

Pornography:

Freedom of speech or media irresponsibility?

by Patricia MacDonald

People all over the world, especially women, are mad as hell that porn is so readily available, but the industry is booming. Some people believe that pornography is a healthy release of sexual tension. If that is the case, then why have battered wives, police officers and others described assaults that parallel scenes from porn films and magazines such as *Hustler*? And what about Clifford Olson- B.C. child molester and murderer- who allegedly carried pornographic photographs of young children in his suitcase during the time in which he murdered eleven children?

In the words of one rapist:

"...I went to a porno bookstore, put a quarter in a slot, and saw this porno movie. It was just a guy coming up from behind a girl and attacking her and raping her. That's when I started having rape fantasies. When I seen that movie, it was like somebody lit a fuse from my childhood on up. When that fuse got to the porn movie, I exploded. I just went for it; went out and raped. It was like a little voice saying, 'it's all right, it's all right, go ahead and rape and get your revenge; you'll never get caught. Go out and rip off some girls. It's all right; they'll even make movies of it'..."

Although pornogra-

phy is not the sole factor leading to violence against women, it is sometimes the trigger factor. In an incident in Dallas, Texas, police were called after a neighbor saw a woman slide down a rope of blankets from an apartment. She had been held captive for two weeks, and another woman had been in there for nine months. Both had been chained, beaten and repeatedly raped. "Officers entering the apartment said they found most of the windows had bars over them and the walls of the apartment were covered with pornographic photographs."

Obviously, the theory that pornography has a positive affect on society, that it is a harmless release of sexual tensions, violent or otherwise, does not always apply. Therefore, it is not valid. There are other theo-

ries of why porn is so popular, especially among the male population. The recent 'boom' in pornography may correlate to the recent increased belief in feminist views-that women are sexual beings who have control over their own bodies. In pornography, women are portrayed as submissive, lustful, controlled creatures who will perform anything the man asks. Men are always in control in pornography. So, because of the recent feminist uprising, many men feel the need to regain control. Porn reassures some men that women are still ultimately under their control.

Pornography combines sexuality with aggression- so that for many men, one implies the other. Neil M. Malamuth and Ed Donnerstein of the University of Wisconsin at Madison state that "the coupling of sexuality and aggression may result in conditioning processes whereby aggressive acts become associated with sexual arousal, a powerful unconditioned stimulus and reinforcer, and that such conditioning could possibly lead to concomitant changes in fantasies and behavior...In most violent

pornography, the victim is depicted as secretly desiring the attack, and such information may suggest that, even if a woman seems repulsed by a pursuer, she will eventually respond favorably to forceful advances, aggression and overpowering by the male assailant." No wonder many men still think "no" means "yes".

Keeping all this in mind, it is impossible for anyone to deny that there is a link of some sort between pornography and violence against women. In an analysis of Berl >>>

