into goblets. Finally, when Catherine approaches the crouching woman, she pulls the mask back to reveal Catherine herself smiling devilishly back at her. “He wants you, you know that,” the Looking Glass Catherine tells her, prompting Catherine’s chase after the figure of her father while the tea party guests cackle maliciously. Catherine’s sexual agency is fragmented by the contaminating influence of patriarchal power and paternal authorship.

When Catherine finally reaches her father, he is standing on the surface of a lily-pad coated pool. He sinks beneath the surface, and when Catherine brushes the surface, peering in as if through a looking glass, a hand darts from the water and drags her in, waking her up in the attic. It is a chaotic and sinister depiction of Looking-Glass Land, suggestive of the original text’s conflation of food, bodily fluids, orifices, and sexuality. The doubling of Catherine forces a confrontation with the debauched reflection that Catherine has been masturbating before all this time, and signals that Looking-Glass Land is the fantasy location of Catherine’s regressive sexuality run amok, as well as the world of the demon who is attempting to seduce her by manipulating her unresolved history of incestuous child-abuse.

In a second instance, Catherine witnesses and masturbates to what appears to be an apparition of her father sexually molesting her as a girl. Her father is handing over the brush and mirror set that belongs to her mother, and her grandmother before that, and that Catherine has passed along to her daughter, Jennifer, in the prior scene. This set has symbolic and possibly supernatural significance throughout the film, suggestive of a cycle of incest or demonic enrapture, or both. In the apparition, young Catherine asks, "Does this mean I'm all grown up Papa? When Grandma's things become mine?" Papa responds, "It means you're very beautiful. It means it gives me pleasure to look at you. Like now, when you're excited this way." Growing up, as in *Osco's* musical, means reaching sexual maturity but also sexual accessibility, and not necessarily subjectivity.

The voyeur, in all the various Alice texts under analysis, is often the female protagonist herself, as a self-policing, always watchful young woman aware of her position as spectacle, and as a foil for the actual author. This is emphasized by Papa's assertion as he unclasps her dress that she can do what she feels "when you're all alone and you look in the mirror." He tells her to "go to the mirror Catherine. Show me what you do when you're all alone here." In this way, Catherine's autonomous sexuality is shown to be inseparable from that of the imagined masculine and paternal voyeur; the co-author of that sexuality. Yet the demon-Papa transfers authorship to Catherine as a tool of his own authorial control. After masturbating in front of her, and ejaculating in her mouth, he turns to the adult Catherine who has been masturbating and asserts, "It's what you wished to happen isn't it Catherine?" She cries out, "I'm vile. I'm vile, I know it." Catherine is

hovering between succumbing and resisting, asserting, “You’re not my father!” but ultimately submitting to the demon’s proposition. She crosses over, not as a result of unquestioning assent, but due to her unresolved trauma and stifling social position. Her attempts later that evening to escape the house are thwarted by her dismissive husband who, in another act of paternal control, simply medicates her and puts her to bed. Catherine appears before the mirror at the specified time, and the demon-Papa emerges naked and erect, and violently rapes her. Her screams wake Richard, but by the time he reaches the attic Catherine is gone.

Jennifer, meanwhile, is curiously disaffected, and quietly creeps to the attic herself where she sits before the looking glass, brushing her hair with the inherited brush. Shots of Jennifer brushing her hair before the mirror periodically cut into what Catherine is experiencing on the other side. It is a hellish, red-hued desert populated by monstrous humans in a constant sexual agitation, rolling around in the sand, rambling madly in a constant stream of verbal noise; a man moves about in somersaults ejaculating into his own mouth; a female mannequin torso roasts on a spit; a Queen bathes in a tub of water stained brown by faeces as a woman squats over her and urinates into the tub while they remark how “vile” and “repulsive” Catherine is. When Catherine frenziedly reaches the looking glass, which stands isolated on the top of a sand dune, she discovers she cannot return. Unlike Alice, who is returned to the safety and order of the real world in both texts, Catherine can never cross back through. The demon’s voice cries, “This your eternity!”

The film suggests the generational cycle of disturbed female sexuality at the hands of paternal sexual authorship and deception, as Catherine’s sobbing and

screaming is intercut with shots of Jennifer talking to herself, “embarking upon a process which seemingly can only end in the debauched, insane spectacle witnessed in the film only moments before” (Jackson 27). The image of Jennifer’s intent expression freezes and lingers as the credits roll, and Jennifer’s voice can be heard exclaiming, like Catherine did, “Wouldn’t you like to see what I do here?...wouldn’t you like to see me...touch me...” It is an unsettling end to an unsettling film. The same can be said for Carroll’s *Looking-Glass*. Carroll’s provocative concluding question, “Which dreamed it?” (158) can usefully be posed to Middleton’s film too.

“I Generally Hit Everything I Can See—When I Get Really Excited”: Adaptations in the BDSM Genre

Of all the texts analyzed in this project, the *Alice* books have the most adaptations and appropriations that fall under the fetish and BDSM categories: *Alice in Fetishland* (2000), *Alice in Bondageland* (2000), *Fetish Fairy Tales 3: Alice in Summerland* (2005), *Alice in Savageland* (2008), and *Alice in Tickleland* (2009). Most recently, a film titled *Alice in Fetishland* was included in the 2013 CineKink Film Festival in New York City. While the popularity of Alice with this particular genre may at first seem unusual, in fact the violence and “uncontrolled aggression” (Kincaid 93) of Wonderland and Looking-Glass Land, coupled with Alice’s variously dominant and submissive behaviors, make these particular appropriations more understandable. Alice’s initial fall down the rabbit-hole is undertaken with a thoughtless enthusiasm, “never once considering how in the world she was to get out again” (2), and her subsequent behavior is by turns domineering, petulant, and submissive. While critics have tended to regard Alice’s adventure as either

predominantly empowering or disempowering, in reality Alice oscillates between the two all the way until the final domesticating paragraph. The proliferation of *Alice*-themed BDSM films demonstrates the ways in which the original Carroll texts offer up a canvas for playing out the gender roles of masculine and feminine, master and slave, subject and object. Through BDSM's staging of "sexual commerce as a theater of transformation" (McClintock "Maid to Order" 87), the gender and subjectivity of Alice and her cohorts are constantly in flux.

Knoepfmacher has argued that the draw of girl-protagonists for male writers such as Carroll and Ruskin lies in their resentment toward the strict gender divisions of their youth, and a regressive desire to restore purity and indulge in childish fantasy through the innocent figure of the girl. In Carroll's work, Knoepfmacher argues, the authorial attitude toward Alice veers from resentful and controlling to reluctantly permissive, reflecting Carroll's struggle with accepting maturation. In *Wonderland*, Carroll is particularly bitter, "reappear[ing] in different guises to woo and yet to castigate the curious little Eve he can possess at least for the duration of a short dream" (174). Indeed, not only is Carroll aggressive toward his heroine, placing her in a succession of frustrating and violent scenarios, but also Alice herself is made to be aggressive, predatory, and impatient. Her dream is unpleasant, and serves more as an outlet for Carroll; an exercise in feminine projection (Knoepfmacher 11). It is unsurprising, then, that *Alice in Wonderland* has more BDSM-themed adaptations than any other novel under examination. While appearing to draw on and perpetuate a natural gender hierarchy, in reality BDSM "performs social power as both contingent and constitutive, as sanctioned neither by

fate nor by God, but by social convention and invention, and thus as open to historical change” (McClintock “Maid to Order” 91). Furthermore, the BDSM *Alice* films tend to position men in submissive roles and Alice in the dominant role, revealing the complicated uses of the *Alice* narrative and its oscillating identifications.

Alice’s experience in Wonderland has been interpreted in a multitude of ways, often influenced by the emotions expressed through Tenniel’s illustrations. While James R. Kincaid recognizes both “rootless hostility” and “free and uncompetitive joy” (92), a world where “Alice is the object of love as well as fear” (92), Jacqueline Labbe regards Wonderland as “dangerous for Alice” (24) and a world where “submission is the only answer” (24). Following Alice’s leap down the rabbit-hole, she quickly learns that she must navigate this new world and its unpredictable inhabitants, not to mention her own unpredictable physical changes, leading to her constantly oscillating position within the power relations of Wonderland. One moment she is replying “shyly” (27) to the Caterpillar and a moment later she is “swallowing down her anger as well as she could” (28). At the tea-party she speaks “angrily” and “with some severity” (44), but soon is “dreadfully puzzled” and speaking “as politely as she could,” “cautiously” and “thoughtfully” (46). Interrupting the tale of the treacle well, Alice finds herself “beginning very angrily,” but then asks the Dormouse “very humbly” (49) to continue, until finally finding the Hatter to be too rude to bear: “she got up in great disgust, and walked off: the Dormouse fell asleep instantly, and neither of the others took the least notice

of her going, though she looked back once or twice, half hoping that they would call after her” (50).

By the time Alice is asked to provide evidence at the trial, she has begun to grow large again and thus more daring. When told furiously by the Queen of Hearts to hold her tongue, Alice retorts, “I won’t!” adding “‘Who cares for you?...You’re nothing but a pack of cards!’ At this the whole pack rose up into the air, and came flying down upon her; she gave a little scream, half of fright and half of anger, and tried to beat them off” (83-84). Even during this dramatic finale, where Alice has “grown to her full size” (83) and recognizes the impotence and absurdity of the members of the court, Alice experiences both fear and anger equally. Furthermore, immediately following such emotions, the narrator takes over and proclaims “what a wonderful dream it had been” (84). Such a disconnect between narratorial interpretation and Alice’s actual experiences further contributes to the oscillating power relations in the text.

While Alice’s interactions with the Wonderland creatures are perhaps most memorably fraught with tension, she reserves her most bitter scoldings for herself, suggesting the degree to which the submissive is author of the scene in BDSM. As Anne McClintock observes in “Maid to Order,” “To argue that in consensual S/M the ‘dominant’ has power, and the slave has not, is to read theater for reality; it is to play the world forward. The economy of S/M is the economy of conversion: slave to master, adult to baby, pain to pleasure, man to woman, and back again” (87). Indeed, after scolding herself for crying, the narrator explains, “sometimes she scolded herself so severely as to bring tears into her eyes....for this curious child was very

fond of pretending to be two people” (6). The “two people” Alice pretends to be are the scolder and weeper, the dominant and the submissive, and such binary power relations characterize both Wonderland and Alice’s psyche (which, after all, *is* Wonderland). BDSM pornographers can rupture and stage these Wonderland dualities, transforming gendered subjectivity in the process.

Talairach-Vielmas argues that following Alice’s physical transformations and tears, “Alice is taught how self-containment, repression, and disembodiment mark the Victorian ideal: her body now melted away, she suffers from an identity crisis and like a schizoid child, scolding herself in the second person, mentions previous masochistic self-punishments” (56). While Talairach-Vielmas reads Alice as ultimately confined and imprisoned, such “schizoid” traits are to my mind more suggestive of the way Wonderland, in Geer’s view, “is the unlikely site of power struggles over the comforts of home and childhood” (2). More specifically, two competing desires are at work within the text: “the adult’s desire to dominate children and the child’s desire to resist that domination” (7). While Geer’s analysis centers around the narrator’s framing poems, which seem to contradict Alice’s adventures themselves, it is not too much of a leap to gender such forces as masculine and feminine, or to dichotomize them according to power relations of dominant and submissive; power relations that can then become pleurably performed, transformed, and ungendered in BDSM.

Alice rarely submits in the BDSM and fetish film appropriations; she is dominant throughout, and the members of each various “land” are subject to her punishments, not the other way round. Williams has observed that “although male

submissives apparently outweigh dominators in real-life heterosexual sadomasochistic practice, the incompatibility of this role with the more traditional use of heterosexual pornography as confirmation of viewers' masculine identity inhibits its incorporation into hard-core narrative" (*Hard Core* 196). Yet, the Alices of the fetish and BDSM titles are all for the most part dominant. In addition, as previously discussed, there are instances of homosexual and queer sexualities in the non-BDSM films that suggest a special connotation to "Alice" and "Wonderland" that initiate deviations within heterosexual pornographic film.

Summer Cummings' *Fetish Fairy Tales 3: Alice in Summerland* is a notably playful and reflexive light-BDSM fetish video, featuring four scenes in which Alice meets a character from Summerland: The White Rabbit, Shore Cat, The Caterpillar, and finally the Queen of Hearts (the only character to dominate Alice). *Alice in Summerland* establishes from the very title that this is Summer's Land. There is no confusion over authorship; Alice, Summer Cummings, and author are one. The video, like much fetish and BDSM pornography, involves no conventional sexual intercourse of any kind, and only small amounts of genital contact at all. As Williams has noted, like the Freudian interpretation of perverse sexuality, much of BDSM and its subgenres are characterized by a "lack of subordination to a genital goal of discharge or 'end pleasure'" (195). In this way, the video avoids much of the imbalanced power relations of genital sexual intercourse, and yet simultaneously foregrounds power relations via constant verbal and physical power play. BDSM in general is not about one person being dominant and one person being dominated; rather, it is about a contractual power play, one in which power is not fixed

(Williams *Hard Core* 228), and where participants can confront gender and power, subvert and play with it.

Talairach-Vielmas is careful to acknowledge the rather unpleasant exchange between Alice and the Caterpillar as a moment in which Alice is clearly marked as symbol: “he reads her mind as a book, seeing her as text and checking her knowledge of the texts that have crafted her” (61). For Talairach-Vielmas, the Caterpillar is Alice’s “instructor” (61), and as noted above, she veers between shyness and barely-contained anger when interacting with this particularly condescending and dismissive character. In Summerland, however, the Caterpillar’s “Who are you?” is first met with a tentative “I’m not really sure,” similar to Wonderland Alice’s “I—I hardly know, Sir” (27). Yet, when the Caterpillar persists with the question, Alice snaps and yells, “I just told you, ok?! I’m Alice, and I need to get outta’ here!” In Wonderland, the Pigeon’s question regarding Alice’s species prompts an introspective query on Alice’s part as to whether she is a girl, whether she is a serpent, and whether she eats eggs (35), but not so in Summerland. When the White Rabbit asks if she is a girl, Alice doesn’t hesitate to assert angrily, “Yes I am a girl! What, you don’t have girls here?” Furthermore, in Summerland the Caterpillar—a somewhat intimidating and wise character in Wonderland—is reduced to an absurd broken record, as every time Summer asks for the way out, the Caterpillar returns to his cycle of stock phrases. This in turn enrages Summer, who after giving him ample warning, opts to reject any potential assistance, gags him with rope, and wraps his entire body in saran wrap like a cocoon, ultimately covering his mouth and silencing him before moving on to the next scene. Tenniel’s

illustration of Alice's encounter with the Caterpillar also stands in stark contrast to the composition of the same encounter in Summerland. While in the book Alice is barely tall enough to see over the mushroom on which the Caterpillar is seated, so that only her hands and eyes peeking over the edge can be seen, Summer—43-years-old, stocky, loud, and with very large breast implants—is immediately physically dominant over the tubby and dimwitted Caterpillar. In Summerland, Alice is the one teaching lessons, and the violence and unsettling power relations of Wonderland become the source of gender- and power-play.

A Return to Form: The Twenty-First Century

The twenty-first century porn format, which has moved away from the linear narrative feature, and almost entirely switched to the gonzo and vignette format, provides a space for quite faithful adaptations of the *Alice* books. The *Alice* stories have survived the shift to gonzo in a way that is more narratively-intact than recent adaptations of the other texts addressed in this project. Peripheral characters, locations, and plot in these Alice adaptations have been retained; furthermore, while the golden age films resisted the sexual regression present in the original texts, these non-linear films preserve sexual regression in their depiction of pornotopia, yet are also insistent on female sexual maturity as part of that pornotopia. In other words, the sexual activity tells the story, and these women are active sexual agents, albeit within a constructed, mass-marketed, and contained fantasy. These female characters and performer-auteurs are working within and between the interstices

of the pornotopia, once again raising questions about the problematic line between sex worker reality and pornographic fantasy.⁹

Falconer demonstrates the ways in which women's "autopathologies" represent mental illness as a combination of Dante's hell and Carroll's Wonderland/Looking-Glass Land. The underworld of illness "is not simply hell but also, at the same time, a Wonderland in which unlooked-for discoveries are made, and in which these shattered and fragmented subjects discover unanticipated spaces for play as they descend lower" (3). These underworld spaces are "at once authorizing and radicalizing, punishing and (potentially) ludic" (3). The difference in these new *Alice* adaptations is that Wonderland serves as a fantastical, dark, and temporary escape from the institutionalized realities of a world that punishes women for active sexual desires. Referencing the societal treatment of "hysteria" as a female sexual problem (Maines), these films depict women who are contained in insane asylums for their uncontained sexualities¹⁰; sexualities that are given free reign in their respective fantasy Wonderlands, their traumas and containment overturned through sexual fantasy though within the bounds of pornographic formula, and with no real escape from their institutionalization; "trapped in so many ways in the architecture—both the houses and the institutions—of patriarchy" (Gilbert & Gubar 85). These particular Wonderlands can be seen (intentionally or not) as allegories for the tensions of female sexual subjectivity within pornography, and within society as a whole.

It is also significant that the two insane asylum films, *Tormented* (Dir. Jonathan Morgan, 2009) and *Malice in Lalaland* (Dir. Lew Xypher, 2010) are big

budget studio productions that utilize A-list performers and follow a mainstream sex act formula for the most part. Yet, the aesthetics of the sex scenes rely on BDSM conventions that encroach on the porn sex formula. *Tormented* is a Wicked production, one of the four top contract studios (the other three being Vivid, Digital Playground, and Adam & Eve). Associated with “vanilla” sex, this outing touts itself as “warped,” going inside the mind of a sexually deranged woman, contract star and writer Stormy Daniels. Yet, the film presents the asylum as a site of sexual assault, the sexual fantasies as ways for the abused female inmate to invert the gendered nature of her abuse, and the female inmate as the focus of identification while the male doctor is presented as malignantly containing female sexuality.

The male doctor is never shown, but his distorted voice states at the beginning, “Hello Stormy. It says here that you don’t play well with others. I keep getting reports of you talking to others of strange sexual fantasies.” As he starts to unzip his fly, he tells her, “Don’t worry we’ll take care of you.” Stormy is terrified, and as she looks away and closes her eyes the film transitions into a sexual fantasy where Stormy is the dominant, sadistic nurse to the gagged and restrained male patient. Each sex fantasy plays out this way: subtly suggested sexual abuses taking place in the asylum are transformed and inverted within Stormy’s mind. Yet the *Wonderland* sequence is different. It is the finale, and signals the successful luring and containment of Stormy. Stormy finds herself dressed as Alice, beckoned into a Looking-Glass Land ruled by a Mad Hatter that appears to offer sexual pleasures, and does, until Stormy awakens and finds herself back in the asylum, distraught in a way that is distinct from earlier segments. The final frozen image of Stormy

screaming, “No!” suggests she will never escape, and somehow her crossing of the threshold into Looking-Glass Land indicates this permanent entrapment.

Malice in Lalaland is a rarity in modern porn (and Hollywood): a 35mm feature production. Yet it feels like a gonzo production due to the episodic *Alice* narrative, and formulaic sex acts. Nevertheless, the BDSM and punk rock trappings create a sense of the topsy-turvy and grotesque enabled by the source texts. *Malice*, like *Stormy*, is locked up in an insane asylum. Unlike *Stormy*, *Malice* really does escape from the asylum with the help of Rabbit. After tumbling down a hole, she finds herself in the desert and embarks on a nonsensical journey through a dusty, gas station- and diner-filled Americana as she attempts to evade Jabbowski, her male warden and primary antagonist. Jabbowski is in turn ruled over by Doctor Queenie, the woman who runs the asylum and is determined to imprison *Malice* once again. Jabbowski finds himself humiliated and powerless at every turn, growing increasingly aggressive and determined as the film progresses, and finally succeeding in capturing *Alice* and returning her to the asylum where he resumes his duties as warden. Yet, there is a point in the film where it becomes clear Jabbowski embodies the submissive pawn-like *Alice* far more than he does a dominant patriarch, while *Malice* goes from prisoner, to object of Chester Catz’s erotic photographs, and eventually takes on the role of pornographer, operating the camera and directing a sex scene performed by the Tweed brothers. Meanwhile, Jabbowski’s treatment at the hands of the Wonderland characters parallels the frustrating experiences of *Alice* in Wonderland and Looking-Glass Land. When Jabbowski, frustrated and now wielding a gun, interrogates the titular owner of strip

club, Caterpillar's, he is given evasive responses much in the same way as Alice when she has to deal with the Caterpillar. Malice becomes author, while Jabrowski suffers the powerlessness and humiliation experienced by Alice (in Wonderland) and Malice (in the asylum).

While Middleton's *TTLG* portrayed a hellish Looking-Glass Land as the inescapable world into which Catherine has entered from her father's house due to her inability to reconcile with her trauma, the Wonderlands of these contemporary pornographic Alices are pornotopian escapes from containment due to ostensibly healthy, active female sexual desire recoded by patriarchal medical institutions as warped. Yet, the women are not set free, and this is what renders the films more subversive than their individual sex numbers would suggest. By not releasing these Alices, by returning them to the patriarchal institution of the insane asylum, the films suggest that female sexuality is abusively contained and desires release. In doing so, however, these modern films suggest that pornotopia serves as a world in which these "warped" sexual women might be free, replaying the myth of the wholly transgressive world of porn but without the transgressive and carnivalesque horrors and delights of the 1970s adaptations. Indeed, these Wonderlands are reflective of the degree to which pornographic categorization and formula have been refined in the mainstream porn format. While aesthetically subversive and creative, little of the carnivalesque and the grotesque apparent in the 1970s is present in the actual sexual activity of these studio-produced, twenty-first century manifestations. But they have their moments: in the margins, within the carefully-

structured and formulaic pornotopia, Alice's Wonderland allows for "warped" pornographic fantasies and gender fluidity that can exist in the underworld.

Hardcore adaptations of the *Alice* books vary significantly in genre and tone, offering a wide range of approaches, and yet all tap into the source texts' dealings with identity, femininity, and growing up. While Brooker may lament the modern preoccupation with the alleged dark undertones of Carroll's work and life, the meaning of Alice and her Wonderland have clearly become mobile texts no longer possessed by the original author, and unrestrained by single interpretation. As with many of the texts under examination, the initial allure for pornography is deceptively simple: a female protagonist, a theme of emergence into womanhood, and an alternative realm where anything can happen. Yet, what the adaptations show is more than simply the sexualization of youth and the ease with which a low budget video can appropriate a familiar feminine image. The popularity and diversity of these adaptations and appropriations demonstrate the violence involved in cultural constructions and representations of female sexuality, the extent to which female subjectivity can thrive within and around this violence, and the ways in which these constructions and representations can turn around and implicate the viewer, the author(s), and ultimately subvert themselves.

¹ See Brooker's chapter, "The Man in the White Paper" (49-75), for a thorough overview and analysis of the various critics who have asserted and refuted Carroll's sexual desire for little girls.

² There are many hardcore porn films outside the scope of this chapter that are *Wonderland*-esque in their episodic structure. Most notably, the *Devil in Miss Jones* series in which Justine Jones wanders the depths of hell, from room to room, on a journey of grotesque sexual decadence prior to condemnation; and the *Pretty*

Peaches series which, while ostensibly based on *Candide*, gradually becomes more like *Wonderland*, particularly Part 2 which involves characters similar to those of *Wonderland*.

³ See, for example, Steven Marcus, whose distaste for pornography is evident throughout his book, *The Other Victorians*. He regards pornography as “not literature” (278) and “opposed to art” (279).

⁴ For an excellent analysis of how pornography became marginalized once again, and Hollywood profited from this marginalization, see Jon Lewis’s *Hollywood v. Hard Core: How the Struggle over Censorship Saved the Modern Film Industry*, particularly pp. 192-229.

⁵ For an analysis of the way exhibition of porn is integral to an understanding of porn, see John Champagne’s “Stop Reading Films!”

⁶ Of those I could positively identify, *Malice in Lalaland* uses the “Adult Alice in Wonderland Costume” <<http://www.joke.co.uk/fancy-dress/adult-alice-in-wonderland-costume~22976.html>>; *Alice: A Fairy Love Tale* uses the “Adult Blue Alice in Wonderland Costume” <<http://www.joke.co.uk/fancy-dress/adult-blue-alice-in-wonderland-costume~23807.html>> as well as the “Adult Sexy Tea Party Hostess Costume” for the Mad Hatter <<http://www.joke.co.uk/fancy-dress/adult-sexy-tea-party-hostess-costume~23011.html>>; and *Tormented* uses the “Seductive Alice in Wonderland Costume” <<http://www.halloweenpartystore.com/Seductive-Alice-in-Wonderland-Costume.php>>.

⁷ Interestingly, according to Knoepfmacher, this is one of the few spaces in which Carroll *does* assert his control over Alice (202-206).

⁸ Nica Noelle states this very objective in her mission statement for Sweet Sinner Video, as discussed in chapter one; the Feminist Porn Awards also list “genuine female pleasure” among their definition of “feminist porn” and as part of the requirements for submissions to their awards.

⁹ It is significant in terms of authorship and subjectivity that the majority of these new Alices are penned by women. Evidently, *Wonderland* still offers an appealing space for women authors (as noted by Falconer) whether to work out pleasure, danger, or a combination of both.

¹⁰ This narrative is popular in pornography, often laying the blame for such attitudes at the feet of organized religion. See for example, *The Defiance of Good* (1975), *Sometime Sweet Susan* (1975), *Lilith Unleashed* (1985), *Thrills* (2002), *Thrills 2* (2003), *Mind Fuck* (2012), *Sex Asylum* (1975); *Sex Asylum 2: Sheer Bedlam* (1986); *Sex Asylum 3* (1988), *Sex Asylum 4* (1991), *Trisexual Asylum 2* (2009), *Trisexual Asylum 3* (2010) and *Madness* (2009). *Thrills* is of particular interest in the context of literary history, as it is a pornographic rendering of *Quills*, itself a fictional retelling of the imprisonment of the Marquis de Sade. In *Thrills*, the inmate is the daughter of a U.S. senator, imprisoned in an insane asylum for her erotic writings.

CHAPTER THREE
**“HE WAS WILD WHEN HE WAS YOUNG”: GENDER FLUIDITY AND QUEER
SEXUALITY IN PORNOGRAPHIC ADAPTATIONS OF ROBERT LOUIS
STEVENSON’S *STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE***

While *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Wilde himself can be read in light (or in shadow) of The Labouchere Amendment of 1885 (discussed in the next chapter), Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, can be read as an articulation of unspoken identities, vices, and sexualities during a time when these things were understood, yet nameless; when “homosexuality” was still “the love that dare not speak its name.” The Labouchere Amendment, nicknamed “the blackmailers charter,” was passed in August 1885 and became law January 1st, 1886; *Strange Case* was first published January 5th, 1886, just four days after the law went into effect. Of course, it is significant that even in the Labouchere Amendment, “homosexuality” is not specified, and during the Wilde trials, the newspapers did not go into any detail about the crime Wilde was on trial for, yet the public seemed to understand the specifics of it (Cohen 4-5). As Elaine Showalter notes, at this time “the Victorian homosexual world had evolved into a secret but active subculture, with its own language, styles, practices, and meeting places” (106). For Showalter, Stevenson’s novella “can most persuasively be read as a fable of fin-de-siècle homosexual panic, the discovery and resistance of the homosexual self” (107). This is indeed a persuasive reading, yet simply characterizing the novella as being about homosexuality glosses over the fluid nature of masculinity and sexuality in the text, enabled by indescribability, vagueness, namelessness, and homosociality. In this way, Jekyll/Hyde is “Wilde” (the culture text) in underdeveloped form.

Once something is named and categorized, as Foucault has demonstrated, there is limited room to move around as a sexual subject. In this way, paradoxically, the increase in sexual categorization has led to sexual representations that, while diverse in name, are at the same time limiting in terms of what is permissible within these representations. Cohen remarks that “Since by and large the binary pairing homosexual/heterosexual still continues to define the poles between which male gender identities are plotted both “scientifically” and colloquially, the legacy of this late nineteenth-century sexological formulation continues to impinge on male experiences even today (10). As a result, pornographic film adaptations of *Strange Case* become more rigidly bound to specific sexual identities over time, with the most recent adaptations proving more sexually restrictive and prescriptive than Stevenson’s 1886 novella. In other words, men of Stevenson’s time benefited from what Cohen calls “the silent privilege of remaining unmarked” (13). Subsequent markings and re-markings have led to increasingly marked pornographies, and the impulse to clearly label pornographic texts according to a wide array of sexual proclivities. At the same time, as with all pornographies, queer dynamics emerge. In this chapter, I show how hardcore film employs Stevenson’s novella to explore sexual duality, and in so doing expose the ways in which sexual identity has evolved into an increasingly specific and paradoxically less contained system of discourse, and how fragmented pornographic genres serve as a buffer for fluid sexualities.

In a written response to the reception of a new stage adaptation of *Strange Case of Jekyll and Hyde*, Robert Louis Stevenson wrote American journalist John Paul Bocock that Hyde was “not, Great Gods! a mere voluptuary.” Stevenson qualifies,

There is no harm in a voluptuary; and none, with my hand on my heart and in the sight of God, none—no harm whatever—in what prurient fools call ‘immortality.’ The harm was in Jekyll, because he was a hypocrite—not because he was fond of women; he says so himself; but people are so filled full of folly and inverted lust, that they can think of nothing but sexuality. The Hypocrite let out the beast Hyde—who is no more sexual than another, but who is the essence of cruelty and malice, and selfishness and cowardice; and these are diabolic in man—not this poor wish to have a woman, that they make such a cry about. (“Letter to John Paul Boccock” 86)

Stevenson’s protests could be said to have fallen on deaf ears, what with the multitude of adaptations that explicitly position the conflict of sexual duality at the forefront of the tale. Yet in hardcore pornography the few adaptations that have been filmed represent surprisingly divergent explorations of sexuality, hypocrisy, and gender, exposing the variety of ways that *Strange Case* has been interpreted, circulated, and disseminated in mythological and symbolic form throughout culture in the decades subsequent to its publication. What these adaptations expose is the instability of gender inherent to gothic fiction and pornography alike, invoked and mediated with a mixture of anxiety, desire, and disgust.

As with all the adapted texts under analysis in this project, *Strange Case* has a certain inevitability about its interest to pornographic filmmakers. The duality of the protagonist, as well as the ambiguity of both Jekyll and Hyde’s nighttime adventures and vices, promise an abundance of sexual interpretations as social propriety gives

way to sexual abandon and loss of societal inhibitions. Linda Dryden explains, “Hyde may resemble an atavistic creature, but the reality is that he is the savage side of Jekyll, kept repressed through an imposed external morality” (32). The separation of self leads to “unspoken ‘pleasures’” (Dryden 31), and when something seems sexual and goes “unspoken,” pornography has material to work with. Indeed, Raven Touchstone, writer of the 1999 porn adaptation, *Jekyll and Hyde*, remarks that what drew her to Stevenson’s novella “as a sexual piece” was the representation of the duality of man: “most of us do not live in our sexuality 24/7. We are all multi-faceted and in one of those facets dwells our sexuality. I think this is why the sex industry has loved to use Jekyll & Hyde...the prim and proper side giving way to abandoned sexuality.”¹

Scholarly analyses of Stevenson’s text, with their emphasis on binaries such as public/private, high/low, mind/body, highlight the ways in which *Strange Case* is ripe for pornographic treatment, not least because the novella itself was considered to be part of a lower form of literature, the “penny dreadful.” Stevenson refers to himself as “a student of our penny press” (“How I Came” 122), while John Addington Symonds, in a letter to Stevenson, worries over the proximity of text and reader when reading *Strange Case* much in the same way current moral guardians worry over pornography and its consumers: “it touches one too closely....Your Dr Jekyll seems to me capable of loosening the last threads of self-control in one who should read it while wavering between his better and worse self” (98-99). Just as *Strange Case* was marginalized by the canon for dealing in base emotions, so pornography is regarded as having too much of a physical effect on its audience. It is therefore

dangerous but also “low.” Still *Strange Case* is now undeniably canonical, widely read, and regarded as an enduring literary classic, apparently overcoming its “dreadful” roots, only to be repeatedly porned.

In this chapter, I analyze three hardcore adaptations of *Strange Case*, representative of three different cultural moments: *The Erotic Dr. Jekyll* (Victor Milt, 1976), a hardcore hetero comedy produced at the height of the “golden age” of porn; *Dr. Jerkoff and Mr. Hard* (Wash West, 1997), a hardcore gay comedy produced at the end of the twentieth-century; and *Jekyll & Hyde* (Paul Thomas, 1999), a hardcore hetero thriller, produced by Vivid, perhaps the epitome of commercial porn, at the very end of the twentieth-century. These films, I argue, demonstrate the way pornography, and by extension culture, carefully navigates the instabilities of sexual identity, and particularly masculine sexual identity. *Strange Case* proves to be a valuable source text for such an exploration in hardcore, providing a framework that, like hardcore, both invokes and resists the precarious position of masculine and feminine sexual identities with a mixture of desire and fear.

“Something Else”: Queer Heterosexualities in a New Pornographic Era: *The Erotic Dr. Jekyll*

In Stevenson’s novella, Edward Hyde is famously ambiguous in appearance and nature. While it is specified that he tramples a young girl (9) and murders Danvers Carew (21), his other vices are only vaguely described. Similarly, while Stevenson offers a detailed description of Hyde’s hand, the rest of Hyde’s appearance is notable for its unaccountableness. Showalter connects Hyde’s unspeakability to that other “unspeakable,” homosexuality (112), while Utterson

and Enfield, on discovering that Hyde is living in the back of Jekyll's house and stands to inherit Jekyll's wealth, assume that Jekyll is "an honest man paying through the nose for some of the capers of his youth" (Stevenson 10). This suspicion invokes another Victorian code word for homosexuality: blackmail. Hyde is "small" and "pale," but aside from this he is most recognizable for being indescribably ugly, and having an undefined deformity. Enfield remarks, "I never saw a man I so disliked, and yet I scarce know why. He must be deformed somewhere; he gives a strong feeling of deformity, although I couldn't specify the point" (11). When Utterson first sees Hyde, he also observes that "he gave the impression of deformity without any nameable malformation," adding, "There must be something else....There *is* something more, if I could find a name for it" (17). Neither man is able to pinpoint Hyde's deformity, but it is suggestive that, clothed, Hyde's deformity is hidden yet tangible, much in the same way as his hand connotes "something else." Generally, Hyde represents an ill-defined, unspeakable physical manifestation of (masculine) identity crisis; a conflation of gender, sexuality, race, and degeneration anxieties.

Jennifer Beauvais regards Hyde as representative of the Victorian bachelor—a new model of man able to traverse both the public and private spheres; content in the domestic sphere, and acceptable as such in late-Victorian society. The bachelor redefined masculinity through his feminine, domestic qualities, but also redefined the domestic sphere by appearing to be a heterosexual gentleman. The homosociality of the novella enables a fluidity of masculinity, "enhanced by the fact that these male professionals are all bachelors" (172). Hyde is not the "private"

aspect of Jekyll; Hyde is both public and private, able to move fluidly between these spheres. Beauvais argues that “The exclusively male community in Stevenson’s novella allows the bachelor to discover a new masculinity, one which is neither completely male nor female. The ambiguity and fluidity of the gender identity of the *fin de siècle* bachelor suggests that his sexuality also wavers” (182). In this way, Hyde is “a hybrid who pushes the gender boundaries and forces the bourgeois professionals to explore their masculinity” (185). *The Erotic Dr. Jekyll*, then, can be read as representing Jekyll as a sort of sexually fluid bachelor of the 1970s: a swinger.²

The 1970s frequently offered queerer, more carnivalesque representations of heterosexuality than are currently available in a corporate culture. The sexual classifications that Stevenson seemed so ambivalent about have become increasingly rigid throughout the last century, a development that is particularly evident in pornographic categories. Advances in civil rights and increased tolerance of sexual minorities has led to a world where there is seemingly something for everyone; a world of “different strokes for different folks” (Williams “Pornographies”). But this is also a sexual and pornographic landscape that increasingly resists fluidity, and demands that individuals subscribe to such categories, most simplistically “gay” or “straight.” These binary sexual identities are not equal, and the homosexual taboo within “straight” porn genres persists.³ In this way, while cuckolding, transsexual, bisexual, femdom/strap-on, and other queer genres are discussed, advertised, and sold in ostensibly heterosexual spaces, they

nevertheless require tagging. To put it another way, these queer practices are not tolerated if they occur in an unmarked pornographic space.

The “golden age” of porn, generally regarded as the period between the early-1970s and the mid-1980s, was a more sexually queer space than that of the present day; one with fewer official categories and no legitimate or corporate industry, but with more experimentation and crossover⁴ than the post-AIDS, closely-monitored pornographic world of subsequent decades discussed in the next chapter. Victor Milt’s *The Erotic Dr. Jekyll* (1976) offers a vision of what Stevenson’s crisis of masculine identity had become in the 1970s, articulating a tension between two masculine sexualities: marital, domesticated, and monogamous on the one hand, and promiscuous, liberated, and hyper-sexual on the other. The film depicts masculine sexual identity as having more to do with other men than with women, representing an eroticized homosociality both visually and aurally in a way that demonstrates pornography’s tendency to utilize humor, women, and sexual classification as ways of mediating masculine homoerotic anxieties. What is ostensibly a crisis of monogamous versus non-monogamous, or feminine versus masculine, becomes something more akin to the crisis of what Shelton terms “homosocialized eroticism” (123).

The Erotic Dr. Jekyll opens with Charles Jekyll (Harry Reems) and his wife, Linda (C.J. Laing),⁵ moving into his grandfather Dr. Henry Jekyll’s crusty old house—a house that Charles believes harbors a “fortune” in its walls somewhere. While Charles, an uptight, slightly eccentric, but conventional man, is interested in money, cars, and vacations, Linda is more concerned with rectifying their dissatisfying sex

life. Having not been sexually intimate in a week, Linda pleads, "Why don't we make love? Don't you think I'm pretty anymore?" Charles rolls his eyes, and dismisses her complaints; later she makes a further attempt by suggesting they try some new ideas that she saw in "those sex manuals." "Sex manuals?" Charles scoffs, "You mean smut manuals!" Charles' disapproval of such smutty behavior between married partners comes immediately after he has been masturbating to *Screw* magazine, indicating a mid-twentieth century discord between "proper" marital sexuality, and the burgeoning sexual demands of a female population in the midst of second-wave feminism. Charles deems it fit to engage in autoerotic pleasure while looking at pornographic magazines, but unfit to put those images into practice with his evidently sexually frustrated wife. In spite of eventually succumbing to his wife's sexual advances once they go to bed ("Ahem, shall we?" he politely responds to her wandering fingers), the scene is nevertheless stagnant, performed in a rigid missionary position, and with very little attention to Linda.

While foraging for treasure the next day, Charles discovers a door in the fireplace, and emerges in a secret laboratory in which Dr. Jekyll's assistant Igor (Bobby Astyr) lives. He offers Charles Dr. Jekyll's magic potion "69," which is guaranteed to make him "popular and sensationally sexy" and, Charles hopes, rich. The catch is that it's a "one shot deal": take it once, and you change; take it again, and you change again. After that it becomes a poison. Charles makes his excuses to Linda, takes the potion,⁶ and the remaining narrative revolves around Charles, now rock star Rory Hump, having sex with the many women who flock to him. By the end of the film, he has organized a Miss America pussy contest, and agreed to a bet that

he can “screw” 100 beautiful virgins in 24 hours. If he succeeds, he wins gold and jewels; if he fails, the men castrate him. Needless to say, he wins, but the hypersexual life he is leading is starting to lose its luster. He decides he needs love, drinks one more swig of the potion, and returns to the faithful Linda as Charles.

Charles is a far cry from the popular and sociable bachelor Dr. Jekyll of Stevenson’s imagining, as Charles lives in secluded marital domesticity and without any visible male bonds until he meets Igor. However, Charles does indulge in secret sexual escapades, though of the masturbatory variety, which are presumably much tamer than Dr. Jekyll’s ambiguous “pleasures” that he describes as “undignified” (52) and stemming from “the evil side of my nature” (51). It is additionally interesting that Charles has a wife who wishes to indulge their sexual desires, an option with which Dr. Jekyll is not provided in Stevenson’s novella. Stevenson creates a world of homosocial, fraternal bonds where women do not prominently figure; a “speaking absence” (Linehan 204) that suggests Jekyll’s downfall is a result of his failure to acknowledge the possibility of a union of sexuality with self, and the “flawed assumption” that love and sexuality cannot “bridge body and soul” (Linehan 209-10).

Charles also fails to understand the possibilities of matrimony as a bed of spiritual and sexual unity, a “flawed assumption” that takes on new meaning in the context of post-Civil Rights social upheaval. When considering the possibilities that lie before him as Rory Hump, as opposed to the tragedy that befell his grandfather, Charles acknowledges, “Things have changed since then. There are millions of women who want...no, no, no, *need* some action! I’m gonna give it a try!” Charles

fails to see that what he is looking for is already in his life—that domestic spaces are sexually adventurous in these newly-liberated times, and that satisfaction of sexual desire is not confined to illicit and promiscuous sexual practices. This is emphasized again when, at the end of the film, Charles/Rory desires more than lust, and more than to be lusted after, and wonders aloud how on earth he will find a woman that would want to be his wife. In the process of his escapades, he has forgotten that he is already married, and to a woman who has been badgering him for sex of multiple varieties. The sound of a zipper being pulled down after the film fades to black aurally confirms that their sex life will be one characterized by the “comfort...consolation...company...and love” Charles wishes for, as well as the lust he misguidedly left his wife for.

It is interesting that in a film that centers around multiple women as sex partners, women barely seem to register as a focal point. Shelton remarks that the function of women’s bodies in heterosexual pornography is often “to make male viewers comfortable with the fact that they are looking at other men (and, more specifically, their penises) and that they may even *want* to be looking at them more than they are willing to admit” (132).⁷ A Bakhtinian carnivalesque humor also functions in this way, Shelton contends: “laughter is precisely what allows male viewers to indulge a potentially transgressive form of pleasure through a form of ironic displeasure” (130). In addition to bawdy humor, Charles’ promiscuous and surprisingly homoerotic sexual escapades are bookended and curtailed by a reassuringly heterosexual marital situation that is absent in *Strange Case*. In this way, pornographic humor is carnivalesque in that it functions as “a permissible

rupture of hegemony in order to signify crisis and to prod structures of authority into renewing themselves” (Shelton 121).

Indeed, Charles/Rory’s escapades are farcical, constantly sexual and grotesque, and consistently homoerotic through framing and aural indicators. As Rory and Igor set out on their first adventure, a middle-aged rich woman (Renee Sanz) picks them up and takes them to her apartment, which she keeps solely for “play.” While Rory is orally pleased by the maid, much to his initial perturbation, Igor—hunchbacked, eyes rolling in his head—asks permission to take advantage of the sexually-charged atmosphere and have sex with the rich woman. As she removes her clothes, Igor notices a large (real) scar on her stomach. Taken aback, he exclaims, “What’s that? What’s that?” Unfazed, she responds, “I’m having a second pussy put in. All the rich people are having them.” Igor is impressed—“Oh, so smart! I love it!”—and they continue with their sexual activities. This rather bizarre interlude not only forces the woman’s scar to the forefront of the scene when the filmmakers could have simply covered it with clothing, but also renders the physical grotesqueries of both partners in a positive, Bakhtinian sense, foregrounding the elements of disgust that both Shelton and Kipnis have argued are so intimately bound to pornographic viewing pleasures.⁸

It is also in this first scene that the homoerotics of the film can be detected. Whenever Rory is involved in sexual activity, it seems Igor is never far away either physically or mentally. In fact, Igor is usually closer in proximity than any of the women, whether he is crawling around Rory’s legs, clinging on to his arm, or standing behind him waiting to share his female partner. In addition, the aural

signals indicate sexual communion between men, as Rory literally cries out Igor's name throughout the sex scene: "Hey Igor! This stuff is really good!"; "This is some kinda real good fun, Igor!"; "Hot damn Igor!" Finally, Rory urges his female partner to stop and watch Igor's sexual antics: "Look at that! Look at that! Igor, you're somethin' else, boy!"

As the narrative proceeds, the number of women Rory has sex with at a time also increases, as he first organizes and judges a Miss America pussy contest, and then agrees to attempt "screwing" 100 virgins in exchange for treasure. It is during the contest that the homoerotics of the affair are rendered as visible as possible without actually involving male-male intercourse. Rory and Igor are taking it in turns having sex with different contestants—vaginal intercourse in "doggy style," facing the camera—in a scenario that is again framed and aurally presented in a homosocial manner. Rory and Igor stand side-by-side, reporting to each other on the quality of the pussy, when unexpectedly (or, rather, by this point quite expectedly) Rory exclaims, "Igor, get over there boy!" turns Igor around, and starts trying to penetrate Igor from the rear. Igor protests, "What are you doing Master?!" and pushes him away. The contest continues uninterrupted, yet the sexual positions now connote quite explicitly the interchangeability of male and female orifices.⁹ The final shot of the contest visually confirms the function of the women, as well as the real relational focus of the film, as Igor squats naked beneath Rory, with the winning woman on one side, and a woman presenting the award—a giant, gold dildo sitting erect on a tray—on the other, held forth to the center of the frame. Also at the

center, the homoerotic male duo are centered in the frame, reassuringly closed off by two women.

The final test for Rory is also the final test for the pornographic film medium to represent the excesses the narrative has promised: a 100-woman orgy. Just as these excesses prove “too much” for Rory, in spite of his eventual physical ability to succeed, so pornography’s visual economy cannot accommodate the 100 virgins, nor the 100 money shots, that are necessary to the visual proof of such an accomplishment. Williams has observed pornography’s inevitable failure to represent the visual proofs of involuntary pleasure that are promised to its viewer (*Hard Core* 113) and in this low-budget representation of Rory’s challenge, the 100 virgins are in fact the same five actresses in rotation, wearing veils. Furthermore, these five actresses have already played other characters in the film before this point. In this way, female bodies are literally interchangeable, but this interchangeability does not go unremarked upon. Rory exclaims to a female partner during the challenge, “You sure I ain’t seen you somewhere before?” consciously rupturing and exposing the limitations of both the visual economy and the budget.

It is a move evocative of what Shelton sees as a pornographic strategy to put its viewers at ease, that is often read as ineptness: “We could just write this off as yet another sign of the filmmakers’ ineptitude, but that only presumes that they would have *wanted* the scene to unfold without any outside interference or that the objective was to present a fantasy completely sealed off from the actual moment in which it was taking place” (136). Porn’s tendency to announce its own constructedness is particularly prominent in films that also have a pronounced

homoeroticism, utilizing humor and “in-jokes” to encourage a feeling of carnivalesque buffoonery where everyone is “just joking around.” It is no wonder, then, that Rory breaks the sealed pornotopia of the film, as his sexual prowess is being observed and monitored by not only Igor, but The Count, played by crossover gay star and director, Zebedy Colt,¹⁰ who stands at the blackboard keeping count of the number of virgins screwed, as well as noting the specific positions. “An auspicious start,” the Count observes of Rory’s choice of missionary, later kissing his fingers in delight in response to proceedings, and toward the end exclaiming, “That boy has stamina,...What a whopper!”

The process and completion of the challenge confirm the gendered specifics of sexual pleasure in the pornographic landscape of this era, framing male sexual climax as “fornication.” When Rory is told he must “screw” 100 virgins, and the Count rearticulates on the day that he must “fornicate” with 100 virgins, it is decidedly unclear as to what this involves. An answer is not far away, however, as Rory is chastised for wasting time performing oral sex on one of the virgins, while fellatio goes unremarked upon. As Rory’s stamina begins to wane, he assures the eager crowd that he can do it—that he can, presumably, remain erect and ejaculate again—evidenced by a montage of money shots, recycled and not nearly 100, clustered together en masse at the end of the scene as a way of symbolizing excess.¹¹ The pornographic spectrum of visual pleasure is limited, not only by budget, but by gendered sexual expectations and a dominant androcentric (not to mention phallogentric) mode of “screwing.”

After such heterosexual and homosocial acrobatics, Rory's return to the comfort and love of his wife seems almost irrelevant, and indeed the film appears to agree as there is no visual depiction of the subsequent sex act. It is instead indicated aurally by the sound of a zipper and Linda's urge that they "go to bed." Instead of a sexual number that would visually represent the ostensible moral that marital sexuality can be as satisfying, perhaps more satisfying, than the wild lust Rory Hump experienced, the film ends with a sly address to the (presumed) male viewer. Igor, in the style of a Greek chorus, speaks to camera: "So! You see, true love wins out in the end. He gave up wealth, riches, fame, and women. For what? A wife, a home, a family. Maybe he had the right idea. But! If any of *you* are interested, maybe something can be arranged, no? Come down and see me some time!" As the screen fades to black, and Igor's cackling laughter rings out, it's obvious that the film is situating the sexual adventures of Rory Hump as the real fantasy, not the marital bliss that Charles chooses. But what really lingers, and is hard to ignore, is the curious and undeniably sexual offer, "Come down and see me some time," evocative of a flirtatious suggestion a femme fatale might make. The crisis presented is not, then, the choice between domesticated and undomesticated heterosexuality, but rather the choice between marital heterosexuality and, as the Count describes one of Rory's sexual positions, "something else."¹² In this way, in spite of hundreds of heterosexual copulations, *The Erotic Dr. Jekyll* somehow reflects the same ambiguous and queer goings on of Stevenson's novella.

“It’s Him! It’s Me!”: Postmodern Homosexuality in Wash West’s *Dr. Jerkoff and Mr. Hard*

While *The Erotic Dr. Jekyll* demonstrates a 1970s willingness to represent a fluidity of sexuality tempered by homosocial humor, Wash West’s 1997 video *Dr. Jerkoff and Mr. Hard* continues the pornographic interrogation of public and private, domestic and foreign, by focusing on the postmodern segregation of contemporary sexual categories. Susan Zieger, in her study of Victorian discursive connotations of homosexuality and addiction, notes that *Strange Case* can now be regarded as “part of the gay canon” (164), an observation that suggests the homoerotic elements in *Strange Case* have been so thoroughly drawn out by scholars and readers alike, as to render the text “gay” in the cultural consciousness. West’s adaptation recuperates some of the regretful, tragic, and condemnatory residue of the late-Victorian novel in much the same way as he does for *Dorian Gray* in the 2000 film, *Gluttony* (discussed in the next chapter). West enacts what Harry M. Benshoff has observed of many queer adaptations of gothic and horror fiction: “an attempt to draw out or exorcise the monster from the queer” (286). This particular “exorcism” involves a change in location from late-nineteenth century London to late-twentieth century San Francisco, a shift in the nature of the identity crisis, and a very different conclusion to the story. West presents a more contemporary crisis of identity in *Dr. Jerkoff*; an aesthetic one to do with low self-esteem and lack of confidence as a gay man in an out world.

Dr. Jerkoff (Jim Buck) is a university professor who lives alone, is dedicated to his work and mother, and is effectively celibate, though not a virgin. After a student asks for “an extension” due to the distractions of his own rampant lust—“I

always end up wanting more...more and more”—Jerkoff forces himself to wake up to his sexless reality: “I know what that fella’ means,” Jerkoff writes in his diary, which serves as voice-over narration, “I haven’t had sex since the last Star Trek convention. And that was with a Klingon.” Determined to try and turn his lonely life around, Jerkoff leaves his domestic space and visits the local gay bar, *Hard*, but after being shunned by men who are put off by his awkward advances, he concludes sadly to himself, “That’s not the place for me. It never will be. I’m a geek, a misfit. Even in the back room I’m as welcome as fart in a space suit.” Jerkoff’s “place” is private, domestic, and the only other available option seems to be the opposite extreme of the club. However, going through his laundry the next morning, he discovers a flyer for Mama Guadalupe, ambiguously promising help with “nature” and “bad spirits.” On visiting Guadalupe (Carmen), Jerkoff is told that he has a “river of lust” and a “volcano ready to erupt” inside him, and she provides a potion that will help him realize these qualities. The remaining narrative revolves around his alter-ego, Mr. Hard, a beautiful and sexually desirable stud, complete with cock ring, who definitely fits in at the gay club, is arrogantly able to choose his sex partners, and who Jerkoff wishes he could become permanently.

The most immediate difference in West’s vision of *Strange Case* is that it is set in a world where homosexuality is to an extent normalized,¹³ and in which the crises of identity and sexual difficulties that Jerkoff must navigate are to do with self-esteem and confidence. West has effectively created a “homotopia,” a phrase used by David Seubert in his article, “Adult Novels of Men in the Womanless World—Gay Pulp Fiction of the 1950’s and 1960’s,” to mean a place “where everything is imbued

with sexual content, no one is straight and characters stumble into one sexual encounter after another without danger, fear, or for that matter, without even really trying." Jerkoff's failures at sexual contact are not about being gay, but rather about being "a geek." Furthermore, after seeing two homeless men, he realizes, "I'm the one who's poverty stricken. At least they have each other. I'm alone. I always will be." In this postmodern universe, there is no space for dorky Dr. Jerkoff; financial stability and academic prowess cannot replace the physical intimacy that Jerkoff desires, but as the film ultimately suggests, neither can the selfish, emotionless sexual activity that Mr. Hard participates in. West indicates that Dr. Jerkoff feels he must become the hairless, buff sexual object of gay commodity culture in order to fulfill his desires, but finally shows that this need not be the case.

While Hyde goes mostly undescribed in Stevenson's text, and his deformity cannot be precisely located, his hand—physical, and figurative as synecdoche for his signature—is ever present and becomes a sure way of demarking Hyde's body. As Richard Dury argues, hands hold a special symbolic place in culture; alien and yet familiar, sexual, and seemingly interdependent of the body. Aside from Hyde's physical hand, hands as representative of identity are rife in Stevenson's text. Hyde's letter is noted by Mr. Guest as written in "an odd hand" (28), and "an odd, upright hand" (26). Compared to Jekyll's writing, Mr. Guest observes "the two hands are in many points identical: only differently sloped" (28). Jekyll ultimately explains in his full statement of the case that he created Hyde's "hand....by sloping my own hand backward" (53). Hyde's actual hand is described in most detail during the moment Jekyll wakes to find he has transformed involuntarily overnight, and is waking up in

Hyde's quarters. The homoerotics of such a scene—waking up and drowsily realizing he has gone to bed in a strange man's room—are obvious, and emphasize the sexual, and in Showalter's view "phallic" (115), nature of Hyde's hand. Jekyll is unsure of where he is, or what has happened, until "my eye fell upon my hand" (54). Jekyll describes his own hand as "professional in shape and size: it was large, firm, white and comely. But the hand which I now saw, clearly enough, in the yellow light of a mid-London morning, lying half shut on the bed clothes, was lean, corded, knuckly, of a dusky pallor and thickly shaded with a swart growth of hair. It was the hand of Edward Hyde" (54). Dury observes that culturally, the hand is associated with sexuality "since it falls naturally to about the same level as the sexual organs, may be placed to cover them and is employed in intimate caresses. It is also an unclothed part of the body that may represent the rest" (108). Such "intimate caresses" are articulated literally in Dr. Jerkoff's name, and visually in the film's post-transformation masturbation sequence.

Haggerty describes the "morning after" scene as reading "like an account of finding oneself in a strange bed after a night of sexual transgression," yet "Henry Jekyll has participated in a night of transgression as Edward Hyde, not with him. Does this distinction really matter?" (127). Such blurring between being and having Hyde, particularly as a queer narcissistic desire, is represented explicitly in the first transformation, which significantly is voluntary (indeed, all the transformations in the film are voluntary). Mirrors and the experience of reflection are a trope of gay pornographic and erotic materials, as allegories of homosexual desire itself. While in *Dorian Gray* the mirroring is created by Dorian and his portrait, in *Strange Case*, the

mirroring occurs not only within the body of Dr. Jekyll which houses two identities, but also within an actual mirror; a mirror that incites horror in Utterson when he discovers it. Jekyll's mirror is first mentioned following Jekyll's suicide. Utterson and Poole break down the door to his chambers, and while investigating the various cabinets and closets, discover "the cheval glass, into whose depths they looked with an involuntary horror" (40). Poole remarks that "'This glass have seen some strange things, sir'" while Utterson stammers, "'For what did Jekyll'—he caught himself up at the word with a start, and then conquering the weakness: 'what could Jekyll want with it?'" (40). Showalter regards this reaction as an embarrassed acknowledgment of effeminacy and possible evidence of homosexual activity: "The mirror testifies not only to Jekyll's scandalously unmanly narcissism, but also to the sense of the mask and the Other that has made the mirror an obsessive symbol in homosexual literature" (111). Indeed, mirroring is a staple of gay erotica, and the first scene following Dr. Jerkoff's transformation is a solo masturbation sequence before the mirror.

Having swallowed a dose of the potion, Jerkoff falls to the floor coughing, and gradually transforms before the camera into a shaved, muscular beauty. Looking in the mirror, he exclaims, "So fucking beautiful..." and touches his reflection. The scene is a solo masturbation scene that takes place entirely in front of the mirror, and which involves Mr. Hard caressing his own body, kissing his own reflection, and anally pleasuring himself while West cuts to close-ups of Mr. Hard's penis touching its own reflection. Towards the end of the scene, the reflection fragments as the camera occupies a position that captures three bodies—two reflections and the

“real” Mr. Hard. It is this framing that captures the money shot emanating from three representations of his penis, and landing on the mirror.

The scene is interesting in several ways, most noticeably because it is a “straight” sex act—one that self-identified heterosexual men presumably participate in on a regular basis—rendered homosexual. Shelton instructively observes of Ron Jeremy’s ability (at one point in time) to perform auto-fellatio, “Watching a man give himself a blow job is still watching a man giving a blow job (and getting a blow job) from a man, except the ‘other’ man is also himself....it is also a homosexual act transformed into a monosexual act, one that sublimates the homoerotic to a solo performance of self-gratification” (139). Yet masturbation, done by hand, is not routinely considered homosexual, and this mirror scene in *Dr. Jerkoff* orchestrates the reverse of Shelton’s auto-fellatio theory: it is an autoerotic sexual act transformed into a homosexual one. In addition, this initial scene suggests a narcissistic self-love, as well as a sense of solitary self-pleasure that Jerkoff presumably would not normally be able to face due to low self-esteem.

Early gay pornographic films would frequently depict such solo masturbation scenes, as well as mutual masturbation scenes, perhaps as a way of presenting such an exposure of sexuality without actual male-male contact.¹⁴ It is also a somewhat empowering image; that of a man comfortable facing himself head-on, so to speak, embracing his own body and form sexually, without shame. The touching of penis to penis can be seen as a postmodern, isolated example of what Linda Williams regards as an emphasis on “sexual sameness over sexual difference” between two men in gay porn (*Screening Sex* 148). Dr. Jerkoff’s name, as noted above, is suggestive of

solo masturbation, and in light of Jerkoff's character, a state of loneliness or that of a "loser." The only other "solo" scene in the film is Jerkoff's nocturnal emission in reaction to a hedonistic dream involving three men in the desert making love. The wet patch on his bed sheets, and Jerkoff's embarrassment, are all the film provides as evidence, in stark contrast to the delirious, sun-baked joy of the dream that prompted such a regressive emission. This is the nature of Dr. Jerkoff's sexual interaction with himself, as opposed to the delights of Mr. Hard's solo scene. Yet in his recreated embodiment as Mr. Hard this act becomes a state of homosexual desire and self-adoration in preparation for further homosexual acts that will increase his self-adoration to the point of callous egotism.

As Jerkoff continues his sexual adventures as Mr. Hard, he realizes he is almost out of potion, but has "enough for one more dosage, and then its back to reality and the demure thrill of academia." Jerkoff decides he will use this last dose wisely: "There is one man I desire above all others. It is he I will pursue." The final dose, then, in a gesture reminiscent of West's *Dorian Gray* adaptation, *Gluttony*, will go toward a meaningful relationship, as opposed to what Mr. Hard has up until this point been participating in: arrogant and emotionless sex with men he picks up at the club. The man he desires is one of the homeless boys, Brad, who he envied from the beginning of the narrative. Brad is the only character in the film who has acknowledged any positive qualities in Dr. Jerkoff, describing him as "pretty cool" for giving him \$20. Nevertheless, Jerkoff cannot accept that Brad would be interested in him, assuming he is only desirable as Mr. Hard. On finding out his mother has swallowed the remaining potion, Jerkoff once again visits Mama

Guadalupe to beg for more. Guadalupe's reprimands indicate, much as Stevenson does, the necessity for a united and whole sexual identity. It is the failure to commit to this unity that results in Jekyll's downfall, a downfall that Katherine Linehan is less than sympathetic toward:

We see Jekyll struggling in anguish to preserve what he intuitively feels to be the shrinking remains of his soul and clinging to an awareness of the element of a genuine love of virtue in himself as a sign that he is no hypocrite; we are little inclined to dwell on the fact that the self-estranged doctor, poor devil, is shrinking from ownership of the side of his being that flourished in the licentiousness he himself granted it. (212)

Indeed, it is Jekyll's desire to separate his undignified characteristics from his virtuous ones, the wish that they "be housed in separate identities [so] life would be relieved of all that was unbearable" (49), the commitment to social norms that prohibit certain ambiguous but deviant behaviors in a man of his social class, that lead to his downfall. In turn, it is Dr. Jerkoff's understanding of the perils of an attitude such as Jekyll's that save him.

Jekyll's perception that man has a "dual nature" is refuted by Mama Guadalupe, who reprimands Jerkoff's desire for more potion, snapping, "You white boys! You are sexual, you are sensual...you need to be whole and sensual, you need to be whole and complete." Unbeknownst to Jerkoff, the potion was merely Pepto-Bismol, a placebo that has drawn out the sexual confidence that has always resided in Jerkoff, but that he repressed. Guadalupe removes Jerkoff's glasses, then his mustache, and finally his wig, which humorously prove to be fake accessories; Dr. Jerkoff's public persona is literally a costume, while underneath he is the shaved and beautiful Mr. Hard. Looking in the mirror, Jerkoff exclaims, "It's him! It's me!" in

direct contrast to Jekyll's, "He, I say – I cannot say, I" (Stevenson 59). Jerkoff's utterance acknowledges a unity of self and sexuality that in Stevenson's time was socially not an option.

Sedgwick's reflections on the use of drugs in Stevenson's novel are instructive when analyzing West's decision to render Guadalupe's drug powerless. Sedgwick asserts, "drug addiction is both a camouflage and an expression for the dynamics of same-sex desire and its prohibition" (*Epistemology* 172). In this way, West's placebo drug indicates that it is Jerkoff's reluctance to realize his own sexual wholeness, and to embrace himself, that has acted as a "camouflage." There was never a drug; he was Mr. Hard, or rather Mr. Hard was him, the entire time. Just as "Stevenson needed a drug in order to imagine the dual nature he tried to describe" (Haggerty 125), so Jerkoff needed to merely *believe* in a drug in order to explore his identity, and the film takes great pleasure in showing that the drug was phony. In a way, the roles are reversed. Not only is Jerkoff the solitary and marginalized character, but also the alleged transformation is ultimately not a transformation at all: it is the removal of a prior transformation, the shedding of a costume.

Finally, while Jekyll/Hyde "is never offered the possibility of love" (Haggerty 128), Jerkoff/Hard does find love, or at least a meaningful sexual experience, as his date with Brad becomes the final sex scene, visualized in detail as opposed to the absent marital sex scene at the closing of *The Erotic Dr. Jekyll*. This scene differs markedly in tone from the preceding ones: mutual fellatio in a "sixty-nine" position, as well as significantly more kissing and smiling than in preceding scenes. The setting is domestic and in Jerkoff's own bed. He has brought the outside

harmoniously inside. The focus on Jerkoff's initial loneliness stands in contrast to the homosocial network of peers in *Strange Case*, men who "keep each other's secrets and intimacies" (Zieger 169). As William Veeder has pointed out, "the repression of *pleasure* is not the principal dilemma in *Jekyll and Hyde*" (109); indeed, as Veeder demonstrates, Jekyll and his male friends engage in all manner of "traditionally sanctioned social 'forms'—friendship and professionalism—to screen subversive drives directed *at one another*" (109). Zieger notes, "Jekyll's fate plays out through the familiar master/slave, monarch/subject, lofty/debased, soul/body binaries, so that, seeking freedom for his soul, he inadvertently imprisons himself in his body, which no longer obeys his direction, but transforms and indulges itself" (183). Such bodily traumas are presented by Stevenson as a result of stifling Victorian repression, while the unspeakable, ambiguous pleasures of Jekyll are, in Zieger's view, a reaction to a "new world of taxonomic identities" that would result in dissolution of self (194).

This frightening new world of solitary categories can be seen in Jerkoff's postmodern landscape. Whereas Jekyll foresaw a future as a Hyde who is destined to become "despised and friendless" (55), Jerkoff is the one mocked or ignored, living alone, unable to participate in the socially established category of urban homosexuality where Mr. Hard excels. Jekyll's homosocial network of convivial friends, which "did provide certain paradoxical opportunities for homoerotic expression" (Zieger 194), is absent in this postmodern *fin-de-siècle* as the gay club *Hard* passes judgment and rejects Jerkoff according to his appearance and manner. It is only as Mr. Hard that he is able to fit in to this socially bracketed and signaled

(hence the flyer) site of homosexual male bonding. It proves to be an ultimately superficial and dissatisfying experience, and one that Jerkoff hazily recalls as both “incredibly revolting” and “exciting” yet not something on which he is willing to waste his last dose on.

A New Fin-De-Siècle: Femininity, Monstrosity, and Heterosexuality in Paul Thomas' *Jekyll & Hyde*

Concluding her analysis of *Strange Case*, Elaine Showalter asks, “is the divided self of the fin-se-siècle narrative everybody’s fantasy? Can women as well as men have double lives? Can there be a woman in Dr. Jekyll’s closet?” (118). It is an important question, and one that Raven Touchstone and Paul Thomas go some way in answering in their 1999 film, *Jekyll and Hyde*. Significantly, this is the only adaptation set during the nineteenth century fin-de-siècle, and one of only two hardcore adaptations to present a female Jekyll in the form of Jekyll’s daughter, Molly, who takes up where her father left off and transforms into Flora. Showalter’s contention that “a working-class Edie Hyde wandering around the docks alone in the early hours of the morning would have been taken for a prostitute or killed by Jack the Ripper” (119) proves eerily accurate here, as Flora acts as a prostitute to begin with, and later sadistically tortures and kills Utterson. In addition, we discover that her father, as Hyde, murdered a prostitute at the brothel he frequents. So, in this way Showalter is exactly right, and yet assumes that a female Hyde would be mistaken for a prostitute, rather than be one, and would be murdered by the Ripper, rather than be the murderer.

It is also worth noting that this film is the only drama and the only adaptation in which the Jekyll/Hyde protagonist commits suicide. Showalter observes that in film adaptations where the homoeroticism is suggested, Jekyll must commit suicide, while those that suppress the homoerotics Jekyll may live (116). Clearly, Showalter is not considering gay pornography where the homoerotics become homosexual activity, and this activity is encouraged. Suicide is never even a suggestion in the comedic *Dr. Jerkoff and Mr. Hard* or *The Erotic Dr. Jekyll*. In *Jekyll and Hyde* (1999), however, Molly does commit suicide, reflecting Showalter's point that women have more cause to desire a double than men; that women have been taught from birth to repress their sexual desires, but that "transgressive desires in women seem to have led to guilt, inner conflict, and neurotic self-punishment, rather than to fantasies or realities of criminal acting out" (120). In this way, "we cannot recast Jekyll and Hyde with female protagonists, because a female Dr. Jekyll with a repressed Sister Hyde is more likely to be agoraphobic than to be picking up (or beating up) men in the street" (120). But Flora both picks up and beats up men on the street, begging the question, how does this function and mean within the context of hardcore pornography created, as writer Touchstone explicitly states, "for men"?¹⁵ What fantasy does this configuration of the story provide? And why must Flora commit suicide while the men of the other adaptations return to domesticity, spent and content?

As demonstrated in *The Erotic Dr. Jekyll*, masculine and feminine sexuality do not stand on an equal footing in the dominant heterosexual pornographic imagination of that era, in spite of (or, perhaps because of) a queer heterosexuality

relatively unobstructed by the obsessively categorized sexual preferences of the current porn industry. Nevertheless, “straight” porn is arguably queerer than ever, with a dizzying array of sexual preferences available in the heterosexual marketplace. Furthermore, as Shelton brilliantly observes, “in pornography preference *is* genre” (124), and while these categories would seem to divide these preferences up neatly,

genre functions principally in pornography as an elaborate and obsessively detailed alibi for the overdetermined issue of viewer desire. While it purports to direct its viewers toward their fantasies’ vicarious fulfillment, porn also allows its spectators to move unobstructed in a space where the nature of their erotic investment may remain confidential, anonymous, private. (123)

So far, the pornographic manifestation of Hyde has been hyper-masculine and hyper-sexual—hetero, homo, and homosocial. In the 1999 Vivid production, *Jekyll and Hyde*, the protagonist is female, the daughter of Dr. Jekyll, and her sexual exploits are seen alongside flashbacks of those of her deceased father, enabling a glimpse of what unbridled nineteenth-century masculine and feminine upper class sexuality looks like in the hardcore imagination, as well as what a woman might gain or lose from the division of public and private self. Significantly, writer Touchstone explains her decision to create a female protagonist in this way: “because men buy porn to watch women, not to watch some guy emote.”¹⁶ Clearly, porn has shifted since the 1970s. Furthermore, and I think particularly significant, this is the only hardcore adaptation that sets its story in the late-Victorian period, the narrative starting immediately following Dr. Jekyll’s mysterious death. In this way, the film also represents what the Victorian era looks like in this pornographic landscape, as opposed to the hedonistic 1970s or the homotopic San Francisco of the late-1990s.

Paul Thomas' adaptation is conflicted by a modern understanding of post-second wave feminist gender politics in a Victorian cultural and literary framework, not to mention a commercial pornographic heterosexual imaginary, resulting in a film that both undermines and conforms to its own pornographic impulse. The film literalizes what Stevenson's text suggests: Hyde as feminine, feminine as nature, and a Darwinian nightmare of regression, destabilizing and restabilizing gender at different points in the process.

While several critics have noted the absence of women in Stevenson's novella,¹⁷ Janice Doane and Devon Hodges have argued that there is a tangible female presence in the shape of Edward Hyde, who they argue is the embodiment of late-Victorian anxieties over the increasing destabilization of gender categories that came with the concept of the New Woman. Stevenson represents Hyde in terms that connote both masculinity and femininity. Not only is Hyde heard "weeping like a woman," but he is also regarded by Lanyon as near hysterical. His footsteps "fell lightly and oddly," distinct from Jekyll's "heavy creaking tread" (38), and Jekyll famously regards Hyde as "knit closer than a wife" (61). At the same time, Hyde is bestial and animalistic; his hands are hairy, he is violent and impulsive, and when he lets out a "dismal screech" in response to Jekyll's suicide, it is a cry "of mere animal terror" (38). Most telling of Hyde's gender ambiguity is Lanyon's description of "his remarkable combination of great muscular activity and great apparent debility of constitution" (44). Cyndy Hendershot also offers a reading of Hyde as feminine, as an embodiment of Darwinian anxieties. Nature is characterized by Darwin as feminine and impossible to master, much like Hyde, while the female presences in

the novella are linked to Hyde in their coding as “primitive, random, unsignifiable, and threatening” (Hendershot 113). Hendershot highlights the working-class women that do appear in the novella, at least one of whom has been read as a prostitute. In his “Full Statement,” Jekyll recalls himself as Hyde walking the streets in fear for his life: “Once a woman spoke to him, offering, I think, a box of lights. He smote her in the face and fled” (59). As Veeder observes, “A woman who walks the streets late at night asking men if they need a light is offering quite another type of box” (141). With this in mind, Hendershot’s further reflections are instructive when reading Thomas’ film. She notes, “Like Hyde, the working-class women who embody the feminine in the novella defy binary oppositions. Most of them are neither angel nor whore and hence fail to signify within middle-class Victorian conceptions of femininity” (113). Ultimately, “the feminine” in *Curious Case* “stands more as a negation of unified, masculine, binary opposition than as an ontological category in itself” (Hendershot 119).

Thomas’ *Jekyll and Hyde* recenters femininity and women, particularly working-class, working women, rendering them the core of sexual interrogation, as pornography is wont to do. More specifically prostitutes, both street walkers and brothel workers, are foregrounded as the agents of this narrative rather than as marginalized characters, complicating both presumed heterosexual viewer identification, and the virgin/whore dichotomy. As Doane and Hodges demonstrate, *Strange Case* “is about a collaboration between masculine and feminine that subverts the identity of each” (63), exposing the fear and desire for “a transgression of boundaries of masculine and feminine identity” (73). Through Hyde, femininity is

shown to have a violent force, something the majority of film adaptations have had difficulty representing. As Doane and Hodges note, most adaptations of Hyde have depicted him “as the representation of manly lust, for this emphasis locates him more firmly within the masculine” (65), an observation that is borne out in both hardcore adaptations addressed thus far. Furthermore, as Charles King points out, those few adaptations that do deal with gender displacement by having Dr. Jekyll turn into a female Hyde are “lightweight, usually aiming for cheap laughs...[suggesting] that although the idea of temporarily changing genders might have some appeal as a male sex fantasy, it is not a fantasy that the male filmmakers want to look at too rigorously” (163).¹⁸ In this way, Thomas’ film is able to explore such “wish-fulfillment” (King 163) but framed within a stable, ostensibly heterosexual hardcore film that is presented with a seriousness not present in the other two films.

Jekyll and Hyde (1999) begins immediately following Dr. Jekyll’s death, as his daughter Molly (Taylor Hayes) lays flowers on his grave, and returns to her newly-inherited house to try to figure out whether to stay or return to school. The only remaining member of staff is Jack (Julian), a servant’s son whom she used to play with as a child; all other staff have left out of fear. In the wake of Dr. Jekyll’s death, consequences of the will are enacted: Bridget, a prostitute working at a brothel, is given a box with a large sum of money in it from Mr. Edward Hyde, while Molly discovers manuscript pages and a laboratory where she begins to read the pages and carry out experiments. Jack is disconcerted by her interest, but does not interfere due to his inferior class status, and eventually Molly becomes “Flora”: a

sexually-aggressive, promiscuous alter-ego who prowls the streets at night picking up men. One of these men is Utterson, and after discovering his identity, she tortures him in an effort to discover how her father died, and hopefully find a cure. Failing to find one, and finding that she is permanently becoming Flora, she kills herself.

Peter Lehman argues in his book, *Running Scared*, that representations of male nudity are carefully constructed and mediated, remarking of the penis that when flaccid, it commonly represents a failure to sexually satisfy if small (10), or it is depicted in a way that barely distinguishes it from an erect penis: "If we are going to show the flaccid penis, in other words, it had better look as much like the supposed awesome spectacle of an erection as possible" (250). Hardcore pornography, as Lehman notes, "is the one place in our culture where the penis is always on display" (117-118), but there are very rarely flaccid penises, and when there are, they tend to be just prior to, or just following, erection, and as a result generally fleeting and/or partially engorged.¹⁹ This is not the case in *Jekyll and Hyde*. There are several moments in the film where prolonged and passive images of vulnerable masculinity function both narratively and sexually, in ways that complicate a conventional notion of pornographic desire, and reflect the ambivalence surrounding gendered sexuality in the original novella. When Bridget receives the box of money at the beginning of the film, she has just finished with a male customer who is strung up by his wrists. Such vulnerability is mediated throughout the scene by extended bouts of fellatio, penetration, and a consistently erect penis. However, after Bridget realizes she's "bloody rich" she tells him, "I'm

fucking done with you!” kicks the stool out from under his feet, and leaves him dangling and flaccid as she walks out of the room.

Similarly, and more strikingly, Utterson, the stern narrative agent of Stevenson’s novella, is a sexual masochist in the film, enjoying a whipping at the hands of Flora. Including Utterson as a main character, and one that participates in masochistic pleasures with Flora, is strangely apt considering his role in the novella, particularly the nature of his relationship to Jekyll/Hyde. The male characters in Stevenson’s novella have an intense desire to see Hyde’s face, and experience combinations of pleasure and disgust, together with an intense “curiosity” regarding this mysterious man. Lanyon describes his first encounter with Hyde as characterized by “what I can only describe as a disgustful curiosity” (44), and exclaims, “Here, at last, I had a chance of clearly seeing him” (44). It is Lanyon’s “greed of curiosity” (46), as Hyde tauntingly calls it, that prompts Lanyon to stay and see Hyde transform back into Jekyll. But it is Utterson who is most curious and desirous of Hyde, and protective of Jekyll. As Beauvais remarks, Utterson is even more feminized than Hyde, as the protector of the domestic who has embraced the one sphere while Hyde traverses two (177). In Stevenson’s novella, while all of the men find Hyde repulsive, Utterson appears to also experience attraction. Following Enfield’s tale of Hyde trampling the little girl, Utterson is haunted by the inclusion of Hyde in Jekyll’s will, and the nature of this mysterious man living in the back apartment of Jekyll’s house. “Hitherto it had touched him on the intellectual side alone; but now his imagination also was engaged or rather enslaved” (14). Utterson has vivid nightmares that night, manifestations of his concern for Jekyll and his

desire to see Hyde: “even in his dreams, it had no face, or one that baffled him and melted before his eyes; and thus it was that there sprang up and grew apace in the lawyer’s mind a singularly strong, almost an inordinate, curiosity to behold the features of the real Mr. Hyde” (15).

Following these nightmares, Utterson commits himself to the hunt, declaring, “If he be Mr. Hyde,...I shall be Mr. Seek” (15). This famous line precedes Utterson’s first encounter with Hyde, at the door to Black Mail House; an encounter that is peculiarly intimate. Utterson has been “haunting” Hyde’s door, and when Hyde finally approaches with that “odd, light footstep,” he refuses to meet Utterson’s eye. Utterson’s subsequent request is remarkably intimate and direct: “Will you let me see your face?” What follows is a stand-off of sorts; Hyde giving Utterson what he wants in an aggressive yet knowing fashion: “Mr. Hyde appeared to hesitate, and then, as if upon some sudden reflection, fronted about with an air of defiance; and the pair stared at each other pretty fixedly for a few seconds” (16). There is an electricity or chemistry to this scene that inflects Utterson’s connection to Jekyll. This connection intensifies along with Utterson’s curiosity about Hyde, prompting Utterson to fear Hyde “stealing like a thief to Harry’s bedside” (19). This love triangle could be read as Utterson torn between the upright, established Jekyll and the dangerous but exciting Hyde. Such sexual dichotomies are popular narratives in pornography, particularly gay pornography in “split personality” films such as *Gemini* (1979). Yet it is in the 1999 heteroporn, *Jekyll and Hyde*, that the Utterson character is most fully realized and, much like the 1978 *Dorian Gray* adaptation *Take Off*, queered through the gender swap of a lead character. While in *Take Off*, it is

Lord Henry who is rendered Henrietta, enabling (hetero)sexual consummation of the homoerotic relationship between Lord Henry and Dorian, in *Jekyll and Hyde*, the relationship between Utterson and Jekyll/Hyde is queered through a heterosexual relationship between Utterson and Jekyll's daughter, Molly/Flora. Utterson enjoys the feminine, domestic Molly but also revels in the dangerous, sadomasochistic Flora, ultimately resulting in his death at her hands.

Once again, this scene of potential feminization between Flora and Utterson is mediated by sexual activity and an enduring erection, yet later when Flora attempts to force information from him, he is tied down on his back, flaccid penis on display, and then tortured by having a lit candle placed between his buttocks, burning down slowly. Such masculine vulnerability (particularly that which invokes anal orifices in a non-comedic fashion) on film is rare, let alone in pornography, and is even rarer in non-sadomasochistic features, demonstrating a commitment to destabilizing the secure and contained masculine body. Granted, this film blurs the line between vanilla and sadomasochistic sexuality, indicative of the Victorian and the gothic in the contemporary pornographic imaginary. Nevertheless, it is BDSM-lite. The destabilization of dominant masculine sexuality is much like Stevenson's blurring of gender boundaries, yet is done in a way that film rarely has the confidence to unflinchingly depict.

Of course, as with any text, gender is not represented coherently, and the destabilizing effects of some aspects of the film are also restabilized by the pornographic impulse to depict genital organs and androcentric heterosexual sex. Furthermore, female sexuality is frequently subservient to male sexuality, a

pornographic tendency that has been recognized by several scholars. In her analysis of hardcore representations of male and female orgasm, Anne McClintock observes “the contradiction between clitoral pleasure and the male inability to imagine female pleasure outside a phallic regime” (“Gonad the Barbarian” 120-21). This contradiction is distinctly visible in the curiously curtailed masturbation scene: Molly is masturbating alone while fantasizing about Jack, and within moments the scene is over, with no indication visually or aurally that she has climaxed. Similarly, the remaining scenes are visually coded as “over” by the money shot, true to hardcore tradition. Yet, at the same time, the film includes significant amounts of light BDSM, sexual practices that perform and trouble gender norms and, as Williams has pointed out, are less focused on genital sexuality and more focused on “intermediate relations to the sexual object, rather than proceeding directly towards ‘ultimate’ end goals” (“Pornographies” 246). It is perhaps because of these sadomasochistic elements that the film manages to so riskily move between images of virile heterosexual masculinity and images of intense masculine vulnerability and feminization.

The three key sex scenes involving Molly/Flora are instructive in analyzing the way the film depicts female sexuality alongside Jekyll/Hyde’s male sexuality. Throughout the film, Molly’s father’s voice over narrates her transformations and sexual adventures, and visually the film prompts the viewer to compare and contrast (and perhaps ultimately fuse) her father’s practices with her own. The first scene involving Flora has her beckoning two men into an alleyway, where she is more submissive to their sexual desires—they dominate her, and the scene ends

with her orally pleasuring and masturbating them both to climax. Post-climax, the men get up and silently walk away, leaving Flora alone in a way that seems to indicate, through her frightened expression and the dark music, that she has been used. The second scene is entirely different in tone. Utterson has stepped in to avoid a fight between the predatory Flora and a group of working prostitutes. Arriving back at his apartment, they are kissing roughly and she bites his lip. Cursing her in pain, Utterson drinks from an Amaretto bottle, and attempts another kiss. She bites him again, and smirks as he pulls away. In spite of his verbal abuse, calling her a “whore” and a “bitch,” Flora is relentless, and orders him down on the ground where she whips him with a riding crop. While Flora is dominant in this scenario, Utterson is also verbally controlling his pleasure: “Yes, I enjoy pain. I find it highly sexual. I like to be flogged like a disobedient schoolboy. Stop! In a minute. Ah, stop! The minute is up!” These verbal controls expose the way in which BDSM is a carefully controlled power play, one in which gender norms are toyed with, yet ultimately, as in carnival, dominant forces are restored. Flora’s first encounter in the alleyway confirms this. In spite of Flora’s sexual dominance in the scene, there is always the knowledge that Utterson could stop proceedings at any time. Nevertheless, as a pornographic text that offers sexual fantasies for its viewers, *Jekyll and Hyde* is offering up particularly queer sexual scenarios, ones that render typical cultural conceptions of masculine and feminine sexuality indistinct and constantly in flux. Furthermore, it is important to remember the extent to which our notions of sexual dominance/submission are affected by conventional understandings of what it means to penetrate and what it means to be penetrated.²⁰

The flux of gender in the film is further evidenced by the subsequent torture sequence, in which Utterson definitely cannot escape, and concludes with Flora hitting Utterson, killing him. Immediately prior to this, the film shows her father having rough, animalistic sex with a prostitute, and then strangling her to death. Her father's voiceover explains that out of concern for Hyde's increasing dominance over his character, he attempted to "live as Jekyll and put away Hyde," but "was found lacking in strength....my evil had long been caged and he came out roaring." In tandem with this aural explanation, the film depicts Flora's torture of Utterson, overlapping her crimes with her father's, and blurring the lines of gendered narrative authority in a way that conflates father/daughter responsibility. As Molly states accusingly while staring at herself in the mirror as Flora, "Papa, papa, what have you done?" The preceding murder is conflated with her father's murder of the prostitute, creating a destabilization of gender categories and of prostitute/John, much in the same way that Flora destabilizes these positions as both whore and sexual predator. Utterson, in turn, has gone from executor of her father's will, to client, and finally to victim of Flora/Hyde's sexual aggression. The resulting sexual dynamics of the film are decidedly queer and fluid, in spite of the strict sexual bracketing of the film.

For these reasons, the meaning of the ending is ambiguous. Throughout the film, in spite of the diverse and fluid representations of gender and sexuality, the narrative has nevertheless remained true to the original novella's split personality: the sexual side imagined as physically grotesque and dangerous, and the civilized side imagined as beautiful and kind. This dichotomy obviously has different

ramifications when embodied by a female heroine, taking on centuries of gendered cultural meaning related to the oppressive surveillance of female sexuality. In this way, in spite of its many subversive qualities, the film adheres to a Victorian notion of the dangers of active female sexuality. The final scene between Molly and Jack is used to articulate Molly's increased loss of control over Flora, as during the sexual activity she alternates between Molly and Flora, scaring Jack and upsetting Molly. It is this loss of control, the fusing together of virgin/whore, that is traumatizing and results in her suicide. It is a superficially conservative ending, and one that appears to condemn active female sexuality.

Yet, within a genre that consistently blurs the lines of the virgin/whore dichotomy and frequently rewards active female sexuality, it seems unlikely that this conservative reading is the case. Indeed, just as Jekyll's suicide in the novella need not exclusively indicate a condemnation of his sensual pursuits (Stevenson' openly defended sexual desire, and Jekyll expresses a degree of enjoyment over his transformations) so Molly's suicide need not be read in these simplistic terms either. I believe a clue to reading the ending lies in the fact that the filmmakers decided to set the film during the late-Victorian period, rather than the present time of filming, 1999. Molly's suicide might indicate that at our twentieth century fin-de-siècle, cultural attitudes toward female sexuality are as sexist and riddled with double standards as they were during the fin-de-siècle before it. Fredric Jameson's treatment of the postmodern nostalgic film reflects this idea, as he suggests that these films "show a collective unconscious in the process of trying to identify its own present at the same time that they illuminate the failure of this attempt, which

seems to reduce itself to the recombination of various stereotypes of the past” (296). Thus, Molly’s suicide is framed as a tragic ending, one that sheds light on a troubled present. Certainly, this reading would illuminate why all other hardcore adaptations of *Strange Case* have updated the film, and translated the crisis of identity to a comedic contemporary masculinity crisis existing in a world where men have sexual license to do as they please. Unlike *The Erotic Dr. Jekyll* and *Dr. Jerkoff and Mr. Hard*, there is nothing funny about Thomas’ *Jekyll and Hyde*.

As these three hardcore films demonstrate, the pornographic landscape, like the gothic landscape, is one characterized by ambiguity, ambivalence, desire, and disgust. Whereas pornography is often presumed to be a strictly heterosexual and humorless medium, and the Victorian period presumed to be sexually repressed and antithetical to our supposedly modern, sexually liberated culture, things are nowhere near as stable as surfaces might indicate. Shelton observes that the question we should perhaps be asking of pornography is, “for what unrepresentable content does the pornographic image so obsessively overcompensate?” (128). As these hardcore adaptations express, the selective silences and assertions of these texts betray the anxieties and instabilities of gender that lie just beneath the surface.

¹ Touchstone, Raven, a.k.a. Penny Antine. E-mail interview. 5 June 2010.

² Swinging became extremely popular in the 1970s, particularly among the porn industry workers in New York City. Plato’s Retreat was a particularly notorious swinger spot, which in turn was immortalized in a porn film, *Plato’s The Movie* (Dir. Joe Sherman, 1980). The documentary, *American Swing* (Dir. Jon Hart and Mathew Kaufman, 2008), documents the 1970s trend, focusing on the ride and fall of Plato’s and its owner.

³ As is heterosexual coupling in gay porn, according to Waugh, unless it is being used to establish a character as heterosexual before he explores homosexuality, as in the films of Joe Gage.

⁴ Many gay porn stars crossed over into successful straight porn careers, most significantly Jack Wrangler, George Payne, and Casey Donovan. Currently, this almost never happens, and stars that have achieved such cross over, such as Christian X and Kurt Lockwood, appear on many female porn stars' "no list." Furthermore, transsexual stars like Jill Munroe appeared in straight films without any warning, whereas the appearance of a transsexual performer in current porn would require labeling of some kind.

⁵ In a curious intertextual move, "Linda" is dressed to resemble the infamous Linda Lovelace who four years earlier starred as "Linda" in *Deep Throat* (Gerard Damiano, 1972), which also starred Harry Reems as her doctor.

⁶ Incidentally, Charles' transforms into a different costume, as well as a different accent, both of which are inexplicably like a southern cowboy. His appearance and immediate feelings of euphoria are evocative of cocaine use, a prolific drug in the 1970s. Zieger comments on the possibility of Stevenson using cocaine, and thus the possibility that Jekyll's drug is meant to reflect cocaine (186).

⁷ For an excellent analysis of the way women function to reassure men of their heterosexuality in homosexual fantasies, see Henry Jenkins' "'He's in the Closet but He's Not Gay': Male-Male Desire in *Penthouse Letters*." Interestingly, Jenkins argues that such overt homoeroticism "may only be realizable in the print medium" (138) due to both the "privacy" and the "ambiguities" that printed texts afford (148).

⁸ It is tempting to read this scar as a displaced "deformity" from the body of Hyde to that of a female sex partner, particularly as the scar is explained as a constructed set of genitalia.

⁹ Carol J. Clover has remarked on the way rape-revenge horror films suggest "that the (male) anus and the vagina are, in certain social matters, one and the same thing" (157). In pornography, and in culture at large, male anal penetration is still coded as queer, regardless of the sex of the penetrator.

¹⁰ Zebedy Colt is also significant for performing fellatio on Jamie Gillis, one of adult film's most prolific and lauded stars, in Gerard Damiano's otherwise-heterosexual *The Story of Joanna* (1975).

¹¹ The same visual trick is utilized in *Dracula Exotica*, discussed at length in chapter five.

¹² Towards the end of the challenge, the list of various positions are briefly shown on the blackboard, for comedic effect. Along with the already-mentioned "missionary" and "something else," Rory has apparently performed, among others, the following: "fag hag fuck," "cum cruncher," "ball buster," "back bender," and "naked lunch."

¹³ Homosexuality is not entirely normalized, as Jerkoff's mother is worried about her son's lack of girlfriend, indicating a level of heteronormativity. Nevertheless, homosexuality is presented as acceptable throughout the majority of the narrative.

¹⁴ Joe Gage's *Kansas City Trucking Co.* (1976) is notable in this respect, with solo masturbation comprising the majority of the film's sexual acts. Tom Waugh counts "solo performance" and "masturbation" as recurring themes in gay porn, particularly in loops and shorts.

¹⁵ Touchstone, Raven, aka. Penny Antine. E-mail interview. 5 June 2010.

¹⁶ Touchstone, Raven, aka. Penny Antine. E-mail interview. 5 June 2010.

¹⁷ See, for example, Veeder's "Children of the Night: Stevenson and Patriarchy," and Irving S. Saposnik's *Robert Louis Stevenson*.

¹⁸ There are only two pornographic films that depict a male Jekyll becoming a female Hyde. One is hardcore, *Dr. Jeckel and Ms. Hyde* (1990), and one is softcore, *The Adult Version of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Byron Mabe, 1972). This scarcity of explicit representations of this theme would seem to corroborate King's contention. Furthermore, *Flesh For Frankenstein* (Paul Morrissey, 1973) features a monster that is both male and female, but this too is not hardcore, and no genitalia is shown.

¹⁹ So-called "wood problems" are another matter.

²⁰ Waugh addresses this binary in when he notes, “A man or women portrayed as getting fucked cannot automatically be seen as a victim. Gay porn in particular, and of course gay sexuality in general, undermine the widespread assumption in the porn debate that penetration in itself is an act of political oppression. A sexual act or representation acquires ideological tenor only through its personal, social, narrative, iconographic, or larger political context.”

CHAPTER FOUR
“STRANGE LEGACIES OF THOUGHT AND PASSION”: SEXUAL IDENTITY AND
TECHNOLOGIES OF DESIRE IN PORNOGRAPHIC ADAPTATIONS OF OSCAR
WILDE’S *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*

There were times when it appeared to Dorian Gray that the whole of history was merely the record of his own life. – Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, p. 121.

The name “Oscar Wilde” typically connotes homosexuality in Western culture, perhaps worldwide, thanks to the enduring legacy of his trials which exposed his private life and dissected his work, leading to a reformulation of “homosexuality” as personal identity on a public scale. As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick points out, “Oscar Wilde virtually *means* ‘homosexual’” (165). Yet, at the same time, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is not always associated with homoeroticism, even while it is associated with a secret and transgressive sexuality.¹ As with all the texts discussed in this project, *Dorian Gray* as a popular culture text concerns the transformation of the body, as well as the secrets and private worlds associated with this transformation. While the *Alice* adaptations unexpectedly displace issues of individual age, in hardcore *Dorian Gray* adaptations Wilde’s novel serves as a canvas upon which to play out concerns regarding *age*—historical, cultural, and individual—in connection with sexuality.

Both *Take Off* (Armand Weston, 1978) and *Gluttony* (Wash West, 2001) use Wilde (as culture-text) and the Dorian Gray narrative to highlight the ways in which history is viewed through technology, suggesting that the cultural history of America is the history of technology, which by extension is the history of sexuality. These films suggest that technology and pornography create sexual subjectivity and shape desires, and that the distance between subject positions in pornographic

creation and spectatorship are more blurred than in other genres. In turn, the specter of Wilde, and the use of *Dorian Gray* in Wilde's trial as damning evidence of sodomy, irretrievably queers the films that adapt *Dorian Gray*, as well as Wilde himself. This results in what Sedgwick calls "camp"—"the moment at which a consumer of culture makes the wild surmise, 'What if whoever made this was gay too?'" (156)—even when the sexual activity is ostensibly heterosexual.

Despite what seems to be a deeply British narrative, both films' utilization of the *Dorian Gray* narrative results in the (homo)eroticizing of American culture and history. In *Take Off* the Dorian character embodies a series of Hollywood icons through the ages, while in *Gluttony*, American history is related as/through porn history, itself recast as gay porn history, with Dorian embodying significant moments in pornography from several decades. Both features are marked by the erotics of particular technologies of the age, and serve as pornographic film treatments of the "strange legacies of thought and passion" Dorian Gray recognized and identified with in the artistic and literary legacies populated by homosexuals (111). In this way, the films signal the affective relationship between visual technology, American culture, and sexual subjectivity.

Sedgwick refers to the Wilde trials and their consequences as initiating "a sudden, radical condensation of sexual categories" (9). Likewise, Ed Cohen notes that "by the time of his conviction, not only had Wilde been confirmed as *the* sexual deviant for the late nineteenth century, but he had become the paradigmatic example for an emerging public definition of a new 'type' of male sexual actor: 'the homosexual'" (1-2). The Wilde trials followed other significant cultural and legal

moments in nineteenth century Britain, most significantly the establishment of The Labouchere Amendment in 1885 and the Cleveland Street Scandal of 1889. The Labouchere Amendment outlawed the practice of ambiguously defined acts of “gross indecency” between males (Hall 39), while the Cleveland Street Scandal of 1889 exposed “a hidden world of Victorian homosexuality” (Hall 48) involving upper-class male uses of working class male prostitutes. The way in which such laws and trials made homosexuality as a practice, and eventually an identity, visible is signaled by the ambiguity of terminology such as “gross indecency,” as well as what Lesley Hall calls “government shillyshallying” over the Cleveland Street Scandal, which she regards as “partially motivated by fears of the undesirable effects of publicizing the existence of homosexuality, especially among the upper classes” (48).

Not only is homosexuality a threat in terms of class stratification, but also in terms of the implications it might have for ostensibly heterosexual male relationships. Hall notes, “The Wilde debacle collapsed a number of transgressive male possibilities (effeminacy, decadence, aestheticism, bohemianism, dandyism, self-indulgence, and excess), in practice pertaining to heterosexual men, into one monstrous cautionary figure” (54). This can be seen in reflections made by *The New York Times* in 1890 that British panic over *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was likely due to the previous year’s scandal, prompting Englishmen to be “abnormally sensitive to the faintest suggestion of pruriency in the direction of friendships” (Gillespie 353).

Such sexual categorization, and establishment of sexual practices as identity, paradoxically leads to the simultaneously progressive and limiting nature of the

genre of pornography. While gay rights and sexual taxonomy have led to a broader variety of pornographic representations than ever before—supporters of the validation of sexual tastes that pornography offers frequently cite the truism that “there’s something for everyone”—such categorization also limits what can and cannot occur in a “straight” film. For this reason, straight films of the 1970s often paradoxically feel more “queer” than gay films of the twenty-first century. In an age where the simple depiction of a male body, or worse his face bearing the marks of pleasure, is regarded as “gay,”² it seems that “gay” means a lot more than simply having an erotic desire for the same sex. Rather, it signals a negative space: whatever is not strictly defined as heterosexual, which usually involves the manner in which male and female bodies are represented in a sexual context.³ As Cohen observes, homosexuality and heterosexuality are terms coined in the same moment, “coined by symmetry with and in opposition to” each other (9). The same is true of straight and gay porn, increasingly so following the HIV/AIDS pandemic of the 1980s, creating a gradual shift away from sexual fluidity.

The Picture of Dorian Gray is probably well-known to many, even those who have not read the book. Still, a brief plot summary may be useful: Basil Hallward is painting the portrait of a beautiful young man named Dorian Gray⁴, whom he is also in love with. Dorian Gray is innocent, childish, and easily influenced; Basil’s friend, the witty and pompous Lord Henry, finds Dorian Gray to be equally intriguing, but more as a beautiful space to fill with his influence. Dorian Gray is in awe of Lord Henry, and is seduced by his witty philosophies on life, most particularly his lauding of beauty and youth. After a particularly seductive sermon on these topics, Dorian

Gray sees his finished portrait, and declares he would sell his soul if the picture would grow old and Dorian Gray stay young. Before long, he realizes his wish has come true—he remains beautiful, while Basil's portrait of him bears the signs of age and sin. He immerses himself in the worship of the senses, instigating suicides, committing murder, and indulging in myriad destructive sensory pursuits. In despair, Dorian Gray destroys the only remaining evidence of his crimes: the portrait. He stabs it, resulting in the magical transference of bodies. His servants discover his dead body, "withered, wrinkled, and of loathsome visage" (184), while the portrait is restored to its original beauty. Basil's erotic love for Dorian Gray is clear in the novel, but is even more evident in an earlier version of the text in which Basil explains to Dorian Gray his rationale for not exhibiting the portrait. While in the final version, Basil says, "I worshipped you" (95), in the original uncensored Lipincott edition, he says something more erotically suggestive: "It is quite true that I have worshipped you with far more romance of feeling than a man usually gives to a friend. Somehow, I have never loved a woman" (Gillespie "From Edward Carson's" 384). Such censorship merely serves to highlight what is being hidden.

Armand Weston's 1978 hardcore feature, *Take Off*, is set in the 1970s where a mysterious man, Darrin Blue, is hosting a lavish party. A guest, Linda, finds and watches an old stag film from 1925 that depicts an elderly man having sex with a young aristocratic woman. Darrin realizes she has seen the stag film, invites her for a drive, and tells her over the course of the day the curious story of a young man who was surreptitiously filmed having sex with his lover and mentor, Henrietta Wilde. Indeed, Henrietta orchestrated the secret filming. After seeing his own

moving image on film, he wishes he would stay young while the image in the film would grow old. He soon realizes this wish has come true, and the subsequent sex scenes in the narrative are depictions of Darrin's exploits as a perpetually young man, embodying iconic Hollywood characters and tropes from each decade from the 1920s through to the 1970s.

Wash West's 2001 video, *The Seven Deadly Sins: Gluttony*, is a faux documentary in which Cyril Vane, an undergraduate student, embarks on a search for mysterious and elusive porn star Dorian. The film's sex scenes represent different historical periods in pornography from the 1960s to the 1990s. Cyril eventually finds Dorian, and discovers he has not aged, while the stag film hidden in Dorian's attic has. Both *Take Off* and *Gluttony* end with the Dorian Gray character finding love, thereby breaking the spell and reverting to his aged self.

As noted by Jeffrey Escoffier, "[Gay p]orn filmmaking, as it developed after 1969, included a strong documentary impulse—ultimately documenting and authenticating male sexual arousal and release" (28). Furthermore, gay pornography had a more arthouse approach to filmmaking than straight pornography did, a style that originated from predecessors Kenneth Anger and Andy Warhol, and which petered out in the late-1970s (Burger 15). Linda Williams observes, "aesthetic ambitions" and "self-reflexive" qualities "would mark pornographies with all-male action as different—in many ways far more chic and avant-garde than the much touted chic of mainstream pornography" (*Screening Sex* 145). It was around this time that straight pornography began to emulate Hollywood productions⁵, as the industry moved into its celebrated Golden Age. It is

significant, then, that while heteroporn *Take Off* (a Golden Age classic itself) parodies Hollywood icons such as Humphrey Bogart and Marlon Brando as a way of recasting American history, *Gluttony*, a product of the postmodern digital age, is a mock documentary examining the mysterious life of a porn superstar over the decades. Yet both films commit to one significant change in the story of Dorian Gray: the portrait becomes the stag film.

“Stags,” sometimes also referred to as “smokers,” occupy an important place in the history of pornography, not only in terms of being the first motion picture pornographies, but also due to their rarity, the lack of reliable information on them, and the generic consistency between them and their present day inheritors. While Dorian Gray’s portrait was painted in 1890, the stag film of *Take Off* is from 1925. This is roughly a decade after the first stag films were made (Slade 34), but importantly the 1920s were “the golden age of the stag film...rich in humor and good spirit” with “the merriest of stories” (Slade 35). The gay stag film of *Gluttony*, however, is from the 1960s, signaling the vast difference in socially permitted representations of different sexualities.

Self-Objectification, Exhibition, and Eroticism

The Picture of Dorian Gray opens with Lord Henry and Basil discussing the yet-to-be-seen eponymous anti-hero. Or rather, he has already been seen, as Basil is working on his portrait while Lord Henry looks on. Lord Henry refers to the man in the portrait as a “young Adonis, who looks as if he was made out of ivory and rose-leaves....he is a narcissus” (7). Lord Henry goes on to characterize the man as a

beautiful but empty shell, all the more beautiful for being so empty: "He is some brainless, beautiful creature, who should be always here in summer when we want something to chill our intelligence" (7). Such sexual objectification, and pleasure in the thought of utilizing someone solely for his body, becomes the function of Dorian Gray for Lord Henry. In contrast, Basil's passion for Dorian Gray springs from his personality; Dorian Gray is "some one whose mere personality was so fascinating that, if I allowed it to do so, it would absorb my whole nature, my whole soul, my very art itself" (10).

Yet, in spite of Lord Henry and Basil's admiration of Dorian Gray, the most significant romance in the novel is between Dorian Gray and his own representation, which he in turn embodies. While at Basil's home, Lord Henry bewilders Dorian Gray with his lecture on the "new Hedonism" (23), where Dorian Gray is facetiously informed that "beauty is a form of Genius" (22), that "Nothing can cure the soul but the senses, just as nothing can cure the senses but the soul" (21), and perhaps most significantly that "We degenerate into hideous puppets, haunted by the memory of the passions of which we were too much afraid, and the exquisite temptations that we had not the courage to yield to. Youth! Youth! There is absolutely nothing in the world but youth!" (23). Immediately following this lecture, Dorian Gray finally sees his portrait: "When he saw it he drew back, and his cheeks flushed for a moment with pleasure. A look of joy came into his eyes, as if he had recognized himself for the first time....The sense of his own beauty came on him like a revelation" (25).

With this revelation, however, comes the realization that he is destined to grow old; that the portrait is already younger and more beautiful than he is. “With his eyes still fixed upon his own portrait” (25), Dorian Gray makes his famous pledge: “If only it were the other way! If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old! For that—for that—I would give everything!...I would give my soul for that!” (25). Immediately, Lord Henry recognizes that the portrait “is the real Dorian Gray” (26), and for the remaining narrative, Dorian’s relationship with his own image is one characterized by admiration, terror, secrecy, and eroticism.

It is no coincidence that the two novels adapted by West—*Dorian Gray* and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*—are both famously concerned with doubles. While characterizing homosexuality as a form of narcissism and self-identification is antiquated and heterosexist, the tension between self and other is nevertheless a core component of gay pornographic representation through solo masturbation sequences, often utilizing mirrors. Thomas Waugh regards the iconography of Narcissus as an important motif of gay erotic imagery, arguing that the tension between subject and object, identification and desire, is subversive of heteronormative systems of gender:

If heterosexual culture simplifies and rigidifies the dynamics of male subject and female object through the tyranny of gender difference, same-sex eroticism opens them up, rendering them ever more volatile. Same sex eroticism layers upon the individual erotic object choice the option of identification as well as voyeurism, projection as well as objectification: we (often) want to be, we often *are* the same as the man we love....Transposed to same-sex representation, this pattern becomes a tension, even a confusion, between identification and desire. (44-45)

Or, as Christopher Craft observes, “the experience of reflection is queer enough” (109), and in West’s films the queer experience of reflection is foregrounded through the use of the double or the alter ego. In addition, the use of mirrors in masturbation sequences occurs in both *Gluttony* and *Dr. Jerkoff and Mr. Hard*—in fact, at one point during a montage in *Gluttony*, the same mirror-masturbation sequence discussed at length in the previous chapter from *Dr. Jerkoff* appears, creating another reflection that is intimately intertextual and signals the narcissistic themes of both adaptations, and the regressive technologies of pornography that I discuss below. Such borrowing from other films occurs so much in pornography that there are pornographic formats devoted to them (the compilation and loop carrier), yet the meaning of what is borrowed and why extends beyond simple laziness and ineptitude.

Laura U. Marks’s work on intercultural visual media is useful in regard to these adaptations. Marks addresses the ways in which film and videotape themselves are “conductive” like skins, as are the cinema-going practices and viewer-object relations of film and video spectatorship. Marks suggests thinking of “the skin of the film not as a screen, but as a membrane that brings its audience into contact with the material forms of memory” (243). In this way, the technologies of the Gothic, Dorian’s portrait and his own skin (“skin shows”), and finally the magazines, stag reels, cinema, and video of *Take Off* and *Gluttony* (“skin flicks”) are conductive, creating cultural memory, leaving traces.

It is telling, then, that Weston’s *Take Off* opens with a discussion of and complication of “skins.” The film opens in a grand mansion where a party is in full

swing, and many men and women, young and old, are swimming, lounging, and displaying their bodies while the camera fluidly follows random party guests as they mingle. No one knows whose party it is, but a mysterious and beautiful man is watching two guests—Roy (Eric Edwards) and Linda (Leslie Bovee)—who have just met, and decide to go inside and “explore.” They find a downstairs room furnished in animal skins, and have sex. Vision and surfaces are foregrounded as themes in the visual and aural narrative. Linda tells Roy to close his eyes, which he does, while she undresses and covers herself with an animal skin. Of course, Roy peeps halfway through, but nevertheless the scene is suggestive of the erotics of looking, not looking, and then looking again at different stages of disrobing and re-clothing. “How do you like my new skin?” she asks playfully, wrapped in leopard print. “I like the real one better,” Roy replies with a grin. This initiates the first sex scene of the film, significant in that it casts the importance of new skins, artificial skins, real skins, and skin flicks; terms that are crucial to the erotics of Dorian Gray’s narrative and to the performance of identity. These real people like to play with new skins, but when it comes down to it, the real skin is always better. Dorian Gray, on the other hand, chooses the new skin, and casts off the real.

Following a generic but loving and erotic scene, there is a distinct change in tone. Linda rises from the couch, almost as if in a trance, as eerie and minimal chime music plays; Roy watches her as she moves fluidly forward and touches high up on the wall as if instinctively feeling for something. Whatever she finds prompts a small projector screen to whir down on the other side of the room. A light starts up, and the familiar flicker of an old movie projector depicts an old black and white film in

which a woman walks across a lawn dressed in fine white clothes and carrying a white parasol. “Hey, we’re going to the movies, honey!” cries Roy, as they settle down to watch it. The couple are amazed at the antiquity of the film, surmising “it must be a collector’s item.” The film shows a picnic, where an old man is gradually and playfully removing the stockings and clothes of the young aristocratic woman. “I didn’t know they made stag films in them days,” asserts Roy, adding, “That’s practically an instant replay!” He is making a cheeky reference to the love making they themselves indulged in moments before, and are now watching in “instant replay” on the screen, drawing a connection between sexual representation and their own love making in “real” life. In turn, this highlights the fact that we as viewers are also watching a sexual representation *of* a sexual representation typically presumed to be a prelude to—not a replay of—sexual interaction. Again, the implications for Dorian Gray’s own narrative are significant. Dorian Gray trades places with what would be the “instant replay,” and lives his life in an erotic lag, so to speak.

The couple continue watching the stag film, their faces lit up in the darkness of the room, in a familiar image of spectators in the darkness of the cinema. Linda grimaces, “Ugh, what’s she doing with an old buzzard like *that?*” Roy grins and quips, “The same thing you was doing with me, sugar pie.” “Yeah, but he’s such a dirty old man,” she replies. “Yeah, well I reckon I will be too some day,” Roy states. The dialogue is setting up the viewer to discover the story of the mysterious Darrin Blue, but it is also particularly poignant that it occurs between two young, beautiful, recently-acquainted lovers, post-coitus, gazing up at a cinema screen—two beautiful

pornographic actors who are themselves forever young and beautiful on screen for any viewer's pleasure, at any time, now available on instant replay in the digital age.

Once the stag concludes, the couple get nervous that they are “trespassing” or committing an “invasion of privacy,” aware that they have experienced something quite intimate, and sneak out of the room. The mysterious man, whom we soon discover is Darrin Blue, the host of the party and owner of the property, stands in a doorway and solemnly watches them leave. He walks silently down into the room they just left, and stands with his hand on the projector. The narrative purpose of this scene is to show Darrin feeling for warmth—feeling for evidence as to whether they watched the stag—but there is something literally touching and intimate about his connection with the machine that depicts his true self. He stands with his hand resting on the projector, gazing past the frame of the film, presumably at where the stag would be projected, gazing at where his own image would be; the image that haunts that space and appeared there only moments before. Unlike a painting, which is perpetually on display, the film image requires further technology to be exhibited; technology that initiates a change in light and sound, and makes a tangible sensory difference to the machine that produces the image. Darrin's gazing at the empty space that held his mechanically reproduced image—a space that theoretically could be anywhere, as all that is required is empty space on which to project—while his hand absorbs the heat of the projector, is a sensory inverse of what Dorian Gray experiences with his painting. Darrin can only see space, but can feel the heat that is a synecdoche for his image.

Back at the party, Linda, irritated by Roy's flirting with another woman, sits down by the pool. She is in full frame, so when Darrin walks up and stands next to her, only his well dressed legs can be seen. "You look bored," he comments before crouching down next to her and introducing himself as the owner of the place. "Everyone's been wondering about the mysterious host," Linda responds, "Where have you been hiding?" Darrin has been present for all narrative events so far in the film, always in the margins of proceedings, walking unnoticed amongst his own guests. Indeed, he explains, "I haven't. I've been watching." Linda agrees to leave with Darrin, and their subsequent car ride together, and the story he tells Linda, provides the narration for the scenes that unfold to tell—to author—Darrin's story.

While *Take Off* is a "straight" porn film, the gender switch that Lord Henry undergoes renders the film paradoxically more queer than if he had remained a man. Certainly, if Lord Henry had not become Henrietta Wilde, Darrin and s/he would not be permitted to consummate their romance. This consummation, even through a woman's body, consummates the homoerotics of the novel, as well as the homoerotics of Wilde's relationship to the novel, as Henrietta is a combination of both Lord Henry and Wilde (and also in some way Basil, as will be discussed below) and appears in the stag film performing with Darrin. Henrietta is essentially Lord Henry and Oscar Wilde in drag.

In the novel, Dorian Gray falls in love with a female love object, Sibyl, who also performs in drag in various Shakespeare plays. Dorian excitedly relates to Lord Henry, "But Sibyl! You should have seen her! When she came on in her boy's clothes she was perfectly wonderful" (65). Yet, as Gillespie notes, this "charade is further

complicated because boys played all the female roles in Shakespeare's theater" (65n). In this way, Sibyl playing a boy is the inverse of Lord Henry being played by a woman, who is also playing Wilde. As discussed below, the role of Sibyl is complicated further when she becomes the gay male documentarian Cyril Vane in *Gluttony*. Henrietta, through organizing the secret filming, performing in the film, and influencing Darrin with her meditations on youth, collapses the authorial ambiguity of the novel, combining spectator, sitter, author of the novel, author of Dorian Gray, and author of the portrait. The erotics of authorship are emphasized when Darrin surmises that Henrietta's secret filming—the "taking" of his image, as Darrin repeatedly calls it—"was her way of getting off."

Henrietta offers a different reason for filming Darrin: the stag film is designed to present the male erotic body for the visual pleasure of a male. When she shows the film to Darrin for the first time, much to his surprise, she asserts, "Look at yourself! I wanted you to see for yourself how truly fantastic you are," adding, "Isn't he fantastic Max?" "Fantastic, Madame," Max dutifully replies. It is Max, the black servant, operating the projector just as he operated the motion picture camera. In fulfilling the Basil role to the extent that he operates the "paintbrush," Max reduces the authorial position of "painter" to menial presser of buttons, operator of machinery. Such is the result of a democratic technology: anyone can use it, and regardless of the fact that Max operates the movie camera, it is clearly Henrietta who is author, as instigator, director, and screen partner. It is Henrietta who calls for the destruction of the film, and Henrietta who is credited with "leaving something" with Darrin besides his fortune. That is, perpetual youth and the magical film.

Interestingly, the acidity of Lord Henry's influence is not present in *Henrietta*. She and Darrin appear to be truly in love, as evidenced by the conclusion to the film. Furthermore, *Henrietta*'s witty pontifications regarding the importance of youth are turned on her, as Darrin frantically worries that when he grows old she will no longer love him: "I shan't be able to bear growing old! Like—." Darrin pauses, and *Henrietta* looks down: "Like me?" Suddenly, the fears of aging beauty are felt by *Henrietta* herself in connection to gender. This fear of age is nullified somewhat by the ending of the film, in which *Henrietta* and Darrin, both aged, are reunited and disappear together into the dusk. Yet this finale is nevertheless problematized as discussed below.

In the novel, when Dorian Gray recognizes a change in the portrait, it is queer enough, as Craft might put it, but it becomes queerer still when depicted in a genre presumed to perform the function of sexual arousal for heterosexual men. When the image of a man gazing at his own image in envy and awe of its beauty is rendered actually visible as a sexually explicit moving image on screen, within a sexually explicit film, the queer sexual politics of the spectator-film dynamic are tangible. Having cruelly rejected Sibyl (which unbeknownst to Dorian Gray has led to her suicide) Dorian Gray gazes at his motionless portrait, now changed: "The quivering, ardent sunlight showed him the lines of cruelty around the mouth as clearly as if he had been looking into a mirror after he had done some dreadful thing" (77). Yet Darrin has not "done some dreadful thing," and sees no "cruelty around the mouth." In fact, as Darrin touches the screen onto which his moving image is projected, the mouth he touches is gaping in ecstasy. He is ostensibly watching the film because he

misses Henrietta, who has left him after two years of romance, yet this again seems to be a camouflage for the real object of his gaze: his own sexually ecstatic performance. As Darrin explains to Linda in voice over, “As he watched, he thought he noticed something peculiar. *He was distracted away from Henrietta* and thought he detected small changes in his own image” (my italics). Darrin immediately gazes at himself in a mirror, just as Dorian Gray does in the novel, but Darrin uses a magnifying glass to look at his reflection as well as his image on the actual film strip, his celluloid skin, which he holds up to the light in wonder. This emphasizes various layers of representation and technologies, and visual scrutiny involving a series of spectators. A film within a film, then, but also more literally, *film*—celluloid—within the film that indeed comprises what film is, but is usually hidden within a machine and utilized for image projection. Authorial ownership, in this age of mechanical reproduction, is rendered kaleidoscopic.

Authorship, Genre, and Sexual Subjectivity

In Walter Benjamin’s influential essay, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” he explains his argument regarding the “aura” of art by comparing the painter, whom he equates to the “magician,” and the cameraman, whom he equates to the “surgeon”: “The painter maintains in his work a natural distance from reality, the cameraman penetrates deeply into its web” (233). The distinction between painting and film, then, rests in the reproducibility and reception of the work. The painting maintains an aura—a uniqueness imbedded in the fabric of tradition; an authority that reflects the work’s “unique existence at the

place where it happens to be" (220). The film, through its "thoroughgoing permeation of reality with mechanical equipment" (234), its endless reproducibility, and exhibition to the masses, loses its aura but becomes something much more powerful. The film can be "an object for simultaneous collective experience," while the painting cannot (234-35). Yet, this perspective cannot account for the stag film which has traditionally been a secretly viewed media form. Certainly, in *Take Off*, while the portrait has become the stag film, it nevertheless subverts both art and technology.

First, the "democratic technology" of film enables the working class, black chauffeur, rather than the gentleman, to be the "artist," and yet he is not positioned as an important part of the artistic process. Instead, he is merely Henrietta's worker, and she is the true artist; the brains behind the production. The chauffeur is the cameraman, but Henrietta is the director. At the same time, the film is not produced for mass consumption; rather, it is produced for and screened to the very people who starred in and authored it. Elana Gomel notes that Wilde articulates "three distinct subject positions involved in artistic creation" (81), leading to the question, "Whose true image is it: the painter's, who puts the colors on the canvass; the model's, who lends his beauty; or the connoisseur's, who interprets and thus completes what he sees?" (81). In pornography, this has implications for sexual authorship in terms of performer, cameraperson, director, and consumer, and the ways in which these positions frequently blend together. Just as Wilde questions the role of artist, sitter, and spectator in the production of a work of art, Weston

questions it further, almost entirely removing the “artist” from the picture, and foregrounding performer and director.

The film becomes Darrin and Henrietta’s, while the peeping chauffeur remains simply the chauffeur. This is emphasized by the ending, in which it appears that Darrin’s reversion to his real self is instigated by Henrietta once again filming him secretly. He looks up during intercourse with Linda to see a hidden camera, which blurs with a black and white image of Max secretly filming in the 1920s; we then see a television screen depicting Darrin and Linda, being watched by a decrepit, aged Henrietta. After a montage of the different faces of Darrin over the decades, his 1970s face merges with a grotesque, mirrored image of his aged face in the style of a Rorschach test. The last we see of him is his reunion with Henrietta before they disappear together. In this series of images, Max is merely a symbol, while Henrietta and Darrin are key players, oscillating between subject and object.

As with most literature on pornography, the writing on stags usually pertains to the heterosexual variety, but in this case the scholarly blind spot has more to do with the lack of gay and lesbian stags made during the early twentieth century (the heyday of the stag) (Slade 31). Waugh discovered fifteen stags during his research that featured male-male sexual activity, but only one of which, *Surprise of a Knight* (c. 1930, U.S.), that he considers to be a homosexual stag film, serving as “a covert gay cultural response or address” (318). Significantly, and somewhat serendipitously for me, this stag film’s screenplay is credited to “Oscar Wild,” a pseudonym that signals an understanding amongst pornographic filmmakers and spectators of the connotations of this name. It was not until the 1950s that beefcake

photographs that supplied homoerotic images developed into moving pictures using the same themes of physical activity and Greek iconography. Beefcake photos and men's physique magazines were the primary sources of homosexual erotic imagery prior to the mid-twentieth century, depicting such scenarios as men in Greek trappings, muscle flexing, and other forms of sport and exercise poses.

Such imagery reflects a larger cultural alibi in which men are permitted to pose and/or look at other men as long as there is physical activity involved, or the mediating influence of Greek imagery, which was especially popular in the Victorian period. Sedgwick explains: "Synecdochically represented as it tended to be by statues of nude men, the Victorian cult of Greece gently, unpointedly, and unexclusively positioned male flesh and muscle as the indicative instances of 'the' body, of a body whose surfaces, features, and abilities might be the subject or object of unphobic enjoyment" (136). However, in a post-Wildean era, this alibi did not fool authorities for long, and in 1948 the post office clamped down on mail order advertisements that could be found in the back of magazines. While the non-explicit male physique mail-order ads were not technically illegal, the magazines containing them erred on the side of caution and banned them. In response, Bob Mizer, one of the primary producers of these ads, created his own magazine, *Physique Pictorial*, and in 1958 started making black-and-white short films that were effectively moving images of beefcake photography: "the same young men cavorting by the pool or dressed in Greek tunics....the films employed simple story lines in which the youthful performers usually played stock characters—athletes, sailors, prisoners, and blue-collar workers" (Escoffier 18). These short films became known as

“danglies” or “backyard cock danglers” (Escoffier 52), and represent, along with the magazines they stem from, the first mass-produced gay pornographic images of any substantial, widespread influence. Escoffier notes that “the cult of male beauty that the physique magazines fostered helped shape gay men’s physical ideals before there was any common culture” (18).

In *Gluttony*, West consciously references this critical juncture in gay sexual representation, beginning his fake documentary with Cyril explaining his discovery, in the 1980s, of images of Dorian from the 1960s physique magazines that his father has stashed under his mattress. Dorian makes a deep impression on the young Cyril, “his image burning into my brain like a brand,” and now he is “attempt[ing] to trace the life of a man that was there at the very beginning of my sexual self. I’m hoping to find out who he is, who he was, and at the same time maybe find out about myself.” Cyril interviews various people—co-stars, directors, academics, and industry-affiliates—creating a narrative, and a character, through the fragmented authorship of artist, performer, and consumer. Cyril also authors his own sexual subjectivity via sexual representation, so the documentary is as much about him as it is about the mysterious Dorian. Through different effects, creating the style of film from the 1960s and 1970s, and video of the 1990s using digital techniques, as well as the digital technologies Cyril uses to search for information (email, databases) and exhibit the information he finds (film projectors, video players, computer screens), the film suggests that postmodern sexual subjectivity is made up of profoundly fragmented and democratic authorship, mediated by highly technological processes.

West also creates a revisionist pornographic history that invokes nostalgia for a more “innocent” cultural moment at the same time as inserting modern day sexual explicitness into those innocent spaces. After discovering an old film at a yard sale called *Original Sin*, starring Dorian, Cyril explains the early days of gay pornography: “The movies of the 50s and 60s were called smokies. They were usually shown in smoke filled backrooms. They were often about exotic themes, using imagination to turn people on in the absence of graphic images.” The film shows Dorian and another man jumping up and down on a trampoline in nothing but briefs. As Cyril narrates, “The fine muscled young specimens paraded around and viewers were left to imagine what lay beneath the g-strings.” However, *Original Sin* turns out to be a “groundbreaking” discovery: “it goes places that movies never went back then. There’s nudity, there’s unabashed sex, even a cum shot.” The scene unfolds in just this manner, providing sexual explicitness in a genre that provides nostalgic pleasure through its coyness regarding sex.

In this way, West is in some way indulging in wish-fulfillment, but in another more profound way, he is revising pornographic history to foreground gay porn. In a subsequent interview with fictional professor Reina Rica⁶, she states that the first recorded cum shot is from the white coater⁷, *Sexual Freedom in Denmark* (1970), yet when Cyril informs her of his discovery she immediately calls her publisher to add a footnote to her forthcoming publication, *The Lesbian’s Guide to Gay Pornography*. Similarly, as the documentary goes through subsequent films and decades, various heterosexual milestones, such as the minor “talking pussy” subgenre, and Russ Meyer films, are rewritten as originally homosexual. In some way this can be seen as

an effort to reclaim pornographic history from an academic sphere that uses the term “pornography” to mean “heterosexual pornography.” In literature on porn, gay porn is othered, whereas in West’s film gay porn becomes simply “porn.”⁸

Meanwhile, *Take Off* queers American history—potentially a more subversive project than queering “pornography,” though these films together suggest these histories are deeply interconnected—by outing J. Edgar Hoover in the 1930s segment, and queering the famously (hetero)erotic dialogue of Lauren Bacall and Humphrey Bogart. As the film’s tagline states, “Where Hollywood left off, *Take Off* takes it all off!” Here, as with many other pornographic adaptations, the rhetoric claims a level of authenticity, speaking the unspoken or “showing everything” that Hollywood is reluctant or unable to provide. Pornography, then, reveals what is “really” going on in these cultural texts that are rhetorically seen by porn as hypocritically “invoking but never delivering sex” (Patton 132).

Yet, *Take Off* suggests more than this. For example, whereas it might be assumed that the film would show Bacall and Bogart having sex, as is invoked by their erotically charged exchanges in films such as *To Have and Have Not* (1944) and *The Big Sleep* (1946), instead Bogart is delivering Bacall’s lines, and to the bartender, Louis. Furthermore, the iconic line, “Here’s lookin’ at you, kid,” is actually spoken to a kid, a teenaged girl, who has been masturbating moments before while Darrin is “looking at” her and she is looking at a photograph of her boyfriend. Played for laughs, then, yet also suggestive of so much more than simple exposure of the sexual activity suggested by the steamy dialogue of Hollywood movies. In a similar way, in the 1930s segment, John Dillinger complains about the newly-established

FBI which is “headed by this queer who’s got hot nuts for my ass. He wants to fry it, and eat it!” and ends his homophobic rant by implying that Hoover performed fellatio on Babyface Nelson, to the point of climax: “this fairy grabbed him with both hands and sucked out all of his bullets!” The film is evidently having fun inserting homoerotics into an antiquated attitude, taking pleasure in implicating Dillinger in the very homoeroticism he is disgusted by: “I don’t know what this countries comin’ to! Put a man like that into *orifice*, pretty soon they’ll be teachin’ it in the schools.”

Take Off parodies antiquated sexual politics and gender norms, yet it also reflects an awareness of the absence of linear progress often assumed to have occurred over the years. For example, during the beginning of Linda and Darrin’s drive, Darrin reflects on the 1920s as “a time of innocence. People still believed in virtue, romance, love and marriage.” Linda snaps back, “Marriage?! Oh my god man, I mean, marriage is an obsolete, archaic, sexist convention arriving from a hypocritical extension of the middle class experience!” Darrin laughs, which Linda takes as an affront, but Darrin informs her “it may surprise you but even in the 20s there were people who sounded a lot like you do, and a lot of them were women. But there was one woman I’ll bet you never heard of because she never made any headlines, but she was so far ahead of her time.” This woman is Henrietta Wilde.

In this way, *Take Off* does not present each decade as necessarily distinct or further ahead, politically, but rather interconnected and only superficially different. Thus, discussions of the “generation gap” of the 1960s are characterized by dramatic irony, as the viewer is aware that Darrin is actually older than the old man he is talking to, the 1950s rebels are told by jaded Darrin that they will soon be hippies,

and the drug trade Darrin capitalizes on amongst rich peace rally protestors is explained to Linda by recalling the 1930s alcohol trade during prohibition. The 1950s and 1960s segments highlight cultural problems occurring during those times, while parodying the way Hollywood films addressed these cultural moments representationally.

Furthermore, sexual politics are poked fun at, as are social mores that had radically changed by the 1970s. In the 1950s, Darrin embodies a “rebel without a cause,” as Darrin puts it, dressed as Marlon Brando in *The Wild One* (1953). Yet, rather than being truly rebellious in spirit, instead Darrin does “nothing.” Dottie, the woman Darrin rescues from rape at the beginning of the scene, is initially excited by his leather jacket and motorcycle, yet comments during their journey, “Aren’t you going rather slow?” “I like to take my time, nice and easy,” Darrin responds as a bicyclist overtakes them. Later, bored, she plucks petals from a flower and muses, “He’ll eat me, he’ll eat me not, he’ll eat me...” while Darrin works on his motorcycle. This embodiment of the rebel is a disappointment to her, and frustrated by Darrin’s willingness to simply work on his bike and do “nothing,” she says in disbelief, “But you look like such a strong, sensitive, alienated, shy, sullen, inarticulate, gentle, self-destructive, confused, disoriented, uprooted, angry, scared, artistic symbol of our times!” While this references the disenfranchised “rebel without a cause” of the 1950s, the description could in fact embody any of the various cultural moments, and Dorian Gray himself.

Technology, Desire, and Regression

Heterosexual pornography is often overlooked with respect to its dedication to replicating authenticity. Primarily for legal reasons, as outlined in the introduction, late-60s and early-70s hetero-pornography pursued the documentary format with the “white coater,” which transitioned the genre from softcore exploitation to hardcore feature. In a more general sense though, as Joseph W. Slade argues, a “clumsiness bordering on incompetence, a wholly deliberate devotion to anachronism as opposed to rapidly developing technological sophistication in the legitimate cinema” (37) has characterized heterosexual pornography from its inception on film in the early twentieth century. While it is true that pornography is “the driving force behind communications developments” (Barss 1), it is also true that the medium of film is, ironically, the one area in which pornography did not make significant strides, if any at all (Barss 75). Aside from the rich, fully realized films of the Golden Age, the impulse to reveal the mechanics behind the production characterizes all pornographic film, even the more glossy digital output of today.

This “technological regression” as Slade puts it, reflects a few possible things: a genuine ineptitude due to the lack of professional filmmakers involved in pornography, a desire to flaunt outlaw status, nostalgia for the “look” of illicitness, a “lack of economic motivation” due to lack of market, the “evocation of raw blue-collar sexual tastes” that results from such a class-leveling technology, a desire to minimize the power of such a powerful technology as a way of preserving the power of the body, and finally, some kind of inherent eroticism in primitive media (37-41).

Slade's contention regarding "the continuing ambivalence of porn filmmakers toward the technologies they deploy" (43) evokes the various critical observations of Wilde's own ambivalence toward art and morality in *Dorian Gray*.

For Joyce Carol Oates, *Dorian Gray* "remains a puzzle: knotted, convoluted, brilliantly enigmatic" (419), and while the selling of Dorian's soul to the devil might be the plot, "what arrests our attention more, perhaps, is Wilde's claim or boast or worry or warning that one might indeed be poisoned by a book...and that the artist, even the presumably 'good' Basil Hallward, is the diabolical agent" (Oates 419). "Wilde's novel," Oates surmises, "must be seen as a highly serious meditation upon the moral role of the artist—an interior challenge, in fact, to the insouciance of the famous pronouncements that would assure us that there is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book...or that all art is 'quite useless'" (420).

While Oates suggests that in another era Wilde's tale might be "a tragedy of the violent warring of consciousness with itself" (421), it becomes a comedy in 1978's *Take Off* and a satire in *Gluttony*, even while both are also tragic romances. Yet in the margins, both films explore homophobia and in some way are haunted by the tragedy associated with post-HIV sexuality and pornography, a period that Escoffier terms "gay noir," the period between 1985 and 1999 in which "the gay male community [was] populated by traumatized men whose sexuality was hemmed in by death, religious bigotry, and homophobia" (280). Just as *Dorian Gray* is tinged with an uncanny sense of foreboding thanks to our knowledge of the trials in which *Dorian Gray* was used as evidence against Wilde, and his subsequent

imprisonment and death, so *Take Off* is haunted by the fate of Wade Nichols, who died in 1985 from a self-inflicted gunshot wound after he had contracted AIDS.⁹

Gluttony is haunted by the specter of AIDS also, simply by being the product of a post-AIDS gay porn video. Indeed, gay porn as a whole is a genre and industry that raises awareness about social issues, shaping, reflecting, and recovering gay sexual identity. In his discussion of gay pornographic film, which he dubs “one-handed histories,” Burger argues that many gay porn films actively recast American history to visualize gay places within straight spaces, and gay-specific sites and roles (34). These revisionist histories, Burger asserts, “are reparative. They make room for new historic truths, whether these be the ones they proffer or ones the viewer invents on his own” (37). However, for Burger, not only actively revisionist film but gay pornographic film in general is “history writing beyond the limits of academia” (34). Visualization of gay male sexual practices, then, is political work. Performance within these films is a vital part of this political work, and a further example of the pornographic complication of authorship. As Bertram J. Cohler notes, “Performance may remake understanding of the meaning of sexual identity for performer and viewer alike” (10). For writers Burger and Waugh, it is not an exaggeration to say that gay pornography is an integral part of gay sexual identity and community.

Reflecting on his 1985 essay, “Men’s Pornography: Gay vs. Straight,” in which he argued gay porn’s “hard won centrality” to gay culture, Waugh contends that “From the point of view of the early 1990s, centrality seems like an understatement: the HIV pandemic has done nothing to stem the boom in the cultural ubiquity of sexual images within gay male communities” (4). Waugh goes on: “Somehow these

images have meant more to us, for all their furtiveness, than girlie-pictures to straight men. Fuck photos have always had to serve not only as our stroke materials but also, to a large extent, as our family snapshots and wedding albums, as our cultural history and political validation” (5). In this way, gay porn is what Burger calls “a warehouse of our cultural heritage and memory, as well as an important site for the production and modification of this heritage and memory” (x).

Following the AIDS crisis of the 1980s, the gay porn industry made a decision to go condom-only in 1987 (Burger 22), while the straight industry opted for a system in which performers are regularly tested and do not use condoms (Escoffier 191). Wicked Pictures is the exception, as was Vivid between 2004 and 2006. Both of these heterosexual studios went condom-only following the 2004 HIV scare¹⁰; only Wicked remained condom-only. The gay porn industry, then, is generally distinctive in its use of condoms. Many industry workers and fans believe its niche “bareback” output is irresponsible not only in the danger for performers, but in the representation of unprotected sex. Indeed, as Escoffier notes, the gay porn industry responded to HIV/AIDS by assuming a role of responsibility in depicting safe sex. After much debate about the importance of “transgression” and “fantasy” in pornography as a genre, by 1990 safe sex in gay porn was becoming the norm.

A timely piece of evidence reflecting this arrived in the form of a “Safe Sex Policy” printed on a piece of paper tucked into my DVD copy of *The Portrait of Dorian Gay* (1974) from Bijou Video. This policy, signed by President and founder of Bijou, Steven Toushin, provides a brief history of condom use in gay porn,

demonstrating the way gay pornography, history, and social responsibility intersect in a way that is distinct from hetero-porn. The policy notes,

Bijou Video distributes films that were made in the pre-AIDS, pre-condom era of the 1970s and 1980s. HIV/AIDS emerged on the scene in 1980. By 1985, the gay porn industry was vigorously debating the use of condoms. By 1991-1992, all gay companies had adopted a safe-sex, condom only policy for the models making gay sex films. I believe that gay films have an influence both on how gay men see themselves and on their sex practices. Remember as you watch our vintage, classic pre-condom films that they were made in a different era.

Toushin concludes with the chilling reflection, “I hate the idea that having sex might leave a person in a physical state in which they need drugs to stay alive.” The idea that such a note might appear on opening a DVD from one of the current hetero-porn companies is unimaginable. Indeed, what you are likely to find is an advertisement for or statement from the Free Speech Coalition, who recently have been involved in campaigning against government-imposed condom use, known as Measure B, in adult film.¹¹

Other consequences of HIV/AIDS include increased stigma against “crossover” stars (male performers who perform in both gay and straight porn) and fewer gay performers who are “sexually versatile” or “universal”—in other words, who top (penetrate) and bottom (are penetrated) in their scenes (Escoffier 215). This type of performer had become “erotically, the ideal man of the seventies” (Escoffier 185), due to the perception that such behavior represented a confident, free gay sexuality in the wake of the sexual revolution. Post-AIDS, however, sexual versatility was associated with an era characterized by a sexual promiscuity that was perceived to have contributed to the epidemic. For this reason, performers tend to market themselves as either “tops” or “bottoms” and for the most part do not

deviate from these categories. In *Gluttony*, the decrease in versatility is reflected in the fact that the performers in the 1960s scene top and bottom, while the performers in the post-80s scenes are strictly either top or bottom. Furthermore, the narrator informs us, “we lose track of Dorian for a while” between 1978 and 1990. While West narratively incorporates these fluctuations in pornographic representation by including sexual versatility, he does not break with one twenty-first century convention in the 1960s sequence. The performers use condoms in this scene, highlighting what Escoffier terms “the strange doubleness of porn—it is *both* a fantasy created by actors *and* an enactment of the fantasy through real sex” (243). In this way, West’s film demonstrates the degree to which pornographic and pornotopian content is shaped by cultural realities.

Pleasure, Sensation, and Ambivalent Authorship

Dorian Gray is a novel about the senses, both indulging in them and morally equivocating over them. Dorian’s crimes and craving for sensation result in his suicide-murder, and in general the novel is ambivalent about pleasure, both physical and spiritual. Michael Patrick Gillespie remarks, “*The Picture of Dorian Gray* articulates, without offering a clear resolution, the conflict that arises as a result of the struggle within an individual’s nature between the impulse toward self-gratification and the sense of guilt that is a consequence of acting upon that inclination” (“Preface” ix). In addition, Gillespie locates a strong degree of pleasure for the reader in such ambiguities (“Picturing Dorian Gray” 393). Body genres, in general, are pleurably ambivalent, yet pornography on the surface celebrates

pleasure for pleasure's sake. Indeed, this motto could be seen as the function of the genre. In these adaptations, the Dorian characters pursue pleasure in a way distinct from the selfish, violent ways of the novel, and for the most part without penalty. At the same time though, there is a sadness and ambivalence regarding the pornographic performer, compounded by the subsequent suicide of Nichols, and reflected in West's bitter tribute to the world of gay video pornography in his mainstream film, *The Fluffer* (2001).

Dorian Gray pursues sensation and pleasures that are ambiguous in many cases, yet irrefutably damaging to others, resulting in murders, suicides, drug addiction, and other unspoken atrocities. Dorian Gray believes in Lord Henry's "new hedonism," and its aim: "experience itself, and not the fruits of experience, sweet or bitter as they might be" (108). As Oates observes, Dorian Gray's sin is constituted by "the fact that he, without any emotion, involves others in his life's drama 'simply as a method of procuring extraordinary sensations'" (419). Darrin is involved in illegal alcohol trading, drug dealing, and illegal passports, but never commits atrocities on the level of Dorian Gray. In fact, much of the time he reneges on his professed lack of care and helps those who need it. Ultimately, Darrin explains to Linda, he regrets wishing for eternal youth. Linda does not understand, and Darrin tells her of his "revelation": "That nothing can remain the same, that change is the essence of life, and that aging is the proof. And that the lack of change is the real death."

Gluttony depicts a Dorian who is much more indulgent in the senses than Darrin; indeed, he is gluttonous. Sexually insatiable, sexually selfish, and preoccupied with consumption of all kinds, his filmography includes films such as

1991's *Forever Cum*¹², a movie that consists of nothing but "cum shots" set to Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries," and 1994's *Lick it Up*, in which the performers eat food off each other's bodies. This movie, Larry X explains, is "the perfect metaphor for [Dorian's] attitude toward sex. The sensory overload of a true glutton....What he was really looking for was an orgasm that went on forever." Actors who worked for Dorian and went with him to the 1970s bathhouses remember he deducted their drink charges from their paycheck after offering to pay, and interacted sexually with 40-50 guys that night, characterized by Jim Dakota as "Like someone with a cold going through Kleenex."

Later in life, Dorian becomes an award-winning chef. Cyril narrates, "As well as creating food, he was equally at home consuming," explaining that Dorian still holds the Guinness World Record for pickle eating, consuming "1,757 pickles in three hours." Dorian consumes endlessly, whether it be food or people, yet still his consumption cannot compare to the crimes committed by the soulless Dorian Gray. Indeed, Darrin and Dorian recognize what Dorian Gray never does, and which is at the core of Wilde's novel: that, as Gomel puts it, "Desire turns out to be the function of time and loss" (83). As a result, Darrin and Dorian are transformed from "textual construct" to "the real" (Gomel 84) without the necessity of death.

In Wilde's narrative, Basil is the only one invited to see the portrait, and therefore the only one to see Dorian's soul. "I worshipped you too much," Basil offers, horrified, "I am punished for it" (132). Basil's horror, and "worship" of Dorian, results in his own murder at the hands of Dorian Gray, described in blankly visceral terms: "[Dorian Gray] rushed at him, dug the knife into the great vein that is

behind the ear, crushing the man's head down on the table, and stabbing again and again" (132). In *Gluttony*, unlike *Take Off*, the Basil character is fully realized in the form of legendary filmmaker Larrymore Lovelace, who made the short film that ages instead of Dorian, *Narcissus Rising*, a film he regards as "the greatest achievement of my life." He loved Dorian, and describes Dorian pleading "on his knees to let him have [the film]." However, unlike in the novel, Larrymore never sees the short film again—it is Cyril who is "chosen...as the one. The one he would reveal his inner self to." Displaying the portrait/film is an act of erotic exposure of self.

On viewing the film, Cyril is shocked, but not horrified, and while embracing after their subsequent love making, Cyril tells Dorian, "I love you." "Lots of people have said that to me before," Dorian responds, "But I don't think anyone's seen the real me." Cyril asserts, "I don't care," and the spell appears to lift. Dorian becomes his real, aged self before Cyril's eyes, while the last frame of the film freezes on his youthful image in the stag. "So time had finally caught up with Dorian," Cyril narrates, "as it does for all of us." Erotic love, honestly and openly professed, between Dorian and Cyril creates a bittersweet ending between two men, as opposed to the suicide, murder, and murder-suicide of Wilde's narrative. This is "true" love—the kind that Basil feels for Dorian Gray; love that "had nothing in it that was not noble and intellectual. It was not that mere physical admiration of beauty that is born of the senses, and that dies when the senses tire" (99). As Gomel notes, Dorian Gray "kills a person who dares to want him as a man rather than an image" (84). In the adaptations, Darrin and Dorian kill no one; they desire to be wanted as men rather than images.

In some way, the conclusion to *Gluttony* is more subversive than that of *Take Off*, which is reluctant to depict inter-generational love on a physical level. Weston substitutes an “age-appropriate” scene between Linda and Darrin for the core romance between Darrin and Henrietta. It is only when Darrin’s body reverts to its real age that he reunites with Henrietta and they walk off together in the dusk. West, meanwhile, responds to the “body fascism” (Morrison 3) of gay pornography, and the gay community at large, by validating the sexual desirability of the aged Dorian. Yet even West does not, or cannot, depict this sexual desirability in the flesh; the sex scene occurs with the youthful body of Dorian, not the aged one. Both films do end with true love, however, and it is love that lifts the spell, rather than self-loathing violence. In the novel, Dorian Gray stabs the picture, thereby killing himself and returning his body to the aged, sin-ridden state it is truly in (184).

Also, unlike Darrin and Dorian, Dorian Gray gradually loses the ability to feel: “‘I wish I could love,’ cried Dorian Gray with a deep note of pathos in his voice. ‘But I seem to have lost the passion, and forgotten the desire. I am too much concentrated on myself’” (169). Dorian’s repentance is rooted in self-preservation, and thus does nothing but alter the portrait for the worse due to his hypocrisy. His unwillingness to confess means he must destroy the only evidence of his sins remaining: the portrait. Both *Take Off* and *Gluttony* depict men who have certainly transgressed, but are forgiven and happily shift into monogamy with an accepting partner. This generic trope of the acceptance of transgression is perhaps unique to pornography. In addition, considering pornography is touted as socially and sexually transgressive, it is perhaps surprising that pornographic features often end with the

reflection that sexual promiscuity is not as appealing when put into practice; that sexual monogamy and true love are more desirable in the long term. Such tropes are evidenced in the majority of the adaptations discussed in this project, most notably *Dracula Exotica*, *The Erotic Dr. Jekyll*, and *Dr. Jerkoff and Mr. Hard*, and it is worth considering the puritanical and ambivalent attitudes toward sexual transgression that pornography as a genre upholds. These films should perhaps be seen as celebrations of momentary transgression made all-the-more pleasurable by the eventual return to normality, much in the same way as the cinema spectator emerges from the darkness into the daylight, or the masturbator resurfaces following climax.

¹ Dorian Gray is the least referenced of all the characters and narratives discussed in this project. There are five adaptations: *The Portrait of Dorian Gray* (J. J. English, 1974), *Doriana Gray* (Jess Franco, 1976), *Take Off* (Armand Weston, 1978), *A Portrait of Dorian* (Michael Craig, 1992), *Portrait of Dorian Gray* (Jim Enright, 1997), and *Gluttony* (Wash West, 2001). Aside from the adaptations, two videos utilize the character name – *Fixation* (Jim Enright, 2004) and *Getting Personal* (Jim Enright, 2005). There are five adult film performers who riff on the Wilde/Dorian narrative: gay performers Dorian Black and Dorian, and straight performers Wilde Oscar, Dorian Grant, and Dorian Velt. In general though, the lack of pornographic adaptations is suggestive that the very mention of the name may be too homoerotic for the anxiously heteronormative genre of heterosexual pornography. Of the five *Dorian Gray* adaptations, two are gay – *Gluttony*, *Portrait of Dorian Gray* (J. J. English, 1974). In addition, one of the “straight” films, *Take Off*, stars an openly gay man who previously worked in gay porn, while another, the barely-hardcore *Doriana Gray* (Jess Franco, 1976), features only women.

² This tendency says a lot about the presumed heterosexual male audience for mainstream media, and for pornography in particular.

³ It is critical to note, however, that this line of inquiry soon runs into hurdles, as transsexual porn involving trans women with cisgendered men, is sold by straight companies to straight audiences. Lest those not familiar with current pornography trends assume that this type of “tranny” porn must be a niche genre, not emphasized

by those studios creating it, let me stress that these videos are widely marketed and sold, most notably by Evil Angel, one of the biggest gonzo studios in the world, and the trans woman/cisgendered man coupling is by far the most visible, and presumably popular, type.

⁴ To avoid confusion, as well as remain loyal to the style of naming in each text, Dorian Gray refers to Wilde's character while Dorian refers to West's character in *Gluttony*. Darrin, of course, refers to Darrin Blue of *Take Off*.

⁵ I say "emulate" rather than "mimic" or "copy" so as to make it clear that pornographic films of this era were not merely derivative. In addition, many of the filmmakers in pornography were also working in Hollywood under a different name, the most famous of these being Gary Graver, Orson Welles' cinematographer, who worked in porn under the name Robert McCallum.

⁶ It is difficult not to see Professor Rica as a parody of Linda Williams, as her analysis of the money shot is taken verbatim from Williams's groundbreaking book, *Hard Core*. Rica tells the camera, "In combining money and sexual pleasure, those simultaneously valuable yet dirty things, the money shot most perfectly embodies the profound alienation of contemporary consumer society." I use this quote in chapter five.

⁷ A white coater is a hardcore pornographic film masquerading as a sex documentary. It is a genre that peaked in the 1960s and 1970s and developed as a way of skirting around obscenity law.

⁸ This heteronormative perspective on "pornography," especially in anti-porn feminism, but in literature on pornography in general, is frustrating. Indeed, evidence of this othering process came prominently to my attention while reading Jeffrey Escoffier's history of gay porn, *Bigger Than Life*, when I noticed how jarring it was that he simply referred to "porn" when he was discussing gay porn. West's film makes a similar rhetorical move.

⁹ Nichols is often incorrectly cited to have died from AIDS. In reality, he killed himself before AIDS could. So many pornographic actors and filmmakers, gay and straight but predominantly gay, died from AIDS it would take too much room to list all of them. Notables include porn superstar John Holmes (1944-1988), the first gay porn star Casey Donovan (1943-1987), gay and crossover performers Marc "10 ½" Stevens (1943-1989), Joey Yale (1949-1986), Eric Stryker (1954-1988), Paul Vатели

(?-1986), Mike Davis (1961-1986), J. W. King (1955-1986), Al Parker (1952-1992), Scott O'Hara (1961-1998), Karen Dior (1967-2004), Joey Stefano (1968-1994), founder of Falcon Studios and the Human Rights Campaign Chuck Holmes (1945-2000), Richard Locke (1941-1996), Kip Tyler (?-1995), acclaimed director Chuck Vincent (1940-1991), and cinematographer Nick Elliot (?-1990). For a discussion of the devastating impact of AIDS on the gay porn industry, and gay community at large, see Escoffier's chapter, "Porn Noir," in *Bigger than Life*. In addition, rame.net keeps a list of porn industry deaths: <http://www.rame.net/faq/deadporn/> There is also a documentary currently being made about Chuck Holmes and gay porn of that era in general, *The Chuck Holmes Story* (Dir. Michael Stabile).

¹⁰ In April, 2004, Darren James was revealed to have infected a number of other performers with HIV after having contracted the virus himself while filming in Brazil. The location, as well as the fact that James contracted the virus from a scene with a female transsexual, instigated xenophobic and homophobic scapegoating, as did the most recent scare in 2010, in which patient zero was a male who performed in both gay and straight titles.

¹¹ The Free Speech Coalition started the No on Government Waste, No on Measure B Campaign <<http://www.freespeechcoalition.com/component/content/article/125-mandatory-condoms/221-fsc-introduces-no-on-government-waste-no-on-measure-b-campaign-committee-staff.html>>. Measure B is also known as the County of Los Angeles Safer Sex in the Adult Film Industry Act. It would require all porn stars to wear condoms for vaginal and anal intercourse scenes. Measure B was up for majority vote Nov. 6, 2012, and was carried with a 57% yes vote. Measure B drew severe criticism from industry performers and producers for taking away their right to choose, and for being a way to drive pornography production out of California under the guise of protecting performers. See "No on Measure B," *The Los Angeles Times* Oct. 18 2012 and "Porn Industry Vows to Fight Condom Requirement," *The Los Angeles Times* Nov. 7 2012.

¹² A play on the title of the Mel Gibson vehicle, *Forever Young* (1992), which alludes to the plot of *Dorian Gray* and also the habit of porning Hollywood film titles.

CHAPTER FIVE
I WANT TO SUCK YOUR...: GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND THE ECONOMY OF
BODILY FLUIDS IN PORNOGRAPHIC ADAPTATIONS OF BRAM STOKER'S
DRACULA

Dracula is all about the sacrifice of virginity to the forces of evil, on the altar of responsibility. The two drops of blood on the wedding sheets. The two incisor-driven puncture wounds on the virginal neck. "It's not my fault. He bit me." If this isn't porn fodder then I'll have sex with Ron Jeremy in the venue of your choice. Please don't hold me to that."
– Shaun Costello, director of *Dracula Exotica*¹

In his review of the 1979 film, *Dracula Sucks*, Robert Rimmer notes, "this one finally proves what all Dracula movies insinuate—that blood and semen are part of the count's repertoire" (207). Rimmer's observation verifies two important notions about pornography and *Dracula*: 1) the perception of porn as a genre "filling in the gaps" or "exposing the truth" that mainstream fare leaves out, and 2) the general cultural knowledge that *Dracula* is a novel *about* sexuality, whether you have read the original Bram Stoker text or not. Indeed, during my own conversations on the subject a professor remarked of the popularity of Dracula porn, "It just seems so redundant!" while a fellow graduate student scoffed, "*Dracula is porn!*" Yet, no character or text has been adapted by pornography more than the Count; as of the present time, over 50 pornographic films either adapt the Dracula narrative or feature Count Dracula as a character.² Evidently, pornographers and (presumably) consumers, do not find the *Dracula* narrative to be any more redundant than the hundreds of mainstream film producers, comic book artists, and video game designers who have utilized Stoker's character in some way. But the *Dracula* narrative functions within pornographic film in ways distinct from these other mediums, threatening to destabilize generic function and, through the popular

meanings of the *Dracula* culture text, bring the instability of gender, sexuality, and the economies of bodily fluids into relief.

Porn's shift toward gonzo and online site membership for the purchase of individual scenes has not eliminated the Count from hardcore: due to his status as culture-text, and his peculiar sexual symbolism, the mere appearance of a man or woman in a black and red cape has signifying power.³ In his analysis of the Count in Hollywood productions, Robin Wood addresses the enduring popularity of Count Dracula in film and culture, suggesting a series of qualities that "give the figure of the vampire Count such comprehensive potency" that are instructive as to what the Count brings to hardcore: "irresistible power, physical strength; supernatural magnetic force," "nonprocreative sexuality," "promiscuity or sexual freedom," "'abnormal' sexuality," "bisexuality," "incest," and "child sexuality" (370-71). Wood stresses that these connotations should be considered "in light of the Victorian England that conceived and nurtured this monster," mischievously adding, "though perhaps things have not changed as much as we would like to think" (370). Certainly, this last aside is particularly pertinent to my analysis of hardcore's enduring fascination with Victorian culture and literature, and the postmodern assumption of sexual progress.

The adaptations discussed in this chapter reveal the much-contested meaning and function of different gendered and sexed bodily fluids and orifices in pornographic film—who discharges and who consumes; who penetrates and who is penetrated—in turn exposing the figurative fluidity of gender, sexuality, bodily fluids, and orifices in Stoker's *Dracula*.

“I Must Keep Writing at Every Chance”: Technology, Documentation, and Sexuality

Judith Halberstam warns that “The danger of monsters lies in their tendency to stabilize bias into bodily form and pass monstrosity off as the obverse of the natural and the human” (85). In this way, Halberstam admits that through equating vampire and Jew, she “had unwittingly essentialized Jewishness” (88). Halberstam asserts that “the Gothic novel and Gothic monsters in particular produce monstrosity as never unitary but always an aggregate of race, class, and gender” (88) and that rather than representing one single, linear thing, “Dracula is otherness itself” (88): “He is monster and man, feminine and powerful, parasitical and wealthy; he is repulsive and fascinating, he exerts the consummate gaze but is scrutinized in all things, he lives forever but can be killed, Dracula is indeed not simply a monster but a technology of monstrosity. Technologies of monstrosity are always also technologies of sex” (88). In turn, Gothic monstrosity, particularly Victorian Gothic monstrosity, is a technology that often complicates and disrupts porn at the same time as it feels curiously at home. This paradox, in the case of *Dracula*, reveals the gendered construction of one of the enduring visual staples of the genre: the money shot. As Halberstam observes, however, *Dracula* is not reducible to one interpretation, and indeed pornographic adaptations demonstrate the ways in which economic-, race-, and gender-based interpretations are intimately connected in the body of the vampire, particularly Count Dracula.

Dracula's peculiar format—its use of multiple narrators in the popular first-person diary structure, and its general narrative excess—consistently displaces its articulations of sexual anxiety. As Craft observes, the Count's death occurs only

“after a hundred rather tedious pages of pursuits and flight” (126). Furthermore, as Craft also hints, these evasions and obsessive documentations on the part of both Stoker and his protagonists seem to increase in intensity as the novel progresses toward its most profoundly anti-climactic scene, Dracula’s death.

The displaced articulations of sexual anxiety, both through its narrative structure and its metaphorical representations and imagery, bear a striking resemblance to Steven Marcus’ observations of pornographic literature written during the Victorian period. The nineteenth century produced such cataloguers as Henry Spencer Ashbee, a writer who, according to Marcus, obsessively documented sexual materials of the period, resulting in his *Index Librorum Prohibitorum: being Notes Bio-Biblico-Icono-graphical and Critical, on Curious and Uncommon Books*, in three volumes. Much like Stoker, Ashbee’s writing style, characterized by Marcus as pedantic, reflects the material he is addressing (or evading, as the case may be). Marcus asserts that “displacement and denial are among the chief *modi operandi* of pornographic writing” (50), and Ashbee’s writing *about* pornographic writing reflects this tendency: “his tireless collection and production of instances, his indefatigable energy of quotation, his unbelievable scrupulosity of concrete detail all partake of the same impulses which both actuate his interest in pornography and are behind its creation” (52). This “pedantry,” Marcus explains, is “a primitive device of concealment, the words and ideas of others acting as a protective cover for one’s own” (53). Similarly, Wood argues that Stoker’s narrative structure absolves him of any responsibility for creating Count Dracula, and, unlike the majority of the film

adaptations, denies the reader any insight into the mind and private life of its titular character (368).

Juxtaposed to this excessive documentation is a “morbid reticence” (93), as Mina puts it, when it comes to certain events, such as the ambiguous scene Mina observes involving “snowy white” but “unclad” Lucy and “something dark....whether man or beast, I could not tell” (88). Mina observes that Lucy’s “lips were parted, and she was breathing—not softly, as usual with her, but in long, heavy gasps” (88). Mina is all too aware of the sensual nature of this event, noting that such a story “might become distorted—nay, infallibly would” (89) and thus “We never refer to it” (91). Mina herself merely refers to it in her diary as “*that night*” (93). When Lucy and Mina do eventually discuss “*that night*” with each other, Mina meets Lucy’s ambiguous memories of “something very sweet and very bitter all around me at once” (94) and subsequent laughter with unsettled feelings: “It seemed a little uncanny to me, and I listened to her breathlessly. I did not quite like it, and thought it better not to keep her mind on the subject” (94). The unspoken is obsessively spoken *about* throughout Stoker’s novel.

Sensual and strange events in the novel are interrupted by gaps and silences, often through the use of excessive punctuation, even when it is illogical that a character would include such moments in their diary, such as when Jonathan stutters his musing over which of their Crew “would destroy the...the...the...Vampire. (Why did I hesitate to write the word?)” (307). Most tellingly, Mina balks at verbalizing exactly what fluids she has unwillingly imbibed from the Count’s chest: “When the blood began to spurt out, he took my hands in

one of his, holding them tight, and with the other seized my neck and pressed my mouth to the wound, so that I must either suffocate or swallow some of the—Oh my God! my God! what have I done?" (252). In spite of naming the Count's fluid as "blood," it has already been framed in terms of other bodily fluids, as Van Helsing has previously described the position of Dracula and Mina as having "a terrible resemblance to a child forcing a kitten's nose into a saucer of milk to compel it to drink" (247). Furthermore, the Count's chest is a "bosom," a term that blurs gendered body parts, and emphasizes the idea of Mina nursing from Dracula's breast.

At the same time as Stoker's characters silence themselves, try not to think, and leave gaps in their speech and writing, forms of documentation are employed throughout *Dracula* as a way of focusing on anything other than the troubling issues at hand. Excessive speech covers over off/scene excesses. Just as Mina is unable to utter the verbal articulation of what she has swallowed, so Jonathan urges himself to write as much as possible in order not to think of what the future holds: "I must keep writing at every chance, for I dare not stop to think....The end! oh my God! what end?...To work! To work!" (253). These contradictory compulsions toward excessive documentation and evasion of articulation reflect the contradictory attitudes toward and anxieties surrounding sexuality during the late nineteenth century, and expose Stoker's individual and cultural anxieties about gender and sexuality. Indeed, Halberstam argues that writing and reading in *Dracula* "on some level appear to provide a safe textual alternative to the sexuality of the vampire....he is a threat which must be diffused by discourse" (90). Such compulsions and

evasions are also present in pornographic film in its attempts to visually solidify 'truth.' A film genre that seeks to "show everything" cannot truly show everything, but can establish a construct that appears to solidify and stabilize a sexual truth or fetish.

The Red and the White: Bodily Fluids, *Dracula*, and the Money Shot

If, as Isabel Pinedo puts it, horror is the genre of the wet death (of blood) and pornography the genre of the wet dream (of semen) then the horror-porn, particularly the vampiric porn film, poses the same "fascinating semantic crossroads" that Kristeva feels about blood in general: "the propitious place for abjection, where *death and femininity, murder and procreation, cessation of life and vitality* all come together" (62). Yet, in vampiric porn they do not "all come together." Indeed, the films displace and separate these discomfiting, abject fluids, quite literally in some cases (see the complicated history of *Dracula Sucks* below).

One of the most obvious connections between vampirism and sexuality is the abundance of orifices and bodily fluids. Craft recognizes a series of "disturbing questions" that Stoker's *Dracula* prompts readers to face: "Are we male or female? Do we have penetrators or orifices? And if both, what does that mean? And what about our bodily fluids, the red and the white? What are the relations between blood and semen, milk and blood?" (109). Hardcore adaptations of *Dracula* iconography reveal how pornography attempts to provide irrefutable answers to these questions, yet ultimately further complicate them. In this sense, hardcore films that appropriate Victorian culture and literary tropes of that era are "problem solving"

(Williams “Film Bodies”). Hardcore film centers the sex that *Dracula* displaces, exposing the “gaps,” but in the process sets up further conventions that create further displacements.

Just as the flow of bodily fluids comprise the narrative core of *Dracula*, so hardcore explicitly trades in representations of abject fluids, specifically the “money shot.”⁴ As discussed by Williams in *Hard Core*, amongst other scholars, the “money shot”—ejaculation onto the man’s or woman’s body—is perhaps the most compulsively prerequisite feature of the hardcore pornographic genre, particularly the heterosexual variety. Furthermore, the money shot typically signals the conclusion of the sex act for both male and female participants.⁵ In 1989, at the tail-end of the pornographic “golden age,” Williams observed that “there is something almost *too* phallic about this money shot” (108), noting the extent to which the ejaculating penis has taken the place of the female body as the site of signifying pleasure. The money shot, Williams contends, is hardcore’s striving for “maximum visibility” (94) and “visual evidence of the mechanical ‘truth’ of bodily pleasure” (101). However, as Williams notes, this “ultimate...confession of sexual pleasure” only speaks to male sexual pleasure, and ultimately the anxious and repetitive money shot “becomes a new figure of lack” (119). The money shot itself is a fetish, “the perfect embodiment of the illusory and insubstantial ‘one-dimensional’ ‘society of the spectacle’ of advanced capitalism—that is, a society that consumes images even more than it consumes objects” (Williams 106). Williams goes on,

But of course, it is in its connection to both ejaculate and money proper (that ultimate obscenity) that the money shot is most obviously a fetish. In combining money and sexual pleasure—those simultaneously valuable and dirty things—the money shot most

perfectly embodies the profound alienation of contemporary consumer society. (107)

The increased generic impulse toward the money shot, and now specifically the facial money shot, would seem to support this. Ultimately, Williams asserts, such fetishization is really located “in the self-perceived inadequacies of the body and mind of the male consumer of pornography” (116).

Jennifer Wicke recognizes similar themes of consumerism connected to bodily fluids in Stoker’s *Dracula*. For Wicke, the novel is about mass culture and consumer society: “Dracula consumes but thereby turns his victims into consumers; he sucks their blood and renders them momentarily compliant and passive then wild, powerful and voluptuous. What the text can’t decide, nor can we, is how to determine which of these is likely, and then, which of these is preferable” (480). Similar questions could be asked of pornography and its consumers.

But in porn, not all bodily fluids are equal. Barbara Creed demonstrates the way vampire mythology has been persuasively related to menarche.⁶ While the focus on blood is the most obvious connection, Creed also details the various theories that connect the mythological emphasis on the moon and werewolves (connected the menstrual cycle), the focus on the neck as site of the vampire’s bite (*neck* being terminology for the uterus), transformation (into womanhood), and ancient cultural beliefs that the bite of a vampire bat would bring on menstruation (Creed 63-65). The delight in utilizing the vampire and *Dracula* mythologies in pornography, however, are ostensibly to do with the sexual aggression and implications of penetration and intercourse that vampire media has repeated over the decades. Certainly, the almost complete absence of menstrual blood, or blood in

general, in pornography would suggest that, as Creed posits, “these two explanations of the vampire myth—it symbolizes the menstrual and hymenal flow—were once an explanation of a single phenomenon, that is, woman’s blood flow” (66). In spite of the excess of various abject fluids in hardcore pornography, menstrual blood appears to still be regarded as obscene. Perhaps menstrual blood is too abject, too connotative of violence, of death, while semen connotes life, creation, and reassures the self (Kristeva 53). There is also undoubtedly a gendered element at work here, however: “Neither tears nor sperm..., although they belong to borders of the body, have any polluting value....Menstrual blood...stands for the danger issuing from within the identity (social and sexual); it threatens the relationship between the sexes within a social aggregate and, through internalization, the identity of each sex in the face of sexual difference” (Kristeva 71). In Dracula porn, one might think blood would make an appearance, menstrual or otherwise, yet it does not. Semen functions in place of blood.

Sanna Härmä and Joakim Stolpe argue in their essay, “Behind the Scenes of Straight Pleasure,” that behind the scenes (BTS) featurettes, very popular with porn fans and included on nearly all DVD releases, “might shed new light on understanding hardcore and the ways in which it attempts to portray straight sexuality as a stable and unwavering monolith, while also revealing cracks in the depiction of a cohesive and pleasure-hungry heterosexuality” (109). BTS are spaces where the abject, the obscene—literally, that which occurs off screen in pornography—and the queer, typically marginalized in heterosexual pornography,

are given voice and boundaries are pleurably transgressed in the name of “authenticity.” As Härmä and Stolpe argue,

The work of transgressing the boundaries and expectations connected with the porn industry is at the same time both gratifying and distasteful, dealing with issues that are usually the source of shame and embarrassment. It mocks the boundaries of privacy, personal space, bodily aesthetics, and conventions about appropriate topics for representation. (118)

Jokes revolving around semen are common.

Behind the scenes of *This Ain't Dracula XXX* (2012) for example (discussed in more detail at the end of this chapter), shows the director demonstrating how he wants the actor to hold Marie McCray's (Lucy's) throat in the decapitation scene. McCray quips, “Do you like knowing your hand is on cum?” The cast and crew erupt in laughter, and the director cavalierly (and somewhat defensively) responds, “It's all DNA to me. I couldn't care less.” Such is the world of pornography, and in the *Dracula* narrative: it's all DNA.

Härmä and Stolpe do not reflect on the treatment of menstrual blood in BTS segments, however, though is featured in BTS fairly regularly. In the BTS for *Dracula XXX* in an extensive comedic riff to camera, Evan Stone (who plays Dracula) jokes about his method of drinking the blood of women. The director steps into frame and says, “He's so full of shit. He's such a lazy fucker, he only gets girls on their period.” Stone then runs with the joke describing the consumption of menstrual blood in graphic fashion, going on to add that hymen blood is the “caviar” of the vampire

world, reflecting Creed's suggestion that all blood emanating from within a woman is part of vampire mythology.

It might be "all DNA," but it is only semen that can occur on screen in pornography, and in excess. Blood, specifically menstrual blood, is edited out, soaked up with sea sponges, or quickly removed with a trusty baby wipe.⁷ In the Showtime reality television show, *Deeper Throat*, which chronicled the making of *Vivid's Throat: A Cautionary Tale* (2008), Evan Stone performs a scene with Sasha Grey while she is menstruating, and they cut periodically to wipe away the occasional trickle of blood. Menstruation poses no threat to those working in the industry; it evidently does (or is perceived to) pose a threat to the pornographic consumer.

Fluidity of gender and sexuality is obsessively worried over in the hardcore genre as a whole. Williams' prediction in 1989 that there would be a decline in the money shot (117), did not come to pass. Instead, the regularity of the money shot became even more stringently regulated. Now it is not the money shot, a cum shot that can happen on any part of the female body, that reigns but the "facial"—a cum shot on the woman's face or in her mouth. It is now so commonplace, that female performers who avoid facials are nicknamed "cum dodgers."⁸

Lisa G. Moore analyzes these newer forms of the money shot, manifested most grotesquely in subgenres such as *bukkake* and *Gokkun*, in which films "venture beyond the money shot toward eroticizing seminal ingestion" (81). This increased fetishization of semen and ejaculation, Moore contends, is likely a result of a post-AIDS culture in which semen and ejaculation are regarded as dangerous and dirty,

and therefore more forbidden. Likewise, as Jules Law contends, Stoker's *Dracula* in its "motif of dangerous blood evokes an entire complex of cultural fears about the transmissibility of character through body fluids" (148). Hardcore porn, particularly the extreme "seminal ingestion" genres "capitalize on recovering and eroticizing the raw material of semen as safe, natural, organic, whole" (Moore 83). The evermore standardized cum shot of the twenty-first century may speak to increased male anxiety, particularly in response to the gender fluidity and proliferating sexualities that Williams correctly perceived to be entering the mainstream cultural consciousness (*Hard Core* 117).

At the risk of pushing my terminological luck, but in an effort at demonstrating the connections between economy, sexuality, sexual representation, and bodily fluids, Stoker's *Dracula* actually contains a "money shot" of sorts. Entering Dracula's lair in yet another attempt at killing him, the crew of light encounter him and Harker lashes out with his knife: "The blow was a powerful one; only the diabolical quickness of the Count's leap back saved him. A second less and the trenchant blade had shone through his heart. As it was, the point just cut the cloth of his coat, making a wide gap whence the bundle of bank-notes and a stream of gold fell out" (266). A literal "money shot" then, as Dracula spews forth a stream of gold, rather than blood which spurts out of wounds in other places in the novel, or semen as might be expected in a pornographic film.

For Halberstam, "Money, the novel suggests, should be used and circulated and vampirism somehow interferes with the natural ebb and flow of currency just as it literally intervenes in the ebbing and flowing of blood" (102). *Dracula*, the

character, and *Dracula*, the novel, interfere with the natural ebb and flow of semen in pornography, not to mention other bodily fluids. “The image of the vampire bleeding gold,” Halberstam contends, “connects not only to Dracula’s abuses of capital, his avarice with money, and his excessive sexuality, it also identifies Dracula within the racial chain of signification that...links vampirism to anti-Semitic representations of Jewishness” (104). Because Dracula “only takes and never spends” (102), he is a gender-inverted masculine figure who stands in contrast to the heterosexual pornographic male who always spends and rarely takes, and also complicates the homosexual pornographic male who either spends or takes, or does both if sexually versatile.⁹

From this perspective one can see the ways in which use of the money shot as a signifier in hardcore Dracula films has changed over time, with earlier films utilizing the money shot in ways that disrupt hardcore heterosexual conventions, while later films more anxiously hide any conflation of blood and semen in vampire mythology. In addition, older films tend to position women in more traditional gender roles while at the same time more freely playing with the homoerotic implications of the blood-semen connection. More recent hardcore film emphasizes and praises active female sexuality and autonomy, but simultaneously reasserts anxieties over gender fluidity and homoeroticism through its staunch denial of the blood-semen connection. Paradoxically, these more recent films anxiously implicate their own homoerotic content through this very denial.

The difficulties in representing juxtaposed sex and violence, or juxtaposed blood and semen, in pornography is evident in the many versions of *Dracula Sucks*

that exist, with varying amounts of explicit sex, on the one hand, and explicit violence on the other. Adult film archivist Joe Rubin's explanation of the fascinating but tangled release history behind this film is worth quoting in full:

The production and release history of the film is rather muddled. Three theatrical versions were prepared and subsequently two of those versions were altered for video. The film was shot in September of 1978 under the title DRACULA SUCKS (DRACULA'S BRIDE never existed as a finished version; it was an alternate title that was thrown around during post but the film was never released under this moniker). The movie was partially backed by Canadians and XXX was illegal in Canada at the time (as in most of Europe) so the first version that was prepared and released in the spring of '79 was an 'International X Version' which included explicit sex (and the biting + violence) but no XXX close-ups. This version was distributed in Canada, much of Europe and Asia (as well as southern US drive-ins) throughout 1979. It ran 92 min. In early 1980, a 'Domestic R Version' was prepared. This version was identical [to] the previous 'International' cut but chopped out 10 minutes of much more explicit footage that was in the 'International' version. Otherwise they're the same in terms of plot and on-screen violence. The 'Domestic' cut, which was described as being 'R Rated' but was still a bit too explicit to get that rating, was played in drive-ins and regular cinemas starting in March of 1980. Both the 'International' and 'Domestic' versions were titled DRACULA SUCKS and bear copyrights of 1979....Around the same time in 1980, a completely different version of the film was prepared to focus primarily on the hardcore sex which had been missing from the other two. This became LUST AT FIRST BITE. Not only did this cut, which also ran just over 80 min, remove nearly 45 min of plot and character development (as well as most of the violence), it added numerous sex scenes which, in the previous versions, had only existed as quick flashes or in much, much shorter incarnations.¹⁰

This history demonstrates the peculiar anxiety surrounding the proximity of penetrative sex and penetrative violence, as well as the profound impact financial sources, law, and exhibition have on pornographic film content.

Dark Angels 2: Bloodline (Dir. Nic Andrews, 2005) is a different beast altogether. The sequel to *Dark Angels* (Dir. Nic Andrews, 2000), which, in a distinctly

Carmilla-esque narrative, focuses on a female vampire and her female human prey, *Dark Angels 2* is much more ambitious and gory, and follows a plot and characters that resemble Stoker's *Dracula*. The head vampire in this film is Draken (Barrett Blade) who, with the help of his Igorish assistant, Quinn (Evan Stone), is creating a race of zombie vampires called slags in order to procure a woman of pure blood. These slags are created via traditional biting of the neck. Draken possesses "the elixir of life"—a large glass tube of blood that, once empty, will result in his race's extinction. When the blood runs out, his bloodline ends. The slags have impure blood; it's "diseased, like a virus" and they do not have enough of the elixir to fully transform humans into Draken's race. Draken's goal is to capture "the one," who he discovers is a waitress, Jesse (Sunny Lane), drain her pure blood into the tube, and perpetuate his bloodline. With the help of a Van Helsing type, called Jack Cross (Dillon Day), Jesse defeats Draken.

While Stoker stops short of depicting man-on-man vamping, *Dark Angels 2* has it in spades. Both Draken and Quinn vamp dozens of homeless men and a policeman in order to create more slags, yet these scenes are carefully choreographed violent action sequences so as to mediate the potential homoerotics of vamping. The opening sex scene articulates the sexuality of vampirism and the homoerotic hurdles that must be navigated in both diagetetic and non-diagetetic ways. The scene involves Draken and an anonymous woman, who have sex concluding with a money shot: Draken ejaculates and the semen, probably unintentionally but certainly serendipitously, lands on her neck. This scene calls for a post-cum vamping finale, which occurs in spite of the singular direction of the money shot. However,

when Draken bites the woman's neck immediately following ejaculation, the semen has miraculously disappeared.

Male consumption of semen, even of one's own semen, is rare in heterosexual pornography, seen as too queer, too feminine. Within the context of an adaptation of *Dracula* that dares to depict man-on-man vamping, perhaps an opening scene involving the vamping of a semen-coated female neck is simply so queer that the filmmakers (or perhaps the performer) would rather break the fourth wall than have it occur. In this way, bodily fluids are kept distinctly separate, and the gendered consumers of specific bodily fluids are kept rigidly defined. Blood may be consumed from a man by a different man, yet one may not consume one's own semen. So while *Dark Angels 2* is surprisingly frank in its juxtaposition of sex and violence, it is paradoxically more conservative than Stoker's novel in its refusal to conflate bodily fluids between men.

While Halberstam warns against stabilizing monstrosity and perversity, she does argue that when Count Dracula appears in the flesh, he "embodies a particular ethnicity and a peculiar sexuality" (91). More specifically, she argues that Dracula embodies "Gothic anti-Semitism [which] makes the Jew a monster with bad blood and it defines monstrosity as a mixture of bad blood, unstable gender identity, sexual and economic parasitism, and degeneracy" (91). His "racial markings are difficult to distinguish from his sexual markings" (100), yet Dracula's physical features are undeniably similar to stereotypical anti-Semitic portraits of the Jew: "His face was strong—a very strong—aquiline, with a high bridge of the thin nose and peculiarly arched nostrils; with lofty domed forehead, and hair growing scantily

round the temples, but profusely elsewhere” (Stoker 23). Later, in London, Dracula is again described as “a tall, thin man, with a beaky nose and black moustache and pointed beard” (155). Later still, on discovering Dracula forcing Mina to drink blood from the wound in his chest, Dr. Seward describes “the great nostrils of the white aquiline nose” (247). Two of the three vampire sisters are “dark, and had high aquiline noses, like the Count, and great dark, piercing eyes” (42). Coupled with their Transylvanian residence which, it is emphasized, “is not England” (26), and the racial associations of Eastern Europe become quite clear.¹¹

It is somewhat tempting, then, to suggest that the casting of Jamie Gillis, a Jewish porn star, as Count Dracula in two adaptations (1978’s *Dracula Sucks* and 1980’s *Dracula Exotica*) is in some way a reclaiming or subversion of Dracula’s monstrous Jewishness. However, not only are Jewish men prolific in pornographic film, but Gillis exudes a sexual perversity in his performances and private life that speaks to Halberstam’s warning against unitary interpretation, and for an approach that acknowledges the intersections between race, class, and gender. Indeed, Shaun Costello, director of *Dracula Exotica*, does not mention Gillis’s ethnicity when explaining his casting decision. Aside from Gillis’s acting and sexual ability, Costello explains, “If Dracula’s appeal was bite me/fuck me, Jamie’s was scare me/fuck me. Long before I was offered the directing job on *Dracula Exotica*, I was aware of Jamie’s Vampire-like qualities. It was something we talked about many times. Something he was aware of, and nurtured. Like Dracula, Jamie was dangerous.”¹²

Shaun Costello’s 1981 film, *Dracula Exotica*, embodies many of the consequences of the mixing of horror and pornography: the graphic realization of

the displaced sexuality from the original novel results in the contradictory and unsettled navigation of subversive gender politics on the one hand, and sadistic sexual scenarios on the other. Costello remarks that he read *Dracula* while in High School, “and it remained food for thought forever after.” For Costello, “The Vampire is a very sexy boy. He is irresistible. He is the apocalyptic bite me/fuck me. And the welcome antidote to repressive, inhibited, Victorian sexual mores.”¹³ Set predominantly during the present day, *Dracula Exotica* does what a lot of Hollywood adaptations have done¹⁴; it recasts Count Dracula as a tragic figure, and recasts the narrative as one of gothic romance rather than horror.

Leopold Michal George Count Dracula (Jamie Gillis) is in love with Surka (Samantha Fox), the daughter of the gamekeeper, but their union is denied by Leopold’s father due to class issues. Leopold gets drunk and rapes Surka; she in turn commits suicide. Stricken with guilt, Leopold curses himself with an eternity of undead bloodlust combined with the inability to ejaculate, and kills himself. The remaining film takes place in the modern day: Leopold’s Transylvanian’s home is now a tourist attraction. He sees an American, Sally, who bears an uncanny resemblance to Surka, follows her back to the United States, and after a rekindling of their romance the film climaxes with Leopold’s climax and his vamping of Sally. This breaks the curse: the two of them transform into doves and fly away.

From the outset, *Dracula Exotica* subverts the typical economies of bodily fluids, particularly the money shot. The first sex scene is troublesome, intentionally so. Leopold, drunk and depressed, sits at the margins as his bawdy friends partake in some whores, all of whom are enthusiastic except one, whom they rape. After

having intercourse with one of the enthusiastic whores, one of the men, played by Ron Jeremy, ejaculates over the reclining woman in a would-be classic money shot. Yet this money shot that is so standard in hardcore is rendered something quite different as the whore catches the semen on the apple in her hand, takes a bite, and then thrusts it into Leopold's mouth, laughing. Flinching angrily, Leopold pushes away the apple, and is mocked by the whore who perceives a slight against her class: "He wants his virgin, that gamekeeper's daughter. Well, perhaps she dines at another table." Surka may be working-class, at least too working-class for Leopold's father, yet she is not a whore. A working-class woman who remains virtuous remains something higher than a whore, and Leopold's perceived slight prompts this whore to suggest Surka's adultery. Furious, Leopold drunkenly jumps up, announcing, "I'll show you. I'll show you!" Leopold's anger stems from his own hurt masculinity, rather than anger associated with Surka's subjectivity or the security of their relationship. Masculinity is experienced through the body of a woman, and so rather than refuting claims about Surka directly, Leopold wants to "show" the woman (or, rather, himself) the "truth" of his masculine power by reasserting dominance over Surka's body; by raping Surka.

In a voiceover, Leopold explains, "Drunk, crazed by their boorish poems, mad with lust for her and disgust with myself, I was possessed. God would wait; she would serve me first." Having aligned Surka's "serving" of God with his own masculine sexual demands, Leopold rapes Surka in a disturbing scene that culminates in a money shot laden with self-loathing as Leopold ejaculates on Surka's unwilling face, asserting, "You're a whore, like the others....like the others, like the

others.” Leopold’s frustration over his lack of sexual access to Surka is emphasized by the whores’ accessible bodies. At the same time, the whores’ bodies are meaningless to him, and it is Surka—the virtuous object of his affection—whom he desires sexually. The rape, the film suggests, stems from institutional and social forces that shape our sexuality, yet Leopold’s masculine sense of entitlement, as well as desire for unsoiled feminine bodies, are also held accountable. In other words, while Leopold may recognize that religion, class systems, and gender norms have ensured that he and Surka be separated, he is still prone to eroticizing and desiring the very same gendered and classed qualities that Surka possesses. In this way, *Dracula Exotica* critiques the Victorian sensibilities that create such tumultuous sexual relationships, while at the same time utilizing these sensibilities as an exciting boundary to transgress.

These contradictory meanings are emphasized further when Surka kills herself in the wake of her defilement, and Leopold curses himself for the crime he has committed. Taking full responsibility for Surka’s suicide, Leopold prepares to take his own life, and explains in a voiceover, “With the bloody blade that stilled that pure and loving heart, I swore an oath, taunting God, to deny me no sanctuary in heaven...or in hell. To forever taint my guilty soul with a need for blood. To fan the burning fire of lust within me, but never be satisfied.” Having pierced his heart with the same bloody dagger that Surka used on herself, Leopold plunges himself into an eternity of limbo centered around desire for two bodily fluids: the consumption of blood, and the ejaculation of semen. The former is attainable through the seduction of others; the latter is forever unattainable, and rendered more desirable by the

former. In porn, this is the ultimate punishment: no sexual fulfillment.¹⁵ Instead, Leopold can only consume the “other” fluid—the red one, rather than delivering the white.

Semen, Craft has pointed out, is a displaced, yet prominent, bodily fluid in Stoker’s *Dracula*, most strikingly in the scene in which Mina is forced to drink blood from Dracula’s chest. The horror of the scene is closely bound up with its palpable sexuality juxtaposed to a desexualized mother-child relation, as the blood Mina drinks is closely linked through Stoker’s language to both milk and semen. Van Helsing recalls, “[Dracula’s] right hand gripped her by the back of the neck, forcing her face down on his bosom. Her white nightdress was smeared with blood, and a thin stream trickled down the man’s bare breast which was shown by his torn-open dress. The attitude of the two had a terrible resemblance to a child forcing a kitten’s nose into a saucer of milk” (247). Somewhat excessively—we might say pornographically—Van Helsing adds that blood “smeared her lips and cheeks and chin; from her throat trickled a thin stream of blood” (247). The pornographic nature of this imagery is felt profoundly by the virtuous Mina, who, recalling what has occurred, regards herself as “Unclean, unclean!” and understands she is now a threat to her fiancé, Jonathan. Mina herself is unable to utter what fluids she has consumed following her forced suckling from Dracula’s breast: “I must either suffocate or swallow some of the—Oh my God! what have I done?” (252). Craft notes that the scene leaves “the fluid unnamed” and results in “encouraging us to voice the substitution that the text implies—this blood is semen too” (125). Furthermore, as Craft adds, “the confluence of blood, milk, and semen forcefully erase the

demarcation separating the masculine and the feminine” (125). Such an erasing of gender within sexed bodies arguably occurs in much horror fiction, as Carol Clover has extensively argued in *Men, Women, and Chainsaws*, yet pornography obsessively reinscribes gender onto these bodies. Certainly this is the case in *Dracula Exotica*'s frequent vaginal penetration, fellatio, and ejaculation on women's bodies, and yet the combination of horror and pornography—a common combination—destabilizes these categories.

Leopold's curse creates a hardcore narrative centered around the denial of what many have observed to be the primary prerequisite of the hardcore pornographic film: the money shot. Leopold/Dracula is unable to climax, resulting in three unconventional hardcore scenes in which the money shot is not the climax. First, Dracula's vampire brides perform cunnilingus on each other and fellatio on him for his pleasure, yet in reality to his perpetual boredom. He has his servant Renfrow douse them with holy water before setting off to the USA, a move that implies that the U.S. is the dominant, hegemonic world power of the 1980s, and self-appointed arbiter of universal meaning. Second, he hypnotizes cocaine smuggler Vita Valdez (Vanessa Del Rio) during his boat journey to the states. He performs cunnilingus on her, biting her in the process, and turning her into his vampire secretary. Third, Leopold appears as an apparition in Sally's mirror while she masturbates to his image, and they appear to connect psychologically, both painfully longing for the other. Significantly, the first two scenes culminate in death or violence, which would seem to corroborate Pinedo's contention that the “wet dream” of the porn film is comparable, even parallel, to the “wet death” of the

slasher film (6). Leopold's inability to produce the ejaculate necessary to a traditional hardcore climax leads to a different climax: one that is a displaced "money shot" (a scalding dose of holy water to the face), the other of which involves the draining of fluids from the woman's body, a more subversive yet equally violent climax due to the inversion of traditional pornographic fluid consumption. Acts of fluid consumption in pornography are gendered feminine: performed by women in heterosexual porn,¹⁶ and men in gay porn (and some heterosexual porn such as femdom and pegging). Arguably, the subversiveness of this draining of fluids by the male is counteracted by the violence with which it is performed.

The third scene is more complicated, and less easily reducible to sexist terms. Sally is Surka's present-day doppelganger, a spy and prostitute working for the FIB (a slightly altered spelling of the FBI, presumably to avoid copyright infringement) who are tracking agents from Communist countries. The FIB suspect Leopold of being an agent.¹⁷ Sally is ordered to track him, and report back her findings. In the meantime, her FIB contact, Big Bird, uses her sexually against her will, and she cleverly extorts information from various agents through sexual scenarios shortly before "snuffing" them.

Having fallen in love with Leopold, Sally masturbates in front of a mirror to a reflected apparition of Leopold. Sally's climax is signaled vocally, while the visuals are centered on Sally's body and physical pleasure, and Leopold's inability to participate in this physical pleasure. Indeed, immediately prior to this scene, Leopold declares his knowledge that they love each other, and that he is "losing control over [his] craving for her warm, loving blood." He concludes, "I had to return

to Transylvania or destroy her.” Contrary to Dracula’s reason for returning to Transylvania in the novel, Leopold wishes to protect Sally from death, or at least to protect “the ghost of who I thought she was.” Indicative of Leopold’s regret, Sally’s masturbation scene is introduced via Leopold’s wistful remembrances, as he mutters, “Surka, Surka,” and Sally looks into the mirror, answering, “Yes. Yes, I’ve been waiting for you.” Touching her neck sensually, Sally moves on to masturbation and vaginal penetration with a candle. Leopold’s apparitional image in the mirror is visible through the space between Sally’s thighs, as the camera shoots from the ground, centering Leopold’s physical body as an erotic force that replaces the missing money shot. Sally’s orgasm is met with Leopold’s own loud groan of satisfaction/pain; a verbal “climax” that meets Sally’s physical one. As soon as Leopold has uttered his climax his image is gone, much like the always-erect penis that hardcore wishes to repeatedly stress, yet must always deflate.

Orifices, Penetration, and Homoeroticism

Elaine Showalter remarks of the proliferation of film adaptations of *Dracula*, that there were “133 full-length film versions” recorded by 1980. “While most film versions of *Dracula* have been heterosexual,” Showalter observes, “homosexuality is strongly represented in the films, coded into the script and images in indirect ways” (182). Showalter is evidently not including pornography, hardcore or softcore, in her 133 film versions. While heterosexual pornography includes anxiously deflected, as well as outright homoerotic, representations of Dracula, the gay pornography obviously does not deal in “coded” or “indirect” references to

homosexuality. These representations are about as traditionally direct as they come. One wonders, then, how Showalter's argument regarding gender and sexuality in these adaptations may have developed if she had incorporated *Dracula and the Boys* (1969) and *Dragula* (1973), or even the rather direct homoeroticism of heterosexual films *Dracula Sucks* (1978) and *The Bride's Initiation* (1976).

Bodily fluids are not the only vampiric device that is sexually appropriate to hardcore genres—mouths are “the primary site of erotic experience in *Dracula*” (Craft 109), and this continues to be true for his pornographic progeny. This focus on orifices, and penetration via these orifices, in *Dracula* are matched by the very same obsession in hardcore, a genre that focuses on oral, vaginal, and anal orifices, and more particularly the penises that penetrate them. Vampiric narratives, then, allow for a literal, sexual translation of what is displaced in *Dracula*. At the same time, these narratives literalize the more subversive anxieties that Craft highlights when he notes that *Dracula* evades and avoids homoerotic contact between man and Dracula: “the vampire mouth fuses and confuses what Dracula's civilized nemesis, Van Helsing and his Crew of Light, works so hard to separate—the gender-based categories of the penetrating and the receptive” (109). Porn, too, works hard to render male and female bodies distinct in terms of who penetrates and who is penetrated, but the vampiric porn film allows for women with fangs to penetrate men, creating a more complex picture. At the same time, hardcore has been theorized by many scholars as an attempt at reconciling male and female sexual desire under one (masculine) framework. Efforts at blending male and female sexuality into an androcentric economy are literalized, and perhaps simultaneously

undermined, by vampiric hardcore. Ultimately, the hardcore realization of *Dracula* creates an unstable product that constantly works to stabilize one genre as it destabilizes the other. The instability and anxiety of the original novel translates into the already anxious and unstable genre of hardcore, as it seeks to expose the “truths” of the original Victorian novel, in turn exposing some “truths” of its own.

Queer pleasures within straight pornography abound. Heterosexual films navigate these moments with humor, nervous evasion, displacement, and female bodies. Such homoerotic, homosocial moments (which are often difficult to separate from the homophobic) in ostensibly heterosexual pornographic films call to mind the “blood transfusions” of Stoker’s novel that constitute the Count’s consumption of male bodily fluids, without ever outright penetrating the men’s necks. Attempting to save Lucy’s life, the Crew of Light take turns to infuse her body with their blood via transfusions, a process that is implicitly acknowledged by the Crew as sexual in nature. After giving his fiancé Lucy his blood, Arthur feels “as if they two had been really married,” while the other men’s transfusions remain an illicit secret: “None of us said a word of the other operations, and none of us ever shall” (157). Van Helsing’s awareness of the way in which “the other operations” might be interpreted by Arthur are demonstrated in Van Helsing’s “feeling of personal pride” when he witnesses the result of his own transfusion in Lucy’s face: “I could see a faint tinge of colour steal back into the pallid cheeks and lips. No man knows till he experiences it, what it is to feel his own life-blood drawn away into the veins of the woman he loves” (119).

Phyllis A. Roth notes “that the transfusions (merely the reverse of the vampire’s blood-letting) are in their nature sexual” (415), not only indicating the sexual nature of bodily exchanges and transfusions of blood, but also indicating the sexual nature of its “reverse”: vampiric “blood-letting.” In this way, the subsequent realization by Van Helsing that “even we four who gave our strength to Miss Lucy it also is all to him” (181), is strikingly homoerotic. As Craft points out, “blood substitutes for semen here” (121), and the child Mina bears, with its “bundle of names” indicating all of the men as paternal figures, “is the fantasy child of those sexualized transfusions, son of an illicit and nearly invisible homosexual union” (Craft 129).

Dracula Exotica presents such a moment in a scene that shows how psychological connection to and through a female sexual body is able to portray homoerotic sexual connections, yet without the difficulties of having the male bodies in the same room. Dracula’s hypnotic abilities are demonstrated in the morgue scene, where Valdez’s dead body has been tagged, and is waiting to be bagged. The morgue attendant, Rudy, takes advantage of what he believes to be a dead body. As Rudy begins groping Valdez’s breasts, the scene begins to cut periodically to images of Leopold’s face as he emerges from his coffin, eyes intently staring. The viewer is to understand that he is mentally connecting with his soon-to-be vampiric minion. Significantly, Valdez’s body lies on the morgue slab, while Leopold’s body lies in a similar posture in his coffin, eyes closed like Valdez, while her mouth is penetrated by Rudy’s penis. In this way, Leopold is mentally experiencing Valdez’s violation, while his physical body mimics hers. While Rudy

performs cunnilingus on Valdez, Leopold rises from the coffin, and as he stares intently, we cut to Rudy vaginally penetrating Valdez.

The scene steadily builds in this manner, Leopold's physical comportment altering slightly as the panoply of positions varies in the necrophilia scene, and finally as Rudy approaches orgasm the editing between Leopold, Rudy, and Valdez speeds up until Valdez's eyes suddenly open signaling the moment of mental register with Leopold just as Rudy ejaculates onto her stomach, seen from her point of view. In a sense, this is Leopold's money shot, if we are to read the money shot as involving some form of masculine command over the female body, yet simultaneously he is receiving the money shot from "his" violator, Rudy. Furthermore, this money shot is met with re-action, as Valdez bares her newly-acquired fangs and leaps up. The scene concludes—we might say, climaxes—with Rudy's screams over a black screen.

Dracula Exotica is not the only heterosexual hardcore Dracula film of this period to dabble in homoerotic implications. *The Bride's Initiation* (1976) is particularly striking. Count Dracula kidnaps a newlywed couple with the intention of using them as part of a ritual to prolong his undead life, a ritual he has performed many times before with the aid of his chauffeur, James, and his witch. The ritual involves mixing a "brew" composed of a man's semen, which Dracula drinks and then feeds to a woman he subsequently has sex with; hence, the kidnapping of the newlyweds, and other victims besides. The plot is often incoherent, but it is undeniably homoerotic: captured, bound men are manually masturbated (by women) until they ejaculate into a goblet; this ejaculate is then consumed by

Dracula. Furthermore, when Dracula discovers Miss Richmond, the woman he believes “will end my daily tortures and bring me eternal life,” events do not proceed according to plan. James kidnaps the detective who has been searching for the newlyweds, in order to harvest his semen for the ritual, and Dracula drinks the brew in preparation for penetrating Miss Richmond. However, immediately after drinking the “brew” Dracula falls to his knees before the detective, exclaiming, “I love you, I love you, you wonderful one! I must make love to you now!” The detective retorts, “Are you kidding? My husband would kill me!” and the film ends. (The fact that gay marriage was not legal at this time, does not apparently stop the filmmakers from declaring that this man has a husband). Just as semen is passed to Leopold’s mouth on the whore’s apple, so multiple different “brews” of semen constitute the Count’s lifeblood in *The Bride’s Initiation*, eventually leading to him falling in love with a man rather than the beautiful Miss Richmond.

Dracula Sucks (a.k.a. *Lust at First Bite*, *Dracula’s Bride*, et al) reportedly also has homoerotic content, the most interesting of it trimmed from available versions. According to adult film archivist, Joe Rubin, who has an answer print of *Dracula Sucks*, at the end of the film Dracula has sex with Mina, making her his bride and turning her vampiric; Dracula then forces Jonathan Harker’s head under his cape, making Harker choke, in a gesture that implies he is forcibly penetrating his mouth. Dracula releases Harker, pulls his head back, and exposes his neck for Mina to bite, killing him. Actual homosexual acts—male-male penetration—occur on screen, then, yet hidden by Dracula’s iconic cape. (What else goes on under the “cape of Dracula” that we don’t know about?) Just as “a mediating image of

femininity...displaces a more direct communion among males” (Craft 129) in *Dracula*, so the sexualized female body in the hyper-sexualized hardcore film mediates the homoerotic elements inherent to hardcore as a genre; a genre that assumes a heterosexual male as a spectator of heterosexual males, particularly the engorged, thrusting, and ejaculating penis. The hardcore vampire and *Dracula* genres merely render this ever-present homosocial quality most prominent due to its iconography of orifices, displaced bodily fluids, and homoeroticism.

The Women of *Dracula*, The Women of Hardcore

“Far from being sexless, under the crinoline the Victorian female was a hot little number” – Lesley A. Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change in Britain Since 1880*, p.16

One of the defining features of heterosexual hardcore pornographic film, is the centering of active, female sexuality, especially the tendency to reward, rather than punish, this sexuality (Williams “Film Bodies” 274). In addition, pornography violates the sanctity of sex as a procreative act, within a socially sanctioned contract. There are many pornographic feature films that explore marriage, yet these films tend to focus on dissatisfaction within marriage, resolved by more and better sex with other people (Williams *Hard Core*). Adaptations of *Dracula* often have titles and plotlines that emphasize marriage and brides, which points to the ways in which, as Costello puts it, *Dracula* is about the sacrificing of virginity. In addition, *Dracula* is about the sexual and violent uses of women’s bodies between men, of which marital contracts are one of the socially-normalized tools. Pornographic adaptations frequently overturn gendered constructs found in horror and the Gothic, even while

these subversions are embedded within sexual commodification and gendered power structures.

Stoker's conflicted handling of gender in the original novel has provided pornographic film with ample opportunity to play within Victorian gendered constraints, while simultaneously subverting them. The majority of hardcore films, narrative and otherwise, have enjoyed the sadistic potential of the novel as well as the active female sexual impulses that vampirism allows. Supernatural qualities in general, particularly hypnotism and vampiric transformation, allow a pornographic space within which certain deviancies and subversions are encouraged.

Hardcore navigates the image and representation of woman in complex ways, and these representations become particularly complex when they intersect with a novel such as *Dracula*. Horror and porn, as Williams has pointed out, use women's bodies "as the primary embodiments of pleasure, fear, and pain" (270). This is also the case in Gothic fiction and the novels of the Marquis de Sade, demonstrating that it is the female body through which male and female readers and spectators experience "some of their most powerful sensations" (Williams "Film Bodies" 270). Typically, Williams explains in "Film Bodies," horror is typified as sadomasochistic, while porn is typified as sadistic, with the assumption of a male audience for both genres. Yet Williams is skeptical of such a simplistic view, asking, "To what extent is she [the male gaze's] victim? Are the orgasmic woman of pornography and the tortured woman of horror merely in the service of the sadistic male gaze?" (272). Suggesting "the value of not invoking the perversions as terms of condemnation" (272), Williams ultimately concludes that simplistic oppositions

need to be complicated, that these genres operate as “a cultural form of problem solving,” and that their function as such should not be dismissed. “Genres thrive, after all, on the persistence of the problems they address,” Williams asserts, “but genres thrive also in their ability to recast the nature of these problems” (280).

Hardcore Dracula films, more so than other examples of hardcore¹⁸, feature a panoply of perverse and violent sex acts, particularly rape and necrophilia. This indicates the extent to which appropriation of gothic themes into a specifically sexual genre can result in a sexually-explicit rendition of the implicitly-sexual violence and victimization present in horror and Gothic fiction. The treatment of Lucy in Stoker’s *Dracula*, for example, has been analyzed at length for the obvious way in which she is punished for becoming an overtly sexual monster—monstrous because she is female and sexual. Indeed, Craft goes as far as describing Lucy’s death-by-stake as “the novel’s real—and the woman’s only—climax” (122), suggesting on the one hand that the violence is figured in sexual terms, and on the other hand that Lucy’s death is equivalent to her orgasm; her *petit mort*.¹⁹ Mina and Lucy are the two central women in the novel, representing what Roth describes as “the dichotomy of sensual and sexless woman” (412). Mina represents all that is virtuous, yet strong-minded, while Lucy is flirtatious and, after being bitten, aggressive in a “voluptuous” and sensual manner.

As Roth also observes, the novel is riddled with comments that reflect a late-Victorian anxiety over the New Woman, fear of the loss of “good women” who fulfill traditional gender roles, and a reaction to “fallen women.” *Dracula* plays out the familiar dichotomy of Madonna and Whore, or as Roth puts it, “the dark woman and

the fair, the fallen and the idealized” (411). Yet hardcore, as noted above, typically celebrates “fallen” and “dark” women. After all, pornography is a medium that generally *requires* the always-sexual woman, and is one of the only sites of unquestioned active female sexuality, as well as other representations that undermine or contradict normative institutions such as marriage, procreative sex, and submissiveness that have been argued to oppress women, and that are prominent features of nineteenth-century literature.

If Mina and Lucy are the dichotomous female protagonists of *Dracula*, then Vita Valdez and Surka/Sally are their corresponding characters in *Dracula Exotica*. If Surka/Sally represents Mina, then it is meaningful that the film chooses to depict the Victorian, virtuous Surka as a victim of (internalized) institutional and cultural restrictions on her sexuality, while Sally is the modern, confident, and sexual Mina of the twentieth century. She uses whoring as a way of extracting information from men, and is only condemned for her active sexuality by Big Bird who cruelly forces her to perform fellatio on him. Sally herself is an intelligent and competent spy, using her sexuality to exploit her clients, and in the case of “The Albanian” penetrating them anally in a way that Mina never would unless forced. Penetration of males by females, as Craft points out, is the territory of the sexually aggressive and polluted vampires.

Jonathan’s first encounter with the vampire sisters, significantly characterized by Roth as “almost pornographic[...]" (412), is both terrifying and thrilling, but ultimately the woman’s “demonism is figured as the power to penetrate” (445). In *Dracula Exotica*, Sally returns to the client brandishing a gun

having been instructed to “snuff the Albanian,” and says they will be playing a “new game” called “Up the Keester.” “I hope it hurts a little,” exclaims the Albanian as Sally penetrates his anus with the barrel. “Give it to me!” he cries, and Sally obeys, pulling the trigger. Such violent penetration of the male body through an orifice that threatens to align men with women, does not situate Sally as “demonic,” but rather a late-twentieth century porno version of the New Woman: confident, autonomous, and sexually assertive. Her only experiences of sexual degradation and exploitation come in the form of oppressive institutions—Big Bird and the FIB, who take advantage of the fact that she is a whore—much in the same way as they did for Surka.

Vita Valdez (Vanessa Del Rio), the sexually voracious and tough cocaine smuggler can be seen as the updated Lucy, and as such presents some problematic aspects in the film, especially if we compare her to Sally in terms of her role, her gendered and raced characteristics, and the conclusion of her particular narrative. Vita is introduced on the boat within which Leopold is hiding himself. Vita is the leader of a gang of male cocaine smugglers, and is immediately shown to be both in control of her sexuality, and sexually demanding of others. Cutting open the cargo for a sample, one of the gang, Eric (Ron Hudd), starts groping Vita, and she knees him in the crotch, snapping, “No one fuck with Vita Valdez unless Vita want them to.” As if to prove this fact, she demands that the three other men get undressed so they can all have sex. Only Eric is left out, sitting at the sidelines while the others enjoy some preliminary sexual activity. Ultimately, however, Vita feels sorry for Eric and invites him to join in. Throughout this scene, Vita directs the sexual activity, telling

the men to “hurry up” at the beginning, giving permission to Eric to participate, enjoying all three men orally pleasuring her body, and finally commanding, “fuck me Eric. Now.”

Vita’s subsequent failure to resist Dracula, not to mention the fact that she is raped on the morgue slab by attendant Rudy (cruelly highlighting the limitations of her assertion that nobody fucks with her unless she wants them to), could be seen as her punishment for her sexually aggressive behavior. The fact that she kills Rudy immediately following the money shot is slight compensation for his violation of her, and yet even this “revenge” is enabled by the psychic mastery of Leopold. She is possessed by men in both body and mind. Furthermore, Leopold employs Vita as his secretary, a typically feminine job in which she is subservient to Leopold. However, this transition is treated with humor, and before long the newly vamped Vita is taking her own sexual revenge, without the assistance of Leopold, on the racist detective Blick who hates “spics.”

Blick shows up looking for Leopold, and Vita is evasive, distracting him with seductive and sexually-charged language and behavior. Del Rio as a performer is known for her exaggerated performances of Latina sexuality, performed to the point of parody, and she utilizes this persona as a way of intimidating Blick. Blick is confused, first by the fact that he saw her dead body in the morgue only hours before (deflected by Vita via use of racist stereotype: “You know what they say, that us Spics all look alike too”), and next by his feelings of arousal, mingled with disgust. As Vita grows increasingly physically predatory, Blick attempts to leave, exclaiming, “I don’t like your filthy hands touching me...!” Mocking his racism, Vita exclaims,

“Ooo-ee! I do believe you don’t like us spics.” Blick closes his eyes, grappling with his conflicting emotions, and the screen dissolves to a shot of him naked, with bloody bite marks on his neck. The moment of penetration is absent. Vita is now in a black dominatrix outfit, complete with bat wings, and a scene of discipline and humiliation proceeds, with Vita forcing Blick to “Come to me like a pig,” prompting him to “oink” repeatedly, kiss her feet, and perform cunnilingus on her. The money shot is explicitly demanded by Vita, as she orders, “Cum in my face! Cum in my face!” and responds to the facial with fangs bared, growling and writhing. Here again, the facial money shot assumes meaning, in this case that semen can stand in for blood as a life force for pornographic (female) vampires.

The sense of pollution attributed to the vampire sisters and Lucy, and for a time Mina, in Stoker’s novel is echoed in this scene with Vita. Jonathan regards the vampire sisters as “both thrilling and repulsive” (42), while Lucy’s changed state makes the Crew “shudder[] with horror” (187). Mina, during her precarious state of transition, repeatedly cries out that she is ““Unclean! Unclean!”” and has ““polluted flesh!”” (259). Blick’s disgust with Vita echoes the disgust leveled toward the transformed women by male characters in Stoker’s *Dracula*, and more specifically the conflicting feelings of pleasure and horror experienced by Jonathan. The difference is that Vita’s sexual aggression is unchanged—she was sexually dominant before her transformation, and remains so in her altered state, only now with supernatural powers of control. The repulsion and confusion Blick experiences is not due to her sexuality alone, but also her race. In this way, the gendered fear of reverse colonization is present in both novel and film, the film more literally

representing “the conflation of the sexually aggressive female and the racial other” (Brock 120). Count Dracula, as discussed above, is ambiguously gendered. Vita, however, is female and feminine and Blick’s disgust and arousal could be read as a highly gendered fear of reverse colonization: reverse colonization performed by the Latina, as well as by the female. Just as men have occupied women’s bodies, Vita intends on occupying Blick’s. While in some way allowing active female sexuality and condemning racism, the film suggests in turn that erotic appeal and sexuality are closely tied up in racist attitudes and ideologies. Fear of sexual impurity is replaced with fear of racial impurity, as Vita represents the (re)pollution of United States soil by immigrant “spics.”

The narrative resolutions of the three principal characters—Leopold, Surka, and Vita—are significant in how to read the film against the novel. Stoker’s “ending” is notoriously anti-climactic, despite what Craft calls “the novel’s...real climax” (122), Lucy’s death, occurring at roughly the mid-way mark. For a novel framed around tracking and attempting to annihilate Count Dracula, the Count’s death is curiously brief, occupying a small paragraph. Earlier in the novel, Van Helsing talks at great length about Dracula’s strengths and weaknesses, explaining that “a sacred bullet fired into the coffin kill him so that he be true dead; and as for the stake through him, we know already of its peace; or the cut-off head that giveth rest” (212). However, when the time comes to dispose of the Count, a strange evasion occurs. Just as Dracula is about to triumph, Mina relates, Jonathan’s “great knife” sweeps in: “I shrieked as I saw it shear through the throat; whilst at the same moment Mr Morris’s bowie knife plunged into the heart. It was like a miracle; but

before our very eyes, and almost in the drawing of a breath, the whole body crumbled into dust and passed from our sight" (325). Dracula's death stands in stark contrast to the violent, blood-gurgling murder of Lucy, who is treated to a stake through the heart, described in violently sexual terms: "The body shook and quivered and twisted in wild contortions; the sharp white teeth champed together till the lips were cut, and the mouth was smeared with crimson foam. But Arthur never faltered. He looked like a figure of Thor as his untrembling arm rose and fell, driving deeper and deeper the mercy-bearing stake, whilst the blood from the pierced heart welled and spurted up around it" (192).

The sexual nature of Lucy's death is further compounded by the fact that the Crew unanimously agree that Arthur, as her fiancé, should be the one to stake her. Van Helsing is willing to commit the act, but wonders if there is not another present "who has a better right": "We all looked at Arthur. He saw, too, what we all did, the infinite kindness which suggested that his should be the hand which would restore Lucy to us as a holy, and not an unholy, memory" (191). In other words, it is only right that Lucy's would-be-husband should be the one to "restore" her femininity through violence; a fixing of gender that is worryingly unstable; in effect, "fucking her into femininity." Craft sees Stoker's inability to represent Dracula's death as closely related to the abundance of writhing, bloody representation of Lucy's death, arguing, "Obviously this displacement subserves the text's anxiety about the direct representation of eroticism between males; Stoker simply could not represent so explicitly a violent phallic interchange between the Crew of Light and Dracula....Lucy receives the phallic correction that Dracula deserves" (124).²⁰

Dracula Exotica provides its audience with a less violent conclusion, yet one that still attempts to “restore” a generic imperative: the money shot. Furthermore, the film’s conclusion conforms to a heteronormative monogamy. Having fallen in love with Leopold, Sally decides to help save his life from the various people on their way to kill him. Leopold tries to persuade Sally to “go, and be safe,” but Sally is in love and will stay in spite of everything. Leopold decides to tell her about his past, informing her of “the horror of my obscene craving for blood, the agony of my raging passion, which for these 400 years had remained unfulfilled.” Sally wants to try to fulfill this lack, but Leopold knows it would result in her death: “I would not pay such coin for my salvation.” Sally insists, facing him: “Your salvation is no less than mine. Your crime no greater. Don’t you see Leo? I was born for this moment. Love me Leopold, love me.” What crime Sally equates to Leopold’s is ambiguous, but presumably the spying, seducing, and murdering that she has participated in is similar in nature to the lifestyle that Leopold has practiced for the last 400 years, save the ability to climax. The sex scene that ensues is slow and sensual, lit softly, and the moment of vaginal penetration—sexual consummation, in traditional androcentric terms—is aurally and visually conflated with the penetration of Sally’s neck by Leopold, as she urges, “Do it now Leo,” and he bites her neck while entering her vaginally. The money shot that follows is intended as the culmination of 400 years without climax: masturbating over Sally’s face, Leopold cries, “Surka!” repeatedly as crashing waves are spliced into the scene. When Leopold finally ejaculates, the clocks start up again, Vita is shown reduced to a skeleton, and suddenly Leopold and Sally are no more. Only two doves remain, and they fly out of

the open window. Both Sally and Leopold have achieved salvation, and they fly away together as doves of peace. The insufficiency of film to depict a money shot 400 years in the making, not to mention the finale of a porn film that put off this very money shot until the end, is demonstrated in the fact that they recycle the recorded money shot and play it twice.

“How is He to be Taken?”: Sexual Duality in Twenty-First Century Draculas

The “double entendre” of Mina’s question quoted above, Jules Law argues, “similarly gestures toward this desire to be penetrated, implicitly transferring the desire now to Dracula himself” (150). Indeed, the fear and desire surrounding penetration in Stoker’s novel becomes ever more contested as the proliferation of pornographic categorization and sexual identities increases, crystallized in the simultaneous gay and straight releases of *Dracula XXX* (2012). As I argued in chapter three with regard to adaptations of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, the attempt to stabilize and separate gender and sexual identity results in a paradoxical queering of heterosexuality and heterosexual pornography. Law asserts, “Vampirism, as the spectacular scene of blood/breast-feeding [in Stoker’s novel] suggests, is not about stable hierarchies of predation, but about economies of circulation, and about the anxieties of those who assume custodianship over them” (162). Who assumes custodianship over the fluids, genders, and sexual identities of hardcore pornography? I argue that it is the consumer.

The sexual significance of Count Dracula in the cultural consciousness continues to thrive, and like Alice of Wonderland and Looking-Glass Land, has

survived the industry shifts in format due to the mass of cultural meaning wrapped up in their immediate visual recognizability. Unlike Dorian Gray and Jekyll/Hyde who would need either props (a portrait, or a vial of potion) or a process (transformation, or never aging), all Alice and Dracula require are a costume and/or make up to infuse what could be a by-the-numbers gonzo scene with a host of other cultural meanings. Yet, the current trend in parodies, discussed at more length in the conclusion, has led to two new releases that, as per twenty-first century porn parody formula, are less integrated, gonzo-style sex scenes inserted into a usually very effective recreation of a television show, Hollywood movie, or work of literature. The dual releases of *Dracula XXX* and *His Dracula XXX* in 2012, straight and gay adaptations of Stoker's novel respectively, suggest that, unlike many other literary and film characters, Count Dracula is just as easily "gay" as he is "straight." Not only do both films work from nearly identical scripts, they use the same actor to play Jonathan Harker (Ryan Driller, using his gay porn pseudonym Jeremy Bilding in *His Dracula*), and utilize much of the same footage and voice over. The box covers are identical in composition and artwork, aside from the sex of the performers, and the blurb on the back cover is exactly the same: "The story of the greatest lover who lived, died, and lived again." These simultaneously released films offer a unique opportunity to analyze the ways in which Stoker's novel, and the *Dracula* culture text (particularly Coppola's film, *Bram Stoker's Dracula*), offer themselves up to hetero- and homosexual pornographic treatments.

There are several interesting parallels between the two films. I will briefly address two: the first scene in which Jonathan Harker spends his first night at the

castle, and the final scene where Count Dracula finally entrances, seduces, and transforms Mina/Matthew. In the first scene, Jonathan Harker (Ryan Driller/Jeremy Bolding) is tossing and turning in bed, the covers pulled down to expose his sweat-sheened torso. This footage is identical in both films, demonstrating the way context impacts the meaning of pornographic imagery and who is meant to be looked at. “My days are spent entirely alone,” Jonathan says in the voice over, “...at night, I sometimes fancy I hear the stones whispering to me. And I have dreamt even stranger things.” In the straight film, this is the point where the three sisters appear, and a three-on-one sex scene takes place. In the gay film, Jonathan’s tossing and turning continues for some time, gradually transitioning into a solo masturbation scene. Three weird brothers evidently do not carry the same erotic weight.

In the final scene of both films, Dracula puts Mina/Matthew in a trance. The difference here is in the sex act itself: Dracula is anally and orally penetrated in *His Dracula*, rendering the Count both penetrator and penetrated, whereas in *Dracula XXX* Dracula orally and vaginally penetrates Mina. Penetration can only go one way when both males and females are present. In addition, Mina is turned into a vampire via semen—“It burns! It burns!” she cries after swallowing his seed, gripping her throat in a parody of the vampire bite before bearing her fangs and biting Dracula’s chest. This alters the scene in the novel in which Mina suckles at Dracula’s chest like a kitten at the saucer. Indeed, Mina is doing the penetrating, with no need of Dracula’s self-performed incision. In *His Dracula* there is no transformation via semen; Matthew’s transformation occurs via traditional neck biting. The issue with both of these scenes and the differences in gay and straight interpretation is one of

transgression. Run through the body of a woman, these scenes carry more erotic weight due to a greater sense of transgression. The transgression of gay men in the Victorian era is already transgression enough, it would appear, demonstrated through the careful removal of all references to matrimony and suitors in the gay version.

None of the Count Draculas in this chapter die via a stake to the heart, just as in Stoker's tale. The threat of homoeroticism in the novel lingers in heterosexual pornography; in gay pornography, as in *His Dracula*, the Count is anally penetrated thus removing the need for a violent displacement. This might be seen as comparable to the way in which semen stands in for blood. Hustler's unprecedented decision to release near identical straight and gay parodies of *Dracula*, then, does what all of the film adaptations have done; they implicate the Count's inherent queerness through vigorous segregation of sexual identities, consumption of bodily fluids, gendered and sexed penetration, and targeting of consumers themselves. Strict categorization—of abject fluids, gender, and sexual identity—and the subsequent queering effect this creates is a paradoxical key to the violent pleasures of Stoker's novel and the subsequent sexualized development of the Dracula culture text.

¹ Costello, Shaun. E-mail interview. 12 April 2012.

² For the most comprehensive listing of all representations of Dracula in popular media to date, and with a section entirely devoted to the myriad X-rated Dracula films, see Picart, Joan (Kay) and John Edgar Browning, eds. *Dracula in Visual Media*. McFarland (2010).

³ Indeed, even the name has sexual connotations, particularly related to bodily fluids and orality. Several compilation DVDs have been released with Dracula-esque titles, including *Count Suckula* (Wicked), *Count Spermula* (Vivid), and the “busty” themed *Count Rackula* (Wicked).

⁴ In an essay on the subject of the lack of menstrual blood in porn, Trixie of BloodyTrixie.com states, “Leaving menstruation out of porn and lumping graphic sexual depictions of menstruation together with shit and piss reflect and reinforce a primitive backwater ignorance about women and the human body, reinforcing centuries-old myths, suspicions, & fears about blood and the function of women's cycles. This type of ignorance is the TRUE obscenity.” Likewise, the webmistress of EroticRed.com states, “I built Erotic Red because I think period play is fun, and it's just mind-numbing to read about how most pornographers find menstruation ‘the lowest of the low’ and ‘crossing the line.’ It's bizarre to see people nod their heads at any amount of violence and degradation that can be hurled at women, but a little red pussy sends them decrying the foulness of it all. Half of why I built this site was to stick my tongue out at such idiocy, half was to show off healthy ladyblood as being sexy and worthy of awe.”

⁵ It is important to note that recent gonzo porn, most notably the work of Mason (aka. Sam No) and Nica Noelle, has been trending toward the female performer orgasming after the money shot. If this were to become more standard, I believe the money shot would need to be thoroughly reevaluated. See the ongoing *Massive Facials* series (Dir. Mason, 2008-2013), *Tori Black is Pretty Filthy* (Dir. Mason, 2009), *Bootylicious Girls* (Dir. Sam No, 2010), and *The Stepmother: Sinful Seductions* (Dir. Nica Noelle, 2009).

⁶ See also “Menstrual Misogyny and Taboo: The Medusa, Vampire and the Female Stigmatic” by Marie Mulvey-Roberts (149-161) and “‘A Rag and a Bone and a Hank of Hair’: The Menstrual Background of ‘the Vampire’” by Andrew Shail (225-242).

⁷ Unless the video is *about* menstrual blood as a sexual fetish. In addition to the two websites, Erotic Red and Bloody Trixie, see *Rag Dolls*, *Period Piece*, *Rag Time Red*, and *Tanpax*. Menstrual blood is shown in the BTS featurettes of *Bitches in Heat* and in *The Gangbang Girl #35* Audrey Hollander's period starts just before filming and is commented on (significantly, she performs an anal scene rather than vaginal as a result). *Live in My Secrets* features a scene between Sasha Grey and director Kimberly Kane in which they simulate period blood using strawberry syrup. Yet, Kane asserts that Grey was on her period and thus the red liquid is a combination of syrup and blood. Of course, semen is fetishized in pornography to the point of

becoming normalized. Menstrual blood is one of the few bodily fluids remaining for which there is not a well represented audience in pornography.

⁸ Not only is “cum dodger” in the Urban Dictionary, and frequently used in online discussions of porn performers, there is also a website called No Cum Dodging Allowed, “where all girls swallow!”

⁹ See also Franco Moretti’s essay, “A Capital Dracula,” in which he argues that Dracula is symbolic of anxieties surrounding capitalism and global conquest.

¹⁰ Rubin, Joe. E-mail interview. 16 April 2012.

¹¹ For further work done on race, ethnicity, and Stoker’s *Dracula*, see Stephen D. Arata’s *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle*, specifically chapter 5, “The Occidental Tourist: *Dracula* and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization” (107-134); Joseph Valente’s *Dracula’s Crypt: Bram Stoker, Irishness, and the Question of Blood*; Robert A. Smart’s “Postcolonial Dread and the Gothic: Refashioning Identity in Sheridan Le Fanu’s *Carmilla* and Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*” in *Transnational and Postcolonial Vampires: Dark Blood* eds. Tabish Khair and Johan Hoglund, and “The *Dracula* and the *Blacula* (1972) Cultural Revolution,” by Paul R. Lehman and John Edgar Browning.

¹² Costello, Shaun. E-mail interview. 12 April 2012. Jamie was also famously queer, performing in gay, straight, and bi films, in both submissive and dominant roles (sometimes within the same scene, as in *The Ecstasy Girls* (Dir. Gary Graver a.k.a. Robert McCallum, 1978) and *Screwples* (Dir. Clair Dia, 1979), the latter of which he performed in wearing women’s lingerie. The other actor considered for the role was Jack Wrangler, a gay man who performed in gay pornographic films before crossing over to a successful career in straight porn. He identified as gay, yet married female singer Margaret Whiting. See the 2008 documentary, *Wrangler: Anatomy of an Icon*, as well as Wrangler’s autobiography, *The Jack Wrangler Story: or, What’s a Nice Boy Like You Doing?* (1985). While porn performers were admittedly more openly sexually fluid in the 1970s, the casting of these two particular men is significant due to the notable queerness of their sexual identity in public and personal life, as well as their star power in the porn industry, both of which are characteristics of the Count.

¹³ Costello, Shaun. E-mail interview. 12 April 2012.

¹⁴ Costello asserts that writer, Schwartz, “lift[ed] the story from the screenplay of *Love at First Bite*, which had done very good box office six months earlier. Schwartz vehemently denied any connection, but the similarity was too extreme to be coincidental.” E-mail interview. 12 April 2012.

¹⁵ This is the “hell” that Justine Jones must reside in for eternity in *The Devil in Miss Jones* (Dir. Gerard Damiano, 1972).

¹⁶ Unless it is a specified sub-category, such as fem-dom categories like “pegging,” where a female anally and orally penetrates a male with a strap-on dildo, and at the end of which the male participant often consumes his own money shot. See Joey Silvera’s *Strap Attack* series, produced by Evil Angel. Another subgenre in which this occurs is the “cuckold” subgenre, in which after watching a male stranger have sex with his wife, a male (the “husband”) consumes the stranger’s money shot. See Blacks on Blondes’ *Cuckold Sessions* series.

¹⁷ Interestingly, Dracula is represented as a communist in 1958’s *Return of Dracula*, as noted in Skal’s film listing (302). Connections between the Cold War and Dracula would appear to be common, and certainly worthy of further discussion.

¹⁸ The exception being, of course, the “roughies” of the 1970s which explicitly traded in rape, sexual assault, and victimization of women as the focus of their genre. It is a fascinating subgenre of hardcore porn, and one which merits extensive discussion.

¹⁹ It is also ambiguous as to whether Craft is suggesting that there are men in the novel who achieve climax, while Lucy is the only *woman* to climax.

²⁰ It is interesting that, in terms of narrative structure, the only difference between *This Ain’t Dracula XXX* and *His Dracula* is the scene where undead Lucy has sex with two of her suitors and is decapitated is not included in *His Dracula*. The filmmakers deemed this scene unnecessary when it is Luke, not Lucy, who has returned from the dead.

CONCLUSION
IT'S JUST PORN: THE DESIRE FOR MEANINGLESSNESS AND THE IMPORTANCE
OF PEDAGOGY

One of the difficulties in writing about pornography is persuading an audience of the validity and legitimacy of the field. Indeed, one of the more frustrating reactions I have met with over the last few years is, “It’s just porn.” Audiences are far more likely to accept that pornographic films might be worth studying if they follow a traditional narrative format, emulating Hollywood film in both structure and production values. A further justification is that of “weird” or “unusual” content—some ingredient that renders the film “more than” porn thereby validating it. I want to stress, pornographic films are never “just fucking”—they are always a mediation, no matter how unmediated or amateurish the content may feel.

Linda Williams stressed in her 1989 book *Hard Core* that

hard-core pornography is *not* a self-evident truth; it is a system of representations with its own developmental history and its own historically changing gender relations....Sex, in the sense of a natural, biological, and visible ‘doing what comes naturally,’ is the supreme fiction of hard-core pornography; and gender, the social construction of the relations between ‘the sexes,’ is what helps constitute that fiction. (267)

Williams was writing at a peculiar moment—on the very cusp of the disappearance of the hardcore feature film—yet her statement has only become more relevant, more critical to an understanding of pornography, in an age where “reality” porn (gonzo) is the dominant genre, and social media has aided in further blurring the lines between reality and fantasy in porn. Furthermore, producers, performers, and audiences alike have a stake in perpetuating a belief in the fantasy, as well as a resistance to analysis of pornographic content as meaningful. This is especially true

of some audience members who, faced with querying their own desires, prefer to dismiss analysis with the assertion that “It’s just porn.” Now, more than ever, porn literacy is critical.

Laura Kipnis reflects on “the great desire so many pornography commentators have to so vastly *undercomplicate* the issue, to studiously ignore the meanings that frame and underlie all the humping and moaning. It’s as if they’re so distracted by naked flesh that anything beyond the superficial becomes unreadable, like watching a movie and only noticing the celluloid, or going to the revolution and only noticing the costumes” (168-169). Still, very little has been said of the desire on the part of the consumer to have their arousal reduced to meaninglessness. What is the threat of analysis? What is the threat of meaning to pornography for both the consumer and the anti-porn commentator?¹ Could it be that, to a male consumer typically used to having pornography all to himself, the presence of a female, feminist scholar taking on pornography, complicating it, and revealing possible truths to that consumer feels a little like my “playing with someone else’s toys?”²

In this way, we might say that suggesting there is “more to porn” does violence to the consumer. Furthermore, it does violence to anti-porn rhetoricians. Indeed, as discussed below, anti-porn scholars and activists would prefer pornography and its participants—on and off camera—simply go away, and in lieu of this, that we stop talking about it unless we intend to condemn it.

While several institutions in the U.S. and UK currently have porn studies courses listed, there is still resistance to teaching pornography in the classroom. This resistance is due partially to a justifiable fear of retaliation on the part of

teachers and institutions, as well as a fear of contamination: “Sex media, rather like horror films in fact, are often seen as intrinsically obscene and harmful, effecting real changes in behaviour and attitude, and therefore potentially damaging to researchers and students” (Attwood and Hunter 547). Yet, a lot of this retaliation stems from a fear of normalization of such a contaminating influence; a fear of “mainstreaming.” In reference to Pat Robertson’s public criticism of her porn studies class at University of California, Santa Barbara, Constance Penley explains,

it became clear that *my critics’ biggest fear was that studying pornography as film or popular culture would normalize it....* another danger lurked for them beyond the threat of normalization: the risk that scholars who take popular culture seriously might start asking of porn what they ask of all other forms of popular culture. These questions would include “What is the nature of the widespread appeal?” “To what pleasures and ideas do these films speak?” “What desires and anxieties do the films express about identity, sexuality, and community, about what kind of world we want to live in?” “What kind of moral, social, and political counterculture is constituted by the producers and consumers of porn?” (“Crackers and Whackers” 107-108 *my italics*)

For these critics, stifling the exploration of pornography, and limiting the discussion of pornography with others, is the route to lessening its (always negative) impact on society. Yet there are also those who teach pornography from an antiporn perspective, and seek to stifle those who wish to teach it as a film genre, a form of popular culture, or an otherwise complex cultural text.

In March of last year, tenured professor Dr. Jammie Price was suspended by her home institution, Appalachian State University, following student complaints about “inappropriate materials.” These complaints stemmed from a screening of the anti-porn documentary, *The Price of Pleasure: Pornography, Sexuality and Relationships* in her sociology class. The details of the suspension and the responses

to it illuminate some of the critical issues in teaching and studying pornography, particularly in terms of rhetoric and approach.

While there has been consistent mainstream media attention to porn studies classes in the United States, up until this instance they have typically attempted to sensationalize the implementation of porn studies components in university classrooms, often generating moral outrage where there was none (Lehman "Introduction" 15). Price's suspension is unique in that it has prompted outrage on the part of anti-porn feminists who are suddenly and unexpectedly the target of censorship. The implication is that anti-porn pedagogy is itself *pornographic*, uncomfortably aligning anti-porn scholars with those "pro-porn" scholars anti-porners and religious conservatives have been criticizing and attempting to silence over the last few years.

In her article, "The Power of the Porn Industry: The Shocking Suspension of Dr. Price," Gail Dines highlights the way the suspension "limit[s] the free speech of academics" and "serves to scare teachers into adhering to the hegemonic discourse," yet she concludes her article by declaring that anything other than anti-porn pedagogy is not educational: "I think we should be speaking about porn in the classroom, but not as a fun industry that sells fantasy, but rather as a global industry that works just like any other industry with business plans, niche markets, venture capitalists and the ever-increasing need to maximize profits." For Dines, not only are anti-porn and pro-porn perspectives impossible to include collectively in a course, but there is no middle ground between teaching porn's harms and teaching porn as "fun." Those who do not teach porn in terms of the evils of capitalism and damage to

women are reducing students to “a captive audience for capitalists to push their products” (Dines “The Power of the Porn Industry”). In this way, “free speech” becomes a very specific type of speech that adheres to Dines’ anti-porn philosophy, and pro-porn discourse becomes the “hegemonic discourse” that Dines and her fellow anti-porn scholars are speaking out against. Teachers of pornography as a film genre are transformed into peddlers of smut or interested parties in the back pocket of sinister big business. For this reason, Price’s student complaints about the screening of “inappropriate materials” are particularly unsettling for Dines (a consultant and interviewee for the documentary) as it erases the boundary she and others like her have worked so hard to construct: the boundary between scholars who promote and thereby produce pornography, and scholars who critique it.

The “problem” with teaching pornography is the inherently pornographic nature of the pedagogy. To teach pornography is to display pornography is to render the classroom pornographic. Mark Jones and Gerry Carlin note, “Academia and its critical authority is not perceived as immune to pornography’s contaminating discursive power” (64). Anti-porn pedagogy is no exception. Jones and Carlin explain that anti-porn feminist displays of pornography that became common in the 1980s are “framed by politically activist discourses” (61) yet as Price’s student complaints demonstrate, the intent and framing of the display make it no less of a display.

Regardless of intention, the message received and reaction provoked is not guaranteed. Furthermore, as Jones and Carlin point out, the academic interest in

pornography as an undergraduate subject stems from feminist anti-porn

pornographic displays:

The engagement with pornography in university-based research—other than in psychological and sociological effects studies, and legal discourse on obscenity—is largely subsequent to the feminist anti-pornographers’ explicit activities. Rather than making pornography unacceptable or extinct, it seems as though the informed engagement with pornography by campaigners for censorship succeeded only in stimulating other forms of intellectual enquiry into the subject. (61)

Dines does not see Price’s suspension as connected to such Foucaultian phenomena, nor indicative of a need for further interrogation of pedagogical displays of pornography. Rather, she sees Price’s suspension as indicative of a wider complicity in the porn industry’s capitalist ventures.

In addition, Dines’ response, which foregrounds her belief that the documentary’s anti-porn stance is the *reason* for the suspension and that higher education is simply another institution complicit in the mainstreaming of porn, ignores key issues in Price’s particular situation. The fact that Price did not warn students beforehand of the graphic sexual materials they were about to witness—a fact that played a key role in her suspension (Smith)—is ignored by Dines in favor of forwarding a simplified argument that the determining factor was Price’s anti-porn stance. If Price were screening a documentary that did not condemn porn, Dines suggests, but were just as graphic it would not have resulted in Price’s suspension.

The suspension and responses to it raise important questions in terms of the role of the educator and the purpose of higher education. Specifically, about the role of the syllabus and the expectations and meaning of “offense” in the university classroom. When criticized for not providing a warning about the documentary, Dr.

Price told *Inside Higher Ed* that the students “could have excused themselves after it started without any negative consequences” (Smith). Indeed, it has become something of a common gesture on the part of nervous educators to have students sign a contract or consent form and to allow students to “opt out” of course components that deal with material regarded as “pornography.”

One professor who is significant in her stance against this is Linda Williams, considered the originator of porn studies, who asserts that the use of consent forms is “counterproductive” as it “tends to make the course all about finding that moment of most extreme offense, when the offensive text does what it is all along expected to do” (“Porn Studies” 14). However, as Peter Lehman points out, teaching porn “is one of the few times that men are in a more vulnerable and perilous position than women” (16), as men risk accusations of sexual harassment due to the stereotype of the dirty old man. For this reason, he allows students to leave screenings on the condition they complete an alternative assignment analyzing their reaction to the film. In addition, he has students sign a consent form at the beginning of the semester that goes beyond excusing students from film screenings and includes spaces outside of the classroom:

If any material should prove unexpectedly disturbing, students should simply leave the screening or lecture and meet with the instructor to determine an appropriate alternative assignment. Similarly, if any students are uncomfortable with a discussion topic with classmates outside class, during office hours, or at any other time, they should simply indicate they are uncomfortable and do not wish to discuss the topic further. (17)

As these various steps demonstrate, approaches to teaching pornography have less to do with protecting the student from dangerous materials, and more to do with protecting professors vulnerable to community outrage.

Are we to presume that students will only be "triggered" by sexual material? What about violent or religious material? And if educators are to let students opt out of sexual materials, should we simply let them opt out of anything and everything, even if the course title states clearly what the subject is? Does education mean non-offensive education? Are educators to protect students from dealing with material they find upsetting? Are course texts to be ignored in favor of what the student would prefer to not address? Reactions to and preparations for offense not only perpetuate the idea that sex and sexual representation should offend, but also validate the notion that "offense" is a reason not to learn. It marks "offense" as the end of an interrogation as opposed to the beginning of one. Why are laughter, fear, and other responses treated as valuable starting points for discussion, yet offense is not? Jenkins reflects that "however neutrally crafted, these policies are framed with specific ideological assumptions in mind. No one requires you to warn students that the Disney movie you are about to show contains sexist, racist and homophobic content" ("Foreword" 4).

This is not to say that educators should *not* warn students. In order to protect myself from student complaints, but also to avoid enacting pedagogical practices I disagree with, in my Gender and Sexuality in Western Literature class, I warned students about all manner of content. Simply by warning students of violent content in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* at the same time as I warned them of sexual violence in

Push and sexual explicitness in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, I highlighted a double standard surrounding sex and violence in United States media. Rather than resist providing syllabus warnings that are designed to protect educators, I enacted this precaution across the board as a way of generating teachable moments.

Lehman, who provides a warning, has students sign a consent form, and allows students to leave film screenings, reflects that

the hysteria is all in the minds of others; students taking the class are fully capable of dealing with the films and studying them just like other texts. But, let's just presume the worst catastrophic scenario possible for the moment: a student gets upset. Imagine what for some people in our society is unimaginable: an adult college student encountering something upsetting! Actually, I tell all my students that if they can get through college without encountering disturbing, upsetting ideas that challenge the belief system they bring into college, they should ask for their tuition money back. (16)

It is worth dwelling on the notion of challenging belief systems, especially as this pertains to studying pornography. It seems that the group that we might be most concerned about being offended are young women, yet in most accounts it is the young men who find the pornographic materials most difficult. Williams notes in "Porn Studies," "What I did not anticipate was that it would be the men in the class who would eventually register offense most dramatically" and that "it was the women in the class who were much better able to handle offense and to keep a critical distance on the material, even as it got closer to home" (15). Male homosexual pornography provoked the most dramatic expressions of offense from the male students in Williams' class:

The sense of offense from these (presumably straight) undergraduate males almost became palpable as we screened William Higgins's *The Young and the Hung* (1985) and, later, *Bi and Beyond: The Ultimate Sexual Union* (1986) and a few men made dramatic, door-slamming

exits. In the discussion that followed the screening, tensions were exacerbated by the fact that some of the women students took this opportunity to take revenge on the males who had finally been made to squirm by the use of male bodies as sexual objects of desire. (“Porn Studies” 15-16)

Clearly, these men were offended, and had their belief systems challenged primarily through having their notions of “pornography” challenged. These men registered disgust, but one also “admitted, with disarming honesty, that the film made him uncomfortable because he was afraid that if he liked it, it would mean he was gay” (17).

Are these types of offense valuable because they disrupt heteronormativity and homophobia? *Do* these experiences indeed disrupt these normative systems? Are such reactions more valuable than offense registered by heterosexual young women in response to sexist pornography? And, in Williams’s words, “What is a proper ‘pedagogy of pornography’ at a moment like this?” (17). Williams found the reactions to gay male pornography so unsettling that she decided to cancel further screenings, but looks back on this decision as a mistake: “In effect, I fostered an atmosphere in which a fear of homosexuality could be expressed in order to curtail what seemed to me a worse evil: the sort of pseudosophisticated condemnations of unsafe sex practices or critiques of silly plots that the majority of straight men voiced, but really only cover up deeper anxieties” (17).

Williams’s experiences illuminate a larger question: do we really need to show pornography in order to teach it? Can’t we study pornography simply by reading theory? What’s to know anyway? This attitude perpetuates the idea that pornography is monolithic, which is antithetical to a genuine analysis of the subject.

Furthermore, as Jenkins has noted, discussing pornography in abstract terms does not advance preconceived notions of porn, no matter your position: “Without specifics, the debate becomes too easy. Porn opponents can imagine what they want to see; free speech advocates can claim what’s on the screen doesn’t matter. Both sides project onto pornography their utopian desires or dystopian dreads about sexuality, power, gender, desire and social justice” (“Foreword” 3).

Williams’s student evaluations demonstrated that, in spite of any offense or upset experienced from the screenings, they had understood Williams’s goal “to expose students to diversities of pornography and the dynamics of the genre so as to make them aware that the appeal to the censorship of pornography is an appeal to the censorship of diverse sexualities” (19). The study of genre and feminist debates about pornography were the least interesting to Williams’s students: “To them, pornography was much more interesting as a springboard for discussion and demystification of the sex acts and sexualities we always seem to talk around in other contexts” (20). This last reflection points toward the need for porn literacy in an age of increased accessibility but decreased open discussion of pornographic convention and sexual representation.

In my own experiences in screening documentaries, giving guest lectures, and participating in roundtable discussions, students of all ages are eager to learn about the genre and untangle their own conflicted feelings on the subjects of pornography and sex media. This eagerness, as well as the genuine anxiety surrounding sexual politics, technology, and the content of pornography, demonstrates the need for honest, informed, and dynamic pedagogies of

pornography. Pedagogies that can be developed through approaches such as adaptation, but also history, film studies, literary studies, and many more disciplines besides. It is through multifaceted pedagogy, not one-sided condemnation or celebration, that the specifics of this diverse and problematic genre can be deconstructed and defanged.

This project has been an exercise in revealing the myriad ways that pornography tries to stabilize itself through the ongoing process of transgression. Gothic, especially Victorian Gothic, is a technology that complicates and disrupts pornography even while it has an affinity with it. Pornography requires a canvas of normality, a gap in speech to fill, on which to play out its various transgressive moves, developing an image of itself that appears to cross boundaries, speak the unspoken, and challenge the status quo. Yet, these obsessive transgressions ultimately enact and protect visual evidence of certain gender, sex, and identity norms. This results in an unusual, often puzzling, sometimes repetitive genre deeply invested in its own conventions, as well as the conventions of the non-pornographic.

Umberto Eco argues, somewhat facetiously, that a porn film is recognizable by how much time it wastes:

the pornographic movie must present normality—essential if the transgression is to have interest—in the way that every spectator conceives it. Therefore, if Gilbert has to take the bus and go from A to B, we will see Gilbert taking the bus and then the bus proceeding from A to B. This often irritates the spectators, because they think they would like the unspeakable scenes to be continuous. But this is an illusion on their part. They couldn't bear a full hour and a half of unspeakable scenes. So the passages of the wasted time are essential. ("How to Recognize a Porn Movie" 224-225)

These “passages of wasted time,” if we expand the notion beyond Eco’s bus travel, would be the substance I have addressed in this project: clothing and costumes, dialogue, architecture, writing and letters, plot. In the gonzo scenes of today, the “wasted time” would be the tease, preliminary interviews, brief set ups (as in vignettes), or even the BTS featurettes. Most anything that is not “just fucking” might be considered a waste of time if one regards pornography in such a superficial manner. Yet, Eco is exactly correct; it is only his terminology that is off. Indeed, Eco’s point is in part the point of this project.

This project has attempted to demonstrate the ways in which pornography is haunted by a particular malleable, “plastic” (Halberstam) Gothic Victorian world inhabited by strict binary divisions. Each text adapted by pornography is representative of deep anxieties over sexual identity, gender fluidity, authorship, duality, perversion, and shifting social structures reflective of a rapidly changing nineteenth-century culture. This visioning is deeply sexually perverse, yet also sexually repressed; a world where homosexuality is forbidden and silenced, yet everywhere in discourse; where women are active narrative agents and sexually bold, yet also part of a genre and culture in which meaning is inscribed onto female bodies. In short, pornographic representation and desire is about transgressing boundaries that are exciting for the very transgression. But this transgression is already anticipated and understood as an integral component of pornography.

Pornography is all about boundaries, about which crossings are deemed fit for a particular genre, and which are not and need to be relegated to a different one. This is still an oversimplification, though. As Emily Shelton observes, “genre

functions principally in pornography as an elaborate and obsessively detailed alibi for the overdetermined issue of viewer desire” (123). In this way, pornographic categorization “allows spectators to move unobstructed in a space where the nature of their erotic investment may remain confidential, anonymous, and private” (123). In this way, pornographic categorization creates a plastic, self-authored space of sexual fantasy mobilized by those very categories.

In a field such as porn studies, so much work remains to be done; an exciting prospect. In adaptation studies alone, entire eras, genres, auteurs, and styles remained unexplored. Rapid changes in technology mean that the fields of reception studies, psychology, cultural studies, and sociology have ample and timely material to work with. Forthcoming work on specific filmmakers and performers, such as Jill C. Nelson’s *Golden Goddesses* (2012), a 1000 page collection of interviews with females of the golden and silver ages, demonstrate the paucity of even generic overviews and information regarding the most celebrated era in adult film. Even broad subjects such as race and pornography, pornographic subgenres, or simply pornography from countries outside of the United States such as India, France, Germany, Australia, and Brazil have been pitifully underrepresented in porn studies. It is an unfortunate symptom of the polarization of the field that the majority of the work has been unspecific, casting pornography as a monolithic genre, and thus rendering much of the scholarly work less useful than it might be.

Thankfully, and in spite of a recent and troubling boom in sensationalistic, tabloid-style academic writing, this appears to be changing. Forthcoming work includes, *Teaching Pornography* by Constance Penley³ and *A Taste of Brown Sugar*:

Black Women, Sex Work, and Pornography by Mireille Miller-Young (Duke UP, 2014).

Recent projects related to pornography that complicate the genre include *The New Pornographies: Explicit Sex in Recent French Fiction and Film* eds. Victoria Best and Martin Crowley (2012), and *Cut-Pieces: Celluloid Obscenity and Popular Cinema in Bangladesh* by Lotte Hoek (2013). Both of these projects demonstrate the fluid nature of pornographic genre and the dynamic approaches that still remain to be explored in porn studies.

The Victorian texts and pornographic adaptations I have explored in the preceding pages demonstrate the extent to which we desire sex to “speak.” At the same time, as demonstrated above, the nature of sexual speech, what is said, and who speaks it is deeply worrisome and contested. This concern is demonstrated by the ample literature that has emerged over the past ten years attesting to pornography’s going mainstream; the notion that the mainstream sphere has become “porned,” and there is no escape. But where does this leave pornography, that genre which, as I have argued, thrives when crossing societal borders and transgressing boundaries? If the mainstream *is* porn, what boundaries will pornography have left to traverse? At the present time, the answer appears to be twofold: parody television shows and literature, and market pornographies in ever more specific categories.

Furthermore, with feminist and queer porn developing into a market of its own, it might be that challenging the dominant form of pornography—a canon in its own right—is a new and exciting form of transgression. Though as the editors of *The Feminist Porn Book* note, the 2013 anthology is in fact an identification of “a forty-

year-long movement of thinkers, viewers, and makers, grounded in their desire to use pornography to explore new sexualities in representation” (13). With rapid changes in technology and law, it would be foolish to make predictions as to the direction of pornography as a genre, but my own feeling is that, given the tools, it has much promise as a genre. What I suspect will not alter is pornography’s investment in its own function, in the playful interaction with the mainstream and with its own conventions.

¹ The resistance on the part of the pornographic consumer may in part be due to a process of internalization, discussed by Kathleen Lubey in her Freudian analysis of porn consumption: “the subject’s awareness of an object’s externality to himself comes to function, in Freud’s work, as a fully internalized, unconscious process that accounts for the seemingly immediate bodily response of arousal and orgasm while simultaneously necessitating cognition and comprehension of the signifying power of the object.” Lubey adds, “This subject is fully engaged mentally: the arousal of his body and his assignment of significance to the sexual spectacle take place within an awareness that exceeds the conscious plane” (119).

² I borrow this phrase from a fellow graduate student who used this term while presenting a paper about slash fiction, arguing that this is the attitude some people have toward women who write heterosexual characters into homosexual pornographic fiction.

³ Penley mentions this forthcoming book in her essay, “A Feminist Teaching Pornography? That’s Like Scopes Teaching Evolution!” (180).

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VITA

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