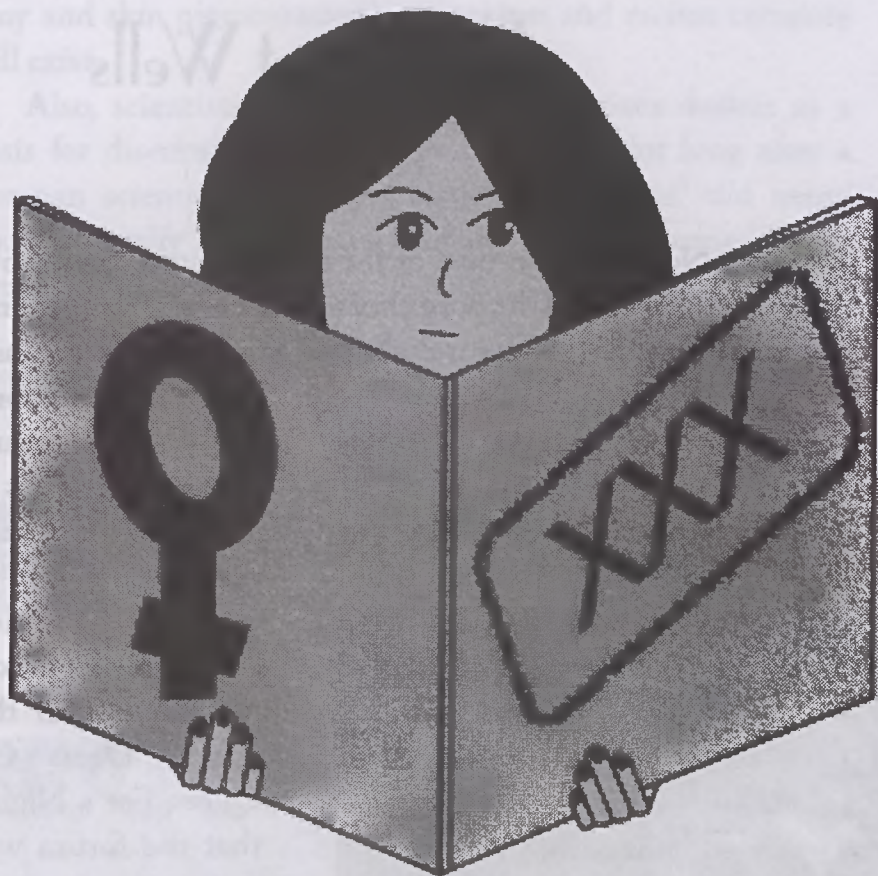


bought for the sake of queer women. This was primarily because I doubted Student Stores salespeople had seen that poster and said, "Ooh, let's sell this one — it will totally appeal to our lesbian population!" but also because there were no posters of male-oriented mythical creatures making out, and the masculine-oriented posters screamed heteronormativity.

The products sold at Student Stores echo the reality that most "lesbian" porn isn't targeted at women-loving-women at all, but is merely another tool to commoditize women for the



dominant, mainstream, hetero-faction of porn users. In the end, pornographic depictions of queer women simply become another masturbatory aid for heterosexual-identifying men.

Revolution Redefined

When radical feminists point out how patriarchy infects and controls queer pornography, names and titles are thrown out to substitute as examples of non-sexist, queer-friendly and "sex-positive" pornography (Annie Sprinkle comes to mind, as does *On Our Backs* and *Blueboy*). Frankly, I don't see how any medium that profits off of the sexual exploitation of any individual is human-friendly, much less women- or queer-friendly. Somewhere along the path of the gender-equality movement, the word "sex-positive" took a drastic wrong turn.

The LGBTIQ community has an extensive history of dealing with social marginalization and oppression — "sex-positive" is the last sentiment applied to queer identities by the broader

public. It is therefore understandable that expressions of "subversive" sexuality through pornographic films, explicit magazines and erotic literature have traditionally been adopted as means of liberation. If being LGBTIQ means you are extreme, subversive and socially unacceptable, then it makes sense to adopt extreme, subversive and socially unacceptable forms of media as a means of expressing your sexuality.

It feels like freedom, but the reality is that LGBTIQ pornography is far from revolutionary. Feminist and academic Ann Russo describes "lesbian pornography" as rebellious in that it's produced by and for women, but not revolutionary in that it reinforces the eroticization of domination and subordination. LGBTIQ pornography is not unique, fresh or liberating, as it adopts rhetoric and practices from mainstream, hetero-porn; ultimately, it's merely another branch of the poisoned tree.

"Porn promises us sexual freedom, but it gives us a prison," said panelist Matt Ezzell, a graduate student in the Sociology department. "This is the opposite of sexual liberation."

Pornography is not sexual liberation. It is a box that limits sexual encounters to an image, page or computer screen. It is a box that limits sexual experience to one of pain, degradation, hate and humiliation. It tells us to be aroused from hurting one another and to be aroused from being hurt. It tells us that we deserve to be double-penetrated, ejaculated on and fucked. This box is wrapped with a pretty bow called "free speech," "sex-positivism" and "sexual liberation," but that bow is nothing more than a deceptive way to pull the box even tighter.

We are currently witnessing the tightening of that box. We live in a world where signs that read "Homo Sex is a Threat to Our National Security" are not considered hateful enough to be removed from our campus. We attend a school where, because *Playboy* is one of the top 100 best-selling magazines nationwide, our campus bookstore defends their right to sell it to benefit student grants. The Bull's Head and, in turn, the University, is complicit in the sale and exploitation of women's bodies for profit.

On our campus, it's okay to hate, it's okay to buy access to women's bodies and it's okay to endorse the degradation of every human. That box will continue to constrict, winding itself more and more tightly around us.

That is, if we let it. Our culture is not some impersonal being floating above us — we create and sustain the demand for products.

"Media products," explained Ezzell at the panel, "do not fall from the sky." We can hold ourselves accountable and take responsibility for reshaping constructions of sexuality. We can reclaim our sexual experiences as loving, caring, empathetic human beings.

All sexual identities, queer and non-queer, can demand to be free of that box.

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