

PORN'S CROSSOVER

In response to Megan Schmidt's "Ask Yourself" viewpoint (7/15): If we are to answer the question, "Why is *EW* willing to subjugate women?" we must first ask this question in the appropriate manner: "Does *EW* intend to subjugate women?" To answer this, we must first establish intent. Is it the intent of *EW* to force readers into porn or prostitution? Are the ads portrayed in a lewd and lascivious manner? Is *EW* forcing advertisers to run their ads to promote these services for profit directly from these services?

While there are a few studies showing that a small percentage of people who commit acts of violence and rape also consume pornography, the vast preponderance of people who consume pornography never commit any crimes at all.

The reality is that there are significant scientific hurdles to overcome in demonstrating that the consumption of pornography/prostitution actually causes violence, no matter whether the research takes place in a laboratory study, a field study, a longitudinal study, or a combination of those approaches.

Those who cite these carefully qualified studies suggesting a connection between adult entertainment and "aggressive behavior" – responses that are often modeled or sanctioned by the studies or researchers themselves – ignore the reality that there is absolutely no way of predicting with certainty whether exposure/indulgence in adult entertainment will produce a positive, negative or neutral result in a given individual.

We must then ask the question, based on Ms. Schmidt's assumption, if women are enslaved or subjugated by adult entertainment, in any form, surely they do not indulge in it themselves?

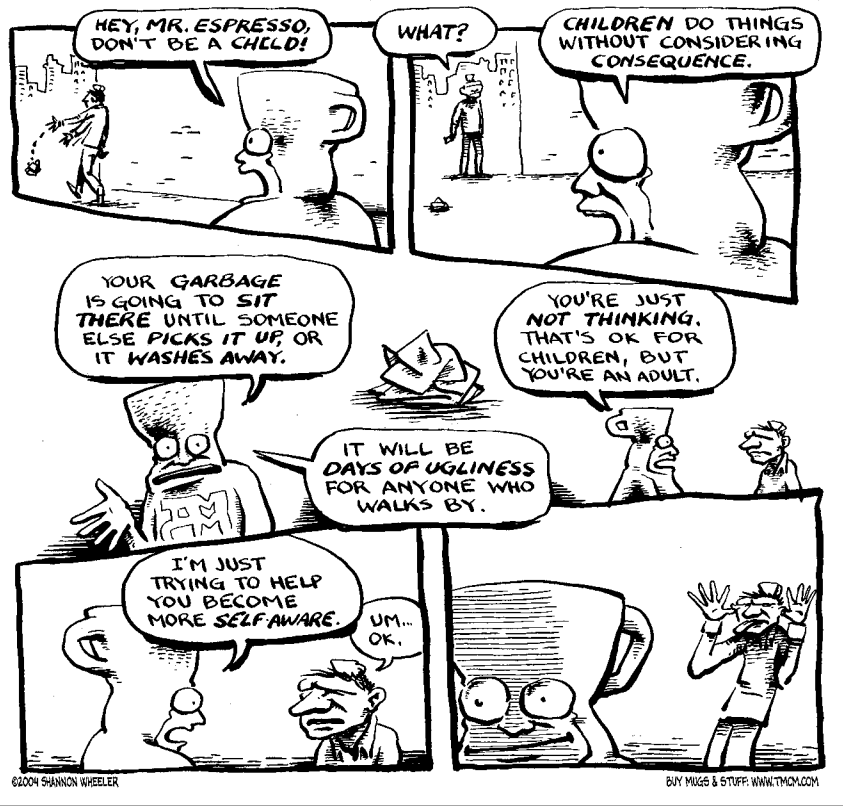
In fact, the female demographic is probably the biggest catalyst for porn's cultural crossover. Adella O'Neal, publicist for the interactive adult-DVD company Digital Playground, says that in 2000 roughly 9 percent of the company's consumers were women; four years later, that figure has bloomed to 53 percent.

Ladies: Your mind, body and conscience belong to one person – you. That conviction is very empowering, whether you are in the adult industry or not. It puts you in the driver's seat in your own life. Men cannot victimize you unless you allow them to by not being your own person, not knowing who you are and not respecting yourself.

*Victoria Austin & Sherylin York
Eugene*

EDITOR'S NOTE: Victoria Austin is a student majoring in psychology with an emphasis on human sexuality and Sherylin York has been an adult performer for the past 10 years.

TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN BY SHANNON WHEELER



GET OUT IN FRONT

Thank you for a fine publication with reporting on local news and issues. Megan Schmidt in her viewpoint (7/15) presents a powerful analysis connecting sex industry ads and the exploitation of women. I expect that in time this view will be widely accepted as correct.

Can *EW* get "in front" on this issue and find a way to be a profitable publication without sex industry ads? There must be a way to do this, and I encourage you to open a dialogue with your readers, advertisers, and supporters to find that path.

*Jon Tressler
Eugene*

WE ARE ALL EXPLOITED

Contrary to Megan Schmidt's suggestion (7/15), no causal link has ever been found between sexually explicit material or behavior and (sexual) violence. Indeed, countries with more availability of porn and prostitution such as the Netherlands, where I conduct my own research, typically report lower rates of (sexual) violence than more puritanical societies like the U.S. Thus, researchers Diamond and Uchiyama write, "In the U.S., it was shown that ... no such relationship of pornography leading to rape or sexual assault could be demonstrated as applicable to adults or juveniles."

Referring to their own recent research in

REASONABLE DOUBT BY TOM LININGER

Revenge of the Nerds

Professors gain clout in civic affairs.

Now that I've become a full-time professor, I get a little miffed when I hear someone dismiss a discussion as "academic." Apparently this term is synonymous with inconsequential. What's so bad about being academic? To quote Curly of the Three Stooges, "I resemble that remark!" (My scholarship draws heavily from Curly.)

The public seems to believe that professors are ill-equipped to interact with the real world. How many professors does it take to screw in a light bulb? Three: one to write a research grant, one to organize a program in Darkness Studies, and one to write a scathing tirade about the power industry. I myself have written more tirades about the power industry than I've changed light bulbs.

President Bush seems to have little faith in professors (which is appropriate, because professors had little faith in this C student.) Bush is backing legislation that would severely restrict academic freedom. The U.S. Senate will shortly vote on HR 3077, a bill that would empower a new executive agency to oversee certain academic programs relating to international studies. According to Beshara Doumani, a professor at UC Berkeley, this bill "is the most ominous threat to U.S. academic freedom in decades."

And the Bush administration is fighting to make sure that university libraries continue to serve their noblest function: surveillance. Section 215 of the USA PATRIOT Act enables the FBI to monitor the books checked out by library patrons. In early July, a group of congressmen led by Bernie Sanders proposed to repeal this provision, but the Bush administration rallied its allies on the Hill, and the proposal failed by a narrow vote.

You'd think that Bush wants to lock up the ivory tower and throw away the key. Will the intelligentsia become the irrelevantia?

Not to worry. Here in Oregon, academics are actually gaining influence in both national and local affairs. Within the last year, professors at the UO have won national acclaim for exposing gender bias in tort law, proving the health risks posed by vinyl, and highlighting the dangers of marine pollution, among other important contributions.

Just last week, an Associated Press reporter ran a story entitled, "Oregon Professors



Influence Bush." The article began with the typical stereotypes: "Over the years, the UO has developed a reputation as a hippie haven, home to Hacky-Sackers, Frisbee-throwers and anti-globalism activists." (Memo to the admissions office: time to drop the affirmative action policy for Hacky-Sackers.) But the article goes on to note that professors in the UO Education Department "have been the driving forces behind the push for letting 'scientifically based research' inform classroom practices." The Bush administration has great respect for the UO Education Department, and this department actually earns \$1.46 million in grant money per faculty member – even higher than the grant money earned by the UO Frisbee-Throwing and Anti-Globalism Departments.

Academics are also playing an influential role at a local level. Mayor-elect Kitty Piercy has announced her intention to form a committee composed of professors and others who would advise city officials on sustainable economic development. And professors with scientific expertise are organizing a group called the Independent Science Review Board, which will provide local officials with neutral advice on the scientific implications of policy proposals.

Are professors becoming too active in civic affairs? The famed jurist Learned Hand warned that too much real-world involvement by scholars could comprise their intellectual integrity. "You cannot raise the standard against oppression, or leap into the breach to relieve injustice, and still keep an open mind to every disconcerting fact, or an open ear to the cold voice of doubt. I am satisfied that a scholar who tries to combine these parts sells his birthright for a mess of pottage; that, when the final count is made, it will be found that the impairment of his powers far outweighs any possible contribution to the causes he has espoused."

Now there's some erudite, flowery language. I just have one response: What kind of a name is "Learned," anyway?

Tom Lininger is a law professor and lifelong nerd.