

## **Should Pornography Be Regulated?**

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Allow me to begin by thanking each of you for taking the time to seriously consider this important and necessary discussion. The time is now to respond to the vast power of the internet and in particular, what this has meant for our young Canadians.

When my little girl was nine years old, she disclosed that my father had been touching her in her privates. No one had loved my father more than me. This bomb shook my world. I had no memories of my father molesting me. How could this have happened? Voraciously, I scoured for all material available to try to understand this. That was twenty years ago, and the struggle for answers continues.

Wikipedia has defined pornography as “the portrayal of explicit sexual subject matter for the purposes of sexual excitement and erotic satisfaction”. No sensible person could ever take issue with the availability of this type of “soft porn” or “erotica”; however, that definition is outdated. According to Gail Dines, author of “Pornland: How Porn Has Hijacked Our Sexuality”, “gonzo porn” is much more available to young people via the internet today, and it depicts hard-core, body-punishing sex in which women are demeaned and debased. The two require differentiation for they have very different impacts on the viewer.

For instance, on an episode of Canada's W5 television program, which aired on October 2, 2015, Joseph Deschambault from Crystal, Manitoba, admits to becoming addicted to pornography at nine years of age. He claims he would be “playing video games and all of a sudden a popup would come on the side.” These were not erotica web-sites. This was women being violated, choked, slapped, and ejaculated upon. Joseph became consumed. His mother says that Joseph “went from being the sweetest little boy to being rude, mean, callous, belligerent, and vulgar”. He fell into the abyss of contemporary pornography, but has found the help he needed and at age twelve, is speaking out against pornography!

One day, after having actually met Gail Dines at a Conference, along with Dr. Robert Jensen, the author of “Getting Off: Pornography and the End of Masculinity”, my daughter telephoned me to discuss a disturbing incident that had just occurred in an emergency room. A patient had come in suffering from a prolapsed rectum. She was in her twenties. The doctor and nurses whispered that it had been likely caused by “rough anal sex”. Surgery may repair

the problem, or it may not, depending on the woman's muscular condition and general overall health. Anal sex has become a common scene in pornographic movies.

Approximately one week after that disturbing conversation, another daughter telephoned me and stated that she was upset because a health nurse informed some of the school personnel that some young women from the health class were asking one another for tampons following a gym class. The health worker discovered that the tampons were being used to stop anal leakage and were being placed in the girls' anuses. These two disturbing stories propelled me to action. I began offering presentations in the schools on the subject of the harmful effects of pornography.

A young man asked me at the end of one of those presentations why his girlfriend always wanted him to slap her during sex, and he admitted that although he did not want to do that, he would in order to avoid her accusing him of not being "into it" if he didn't physically punish her during the sexual act. A young girl asked me, again, at the end of a presentation, why her boyfriend insisted on anal sex, and several young people insisted that as long as they "just do oral or anal, they're still virgins".

The impact of pornography on young women and men is frightening. Young women are being sexualized at an increasingly younger age. Genital piercings are more common. Genital waxing is very common. Women engage in self-loathing since we can never "idealized slim, toned, hairless body popularized by the porn industry" (Gail Dines). Women are having less satisfying sex lives, with limited emotional involvement available from their male partners who have learned from the porn industry that the only satisfaction that matters is his. Eating disorders among young women are on the rise. There is increased participation in "hookup sex" even though this leads to lower self-esteem and an increase in depression for women.

Young men learn to believe that women actually want to be treated in a brutal fashion. They have learned through porn that all women want sex; therefore, they do not understand rejection, and may take it quite personally or become angry. Men often talk about their feelings of sexual inadequacy after viewing porn. Sex comes to be seen as disconnected from intimacy, with no emotion, which then makes it difficult for porn users to connect with real women. Because pornography is addictive, it can then lead to depression.

A young man, approximately twenty-five years of age, stood up at the Conference with Gail Dines and Robert Jenson, and admitted that he had become addicted to porn as a young teen-ager, and has been unable to sustain a satisfying relationship with a woman ever since. He explained honestly and courageously that the very act of masturbating is a different feel and texture than it is with a woman's vagina, and he was unable to ejaculate with a female partner, and sometimes even had trouble maintaining an erection without first viewing pornography. He finally found a therapist who would treat him, and was told that the only "cure" is to abstain completely from all sex or pornography for a minimum of six months, and then to gradually begin to have intimate relations with his girlfriend, without the use of any form of pornography.

Ann Jones, author of "Next Time She'll Be Dead" states, "exposure to aggressive pornography increases aggression against women". And internet pornography has become very aggressive. It has also become popular and normalized. Forbes indicates that pornography is a \$14 billion dollar a year industry! "Pornography is bigger than any major league sports, perhaps bigger than Hollywood. Porn is no longer a sideshow to the mainstream. It is the mainstream," claims Frank Rich in the "New York Times". The number of "hard-core" pornography titles released in one month in the United States is over one thousand. Over 70% of men between the ages of 18 – 34 view on-line pornography at least once per month according to the "Safe Families" website. So, we know that pornography has changed over the decades, is big business, is harmful to young women and men, and to society in general, but is it addictive and if so, does it lead to acting out and/or crime?

Dr. Victor Cline, a clinical psychologist at the University of Utah, believes that pornography is addictive and leads to sex addiction as well. He has treated over 300 sex addicts and stated that all perpetrators were involved with pornography and experienced the following:

1. Addiction Effect – similar to drugs, alcohol, etc.
2. Escalation Effect – more deviant, need more stimulant for same effect
3. Desensitization – material initially seems shocking but over time became normalized
4. Increasing tendency to act out – in a very short period of time, up to two years, once addicted to pornography, the men began acting out the images they had viewed.

Dr. Mary Anne Layden from the University of Pennsylvania writes in her article entitled "Pornography and Violence: A New Look at Research" that pornography is a potent teacher of both beliefs and behaviors, and in fact provides the ideal conditions for learning. Furthermore, she states that pornography "teaches its users that the behaviors are acceptable and stimulates them to do so." She ends her article by stating that pornography "involves pathological behaviors, illegal behaviors, and some behaviors that are both illegal and pathological. Pornography is an equal opportunity and very lethal toxin."

Sam Seager, a convicted sexual offender in Utah admitted that at first what he saw repulsed him, but as time went on, pornography changed the way he treated his victim, a 12-year old girl. "The abuse became more aggressive, pronounced, and worse because of pornography", Seager stated. Seager had never even looked at pornography until it accidentally appeared on a friend's computer.

Consider also the case of David Sharpe, from Ottawa, who attended court on December 21, 2016, facing nearly two dozen charges of both child pornography and sexual assault, among which are 1 count of distributing child porn, 3 counts of possession of child pornography, 6 counts of making child pornography, 9 counts of voyeurism, and then 2 counts of sexual assault, and 2 counts of sexual interference. While we are not aware of the chronological order of those charges, it makes sense that they are definitely linked, and that the pattern spoken to by Dr. Cline, above, could be found.

“Like any addiction,” says Wallantine from the Attorney General’s Office in the United States, “enough is never enough. So they’ll move on to another category of pornography, something that’s more deviant and ultimately not all but many – move on to child pornography. At that point, many of them have no longer been able to contain their sexual urges to viewing and start acting out.” Dr. Michael Bourke and Dr. Andres Hernandez stated in their article published in the American Psychological Association called “Porn use and child abuse: The link may be greater than we think”, “men charged with internet child pornography offenses and those who commit hands-on child sex offenses are, in many cases, one and the same.”

While much controversy exists around whether or not pornography is addictive and can lead to sexual addiction, and ultimately child sexual abuse, which represents the “abyss of pornography” referred to earlier, are the cases cited herein not sufficient to cause society to want to mitigate these horrifying effects? The information may be anecdotal for the most part at this time due to the recent proliferation of internet pornography, making longitudinal scientific studies impossible; however, do we really want to wait any longer before taking action to halt this?

The long-term repercussions of waiting include, among numerous other things, the following story. The Fifth Estate aired an episode titled “Too Young To Lose” on April 10, 2015, about a young girl who had grown up in a middle-class neighbourhood and was, in most respects, “the girl next door”. At thirteen years of age, she was sexually assaulted. This sent her on a downward spiral, to a side of the city she never knew existed. She states that pimps look for “broken girls” and then lure them into a life of sexual exploitation. “Basically the pimps can spot you in a crowd, and know that you’re a victim” said the “girl next door” from Edmonton.

Following my father’s arrest (and ultimate conviction) of sexually molesting my daughter, it was discovered that he had hordes of pornography out in the garage. My mother never knew. No one did, or at least no one admitted that they knew. Charles Montaldo, a Crime Expert, stated that “Almost all pedophiles have a collection of pornography, which they protect at all costs”. Perhaps the case made herein about the link between access to pornography and the fall into the “abyss” has not been made convincingly due to the lack of scientific studies to verify this. However, please consider the cases examined herein of Sam Seager, who had never even looked at pornography and then began molesting a 12-year old after viewing it, and David Sharpe from Ottawa who has committed over two dozen crimes once he fell into the “abyss” and my father, Lionel Robar, who had been a very loving father to me, but fell into the “abyss of pornography” and ultimately molested my little girl.

Remedies do exist. In Hawaii, restrictions were placed on the sale of pornographic material and rape figures fell. The restrictions were lifted, and rape increased. Scandinavia, Britain, Australia, and New Zealand found a connection between the availability of pornography and the level of rape. Between 1975 - 1992, in New South Wales, pornography became increasingly available and there was a 90.6% increase in rape cases.

The internet sites should require a credit card for access, which would at the very least limit the use to children old enough to have a credit card. All five of the recommendations listed in the paper submitted by Glendyne Gerrard, Director of Defend Dignity on September 23, 2016, are wonderful ideas. Dr. Robert Jensen suggests "It is not enough for us to change our personal behavior. That's a bare minimum. Such change must be followed by participation in movements to change the unjust structure and underlying ideology that supports them." You can do that by supporting M-47. However we do it, we know we need to restrict the availability of pornographic material, and we need to do it now.

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