



THINK PIECES

# when did fashion become porn?

Caryn Franklin investigates the pornification of men's mind's and women's bodies.

By **Caryn Franklin** | Nov 13 2013, 11:25am



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I usually see things from a female perspective. But **boys** and men deserve compassion too. Exposure to record levels of Internet pornography is causing havoc.

Tuning in regularly to watch while a woman plasters a pleasurable grimace on her face to endure sodomy, gang rape, on face urination and ejaculation accompanied by enough pounding, choking and manacling to warrant medical treatment at the end of her working day, takes commitment.

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Repeat exposure to that kind of TV can mess up male brains, as tests conducted within a recent Channel 4 documentary on a young porn-addict confirmed. For one thing, being forced to seek frequent lonely masturbatory relief in public toilets several times a day is just grim. Mutual sexual pleasure in real time is unlikely too. **Plain old Vanilla Sex doesn't hit the spot any more.**

It doesn't help, that actors look turned on and effortlessly erect, it's a special skill to remain completely uninterested in the human meat below to stave off an early bath.

This is big stuff to live up to. Guys have body image anxieties too with additional performance pressures. There's a growing market for Viagra and other enhancers to help those seeking souped-up mechanical thrusting abilities. There's also surgery as well as traction and penile lengthening procedures. Masculinity now, just like femininity, is prey to a whole host of marketing promises and pressures. The only thing that is really serviced is rampant Consumerism.

But the idea of Women For Sale, damages both genders. Broadcast as a misogynistic standard from a shabby back-room printing press for most of the 20th Century, now pornography is produced on an industrial scale as never seen before and, courtesy of continually developing digital markets commands huge revenues although over 80% of young users access it for free.

So if explicit and violent pornography is routinely employed to satisfy natural curiosity about sex, there has to be some trickle-down effect. On the front-line are young women, currently negotiating a landslide of cultural directives about their lack of worth and desirability. Young men brought up on porn, reject amongst many things, natural pubic hair in favour of the sex-worker aesthetic. Pre-teen boys can be heard instructing pre-teen school-girls to shave 'down there' if they want to be liked. Boys also have little idea of what makes sex pleasurable for women. And neither it seems do today's young women, studies reveal girls expect relationships to be controlling and sometimes violent. Other consequences are equally pernicious.

"Second-rate studio shots of shaved labias pinned open by ragged hands, are being joined by immaculately styled, big budget, fashion and music imagery."

Pornification of our popular culture is happening right under our noses. Second-rate studio shots of shaved labias pinned open by ragged hands, are being joined by immaculately styled, big budget, fashion and music imagery. High-class models and well paid pop stars mimic the spooky, sleazy, come-slutty posturing of their poorer sex-for-sale sisters. Impressionable fans revel in their bodies as sexual entities and cavort on social-networking stages with ill-judged abandon. Fired up by the mistaken belief that hyper-sexualisation is powerful currency, girls haven't yet experienced enough ordinary work-place goings on. There is limited respect for women as it is.

But let's take Miley as our case study. Her little-girl-lost, appears in child's vest and pants before she gets down to some naked simpering, sucking and licking of demolition equipment. It's empowering no? When men take camera shots up the arse or give cunnilingus to DIY power tools, we can talk. Since no-one with testicles is jiggling them bare to sell music, the debate is one sided. Pop-elder, Sinéad O'Connor tried reasoning as any mother would, Annie Lennox provided back up. Both received a two-finger salute. Miley has signed up for stewardship from an industry, not previously revered for it's pastoral care of young women. Putting her trust in highly-paid creatives, when none have earned it, and others are central to online campaigns to out them as sexual predators is, well, misguided. Young women being schooled in the art of

empowerment by pornographers and shareholders encouraging self-harm, deserve patience though.

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And so we come to fashion, featuring sexually posturing, naked adolescent girls, models faking arousal with milky 'come;' on their faces or female torsos with legs wide open, their shaved vulva framing a fragrance bottle. These make for confusing messages too. Although in an environment where the female body is routinely, manipulated, contorted and controlled, why not? Fashion joins music to reveal itself to be the perfect grow-bag for more misogyny.

More sticky trickle down? Or have creative thinkers fallen prey to moral atrophy, now that their brains are prematurely addled by too much Internet fanny? Are we bereft of new and innovative ideas, so porn will do? Is the hollow draw of women as sexual caricatures - reduced to breasts, genitals and pouty manoeuvres, sheathed in designer chiffon, or accompanied by hi-production sound values, an artistic statement?

Internationally renowned, record labels, fashion houses and advertising CEOs say they are selling a dream, but WHO TO? Sophisticated marketing, aimed at intelligent women and attentive girls it isn't.

So let's just come right out and say it. GROOMING. This new media porn is all a bit of innocent fun, nothing to make a fuss about. Just give us a little flash of your honey-pot and stop being so uptight. Individuals are incentivised with career promises, the masses are reassured, when it reaches their phones and laptops, that this is media at its edgiest. That's how sexual groomers work in both seedy and shiny surroundings isn't it? When repellent ideas are given a fun or adventurous spin, they are always easier to carry out.

"[Kate Moss](#) waited over 20 years before she felt safe to reveal the distress she felt at 17 years old..."

Kate Moss waited over 20 years before she felt safe to reveal the distress she felt at 17 years old when was asked to straddle a male model while both of them were semi-naked. In her recent autobiography, *Kate*, she describes a room full of adults, where no one on the shoot recognised her vulnerability. Effectively an unprotected child in an exploitative grown-up spectacle, she was set up! In her words, she 'was so little.' She alludes to the same scenarios happening repeatedly at the beginning of her career, until she got used to it and cried less. And so it goes on. Models complain. Nothing happens. The lament of powerlessness is exactly what porn, groomers and predators feed on.

UK TV presenter Jimmy Savile chose powerless even hospitalised victims. Strategic connections to higher echelons protected him from the accusations of hundreds of defiled adolescents. They were told to stop making a noise over a bit of high-jinx. Savile's behaviour, apparently an open secret, had the BBC choking on worthless apologies when those same girls returned as women seeking justice.

Do we have a Jimmy Savile or two of our own? If abhorrent behaviour is rewarded with more shoots and more campaigns, while porn posing as fashion or music, routinely repeated, becomes normalised, where does that leave us? Grooming by individuals or an entire industry, is morally corrupt and it's happening on our watch.

And so we come full circle. Standard viewing of barely adult girls engaging in demeaning acts of sexual posturing, finger sucking, fanny massaging and arse waving. Cheap shots from fashion, a luxury industry loudly trumpeting its taste-leadership credentials, and music, pretending to empower all young women. Not all of us are taking it lying down.

## Credits

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