

than by banning porn. - >
 0 Z] . Against all this is the argument that per-
 i | haps porn is in fact a safety valve, a way to
 - . | quietly satisfy yourself at home rather than
 : go out and inflict your deviance on someone.
 Fedler, however, characterises. the dis-
 comfort many women feel about porn as .
 belonging to those â\200\234powerlessâ\200\235 in society.
 Thereâ\200\231d be a great deal of argument over
 _ that, with middle class, educated feminists in
 _the US and the UK screaming. â\200\234patronis-
 Ao i, AT g . | ing!", â\200\234wrong!â\200\235. But here in South. Africa?
 S S 2, How powerful is a woman-working as &
 w8, % = i . ' P domestic servant? Or a street.cleaner? Or
 ; ot) eking out a living in the former homelands?
 -) Remember that these experiences are aver-
 _age here and that this is a country in which
 it is estimated that a woman is raped every
 . | 83 seconds. : :
 Ce " There are degrees of power in different
 classes, but nevertheless few, if â\200\230any, women
 could honestly say they-are and always have
 - been as powerful, or especially as listened
 to, as their male peers. IS
 But why, people will ask, do women pose
 for these photographs or act in these videos?
 â\200\234What's essential to-porn is a notion of
 _exploitation,â\200\235 commented Mark Rosin, a
 censorship lawyer, â\200\234and if a model is being
 paid extravagantly and consents to the
 process it doesnâ\200\231t mean she isnâ\200\231t: being
 exploited. Exploitation does not exist solely
 ; in the mind of & model, the situation can be
 G exploitative - anyway- because -society is
 i oppressive of women in general.â\200\235
 _But Zerbst says â\200\234no model is dragged
 ing in front of the camerasâ\200\235. He adds:
 uting the: social:-convention
 men -shoiild â\200\234bÃ©=demure and

"-and they are asserting an eco- .

- computers. And: perhaps they -
_should remember-that there is- .
. such a thing as. hate speech, : |
- usually. racist and from - the:
4 Tightwing, and that -the-term? | -e8
".could just as easily be applied - Frinoe
"to some porn, vis @ vis women.~ |
-* How many people, besides:-
religious groups and the moral -
t, have questioned what is
going on? Very few, because to
- do so-would be to risk being . i
labelled that worst of all things " i3
in the liberal left a prude, or
even worse, & prude who does-
't understand the issues.
+: Anti-porn. law lecturer
Joanne Fedler, who will be pre-
~ sending a brief to the constitu- Tk
tional court on porn, as wil |
-Hustler, points out that the -
: TR, right to freedom is continually
ow many pictures of naked genitals*- espoused as the reason for-:
can you look at in one hour?.If the ~ sllowing porn. But, she says,
answer is not enough, give me* the-right to freedom has to be
& Emore then I'm afraid you suffer: -balanced against the right
to
from that most debilitating of all conditions, - equality, also enshrined in the
a total lack of imagination. Looking at differ-< present constitution.. The
ent arrangements of genitalia, is, after the .Canadian- Supreme Court has
initial shock, plain boring. : upheld restrictions on porn for
! Flipping through magazines such as precisely this reason, deciding
Loslyf and Hustler, one notes the obsession that it undermines the equality
with gynaecology before starting to yawn. . of women.
The anticipation of shock/horror in fact may It's important to distinguish
exceed anything that's in the product, & lott between *different kinds of
1 like Madonna's Sez book. T porn. Zerbstas noted that the
1 Â Support for the idea that porn is & yawn.a. debate now=raging usual

cThe dÃ©bate' onâ\200\230pograpÃ© &
Â¶rages on in South Africa:Here

Glynis O'Hara looks at somÃ©-of
â\200\234the arguments, and declarÃ©s t
â\200\230actual material'abore . e

minute has come from an unexpected ~includes the entire spectrum of
â\200\230source. Hustler associate editor Jeff Zerbst pern. â\200\234I detest child porn and
d
l said much the same when he said the logical .:bgstiality and I've:never ever

critique of pormis not that it is hate-provoke. .seen.sex andviolence pictorial- PORN: i e
R iahie he kit S e T A e T T EMON . Snomie right, the Tight to:make money in any
ing-and crime-inducing but that it is â\200\234formu-awayabutl~have seen it in.the ..cmesi
R et O T 5) e L i : e vay: sase.â\200\235 i EES
la-laden, banal and imaginatively dull.â\200\235 movies, such as in Natural : ;

. He was addressing a Unisa conference on ~+ Born Killers (thg'lddngpgecl_giï~\202:jn~th&3n
ptei*j.iadverï~\20lsing}Â«cbx?%&st. Y
gender issues at the time, along with his : room). Â@ i Â¥ - - F . gt -g - â\200\230There a
reltgo -importan
{ partner-in-debate, anti-porn â\200\234law lecturer .. :â\200\234The soft porn world-ismai
ve and ingenus - Âfquestions <abouts 0

.Joanne Fedler, He added: â\200\234Porn;is B-grade ; ousa d we're:talking gbout soft:porn:

We're:

t~interlinked
1 - ornography. First,. is it
misogynous? Aid;secondly, does.porn lead
bty 2 sae et AR

& There has:been. lenty:of evi
offenders collectzand=
j st o

1 = v

{fantasyâ\200\235 .. ' o Lk allowed hatd core:porn if this-cotntry=.3 - v
" Hewas saying at the time that porn is notâ\204¢ It is naturally repellent to people.â\200
\235 So he -Â« ~~There's mofotally clear -answer to the: -
infinitely - riveting and corrupting, leading.. .does believe in limits. - - 7. first one.
Yes;it'can be misogynous, but.on.
people to behave irresponsibly and insanely...". Nevertheless:magazines on sale now.are â
\200\234the other hand; it isn't always so. In fact, one : -
That statement isâ\200\234at"the crux of theâ\200\230debate â\200\234shochngâ\200\234toâ
\200\224'many"Sou rAfricansÂ¥Seope:~2=of the most frustratingthings about pornog- = T
'how raging in South'Africaâ\200\231s media.. : : ?

4 There have been .twd esponses:to;p:
80 far, either that it is digusting Arid demean-
- ing to women or that it is the:apogeeof free
-8peech and is.not mp(;nsible;tpr.;g:manng

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Amagazing *full Â¥of isilicone . inflatÃ©d - raphy may bÃ©xthat th Â»'are no clear, consis-
i
ot oot 4ulated B raply by bt e i
tokYe
gy

Â¥speech ever -promised ;us-should -perhaps >
â\200\234&xamine.a lot more;closely;: rwhatiss
{ Â©oing on in-magazines, videos, and onfhelr
te.

L considered quite natural
e. But she felt that the
ir)-" was portrayed in the
-as not healthy for young

hce a difficult task when tv-
itor the kind of sexually
nages their children are
Seen a Madonna video late-
to forget that sex is used o
s of things, from fashion and
ouse paint and motor cars.
people who find Hustler
ion't bat an eye at the scantily
socratively posed â\200\230back-page
ilv newspapers.
defining pornography is cru-
v debate about it Dictionaries
origins of the word back to
Greece where it literally meant
bf, or about, prostitutesâ\200\231. But in
ern lexicon there is soft pom,
re, erotica â\200\230and-s/m (sado-
m). Some images are classified

ence.~And

d some as acts of criminalsex- -
â\200\230some seem to be

â\200\234Who has a spe
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"aï\201'dafeï\202 3
e R T ANEAT soss

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0 separate issues. !
= s RIS . ,

Adds Shona Bagley. deputy editor of
South African Playboy, â\200\230TV and films
eroticise violence. which is far more
dangerous than showing a naked

woman. There's nothing wrong with

â\200\234So-erotic art and literature are good,
and ;pomography- is -bad. But can â\200\230you
always tell the difference? The issue is

~â\200\234swathed â\200\234in subjectivity. Erotic images

mVe:beenaroundfor centuries, as have

:::m:empis; toban them. But never have

these images-had the reach and perva-

siveness â\200\230that they do today, thanks to

mass media and, more recently, the
computer-driven information highway.

Anthony Burgess, author of A
Clockwork Orange and himself no
stranger to censorship, makes this elo-
quent distinction: â\200\234The purpose of art is
to enfire [sic] the imagination. The pur-
pose of pornography is to keep the
attention anchored to the flesh. Art may
summon angels; pornography has no
wings.â\200\231

Far from the lofty idealism of
art, most of the erotic images that
surround us are pure commercial
entertainment, and magazines are
still the most accessible form.

Snatching a peek at a "girlieâ\200\231 maga-
zine in the sanctity of the locker
room is as much a part of most
boysâ\200\231 adolescence as pimple cream â\200\224
though the desire for erotic images is
something most men don't grow out
of. Rather than being peopled by per-
verts. the erotic magazine market con-
sists mainly of middle-class. married

That so many heterosexual women
enjoy looking at â\200\230menâ\200\231sâ\200\231 magazines
seems surprising. Tracy Edmunds, 2
Johannesburg-based freelance journalist
and occasional contributor to Playboy,

suggests that this homo-eroticism is 2
form of self-love. â\200\234When a woman looks
at an erotic photograph. she sees herself
as she would like to be when intimate
with 2 man. She hopes there is someone
who sees her with such desire, even if
her pubic hair is not so stylised.â\200\231

COMPLEX AS IT is to determine how
pomography makes us feel. it's harder
still to determine what pornography
may make people do. There has been
furious debate about the possible link
between pornography and sexual
violence â\200\224 which is almost always

" directed at women, and in some sick

instances. at children. Both case studies
and laboratory tests have failed to
establish a causal connection, though
many people who commit sex crimes

FAIR LADY, 14 JUNE, 1995

PHOTOGRAPHS: THE CAPE TIMES, RYNO, SOUTHLIGHT, SYGMA, ELITE PHOTO AGENCY

South Africaâ\200\231s new shades of blue

How do you feel about the plethora of pornographic images in our
newly democratic, vastly more permissive society? Embarrassed?
Apery? Excited? Indifferent? As debate rages on the issue of whether
pornography exploits or empowers women, only one thing seems

< CErain: censorship is not an option. So what areowe left

husband
began bringing
home erotic magazines. â\200\230He wanted me
to look at them with him.' says Mary*.
â\200\230But the fact that they rumed him on
made me feel really.. . . insecure. I felt
so inadequate compared to those

women would he still like my breasts, .
even though they weren't as big? That ~

sort of thing. But I tried to understand.

50

5

In an effort to participate, Mary bought

an erotic magazine aimed
at women - and was com-
pletely taken aback by her
husband's reaction. "He went
berserk. saying that he obvious-
ly wasn't enough for me if [

Her husband's
response may be unfair
and irrational. but it's
not unusual. Sex is

powerful. com-
plex. emotional
and confusing. And
suddenly. it's every-
where: once-restricted mat-
erial is now available in corner

cafés, bookstores. and video shops.

There are erotic literary works, films
and art, the ubiquitous "girlie" magazine,
sex shops and mail-order sex aids, and
bulletin boards where swinging singles
of both genders and all sexual persua-
sions can swap photographs and phone
numbers. (One such set-up. the Adult
Entertainment Club, dares to reach half
a million "broad-minded" South

- Moralists fear that people previous!"-

denied access to erotica will overdose -
and, like diabetics let loose in a choco-

TR

~consider myself a prude, she

-see it. Karen's fear was not that her

| D EGVR\ : KAPSHY BLILAP e
OMER (T (hlen %
e Marrig 5 "

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late factory. become ill
as a result. But while
protection from infor-
mation and images
you find offensive is
certainly your right. in
our new " democratic.
vastly more permissive
society. censorship is
no longer a viable
mechanism for con-
trolling what you see.

stop it. But what do you do when con-
fronted with something that's legally
acceptable but not to you? .

Take Karen's reaction when a pile
of magazines given to her by a
friend mumbled out to contain one of
the "erotic" variety. I wouldn't

5" possibly
o (8111311135

says, "but I wrapped it in three
plastic bags when I threw it away,
to make sure my children wouldn't

" Handle This Magazine
With Rubber Gloves

children would be exposed to nudity -
FAIR LADY, 14 JUNE, 1895

@

are avid consumers of pornography. The most famous example is psychopath Ted Bundy, who claimed that pornography contributed to his behaviour. Others argue that access to pornography should decrease sexual violence because it offers people an outlet for their desires that doesn't involve real people. One study, for example, showed that the incidence of rape increased more slowly than incidents of non-sexual assault in countries like the USA, Denmark, West Germany and Sweden, where pornography was freely available. .

But British research scientist Dr Mike Baxter contends that pornography changes men in subtle ways. It makes them sexually callous. It increases their belief that all women are nymphomaniacs. It increases the incidence of sexual harassment at work; it makes certain men believe that all women in short skirts are available, as they are in girlie magazines.

This is just one of the reasons women in some countries, recognising that it is up to us to put out the kind of images we want to see, are beginning to create affirmative, liberating erotica for men and women; erotica centred around women's fantasies, rather than images of women as seen through the eyes of men. The same could happen

here if South African women are able to admit to being interested in erotica and sex even if our conditioning tells us we should only be interested in relationships.

South Africa may have had a particularly censorious past, but we're certainly not the world's most prudish nation. In March 1993 a parent in the United States successfully campaigned to have copies of the children's cartoon puzzle book Where's Wally? taken off the shelves of the school library because it contained a

tiny cartoon drawing of a topless sunbather. In 1992 the Indonesian government banned hula hoops, fearing that

they would overstimulate passions. And it was only in 1987 that the Ayatollah

Khomeini declared hula hoops allowing

soccer players to show their legs.

Still, we cannot escape the legacies of our past. One of those is a culture of violence, and violence against women

in particular. We have one of the highest incidences of rape in the world. At a Lawyers for Human Rights conference. Mmatshilo Motsei of Adapt (Agisanang Domestic Abuse Prevention and Training) at the Alexandra Health and University Clinic, said that an estimated one in six to one in four women in SA is abused by her partner. She said the high levels of violence against women can be linked directly to the unequal power relations that exist between men and women in our society, and the perception that women are commodities that can be bought or sold.

While it is clear that pornography didn't cause these problems, there are fears that it could make them worse. As Joanne Fedler warns, "Pornography in this culture is not going to make it easier for you or me to walk out at night alone. It will make it much more difficult. I think people need to be quite clear about that. If you have pornography that promotes hatred against women, our culture will suck it up."

Whether pornography harms or discriminates against women has proved impossible to establish in court of law, which is why most countries with a bill of rights like ours also allow free trade in pornography. (Canada is one exception.) There is widespread belief that if a

(Please turn to page 162)

Pornography

(From page 53)

woman consents to participate in the making of pornography, it is legitimate. Fedler disputes this. "A woman may not have been strapped to a chair to have some pictures taken, but if she desperately needs money, where does the consent come in?" she asks. "Economically, she is disempowered. She has no education. She has no idea how to make a living. When did she consent to her situation?"

The pornography issue has particularly interesting constitutional implications

because it brings two fundamental human rights â\200\224 freedom of speech and the right to equality - into conflict

issue ever reaches the constitutional courts will depend on what happens in the lower courts. Parents and concerned citizens will need to be vigilant. For although the new draft Film and Publication Bill has met with widespread approval, enforcement of the proposed laws will be difficult.

It will be even more difficult when it comes to computer pornography (see â\200\230The thin lineâ\200\231, page 166). The contents of a floppy disk are hard to monitor but easy to copy and trade. In other countries there is rising concern that children are learning about sex from hard-core computer porn rather than

There is concern that children are learning about sex from hard-core computer porn, not sex education at home or school

with one another. If pornography as a form of speech
| is shown to violate women's
| fundamental right to equality,,
| then the limitations clause
| can be invoked to restrict it â\200\224

She experienced that familiar quiver of anticipation. It felt so long since the last time and once again she had to resist the... '

(cont. on page 93)

| which would amount to
censorship.

Legal precedents set in other countries give us some idea of how our courts are likely to approach the issue of pornography. Fedler points out that a nationâ\200\231s history will determine what emphasis it places on different rights: the United States tends to put freedom of speech ahead of all other
* rights, while in Germany, still

smarting from the memory of
- Nazi-atrocities, dignity of the
. person is paramount. Given
, -our -history -of -oppression,
: â\200\234South â\200\234Africaâ\200\231s â\200\234emphasis â\200\234will

1

:-probably â\200\230be on the right 10

+~equality. -
- â\200\234Whether the pornography

B T

sex education at home or in
school.

Parents are not powerless
in the face of pornography.
You can campaign to keep
your neighbourhood free
of influences you find dis-
tasteful. like the Constanta,
Cape Town, mother who
made headlines not so long
ago when she successfully
stopped her local stationers
from selling greeting
cards and T-shirts with
â\200\230overtly pornographic and
anti-Christian printsâ\200\231.
Shoprite and Checkers won'
stock erotic magazines in
their supermarkets, others
keep them behind 2 counter

where curious -youngsters -

wonâ\200\231t-be -able â\200\230to â\200\230browse.

Pornography
(From page 162)

And if that shelf isnâ\200\231t high

enough. you will be entitled
to make them raise it.

As with so many key
issues. the education and
empowerment of women is
crucial. Alerting women to
the potential dangers of
porn. and learning to make
the distinction between pan-

A2

guide our children safely
in an information age
where access to anything is
possible.

We're finally free from
those who would censor
our sexuality. It would be
tragic if that same freedom
forced people to tolerate
what they find offensive.

--can lose their
that fall under the Advertising Standards Authority are not subject
to the Act. Neither are broadcast (licensed by the Independent

;FAIRLADY, 14 JUNE, 1995

dering to prudishness and
infringing on human rights.
will enable us to make
informed choices and to

The law

Before our new constitution came into being, censorship was
informed by patriarchal Calvinistic morality and "undesirable"
material was vaguely defined as that which incited lust, was "sex-
ually fulfilling" or "vulgar or in poor taste". Both the Director
ate of
Publications and the Publications Appeal Board were beyond the
control of ordinary courts.

Today the pornography debate has less to do with morality
than with basic human rights and freedoms. In terms of the
Interim Constitution, any infringement of basic rights becomes a
matter for the courts. Even before new legislation was drafted, the
sex trade in all its guises "magazines, film and video, telephone
chat lines, swingers notice boards and cybersex" had begun to
mushroom.

On March 3, the Film and Publication Bill was published for
comment in the Government Gazette. In that same month the
publishers of Hustler brought out eight new titles ~ including Asian
Babes and Black and Blue (the ambiguous title apparently refers
to a combination of African skin colour and sexual content,
though the word association is enough to make your skin crawl).

it will prohibit

compromise.. - &
* Names have been changed

proposed legislation, a fine of up to R10 000 or two
years' imprisonment, or both, can be imposed on offenders who
possess, advertise or distribute an XX film or publication, unless
for the bona fide artistic purposes mentioned above. In cases
where material other than XX rated has been illegally displayed
for sale, the maximum fine is R2 000 and six months' imprisonment. Distributors (cinemas, magazine outlets and so on)
operating licences for up to one year. Advertisements

Broadcasting Authority. = =

164

.- FAIR LADY, 14 JUNE. 1995

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