

“Make Love Not Porn”: Entrepreneurial Voyeurism, Agency and Affect

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In her groundbreaking work on pornography, film scholar Linda Williams suggests that hardcore pornography articulates a “frenzy of the visible,” a fixation with the “involuntary confession” of bodies in the throes of pleasure (1990, 50). The drive to know the truth of pleasure in another body, the sensations that derive from its pursuit: the tension, the frustration, the power, the shudder of its partial fulfillment—these animate the profit potential of the porn industry. But hardcore porn is no longer a function of the modalities of cinematic representation and distribution addressed by Williams. Just as bricks-and-mortar adult movie theatres have become anachronisms, VHS and DVD/Blu-Ray have become relics. As porn has moved to online settings, it has become a critical site to consider the relationship between bodily sensation and networked communication (Maddison 2004).

In this chapter, then, I use porn as an opportunity to consider the relationship between agency and affect. I do so through an assessment of two alternative porn sites: FuckforForest, a non-profit site that subverts the commercial model of online porn to raise money for eco-activism, and MakeLoveNotPorn.tv (MLNP.tv), a pay porn venture launched in 2012 by Cindy Gallop, a former brand adviser to Coca-Cola and Levi Jeans, which makes money by offering the experience and affect of alternative porn. Gallop’s injunction “Make Love Not Porn” serves as her rallying cry to make contemporary porn feel “real” and “authentic” at the very moment when we

must work harder within the neoliberal ideology of the enterprise society and therefore have less time and emotional energy for fulfilling sex. Such circumstances encourage the demand for greater pornographic realism for which consumers must pay; affect is the lubricant that encourages them to pull out their wallets.

Porn has persistently represented a significant battleground for a range of debates about gender, sexuality, representation, and power (Segal and McIntosh 1992; Attwood 2002; McNair 2002). These debates frequently turn on the tension between agency and embodiment, a tension that stages the human body as a site of excitement and potentiality, or of containment and repression. The deadlocks that arise from this tension have been described as a “tired binary” (Juffer 1998, 2), yet new insights offered by theories of affect, along with the rapidly changing context of network cultures, give us new opportunities for breaking tired binaries and old deadlocks. In a world radically transformed by digitization and networked communication, the value of insights offered by the affective turn is difficult to overlook, especially in work that relates the “new” materialism of the sensory and the affective to the “old” materialisms of work and agency and social power (Lazzarato 1996, 2001; Ahmed 2004, McRobbie 2010).

Culturalist approaches such as cultural studies need to embrace the vocabulary and insights of affect theory if they are to question the ways in which cultural phenomena like sound, music, and pornography work so powerfully upon the body. Jeremy Gilbert (2004) speaks to the limitations of culturalist approaches in getting to grips with sound. He suggests that “the fact that sound is difficult to talk about in linguistic terms does not make it desirable . . . to consign music to a realm of sublime mystery . . . The problem we have is that music is by definition an organised form of experience, one whose effectivity is strictly delimited by sedimented cultural

practices, but . . . one whose structured effects cannot be fully understood in terms of meanings” (n.p.). The enabling force of semiotic theory in cultural studies, Gilbert notes, allows it to unmask “the cultural constructedness of all apparently natural social phenomena” but with the effect of also erasing “the specific sensuous differences between various types of aesthetic practice” (ibid.). Gilbert accepts Massumi’s seminal distinction between emotion and affect, where emotion is “qualified intensity . . . owned and recognized” (Massumi 1996, 221), but he problematizes the effacement of the social from Massumi’s schema. Insisting on the potential continuities between structuralist paradigms and the affective turn, Gilbert suggests that “a post-logocentric cultural theory should not . . . be seen as the latest in a succession of theoretical fads, but as contributing to a long tradition of socialist analysis” (2004, n.p.). Gilbert insists that such an approach is crucial in working against the hegemony of competitive individualism that “has emerged across a vast range of sites as the . . . ideology of contemporary neo-liberalism” and which works against “any notion of collectivity, of public good, of shared experience” (ibid.).

Cultural phenomena are shaped by social forces and power relations as much as they are shaped by affective resonance, and questions about their operation are always questions about cultural forces, power relations, and the potential for social change. If we are to make sense of Gallop’s injunction that we “make love not porn”—an injunction rooted in concern about the social effects of porn on human relationships—then we need to understand not only the sensations associated with consuming porn but also the affective experiences of labor and sociality more widely. The idea of affective, or immaterial, labor is useful in understanding the structures of contemporary pornography, especially in the context of what has been referred to within the U.K. context as the “enterprise society,” one defined by market relations,

competition, inequality, and the privilege of the individual. Tiziana Terranova's foundational work in *Network Culture* considers the materiality of work in the digital economy, where notions of the commodity, and of producers and consumers, are in creative flux, even as value remains of critical importance: "the internet does not automatically turn every user into an active producer, and every worker into a creative subject. The process whereby production and consumption are reconfigured within the category of free labour signals the unfolding of another logic of value" (2004, 75). Terranova is influenced by Maurizio Lazzarato's concept of immaterial labor which describes two components of labor, one in which skills are increasingly associated with "cybernetics and computer control," and the other which creates the cultural content of the commodity, and is a function of the collapsing distinction between work and life. This second element of immaterial labor exceeds the traditional understanding of labor value in critiques of capital and locates specific forms of work in the digital networked economy. Immaterial labor describes the value of the worker's affectivity to capital: her emotions, tastes, desires, opinions, social interactions, networks, domestic practices; her bodily reactions, sensations and capacities. The increasing significance of FaceBook as a professional networking tool points to such a collapse of the distinction between work and life, as does its use as a surveillance tool by employers. Indeed, we might suggest that the phenomena of social media exemplifies Lazzarato's thesis, blurring boundaries between work time and leisure time, between work self and private self. Here we might start to appreciate the implications of Gallop's business venture, *MakeLoveNotPorn.tv*, the unique selling point of which is its delivery of a more authentic and equitable experience of emotion and sensation: this is a question about the relationship between affect and commerce.

In networked culture, pornography most frequently takes the form of commodities that are traded as gifts, or through peer-to-peer sharing, or in financial transactions based on a pay-per-view or subscription basis. In the case of pornographic fiction posted to, and downloaded from sites such as Literotica, Screeve and Nifty, the creativity, tastes, and desires of authors are foregrounded and subject to categorization, reflection, and discussion in forums, feedback posts, ratings lists, and so on. Such exchange of affectivity often circulates without direct financial transaction, but via a site or online community that is itself funded by advertising links, often to other forms of online pornography (Literotica functions in this way). In the case of sites that sell access to video content, the most popular commercial model works by offering short preview or introductory clips, with images, text, and other context all designed to solicit payment to access full or further content. Here the affective power of the preview material, which depends upon striking a balance between potential affective capacity and realized affective capacity, directly correlates to the economic success of the site. Preview material must act on potential consumers' bodies powerfully enough to have them reach for their bank cards, yet not so powerfully that they would not wish to do so again. These "forces of encounter," as Greg Seigworth and Melissa Gregg (2010) describe them, account for the intensity of consuming porn, but also of making it. The financial value of networked porn depends upon the immaterial labor of porn performers and producers: their tastes, but also their bodily reactions, sensations, and capacities. I shall return to the question of immaterial labor in porn in the context of the enterprise society. Before doing so, however, I will situate my discussion within the current political and critical context of porn studies.

Constrained Optimism and Altporn

An influential vein in porn studies exhibits what I refer to as “constrained optimism.” It coincides with the affective turn in cultural theory as well as the widespread academic and political acceptance of the failure of ideological revolution and social democratic ideals. If criticism of the dominance of so-called logocentric perspectives hinges on its tendency to “focus on negative critique,” the affective turn offers “more life-affirming alternatives to the status quo” (Paasonen 2011, 9). Critics in this vein of porn studies side-step a mainstream industry generally considered to be characterized by standardization, repetition, misogyny, and low artistic value, coupled to its failure to yield the “sexual democratization” that some commentators hoped for (McNair 2002, 207; Attwood 2006, 81). Instead, they have tended to focus on a range of alternative pornographies (Cramer 2007; Jacobs 2004a; 2004b; Attwood 2007; Paasonen 2007; 2010; Van Doorn 2010) referred to variously as altporn (Attwood 2007; Jacobs 2004a; 2004b); netporn (Paasonen 2010); realcore (Messina, quoted in Gemin 2006); indie porn (Cramer 2007; Cramer and Home 2007); and amateur porn (Jacobs 2004). Florian Cramer and Stewart Home have suggested that indie porn “is the pornography of this decade, if not of the whole century” (2007, 164). Academic work on these “alternative” pornographies, which I will refer to hereafter as altporn, tends to demonstrate constrained optimism by looking for breakthrough trends, movements, and artifacts to validate the agency of the progressive voyeur or sexual dissident against the forces of reaction and bigotry. At the same time I would suggest that much work on altporn evades engagement with the political implications of apparently progressive sexual activism that is nevertheless located in conventional relations of capital, and which offers forms of agency and empowerment associated with consumer culture.

The problem of categorization casts a long shadow here. Susanna Paasonen has rightly suggested that “the notion of the mainstream is porous and contingent,” and it is clear that the category of altporn is slippery (2007, 163). As the description of a particular kind of online product or experience, altporn can be difficult to disaggregate from the output of an industry that depends upon continual commodity innovation (Biasin and Zecca 2009), and where the categories of amateur and professional, producer and consumer, are in flux. As a category of critical enquiry, then, altporn fails to encompass all of the diverse range of practices being undertaken, and indeed much work in this area demonstrates a self-conscious preoccupation with the limits and frailties of taxonomical ordering, as the diversity of terms listed above demonstrates.

Work in porn studies is critical of tendencies in altporn, most significantly around questions of labor and commodification. Yet the focus on alternative pornographies tends to maintain an investment in the promise of agency, where this agency is a function of the expansion of the technological resources available in a networked culture, the proliferation of choice, and the blurred boundary between consumer and producer. Fuckforforest, frequently cited as an example of indie or alternative porn (Jacobs nd; Attwood 2007; Bonik and Schaale 2007; Paasonen 2007; 2010; Dicum 2005), illustrates the complex networked dynamics of affective labor, self-commodification, and agency. The site itself is an example of constrained optimism in its rallying cry, “We cum to save the world!”, and as a non-profit altporn site it provides a useful corollary and contrast to Gallop’s more business-minded MakeLoveNotPorn.tv.

FuckforForest (Figure 1) adopts the standard commercial model for online porn sites, with free previews and subscription-based access to regularly updated

hardcore material and subverts it as a form of eco-activism. This operates in three ways: first, marketing of the site works to raise the profile of ecological issues, rather than to merely publicize the site's sexual imagery; second, the site is run on a non-profit basis, and subscriptions are donated to eco-charities and organizations; and third, users are given the option of uploading explicit images of themselves in lieu of monetary subscription. The site, then, equates affective responses to sexual imagery with both progressive political ideals and a promise of mutuality and inclusivity. In this, FuckforForest exploits a critical moment of arousal when the process of speculatively, perhaps aimlessly, browsing, acquires a purpose that becomes directed towards fulfillment and climax, enabled by the potentially disruptive moment of bank card authorization. Here, bodily intensity is marked by both the representational and the mechanical as it is delineated by the practice of browsing free preview clips and paying for full and complete clips, and articulated by a "grabbing" of content and money from the network, the touch of hands on body, mouse, trackpad, purse.

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Figure 1. FuckforForest home page

FuckforForest lubricates desire for the bodies of eco-activists with the promise of solidarity with their ideals. And the thrill of such solidarity, simultaneously sensuous, ideological, and financial, has worked as a form of political advocacy: since its inception in 2004 the site has raised over €245,549 for rainforest protection charities.¹ However, FuckforForest has not always been able to donate its revenues as it would like, or to continue to work with some organizations, due to moral objections to FuckforForest's explicit sexuality. Both the Rainforest Foundation and World

Wildlife Federation (WWF) have refused donations, and FuckforForest was obliged to withdraw from its work with Arbofilia, a Costa Rican reforestation project, when other funders of the project threatened to withdraw their support.

FuckforForest is significant in a number of ways. The site represents an optimistic and encouraging worldview in which sexuality, public life, political activism, ethical environmentalism, and interpersonal exploration are validated and mobilized in productive dialogue, and linked through an appeal to bodily sensation. In contrast to the way in which many online porn sites articulate sexuality to gender power or gender violence, FuckforForest frames sexuality and bodily sensation as potentially liberating, egalitarian, and socially transformative. While all the models on the site appear to be uniformly young, white, and slender, there's a noticeable lack of what Paul Willeman has described as "meat" and "plant" embodiment (2004, 21). Images on the site show model/activists with body hair, un-enhanced breasts, and flaccid as well as erect penises of modest proportions, in contrast to what Mark Davis (2009) has described as the "viagra cyborg" prevalent in mainstream commercial hardcore. The organization of genital play in the film clips is enthusiastic, amateurish, and lacks both the predictability of the "normative pornoscript" (Van Doorn 2010) and the professionalized effect of the digital workflow that characterizes clips on pay sites. In short, FuckforForest seems "real."

"Make Love Not Porn"

Cindy Gallop launched MakeLoveNotPorn.com (MLNP) in 2009 as a way of facilitating "a dialogue . . . about sex" by counter-posing "porn myths" ("men love coming on women's faces") with the "real world" ("some women like this, some don't"). MLNP is not grassroots activism, but rather, like Gallop's other online

initiative, IfWeRanTheWorld.com, articulates politics as a function of corporate social responsibility. The funky messages about sex and choice operate as a shop front for selling T-shirts, investment opportunities, and Gallop's own entrepreneurial activity as a brand advisor. In the context of immaterial labor, we might see Gallop's website as trading her immaterial and affective experience sex, and her branding and communication skills, for financial reward, professional esteem, and investor confidence; but also as re-confirmation of her status as not only a successful business person, but as an enterprising subject.

This particular enterprising subject accepts the recession of the state apparatus in the failure of sex education ("I'm trying to counterbalance the impact of porn as sex education"), and seeks personal self-actualization through the articulation of her own autonomy ("sex at its absolute best is transcendental . . . you just have to be creative"). Gallop may resist elements of porn's normative script of genital play and sexual negotiation, yet it is clear that her agency, as an entitled member of the neoliberal elite, is critical to both her insight into what is wrong with porn's influence on sexual practice and her desire and ability to do something about it.

In 2012 Gallop launched MakeLoveNotPorn.tv (MLNP.tv), a pay porn site and at the time of writing still in beta, which literally capitalizes on the investor confidence she was able to muster with her original site (MLNP.com). MLNP.tv offers a familiar altporn experience that exhibits many of the characteristics which Feona Attwood (2007) identifies in the new taste cultures: an appeal to community and authenticity, a self-consciousness about resisting familiar porn tropes, and an aestheticization of sex that accords with the apparent bourgeois bohemianism of *Sex and the City* in its television and movie incarnations. Gallop's site proclaims "we are pro-sex, pro-porn and pro-knowing the difference" and outlines its philosophy:

MakeLoveNotPorn.tv is of the people, by the people, and for the people who believe that the sex we have in our everyday life is the hottest sex there is. We are not porn—porn is performance (often an exceedingly delicious performance, but a performance nonetheless). We are not 'amateur'—a label that implies that the only people doing it right are the professionals and the rest of us are bumbling idiots. (Honey, *please*.)²

The site's tone makes an appeal for emotional identification with the kinds of post-feminist subjects who Angela McRobbie describes as a new form of feminine deference, quite literally clothed in the privileges of consumer culture, that arises from women's capacity to earn, and seeks approval not directly from men but from the "fashion and beauty system" (2007, 723-4).

An interview with the Guardian newspaper in the UK, illustrated with a photograph of Gallop reclining on a rather fabulous animal print chaise, makes explicit the correlation between the distinctiveness of MLNP.tv and Gallop's persona. MLNP.tv is "an elevated style of adult video" which offers "tasteful erotica" that will be "the sex education of the future," while Gallop herself is "enthusiastically single and unashamed to date men less than half her age," despite being 52 years old, and "wears figure-hugging black ensembles, attends glamorous parties and is not shy in correcting her aggressive young lovers" (Walters 2012). The persona is complex: Lust, a taste for younger men, sexual promiscuity, charisma, class and wealth, the liking of porn despite distaste for its apparent myths. The projection of greed/agency/business acumen represent her affective labor as owner of a website looking to attract more users, as she enterprises her emotions, tastes, desires, opinions, social interactions, networks, domestic practices, bodily reactions, sensations, and

capacities—all with a promise of our potential pleasure and fulfillment in purchasing porn clips.

MLNP.tv strives for intimacy in its tone, while offering the fashionable gloss and style of a corporate site. There are four levels of sexual representation on offer. First, what we might characterize as post-feminist, post-porn, empowering rhetoric in such statements as “Welcome to our little experiment that celebrates all of us who makefunnymagnificentcrazydirtysexymessygloriouslovenotporn” and “in a world where you can access so much online for free, and where artists, creators and producers struggle to make money, we believe that everyone who creates something that gives other people pleasure deserves to make money from it.” Second, there are the clips themselves, of which, at the time of writing, there are 31 available for rent, uploaded by ten different posters: seven heterosexual, one lesbian, two solo; one mixed race black/white, one mixed race latino/white. The clips range in length from three to 46 minutes and express a range of styles: some are amateur, with poor lighting, little or no editing, and a fixed camera position (e.g. clips uploaded by Ionsquares); some are more elaborate, with editing, music, and a more self-consciously aesthetic and artistic (e.g. clips uploaded by Lilycade and Violet+Rye). Third, each clip has a small selection of still images that can be freely viewed. Fourth, most clips include a “peek”—a short preview for the video made by the posters.

I have already noted the affective and economic power of the preview clip for pay-per-view (and subscription) porn sites. MLNP.tv has a page of specific advice for potential posters on the importance of the preview clip. Sara, curator of content, suggests:

One of the things I've loved the most about curating our very first mlnp.tv #realworldsex videos has been the sheer joy I've experienced every time one

of our #makeovenotpornstars submits a work. And, being the lucky lady that I am, I've often had the privilege of knowing a little bit of the backstory behind each work that makes watching it all the more enjoyable. And of course, the mlnp.tv team really wanted you, the user, to also reach that level of enjoyment (heh). So, we created a space for each #makeovenotpornstar to upload a video separate from their main work. A place where you would be able to introduce your #realworldsex videos and point out something that was particularly juicy about your #realworldsex experience. Not only that, but these intro videos are available as "previews" of your #realworldsex videos themselves, allowing users to view these 'trailers' for free and learn a little bit more about your work before they rent it...when you submit your own #realworldsex video, be sure to include an intro video of your own. We call them 'context', and it's part of what we mean by 'contextualizing' your submissions. Backstories are HOT! You'll be sure to gain more rentals, more #realworld cash and much admiration not only from the mlnp.tv community but also from me, Madam Curator!³

There are many things to draw attention to here. Backstory and contextualization are foregrounded as connected to pleasure and profit. Here the preview clip functions not only in balancing affective intensity delivered with affective intensity promised (and still withheld) but potentially also offers pre-pornographic stickiness and a form of relationality that exceeds the confines of the experience of watching the genital acts in the "feature" video itself. The peek does not merely preview the video, it is not merely constituted as a segue to the main event, but is instead an insight into the sensations, relations, and conditions that manifest that event, both as private genital act and pornographic self-exhibition. The peek offers

discrete pleasures attached to the act of voyeurism it promises, but ones that surprise and move in ways that exceed our expectations of the pornographic scene. Stickiness here is about binding the consumer to the affective labor of posters who profit directly from the return visits and repeated rentals that such stickiness represents, but it is also about the visceral experience of watching the peek, many of which are shockingly intimate, troubling in their frailty, vulgar in their often unintentional directness, and gross in their effect upon the sexual knowledge we have of their participants. Some of the peeks have a professional gloss and attest to the ambiguous notion of amateurism that altporn sites like MLNP.tv demonstrate, where posters are already sex bloggers or porn performers or creative professionals (Violet+Rye, LilyandDanny, and AudioSmut) who use MLNP.tv to extend the field of their entrepreneurial subjectivity and business activity.

MLNP.tv's Madam Curator suggests that the "gold standard" for peek clips was uploaded by Lily and Danny, both of whom work as porn performers. Their peek features the couple talking directly to camera about the circumstances behind the making of the sex scene they are selling on MLNP.tv. They talk about being asked to contribute to MLNP.tv by Cindy Gallop herself, about how Lily sometimes cannot have vaginal sex with Danny because she has been working hard filming, about how in their professional lives they are asked to do "crazy" positions that do not always feel as good as they look, about being regularly tested for HIV and STDs and that they are a "fluid bonded couple." The power of this peek, however, lies not just in the specific knowledge it reveals about experiences of acting in and watching porn, in negotiating sex with your boyfriend after having sex with other professionals all day, but in the force of the encounter it stages between Lily and Danny who constantly touch and gaze at one another and at the viewer with a kind of comfortable yet intense

intimacy. Porn solicits a familiar range of affects, from arousal and orgasm, through to disgust and humor, but Lily and Danny's peek tears something in the familiar structure of our license to look at porn; there is a simple and mundane authenticity here that is shocking. This peek exceeds our expectations of the "normative pornoscript" affectively and representationally, unlike the clips available on FuckForForest, which offer much more conventional affective and sexual experiences.

These peeks go some way towards justifying the site's claims about authenticity and for resisting familiar porn tropes. In this, MLNP.tv is following a trend exhibited currently in a lot of commercial online porn where behind the scenes clips are either offered as a free preview, or are added as a coda to the paid video (Härmä and Stolpe 2010). MLNP.tv is distinctive in taking this form of commodity innovation and applying it to commercial clips produced in more strongly marked amateur contexts, where performers have a pre-existing relationship, and where the affective resonance of intimacy exceeds both the physical vulgarity of the sex acts and the stilted conversation exhibited by strangers or work colleagues, brought together for professional reasons, and who are subject to the demands of a director, producer or webmaster.

MakeLoveNotPorn.tv refines the altporn formula in a number of ways. These innovations can be summarized in terms of the ambition of the project: in its scale, MLNP.tv represents a significant shift in attempts to mainstream hardcore porn to taste cultures defined by aspirational lifestyle shopping, where aesthetic and tonal cues reinforce an experience that foregrounds the power of choice, and where pleasure and agency are intertwined: "pro-sex, pro-porn, pro-knowing the difference." MLNP.tv self-consciously eschews the taxonomies of online porn—"creampie,"

“anal,” “Asian,” and so on—and instead works to instantiate a categorization based on a funkier, more playful and more feminist logic. MLNP.tv expresses an ambition to market hardcore pornography to women (and couples) more familiar with Sex and the City and the “fashion and beauty system” (McRobbie 2007) than with YouPorn, or to women and couples already familiar with the “sexist and disgusting” nature of porn (Cramer 2007) and yet subject to the terms of the post-sexualized society Gill (2003) describes: a society where elaborating a generalized enterprising of the self stands as the very marker of professional and social success. McNay (2009) eruditely articulates the contradictory nature of appeals to agency and individuality in the enterprise society, arguing that such appeals actually demonstrate responsible self-management, not emancipation. These are the conditions of immaterial sex, where libidinal, emotional and physiological energies, desires and sensations designate terms of human capital.

Gallop, brand innovator and pornographer, manifestly represents the apex of this formation. MLNP.tv as commodity innovation arises from the insights of Gallop’s own sex life, which are self-represented as public relations copy, and work as a guarantee of both authenticity and her up-scale post-feminist values. Likewise, the site facilitates wider, self-managed forms of enterprising immaterial sex, where participants upload their sex scenes in hopes of earning fifty percent of rental fees generated. These participants represent different levels of experience with sexual entrepreneurship, from porn stars on their day off to sex bloggers and media professionals diversifying their creative portfolio. Innovations such as the peek designate an extension of the terms of pornographic immateriality, commodifying moments of intimacy and intensity that exceed the conditions of generic genital play in pay porn. This commercial advance is a function of the social conditions and the

cultural and political insights that animate MLNP.tv— its idiom, mode of address and aesthetic cues, its information architecture and site design, and the affectivity of Gallop’s labor. Here the incitement to confess the secrets of bodily capacity (Williams’s “frenzy of the visible”), which has been the animating principle of commercial porn’s promise of authenticity and realness, exemplifies the conditions of the enterprise society. And for consumers, MLNP.tv’s apparent rejection of the “normative pornoscript” and standardized niche marketing, along with its flattery of bourgeois values and tastes, might actually feel like making love not making porn. But only in the bizarrely contradictory social conditions that neoliberal ideology describes can such a distinction be meaningful in the first place, as the collapsing distinctions between work and life, public and private, professional networks and personal relationships, designate less time and emotional energy for sexual intimacy and intensity, while prescribing ever more elaborate standards for its online performance by others. Here, brand extension and commodity innovation acquire an affective intensity as modes of sociality.

From Agency to Entrepreneurial Voyeurism

The question of how we activate political engagement within representational cultures has never been straightforward, as the examples of FuckforForest and MakeLoveNotPorn.tv demonstrate; but recent theoretical and political developments, not least in the aftermath of the publication of Michel Foucault’s lectures from the Collège de France, have challenged taken-for-granted assumptions about the value of agency in cultural negotiations. In *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Foucault describes neoliberal governmentality as “a formal game between inequalities” (2008, 120) designed to propagate the equality of inequality, where competition and the enterprise

form become generalized as the primary mode not only of social institutions and interaction, but of individuality itself. In the context of Foucault's analysis of the self as a function of the enterprise society, Lois McNay has questioned the relationship between individual agency and political engagement. She asks, "if individual autonomy is not the opposite of, or limit to neoliberal governance, but rather lies at the heart of disciplinary control through responsible self-management, what are the possible grounds upon which political resistance can be based?" (2009, 56).

For Lazzarato, the organization of labor in neoliberalism works to maximize polarizations of income and power while working to prevent these inequalities becoming "irreducible political dualisms:" in this way neoliberalism affects a depoliticization of labor (2009, 120). The enterprise society involves the "generalization of the economic form of the market . . . throughout the social body and including the whole of the social system not usually conducted through or sanctioned by monetary exchanges" (Foucault 2008, 243). McNay has emphasized several features of neoliberalism's construction of the self-as-enterprise. Critically, the organization of self around a market logic "subtly alters and depoliticizes conventional conceptions of individual autonomy" by foregrounding choice, differentiation, and "regulated self-responsibility" (McNay 2009, 62). This has profound effects for sociality: McNay suggests that the self as entrepreneur "has only competitors." Neoliberalism proceeds on the basis that these "competitors," alienated from one another by the governmental maximization of the inequalities between them, should seek advancement through the acquisition and exploitation of individual freedoms, which proliferate constantly. Neoliberalism discourages class and other forms of solidarity precisely because these "competitors" are constantly differentiated from one another, and because the "idea of personal responsibility is eroded" (ibid.,

65) by the outsourcing to individuals of rights and responsibilities previously secured by the social contract.

These theories of labor and power may help to account for the constrained optimism porn studies writers have exhibited about altporn. On the one hand, we can see the work of altporn entrepreneurs as expressions of the post-Fordist multitude: emergent expressions of creativity and sociality, arising from the articulation of communities of interest, where interdependence and cooperation, as functions of new technological possibilities, are expressed by user-generated content and interactivity in forums, blogs, and reviews. On the other hand, we can see altporn entrepreneurs as affective laborers for whom the distinction between life and work, and work and leisure has collapsed, and for whom the opportunity to comply with the requirement to enterprise themselves arises from an exploitation of their latent immaterial creativity. We might describe what emerges from such transactions as immaterial sex, where libidinal, emotional and physiological energies, desires and sensations that are a function of human capital produce surplus value.

Successful consumption of porn depends upon restive file browsing, with hands occupied not only in stroking the body, but in operating the mouse or trackpad, to opening and scrubbing through files in order to patch together a bricolage of quality pornographic moments. Access to porn, then—often especially altporn—is dependent on managing networks and social media where we must demonstrate entrepreneurial skill, choose appropriate contractual subscriptions, follow links and recommendations to new sites of free content, keep up with chat rooms, torrent lists, blogs and feeds to ensure that we are not missing out on opportunities to realize our desires and demonstrate our self-management. These patterns of entrepreneurialism of the self mirror the practices necessary to maintain professional success as an

immaterial laborer. These are the conditions described by Mark Fisher's notions of "reflexive impotence" and "depressive hedonia" (2009, 21), where pornographic pleasures, in all their accessibility, standardization and dependability, somewhat conform to work-centric patterns of social relations. This is a moment when the search for pleasure, as Nina Power notes, might become just another form of work (2009, 51).

Here the optimism that Paasonen detects in the turn towards affect, which seeks "life-affirming alternatives to the status quo" (2011, 9), potentially founders, reminding us that bodily sensations need to be socially and politically situated. This is a question about the purpose and direction of cultural theory. But it is also a question about experiences other than the practice of theory. Whether sensations and experiences related to online porn are life-affirming or repressive or complex modalities of both, and more, remains an urgent question. Situating these experiences and sensations in a social context is one way of potentially avoiding a methodological trap in which we affirm the social importance of affect but are then unable to socially locate it or to account for it outside the terms of a theoretical enunciation that can often feel startlingly subjective and individualized. In part, we might explain the enduring popularity of porn as a subject for critics and theorists of gender and sexuality by noting that its materiality, both in the sense of artifacts and institutions, and in its effect upon bodies, its "carnal resonance" (Paasonen 2011), allows us to adjudicate sexual practice: porn offers a privileged, seductive lens through which the private is also public. Porn can act as a barometer for modes of pleasure and their political effects, but in order to serve this purpose sensation must be culturally located. To what extent, for example, does pornographic immaterial sex, enacted by sexual "cyborgs" (Davis 2009) and "athletes" (Taormino 2008, quoted in Paasonen

2011) articulate a standard for (self) regulation of the (sexual) self, one that might be impossible to achieve but which is coterminous with the enterprise society? Is it impossible to achieve because we don't have enough time for an elaborate recreational sex life, or at least one that patterns the affective capacity of the sexualized society? Impossible to achieve because we are unable to autonomously realize our libidinous capacity, because we are too tired, alienated, socially inept, or domestically and socially compromised? Impossible because our sensory and affective responses might relate more to mediated networked interactions than to "meat" intimate bodily ones?

In such a context we might understand Gallop's exhortation that we "Make Love Not Porn" as an appeal to network our desires to commodities with the allure of bourgeois bohemianism, to the promise of egalitarian gender play, where intensity is seemingly unrestricted by the standard taxonomies of pay-per-view porn, and where our apparent privacy promises an experience of that intensity released from the liability and responsibility of our entrepreneurial self.

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