

Philosophy - feminism, moralism, and pornography

[Experience](#), [Human Nature](#)



Pornography, Oppression, and Freedom: Article Summary In the article, Longino provides a radically innovative definition of pornography. By rejecting the traditional view that pornography is a representation of nudity and obscenity in order to arouse sexual feelings, the scholar points out that a portrayal of sex in which female status and dignity are not violated does not amount to pornography. Thus, according to Longino, a sexually explicit material becomes pornography only when it represents sexual abuse and degradation (230).

Admittedly, the work is from a 'hardcore' feminist who thinks all males are sadists. It is this attitude along with a lack of understanding about human sexuality (admittedly women's too) that give birth to the new definition of pornography. Had she gained some knowledge about activities like tit torture as depicted in Kama Sutra, she would have thought twice before reaching such a new definition. While stressing on the sadistic attitude of the male-dominated society, it is painful to note the total ignorance the scholar shows towards the element of masochism inherent in women.

The scholar is against pornography because of three major reasons. Firstly, it promotes violence against women. Secondly, it provides a totally wrong picture about female sexuality, and thirdly, it promotes male-centeredness (234). It seems that the work goes seriously defective in the fact that it does not give any attention to the impact of explicit sexual content on children. In other words, the scholar is of the opinion that as far as females are not tortured in the portrayal, the material does not have to be considered pornography. Here, she fails to acknowledge the fact that in order to arouse sexual feeling in people including the immature ones, it is not necessary to

include bondage or torture. Thus by defining only sexual content with violence as pornography, Longino has provided a totally defective view of pornography.

Also, the scholar is alarmed by the fact that pornography has secured its own place in the mainstream media. In the opinion of Longino, this overwhelming acceptance of pornography by the mainstream society and media shows the desire of the male-dominated society to subject females to such activities like rape, bondage, and torture for its own sexual gratification. That means the creation of a society where psychological and physical violence against women is accepted as part of the social culture (234).

Admittedly, the scholar is rather unaware about the content of sadism in males as propounded by various thinkers including Freud and the element of masochism in women as claimed by various women writers. Had she been aware about these elements which are set by default, she would not have resorted to claim that the pornography according to her definition would result in more female subjugation.

Works Cited

Longino, Helen. Pornography, Oppression and Freedom. Chapter 8.
Pornography and Sexual Morality.