

WHOSE PORN IS IT ANYWAY:
RHETORICALLY EXPLORING THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MAINSTREAM AND
FEMINIST INTERNET PORNOGRAPHY

By

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ABSTRACT

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Pornography has been increasingly theorized by gender and cultural scholars over the past two decades. While the theoretical discourse on pornography has been plentiful, there has been limited empirical inquiry into porn—and existing research within rhetoric and composition focuses on the rhetoric and backlash surrounding porn ("the porn wars"), rather examining pornographic media itself as an innately rhetorical artifact. Pornographic videos and communities remain a largely untouched site of research within rhetoric and composition, and even within the humanities writ large, in spite of their influential role in the creation of cultural and sexual scripts.

In this thesis, I articulate the results of a study that examines the differences between videos posted in two porn communities on the social network reddit, r/PornVids and r/Chickflixxx. Both subreddits provide links to free, open-access porn videos, although Chickflixxx describes itself as a board "for women, by women." Using multi-modal coding methods, I have collected quantitative and qualitative data on the visual and auditory rhetorics of the videos of both these communities. By grounding this data in existing feminist and cultural rhetorical theory, I delineate and quantify the differences between mainstream and "woman-friendly" porn as demonstrated by real rhetorical artifacts, instead of ethical debate. I conclude by offering future directions for porn studies methodology and reflexive feminist research that takes into account the investigator's intersecting identities and subject positions.

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One of the great things about researching and writing about pornography is that everyone has an opinion. I have met many people—scholars and otherwise—who have shared their views and knowledge on this topic with me, but I have had similar things to say to all of them. This isn't really a thesis about pornography. It's about gender, and rhetoric, and agency, and even sexuality: but perhaps most of all, it's about power.

Consequently, the fruits of this intellectual endeavor are dedicated to the people who have given me power.

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CHAPTER 1: Literature Review and Conceptual Frame

This thesis probes questions of gender, sexuality, power, and agency as evidenced within a contested rhetorical artifact: internet pornography. Pornography's influence on both public discourse and private practice of sexuality has been increasingly explored within a social science paradigm over the last decade (Attwood, 2010; Dines, 2011; Döring, 2009; Griffith et al., 2009; Nikunen, Paasonen, and Saarenmaa, 2008; Tibbals, 2014), but humanities scholarship analyzing pornography remains scant, and lacking methodological transparency (McKee, 2014).

Additionally, feminist scholarship on pornography has expanded over the past two decades with the emergence of the genre of feminist or "woman-friendly" pornography—that is, pornography created specifically with women in mind. However, the scholarly literature surrounding feminist pornography again remains largely historiographic or theoretical in nature. Because of this critical gap, this study harnesses the empirical rigor of mixed methods inquiry, as well as the critical nuance of feminist research methodology, to shed light on the differences between woman-friendly and mainstream pornography.

In this study, I examine the differences between pornographic videos posted in two communities on the social network Reddit, r/PornVids and r/Chickflixxx. Both subreddits provide links to free, open-access porn videos, but Chickflixxx describes itself as a board "for women, by women." Using multi-modal coding methods, I have compiled quantitative and qualitative data on the visual (Who is pictured, and what do their bodies look like? What sex acts are taking place, and for how long?) and aural (What is being said by performers? What words are being used) rhetorics of the videos of both communities. This study builds upon the previous feminist and internet research scholarship, connecting the two to fill a critical gap in the

discipline of porn studies, as well as illuminating gendered differences in sexual preference and fantasy as illustrated through porn cultures.

This literature review describes a research approach focused on feminist epistemology with methodologies employed in internet studies. I apply these two separate but related frameworks to and place them in conversation with a growing area of scholarly inquiry: the study of sexually explicit media, particularly pornographic videos hosted on the internet. Feminist thought is readily applicable to porn studies due to the gender dynamics and roles portrayed in adult films, as well as ongoing feminist debates about the role of pornography in the creation of sexual cultures and scripts. Pornography is also increasingly relevant to the field of internet studies due to the prevalence and ubiquity of porn across digital spaces and interfaces, as well as the adult film industry's status as a "technological innovation engine" (Paasonen, 2011) that has propelled the development and widespread adoption of home video tape recorders, secure internet shopping checkouts, and more (Attwood, 2010).

By situating and constellating (Brooks-Gillies et al., 2014) these three different but very much interconnected fields—porn studies, feminist methodology, and internet studies—I aim to create a theoretical framework for an empirical research project that delineates and quantifies the differences between "woman-friendly" (or "feminist"¹) and mainstream internet pornography.

¹ For the sake of clarity within this thesis, I use "woman-friendly" and "female-friendly" interchangeably to describe pornography that is created for women, and/or by women (see page nine of this paper for additional characteristics of this particular type of pornography).

While "feminist pornography" is the more commonly used term in the scholarly literature, "woman-friendly" and "female-friendly" are typically used on porn websites. However, in my analysis for this project, I've observed a distinct separation between the idea of "feminist pornography" as articulated by researchers and feminist pornographers, and "woman-friendly" or "female-friendly" pornography

1.1 Feminist Research Method(ologie)s: Positionality, Praxis, and (Knowledge) Production

Before beginning a conversation on scholarship conducted within a feminist paradigm, it is important to recognize that there is not a single feminist approach to research, but rather an array of feminist research methodologies (Reinharz, 1992). Existing literature on feminist research methodologies in both the humanities and social sciences emphasizes the power relations inherent within the social production of knowledge (Ramazanoğlu & Holland, 2002; Collins, 2008), as well as a research praxis that combines reflection upon one's own subject position (Harding, 1992) with a commitment to transformative social justice (Hesse-Biber, 2007). Feminist research—as described by scholars from across such varied fields as women's studies (Hesse-Biber, 2007), philosophy (Hartsock, 1983; Harding, 1992), sociology (Reinharz, 1992; Franks, 2002; Collins, 2008), and telecommunication and media studies (Bromseth & Sundén, 2013)—developed in response to positivistic theories of empirical research, particularly the

as articulated by more mainstream porn producers. Feminist porn theorists and practitioners emphasize that *feminist* pornography is that which is created or directed by women, and/or focuses specifically on female sexual pleasure (Taormino et al., 2013).

On websites that offer a "female-friendly" porn option, such as VPorn.com, these qualities are less evident—what makes a pornography video "female friendly" is not its content, but instead its cinematography or ethos. Content for women on free pornography websites typically mirrors many of the tropes evident in other pornographic content (prioritizing of male oral sex over female oral sex, external ejaculation, etc.—see section 1.3 of this chapter for a more detailed explanation of these tropes), but is presented with a greater attention to aesthetic detail. These videos feature more elaborate sets, trendier wardrobes, softer focus and more lens filters, but generally reproduce similar content and scripts aside from these cinematographic considerations.

In short: "female-friendly" pornography, as produced and marketed by mainline porn studios, is typically mainstream pornography, just shot with a more expensive camera. Feminist pornography, on the other hand, offers a more radical alternative to heteronormative and androcentric sexual scripts presented by mainstream porn.

methodological distinction between objectivity and subjectivity, which stems from Enlightenment-era Cartesian dualism (Ramazanoğlu & Holland, 2002).

Feminist theorists have also asserted that scientific objectivity is a masculine paradigm due to the historic superordinate knowledge positions of men within the academy and in society writ large (Franks, 2002). A traditional, positivist research epistemology aims for complete value neutrality—to eliminate outside influences that could potentially “affect” or “contaminate” research results. Within a feminist research paradigm, it’s important to instead recognize the biases inherent within the researcher's social and cultural locations, and then to use them to further enrich research and dismantle patriarchal authority and matrices of oppression (Collins, 2008). Thus, feminist research methods upend the traditional views of power and status, effectively shifting the role of “bias” (if we can divorce the word from its typically negative connotations) from an agitator to an absolute necessity.

In this way, feminist research does not reject the concept of neutrality outright, but rather reframes it in a way that offers a greater deal of license for researchers to offer their own perspectives within their work, as well as variance within those perspectives. A researcher's background does not *contaminate* her work, but rather *enriches* it: her gender, sexuality, race and/or ethnicity, class, ability, and more create a particular social location within a "matrix of power" (Collins, 2008) that enables her to create uniquely feminist knowledge. In this vein, two of the feminist frameworks that offer a new definition of bias are the companion theories of standpoint epistemology and strong objectivity.

Traditional feminist standpoint epistemology, which stems from Marxist social theory, aims to highlight the power regimes inherent in knowledge production by creating theory and

engaging in research that starts from marginalized lives—namely the lives of women, racial and ethnic minorities, and those of less privileged socioeconomic status (Hartsock, 1983). This shift in research methodology is a radical act, Hartsock and other standpoint theorists argue: it upends traditional scholarly objectivity and instead asks the researcher to engage in constant reflection about their position within a project to "be a part of the political struggle" to shift gendered social relations (Hartsock, 1983, p. 304).

Feminist philosopher Sandra Harding's (1992) theory of strong objectivity aims to build upon standpoint theory, and is so named because of Harding's belief that, by strengthening the role that both the researcher and participants'² positionalities play in a research project, the truth value of that project's claims—its objectivity—will also be strengthened. Strong objectivity, as described by Harding, aims to highlight the experiences of those whom research has typically ignored, but cautions against approaching a study with a particular political agenda. Again, this methodology does not presume value-neutrality, but it recognizes the importance of *all* standpoints in enriching scholarly work—including those of men. She writes that "Men, too, must contribute distinctive forms of specifically feminist knowledge from their particular social situation" (Harding, 1992, p. 63). In this way, the investigator becomes a part of the research just as much as the participants are: in keeping with standpoint theory, their social location and background shape their work. I reflexively describe how my own social location shapes this study in both the methods and conclusion chapters of this thesis.

² Note how the term "participant" is used here, instead of "subject." This is a deliberate rhetorical move on my part, as well as the part of many other feminist researchers, to affirm the agency of individuals and populations involved in research studies, particularly those from historically marginalized populations (women, racial and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, LGBTQQA persons, etc.).

While many scholars from across disciplines describe their use of standpoint epistemology and feminist research methodologies within their work, still more employ these frameworks without explicitly labeling them as "feminist." I not only reflexively employ aspects of these methodologies within this study to situate this work within existing feminist scholarship, but also make a case for the rigor of this reflexivity in mixed-methods rhetorical research. Another discipline where such critical research techniques are employed is in the analysis of internet technologies and digital communication: internet studies, a field of study that will be explored in the next section of this literature review.

1.2 Internet Studies: Researching Digital Tools and Spaces

While *internet research* may utilize networked computers and mobile devices to conduct scholarly inquiry, *internet studies* extends beyond the technologies used to communicate online and into a much larger ecology, examining human communication, communities, and cultural change both facilitated by and documented within digital interfaces (Consalvo & Ess, 2013). Scholars have studied and theorized computer-mediated communication since before the age of the internet as we know it (Wellman, 2013), but over the past two decades the discipline of internet studies has widened beyond the world wide web to examine both online and offline phenomena and practices, "real" and "virtual" environments, and disembodied digital and material physical identities (Consalvo & Ess, 2013).

Internet researchers Nancy Baym and Annette Markham (2009) corroborate this claim of fractured binaries in the introduction to their edited research methods collection *Internet Inquiry*, writing that the development of internet communication technologies and resulting digital communities have disrupted and, in some cases entirely dismantled traditional social boundaries

(Markham & Baym, 2009). This shift is also magnified by the phenomenon of media convergence, or the migration and transformation of media content across platforms, industries, audiences, and nations (Jenkins, 2006). Consequently, internet studies allows for a critical analysis of the socio-cultural, political, economic, and yes, even academic ramifications of increasingly interconnected global technological networks—presenting opportunities for examinations of our relationship with digital media, and its relationship with our world at large.

New media researchers Janne Bromseth and Jenny Sundén (2013) call for increased consciousness of gender and sexuality within internet studies in their chapter of *The Handbook of Internet Studies*, writing that "...the body accountable online is to a larger degree connected to a material representation offline, creating other conditions for constructing and negotiating gendered selves as situated processes" (Bromseth & Sundén, 2013, p. 290). Nowhere is this connection between the virtual self and the material body more apparent than in the consumption of online pornography, which again emphasizes the inextricable links between online and offline experiences through its erotic and affective modalities. A user cannot bracket her embodied self when engaging with porn: not only does she navigate using her hands and fingers on a mouse, trackpad, or keyboard, but she feels visceral, bodily reactions to the images on screen and the audio in her speakers or headphones. People select particular niches (Mazières et al., 2014; Tibbals, 2014) of adult content because it touches these areas of "carnal resonance" (Paasonen, 2011)—and porn users quickly learn which genres turn them on, and which do not. As Susanna Paasonen (2011) notes, "...encounters with cultural images are simultaneously somatic and semiotic. They are felt in the body and also involve acts, histories, and conventions of representation" (Paasonen, 2011, p. 255). In this way, pornography is an important site of internet research, notes German professor of media psychology and design Nicola Döring

(2009), because of how it necessitates *active* media consumption for viewers to satisfy their sexual needs (Döring, 2009), symbolizing a shift from the image of the passive viewer to a more savvy, selective one.

Additionally, in his book *Convergence Culture*, fan and media scholar Henry Jenkins (2006) notes the emergence of amateur film directors and producers online, writing that "the line between amateur and professional production is blurring" (Jenkins, 2006, p. 168). Jenkins coined the term "participatory culture" to describe this phenomenon of "culture in which the fans and other consumers are invited to actively participate in the creation and circulation of new content" (Jenkins, 2006, p. 331). Not only does participatory culture continue to close the gap between producers and users of digital content, but it dismantles traditional "economic and social barriers that block popular access to the means of cultural production" (Jenkins, 2013, p. 26)—that is, digital interfaces and communities also break down the hierarchies involved in the production of media.

These concepts of participatory culture and decentralized media production are expounded upon by internet researchers in 2010's *porn.com: Making Sense of Online Pornography*. In his chapter of the collection, internet sexuality researcher Sharif Mowlabocus (2010) charts the rise of amateur porn on the web, focusing particularly on the "democratization" of pornography—that is, what he argues to be a more egalitarian and less objectifying division of labor—through DIY home pornography and user-generated porn sites like XTube, the adult entertainment alternative to YouTube (Mowlabocus, 2010). Digital pornography trends will be elaborated upon further in the next section of this literature review.

Conversations in internet research methodology, particularly qualitative internet research methodology, echo considerations of ethics and praxis that are central to empirical feminist scholarship. Social media researcher danah boyd cautions against prescriptivism and emphasizes the importance of social processes of the interpretation of data in one of her chapters of Markham and Baym's *Internet Inquiry* (boyd, 2009); these concerns about data analysis and the representation of participants' lived experiences in written research are similar to Hesse-Biber's (2007) in her recommendations to researchers in *Feminist Research Practice* (Hesse-Biber, 2007).

While boyd emphasizes the importance of being present and engaging in participant observation when conducting a research study, current Association of Internet Researchers president Lori Kendall (2009) goes a step further in her chapter to explore the researcher's gendered experiences and erotic subjectivity when working with human subjects online—that is, the ethics of researcher sexuality and the embodied experience of erotic feelings in ethnographic studies and beyond (Kendall, 2009). The mere fact that Kendall is able to write about her own erotic subjectivity while studying digital communities signifies a radical departure from the traditional positivist notion of the scientific researcher in a sterile white lab coat, impartial and entirely free from bias or standpoint that could potentially contaminate their study's results—echoing the tenets of feminist research praxis described by Hesse-Biber (2007), Harding (1992), and more.

While the contributors to *Internet Inquiry* may not explicitly identify themselves or their methodologies as "feminist," they embody feminist research praxis through their emphasis on the importance of researcher participation and reflexivity when doing work within digital spaces. Becoming visible and actively involved within the digital communities that one researches is not

merely a way to evince ethos as a scholar, but also to gather richer, more nuanced data through establishing a rapport with participants. Again, this emphasis on visibility and transparency reflects shifting, slippery boundaries between previously stark dichotomies—researcher and participant, public and private, bias and standpoint—that are problematized and dismantled through both feminist and internet research methodology.

1.3 Porn Studies: Scholarship on Sexually Explicit Images and Video, from both Mainstream and Feminist Perspectives

While not explicitly referencing pornographic productions, feminist film scholar Laura Mulvey's work (1975) provides a lens through which to examine the construction of gender, power, and pleasure in moving pictures. Utilizing a psychoanalytic frame that draws from both Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan, Mulvey explains in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" that studio film productions have produced male ego ideals through voyeurism and scopophilia—that is, through the desire to see the private and the transgressive, and subsequent deriving of pleasure through this looking, which objectifies the object that is being looked at. Male sexual power is signified through the filmic romances of the 1950s and 60s, wherein woman is constructed as a "bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning" (Mulvey, 1999, p. 834), and viewers consequently identify with the male protagonists who interpret that meaning—the "spectator's surrogate" (Mulvey, 1999, p. 844).

If cinematic narrative film constructs an "image of woman as (passive) raw material for the (active) gaze of man" (Mulvey, 1999, p. 843) as Mulvey writes, then pornographic productions represent this erotic objectification in its most extreme form. Mainstream porn culture, as represented most prominently through websites and digital advertisements today, magnifies and hyperbolizes not only women's physical features—large breasts and buttocks, long

French-tipped fingernails, faces made unrecognizable through hours spent in the makeup artist's chair³—but these filmic conceptions of sensual power and control as well. Mulvey's theory of "woman as image, man as bearer of the look" (Mulvey, 1999, p. 837) is truly exposed when bodies are in both today's digital porn clips and the stag films of old, with the camera (and consequently the spectator's) focus zooming, lingering, and scrutinizing the female partner's naked form.

The potential ramifications for the assumed male spectator, as he witnesses this pornographic surrogate, are explored by the anti-pornography scholars and activists who wrote at the same time as Mulvey⁴. The "porn wars" of the 1970s and 80s divided second-wave feminists into pro- and anti-pornography camps, with voices like legal scholar Catharine MacKinnon and activist Andrea Dworkin vilifying the adult entertainment industry for its role in perpetuating violence against women and children (MacKinnon, 1984; Dworkin, 1988). While the porn wars saw an increase in the discourse surrounding pornography, pornographic images and videos had already been a subject of academic inquiry for decades. In her edited collection *porn.com: Making Sense of Online Pornography*, film and media scholar Feona Attwood notes that until the advent of internet porn websites in the mid-1990s, most porn scholarship fell under these two categories: the "effects" tradition linking pornography to gendered violence and other social ills, or anti-porn feminist rhetoric that "....equated porn with men's violence against women or institutionalized male power" (Attwood, 2010, p. 3–4).

³ For an example of the constructed, embodied identities of female porn stars through makeup artistry in particular, Melissa Murphy's before-and-after photo series is particularly telling: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/11/porn-stars-without-makeup_n_2853817.html.

⁴ I cite a 1999 reprinting here, but "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" was originally published in 1975, around the same time as anti-porn activist Andrea Dworkin's first works.

Over the past two decades, pornography scholarship has widened its scope beyond simple axiological debates—is porn good, or is it bad?—to examine sexual technologies and cultures as articulated through pornographic media, particularly on the web. This has led to the emergence of a new field: porn studies. Recent qualitative work in this area includes research on the affective experience of viewing pornographic videos on the internet, studies of digital porn fan communities and the socio-cultural shift from pornography consumption from a solitary experience to a more collective and participatory activity, and analyses of adult film niches such as LGBTQ and amateur or "gonzo" pornography (Paasonen, 2011; Lindgren, 2010; Moorman, 2010; Tibbals, 2014).

Quantitative work in porn studies is comparatively rare—most quantitative research around pornography continues on the "effects tradition" that Attwood described, typically linking it to (or de-linking it from) sexual abuse, violence, addiction, etc. Pornography is also often a focus of clinical and psychological sex research: typically these statistical studies focus on porn viewing habits of consumers, but one 2012 psychology article applied multiple "quality of life" factors to adult film actresses, debunking the "damaged goods hypothesis" that previously claimed these women would be susceptible to sexual violence and substance abuse (Griffith et al., 2012). Additionally, social scientists have also begun to apply quantitative big data methods to the millions of internet pornography videos freely available on the internet, examining and mapping porn culture on an even broader scale. The first issue of *Porn Studies* includes a meta-analysis of keyword tags from over 800,000 free online porn videos, drawing on computational social science methodology to map and analyze the diversity and "niceness" of sexual cultures portrayed in two online porn websites (Mazières et al., 2014). The quantitative work done within this study is on a smaller scale, but provides a dataset and values that are no less rich than the

studies conducted by Griffith and Mazières and their colleagues, because the numerical data is contextualized with qualitative information gleaned from rhetorical analysis. The methodological considerations around this mixed-methods approach are explored in the next chapter of this thesis.

There has been some recent discussion on the methods and methodologies employed in research on pornography, most notably media scholar Alan McKee's (2014) critique of humanistic content analysis and statistical social science methods in the inaugural issue of the *Porn Studies* journal (McKee, 2014). McKee conducts a broad survey of methods within porn studies research—taking them "as a starting point for a discussion of the implications" of differing research approaches (McKee, 2014, p. 55)—but does not delve into questions of ontology or epistemology. Additionally, neither do McKee nor any other recent porn scholars explicitly cite or describe feminist research methodology(ies). Nathaniel Burke's (2014) article in the *Porn Studies* journal does emphasize the importance of reflexivity and consciousness of one's own subject position as a pornography scholar⁵, particularly when employing ethnographic methods which typically require participant observation. Burke highlights the impact of the researcher's positionality "both within the field and within the academy," (Burke, 2014, p. 71) mirroring the reflexivity of feminist epistemologists such as Hartsock and Harding but not claiming the name "feminist." This thesis study provides an initial model for porn studies research that engages reflexively with both feminist research methodologies and the researcher's own unique subject position, opening the door for similar work in this and other fields.

⁵ For an exploration of my own subject position and standpoint as an emerging porn studies researcher, please see the following video, which describes my approach to reflexivity throughout the thesis research process: <https://vimeo.com/114313871>.

The genre of feminist pornography emerged at the time of the 1970s-80s "porn wars," in part due to the explosion of international conversation surrounding porn, as well as increasing disenchantment around mainstream porn that presented "a single patriarchal discourse with misogynistic effects" (Paasonen, 2011). Porn director and producer Candida Royalle, who is often cited as one of the earliest pioneers of feminist pornography (Taormino et al., 2013), described her interest in adult films (and, by proxy, the emergence of the female-friendly porn genre) as stemming from a desire to "...produce explicit porn that had integrity... to show that porn could be nonsexist... to show that porn could be life-enriching" (Royalle, 1992, p. 23). In 2013's *Feminist Porn Book*, theorists and practitioners described "feminist porn" as a video depiction of sexual act(s) that⁶:

- 1) is written, directed, and/or produced by women
- 2) "depicts genuine female pleasure;" and/or
- 3) challenges or dismantles traditional depictions of sex and sexuality found in mainstream or traditional porn videos (Taormino et al., 2013)

Now, over two decades after Royalle founded her feminist pornography production company, there is a considerable amount of theoretical discourse on feminist pornography (Williams, 2004; Taormino et al., 2013), but only a handful of empirical studies examining the subject, again largely conducted by social science researchers. Porn studies, and particularly feminist porn studies, often embodies a feminist research praxis in that it values the knowledge

⁶ This definition provides part of my framework for differentiating between "feminist" and "mainstream" pornography within this work. It is important to note that this is a broad and inclusive definition, for it is the nature of a feminist sexual ethic to make room for a multiplicity of sexual desires and practices. The concept of multiplicity will be explored further in the implications section of this thesis.

of practitioners (Hesse-Biber, 2007)—that is, of porn actors, directors, and producers—in addition to that of scholars and theorists. In fact, feminist pornographers have contributed to peer-reviewed academic journals (Royalle, 1992; Stoya, 2014; Trouble, 2014), as well as edited collections (Taormino et al., 2013) for over two decades. The recognition that research participants—in this case, the people who create pornography—can provide critical reflection upon an object of study shows valuing the perspectives of not only scholars, but also women outside of the academy who lead complexly gendered lives. In this way, feminist porn scholarship—much like feminist pornography itself—aims to transform representations of sexuality across genders and cultures, situating pornography contextually and acknowledging the complexity of the sexual experience in all of its many forms. The pilot study that comprises this thesis combines analysis of pornographic content selected and rated by two different audiences—one that prefers mainstream porn, the other that defines their porn as "woman-friendly" or feminist—in order to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of users' porn preferences and, ultimately, their sexual practice.

My scholarship aims to use both of these types of frameworks in order to capture the differences in the sexual cultures visibilized through pornography, while keeping in mind the intent of the individuals who created it. One of the practitioner-created theoretical frameworks that I seek to employ is a February 2014 video produced by feminist pornographer Ms. Naughty (also known as Louise Lush): "The Male Gaze In Porn (With commentary by Doge)."⁷ In this

⁷ The original version of "The Male Gaze In Porn (With commentary by Doge)" is no longer available online because of video-hosting site Vimeo's restrictions on graphic sexual content. The web address included in the works cited (<http://vimeo.com/85876551>) links to an edited version; I have a copy of the original cut, and it can also be requested from the creator herself on her website (<http://brightdesire.com/>).

two-minute compilation, Ms Naughty sought to explain one of the reasons why women do not want to watch porn: the male gaze. "The Male Gaze In Porn," viewed nearly 7000 times in three months, deconstructs the construction of mainstream pornographic fantasies *for* men, *by* men—from phallogentric imagery ("the headless dick"), to synecdochic representations of the female body ("the woman is always looked *at*, she never *looks*"), to inauthentic portrayals of lesbian sex ("his fantasy"). Her critique uses clips from real porn videos, all comically censored using images from an internet meme and accompanied by a kitschy backing track (Ms. Naughty, 2014). Pro-porn feminists (Attwood, 2009; Taormino et al., 2013) and feminist pornographers (Royalle, 1993) alike posit a complication or complete dismantling of this constructed male gaze through the creation of pornography *by* and *for* women, but such accounts are typically anecdotal rather than empirical (Lee, 2013; Noble, 2013).

In total Ms. Naughty outlines eight aspects of the male gaze, six of which I use as a framework in my analysis, incorporating the work of a feminist porn practitioner into my scholarly praxis. I use these tenets to examine both the function of the male gaze in mainstream pornography, as well as the subversive power of pornography created for women⁸:

- 1) The Headless Dick: the camera regularly cuts the male body out of the frame, focusing solely on the phallus
- 2) It's All About Her Body: the camera mainly focuses on the female performer and her body parts

⁸ The other two aspects, "Tits Sell" and "Your Cock" describe the function of the male gaze in pornography marketing, specifically on DVD box covers and in video descriptions, and are thus largely inapplicable to the digital videos that I examine in this project (which are all distributed through free online porn tube sites that simply use a thumbnail image and descriptive title to identify each video).

- 3) Always Male POV: the camera typically captures sex from a male point-of-view (POV);
"the woman is always looked *at*, she never *looks*" (Ms. Naughty 2014)
- 4) Oral = Blowjob: pornography prioritizes fellatio; cunnilingus is comparatively rare, and receives much less screen time if it is present at all
- 5) Male Orgasm is the Goal: male orgasm is prioritized over female orgasm and nearly every scene ends with ejaculation, typically external, often on the woman's face
- 6) His Fantasy: scenarios portrayed in porn typically reflect male, not female, sexual fantasies (Ms. Naughty, 2014)

Ms. Naughty's multimodal caricature of the often singular, reductive narrative presented by mainstream porn is theory that is both critical and accessible. Her critiques of the composition of the pornographic frame in accordance with the male gaze echo both Mulvey's (1975) feminist film theory and the work of postmodern theorists, describing the monolithic constructions of *both* sexes that are produced through a grand pornographic narrative.

Sociologist Shulamit Reinharz (1992) writes of the importance of "the involvement of the people being studied" in feminist research (Reinharz, 1992, p. 263–267) through methods such as interviewing or participatory data analysis. While I could not interview porn directors or performers over the short data collection period for this project, the "Male Gaze in Porn" video provided me with the opportunity to still incorporate the knowledge of a woman working within the adult film industry. The inclusion of Ms. Naughty's theory not only highlights the voice of a woman within the industry, but also signifies a deliberate move to value the theories of porn practitioners—the individuals and groups involved in the creation of the rhetorical artifact of pornography—alongside those of scholars. An essay of Ms. Naughty's (2013) is included in *The Feminist Porn Book* as well, demonstrating its editors commitment to highlighting the voices and

theories of those in the porn industry. In creating feminist porn theory, I must recognize the discursive value of frameworks like Ms. Naughty's—laugh track, campy music, and all—alongside the established theoretical canon.

Internet researchers have also explored digital pornography as a topic of scholarly inquiry, and with increasing frequency with media convergence and its diversification and magnification of porn genres. In a blog post on his website, Henry Jenkins (2007) notes typical social and feminist arguments against pornography: its purported commodification of sexuality and objectification of women, as well as increased possibilities for sexual exploitation of unwilling or unknowing participants through the widespread availability of cheap digital cameras, smart phones, and photo manipulation software (Jenkins, 2007). However, Jenkins also notes that online porn sites—particularly interactive porn "tubes" where creators upload content for users to rank and sort, as well as sites where "women take greater control over the production and circulation of their images"—can provide a rich and dynamic site for research on sex and sexualities (Jenkins, 2007). In this way, porn teaches us not only about users' sexual preferences, but also about broader social and cultural changes across time and space.

There are still many avenues to be explored and much research to be done within porn studies, particularly utilizing new and inventive combinations of research methods and methodologies (McKee, 2014). Döring notes in her 2009 article that "very few studies have systematically investigated the types and characteristics of online pornography" (Döring, 2009, p. 1092), instead typically engaging in evaluations of pornography's effects on sexuality or society. Internet scholars have begun to probe this research area with studies that analyze the role of authenticity in non-heterosexual pornography (Moorman, 2010) and the popularity of various

acts across porn websites that feature free, open-access videos uploaded by users (Mazières et al., 2014; Porngram, 2014).

1.4 Tying it All Together

In spite of the abundance of critiques of pornography written *by* feminists, the particularities of the *feminist porn genre* have yet to be explored empirically—a critical gap in the feminist porn studies literature that my study seeks to fill. Only a handful of internet scholars have approached pornographic images or videos as topics of inquiry, and porn studies remains unexplored territory within my own discipline of rhetoric and writing studies.

When examined through the lens of feminist research methodology, as in Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1999), pornography becomes more than videos of a body or bodies engaging in graphic sexual acts—it represents sexual cultures, producing and reproducing sexual scripts through its visual and aural rhetoric. By combining existing internet studies and feminist research methodology and applying them to pornography scholarship, I aim to create a contextualized understanding of the differences between mainstream and woman-friendly internet porn that acknowledges the very complex nature of these sexual experiences and cultures.

CHAPTER 2: Methods

While the theoretical discourse on pornography has been plentiful, there has been limited empirical inquiry into porn—and existing research within rhetoric and composition focuses on the rhetoric and backlash surrounding porn ("the porn wars"). A cursory library database search of "porn rhetoric" will yield many articles on the rhetoric *surrounding* pornography—deconstructing pro- and anti-porn discourse—but none on the rhetoric *of* pornography itself as a rhetorical artifact, despite its enormous impact on media, sexual norms, and technological innovation

To reveal the nuance and diversity of the abundance of freely available online pornography requires moving beyond axiological or value-based arguments (e.g. "Is it good or is it not?") to more complex cultural analysis and critique (e.g. "What is the gendered power dynamic here, really?;" "What does this reflect about sexual norms and cultures?"). It is my intention to examine actual pornographic media (specifically free internet porn videos) to understand gendered preferences, user behavior, and shifting porn and sexual cultures—rather than launching into ethical debate.

This thesis details a study that examines the differences between videos posted⁹ on two porn communities on the social network reddit: r/PornVids and r/Chickflixxx. Both subreddits provide links to free, open-access porn videos, but Chickflixxx describes itself as a message board "for women, by women." I have compiled quantitative and qualitative data on the visual

⁹ reddit's interface does not provide users with the opportunity to upload media such as images or video directly to the site: redditors can post text content to bulletin boards on the site ("subreddits") and provide links to external media (for more information on reddit's information architecture, see Potts & Harrison, 2013). Because of this design, users on porn subreddits post links to videos hosted on other websites, most frequently free porn tubes like RedTube, YouPorn, and PornHub.

(e.g. "Who is pictured, and what do their bodies look like?" "What sex acts are taking place, and for how long?") and verbal (e.g. "What is being said by performers?" "What do the users who post and comment on these videos have to say?") rhetorics of the videos of both communities, and grounded this data in existing internet, feminist and porn theory. I seek to delineate and quantify the differences between mainstream and "woman-friendly" pornography to make visible the changes in sexual attitudes and cultures that they represent; and, ultimately, to extend the ongoing discourse on cultural changes that are not only indicated in, but also facilitated by, digital environments.

2.1 Data Collection

This project examines twenty pornographic videos linked on reddit: ten from r/Chickflixxx and ten from r/PornVids. reddit allows users (or "redditors") to share and vote on content on message boards, or "subreddits," that coalesce around particular themes: users then rank this content and it appears in the order of aggregate popularity by default. As of April 2014 there were over 2000 NSFW¹⁰ subreddits (sneezefreak, 2014) ranging in focus from the normative to the fetishistic. The two subreddits used in this pilot study are among the most popular on the site: [r/PornVids](#), a mainstream porn video board with over 119,000 subscribers (r/PornVids, 2015), and [r/Chickflixxx](#), a porn subreddit compiled for women, by women, with over 27,000 subscribers¹¹ (r/Chickflixxx, 2015).

¹⁰ NSFW is an acronym for "not safe for work," which signals content that includes nudity or otherwise sexually explicit content and is therefore not suitable to open or view at one's place of employment. For more on this and other jargon used in this thesis, please see the glossary in Appendix A.

¹¹ As of March 22, 2015.

Rather than studying these particular social porn communities themselves (Lindgren, 2010), I have used the communities' peer-sourced, group-ranked content as an indicator of real user demand for pornography. In short, instead of looking at the discourse surrounding pornography, this study examines pornography itself as a rhetorical artifact. Pornography in and of itself constitutes a collection of discourses that communicate meanings about sexual norms, values, and practices: and I aim to examine and unpack the various affective, erotic, and participatory modalities of two strands of this discourse, in order to "think beside" (Paasonen, 2011) previous theorists, rather than beyond them.

The twenty videos that compose the study sample are taken from the top videos on each subreddit from the past year, representing current trends in popular internet porn. Through reddit's peer-sourced and group-ranked information architecture, their landing pages are indicative of real-time user demand. They provide researchers with a finger on the pulse of porn trends of the moment.

I coded and analyzed the ten most popular videos on PornVids and Chickflixxxx that were available for download off of their host sites. This requirement excluded several of the most popular videos from both subreddits from my study sample, but it was a necessary methodological consideration. Because of the fleeting and ephemeral nature of internet content (Markham & Baym, 2009; Potts, 2013), I needed to take additional steps to be able to access these videos across a period of several months, even if they were taken down partway through the study. This researcher's dilemma is particularly of porn content posted on reddit, which are often videos from paid porn providers that have been illegally downloaded and reposted on open

access "video tube" websites¹². To preserve my data and potentially make my sample available for other researchers to study, I selected the top ten videos on both subreddits that could be downloaded directly from their source—that is, those that I could download off of the video tubes and store on my own computer, so that I could continue to access them even if they were taken offline. I also saved and archived each webpage containing project data: the subreddit homepage ranking the videos, the individual posts linking the videos, and the site with the video itself¹³. To archive all content on these pages (text, embedded fonts and design elements, links, images, videos, etc.), I used both the Evernote web clipper¹⁴ and a new suite of archival tools that save webpages and content to the Internet Archive.¹⁵ These tools provided the most comprehensive and rich archive of this data: the videos, their host sites, and the posts on reddit where they were shared with the PornVids and Chickflixxx communities.

¹² These websites are video sharing communities that function similarly to YouTube, hence the term "video tube:" users upload content that is then made publicly available. Examples of porn tubes include YouPorn.com, RedTube.com, and Pornhub.com.

¹³ See Appendix II for an example of this archival data.

¹⁴ [Evernote](#) is a free note taking and archival software tool, available across multiple desktop and mobile platforms. Its [web clipper](#) is a browser extension that enables users to save webpages, text and images into the Evernote application.

¹⁵ The web tools that I used to save data for this study were beta applications created through the Archive What I See Now project, funded by a National Endowment for the Humanities Digital Humanities Start-Up Grant. This project, a partnership between the NEH and scholars from Old Dominion University and Michigan State University, seeks to bring institutional web archiving tools to individual researchers. The grant-funded tools, called WARCreate and WAIL, supplement existing archives such as the [Internet Archive](#) and the [Wayback Machine](#) through a browser extension that enables researchers to save a page both locally and to a collective archive. As of March 2015, the archival applications are still under development.

More information on these tools and the NEH Start-Up grant are available on Old Dominion University's [Web Science and Digital Libraries Research Group website](#), as well as the [NEH's funded projects page](#).

Additionally, I limited this study to pornographic videos that depicted sexual acts between one man and one woman, which led to the exclusion of several popular threesome, orgies/group sex, and lesbian videos from the sample. While this study is heavily informed by queer theory, as well as the considerable amount of recent literature that discusses LGBTQ porn cultures and other recent trends in non-heteronormative pornography (Moorman, 2010; Royalle, 1993; Tibbals, 2014; Trouble, 2014), the decision to exclude videos of LGBTQ and group sex was purely based on considerations of scope and ease of analysis. The inclusion of these additional variables would have continued to complicate an already incredibly complex project. I hope to analyze pornography that includes an even greater diversity of sexual bodies and acts in my future scholarship.

The following tables include the titles and URLs of the posts that comprised the sample for this project, as well as the length of their accompanying videos and a brief description of those videos' genres.

Table 1: r/PornVids sample (videos ranked in descending order of aggregate popularity)

Video Number	Video Title	reddit URL	Video URL	Time	Genre; professional or amateur
1	Horny Aussie girl with huge tits gets it on in a university library. You need to see this. HAWT! (MF, BJ, POV, 17:08)	http://www.reddit.com/r/pornvids/comments/2b6hox/horny_aussie_girl_with_huge_tits_gets_it_on_in_a/	http://www.pornhub.com/view_video.php?viewkey=1228934352	17:08	Point-of-view (POV); amateur style with professional female performer
2	Unbelievably gorgeous blonde sucking and fucking. That smile, I'm in love. [MF, POV, 13:48]	http://www.reddit.com/r/pornvids/comments/1ujm5z/unbelievably_gorgeous_blonde_sucking_and_fucking/	http://xhamster.com/movies/2562688/quality_amateur_sex_tape_with_dreamy_gf.html?embed=view	13:48	POV; amateur style with amateur performers
3	Paige Turnah, a curvy British porn star, made a video on a tripod in her bedroom of her fucking her then-boyfriend. The chemistry between them is great, as is the sex. [MF, 19:12]	http://www.reddit.com/r/pornvids/comments/27711x/paige_turnah_a_curvy_british_porn_star_made_a/	http://www.xvideos.com/video7005479_***	19:12	Sex tape; amateur style with professional female performer
4	18 yo LSU girl with big tits does her first vid [teen, 49m]	http://www.reddit.com/r/pornvids/comments/1vuoeq/18_yo_lsu_girl_with_big_tits_does_her_first_vid/	http://www.cliphunter.com/w/1930009/Big_tits_18_year_old_teen_***	48:49	Audition tape; professionally shot with amateur female performer
5	James Deen + Amateur 3. [Cutie] and she's so into it [MF, 55:35].	http://www.reddit.com/r/pornvids/comments/2alcwv/james_deen_amateur_3_cutie_and_shes_so_into_it_mf/	http://www.cliphunter.com/w/2072099/Civilian_3_Fucks_her_Pornstar_Crush	55:35	Sex tape; amateur style with professional male performer; part of James Deen's "Do A Scene with Deen" series

Table 1 (cont'd)

Video Number	Video Title	reddit URL	Video URL	Time	Genre; professional or amateur
6	This is the first video to get me to actually subscribe to a porn site. Speechless. [Brooklyn Chase, POV, HD, 12:46]	http://www.reddit.com/r/pornvids/comments/1ou3nx/this_is_the_first_video_to_get_me_to_actually/	http://www.youporn.com/watch/8925787/hd-pov-big-tits-beauty-loves-your-creampie-inside-her-warm-wet-pussy-yp/?from=search_full&pos=1	12:46	POV; professional
7	Megan Madsen can't stop cumming [amateur, teen, orgasm] [39min]	http://www.reddit.com/r/pornvids/comments/20ul85/megan_madsen_cant_stop_cumming_amateur_teen/	http://www.xvideos.com/video1308793/inocent_teen_megan_madsen_overkilled	38:39	Casting; amateur female performer
8	Petite brunette with perky tits, will require multiple viewings[massage][MF][52:43][HD]	http://www.reddit.com/r/pornvids/comments/2fytk3/petite_brunette_with_perky_tits_will_require/	http://www.cliphunter.com/watch/2138062/gorgeous_skinny_brunette_gets_fucked_hard_at_the_massage_parlor_in_HD	52:43	Massage; professional
9	Best. Girlfriend. Ever. (even instructs him on the "right way to film") [amateur, 10min]	http://www.reddit.com/r/pornvids/comments/2a7smd/best_girlfriend_ever_even_instructs_him_on_the/	http://www.redtube.com/809917 ***	9:39	Sex tape; amateur
10	One of my favorite videos, that I felt had to be reposted. He fucks her so good that she asks him out. [15:21] [FM] [Hardcore]	http://www.reddit.com/r/pornvids/comments/1sxzyt/one_of_my_favorite_videos_that_i_felt_had_to_be/	http://beeg.com/7792187	15:21	Office; professional

*** Denotes that the video, while hosted at the location linked in this Reddit post during the time of data collection (September 2014), has been removed from its host site either at the request of the user who originally uploaded it, or the copyright owner.

Table 2: r/Chickflixxx sample (videos ranked in descending order of aggregate popularity)

Video Number	Video Title	reddit URL	Video URL	Time	Genre; professional or amateur
1	So someone responded to James Deen's "open casting call" for normal women to have sex with him on camera	http://www.reddit.com/r/chickflixxx/comments/1rsqaf/s_o_someone_responded_to_james_deens_open_casting/	http://www.pornhub.com/view_video.php?viewkey=220237183 ***	46:05	Amateur sex tape with professional male performer; part of James Deen's "Do A Scene with Deen" series
2	Adorable amateur girl with James Deen	http://www.reddit.com/r/chickflixxx/comments/2jfgu4/a_dorable_amateur_girl_with_james_deen/	http://www.cliphunter.com/w/2167223/Pornstar_Crush_Slays_Another_Cutie	62:09	Amateur sex tape with professional male performer; part of James Deen's "Do A Scene with Deen" series
3	James Deen fucks redhead Jodi Taylor, she can't stop cumming (x-post pornvids)	http://www.reddit.com/r/chickflixxx/comments/2l6kif/james_deen_fucks_redhead_jodi_taylor_she_cant/	http://www.pornhub.com/view_video.php?viewkey=1440147614	46:52	Professional; anal; produced by a woman
4	College dorm sextape. I love how much the girl is getting off, while trying not to scream. (amateur) PS: the guy is like a piston	http://www.reddit.com/r/chickflixxx/comments/2dpaei/c_college_dorm_sextape_i_love_how_much_the_girl_is/	http://www.redtube.com/819039	12:50	Amateur sex tape; college
5	Ryan Madison... dear God. I'm so glad I found this in HD.	http://www.reddit.com/r/chickflixxx/comments/2gwjyi/ryan_madison_dear_god_im_so_glad_i_found_this_in/	http://www.pornhd.com/videos/1979/aurora-and-ryan-shooting-hardcore-ads-hd-porn-video ***	36:14	Professional; art house

Table 2 (cont'd)

Video Number	Video Title	reddit URL	Video URL	Time	Genre; professional or amateur
6	So we [f][m] made a new video:	http://www.reddit.com/r/chickflixxx/comments/23yqvc/s_o_we_fm_made_a_new_video/	http://www.pornhub.com/view_video.php?viewkey=1649348905	7:45	Amateur sex tape; shot by members of reddit community
7	James Deen and Emma Stoned, passionate and focused on her pleasure	http://www.reddit.com/r/chickflixxx/comments/2jp5md/james_deen_and_emma_stoned_passionate_and_focused/	http://www.xvideos.com/video8297699/emma_stoned_and_james_deen_-_sensual_moments_2	33:34	Professional; art house
8	I'll just leave this here ... great scene	http://www.reddit.com/r/chickflixxx/comments/2fvcan/il_just_leave_this_here_great_scene/	http://www.redtube.com/475579	33:03	Professional; scripted
9	Xander Corvus getting head is the best thing.	http://www.reddit.com/r/chickflixxx/comments/1xqbsa/xander_corvus_getting_head_is_the_best_thing/	http://www.redtube.com/282276	10:00	Professional; teen (18+)
10	I want my guy to fuck me like that.	http://www.reddit.com/r/chickflixxx/comments/2fc9b8/i_want_my_guy_to_fuck_me_like_that/	http://www.redtube.com/820600	15:36	Professional; alternative

*** Denotes that the video, while hosted at the location linked in this Reddit post during the time of data collection (September 2014), has been removed from its host site either at the request of the user who originally uploaded it, or the copyright owner

Overall, these videos comprise nearly ten hours' worth of pornographic content: 4 hours, 43 minutes and 40 seconds for the PornVids sample and 5 hours, 4 minutes and 8 seconds for the Chickflixxx sample, respectively. While this amount of content is certainly not indicative of the various norms and niches of the millions of pornographic files available online (Döring, 2009, p. 1092; Mazières et al., 2014), these twenty videos do provide a representative sample of the most popular content within two porn communities and their respective cultures.

The next five sections of this chapter describe my coding process and schema, as well as methodological considerations made around feminist positionality and praxis throughout data analysis.

2.2 Critical Autoethnography: The "Affective Pass"

In the meeting where I shared my thesis proposal with my graduate advisory committee, the scholars who were guiding my work expressed two initial doubts about this project. First, they urged me to narrow the scope: I had initially planned to examine many more than twenty videos, and to look at many more variables in much greater detail than the study you see detailed here. Second, they expressed concern about the emotionally intense nature of the project: they wanted to check in with me frequently over the course of data analysis, especially since I would be watching several hours of pornography multiple times in order to code for such elements as misogyny and symbolic as well as physical violence.

My committee helped me to build reflection into my research methods, in an effort to not only engage in self-care around my own history of sexual violence, but also to determine my own position in this work according to my unique feminist researcher standpoint (Franks, 2002; Hesse-Biber, 2007). One of my committee members recommended that I engage in an "affective

pass" prior to coding the video data, in order to track my gut reactions to what I was witnessing on screen¹⁶.

To do this, I recorded my reactions to the first two videos from each sample using a screencasting program, Techsmith Camtasia. The first time I watched these videos, I spoke aloud my reactions to the images and actions on screen, thinking specifically about *how* I was feeling about the videos, and *why* I was feeling that way. Time constraints did not allow me to engage in this reflective practice for all twenty videos in the project sample, but employing the affective pass for the first two videos from each of the Chickflixxx and PornVids datasets helped create a critical and reflexive mindset for me throughout the duration of the study. These emotional reactions were very much interpretive according to both my training as a feminist researcher and my own experience in my erotic body with its manifold subjectivities, and recording them and using them as data enabled me to engage in the practice of critical autoethnography.

Communication scholar Tami Spry (2001) describes critical autoethnography as "embodied methodological praxis," explaining that self-reflexivity empowers the researcher to develop critical consciousness around their experiences in particular, situated social contexts (Spry, 2001). As a practice, critical autoethnography brings the researcher's corporeal body—a site removed from positivist empirical research (Harding, 1992; Hartsock, 1983; Hesse-Biber, 2007)—and foregrounds it through "...situating the sociopolitically inscribed body as a central site of meaning making" (Spry, 2001, p. 710). Within this research on pornography, a rhetorical

¹⁶ I am immensely grateful for Dr. Malea Powell's mentorship on my graduate advisory committee, and her suggestion that I incorporate an affective pass at the beginning of my collection and analysis process. It was her idea that eventually generated the critical autoethnographic data that helped me to ground this work within my own body and experience.

artifact that elicits very much embodied reactions, it was important for me to take stock of how my own body made meaning of the content that I was coding and analyzing.

Researcher self-reflection on the study data sample was necessary for two reasons. First, as many empirical feminist researchers have noted, it is impossible to bracket one's own subjectivity because all attempts to uncover social reality are inherently political in nature (Ramazanoğlu & Holland, 2002). Furthermore, the investigator's subjective, situated interpretation of data is integral to the process of cultural research—for, as Jeff Grabill (2006) notes, "Culture is not found, wholly formed, it is created in at least two ways: by the participants in/of the culture and by the researcher making sense of the cultural moment" (Grabill, 2006, p. 8). With pornography, as with any other cultural artifact, meaning making occurs not only through the creator's deliberate rhetorical choices, but also through the audience or user's subjective interpretation.

Second, I had a more personal rationale for this self-reflective practice. This affective autoethnography pass functioned as a way for me to engage in self care during the data analysis process. This project was partially born out of my experience using pornography for healing after surviving a rape during my undergraduate program, and I understood that analyzing several hours of explicit sexual content for elements like misogyny and embedded violence could be potentially triggering for me. There needed to be a mechanism in place for me to recognize and mindfully reflect upon my own experience and continued healing process in this project—particularly to prevent or minimize the potentiality of me being triggered by the ten hours of graphic sexual content that I needed to review multiple times in order to thoroughly code it. I explore my own embodied and affective reactions to an instance of physical violence portrayed in one of the videos from the dataset in Chapter 3, Section 3 of this thesis.

As Spry wrote, reflecting upon my own reactions allowed me not only to be present in my own surviving and thriving body throughout the duration of the data collection and analysis process, but also to emphasize that "knowledge in the body, offering [me] the researcher an enfolded epistemology and ontology" (Spry, 2001, p. 716).

The intensely personal nature of this research is also represented in the deliberate selections that I made in the project coding schema, as explored in the next three sections. The foci of inquiry within this project reflect my own positionality as a survivor, as well as a sex-positive, pro-porn feminist.

2.3 Data Coding: Visual Elements

Quantitatively, the greatest source of data in this project came from the elements of the 20 sample videos that were physically present, visible, and easily countable. Previous sociological studies have analyzed the terms and tags used to describe pornography (Mazières et al., 2014; Porngram, 2014), or the communities that emerge surrounding different pornographic niches or genres (Lindgren, 2010). However, no empirical inquiry in the social sciences, nor in the humanities has explored the actual acts taking place in pornographic videos themselves: from foreplay to climax, and everything in between.

To fill this gap in the previous research literature, I coded the 20 videos in the pilot sample for a set of sexual acts, positions, and practices. The following list is by no means comprehensive, but it reflects my own evolving understanding of the typical sexual scripts laid down by pornography, as developed both through reading porn studies theory (Royalle, 1993; Taormino et al., 2013; Tibbals, 2014; Williams, 2004) and engaging in the data collection and analysis for this project. My goal in coding for these particular acts was to fill an established gap

in the research literature—the dearth of "studies that have systematically investigated the types and characteristics of online pornography" (Döring, 2009, p. 1092). Thus, the design of this study presents one particular option for systematically and comparatively engaging in discourse analysis to delineate the differences between two different types of online pornography.

The visible acts and practices that I timed and coded for include¹⁷:

- Kissing/foreplay: what acts are occurring before oral and/or penetrative sexual activity? This includes, but is not limited to kissing, making out, petting or caressing, frottage or dry humping, and other kinds of "outercourse."
- Mammary intercourse: placing the penis between the breasts, or rubbing it on them.
- Manual stimulation: fingering (touching, caressing, and/or penetrating the vagina and its exterior structures with hands and fingers) or handjobs (touching, stroking, and otherwise stimulating the penis and/or scrotum with hands and fingers).¹⁸ One video also included digital anal penetration or anal fingering.
- Oral sex: eating out (stimulation of the vulva, clitoris, vagina, etc. with mouth, lips and tongue) or blowjobs (stimulation of the penis, scrotum, etc. with mouth, lips and tongue). One video also included oral-to-anal contact (anilingus, "salad tossing," or "rimming").
- Vaginal intercourse: penetrative, penis-in-vagina sexual activity. Sexual positions (e.g. missionary, woman on top, doggy style, etc.) were also named and counted.

¹⁷ Again, please see the glossary of terms in Appendix I for elaboration on these categories and other jargon used in this thesis.

¹⁸ It is worth noting that there were no instances of male anal or prostate stimulation/massage, nor female-to-male anilingus in any of the videos in the dataset.

- Anal intercourse: penetrative, penis-in-anus sexual activity. Sexual positions were also named and counted.
- Spanking: how many times (if any) does one partner spank another? Typically, spanks were inflicted onto a female partner's buttocks, but there were also instances of spanks on women's genitals to a lesser extent. Additionally, there was one instance of a male performer slapping a female partner in the face: this particular video is discussed in great detail in Chapter 3, Section 3 of this thesis: "Power Play and the Rhetorics of a Feminist Sexual Ethic."
- Orgasms: did the man orgasm? When? Did the woman orgasm?¹⁹ How many times, and when? In what contexts did orgasms occur (e.g. through manual stimulation, intercourse, etc.)?
- Ejaculations: if there was one, was ejaculation visible—did the video include a "money shot" or "cumshot" of the man ejaculating on the woman's face, breasts, or elsewhere?

These categories were not static, but rather adapted flexibly in response to phenomena that became apparent throughout the coding process—following a (semi-)grounded approach to

¹⁹ Quantifying the female orgasm proved to be a foolhardy endeavor, particularly within the erotic spectacle that is pornography. I had to rely upon a variety of contextual cues to attempt to determine when and how many times the female performers in the sample experienced orgasm—verbal (typically utterances like "I'm coming" or "I'm about to come"), physiological (trembling, shaking), and female ejaculation or squirting. In the end, the data from this study examine *possible* or *probable* orgasms, or perhaps more importantly *theorize the visibility and performativity of female orgasms*, rather than quantifying the female orgasm across these 20 porn videos.

Female pleasure and orgasm, as a complex and messy phenomenon, must be theorized more through both humanistic and social science lenses to ground the feminist study of pornography. Jagose's (2013) book *Orgasmology* begins to provide a foundation for orgasm theory from a queer and feminist perspective.

discourse analysis where the categories flow up from the data (Birks & Mills, 2011; Charmaz, 2003; Josselson, 2011; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). For example, spanking was not an element initially included in the coding schema, but after the first couple of coding sessions it became increasingly apparent that this was a necessary act to quantify due to its contested significance in establishing gendered power dynamics, as well as soft-core violence, in the bedroom²⁰. After reading both pro- (Barker, 2014; Penley et al., 2013) and anti-porn (Dines, 2011; Dworkin, 1981; MacKinnon, 1984) feminist theory that brought up the question of slapping and spanking, and noting the practice occurring across all of the first videos of the sample, I added a "spank count" to my coding schema. I retroactively returned to the previous videos to record the occurrence of any type of physical slapping or spanking in them to ensure consistency across both of the datasets.

Additionally, casting and cinematographic elements were included in the pilot study coding schema. I took qualitative notes on the performers²¹ identities and appearances in each video, paying particular attention to whose bodies were being shown and whose were not. This included making notes on performers' ages (either perceived ages for amateurs, or ages verified by sources like the Internet Adult Film Database for professional porn performers), races and/or ethnicities, hair, clothing, accessories makeup, body size and modification (breast implants,

²⁰ This was a fortuitous decision on my part, given the UK Film Board's December 2014 decision to ban any kind of slapping from pornography produced in that country; a ruling made immediately after I finished coding data for this thesis. This decision received international media coverage, and sparked outrage and protests from UK-based pornographers. For more information on these regulations, see Christopher Hooton's "A long list of sex acts just got banned in UK porn:" <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/a-long-list-of-sex-acts-just-got-banned-in-uk-porn-9897174.html>.

²¹ Ten self-identified men and ten self-identified women in the ten videos from each of the two subreddit samples, Chickflixxx and PornVids—for a total of 40 performers.

tattoos, etc.), and anything else that emerged over the course of each video that was particularly salient. Again, grounded theory was built into the data analysis process to enable flexible coding that accounted for the many different variables that affect the mood and tone of pornographic visuals.

2.4 Data Coding: Auditory Elements

The coding process for the auditory content of the sample was less regimented, largely due to the lack of dialogue within the videos. Unlike longer-form adult videos like the DVD titles sold or rented in brick and mortar stores, videos hosted on porn tubes are typically an hour or shorter, abridging opening dialogue and background that sets the scene or cutting it out altogether.

Because of the brief nature of dialogue, I largely coded nonverbal units of language (Blythe, 2007), such as pitch and tone, rather than engaging in full-blown discourse analysis of the words being used. I recorded what words were being said in the videos, but also paid close attention to the tone in which they were communicated. Did it sound aggressive? Submissive? Engaged? Passive? What sort of a mood did it create for the viewer?

2.5 Data Coding: Latent Content and the Male Gaze

Because of the often embedded nature of social, cultural, and gendered norms within pornography and erotic imagery writ large, it was also necessary for me to code for latent content within this dataset. By latent content, I mean that which engages "...an interpretive reading of the symbolism underlying the physical data... the *deep structural* meaning conveyed by the message" (Berg, 2001, p. 242).

For this study, the interpretation of symbolic meaning was largely informed by Laura Mulvey (1999) and Ms. Naughty's (2014) theories of the male gaze. I coded specifically for six of Ms. Naughty's eight elements of the male gaze in pornography²², checking boxes in my spreadsheet for each and providing supplementary qualitative comments as necessary. Again, those six elements include:

- 1) The Headless Dick: the camera regularly cuts the male body out of the frame, focusing solely on the phallus
- 2) It's All About Her Body: the camera mainly focuses on the female performer and her body parts
- 3) Always Male POV: the camera typically captures sex from a male point-of-view (POV); "the woman is always looked *at*, she never *looks*" (Ms. Naughty 2014)
- 4) Oral = Blowjob: pornography prioritizes fellatio; cunnilingus is comparatively rare, and receives much less screen time if it is present at all
- 5) Male Orgasm is the Goal: male orgasm is prioritized over female orgasm and nearly every scene ends with ejaculation, typically external, often on the woman's face
- 6) His Fantasy: scenarios portrayed in porn typically reflect male, not female, sexual fantasies (Ms. Naughty, 2014)

These elements helped me to begin to assess the differences in gender norms and power (if there were any) between the pornography most enjoyed by PornVids' largely male readership, versus Chickflicxxx's largely female readership. Ms. Naughty's categories helped me to code the

²² Ms. Naughty's other two elements of the male gaze describe the marketing of pornographic DVDs, so they are not applicable to this project that looks solely at freely available internet pornography.

videos in the sample beyond the content of the frame, answering such questions as "whose fantasy and desires does this scene reflect?" and "what sexual norms are being reinforced or subverted here?"

Latent content coding also included making qualitative field notes on the tone and mood of the scene: were the actions slow and tender, or did they have a sense of passion and urgency behind them? Once again, incorporated into this category of data analysis, and interwoven with visual and auditory coding as well, was the question of physical and sexual violence. Since the porn wars of the 1970s, anti-porn activists such as Dworkin (1981; 1988) and MacKinnon (1984) have linked the consumption of pornographic imagery to the perpetration of violence against women and children, and the connection between pornography and sexual abuse remains contested today (Döring, 2009; Griffith et al., 2013). Not only did I code for overt physical violence within these videos, but also instances of symbolic violence such as violent or domineering speech, or implied lack of consent.

2.6 Supplementary Comment Analysis

In addition to archiving the videos of the dataset themselves, I also saved the comments on the reddit posts where the videos were linked. I referred to these comment threads as necessary for contextual clues as to porn user preferences, especially when I found something that seemed like an anomaly in the sample. For example, the only instance of physical violence that I observed in the dataset occurred in the feminist porn sample, which seemed odd to me given feminism's commitment to the abolition of violence of all kinds. The redditors' comments on the video helped shed light on its controversial nature within the Chickflicxxx community, with some enjoying the opportunity to view "rougher sex," while others felt it was "way too

rough" for their own erotic tastes (Adorable amateur girl with James Deen, 2014). The comments on this particular video showed that it was not unequivocally accepted by all members of Chickflixxx: it received many upvotes because a large number of users enjoyed it, but many others, like me, found it unsettling. In this case, examining the context of the video's popularity among users proved incredibly valuable in situating it within the broader sexual norms and ethic of the community.

This idea of contextual analysis is crucial to the study of not a singular rhetoric, but plural rhetorics as we understand them in the 21st century discipline of rhetoric and writing. It is echoed in works considered canonical by the field, like *The Practice of Everyday Life*, where Michel de Certeau cautions against "...extract[ing] documents from their historical context and eliminat[ing] the operations of speakers in particular situations of time, place, and competition" (de Certeau, 1984, p. 20). So too is the importance of context emphasized in the methodological literature, such as Norman Fairclough's *Language and Power*, which states that a text must always be interpreted with a context in mind (Fairclough, 1989).

Each pornographic video sets a scene with a distinct context and rhetorical situation that must be taken into account when analyzing and theorizing it. All of these elements in the coding schema for this project, in conjunction with each other, provide a rich context for the analysis of pornography as a rhetorical artifact—and, by extension, the gendered norms and sexual cultures that porn influences and visibilizes. The following chapter describes the results of this analysis.

CHAPTER 3: Results

The data collection and analysis process was completed in December 2013, after two and a half months of visual discourse analysis, coding, note-taking, and critical reflexive practice. The following three sections describe the results of this study, as categorized in three broad thematic areas: variety and diversity of sexual imagery and practice, participatory porn culture, and the darker side of desire and fantasy as illustrated through sexual dominance and submission. Each section illustrates a theme through anecdotes from particular videos in the study sample.

The quantitative and qualitative data gathered shed much light on the differences between the sexual cultures of PornVids and Chickflixxx. For a quick glance at the quantitative data collected from the study sample, please see Table 3: PornVids Data Overview and Table 4: Chickflixxx Data Overview. The first section of this results chapter, "Diversity and Multiplicity of Sexual Bodies and Practices" presents the particular trends that separate the videos on Chickflixxx from those on PornVids, as well as noteworthy similarities between the two samples. The different sexual bodies, practices, and ethos represented within these videos typify a greater sexual diversity present within woman-friendly or feminist pornography. These themes illustrate not only the measurable differences between mainstream and woman-friendly pornography, but also broader changes in sexual attitudes and cultures as embodied within the audiovisual rhetorics of pornographic media. The videos on both subreddits present differing images of gendered power and agency—images that consequently shape the sexual preferences and practices of an increasingly porn-educated (Döring, 2009, p. 1092) generation.

These differences are particularly exemplified within the films of James Deen, a male porn performer who appeared in five of the twenty video clips from this thesis sample—one

video from PornVids, and four videos from Chickflix²³. Because of Deen's ubiquity across these communities—as well as in pornography writ large, as he is often cited as the most watched male porn star in the adult film industry and the world today (McKenzie, 2013; Turney, 2014)—the analysis in this thesis focuses largely on videos where he is featured. Deen is noteworthy because of his popularity with women in particular, which I investigate in the following section titled "The James Deen Phenomenon."

Finally, the results of this thesis begin to provide answers to questions of sexual agency that permeate current discourses on gender, both within academic and popular media. Increasing public visibility of BDSM (bondage, domination, sadism, and masochism) subcultures have brought power- and pain-play to the forefront of both feminist (Barker, 2013; Deller and Smith, 2013) and popular (Korra, 2014; Trout, 2015) discourse. In spite of the contested potential for trauma and abuse, infliction of physical violence and/or pain during sexual activity permeates pornography through such practices as choking, spanking, slapping, and even simulated rape or assault. Because of the prevalence of these debates across current media, I conclude these results with the section "Power Play and the Rhetorics of a Feminist Sexual Ethic," which examines the intimately intertwined constructions of violence and consent, as portrayed within the final pornographic video that I examined for this project.

²³ See pages 24–26 for a complete listing of the videos in the project sample, including names of performers, length and genre of production, and links to both the original Reddit posts and the sites that hosted the videos.

Table 3: r/PornVids Quantitative Data Breakdown

Video #	Kissing/ Foreplay	Handjob	Blowjob	Mammary	Fingering	Cunnilingus	(Vaginal) Intercourse	Positions	Spanks	James Deen?
1	--	0:14	5:15	0:55	--	--	4:32	2	--	--
2	--	2:11	4:06	--	0:32	--	3:31	2	--	--
3	--	2:05	2:32	--	0:32	--	12:16	5	--	--
4	--	--	16:47	0:11	0:16	--	21:51	6	25	--
5	5:37	0:08	1:47	--	6:46	2:07	22:45	6	51	✓
6	--	0:13	2:24	--	4:02	--	6:13	3	18	--
7	--	0:21	4:57	--	1:43	--	26:34	6	1	--
8	6:57	--	1:53	--	2:48	--	22:33	6	1	--
9	0:18	0:14	3:16	--	0:17	1:27	3:49	3	7	--
10	0:10	0:50	4:13	--	0:13	--	7:26	5	--	--
TOTAL	13:02	6:01	47:46	1:06	14:12	3:34	2:11:30	44	103	1 video

There was no anal sex in this dataset.

Table 4: r/Chickflixxx Quantitative Data Breakdown

Video #	Kissing/ Foreplay	Handjob	Blowjob	Fingering	Cunnilingus	(Vaginal) Intercourse	Anal	Positions	Spanks	James Deen?
1	2:53	0:52	1:19	5:40	2:47	11:55	--	7	10	✓
2	3:21	0:56	5:16	3:33	1:08	11:49	--	3	12 ²⁴	✓
3	2:30	--	3:01	2:40	2:51	0:59	19:12	5	7	✓
4	0:16	--	0:04	--	--	10:30	--	1	--	--
5	0:14	--	2:48	0:47	--	28:36	--	9	9	--
6	--	--	--	--	1:12	4:37	--	3	1	--
7	4:01	0:29	2:24	6:21	4:21	11:31	--	2	--	✓
8	3:52	--	0:29	0:34	1:05	20:05	--	4	1	--
9	1:37	--	2:43	0:10	--	4:14	--	2	--	--
10	0:49	--	3:08	0:49	3:28	8:39	--	3	--	--
TOTAL	19:33	2:17	21:12	20:34	16:52	1:52:55	19:12	39	40	4 videos

There was no mammary sex in this dataset.

²⁴ Additionally, there were 11 instances where the male performer slapped the female performer in the face in this particular video. This instance of dominance and pain play is explored further in the third section of the results chapter, "3.3: Power Play and the Rhetorics of a Feminist Sexual Ethic."

Table 5: r/PornVids Male Gaze Coding

Video #	1: Headless Dick	2: Her Body	3: Male POV	4: Oral = Blowjob	5: Male Orgasm	6: His Fantasy
1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	--	✓	--	✓	✓	--
4	✓	✓	✓	--	✓	--
5	--	--	✓	--	--	--
6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	--	✓	--	--	--	✓
10	✓	✓	--	✓	--	✓

Table 6: r/Chickflixxx Male Gaze Coding

Video #	1: Headless Dick	2: Her Body	3: Male POV	4: Oral = Blowjob	5: Male Orgasm	6: His Fantasy
1	--	--	--	--	✓	--
2	--	--	--	✓	--	--
3	--	✓	--	✓	--	✓
4	✓	--	--	✓	✓	--
5	--	✓	✓	✓	--	--
6	✓	--	--	--	--	--
7	--	✓	--	--	--	--
8	--	--	--	--	--	✓
9	--	--	--	✓	✓	--
10	✓	✓	✓	--	--	--

3.1 Diversity and Multiplicity of Sexual Bodies and Practices

In a January 2015 Chickflixxx post, redditor NurseAbbey posed the question: "what don't women like about mainstream pornography?" Dozens of Chickflixxx subscribers commented describing the aspects of pornography that turned them off, with many criticizing the lack of intimacy or tenderness present in the pornography they had seen before discovering female-friendly porn. The videos posted on Chickflixxx, commenters said, incorporated not only more sensual actions such as smiling, kissing, caressing and embracing, but also more reciprocal sexual stimulation than the porn they were used to seeing. While the words "equity" or "reciprocity" weren't explicitly mentioned by redditors on this thread, many referenced that they enjoyed seeing more clitoral stimulation and oral sex (including mutual oral sex or 69ing) in adult videos, as well as depictions of female pleasure and, ultimately, female orgasms (NurseAbbey, 2015).

The assertions made by these users are partially corroborated by the empirical data collected for this project. Videos from the r/Chickflixxx sample included more kissing and foreplay than those from r/PornVids (19 minutes and 33 seconds to r/PornVids' 13 minutes and 2 seconds; that is, kissing and foreplay comprised 6.42% of ChickFlixxx video content and 4.59% of PornVids video content), as well as more cunnilingus and manual stimulation/fingering. However, much of the manual clitoral stimulation across the videos from both subreddits was performed not by male partners, but by female performers upon themselves.

Both qualitative and quantitatively, the feminist porn videos demonstrated a greater diversity of sexual acts and practices than the mainstream. The woman-friendly sample included use of sex toys, while the mainstream sample did not. Interestingly enough, the woman-friendly

sample was the only one to include any anal sex, a practice typically thought—at least in a hetero-porn context—to be more appealing to men than to women. The video featuring anal sex also featured sex toys and was the only clip in the sample directed by a woman, though in the original post on reddit and in the comments she is described not as director or videographer, but as "camera girl" (crazytaxiwoo, 2014).

There were a wider array of bodies in the feminist sample: women with small breasts or flabby tummies, men and women with tattoos, with pubic and underarm hair. In one particular amateur video created by two redditors who frequented Chickflixxx, the female partner left her mismatched socks on for the duration of the sexual activity—a small detail noticed and enjoyed by multiple other redditors who commented on the link (testing78378, 2014).

The only person of color²⁵ out of the 40 total performers across the entire study sample was also featured in the Chickflixxx dataset, an Algerian-Arab woman with the stage name Anissa Kate. Anissa could likely pass as white due to her light skin tone, but her thick French accent was emphasized throughout the video that she starred in (the eighth video of the Chickflixxx dataset: "I'll just leave this here... great scene"), creating a sense of foreign exoticism that contributed to her sex appeal in the scene as a scheming trophy girlfriend seducing her partner's young colleague. Her constructed status as a foreign other exemplifies the common

²⁵ As for ethnic diversity, male performer James Deen is Jewish and often identifies as the "Jewish boy next door," but rarely discusses his Jewish heritage beyond this either on or off screen. The exoticization of visible racial and ethnic identities within sexual videos and imagery is another story for another piece of scholarship, though. Mireille Miller-Young's *A Taste for Brown Sugar: Black Women in Pornography* (2014) and Celine Parreñas Shimizu's *Straitjacket Sexualities: Unbinding Asian American Manhoods in the Movies* (2012) and *The Hypersexuality of Race: Performing Asian/American Women on Screen and Scene* (2007) are excellent places to start.

pornographic trope of exoticizing women of color and non-western women (Hoang, 2004; Miller-Young, 2013 & 2014; Shimizu, 2013; Williams, 2004a).

On that account, it's worth noting that this freely available internet pornography was still not entirely *equitable*, statistically speaking. Women on Chickflixxx often complained about the lack of cunnilingus in mainstream porn in particular, which led me to code specifically for the duration of oral sex acts across the pilot sample. The fellatio ratio—that is, the amount of male-receiving oral sex compared to the amount of female-receiving—spoke volumes, with the PornVids sample displaying 13.4 seconds of blowjob for every one second of cunnilingus, while the woman-friendly Chickflixxx sample showed about 1.26 seconds of blowjob for every one second of cunnilingus. Also contradicting the female redditors' claims of gender equity within feminist pornography, both the r/Chickflixxx and r/PornVids sample had the same number of videos depicting female orgasm (six videos out of ten for each sample)—though it is worth noting that there were more instances of multiple female orgasms, thus a greater total female orgasm count, in the r/Chickflixxx videos. Visual representations of female orgasm are increasingly called for by feminist pornographers and porn theorists alike, particularly when the editors of the leading edited collection on feminist porn theory write that truly feminist pornography "depicts genuine female pleasure" (Penley et al., 2013, p. 12). If the videos in both samples depict more male orgasms than female ones, where is the gendered and sexual equity that these theorists envisioned?

While seemingly basic and admittedly a bit reductive, these simple numbers are indicative of greater trends across the visual rhetoric of pornography that value the pleasure of a man over the pleasure of a woman. These trends in turn influence the real life sexual practices of a generation that is increasingly "porn educated" (Döring, 2009), with one study showing that

more than half of UK students turn to pornography for their sex education (National Union of Students). Because of pornography's rising status as a sexual educator, particularly for children and young adults (Albury, 2014), the representation of a greater variety of bodies and more equitable sexual practices is increasingly important and impactful.

3.2 The James Deen Phenomenon

Many items on the Chickflixxx users' best porn practices list are embodied by male porn actor and director James Deen, who is a fan favorite on the subreddit. Not only is Deen mentioned several times in the thread started by NurseAbbey, but he is featured in four of the ten most popular videos on r/Chickflixxx as well as one of the top videos on r/PornVids at the time of sampling (r/Chickflixxx, 2014; r/PornVids, 2014), and therefore figures prominently into the analysis of this project. Deen's marked popularity above all other male *and* female porn stars on these boards is indicative of broader cultural phenomena around sexual culture, power, and preference: as illustrated by the discourse surrounding his videos on both porn boards analyzed for this project.

James Deen appears in so many videos that redditors have shared on r/Chickflixxx (101 since the subreddit's creation in 2011) that several visitors to the subreddit have made posts specifically asking why he is so popular amongst r/Chickflixxx regulars (BigDick_SmoothBalls, 2013; bisexie, 2013; lie-sensed_pro, 2012; ilkuniklo, 2012). When prompted to explain their affinity for Deen, redditors have cited his eye contact with female scene partners, the improvised dialogue he often whispers into scene partners' ears during sex (in addition to other male vocalizations such as moans or growls that female redditors listed in their porn wish list), his perceived authenticity ("He fucks like he likes it, not like he's getting paid"), and youthful "boy-

next-door" looks and build that differ from those of typically older and heavier or more muscular male porn stars (lie-sensed_pro, 2012). These sexual practices and personal qualities are greatly valued by the women of r/Chickflixxx, leading to the collective up-voting of Deen's videos posted on the board and moving them to the top of the most popular posts through reddit's peer-sourced, group-ranked interface.²⁶

Media scholar Henry Jenkins describes this "collaborative production and evaluation of knowledge" in 2006's *Convergence Culture* (Jenkins, 2006, p. 58), contending that, in this way, the new media of the first decade of the 21st century blurred the lines between producer and consumer. Jenkins also describes at length the increasing visibility and significance of participatory culture facilitated by digital media, wherein consumers and fans take an increasingly active role in the creation of media content (Jenkins, 2006). Deen's popularity on r/Chickflixxx, and in porn fandom writ large, could also be attributed to his interactions with fans, particularly the opportunities he presents to women to participate in the creation of his videos through his "Do a Scene with James Deen" initiative.

In September 2013, Deen tweeted that a previously scheduled porn shoot had been canceled, and (seemingly jokingly) asked if any of his Twitter followers wanted to shoot an amateur porno scene with him instead (Deen, 2013a).

"Hundreds" of women responded—and continue to respond as I write this thesis, a year and a half later—sending in applications and pictures of themselves for consideration (Deen, 2013b). Two of the ten videos in the r/Chickflixxx sample are a part of this series that Deen

²⁶ Again, reddit presents content in descending order of aggregate popularity by default. Users can "upvote" or "downvote" individual posts, giving or taking away points from its score. This means that on an individual message board or "subreddit," the video that has received the most points that day (the highest score) will be displayed first.

refers to as "amateur sex tapes," and at least a dozen more have been shot and uploaded to his personal website since the initial casting call. The widespread success of these videos—which are among the top rated on *both* r/Chickflixxx and r/PornVids—reinforce Jenkins' assessment that fan participation has not only an affective value, but an economic one (Jenkins, 2006, p. 58). As Jenkins writes in *Textual Poachers*, fan cultures create meaning and community from materials often deemed "trivial" or "worthless:" subverting traditional economic and social barriers to cultural production (Jenkins, 2013, p. 26). These women are engaging in the production of a new porn culture, new sexual representations, and new sexuality—with little to no startup capital.

This series, composed and shot by a professional pornographer with women who have no affiliation with the porn industry, combines the notion of audience participation with explicit sexuality to create a participatory porn culture. James Deen's series enables women to fulfill their own sexual fantasies with a male porn star, inserting female desires into a typically otherwise male-dominated pornographic narrative. Not only does Deen's series of amateur sex tapes create a new degree of consumer interactivity within the porn industry, but it also flips the traditional androcentric script of commercial sex work.



Figure 1: Tweet from James Deen (@JamesDeen), September 5, 2013.

In her article describing women's self-published porn sites during the internet's first decade, DeVoss (2002) argues that these webpages granted the women who created them new control and power over their sexual and self-representations—ultimately allowing them to modify and complicate the "smooth, singular" body of the prototypical airbrushed porn star (DeVoss, 2002, p. 88). I would contend that now, over a decade later, James Deen and his female fan base continue to shift this narrative through shooting and distributing these videos on the fringes of mainstream porn culture—continuing to force rupture between dichotomies such as

public and private, professional and amateur, tenderness and aggression, dominance and submission. Though the women DeVoss (2002) described were subverting the sexual commodification of their bodies for their own financial gain—asserting a particular female sexual agency—they were still doing so in a way that catered to a largely male gaze. Theirs was pornography created for men to purchase and consume.

While James Deen asserts that he does not make pornography with any audience other than himself in mind (Deen, 2014), the popularity of his work across genders paints a different picture. These women who enjoy Deen's porn not only volunteer to create a video of their sexual encounters with him, but play an active role in the creation of these videos—offering up their own desires and playing out their fantasies on camera, potentially to arouse female porn consumers like themselves with similar desires.

The women of Deen's participatory porn series are claiming agency according to the articulation of the concept by rhetoricians Carl G. Herndl and Adela C. Licona (2007). Conceptualizing agency as a subject's ability to effect social change, Herndl and Licona acknowledge that "the same social subject can occupy different, sometimes contradictory, identities and social spaces" (Herndl & Licona, 2007)—the same fragmented, yet liberating positionality that DeVoss articulates in her work on female pornpreneurs. Couples have shot videos of themselves engaging in sexual acts since before the creation of porn websites, but never have women been provided such an opportunity to participate as an actress in the production of pornography made for them, by them—and in so doing, announce and affirm their status as porn consumers.

The women in this series claim a new erotic agency that has not been afforded to women previously: the ability to have public sex with a porn star who is an object of *female*, not male, desire. In turn, Deen and his female "civilian" partners create a video that reflects that desire back into the internet pornosphere through thousands of viewings by other porn consumers—of all genders. This reciprocal process redistributes the agency of the pornographic production more equitably between participants, a theme that will continue to be explored in the next section on dominance and submission.

3.3 Power Play and the Rhetorics of a Feminist Sexual Ethic

Candida Royalle created the first adult video production company for women in the late 1980s. When asked for her biggest complaint about the genre of women's pornography, she responded: "Everyone says: 'Oh, women want sex soft and pretty, like a Harlequin novel.' It's as if women are being protected... Porn can be an enhancement to talking about fantasies, and can offer a safe and erotic way of opening things up" (Royalle, 1993, p. 28).

At the end of the data analysis for this project, the nature of this connection between pornography and fantasy became both visible and incredibly salient. The final video that I coded from the Chickflix sample was from James Deen's participatory porn series, starring Deen and an 18-year-old amateur woman who chose the pseudonym "Diana Colton" for her first adult film. The video begins with conversation between the pair for nearly half an hour, before kissing and foreplay that segues into oral sex and vaginal intercourse. After a brief break, the pair resumed having sex 50 minutes into the video.

It was at this point that James Deen choked his female partner and slapped her eleven times.

I had a visceral, embodied reaction to the brutality that I watched as I recorded data for this, the last video for the study. Each slap made me flinch in my chair. I felt physically unsettled and nauseous. Memories of trauma filled my body and I could feel them weighing down my limbs. When my partner at the time came home after I had finished coding, I buried my head into his shoulder and cried and cried and cried.

Personal triggers aside, this video represents a vital point of contention within both feminist porn studies and popular discourse around sexuality. Opponents of pornography contend that sexual imagery and practices that incorporate physical pain or abuse have the potential to not only be unsettling, but dangerous (Hooton, 2014). The outright condemnation of these acts is equally problematic, however; for as the editors of *The Feminist Porn Book* write, "...sex-positive feminist porn does not mean that sex is always a ribbon-tied box of happiness and joy... feminist porn explores sexual ideas and acts that may be fraught, confounding, and deeply disturbing to some, and liberating and empowering to others. What we see at work here are competing definitions of sexuality that expose the power of sexuality in all its unruliness" (Taormino et al., 2013, p. 15).

Just as the pornographic video cannot be divorced from the context of its composition and angle that creates a particular gaze, the sexual act cannot be divorced from the context of its setting and communication that creates a particular consent. An individual scrolling through James Deen and Diana Colton's video could see the slapping as demonstrative of an abusive encounter but that assessment would ignore the crucial context of consent and careful negotiation both before and after the slaps took place.

At the beginning of the video, and the beginning of every video in Deen's "civilian" series of amateur sex tapes, the woman and James exchange documentation and forms. In the video with Diana Colton in particular, James comprehensively describes the woman's right to her likeness in the final video. If she doesn't like it, or if after it's posted some time passes and she decides that she doesn't want her porno on the internet, she can ask him to take it down. The pair discuss hard and soft limits around sexual practices: he notes that she doesn't want to have anal sex, but is open to most other sex acts. Again, Deen emphasizes that she can say no at any time. They also exchange STD test results.

In the middle of the video, when the pair take a brief break from sex, James asks Diana what her fantasies are. She responds:

"I like being bent over someone's knee and spanked. I like it when you choke me. And... um... I like being fingered really hard and, like, touching myself at the same time. That's really what makes me come. I don't know... I like being tied up and restrained... I like being bruised and hickeys and... I've never been slapped in the face before, but I think I'd like it" (Adorable amateur girl with James Deen, 2014)

In this instance, Diana Colton not only consents to violence, but *requests* it from her male scene partner. She is claiming her own agency to change the prototypical pornographic script, and articulating her own desires so that they can come to fruition—even though those desires are marginal and contested.

Even if users don't typically watch the interviews at the beginning of porn videos²⁷, they still must engage in the embodied act of picking up the cursor and scrolling to the sexy parts.

²⁷ At the time of this thesis' defense (April 2015), I am unable to find any existing literature that focuses on consumption trends for individual porn videos—that is, work that determines the parts of pornography that users watch, and the parts that they prefer to skip through. Perhaps

This is a moment of disruption in the act of consuming pornography: a moment when the viewer, consciously or unconsciously, passes by the five or ten or twenty minutes of the performers conversing, out of scene and out of character and, as non-sexual human beings. This moment of rupture, however fleeting, still breaks the facade of a genuine or authentic unscripted sexual encounter: it forces recognition that porn is performative, and not necessarily indicative of reality.

Kink.com, the world's largest producer of BDSM porn content (Voros, 2013) employs this momentary disruption of fantasy through interviews at the beginning of each of its videos. Domination and power play are tropes widely present across the array of Kink.com content, with such categories as "Bound Gang Bangs: helpless women outnumbered and overwhelmed;" "Device Bondage: hot helpless women, hard metal bondage;" "Hardcore Gangbang: a woman's fantasy can sometimes get rough;" and "Public Disgrace: beautiful girls bound, fucked, & humiliated in public" (Kink.com, 2015). Peter Acworth, who founded Kink as a graduate student in 1997, describes the interviews as necessary for "safe, sane, and consensual" BDSM porn videos, particularly those that present fantasies involving physical force such as slapping, spanking, bondage, torture, or struggle (Kink.com, 2015; Voros, 2013). In a 2013 documentary on the porn production company, Acworth's employees explain that these fantasies that involve

an eye-tracking study would be an appropriate next step for research that combines porn studies and literacy or composition methods.

In any case, hardcore pornography is most typically used by men or women who are seeking sexual excitement and gratification (Janssen, 2002)—and the realization of such goals is typically delayed by an out-of-character, fully clothed interview. I'm not saying that nobody watches the interviews in porn, but I do believe that the majority of users either only watch parts of these clips or skip past them entirely in order to seek more immediate sexual release. Again, future research is necessary in this area.

dominance, submission, or kink can make BDSM pornography and sexual practices "very confusing to the casual observer," (Voros, 2013) but assert that consent mechanisms are put into place to make every video safe and ethical for all participants—these include partners' wishes surrounding particular sexual acts ("hard and soft limits"), as well as words that can be used to stop a scene or encounter ("safe words"). Viewers have an opportunity to witness the negotiation of this contract in the interview at the beginning of each video across Kink.com's platforms—and the consent is visible and comprehensive.

In sexual fantasy, these moments of rupture and disorientation for the viewer are where explicit verbal consent often happens—but, as scholar-activist Kathleen Livingston (2014, 2015) notes, consent is not a singular statement of permission, but a set of practices and norms that encompass self and community care (Livingston, 2014 and 2015). Pre-porn interviews are a genre of and about consent that is negotiated between partners both before and during the sexual act. The notion of consent within pornography is just as complex and multifaceted as the pornography itself, as evidenced by the abundance and variety of data collected within this project.

In short, a feminist sexual ethic makes room for diverse sexual expression and imagery—it behooves us not to "yuck someone else's yum."²⁸ It recognizes a multiplicity of sexual acts and practices—including the choice to abstain from sexual activity altogether—and affirms their existence within a consensual context.

In her video, Ms. Naughty (2014) speaks of a pornographic gaze that is monolithically constructed for a "default male audience" (Ms. Naughty, 2014). The feminist counter to this

²⁸ I don't know who coined this phrase, but I am forever in their debt.

singular male gaze, naturally, makes space for a multiplicity of desires and fantasies, acts and practices. It creates visual representations of the desires of women—even those that are transgressive, like Diana Colton's or those depicted in BDSM videos on Kink.com—within a space of explicit, visible consent. The implications of this pornographic consent will be explored further in the final chapter of this thesis, which concludes by synthesizing the results of this pilot study and providing potential directions for future rhetorical inquiry into porn studies.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSIONS

As this master's thesis and its accompanying research project have drawn to a close over the past several months, a flurry of stories related to sexuality, pornography, and feminism have inundated national news media. In December 2014, the United Kingdom passed legislation banning the country's pornographers from producing videos depicting a number of sexual acts, including "spanking, caning, physical restraint, humiliation, female ejaculation, strangulation, face-sitting, fisting, and [anything else deemed as] physical or verbal abuse (regardless if consensual)" (Hooton, 2014).

In February 2015, the film *50 Shades of Grey*, inspired by a popular BDSM romance-thriller trilogy by British writer E.L. James, was released over Valentine's Day and broke box office records for the highest opening weekend gross for a film directed by a woman (Lang, 2015). The film also sparked international debate around depictions of what many deemed abusive or inappropriate sexuality, with one blogger writing, "Since when is pornography not labeled correctly?...Pornography has gone from strip clubs to Playboy Magazine to Sports Illustrated: Swimsuit Edition to Cosmopolitan's sex advice articles to trashy fiction novels to HBO specials to online access. When does it end? I guess it doesn't anymore" (Plant, 2015).

What perpetuates the continuing "porn wars" between feminists and non-feminists alike, and what began my foray into rhetorical porn studies, is this paradoxical nature of pornography. Much as politicians claim that the government should not interfere in the private lives of citizens, yet seek to regulate those citizens' private activities behind bedroom doors, so too does pornography sit tenuously on the contested boundary of public rhetoric and private practice.

Those who claim not to watch it aim to police its production and consumption, and those who do consume it are stigmatized into silence around their consumption.

Internet pornography uniquely demonstrates the rhetorics of an erotic culture that is simultaneously public and private. In the 21st century, porn is always, already a part of our widely circulated norms of gender and sexuality, yet often relegated to the realm of impolite dinner conversation—a thing we speak not of, despite its omnipresence in our media and culture. The concluding sections of this thesis explore the implications that this work has on empirical porn research, feminist methodology, and sexuality.

4.1 Implications for Method

This master's thesis offers a particular account of the most popular images that strike the affective, erotic resonances of two groups of people online. The user division between these two message boards devoted to "mainstream pornography" and "pornography for women" both reinscribes a problematic and largely unfounded sexual binary (Penley et al., 2013; Royalle, 1993) and creates new space for individuals to share and reflect upon adult content. Just as the links posted, categorized and voted upon by members of these two reddit communities demonstrate particular sexual niches and cultures, so too do the methods used in this research yield particular results. While it examined a small sample of a larger community of users sharing sexually explicit content—reddit has over 4000 sub-communities devoted to porn (sneeze freak, 2014)—the design of this study allowed for a thorough and nuanced analysis through the rigor of mixed-methods inquiry.

Coding exhaustively for the numerous elements discussed in Chapter 2 produced an abundance of data, both qualitative and quantitative, stretching across nearly thirty rows of two

Excel spreadsheets, two hours of spoken observations recorded over video clips through screencasting software, and countless notes scribbled in journals and typed into my iPhone late at night after marathon analysis sessions. I hope to continue to work with this data, especially exploring the differences between pornographic genres within the samples, for the twenty videos themselves represented a range of porn tropes from professional to amateur, POV to gonzo, casting to sex tape, and more—each with its own distinct sexual and practical implications.

What does this thesis and its pilot study teach about method? That it is essential for us to conduct research on previously existing theory—particularly that theory which we have internalized so much that we take it to be a truism. This comparative research enables scholars to unpack previous assertions by both academics and pundits alike that porn is a monolithic, violent discourse (Paasonen 2011), contributing to porn studies in a uniquely rhetorical manner. Additional studies should also be done to continue breaking apart stereotypes about porn consumption—for example, ideas such as "nobody pays for porn anymore in an age of free internet porn content," and "nobody watches the interviews before porn videos." Throughout data collection and analysis for this project, I continually encountered widely held ideas about pornography such as these—but was unable to find any scholarly literature or reliable datasets to substantiate those claims. Future porn studies research can explore these and other prevailing myths about the digital pornosphere and its diverse users.

It also helps to continue to add to definitions of what pornography *is*—for, as Döring (2009) notes, "very few studies have systematically investigated the types and characteristics of online pornography" (Döring, 2009, p. 1092). Changes in digital participatory cultures like those detailed within this study can be explored both qualitatively and quantitatively, but combining both types of data creates a socio-cultural account that is both descriptive and empirically

rigorous—and the same can be said for feminist studies that explore the impact of shifts in gender norms. I hope that more rhetoricians and humanities scholars will continue to engage in this type of interpretive research around pornography and other embodied digital contexts that could benefit from an intensive mixed-methods approach.

4.2 Positional Implications for Feminist Research Methodology

I also hope to continue to reflect critically upon my own position in this work. The importance of standpoint is continually emphasized in feminist research methodology literature (Collins, 2008; Hartsock, 1983; Ramazanoğlu & Holland, 2002)—and I have only briefly touched upon my standpoint in writing this thesis.

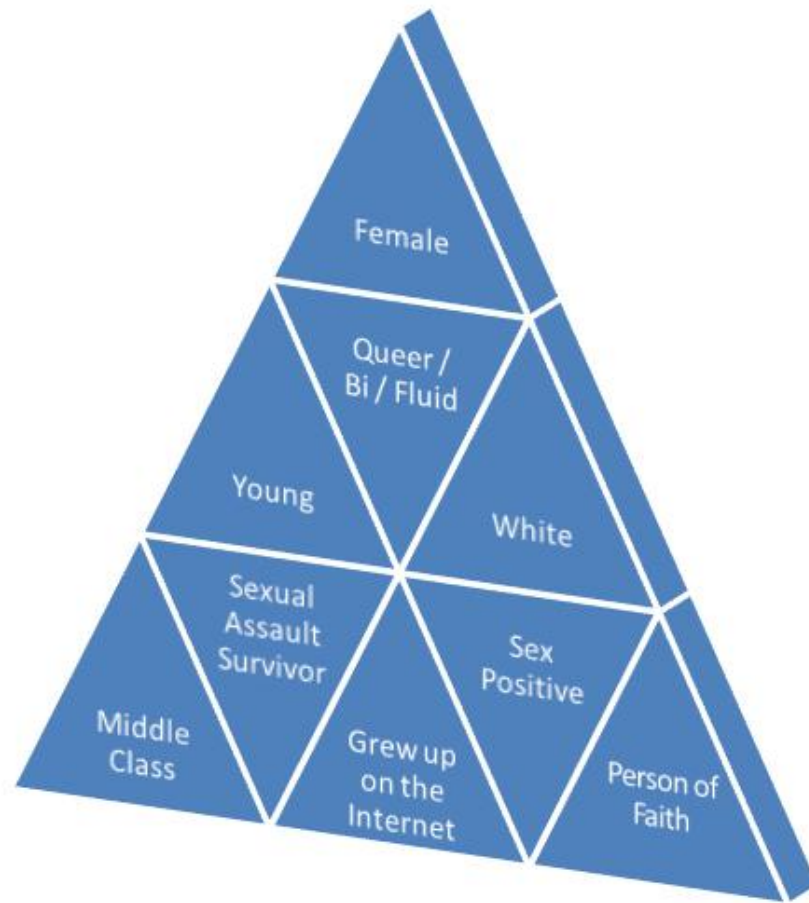


Figure 2: The researcher's intersecting identities, illustrating feminist standpoint

I am a woman who occupies many constellating (Brooks-Gillies et al., 2014) subject positions, which both enrich my scholarship and limit my understanding (see Figure 2, above). It is not only important for me to disclose these positions, but to recognize where they both positively and negatively affect my research and to seek out resources to fill the gaps in my knowledge accordingly. For example, as a middle-class white woman, I cannot understand what it is like to pass through the world as a person of color. I do not internalize sexualized and exoticized images of Black or Asian or Arab or Chican@ women in the same way that women from those racial and ethnic groups do, nor do I understand what it is like to contend with these

stereotypes either inside or outside of the bedroom. This is why I have committed to incorporating theory on racial-sexual stereotypes into my scholarship (Hoang, 2004; Miller-Young, 2013 & 2014; Shimizu, 2013; Williams, 2004a)—because, as a feminist, I have an ethical commitment to challenge this type of marginalization.

Conversely, my positionality, particularly my gender identity, enriches this research in multiple ways. First, I likely wouldn't be able to conduct porn studies research—at least, not employing these methods—if I were a man, because colleagues would assume that I were watching pornography for personal titillation, instead of scholarly edification. Second, as a woman, I have also experienced the "pornification" of culture (Dines, 2011) in different ways than a man would have. The way that my body is sexualized by strangers, the comments of previous romantic partners on my candor around sexuality, and even the circumstances of my own sexual assault reflect gendered power dynamics that I now have a profound and poignant understanding of.

It is often difficult to locate one's self within the context of sexual research in particular, because of the risks involved in such disclosures. However, as internet scholar Lori Kendall (2009) notes, the researcher's erotic reactions are an important part of the inquiry process within sexual research, and these feelings cannot be bracketed (Kendall, 2009). Shulamit Reinharz, who wrote one of the pioneering textbooks on feminist research methodology (1992), describes that one of the qualities that separates feminist research from other empirical work is "the involvement of the researcher as a person;" (Reinharz, 1992, p. 258–263) and I do not seek to separate my personhood from my scholarship—even those dark corners of my personhood that may be unsettling or traumatic. My scholarship is born out of those experiences: both the pleasure and the pain of sexual experience. I hope that my bravery in divulging my complex and

fragmented positionality, including my own erotic subjectivity, might inspire other scholars to do so in their own work on digital communities, sexuality, and embodiment.

4.3 Rhetorical and Cultural Implications: Towards a Feminist Sexual Ethic

I began this thesis by describing the "porn wars" of the 1970s and 80s that created the field of porn studies as it exists today. The porn wars waged a battle *over* the adult film industry and its purported effects, focusing on a particular genre of pornography and disregarding the vital context present within feminist or other genres. Through this project I sought to examine pornographic videos as rhetorical artifacts within their vital contexts, including the real words of the real users that selected them to post on Chickflixxx and PornVids.

But ultimately, this project is not really about pornography. While pornography is my object of inquiry and the phenomenon that I have sought to study for this particular piece of scholarship, this project is truly about sexual dialogue and practice, and perhaps more importantly, patterns of gendered power and agency as exemplified through this erotic imagery.

Additionally, this study makes visible the widespread effects that digital spaces, interfaces and communities can have on discourse and practice—gendered, sexual, and otherwise. Porn boards and sites such as PornVids and Chickflixxx could not exist, at least not on such a large scale and with such great diversity of content, without the internet—which shifted porn consumption from a solitary activity in private clubs or residences, to a more collective endeavor with its own digital communities and participatory cultures (Lindgren, 2010). Truly, the internet not only provides insight into the creation and evolution of socio-cultural phenomena, but is also a robust and generative socio-cultural phenomenon in its own right (Hine, 2009, p. 9).

Candida Royalle (1993) writes of feminist pornography, "...I wanted to make films that say we all have a right to pleasure, and that women, especially, have a right to our own pleasure" (Royalle, 1993, p. 23). According to the images presented within the Chickflixxx dataset—as well as the popularity of James Deen's participatory porn series on both that subreddit and PornVids—the balance of mainstream pornography is shifting (albeit slowly and unevenly) to affirm the pleasure and fantasies of more and more people of more and more genders. The hegemonic male gaze described by Mulvey (1999) and Ms. Naughty (2014) is not by any means dismantled by this phenomenon, but it continues to move us closer towards a multiplicity of erotic media. It makes space to engage critically (and even enthusiastically) with pornography, in all its multimodal, embodied, digital, erotic, affective, gendered, and socio-cultural rhetorical action.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

69: simultaneous or mutual oral sex between two partners.

Amateur: an individual who appears in pornography who is not a professional performer or "porn star;" a genre of pornographic content where one or more participants are not professional porn performers.

BDSM: an umbrella term used to describe sexual practices and communities involving **b**ondage, **d**omination, **s**adism and/or **m**asochism.

Blowjob: colloquial term for fellatio, or oral sex performed on a partner who has a penis; stimulation of the penis with the lips, mouth, tongue, and/or teeth.

Cam girl: a woman who produces pornographic content using a webcam for monetary compensation.

Casting: a genre of video pornography where a participant (typically female-identified) performs sexual acts on a porn professional (typically male-identified) for the opportunity to pursue a career as a porn star or performer. Also colloquially known as the "casting couch" video. *See "GDP—Girls Do Porn" for another variation on this genre.*

Cumshot: an external ejaculation at the conclusion of a porn video, typically on a woman's face or breasts. *Also known as "money shot."*

Doge: an internet meme created with misspelled, grammatically incorrect text in Comic Sans typeface superimposed over a picture of a Shiba Inu breed dog . Typically used to reflect feelings of dubiousness or lack of amusement: e.g., "very shock. such surprise. wow." For additional information on the origins of the Doge meme, see its Know Your Meme page: <http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/doge>.

Facial: a cumshot or money shot that occurs on a woman's face.

Feminist porn: defined by the editors of 2013's *Feminist Porn Book* as a filmic depiction of sexual acts that 1) is written, directed, and/or produced by women; 2) "depicts genuine female pleasure;" and/or challenges or dismantles traditional depictions of sex and sexuality found in mainstream or traditional porn videos (Taormino et al., 2013).

Fingering: manual stimulation of the vagina and its exterior structures (vulva, clitoris, etc.) through touching, caressing, and/or penetration with hands and fingers.

Gangbang: a sexual encounter involving a partner of one gender and three or more partners of a different gender. May or may not be consensual.

GDP, or "Girls Do Porn": a pornographic series that has developed into a genre of its own, wherein amateur women in their late teens and early twenties create their first porn video. All GDP videos are shot in hotel rooms with a similar format, beginning with an interview with the female participant that asks a standard series of questions exploring her sexual history and interests (e.g., "when did you lose your virginity," "where's the craziest place you've had sex," "what's your favorite position," etc.), followed by a blowjob, penetrative sex, and a cumshot.

Handjob: manual stimulation of the penis, scrotum, and/or perineum using hands and fingers.

HD: high definition, a term used to describe video of high resolution and quality.

Heteroporn: heterosexual pornography with one male-identified and one female-identified partner.

Limits: a term used within the BDSM community to describe negotiated practices between sexual partners. A *hard* limit is a practice or act that a partner will absolutely not engage in; a *soft* limit may be situationally dependent or up for negotiation. For example, "I won't let my partner cane or flog me under any circumstance—that is a hard limit for me. I will let my partner spank me, that's a soft limit, but if it gets too rough I will use my safe word."

Male gaze: a term coined by feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey in her 1975 essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema;" used to describe the dominant heterosexual male perspective adopted within film that commodifies and sexualizes the female body, empowering man as an active "bearer of the look" and rendering woman a passive "bearer of meaning" (Mulvey, 1999).

Mammary: placing and thrusting the penis between the breasts, or rubbing it on them.

Money shot: *see "cumshot."*

NSFW: **not safe for work**—an acronym used online to denote pornographic content that is not suitable for users to view in workplaces or other public environments.

Participatory culture: defined by media scholar Henry Jenkins as "culture in which fans and other consumers are invited to actively participate in the creation and circulation of new content" (Jenkins, 2006, p. 331).

Pornosphere: the digital environments in which pornographic content circulates, including porn websites, message boards, and communities.

Pornpreneur: an entrepreneur of pornographic content; particularly individuals who seek out new or emerging porn markets.

Porn tubes: video sharing websites for pornographic content such as PornHub, RedTube, and YouPorn, typically mirroring YouTube's content delivery format and information architecture (hence the term).

POV: **point of view**, an acronym used to describe pornography that is filmed by a sexual partner with a handheld camera (typically the male partner in a heteroporn context), or shot in such a way to mirror this technique. In heteroporn POV scenes, the camera focuses on the woman's face and body.

Produser: a term coined by Axel Bruns (2008) to describe an individual who both creates and uses media content in online spaces.

reddit: a social networking website that hosts collections of message boards, or "subreddits, that coalesce around particular themes (e.g., geographic locations, hobbies, communities, etc.). Users then rank this content and it appears in the order of aggregate popularity by default.

redditor: a user on reddit.

Safe word: a term or phrase used to stop a BDSM sexual encounter. For example, in videos produced by Kink.com, the term "red" signals that a participant wishes to stop the scene immediately, while "yellow" indicates that a participant wants to slow down or receive gentler treatment.

Sex tape: a pornographic video created without a camera crew or production staff, typically by two amateurs.

subreddit: an individual message board on reddit. subreddits are organized around particular topics or themes—for example, r/atheism is devoted to discussion around secularism and non-religion, r/funny is for sharing humorous content, and r/AskReddit enables users to post questions and solicit advice from fellow redditors.

APPENDIX II: SAMPLE ARCHIVAL DATA

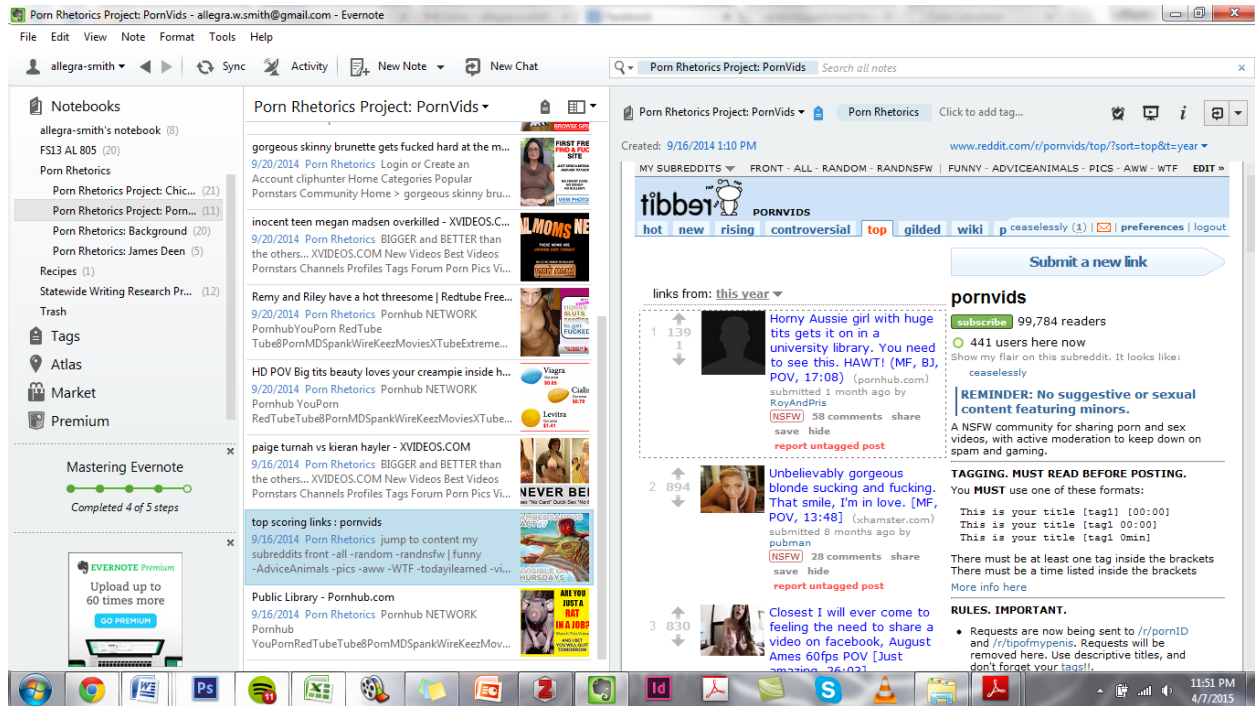


Figure 3: Evernote Screenshot of r/PornVids top videos from September 2014

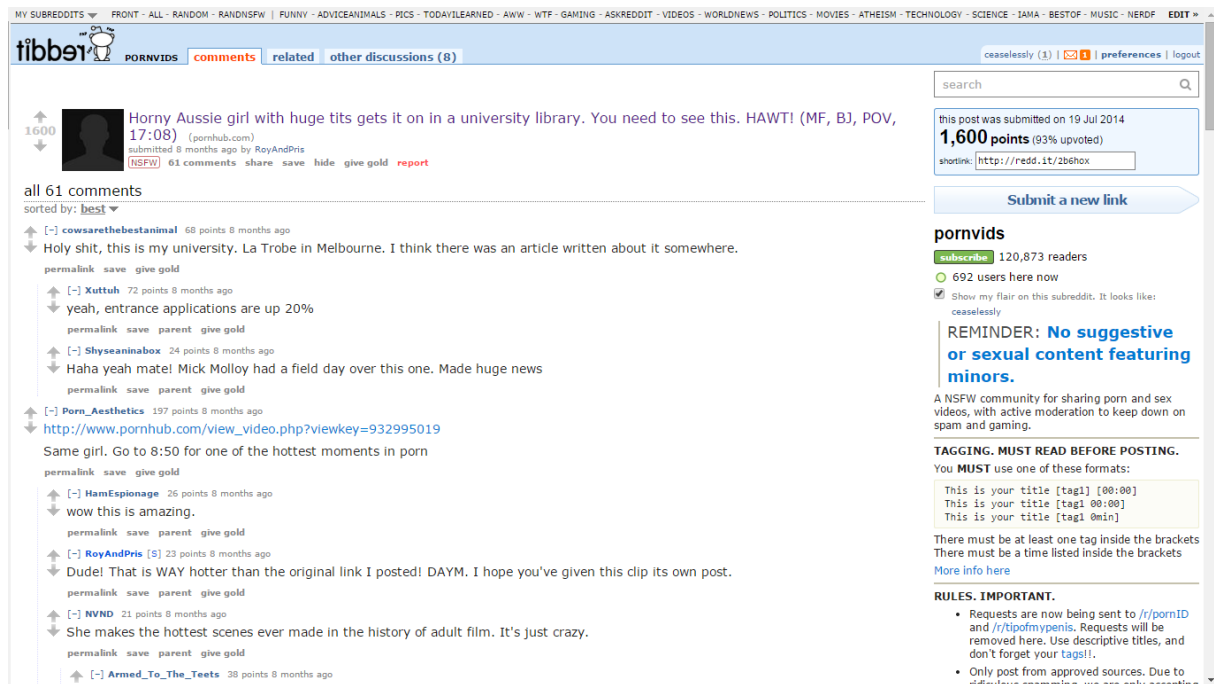


Figure 4: Screenshot (with user comments) of r/PornVids Video #1, "Horny Aussie girl with huge tits gets it on in a university library. You need to see this. HAWT! (MF, BJ, POV, 17:08)"

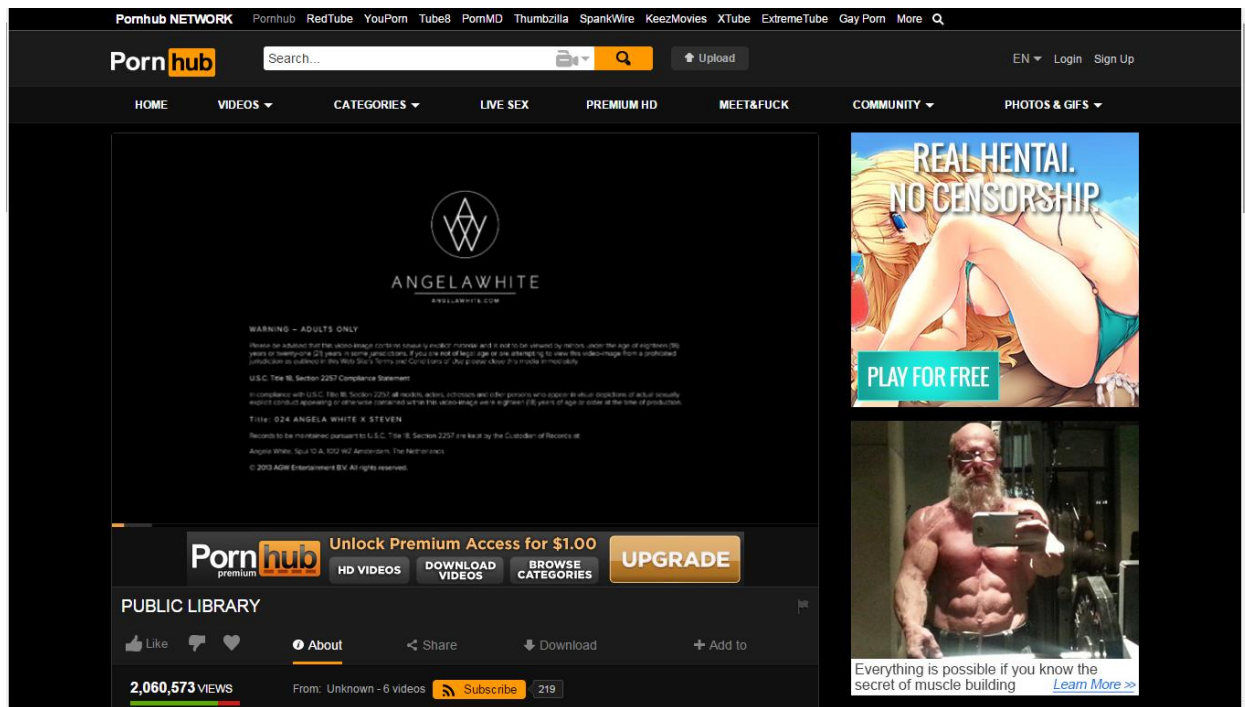


Figure 5: Screenshot of r/PornVids Video #1 on its Host Site

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