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Pornography, sexually explicit cultural artifacts intended to produce immediate sexual arousal. The term first appeared in eighteenth-century France, and is a modern Greek coining from "pornographos," writing about prostitutes. It is documented in English from the mid-nineteenth century.

Definition. Considerable thought has been devoted to the definition of pornography. Proposed definitions are of three types. The first is by content: the portrayal or discussion of genitalia or specific sexual acts is pornographic; this definition fails because sexual acts and genitalia may be portrayed for medical purposes, or in educational material, without the intent to arouse. A second approach is by the observer's use of the materials: those materials which produce sexual arousal are pornographic. This approach fails because images not intended for arousal, and not found arousing by most, can be used to produce sexual arousal; conversely, some are not stimulated by scenes which the majority finds intensely erotic. Finally, there is the intent of the producer: those materials which are intended to arouse the viewer, reader, or listener are pornographic. As a legal criterion this approach also fails, because intent can be disguised or denied, and can never be established directly or with absolute certainty. However, it is sufficient for critical purposes and is the definition used in this article.

Value of Pornography. Pornography has often been considered a symptom of societal illness, and its demise predicted. That the gradual removal of restrictions on sexual activities has not produced a parallel decline in pornography, but rather the reverse, suggests that it satisfies a deep need. While animal sexual excitement is produced by odors, a consequence of the estrus cycle, humans use our minds. The separation of sexuality from reproduction, the increased lifespan civilization has brought, and the anti-erotic trends in modern society mean that glandular impulses toward sexual activity are insufficient. Thus the production and consumption of pornography as a stimulant of sexual activity.

The production of pornography, then, is a naturally human activity, stemming from the same sort of inner drives that lead to the production of music, art, and literature. It has been found among many primitive peoples. That sexual excitement, like laughter, is contagious lies at the root of pornography's power.

Pornography is, for many people, pleasurable, directly and indirectly producing orgasm, and that alone is a powerful argument for it. It relieves guilt over sexuality, encourages masturbation and fantasy, and is a substitute for risky sexual encounters; as such, it can be relationship-enhancing. Through pornography the creator and consumer can explore and accept aspects of their sexuality which cannot be acted upon. Although some pornography transmits misinformation, on the whole it provides education about sex and contributes to public acceptance of sexuality. Through pornography society does its thinking about sex and to some extent about relationships. Pornographers and the legal struggles they have fought have made it possible for non-pornographic sex education materials to circulate freely. Pornography also provides the historian and anthropologist with evidence of sexual activities and attitudes.

Homosexual Pornography. It has been argued that almost all pornography is homosexual. Save for those small portions consumed by women, or created by women for consumption by men, pornography has been created by men in order to stimulate other men. Even if heterosexual activities are described or portrayed, even if the producer and consumer are heterosexually identified, the intent and, in some way, the true nature of such pornography is homosexual. That homosexuality and pornography tend to be accepted or condemned together gives further support to a probable deep relationship, perhaps that they both encourage and require societal tolerance of non-procreative sexuality. There has also been significant involvement of homosexuals in the production and sale of materials directed to the heterosexual public.

However, pornography is usually considered homosexual if it has homosexual content or subject matter. While erotic portrayals of men, and descriptions or expressions of homosexual love, are widely found, homosexual pornography is much more restricted. Where it exists it shows an acceptance by society, however begrudging and limited, of homosexuality and homosexual sexual relations. The occasional exposure of non-homosexuals to it has in turn contributed to further societal acceptance of homosexuality.

History. Pornography is exceptionally subject to destruction, homosexual pornography doubly so, and the following is presumably incomplete. The earliest homosexual pornography is found in Greek vases, on which much sexually explicit homosexual activity (oral, anal, and intercrural intercourse) is found. Primarily pederastic, they constitute a body of work unequalled in artistic value and positive attitude towards sex.

Little is known in the West about the homosexual pornographic poetry of the classical Islamic cultures or the paintings of Persia. Further homosexual pornography in the West, until the nineteenth century, is combined with defenses of sodomy. Such works include *Alicibiade fanciullo a scola*, from seventeenth-century Italy, an erotic defense of pederastic love, taking that of Socrates with his pupil Alcibiades as subject; the bisexual, philosophical fiction of the Marquis de Sade; and *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain, or the Recollections of a Mary-Anne* (1881), the earliest such work in English and the first that is unabashed masturbatory fiction, with brief appended essays on "Sodomy" and "Tribadism." Pornographic scenes are found in the famous *Teleny*. The number of published works, however, was small. Well into the twentieth century pornographic stories, such as *Seven in a Barn*, circulated in typewritten form.

The invention of photography in the nineteenth century provided a new medium for the pornographer (*photography). The best-known creator of sexually stimulating male portraits was the Baron von Gloeden, although there were others in both England and Germany. Sexual activity was often the subject of photographs, though legal restrictions kept them underground.

Twentieth-century homosexual pornography in the United States and Germany, other than that which was underground, began as an offshoot of the naturist and physical culture movements. Erotic "physique" magazines, picture sets, and films were published under the pretense of non-sexual interest in body development. The devastation of German culture by the Nazis and Second World War left the United States as the principal center of gay erotica. 8 and 16mm homosexual films, progressively more straightforward in subject matter and more

open in their circulation, were made and screened in large cities. A major figure is Bob Mizer, who founded Athletic Model Guild in 1945.

The last two generations have seen a continual attack through the courts on censorship of pornography. Supported by an ever more tolerant public, these efforts have gradually brought upholdable convictions for publication or distribution of pornography to an end in most of the U.S. (except for child pornography). However, legal harassment and prosecutions have continued, and increased towards the end of the Reagan years. The freeing of the mails to pornography in the 1970's was an influential step; another was the Danish decision, in the late 60's, to end all legal restrictions on pornography.

Since 1970. Increased gay self-awareness and self-acceptance, greater public acceptance of homosexuality, and the dropping of most legal barriers to the publication and circulation of pornography have all helped homosexual pornography to grow explosively. It has today a major role in the gay male world, in which it is not controversial; few legal cases have involved homosexual pornography. While figures are unavailable, anecdotal evidence suggests that per capita consumption is higher in the gay than in the straight community. To a considerable extent it has replaced the gay bar as a means of socialization. It has shown a classic sign of economic health, the division into specialties, and the conservatism which has come to characterize part of the pornographic industry is also a sign that it is well-established. Inexpensive video equipment has made it easier for new pornographers to enter the field, although to date there has been more straight amateur pornography than gay. A number of glossy monthly magazines, following the model of *Playboy* and its successors, have strong pornographic components in pictures and text (*Blueboy*, *Honcho*, *In Touch*, etc.), and *Stroke* proclaims openly that it is and wants to be pornographic and masturbatory. In the 1980's there has been a renewed interest in written and drawn pornography, in which fantasies are not limited by what models can actually do and in which laws, as on inter-generational sex, can be broken without consequence. The new *phone sex industry offers personalized, oral pornography. The division between pornography and high art loses its rigidity as painters, photographers, and authors of fiction and poetry produce works which stimulate sexually, and pornographers exceed the limits of popular art.

Leading recent gay pornographers of films and videos include Jean-Daniel Cadinot, Jack Deveau (Hand in Hand Films), Joe Gage, Sal Grasso ("Steve Scott"), Fred Halsted, William Higgins, Christopher Rage, and Peter de Rome. Boyd McDonald pioneered the collection, for pornographic ends, of confessional, reader-written material, an undeterminable but large proportion of which is not fantasy but reports of true sexual adventures; his magazine *Straight to Hell* has been succeeded by *First Hand* and *Friction*. Most of McDonald's magazine material has been reprinted in book form by Gay Sunshine Press (now Leyland Publications), and there are original books of the same type from that publisher, from Gay Presses of New York, and from Bright Tyger Press. John Preston, Samuel Steward ("Phil Andros"), and Larry Townsend have written pornographic novels. Jack Fritscher, before turning to "documentary" erotic videos (Palm Drive Video), wrote and edited stories and confessions (*Man2Man* magazine). Among the other pornographic titles published by Leyland Publications is Mike Shearer's *Great American Gay Porno Novel* (1984). David Hurles ("Old Reliable") has recorded, first on audio and then on video tape, hustlers and ex-convicts, often filled with anger. Two leading pornographic visual artists are Tom of Finland and Rex. Pornographic comics have been collected and reprinted by Leyland Publications. In

the 1980's a gay pornographic industry emerged outside the U.S., first in France, then in Japan and on a smaller scale, for export only, in Thailand, Brazil, and Mexico. Just as American pornography has had considerable influence in the spreading and homogenization of gay male culture, foreign pornography has the potential for broadening American gay eroticism.

Women's pornography. Most allegedly Lesbian pornography has consisted of fantasies for heterosexual male consumption, and *Playguy*, ostensibly for heterosexual women, has always had a large male readership. As a genre of sexual fantasy women have had romances, abundant pulp fiction with a strong sexual component. A development of the 1980's is the birth of a true women's pornographic movement, in which women create and market erotic materials for female consumption, both homosexual and heterosexual. A precedent is the feminist erotica of Anaïs Nin.

There are now published anthologies of women's erotica (*Herotica*, edited by Susie Bright, *The Leading Edge*, edited by Lady Winston, and several other collections), magazines both Lesbian (*Bad Attitude*, *On Our Backs*, *Outrageous Women*, *Yoni*) and heterosexual (*Eidos*, *Libido*, *Yellow Silk*), a major novelist, Anne Rice ("A. N. Roquelaure," "Anne Rampling"), and filmmakers (Fatale Video; the heterosexual Candida Royalle). Lace Publications has published several volumes of Lesbian erotica, including the adventure fantasies of Artemis OakGrove and Cappy Kotz' *The First Stroke*. Pat Califia's *Macho Sluts* appeared in 1988 (Alyson Publications). In comparison with men's, women's pornography is less visual, and includes more emotional context for the sexual acts. While pornography has been controversial in the feminist movement, and fantasies of violence or domination especially so, the emergence of women's erotica has helped to defuse the issue. Its continued strong growth seems very likely.

Bisexual pornography. As many men find Lesbian lovemaking stimulating to watch, and the division between homosexual and heterosexual women has not been as rigid as the modern dichotomy between gay and straight men, much pornography has presented women bisexually. The mid-1980's saw the emergence of pornography portraying men bisexually, usually using sexual trios consisting of two men and one woman. Not of "grass-roots" origin, as other forms of pornography have been, it has been a successful creation of the pornographic film industry, with only trivial written precedents. Although a product of the homosexual rather than the heterosexual branch of the industry, it seems to appeal more to heterosexual men than to the gay-identified.

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