Pornography at Different Stages of Girls Psycho-social Development:

Context, Subject, and Changing Meanings

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ABSTRACT

**Pornography at Different Stages of Girls Psycho-social Development:
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Pornography is present in adolescent girls' everyday lives through their own interest, family, peer groups, media, and surrounding discourses. Yet girls' experiences regarding porn have not been studied in depth. The aim of this qualitative study was to analyze twenty young women's, aged 18-24 years (from the United Kingdom, United States, Australia, and Canada), encounters with pornography during adolescence. The data was collected by e-mailing four Blocks of semi-structured questionnaires during a period of three months (each Block included 8-13 open-ended questions, and an 'event-question' inviting to write about a memory related to a given topic). The accounts were analysed according to psychoanalytic and discursive feminist theories. There are two study objectives: 1) how does girls' relationship to porn change during psycho-social development, and what psychic mechanisms may be involved in the process? and 2) what role do other people, parents, and peer group play in the formation of girls' gender/sexual identity in relation to porn? Girls' agency in these processes was also stressed. The participants' adolescent experiences underline the commonness of girls' accidental and deliberate encounters with porn, the wide range of thoughts and feelings they may evoke, and the diversity in the strategies girls employ to make sense of these psycho-physiological responses, and in navigating within the society's gender structures. Reasons for watching/reading porn can be divided into contextual, conscious, and unconscious ones; they are not exclusive, and depend on each individual and the stage of psycho-sexual development she is at. Similarly, the effects of porn are complex and multilayered, depending on the material, the degree of girl's agency, the consumption context, and on the discourses within which the understandings of gender relations and female/male sexuality are constructed. The results demonstrate how pornographic material can have both negative and positive effects on girls' self-image, reflections, and sexual behaviour, and how the influences are inseparable from the person's other experiences, popular discourses (e.g. biological), and ethical debates and gender politics.

ABSTKTI

Pornografia eri vaiheissa tyttöjen psykososiaalista kehitystä: konteksti, subjekti ja muuttuvat merkitykset

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Pornografia on voimakkaasti läsnä teinityttöjen jokapäiväisessä elämässä oman kiinnostuksen, perheen, vertaisryhmän, median ja ympäröivien diskurssien kautta. Tästäkin huolimatta tyttöjen tuntemuksia pornon suhteen ei ole tutkittu syvällisemmin. Tämän kvalitatiivisen tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli analysoida kahdenkymmenen nuoren naisen, iältään 18-24-vuotiaita (Britanniasta, Yhdysvalloista, Australiasta ja Kanadasta), teinivuosien kokemuksia suhteessa pornoon. Aineisto kerättiin sähköpostin välityksellä lähettämällä kolmen kuukauden aikana neljä puolistrukturoitua kysymyslomaketta (jokaisessa lomakkeessa oli 8-13 avointa kysymystä sekä 'tapauskysymys', jossa tarkoituksena oli kirjoittaa tiettyyn aiheeseen liittyvästä muistosta). Vastaukset analysointiin psykoanalyyttisten ja feminististen teorioiden valossa. Tutkimuskysymyksiä oli kaksi: 1) kuinka tyttöjen suhde pornoon muuttuu psykososiaalisen kehityksen aikana, ja mitä psyykkisiä mekanismeja prosessissa on mukana? ja 2) mikä on muiden ihmisten, vanhempien ja vertaisryhmän merkitys tyttöjen gender/seksuaali-identiteetin muovautumisessa suhteessa pornoon? Tyttöjen aktiivista toimijuutta haluttiin myös painottaa. Osallistujien teinivuosien muistot osoittavat, kuinka yleisiä tyttöjen sattumanvaraiset ja tarkoitukselliset kohtaamiset pornon kanssa ovat. Vastauksista korostuu myös kokemuksista kumpuava laaja tunteiden ja ajatusten kirjo, sekä erilaisten strategioiden moninaisuus joita tytöt käyttävät tehdäkseen nämä psykofysiologiset reaktiot itselleen ymmärrettäviksi, ja navigoidakseen yhteiskunnan sukupuolirakenteissa. Syyt pornon katsomiseen/lukemiseen voidaan jakaa kontekstuaalisiin, tietoisiin, ja tiedostamattomiin – ne eivät sulje toisiaan pois, ja ovat riippuvaisia kustakin tytöstä sekä hänen sen hetkisestä psykoseksuaalisesta kehitysvaiheestaan. Myös pornon vaikutukset ovat monimutkaisia ja yksilöllisiä; vaikuttavia tekijöitä ovat materiaali, tytön oman aktiivisuudenaste, katsomis/lukemiskonteksti, ja diskurssit, joiden pohjalta käsitykset naisten ja miesten välisistä suhteista, sekä heidän seksuaalisuudestaan, ovat muodostettu. Tulokset osoittavat kuinka pornografisella materiaalilla voi olla sekä negatiivisia että positiivisia vaikutuksia tyttöjen minäkuvaan, ajatuksiin, ja seksuaaliseen käyttäytymiseen, ja kuinka näitä vaikutuksia ei voi erottaa yksilön muista kokemuksista, yleisistä diskursseista (esim. biologiset selitykset) ja sukupuolipolitiikasta.

Avainsanat:	Tytöt	Pornografia	Psykoanalyysi	Feminismi	Internet tutkimus

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1. INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL APPROACHES

1.1 Discourses Around Adolescent Sexuality: Anchoring the Research into Body and Gender Politics

Modern sexuality is science/fiction; it is a story told in the words of our socio-historical setting (Potts, 2005). Narratives people tell about, and refer to, in relation to their and other's sexuality, are constructed through discourses – the fluid network of power relations primarily expressed through language, images, and practices centred around the embodied individuals (Bordo, 1997). This mesh of culturally bound meanings is generative and reproducing rather than repressing (ibid:92). But discourses do not only form a person's sexual identity (e.g. hetero-, bi- or transsexual), but also the notion of gender identity. As opposed to biological sex (female-male), gender is delineated as the socio-culturally constructed roles and qualities assigned to women/girls and men/boys (Sullivan, 2003). Since cultural definitions of feminine and masculine attributes and behaviour frequently 'matches' with one's sex – such as clothing, mannerisms, interests, and interaction with other people – gender is often understood as having a biological foundation.

The tight link between gender and sex, and the reducing the former to the latter, is embedded in individuals' everyday life on intra- and interpsychic levels. In Western cultures, especially in the past, female sexuality is predominantly described in comparison to that of males. The 'boys will be boys' and 'emotionally sensitive girls' clichés are most apparent in media representations – ranging from teen magazine headlines to soap-opera plots – but these popular myths are also implicitly endorsed through legislations, and public policies and practices. The aim of sex education, for instance, is usually 'harm-reduction'; i.e. adolescent sexuality is positioned as a morally, socially, and economically dangerous phenomenon which needs to be controlled and postponed till a monogamous 'mature' relationship (Kidger, 2005).

However, since the ultimate symbol of such risky behaviour is teenage pregnancy, it is hence chiefly adolescent *girls'* sexuality that has to be kept at bay (Tolman, 2005). While boys are just boys, girls are innocent, vulnerable, and easily lead; they must be taught to say 'no' and be sensitised to recognize possible dangers which lurk in the adult world of sexuality. In other words, at a very early age girls learn that their 'power' does not lie in physical strength, but rather it takes the form of consent and seductive mystique

on an intersubjective level; this power is supposed to be "different from but equal to the custom of male initiative" (MacKinnon, 1997:45).

This 'equality' is somewhat illusory as it is ultimately up to an individual girl to guard her physical, mental, and moral boundaries – her feminine immunity – by keeping the unpredictable male sex drive at an arm's length (Haug, 2000:171; Potts, 2005:164-5). Indeed, in her PhD research on 15-16 year-olds' interpretations of everyday sex-based harassment, Aaltonen (2006) found that not only are girls usually the ones who encounter and deal with unwanted attention (e.g. they are understanding towards young and childish masculinity), but furthermore male harassers are often excused by referring to their hormones, and to the attributes of the female targets, hence dividing the responsibility (e.g. clothes, behaviour, being drunk at a party). While it is plausible to say that girls' cautiousness regarding their environment, behaviour, and appearance is only common sense and ultimately for their own good, according to Haug such logic forces females to develop anxiety that "becomes existential and thus prevents them from recognising their individual problems as problems of humanity as a whole" (ibid:166).

Since academia is tightly enmeshed with media and political discourses (Derrida, 1999), scholars and researchers also play a part in narrating understandings of female/male sexualities. Although nowadays psychologists are more sensitive to the effects of socio-cultural context in the formation of gender/sexual identities, the emphasis on social factors may turn a subject into a mere bearer of culture. As Deborah Tolman (2005) searched through development psychology literature describing the possible reasons behind girls' sexual behaviour, she found that whereas aspects such as social background and family situation were often mentioned, only a few had recognized girls' sexual desire as a potential factor. Adolescent female sexuality, in short, is often conceptualised according to external factors.

Additionally, a biological model still has a firm foothold in psychology seeking a scientific status. For instance, besides locating the root of the differences in sexual behaviour in the essentially dissimilar chromosomes (see e.g. McGillicuddy-De Lisi & De Lisi, 2002), psycho-biological explanations also assert that testosterone is the factor behind girls' emerging interest in sex (Potts & Short, 1999:172-3). But readings like these do not only privilege masculine as the standard (Irigaray, 1985; Potts, 2005), but inevitably reduce the position of females and their sexual desire/s to being less intense in comparison to the active and spontaneous male sexuality. Furthermore, because adolescence is seen as the period during which adult sexuality gradually begins to

manifest itself, this line of argument constructs pre-adolescent girls as asexual, while their adolescent sisters are desexualised (sexual interest is weaker than that of boys) – views which are often supported by an assumption that females primarily yearn for emotional connection and security (Tolman, 2005).

But as these myths circulate in biology text books, sex education classes, and TV documentaries, young women are presumed to be heterosexual by default (Griffin, 2000:230; Sullivan, 2003:59), while implicitly they are denied access to certain domains of desire/s and sexual expressions which are considered 'normal' for boys and their raging hormones. The entry to such spheres by a girl of any age (often even after her 18th birthday) does not only get interpreted as a symptom of problematic individual development or of over-sexualized Western culture. More crucially, expressions of 'inappropriate' sexual agency may put her into social, material, physical, and/or psychological danger (Tolman, 2005).

This research is principally located in the field of the psychology of gender and sexuality, and engages in debates concerning embodiment and subjectivity. I analyze twenty young women's, aged 18-24 years (from the United Kingdom, United States, Australia, and Canada), retrospective accounts of their adolescent experiences within one of the realms strictly forbidden to girls: pornography (data was collected via email questionnaires as a part of a MSc (by research) Psychology dissertation in Manchester Metropolitan University, UK (MMU); see Chapters 2.1 and 2.2 for discussion).

1.2 Pornography within Feminist and Psychoanalytic Frameworks

1.2.1 Feminisms and Pornography: Between Degrading Masochism and Liberating Self-Expression

It is often assumed that all feminists oppose pornography; it humiliates women and at the same time provides vivid step-by-step instructions on how to oppress them physically and mentally inside (and outside) male-dominated bedrooms (Dworkin, 1981). However, this is just one side of the story, as told by anti-porn feminists. Their roots are in the radical feminism of the 1970s, which emphasises women's oppression as the foundation of human

relationships in patriarchal[1] society (Hardy, 2000:78). For over two decades the main argument of anti-porn feminists has been fairly straightforward: pornography *causes* sexual violence, and by its mere existence symbolically *constitutes* and *reinforces* the unequal social relations between genders (Dworkin, 1981). Thus the problem with porn is not – or at least not entirely – the naked images themselves, but the practices that eroticises differences between people (e.g. age, class, or race) (Jeffreys, 1998:76-7). This is why pornography – that often fetishises scenes of rape and bondage performed by an older male-subject on a younger female-object – affects every woman regardless of her ethnicity, social class, and sexual orientation.

Simon Hardy's (2000) analysis of the mass market pornography – i.e. the sexually explicit top shelf, cable TV material primarily used by men, mainly depicting sex between men and women – confirms anti-porn feminists' views: "[they] usually present a particular, though hegemonic, type of heterosexual eroticism which is strongly predicated on the symbolic power of men over women" (ibid:79). The aim this type of porn is to stimulate males' (hetero)sexual desire while exhibiting masculine, genital-centred manifestations of *any* proper sex act, i.e. erection, penetration (of female body), and ejaculation.

The opposing party in the porn debate – mutually sympathetic anti-censorship feminists and queer theorists – share the concerns of sexual violence towards women and children. However, in their view relegating all sexually explicit material under the same stigmatized label of 'porn' and demanding stronger censorship and control, anti-porn arguments run a risk of marginalizing non-heterosexual groups by attacking gay and lesbian porn as well. According to anti-censorship arguments, even if pornography was abolished through legal actions, not only would 'heteronormativity'[2] still be hale and hearty, but also the unconscious aspects of porn would be merely pushed underground, hence staying ultimately intact (Butler, 1990). Thus, the dualistic order of the world (e.g. male-female) and gender inequality may even be endorsed (Sullivan, 2003:123-24); specially since anti-porn feminists' graphic language reduces the body and the subject into genitals hence paradoxically reflecting the masculine sexuality of the pornographic world (Cornell, 1995:556) (see e.g. Dworkin's (1987:122) description of intercourse as a rape like event). Moreover, females too can enjoy mainstream porn.

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[1] Although patriarchy as such does not exist in the post-modern world where identities and totalising ideologies have collapsed, I will be using the term 'patriarchal' to describe our complex range of unconscious and conscious ways of 'thinking' that nevertheless are often contingent with the history of female oppression (Minsky, 1996: 18).
[2] Heteronormativity refers to the practices and institutions that privilege heterosexuality and relationships between men and women as fundamental and 'natural' within society (Sullivan, 2003).

Although the anti-porn feminists' analysis and concerns of the social relationships are largely justified – particularly since the cruelty of mainstream porn increases as the industry tries to sharpen its edge (Jensen, 2004) – they rarely offer anything to replace the eroticism of male domination (Hardy, 2000:89). But anti-censorship feminists and queer theorists – both of whom have been linked with gay and lesbian politics – have a rather controversial recipe for breaking down the institutionalized system of two-sexes, two-genders, and one-sexuality (Sullivan, 2003). In their opinion the most efficient means for the multiplication of desire and power is free, artistic, and imaginative erotic expression (Hardy, 2000; O'Rourke, 2005).

The term 'queer' is a verb, not a noun: it emphasises performance, becoming, and endless possibilities to subvert the fixed categories of gender and sexual identity (including 'gay' and 'lesbian') (Sullivan, 2003:45-6) by 'resignifying' their usual meanings (Butler, 1997). Therefore, the binary oppositions of man-woman and masculine-feminine must also be queered, as they constrain not only the lives of non-heterosexuals, but straights as well (O'Rourke, 2005:112). A way to rethink, for instance, an active-passive dichotomy is to twist a linear binary into a continuous active-*re*active circle – i.e. orgasm is not the ultimate goal – where, as O'Rourke writes:

> … sexual pleasure covers multiple areas of/on/in the body… It queers sexual distinctions when we think of the active tongue, finger, fist, penis, sex toy as being grasped or enveloped by the equally active mouth, vagina, anus, hand. (O'Rourke, 2005: 113)

The dictum of 'queer-straight' theorising is that although heteronormativity is damaging, heteroeroticism does not need to be so (ibid:112). The key elements of this kind of 'pure relationship' (Giddens, 1992:202) – a relationship founded on equality and self-determination – involve autonomy, respect, communication, the negotiation of rights and obligations, and the cultivation of accountability and trust (Attwood, 2006:90). This project may offer heterosexual women a different viewpoint, which would be difficult within the anti-porn framework.

However, an expressive approach to porn, desire, and equality achieved through shifting power positions may lead – just like the biological model – to a form of essentialism, especially if the 'repression hypothesis' (Foucault, 1990) of Freudian psychoanalysis is solely employed (Hardy, 2000; Sullivan, 2003). According to queer/feminist theorists who use psychoanalytical frameworks, erotic meanings and pleasures concerning relations of domination and submission stem from psychic forces. In Lynne Segal's (1998:57) view, "psychoanalytic readings suggest a way of understanding

the bizarrely 'pornographic' nature of our fantasy life", whereas Laura Kipnis (1999) argues that pornography represents a sort of collective unconscious by adopting aspects that are otherwise denied cultural expression.

The dilemma in these accounts is that by focusing on an individual psyche they are at risk of disavowing social factors such as race, class, and gender (which are at the heart of two other queer approaches; deconstructivism and Foucaultian discourse analysis) (Filax, Sumara, Davis, & Shogan 2005:83). As a result, using psychoanalysis might even de-problematise the aims of queer politics if eroticism and its expressions as we know them, are seen to originate from infantile experiences and feelings of desire, abandonment, possessiveness, and aggression (Hardy, 2000:85).

To simplify, the battle line between the anti- and pro-porn camps boils down to the question of freedom; the former sees it as freedom *from* objectification which makes women modality, while for the latter the ideal is freedom *of/for* (sexual) expression and fluid identifications. Both of them, nonetheless, are inevitably locked – and therefore at the same time both limited and limiting – within the discursive mesh of the science/fiction of sex (Attwood 2002; Potts 2005).

1.2.2 Psychoanalysis and Pornography: Female Subjectivity with Cultural/Difference

Psychoanalysis has often been criticised - particularly by feminists - of being male-centred and culturally biased. Penis is the hallmark of subjectivity; 'normal' development is described within the mother-father-child triangle which reflects the heteronormative ideal of family (Hardy, 2000). Indeed, psychoanalysis was built on dichotomies of the patriarchal tradition (e.g. active-passive, masculine-feminine) and on gendered roles of the Western nuclear family (e.g. mother as the primary care-taker[3] (O'Conner & Ryan 1995)). Thus the effects of socio-historical context (such as race, class, and sexual orientation) are still often ignored or seen as pathological to the individual in question. This chapter explores pornographic text and viewers'/readers' relation to it within Lacanian, Freudian, and Kleinian frameworks, while contrasting them with the work of Irigaray and Kristeva who have focused theorising female subjectivity.

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[3] For the sake of convenience I will be using the term 'mother' when referring to the primary care-taker although nowadays 'maternal' often translates as the care of a child's emotional and physiological needs given by either parent.

In the Lacanian model there are three interacting realms – *Symbolic, Imaginary,* and *Real* (the first two hold the most relevance for this paper). Vision has a special role in Lacan's theory; while still being in the state of maternal mergence, infant's sense of separate self gradually begins to emerge after she perceives an image of herself on some reflecting surface (Lacan, 1977:2). Since the fascinating image was originally projected from the outside, one has to leave the *Imaginary*, and enter into the *Symbolic* order (accept the social order, the Law-of-the-Father). *Symbolic* is governed by 'phallus', which does not only stand for logic and unity – most evident in the structures of language – but is also the privileged signifier of sexual difference (phallus points out the female 'lack' or castration). To retain order in society and psyche, the maternal – denoting fusion and lack of boundaries – needs to be repressed (Smith, 1998).

In mainstream pornographic text the power of phallus to signify sexual differences is outstandingly explicit; the focus is on genitals, breasts, and buttocks. This viewpoint is in the visual media emphasised by lighting and framing (Ciclitira, 1998). The representation of the female model lacking both penis and power serves as an unconscious reminder to a male viewer of the threat of castration that was an essential motive behind identifying with the paternal law. Through '*fethishistic scopophilia*'[4] – the female actress as the chief erotic object – the 'male' unconscious can both repress this '*castration anxiety*' (ibid:238), and express envy, fear, and anger it feels for the mother. In this way female lack becomes a reassurance, rather than a peril for men. However, according to Elina Mäenpää-Reenkola (2004), woman's castration anxiety – the realisation of 'naturally' lacking a penis (real or illusory) – is secondary, for it arises after '*genital anxiety*'; a girl's fear of the damage done to her vagina and of losing her sexual pleasure[5]. In a 'female' unconscious, porn may thus easily tap into both genital and castration anxieties.

The objectified female model may also represent the phallic mother (Ciclitira, 1998:223-44). The notion dates back to the pre-Oedipal phase when the infant perceives its mother as all-powerful; she has absolute power over the child while she is sexually unidentified and hence has no needs or desires for other (i.e. father) (Mäenpää-Reenkola, 2004; Smith, 1998). Due to the maternal mergence, the infant perceives itself as an integrated part of the phallic mother. However, these primitive phantasies of omnipotence

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[4] The pleasure of looking at one's own genitals being transferred onto another person as an erotic object.
[5] As early as in the 1920s Karen Horney challenged Freud's phallocentric view of female 'lack' by arguing that in a girl's psychosexual development there is an early feminine phase during which she is aware of her vagina and its pleasurable sensations. Therefore female's early mental images of her genitals are based on what she has, rather than what she lacks (Mäenpää-Reenkola, 2004: 80-1).

suffer a blow whenever mother is incapable of immediately satisfying her child's needs; the child is filled with destructive impulses as she desires to gain power over the frustrating mother-object. In the Kleinian theory these phantasies of control originate from infantile defensive mechanisms – which are also part of adult psyche, though affected by culture – when mother's breast is 'split' into 'good' (fulfilling breast) and 'bad' (dissatisfying breast)(Farrell, 1995). Due to the limited cognitive capacities, the infant creates part-objects of whole ones.

In pornography the fetishised part-objects – e.g. genitals, breasts, and mouth – are ever present as framing 'splits' them from the rest of the body, and thus does not distract the viewer with whole-people signifying subjectivity (or social-reality). What is more, the sucking of a breast or penis may correspond to early feeding fantasies – which especially in girls' psyche are associated with vaginal sensations and primitive identification with mother (Mäenpää-Reenkola, 2004) – as, according to Segal:

> The adult erect penis is in relative size for the adult close to the size of the nipple for the baby; the vagina can be 'understood' as a warm, loving mouth: this gives deep and resonant meaning to sexual activities of all kinds (Segal, 1998: 45)

Splitting is related to '*projective identification*' and '*introjection*'. The former means the displacement of feelings – especially those of rage, need, and vulnerability – or parts of one's own identity, to the external objects to defend the ego-unity (Klein, 1946). For Stoller (1986) it is this infantile hostility that forms the essence of pornographic appeal, as nothing is porn until an observer's fantasies are included. Hostility and revenge are perhaps most explicit in some forms of 'perversions' – sexual acts outside penis-vagina penetration, such as anal sex or S/M – in which they contribute to sexual excitement (other factors may be mystery, risk, illusion, reversal of trauma, triumph, and fetishation) (Stoller, 1986).

Through *introjection* the individual takes desirable parts of the good object into one's own self. A female viewer/reader may, for example, transform in fantasy and practice aspects of her identity by imitating a protagonist's behaviour in order to be like the object of desire, and thus simultaneously having a seductive power over the other (e.g. the other characters or her own partner) (Ciclitira, 1998). *Projection* and *introjection* are thus linked with narcissistic self-idealization and feelings of omnipotence as the viewer can on an unconscious level possess an ideal object and fuse with it, and also gain entry to the bad object in order to either attack or conquer its assumed power (Klein, 1945).

These psychic mechanisms are also involved in the Madonna/whore division of female porn models which originates from the child's realisation of whole-people. As the child enters the Oedipal phase, the mother's desire for the real or symbolic father is exposed – she is now seen as castrated (mother causes disappointments while signifying feminine 'lack' in the Phallic order) (Day, 1988), as well as unfaithful (i.e. she desires a third party). In girls, the feelings of frustration and inadequacy cause anger towards her mother, which may turn into the devaluation of, or rebellion against, her own sex (Mäenpää-Reenkola, 2004). Because of this ambivalence, the female viewers of porn might regard female models both as 'whores' (i.e. sexually available for anyone and therefore deserve to be verbally and physically abused and/or forgiven), as well as idealised objects of desire who are devoted to satisfying the viewer's every single need.

The continuously changing female body (particularly during puberty) also causes changes in the way female spectators relate consciously and unconsciously to pornographic text. According to Laufer (1994), teenagers may perceive their own bodies as the source of intense anxiety which is related to the identification with the same-sex parent as "the fantasy is that of being forced, by their body to become the mother or father… being taken over by the parent's body and forcing them to be like them" (ibid:8).

In other words, during adolescence the ego-unity of a girl may face a gendered menace as her childhood body gradually (more or less) becomes that of an objectified porn actress; that of maternal. The development of breasts and the onset of menstruation could be seen as a specifically vivid resurrection of the mother; her (sexual) desire, role in the family and society, or even revenge, as it is usually the mother who decides whether and how such changes are put into words (Mäenpää-Reenkola, 2004:16). Thus, in the female spectatorship there may be a layer of masochism mixed with sadistic desire (Freud, 1905) as a female viewer tries to control the maternal in her own psyche.

However, in Irigaray's (1985:25-8) opinion this female masochism is a manifestation of masculine discourses which construct the female body merely as a 'hole' or a place for a penis or a baby, for instance (Potts, 2005:162-3). Therefore it is difficult for women to define *their* subjectivity and desire as anything else but passive. In mainstream pornographic text, the phallic supremacy is indeed amplified through language, as it is usually a masculine agent (e.g. male actor, writer, or audience) who uses abusive, devaluing, and commanding rhetoric (e.g. 'whore'). The female model is thus an image without subjectivity, as the words she uses are appropriated by, and meant for male

desire – her words and non-verbal communication (e.g. moaning and sight) carry meaning but lack the signifying power of words.

In these masculine discourses penis is the only sexual organ of true importance, while the female sexual organ represents "the horror of nothing to see" (Irigaray, 1985:23-6). For Kristeva this 'horror' surrounding female body is linked with the pre-Oedipal mother-infant fusion and the child's struggle for separateness through '*abject*' (Kristeva, 1982; Minsky, 1996:183). *Abject* falls into two categories: *excremental* (e.g. infection and corpse) that threatens identity from the outside, and *menstrual*, which does the same from the inside (Smith, 1998). In short, *abject* depicts anything that blurs the limits of a subject's sense of a stable oedipal-identity established in and required by the *Symbolic order*[6] (Mansfield, 2000:80-89; Smith, 1998). *Abject* causes horror, uneasiness, or disgust whenever an individual encounters the barriers which in society and culture signify separation from the 'archaic mother' (Smith, 1998:33).

Through their reproductive capabilities and early mother-daughter fusion – later combined with an active search for mother as a pleasure-object, and as the object of identification (O'Connor & Ryan, 1995:187) – women have a special relationship with *abject*, as well as a layer of homoeroticism in female psyche regardless of sexual preferences[7]. Also in Kristeva (1982:8-9) mother is for women (just like *abject*) a source of great ambivalence; her (female) body invites mergence, but as a person she represents the *Symbolic* – language and order – and thus reinforces separation particularly through toilet training (Creed, 1994:164-5; Smith, 1998:33). The mother is thus the first castrating-figure as she functions as a bridge between the child's soiled abject body in the *Imaginary*, and a 'clean and proper body' (Kristeva, 1982:6) mandatory in the *Symbolic*.

Barbara Creed (1993) has used Kristeva to analyse our repulsed fascination of horror movies that often show violent scenes of disfigured female bodies covered with urine, sweat, and semen – forms of abject that frequently feature in pornography too (e.g. anal penetration, 'golden showers'). Although such bodily wastes easily cause embarrassment and disgust in the audience, in Creed's view they may also raise pleasure in breaking the taboo of filth and "returning to that time when the mother-child relationship was marked by an untrammelled pleasure in 'playing' with the body and its wastes" (Creed, 1994:13). *Abject* in pornographic text could thus be linked with the

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[6] However, it is important to notice that abject is a product of the organic drive for separation - thus it is not a product of separation nor can it be controlled by the (symbolic) law (Smith, 1998: 33-4).
[7] For Freud, female homoeroticism is a 'perversion' resulting from pre-Oedipal regression or failures to solve Oedipal complex; i.e. to renounce mother as a love-object.

viewer's wish for self-loss through which s/he can momentarily be liberated from, and revolt against, the expectations and norms of society while nevertheless staying firmly in the *Symbolic order*. In addition, the repetitive scripts of porn can be seen as a favourable setting for the viewer to re-establish the boundaries around the self time and again.

Lacan's theory emphasises vision; however, many female analysts put emphasis on touch, particularly in female psyche (Irigaray, 1985; Mäenpää-Reenkola, 2004). In Irigaray's view, whereas a man needs an active use of "an instrument; his hand, a woman's body, language" in order to touch himself, the woman is in a constant state of self-gratifying auto-eroticism as she "touches herself" all the time… for her genitals are formed of two lips in continuous contact" (ibid:24). As a result, the clitoral activity cannot be distinguished from the vaginal passivity – the shift which in the Freudian theories is a crucial step in the development of a girl's psyche towards 'normal' (heterosexual) femininity. Moreover, since there are no clear forms and limits for the '*vaginal lips*', women's sexual pleasure covers areas both inside and outside the body, and is thus diffuse, plural, and amodal (based on physical sensations of vagina, a girl creates visual images of her inner and outer genitalia (Mäenpää-Reenkola, 2004:82)). Female pleasure is therefore independent from reproduction and the masculine castration scene (Cixous, 1990; Irigaray, 1985).

Although the notion of blurred boundaries between active-passive, feminine-masculine, and self-other may come more 'naturally' to females (Kaite, 1995; Mäenpää-Reenkola, 2004:46), a capability to occupy multiple positions is not impossible for men, either, due to the pre-Oedipal mergence. Furthermore, both women and men may also identify with the narrative as a whole through the original fantasies of early childhood related to three primal scenarios: the origin of the individual ('*primal scene*'); of sexuality ('*seduction*'); and of the difference between sexes ('*castration anxiety*') (Ciclitira, 1998).These are largely unconscious, and lack a clear notion of an active subject; i.e. the child is present in the scene rather than the agent in it (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1968:13). Thus, desire is not necessarily by default as aggressive towards specific object as Kleinian understanding suggests – sexual desire can also result from a wish to re-create an absent object in which case, according to Cowie, it:

> … is the wish to be aroused and the wish to fantasize a scenario of sexual activity which pornography serves, so that the climax is a kind of interruption, albeit one which also maintains the system. (Cowie, 1992:137)

The meanings porn conveys are therefore a mixture of original (universal) fantasies: personal life histories and current experiences, and social context in which psychic desire is linked with the contemporary discourses of 'normal' sexuality (e.g. sexual identity, appropriate activities, what is found desirable etc.).

1.3 Study Objectives

Although there has been an increasing interest in the study of girlhood particularly among feminists, the majority of this research has focused on same-sex friendships (e.g. Griffin, 2000; Hey, 1997), on the construction of feminine identities on a wider cultural scale (e.g. Kidger, 2005; Tolman, 2005), or on the negative effects of sexually explicit material on children (see for discussion, Levine, 2003). On the other hand, most research on pornography has dealt with adult sexuality (e.g. Ciclitira, 1998; Hardy, 1998), or has moved on a more theoretical level among academics (Attwood, 2006). In other words, there has been little research on adolescent girls' multilayered feelings and thoughts about porn during their transition towards adulthood (although Rogala and Tyden (2003) studied the thoughts and the effects of porn consumption among 16-23-year-olds of both sexes, they did face-to-face interviews, which may have affected the findings).

There are two main questions I want to address in this paper: 1) how does girls' relationship to porn change during psycho-social development, and what psychic mechanisms may be involved in the process? and 2) what role do other people, parents, and peer group play in the formation of girls' gender/sexual identity in relation to porn? I will also explore girls' agency[8] in the production of their sexuality; i.e. how they actively construct and negotiate their sexual and feminine/female identities in relation to the discourses both within pornographic text and social context.

I will tackle these objectives within the framework of feminism and psychoanalysis. Even though the relationship of the two has often been an antagonistic one – as the former emphasises the ideological sphere and cultural construction of subjectivity, the latter focuses on unconscious motivations that emerge from bodily needs

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[8] By 'agency' I mean a kind of mixture between humanistic and poststructuralist understandings of the term: whereas the former sees an individual as a rational agent who is able to make 'right' choices, for the latter such humanist individual is itself produced through historico-cultural discourses. Agency, in poststructuralist theories, is never freedom from these discourses, but the capacity to recognize constitutive power of language which in turn makes it possible to resist, subvert, and change the discourses themselves (Davies, 1993; 2000).

– for me this metaphysical and epistemological tension is creative rather than stultifying. Feminist socio-cultural reading of the formation of girls' sexual identity does not rule out the underlying personal meanings which can be addressed through psychoanalysis; beliefs, desires, and motivations may very well find expression in ways that might first seem mere reflections of the dominating (patriarchal) ideology.

2. METHODOLOGY, RESEARCH DESIGN, AND ANALYSIS PROCESS

2.1 Methodological Approaches and Research Design

The two distinctive methodological features of the research design are a modification of memory-work method (Haug, 1987) and the use of email as the communication and data generating medium. Despite the quick expansion of information technology in every area of our (Western) lives, Internet is still a novel addition to the toolkit of qualitative research; therefore the advantages and disadvantages of cyberspace research are still somewhat unclear (Seymour, 2001). Although authenticity, embodiment, and shared research context – the elements regarded highly in more traditional qualitative approaches (ibid:155) – are clearly problematic in online research, there are also benefits of electronic communication when asking people about the 'secret' sides of their lives.

In short, email-based research offers innovative and flexible ways to do qualitative research; it is a quick and familiar way to communicate, as participants may enter their accounts almost whenever and wherever they like. This in turn gives them more freedom and autonomy (e.g. to think, review, and even delete answers), and also lessens the interviewer and setting effects (e.g. clothes, accent, and gender) (Seymour, 2001). Sitting safely in front of a computer screen may also decrease the anxieties the researcher and the participant might have during an intimate face-to-face interview; i.e. neither party needs to worry about being 'betrayed' by their autonomic nervous system (i.e. blushing, sweating etc.), let alone being judged by the other's rising eyebrows. (Clarke, 2000). As a result, online communication may reflect aspects of participants' character that would not be revealed during personal discussions.

This is not to say that the Internet would echo more authentic voices, but rather that it should be seen as the means to enrich and complicate the picture built of a particular person. Thus, Internet research can be egalitarian, more informative, less pre-constructed, and less influenced by the web of socio-cultural pre-suppositions (e.g. Seymour (2001:157) found that women are more likely to be interviewed at home thus making them more exposed to the researcher's 'gaze'). Moreover, since the data is already in a written form, the method saves time and money (e.g. by by-passing recording and transcribing) (Seymour, 2001:152).

On the other hand, since participants in the Internet-based research are required not only to have the equipment and access, but also to be textually and technologically skilled, email research may reinforce age, gender, and socio-economical division (see Seymour, 2001 for discussion). Internet inquiry, therefore, is particularly problematic for feminists whose political project is to start from the lives of marginalized groups (Harding, 1993). Furthermore, the findings may be biased not only because participants might not form a presentable biopsy of a target group or honest about their 'true' 'identity (e.g. in terms of gender, age, background), but also because there are no formalized sampling methods available for online inquiry (Clarke, 2000). The flexibility may also leave researchers in an anxious waiting mode if the replying speed of participants does not meet the premeditated time limits (e.g. there may be technological, personal, or other problems in participants' lives which researchers cannot anticipate). Online enquiry should not be too 'high-tech' either as it can make answering more complicated and time-consuming, thus shifting attention away from the actual research questions (Seymour, 2001:152).

Privacy and ethical issues, too, must be reconsidered in an online study (e.g. storing the data, not sending group-emails). These aspects weigh even more when inquiring on exceedingly sensitive areas, such as porn (especially since early encounters with pornography are sometimes linked with childhood abuse (Ciclitira, 1998:336-43)). In other words, although face-to-face interviews may expose participants to researcher's 'gaze', reactions, and interpretations, the embodied presence of another human being also offers the much-needed emphatic and professional support should distressing memories surface. But since email interviewing lacks verbal and embodied signals (body language, facial expressions, silences etc.), the accounts of maltreatment may even by-pass the researcher's awareness and thus remain in subtext (Seymour, 2001:161).

Hence, in an email inquiry it is essential to be sensitive to the written accounts, and to the messages between the lines: to the sudden changes, delays, breaks, or contradictions in the answering style of a particular participant (Clarke, 2000). However, since the main objective of this research was to examine participants' 'everyday' experiences with porn, there was also an academic motive to minimize the possibility of the emerging of traumatic recollections (e.g. I 'debriefed' potential participants by emailing them detailed information about the study). While the Internet is not suitable for all inquiries (and thus it is important to consider whether online inquiry is suitable for the research goals, and to be sensitive to the experiences and living-conditions of the target group (Clarke, 2000)) it nonetheless may prove an extremely fruitful medium when working with younger people

with media and technology proficiency. Moreover, even in cyberspace the body is strongly present in the form of discourses (Seymour, 2001).

The research project started in late 2005 as a literature review and formulation of the used material (Information Letter, Consent Form, and four blocks of questions (to view the Blocks, see Appendix 2.a-d)). There was no pilot research in a traditional sense. Instead, I showed all the material I was to use to academics (e.g. gave a presentation at the Feminist and Research Reading Group at MMU), university students, and to some young people I contacted through common acquaintances. In practice, I tested the usefulness and the layout and wording of the questionnaires by sending them to people I already knew.

Each Block had a certain theme related to porn, growing up, and society. In the first half of every block there were 8-13 open-ended, semi-structured questions; participants were given a possibility to mould the original questions to better suit their experiences, and use underlining or capitals to emphasise words or views - 'diminishing' the lack of body language to certain extent. Whereas no one used an opportunity to create their own questions, many employed textual clarifications (including smileys and 'lol' = laughing out loud). At the end of each block there was also an 'event-question' which invited participants to write about an occasion, action, or experience related to pornography (e.g. the first time they encountered porn). The event-question was a modification of Haug's (1987) memory-work methodology.

In the original version of memory-work a group of women with a common interest would together analyse written accounts from their past over a given period of time (weeks, months or years). Their goal was to question female sexualization and actively transform the socio-cultural constrains (e.g. taboos and double standards) in women's everyday lives[9]. The key philosophy of memory-work is that experiences, emotions, and identities are not unique, nor do they arise from individuals' 'natural' selves (Haug, 1987). Rather they are collectively produced stories tightly linked with gender: the individuals are spoken into existence by others and themselves through discourses that position them into dualistic categories, such as female-male (Davies, 2000:75-7). Thus the importance of everyday language gains special attention (Haug, 2000:73). By sharing their stories, and

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[9] Haug and her colleagues developed the method as they found the existing socialization theories male-biased; girls rarely appear in such theories, and if they do, "they surface only as objects of various different agencies" such as family and school, that force them into a particular set of roles (Haug, 1987:24). Haug wanted to emphasise women's agency in the building of their subjectivities, as females are not "simply stamped with the imprint of their given social relations, but [rather] acquiesce in them and unconsciously participate in their formation" (ibid: 25). Girls and women, this is, may enjoy participating as 'competent' (female) members of society (Davies, 1993;2000) in such 'oppressive' practices as serving others and wearing high heels.

drawing connections between memories and common-sense understandings (e.g. popular sayings, metaphors and images), memory-workers first become aware of (previously unconscious) discourses. After this they can begin to change their own beliefs about the 'natural' order of the world (Crawford et al, 1992:41; Haug, 2000:155).

Autobiographical accounts (which might be the case in face-to-face interviews) are avoided as they might reflect the normative understanding of life creating an illusion of a chronologically living, rational individual whose current identity is caused by the past episodes rather than their socio-cultural interpretation (Haug, 2000). Life stories "privilege certain memories over others" (e.g. losing virginity) (Haug, 2000:155) which are nevertheless often at odds with less central, daily memories (Thomson & Holland, 2005:204). Thus memory-workers analyze gaps and conflicts hiding in everyday events by using three techniques; 1) the focus is on stories as cultural products (i.e. not on an individual as a person); 2) participants provide as much detail as possible (e.g. key images, sensations etc.) to bring in the unconscious elements of their embodied experiences (Davies, 2000); and 3) memories are written in the third person in order to prevent self-justifications and highlight the narrative nature of the self. The goal is to create a space in which people can realize that their experiences could be understood and even lived differently, and in which to try out new ways to conceptualize their subjectivity (Haug, 2000:166).

Nowadays memory-work is creatively employed also to individuals, other groups (e.g. men with AIDS (see Pease, 2000)), and research participants (e.g. see Thomson & Holland, 2005) whilst making the technique itself more flexible (for example by using images, myths, and portfolios). In my research the term 'memory' was not directly used in order to reduce associations to concrete – possibly upsetting – and already processed occasions; event questions rather drew attention to 'forgotten' incidents that had not yet gained much conscious consideration due to their obviousness in our culture (e.g. boys' interest in porn).

2.2 Participants and Data Collecting Process

Although online research raises the question of 'identity frauds', there are ways to minimize such risks, for example by defining the medium through which participants are recruited (e.g. web-based bulletin boards and chat rooms (Clarke, 2000)). I found my

participants by using the word-of-mouth method (both online and offline), and pre-existing email lists, mainly those of different Women's studies departments around the English-speaking world. Although the latter case was a more 'official' medium and increased the 'authenticity' of the potential participants – while simultaneously perhaps homogenizing the group – these two methods often mixed as some young women who contacted me via email told they had heard of my research from an unnamed third party.

After a four-week recruiting period I had twenty-five participants from four countries: eleven British, eight Americans, three Canadians, and three Australians (see Appendix 1.b for summary). The participants were born between 1982 and 1988; majority were 19-22 years of age (22/25), the biggest age group being 20-year-olds (7/25). Most informants were university students living in suburbs either with a partner, housemates, and/or with their childhood family, although one lived alone and some come from urban or rural areas. For the majority, religion had relatively little significance in their current lives, but many had gone to a religious school or had at least a moderately religious upbringing – Islamic, Catholic, or Protestant – which had been influential during their childhood and adolescence through the taboos and beliefs of their family, community, and peer groups.

In the *Introduction questions* (sent to the participants after they had 'signed' the consent form (= emailed back)) all the participants identified themselves either as hetero, homo-, or bisexual. However, some were reluctant to use such labels, and emphasised their varying attraction towards both women and men – ranging from aesthetic appreciation to curiosity played out in the field of imagination. Especially those familiar with gender and women's studies often preferred the term 'queer' as they found terms emphasising fixed sexual identity (such as straight or gay) insufficient to encompass the wide range of feelings that they held, or could hold, in relation to certain people or practices (e.g. S/M). Out of twenty-five participants, five returned only the Consent Form, ten answered to 1-3 blocks of questions (some informed me of their withdrawal while others did not), and ten continued through the whole research project (i.e. returned all four blocks).

The actual data collection took place over the period of three months at late spring/early summer 2006. By emailing a block of questions once a week while keeping other correspondence at a minimum, I wanted to create a sense of structure, form boundaries (both temporal and interpersonal), and to make sure that all the participants had access to the same amount of information (for the sake of convenience, participants

could receive questions either in email format or as Word documents). However, occasionally extra guidance was needed and many participants exceeded at some point the recommended one-week reply schedule due to other engagements, forgetting, or for some unnamed reason. In order to create a sense of 'closure', participants were offered a possibility – which they all accepted – to receive a summary of the research results.

2.3 Analytical Process

In the analysis I used a combination of discourse analysis (Parker, 2005) and a modification of the 'standard practice' of the Listening Guide method (Tolman, 2005). The focus of discourse analysis is on the discursive processes (language, images, art, and non-verbal communication) that generate within given socio-historical context cultural meanings and interpretations, and by so doing shape, constrain, and position subjects, for example, as passive or powerless (Parker, 2005). The deconstruction of 'common sense' understandings, institutional procedures, and the social narratives – that all make certain choices and understandings available for adolescent girls in relation to porn and sexuality – are central to this paper. The psychic and social dilemmas emerging from dominating discourses, especially in the realms of ideology, morals, and intersubjective desires (e.g. feminism, religion, sexual pleasure), are also analysed within psychoanalytic frameworks.

Listening Guide method is an analytic process that includes four separate readings of an interview (or written accounts in my case) to identify distinct 'voices' within a single narrative in order to develop complex perspectives and interpretations of the participants' accounts in relation to the social context. This analytical approach enabled me to combine feminist and psychoanalytical perspectives within the chosen methodological frameworks; i.e. to investigate how adolescent female desire, sexuality, and sexual identity are organized by the institution of heterosexuality, but nevertheless expressed and understood by individual girls and women as springing from, and being expressions of, the core of their subjectivity.

Each time I looked for the parts that expressed a particular relation each informant had regarding pornography. The first reading focused on explicit information, and on my responses to them as a culturally bound reader (particularly my first reactions I had typed to the margins of the returned blocks). The method requires a high degree of reflexivity from the researcher (which is amplified in email-based research due to its methodological

pitfalls), as the recognition of own feelings may not only contain useful insights, but more crucially facilitate the hearing of the participants' voices over those echoing from researcher's own past.

On the second reading I looked for statements that referred to the self: i.e. 'I', 'my', and 'me'. By focusing on the manner in which a participant placed herself in relation to the early encounters with porn, other people, and sexual discourses in general – how she wrote herself and her role into existence within such enacted narratives – was to make the degree of agency more perceptible (for example, when writing about female sexuality, did the participant use 'she', 'they', or 'I'?). How the speaking acts of other people that positioned the participant, for instance, as a 'bad girl', was taken up by her as her own (e.g. did she resist, conform to, or ignore such comments) (Davies, 1993: 94)?

During the third and fourth readings I assessed the relationship between self and 'relational voices'. The focus was on how the informant wrote about an erotic voice – which is most often associated with the body and its sensations (Tolman, 2005: 210-14) – of her teen years, and how she now, as an adult, responded to adolescent sexuality on a personal level and within the contemporary social order that defines the limits for 'appropriate' adolescent sexuality. Therefore, the moral voices of care and justice were also analysed.

In addition I sought expressions that describe or signify emotions (e.g. 'lol'), desire, conscious decision-making, or strong bodily sensations, such as 'I felt disgusted'. I also looked for (with certain reservation) unconscious elements that lurk in the reports as inappropriate words, nonsensical passages, unexplained silences, contradictory statements, or as statements that belittle or rationalise possible erotic experiences. The role of other people, either as real or abstract, was important also in analysing these 'beyond language' aspects (e.g. how the presence of other's, or informant's concern about the responses or potential actions of them contributed to her conscious and unconscious reactions).

Due to the space limit, I will structure the analysis around Kayla and Linda; two of the ten participants who completed all four blocks of questions. Their accounts best respond to the aims of this paper while providing an 'outline' against which to reflect other participants' adolescent experiences – highlighting the range of interpretations, solutions, and reactions girls may have – regarding porn and identity formation. Because the reliability of coding voices is a problematic matter, I wanted to provide as many examples as possible. Each quotation in the text is followed by 'coded' information about

the participant, and by a symbol of the block in question and the line number within it: for example, (Kayla, 19, H, b/f AUS: BI 14-6) (see Appendix 1.a for description).

3. RESULTS

3.1 Kayla and Linda – Constructing Adolescent Female Sexual/gender Identity within Social Context

3.1.1 Porn in the Childhood Family

The foundation for girls' understandings regarding sex, female/male sexuality, and gender stereotypes are first constructed through the people in the immediate environment; especially in the family.

Kayla's (19, H, b/f, AUS) and Linda's (20, H, b/f, UK) families rarely discussed sex, little less pornography. However, according to Linda, her mother's disapproval of sexual content in movies was particularly obvious. "It was clear she didn't see the point of these scenes and that she was embarrassed by them" (BIV 6-7). If porn was mentioned, it was referred to as foul and perverted – something "that dirty old men did" (BI 74). Indeed, this had been the opinion many participants had held, both personally and 'publicly', in the early teens; porn was disgusting, degrading, and something no self-respecting woman should be interested in.

However, these gendered stereotypes may raise a dilemma: for many participants, discovering the 'stashes' of fathers or brothers was the first official encounter with pornography. After Kayla's parents separated, and when her father began a new relationship, porn entered forcefully into her awareness.

> Kayla first encountered porn, at age 14, in her fathers bedroom. She was looking for something in his drawers and came across a few semi-hardcore magazines. She was embarrassed to have found them, and slightly disgusted at the thought of her father masturbating over the photos. (BII 66-9)

"I felt sick", Kayla describes her experience, "not that he had porn, but that he was watching it, etc, with this new woman" (BII 6-7). Melissa (21, H, s, USA) was around twelve when she found out that her father was visiting pornographic sites. She articulates the reasons behind similar thoughts in more detail.

> I felt disgusted and very disappointed in [my father]. He was still married to my mother at the time, and I didn't think that people who were married should look at porn, especially without their spouse knowing about it. I felt very sad and angry that he was unfaithful to my mother in this way. (BII 7-11)

For other participants, too, the idea of their father using porn as a way to express and satisfy his desires towards not just the mother, but females in general, was 'disturbing', and evoked anxiety and confusion. Sandra (23, B, g/f, USA) remembers how, during a visit by her mother's relatives, she, at the age of twelve realised that her father was a representative not only of his own, but of male sexuality in general.

> When they came into our house, Robert [the husband of mother's cousin] gave a large paper bag to my dad. My dad gave it to me and told me to bring it upstairs. Robert seemed surprised and said he shouldn't give it to me. Of course, after hearing that, I immediately peeked into the bag when I got upstairs and saw a stack of porn magazines, like Playboy, etc. I was not expecting this. I didn't tell anyone. I still remember it to this day. It was odd to think about my dad as a sexual being. (BII 8-14)

This experience, according to Sandra, "was the first time she really thought about porn because it was no longer distant – it was something her own father took part in" (BII 78-9). But how girls feel about a particular man consuming porn does not merely depend on how 'distant' he is from their everyday life or gene pool, but also on how she perceives him as a person in general.

For instance, Frida (22, H, s, USA) had not been particularly close to her father, and thus found his interest in porn disturbing. However, she had got along well with her uncle; therefore the idea of him watching porn had not been disgusting at all – he was an adult man who had the right to enjoy it. Similarly, brothers' porn consumption had not evoked the feelings of betrayal, anger, sadness, or disgust; Mary (22, L/Q, s, USA) even occasionally ended up watching soft-core movies with her younger brother on the TV when flipping channels. The stereotypes of hormone-driven teenage boys and dirty old men may also partly explain why it is significantly easier for girls to accept their brothers' porn consumption. Sex, as a 'natural' expression of humans' biological make-up, is strongly associated with youth.

Nonetheless, the personal observations and gendered understandings do not only echo the family's views of sex-specific attributes (expressed also in rules concerning dating and dress codes); they also reflect the dynamics between mother and father - or indeed, between women and men. While most participants state that both of their parents disapproved of porn, some clear differences in the positions of fathers and mothers do emerge. Some fathers' views are received as quite docile and politically correct, which might stem from their own consumption of porn. Mothers usually take a passive or openly negative position. This, as Melissa demonstrates in relation to porn site incident discussed above, may sometimes come close to passive-aggressiveness, a form of sadomasochism, mixed with denial and projected hatred:

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> My mom did find porn sites saved in the temp files on our computer […] and accused me of having looked at them, because she could not accept the fact that my father would look at it […]. It was pretty disturbing for me at that age, and even more so when I saw what the URL names were. (BI 92-7)

As a young girl, Melissa had discovered her father's 'unfaithfulness' to her mother (as she described her feelings). More importantly, because her mother was distressed and in denial, she could not provide the emotional support Melissa might have wished. Instead, as she accused her 12-year-old daughter of visiting porn sites, Melissa felt the pressure of male sexuality from two fronts. On one front was her mother who projected her feelings of disappointment and disgust into a pre-adolescent girl, rather than admitting that her husband occupied the other front as a representative of objectifying male sexuality. Melissa was left to face both alone.

This obvious discrepancy between parents' official opinions on pornography and what participants had observed taking place behind the scenes, easily adds another layer of puzzlement on girls' own interpretations of the meanings of porn and how women are to cope with it. Words may not only be overridden by actions and quiet approval, but moreover, it can be difficult for a teenage girl – who is psychically and physically transforming into an adult woman/female – to combine the images of a loving father (whom she has learnt to know in the childhood), and the father as a representative of objectifying male sexuality.

Furthermore, girls must negotiate and integrate all these contradictions into their self-image and psychic reality – process that often continues until the adulthood. For instance, there are still traces of adolescent beliefs in many participants' accounts: males can use porn to 'connect' with their 'inner aggressive self' and women want to experience emotional closeness on both sides of the screen. As an adult, Linda can reflect on the effects her upbringing might have had on her feelings and thoughts in terms of 'proper' sex and sexual relations. "Perhaps being female, and being brought up by my mother who educated me about the facts of life etc." Linda ponders, "the females' negative opinions have been transferred on to me" (BI 89-91).

3.1.2 Changing Relationships: Girls, Porn, and Society at Different Stages of Adolescence

Age, context, relationship status, reasons given for sampling porn, and understandings of female/male sexuality, heavily correlate both with how a girl constructs her encounters with porn, as well as with how people respond to a her interest in sexually explicit material. Even if pornography is not an issue in the family, this is to say, it enters girls' lives – either concretely or symbolically – via other people: schoolmates, boy/friends, or surrounding community (e.g. teachers and other adults).

3.1.2.1 Porn from the Verge of Puberty to Mid-teens: Peer Group, Community, and Gendering Sexuality

Rather than seeking physical arousal, at pre- and early puberty the emphasis is often on doing something 'forbidden' (i.e. breaking the rules, seeing what the 'fuss' is about etc.), learning about sex as an act, and on examining the images of naked human bodies. Especially the female figure is intriguing because of the physiological changes in a girl's own body, and also since this is often the first time she begins identifying herself with the adult-female/woman – with the images and meanings that have earlier been somewhat foreign to her embodied child-female self. Although there may be homoerotic and narcissistic elements involved in porn usage, particularly younger girls' curiosity towards porn is thus linked to the desire to learn more about the anatomy and possibilities of their developing bodies. The appeal of the female figure can also be connected to other psychic phenomena. For instance, as a teenager Amanda (20, H, b/f, UK), who practices visual arts, had found porn representing "a certain type of beauty and sexual freedom" (BI 62-63), and especially the women in porn had appealed to her sense of aesthetics (BIV 47-8).

Furthermore, unlike for adolescent girls, it may be less risky and anxiety-laden for their pre-adolescent sisters – who are not yet sexually 'mature' – to openly study the bodies of porn actresses together. For, example, at the age of 11-12 Kate (20, H, b/f, UK: BII 46-7) had looked at female underwear models in magazines because she "just wondered what they looked like". Mary, on the other hand, was twelve when she first encountered porn through her best friend Beth, who had found her father's nude magazine (see full description BII 70-85). Beth and Mary had lain side by side on the bed flipping

through the pages. Mary does not recall being stimulated: "They were both excited because they felt like they had done something that was against the rules and gotten away with it" (BII 84-5). Feeling comfortable in each others company, the girls actively engaged in 'commenting' the female models as well as in forming a mutual understanding of why Beth's father had the particular magazine.

But the relationship between a girl, porn, her sexual/gender identity, and other people gets more complex after the outset of puberty – after her subjective experience and position in the society shift towards that of adult-females'. Although nowadays Kayla, just like many of participants, understands that female and male sexualities are formed within the constructs of society, the memories reflecting the imbalanced gender dichotomy are still vivid. "Much of the demeaning behaviour directed towards women by men", Kayla speculates, "is too commonly brushed off as 'boys will be boys'" (BIV 11-2). Indeed, as young girls, many participants had experienced the effects of boys' sexist behaviour, and how it had been 'brushed off' even by authorities. Natalie describes her experiences of the first day in secondary school:

> it wasn't like she had to deal with enough change but for the first time she saw images of women that she had never experienced. topless girls with skimpy g strings and suggestive stares. of course, there was nothing like this in primary school. but here, every where she went, every guy she spoke to had a picture of a girl on either his books or his folder. it was like initiation. you weren't a man unless you had a 'girl'. the school called such images sexual harassment but they never tried to stop it. it was a culture. (Natalie, 18, H, b/f, AUS: BII 68-74)

This time individual girls must make sense of the conflict between the official views of society, and the significance they have in real life. Moreover, girls open disapprove of porn – taking an opposite position to the hypermasculine identity of boys – may even endorse the very same gender binary.

While many teenage girls sincerely feel that porn is 'foul and disgusting', boys' usage of porn is often collectively accepted as 'something they do'. Adolescent boys' extroverted expressions of sexuality might even be interpreted as openness – a goal girls too should aim at – rather than as a means of strengthening gender roles. Similarly, because porn is degrading to women, but seen as a normal part of male sexuality due to their biological make-up (hence 'alien' for females), a girl in her early-to-mid teens needs an excuse for her inquisitiveness towards pornographic material: she saw a clip by accident, her boyfriend has some magazines, she wanted to quickly see what the fuss was about, someone put a movie on as a joke, and so on (see the next chapter for further

discussion). Regardless whether she encounters porn actively or passively, curiosity must be reduced to anything else but sexual desire.

Even among female friends confessing to enjoying reading/watching porn might mean exclusion, or questioning of a girl's character (only few participants had told about their porn usage to anyone prior to adulthood). Linda provides an illustration of how she had necessitated a 'reductionist' excuse from her friend:

> Linda was about 15/16 when her best friend first mentioned she had seen a bit of a porn video. This surprised Linda, but as it was her best friend she was quite accepting of this as she knew her friend was quite open minded, her friend also explained she had only seen part of the video and was just watching it to see what it was like and that she thought it was very funny and that she laughed at it. As Linda realised that her friend hadn't watched it to get turned on, and that she wasn't serious about it, this made it seem ok. (BI 107-13)

Even though Linda states that "there was no embarrassment or shame in talking about it" (BI 115-16), she had nevertheless been surprised (which might have shown on her face and in her voice). In her mind Linda had looked for reasons for her friend's act; she was her best friend and open-minded, it was one-off clip and funny, and most importantly, she had been only curious and not 'turned on' by porn. All these reasons were needed in order to 'make it seem ok' (although Linda herself had been 'slightly aroused' while reading sexually charged stories in women's magazines – see next chapter). An adolescent girl's reasons for watching/reading porn – especially material targeted at males – arise from her character and situation in life; "If they were watching it seriously (i.e. not just a one off out of curiosity) or seemed to be enjoying it," Linda summarises, "then they would be considered weird or over sexed (BI 85-7)." Boys' interest in porn, as it is linked to biology, needs no further justification.

Girls may also lack the means to question and defy the expressions of adolescent masculinity also on a personal level. Natalie's story (see full description, BI 80-97) of 13-year-old teenagers camping illustrates vividly how adolescent boys already use pornography – even without the presence of images – to establish and reinforce power relations and gender roles. She relates how the boys began to describe porn movies and magazines they had seen; rating the models, depicting the scenes, and recommending sites to each other. Although the girls "laughed along with the guys at various jokes or disgusting sex scenes", in Natalie's experience "their laughter was more to conceal how uncomfortable and nervous they were". The girls' body language spoke loudly: "they all sat in closed positions with their legs held close to the body and their arms either crossed over their chest or wrapped around their legs".

After the boys had finished, one of the girls admitted that she too watched and enjoyed porn. First the boys stared at her quietly "as if she had said that she was a porn star herself". But the looks were not appreciative; the other girls instantly knew that "she had said something wrong when the guys laughed at her and called her a slut". The girl was not able to defend herself nor did anyone stick up for her. "For years to come the ridicule she received for that one comment". Natalie concludes her story, "reminded Natalie not that it was wrong to watch porn, but that it was wrong to admit to It" (BI 80-97).

Although 'having a laugh' is one of the main explanations participants give for watching porn in the first place, the recollection illustrates how there are significant differences in the functions and meanings of 'having a laugh' in mixed- and same sex groups; i.e. who laughs, at what, and in what context. At the verge of puberty, boys do the laughing – either at the expense of female actresses, or an individual girl. The description also highlights how quickly girls learn indirectly from another female's experience not to admit to watching porn, as well as how laughing along with guys may sometimes be a defence – a means for dealing with anxious feelings and fear over being the next target of public attack.

3.1.2.2 Porn from Mid Teens Towards Adulthood: Friends, Partners, and Concealed Double Standards

As a girl gets older, she has to constantly renegotiate her relationship with porn and whatever implications it may have to her understanding of intimate relationships, of the essence of female and male sexualities, and of the formation of her identity. In other words, as the importance of boys in particular grows in girls' lives through dating and/or friendships, porn develops from a subjective matter into something that must be dealt with on a more interpersonal level – regarding it as 'totally off-limits' or 'disgusting' rarely works for females in their late teens.

One of the most common means participants had employed during in dealing with double standards during late adolescence – especially in relation to their male friends and pornography – was to turn porn into a topic of mutual 'joking'.

> I remember once when a whole big group of us - lads and girls - had a porn film on at a party. Some of the lads where quite getting in to it but all the girls and a few of the lads

where generally just laughing about how unrealistic and cheesy the whole thing was. (Heather, 22, H, s, USA: BI 68-71)

But even if the girls did view porn as a form of 'entertainment' – something that should not be taken too seriously – Heather's example demonstrates how they are not expected 'get into' porn (at least not in public) in the same way as boys. Moreover, besides handling one's anxieties, just 'having a laugh' might be an attempt to avoid giving an impression of being immature or a 'prude'. However, anxieties may have more to do with the power imbalance between the two sexes and the lack of girls' agency, than with 'immaturity'. Even when girls – especially those who are already more comfortable and confident with their sexuality – view porn as a form of entertainment, in mixed-sex viewing sessions they are not in the same position with their male peers.

Indeed, especially in the 'public' context – such as parties – boys are usually the ones who decide what to watch, where and when to watch it, and how to construct the situation. Taya remembers how, at the age of 15, she entered a crowded room at a party.

> Most of the people where men and they were all whistling and cheering. I felt a bit intimidated by the unaffected enthusiasm about porn as I had never encountered it before. I was pushed and shoved around the room for a bit as everyone tried to get close to the screen and I remember smelling beer, cigarettes and yes sperm quite strongly although I didn't know what it was at the time. (Taya, 19, H, s, AUS: BII 68-72)

Taya did not only experience the 'unaffected enthusiasm' of the men – the escalating hyper-masculinity – through their words (e.g. cheering which alone could have been taken as immature bragging), but above all she felt it in her own body; pushing and shoving, smell of beer and sperm. The description shows how boys can, even in a crowd, isolate girls into their sexualized, vulnerable female bodies. Although girls in the late teens may, and often do, increase their agency by taking genuine interest in pornography, they are nevertheless often judged by male peers according to what is considered to be 'proper' femininity. Taya (see the full description: BI 128-58) also writes how she, at the verge of adulthood, still faces double standards even among her friends. Once again she was at a crowded party, and delighted to find her friends in an upstairs room:

> Squashing down in between Aaron and Mike Taya was surprised to see Jenna Jameson flashing across the plasma screen. Grinning she settled back in for the show, only to crack up with laughter five minutes in. "Oh Please!" she laughed "like anyone could get that monster down their throat, a normal girl would be throwing up on him having that shoved so far down." The girls started to discuss various techniques for getting past the gag reflex and were having quite a good time, giggling and talking. […] Taya and her friends received so many dirty looks she eventually asked what was wrong. Aaron then explained that girls watching porn was like Martha Stuart in the labour force. It wasn't done and it

certainly wasn't talked about. The other guys nodded in agreement and a debate ensued. (BI 140-52)

The confidence Taya and her female friends had first shown in their sexual agency was abolished by their male friends' consensual disapproval. The high spirits of the girls were replaced by feelings of defeat and injustice which stem from the solid foundation of gender roles. Moreover, if a girl mentions the word 'porn' in a mixed group, boys may be – as Evette speculates – titillated by the topic, while other girls might interpret it as attention-seeking (which can sometimes be true).

In contrast, joking about porn with one's girl friends may serve as a safe medium to share experiences and find out how other females perceive it; mutual laugher can also provide personal relief. "I was glad to find out that other people watched porn as well", Mary (BII 56-7) writes of her joking with a female friend in college. If a common ground is found (i.e. the discussion gets more 'serious' or stays on a jokey level), girls may together decrease the taboo and shame, and open a space where they can question the realism and meanings of pornography. Such female reflection is not important only because many adolescences watch pornography in order to see what 'really' happens during sex (since sex education is mainly about STDs and reproduction), but above all because girls are often left alone with their thoughts and feelings, the revulsion some scenes may cause, the fear they might have to repeat such acts in a relationship, and the feelings of pleasure and desire when exploring one's preferences.

The assumption that pornography is an essential part of adolescent male sexuality, poses a dilemma for hetero- and bisexual participants especially. The question for them is, what to think and feel of their boyfriends using porn, and how to respond to it? Girls may be, as Kayla (BI 60-1) suspected, even forced to watch porn, or they just have to come to terms with it. "As you get older and into relationship", Cathy (24, H, b/f, UK: BI 91-4 writes, "porn becomes more of a factor, you either ignore that your partner has it or you start to watch it as a couple".

'Normalization' of porn, particularly in relation to biological discourses, can decrease girls' anxieties partner's porn consumption can evoke (similar reasoning may also lessen some girl's guilt and sense of 'weirdness' regarding her own porn usage). Vicki (21, UK) was 18 when she had 'freaked out' after finding her current boyfriend's stack of porn DVDs. She did not know how to react: "I text my best friend and she said its normal, he is a bloke they all have them", Vicki explains how she calmed down, "this is when I first began to see porn as this possible 'normality' in our society" (BII 17-9). Girls need to be, in other words, 'mature' about pornography in a relationship – to accept it as a

part of a loving and caring boyfriend. This idea is reinforced also by their female peer group - not just by the surrounding male society. "Now I think it is something I have accepted", Vicki describes her changed views, "because my fella watched it so it was part of his life".

However, not every young woman accepts porn unquestionable and inevitable role in a relationship. Melissa, for instance, has reversed her opinions since her adolescence on the opposite direction.

> When I was teenager, I believed every man looked at porn, period. I believed it was normal and natural, and that even in a relationship they would use it. I now know that that would be a deal-breaker in any relationship I would have. (BI 65-7)

On the other hand, a girl might find porn enjoyable – a delightful surprise for some young males – in which case it may become a couples mutual interest; a form of foreplay, a pastime, or a recreational zone in which to try out fantasies and new techniques. But girls should be careful not to enjoy porn *too much,* as it may threaten male narcissism. "Sometimes it upsets [my boyfriend]", Kayla writes in relation to her viewing porn by herself, "if he thinks I don't get excited by him alone" (BII 54). In the participants' experience, men rarely apply the same logic to women.

But females themselves sometimes make distinctions based on biology which may lead into conflict of interests. For example, Nina (20, H, b/F, UK) describes everyone who use 'normal' (mainstream) pornography as "interested in sex; horny; bored; average" (BI 27). In terms of sexual behaviour, men's lead in 'no-strings-attached' sex is gradually 'levelling out': women and men have the same amount of sex, and enjoy it equally (BIV 8-12). This 'physiological equality', like in the accounts of few other participants, refers to having women's right to arousal and sexual pleasure recognized as just as strong, satisfying, and natural as men's. However, personally Nina thinks that porn provides men – who are also more capable of cheating and having 'detached' sex – with fantasies they try to emulate and act out while "secretly every woman who sees a slim, voluptuous, attractive woman on the pages of men's magazines would long to look like that" (BIV 27-8). It is mostly the fear of being judged that prevents women from acting on the wish to be lusted after.

Whether these sexed tendencies are seen to stem from biology or social norms, men are still subjects and women, objects. Hence, the manner in which Nina constructs the gender/sex matrix not only assumes desire and the gender relations as heterosexual by default. More importantly, the 'secret' wishes – in or outside the consciousness – imply

that the psychic structures of females and males reflect the position the patriarchal society has assigned to them. This problematises the possibility and the need for *social* equality. When brought onto the level of society, double standards and stereotypes – of which girls can be perfectly aware – often override, or subvert, this 'physiological equality'. In addition, for some girls the normalization and sexual open-mindedness within society may cause more pressure and anxiety than feelings of liberation. It is not just men who are obsessed with sex; *everyone* seems to openly have or at least talk about sex - at school, on MTV, in chat rooms, or in porn movies.

The conflict in girls' thoughts and feelings can be linked with boys attitude towards porn and female models reflecting culture's views of ideal femininity (i.e. slim, big breasts, long hair). "When i was in high school, porn was everywhere", Brenda (22. B/Q, b/f, CAN) describes growing up in a 'close minded' small town; "i just ignored it, but i always felt inferior and jealous of these women that all these guys would drool over" (BI 73-4). But 'ignoring' was quite difficult since Brenda's male peers "were constantly degrading women talking about 'her box' and how 'she's so loose' and 'such a slut' while they'd high five each other if they fooled around with her" (BIV 12-4). But above all, she had been jealous of her high school boyfriend who was a fan of an attractive female wrestler (BI 80-3). Indeed, many participants say they had compared themselves to porn models, which in turn had generated feelings of inferiority, inadequacy, and dissatisfaction towards own body and sense of femininity (however, similar feelings also occurred in relation to other girls and media representations). These thoughts and feelings had troubled many despite the fact many had seen porn as an objectification even as adolescents.

Sometimes girls may also experience an unanticipated fury of boyfriends' mothers (or other adult women's) as they may accuse girls of being 'oversexed', instead of questioning the way the men in their lives express their sexual desires. Vicki recounts (see BI 123-43) how she, at the age of fifteen, had always been interested in her first boyfriends' porn DVDs and magazines, as she was unfamiliar with such material (note how above, the 18-year-old Vicki had been 'freaked out' at finding her current boyfriend's stash). One day, when the house was empty, the couple seized the opportunity and put on a movie. Lying on the bed, they were enjoying themselves when the parents suddenly returned and the boyfriend's mother came straight in.

> Vicki and her boyfriend were still fully clothed but the people in the porn film certainly weren't. Vicki remembers that they were watching a man licking the woman out and she hadn't experienced it yet so was really intrigued. his mum hit the roof and said that girls

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should not watch porn, it is disgusting and sick and porn was made just for boys and men. she told Vicki that she was obviously sick for wanting to watch this and she should remember she is a girl and not some slut and should not behave like this. (BI 131-7)

After the 'mortifying' event she did not visit her boyfriend again nor did she watch porn for two years. However, when she at the age of seventeen did come across porn second time around, the circumstances were quite different. Vicki had been "seeing a girl for four months and porn was introduced to 'assist' in sex". The girlfriend lived in her own flat "so it was more private and not so scary"; besides, she also told that "porn was for anyone who wanted to watch it" (BI 139-42). This time Vicki's curiosity for porn was not filtered though her gender: she was not seen as a sick *girl,* but as an *individual* who enjoyed pornography.

Vicki's story, at least the first half of it, also shows how girls may use their male/boyfriends as a shield behind which to watch porn and to explore own desires, body, and preferences. The exploration does not necessarily include a partner, for it might be a private voyage.

3.1.3 Porn and Its Functions on an Intersubjective Level

Sexuality is one of the main areas through which adolescents separate from their childhood families and turn towards the outside world and its objects; it is a private world which cannot be shared with parents and siblings. In this individuation process pornography – a particularly private affair – can be one of the mediums also for girls. As girls get older and their sexual desire towards other people increases, the reasons for encountering porn are more clearly linked to adult sexuality and personal motivations – and girls themselves more consciously try to 'make sense' of these changes (e.g. they look for arousal, do not view porn usage as 'bad' anymore etc.). In other words, the general curiosity (the most common reason participants gave for sampling porn) can turn into a more intense indulging, as porn, and the responses it evokes, can be a multilayered 'learning curve' for adolescent girls approaching the adulthood.

Although many adolescent girls encounter porn in a social context, often by accident or passively (e.g. at parties, school, through friends etc.), especially boys' enthusiasm leaves virtually no (safe) room for girls to seriously indulge in the material. Particularly those participants who had actively tried to find porn at early-mid puberty (for instance, on the Internet, parents' closets, or cable) due to their *own* interest in sex and the

pleasure it caused, state they had preferred perfect solitude: physical and psychological space. "The lascivious emotions of others made me uncomfortable", explains Melissa, who had watched soft-core movies on cable when she was 15-18 years old, "so instead I chose to focus on my own feelings" (BIII 12-3). When there is no fear of exposure or judgement, or other's distractive presence, a girl can focus on herself; her own psychic and bodily reactions.

In adolescence, when girls are still living with their families, physical space chiefly refers to the material/medium used, and to the actual room in which the viewing/reading takes place. Despite the guilt Linda had felt, in her mid teens (c. 15-16) she had read stories about real sexual activities either online or in women's magazines. As the accounts were written from a female point of view, Linda felt more comfortable reading than even imagining viewing mainstream pornographic images. These stories simultaneously satisfied her curiosity about sex.

> Linda was in her room, in the late evening reading a porn story in a magazine. it was intriguing to see what people wrote about and how they wrote about. She was also curious to see what people did in their sex lives. [Linda] was imaging the story and found it exciting and slightly arousing. afterwards, [she] felt that [she] shouldn't have read it, but at the same time realising that it was part of growing up, and probably would be the last of such stories that [she] read. (BIII 65-70)

An empty home, one's own room, or a night-time house had provided the safest setting also for many other participants for exploring sexuality through pornography. In Kate's opinion, it is quite common for girls to watch/read porn, especially since "all the soft porn on ch5 on Friday nights and most teenagers having their own tv in their room" (BI 90-1) (9/20 of participants think girls using some sort of porn is common; 6/20 uncommon; 5/20 are not sure).

The Internet has become a new source of pornographic material for adolescent females who previously had to rely more on whatever material was available (e.g. parents'/siblings' collections, movies on TV). The accessibility and technological knowledge (e.g. where to look, how to 'cover one's tracks') has made girls, in a sense, more equal with boys in terms of porn usage. The 'disposability' of cyberspace material – e.g. deleting images/texts, pretending to do something else on the computer – made some participants prefer the Internet (a factor that also applies to more traditional material, such as women's magazines). Although the Internet has increased girls' control over the situation and the material they use, it also has an unmanageable and distressing side to it, should unwanted or upsetting images appear on the screen. "It was distressing. I could not

put up with it at all", Kim (19, H, s, USA: BII 31) writes concerning some of the clips she had randomly found using a search engine. "I saw what was available and just dealt with it" (BIII 59).

Particularly heterosexual participants emphasise the educational side of porn for sexually inexperienced and insecure teenagers – sex, as Taya notes, can be physically 'hard to co-ordinate' as it is not self-evident what might be pleasurable to the other or oneself. Indeed, few participants admit they have learnt techniques, become more open for 'alternative' sexual acts (e.g. anal sex), or have adapted actresses' behaviour (e.g. becoming more vocal). Porn can provide a pick-and-mix gallery, a starting-point for fantasies, also for girls:

> Pornography has given me a few things that I can recreate in my mind and at the same time involve myself in the fantasy. I can use the same scenes, but choose who I wanted to be there like my favourite movie star. I would remember the key things that took place in the porno that I enjoyed and picture them perfectly. (Jessie, 20, H, s, CAN: BIV 68-71)

But adolescent females do not merely internalize and repeat the scenarios and gender relations of porn – it may also help girls to define what they do *not* find appealing. For example, Kim says she could never picture herself practicing oral or group sex. Porn may also affect girls' taste in men; majority of the participants had found, and still do, the male actors and their bodies (particularly penises) either as unattractive, scary, or disgusting. Mainstream porn (that exaggerates the stereotypical ideas of masculinity and femininity) can also make girls more sceptical of gender roles within a wider social context. Amanda says, for instance, that the obvious unreality of porn has made her question more than any other media what it is to be a female - as well as a male. Some unrealistic features of porn that the participants name are the lack of a visible penis in soft-core movies, clearly painful scenes, and the artificiality of women's bodies and orgasms.

For bi- and homosexual girls even mainstream porn can be helpful in distinguishing, as had been the case for few non-heterosexual participants, (aesthetic) attraction and fascination for female body from *sexual* desire. However, some had not only felt guilty for breaking the family rules or gender appropriate expectations, but also because of the awareness of being aroused by images that were degrading to women. Moreover, adolescents may consider even themselves being heterosexual by default - particularly if there are no homosexuals in their peer group: "Since the norm was being straight, I assumed I was straight" (Sandra:BIV 12-3). Therefore, consuming porn may be an especially private experience for non-heterosexual girls as unexpected desire for

women can also result anxiety and confusion (e.g. fear of rumours, exclusion, or abnormality).

There are also several largely unconscious mechanisms and motivations involved in girl's porn usage linked both with the psychic processes of a particular individual, and with her stage of psycho-sexual development. For example, while porn's 'forbidden' quality may signify for pre-adolescent girls the boundary between children and adults, in adolescence girls associate it more explicitly with tainted sexuality and unfeminine behaviour – with such terms as 'dirty' and 'slutty' with which they sometimes describe themselves too. However, there are differences in girls' responses to these unfavourable self-definitions, as they do not merely pose a threat their identity or self-image.

Through pornography – through guilty pleasures, 'bad girl' associations, and fantasies of illicit settings/scenes – a girl may temporarily escape and defy gender expectations that might feel constraining her everyday self.

> i think while i was watching or reading porn i allowed myself to feel more "dirty" and sexually unrestrained because of the act that i was participating in. i allowed myself to step out of the good girl image and be more myself. (Evette, 20, H, b/f, USA: BIII 59-61)

Similarly, 'forbidden' can have temporary and situation-specific functions that stem from the individual's overall circumstances (e.g. living conditions, stress etc.). Although Brenda's secret hard-core viewings had caused guilt – both because she knew her boyfriend would not approve her deeds and since the material itself was 'anti-feminist' – they had also made her feel sensual and liberated in a sexually and emotionally dissatisfying relationship.

A girl may project her fantasies of pleasure, closeness, aggression, shame, or vulnerability on an actress in order to introject or express power over the anticipated feelings. She can, for example, devalue the actress – e.g. as being the centre of lust and exhibiting sexual assertiveness – hence making herself feel (narcissistically) superior. For instance, regardless of whether Kim – who comes from a very tight-knit and religious (Christian) background – refers to the escapades of celebrities or the explicit sex acts of porn actresses, she uses such terms as 'sluts' or 'whores' (BII 44; BIII 17). These fantasies can have a sadomasochistic layer springing from shame; some participants say they had believed they would be punished somehow if their porn usage had been exposed. The conscious or unconscious fantasies of punishment may therefore be transferred into the scenes where the devalued actress is punished instead.

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If a girl is aware of the 'wrongness' of her deeds, the ego needs also conscious protection during porn consumption. For instance, while watching porn clips on the Internet, Kim had wondered if the actors had lost their pride, had no other source of income, or were in need of therapy – similar speculations had also applied to porn consumers (BIII 70-1; 17-9). Such reasoning may function as an attempt to distance oneself from the dirty 'other', and as a security blanket under which one can express the repressed wishes and reactions (e.g. feelings of arousal). Unlike Kim, who assessed both the self and deeds against internalised external authority (i.e. paretns' teachings, moral codes etc.), Melissa had looked inwards for standards. Although she too had considered especially girls interested in porn being dirty, Melissa had changed her mind after she had viewed few films herself: "I began to realize they weren't [dirty], because I knew I wasn't, and I had watched it" (BI 51-2). As Melissa reflected her interest in porn against the self as a whole – not just in relation sexuality and gender identity – she was able to conclude that she was not dirty or disgusting - an insight she was then able to apply to other females as well.

But a porn actress can also be idealised for her sexual confidence and appeal, as Kayla (BIV 50-1) writes. Through identification girls can also feel themselves more attractive and sexual. These fantasies that commonly develop into a wish for physical contact, do not merely remain on a psychic level, but are often experienced and intensified through overall embodied sensations. Many participants report that watching/reading porn had caused changes in breathing and heartbeat, while all senses had become more intense – even when not naming such reactions as 'arousal'. For instance, when first watching porn after the outset of puberty, Jessie says she had experienced 'a new feeling': "I didn't know what it was but I knew I liked it. I thought I was weird" (BI 68-70). However, when she at the age of 17 discovered a clip of a man and a woman having sex in a shower from her older brother's computer, she was very aware of her psycho-physiological reactions.

> She was very focused on the video watching every detail. She could almost feel what was going on as well as having enhanced taste and smell. She could only think of wishing to be in that place and doing what the actors were doing and feel what they were feeling. (BIII 71-4)

Therefore, even if the 'weird' sensations are difficult to describe, on an embodied level porn may help girls to become more aware of such bodily reactions and own agency; e.g. how they may be recognized, recaptured, and directed.

Particularly bi- and homosexual participants state they had not only (if ever) identified with the actress or voyeur, but above all with the dominating male figure. A girl

may imagine participating in the acts as herself, as the actress/actor, or as a woman/man; i.e. being in the female/male body which is not that of an actual actress'/actor'.

> I didn't always imagine myself as any of the actors, but more often than not I identified with the man in the situation as if I were the one engaging with the woman, but it was not always as a man like the actual character was. In same sex female scenes, I identified with both/all actors. (Mary: BIII 33-6)

But cross-gender identification is not automatically linked with one's sexual identity. For example, although Amanda and Jessie both identify as heterosexual, they had also been attracted to porn actresses, occasionally even taking the masculine view-point (if not the man's position). Moreover, not only can the identification change within, or across, fantasies, but also the dynamics between characters often play an important role in arousal. The eroticization of power dynamics (and identifying with the male figure) can hence be incorporated in the scene as a whole instead of localised into either sex. For example, the active/passive bodies can form an entity a girl feels for: "The male and female both have different structures that make them sensual", Jessie reasons, "they are all working together to achieve one thing, the orgasm for both persons" (BIII 27-8; 31-2). In addition, a female can also identify with the *other person's* sexual desire for an object (e.g. imagining an actor's feelings of passion and losing control).

However, fluid identification may be more difficult after the formation of heterosexual feminine identify. There are several reasons for this, such as the awareness of social inequality behind mainstream porn, sympathising with maltreated actress/actor, and own intimate involved with males who simultaneously represent objectifying male sexuality. For example, Natalie – who has been distressed by some of the rape-like scenarios – says she cannot identify with a man: "there's no way that i could feel for or relate to the guys because I'm not a guy so i have no idea what's going through their heads when they are doing this" (BIII 22-3).

The format of material affects both the quality of arousal and relating to the scenarios or characters. Although especially younger girls are perhaps more comfortable with the idea of being aroused by textual material (due to its connotations with 'softer' or more 'feminine' qualities) there are several other factors that affect particularly older girls' choices. In other words, as the girl's sense of sexual/gender identity increases, so does the awareness of one's own preferences and the reasons behind them. Many participants state that they had preferred reading because of their growing awareness of gender politics, and the imaginative control and flexibility for creating own scenarios. Then again, some had preferred watching, as they had wanted to see real people having sex, or found images in

general more stimulating. However, the visibility makes a difference too; Vicki had often found the innuendos in normal films more arousing than explicit porn movies.

On the other hand, also the quality of sexual gratification a girl is seeking makes a difference; whereas watching, as Evette had discovered, provides a passive and quick pleasure, reading allows absorbing into the material and experiencing it even for days. But the character development might not only play an important part in arousing and relating; the eloquence of a story can appeal both to viewer's/reader's intellectual and sexual pleasure, hence constructing the identity on a wider scale.

Whereas some participants had continued using porn until adulthood – i.e. when the individuation process of adolescence is mostly behind – others' consumption had been occasional, or they had lost interest altogether after a few samplings (e.g. porn gets boring/unappealing, they already 'learned' enough etc.). Nevertheless, for most the growing physical and psychological space to the childhood networks had increased their confidence in exploring own sexuality, particularly through pornography. Although the change in the mind-set rarely happens overnight, especially university has provided for many new ways of understanding and discussing porn (e.g. feminist discourses) while meeting other people with similar interests. For instance, today Mary views "the use of porn by women as a mode of sexual liberation" (BII 63), whereas Brenda – who makes own private porn with her current boyfriend – credits porn for her improved self-image: "[Porn] made me feel daring and gave me a sense of self confidence in my sex life" (BIV 67-9).

Although Linda still holds somewhat stereotypical views (such as women being more emotional, while "for men it is possible for their brain to separate love and sex" (BIV 15-6), she is nevertheless bolder to explore her sexuality and possible manners to express it. She also come to realize that women, too, can take control during sex and enjoy a varied sex life with several partners – just like men.

> I feel the reason for this change is definitely growing up, reading women's magazines, which could be seen as a gentle introduction to such things. I formed my own opinions and moved away from just believing what I was told by others. (Linda: BII 65-8)

4. REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Discussion of Results

The aim of the study was to explore young women's retrospective accounts in order to shed some light on how pornography may affect each individual adolescent female's thoughts and feelings regarding sexuality, maturing body, and becoming a woman. There were two main research questions: 1) how does girls' relationship to porn change during psycho-social development, and what psychic mechanisms may be involved in the process? and 2) what role do other people play in the formation of girls' gender/sexual identity in relation to porn? Girls' agency in these procedures was also highlighted (Davies 1993, 2000; Tolman 2005).

As can be seen in participants' accounts, pornography is strongly present in the everyday lives of pre- and adolescent girls; not only through personal encounters – accidental or deliberate – but more importantly through the discourses within which sexual/gender identities are in general constructed (Bordo 1997; Foucault 1978; Hardy 1998; Sullivan 2002). Adolescence is a particularly significant and exciting period, as in the course of it, early emotional relationships – as well as the whole embodied subjectivity – are transformed into something qualitatively different (Gagnon & Simon 1973). In the given social context the elements of psyche and desire are converted by the sexual scripts, shared beliefs, and unwritten rules into the culturally or connubially defined adult forms (Hardy 2000).

Although participants currently believed the sexes to be 'physiologically equal' (i.e. they have an equally strong sex drive and capability for sexual pleasure), and that women's and men's differences in sexual behaviour and attitudes – in terms of promiscuity, usage of pornography, and passive/female-active/male stereotypes – chiefly result from gendered socialization, such views had not been constructed without facing several psychological and social dilemmas. Indeed, as teenagers participants had generally thought – both personally and collectively – that the biological make-up of women and men were essentially different. Therefore, their sex-drives were not exactly the same either; men were sexually more assertive and visually stimulated, while women responded to emotional closeness (there were still traces of these views in the adult thinking of few participants). Thus it was normal for men to watch porn and use it for masturbation,

whereas any self-respecting female should regard porn as disgusting, degrading, and something she would never be interested in.

Such beliefs in relation to one's own porn sampling had evoked guilt, fear, shame, and confusion in many participants who were afraid of exposure, uncertain over one's sexual identity, aroused by degrading images, and breaking the norms of femininity and community. As a result most of them had considered themselves weird, dirty, sinful, or slutty. Masculine discourses – which females too adopt – provide girls with a very limited vocabulary to describe their embodied experiences (Griffin 2000; Haug 1987; Irigaray 1985). Interestingly, some pre-adolescent girls may - sometimes together - study the bodies, motives, and deeds of naked models without much embarrassment or guilt. Therefore, the outset of puberty – including changes in the body, psyche, and position in the society (e.g. increased responsibility, people noticing growing breasts etc.) – seems to be a turning point in the formation of adult gender identity also on an affectionate level.

The gendered understandings, which were reinforced through identification and observing other people in the immediate environment, were often first constructed in the family (Haug 2000). For many participants the negotiation between the self, porn, and male/female sexuality had began when first encountering sexually explicit material (c. 12-14 years) at home. Although both parents had often disapproved of porn, in most cases the mother had taken a more negative position towards it. Sometimes girls can become quite robustly subjected to, and subjects of, adult women's gendered storylines in varying degrees and ways (Davies 2000). For instance, a mother may pass her views of female/male sexuality on to a daughter (e.g. referring to male sex drive in relation to porn, covering eyes during a sexual scene on TV etc.); construct girl's emerging interest in sex as a potential danger (e.g. warning about teen pregnancy or inviting unwanted attention); and provide a real-life proof of the society's gender dynamics (e.g. silently accepting husband's porn usage).

Indeed, the men had in many cases consumed sexually explicit material despite the family's official rules. Whereas brothers' porn consumption had not evoked strong reactions, the idea of father being aroused by porn had evoked feelings of betrayal, sadness, anger, and disgust. Based on the participants' vague descriptions of their father's porn consumption, they had not attempted – and had consciously even avoided – to make sense of these feelings and psychic conflicts it had caused. There may be several interlinked reasons for these responses. For instance, as opposed to brothers who might be perceived as individual men, a girl may feel that the father is cheating on the mother, that

he has insulted the incorruptibility of the girl's life by bringing something external and tainted into the family, or that her previous view of him is suddenly compromised when he appears as a representative of male sexuality (stereotypes of hormone-driven teenage boys and dirty old men may also have an effect).

In other words, since sexuality - the main medium in the individuation process – cannot be intimately shared between parents and children (thus giving more room for fantasies) (Laufer 1994), a girl might predominately construct her father's sexuality and his porn consumption within the male sex-drive discourse: i.e. the father too sees women as objects of his emotionally detached sexual desire. Also, adolescent girls themselves are transforming psychically and physically into an adult woman/female, and therefore they may have an anxiety-evoking unconscious fantasy of the father sexually desiring her as well (after all, fetishation of teenage girls is a common theme in pornographic text) (Mäenpää-Reenkola 2004). These anxieties may be amplified if porn is the only form of father's sexuality a girl is aware of, or if she is not emotionally close to him (i.e. how a girl feel about a particular man consuming porn depends also on how she perceives him as a person in general).

For a teenage girl, it can thus be difficult to negotiate the contradiction between family dynamics, parents' official opinions (in terms of porn, gender roles etc.), and the previous and new images of the father. But it is not only the strong presence of male sexuality, and the absence of sexual female agency, that are highlighted in these early experiences. Above all, the recollections demonstrate how the aura of male sex drive overrides parents' official views, and women's (e.g. mothers') criticism of female objectification – a phenomenon a girl may first notice within family, but later experience personally in the social context. Precisely because these discourses around sexuality are felt and expressed on such everyday, intimate levels, it is in many ways easier for girls to negotiate the troubling aspects of porn by adopting, at least partly, the popular understandings and masculine lingo (e.g. porn being natural for men, degrading, or only about sex). The equalization of gender relations, which has begun in the social realm, nevertheless has difficulties to bridge over a manmade gap to the sexual realm still governed by male authorship (Tolman 2005).

Among peers, particularly younger boys' extrovert exhibitions of sexual knowledge and agency (e.g. bringing magazines to school) is rarely questioned even if it takes sexist or hostile forms. Many participants recalled how boys had graphically objectified female models, or publicly ridiculed a girl interested in porn as a whore. Some

had felt the male 'enthusiasm' towards porn in their own body (e.g. being intimidated by verbal and physical expressions by a group of males watching a video). The silent acceptance also by girls can stem partly from physiological differences. When facing boys' porn zest, a girl is often isolated and silenced – even in a group – into her sexualized female body (Haug 1987) that is the very centre of hyper-masculinity. Even if it is not its direct focus (e.g. target of ridicule or objectification), the feelings of physical and social vulnerability are nevertheless felt strongly on an embodied level. Laughter is used as a social tool to silence girls and police gender appropriate behaviour. Adolescent females do not merely aspire to being categorised as 'feminine'; they want to 'do identity right' (Davies 1993: 9) as failing to do so can be devastating.

On the other hand, due to the gendered stereotypes and 'lingual repression' (Parker 2005), teenagers may not even consider boys' behaviour as sexism (Crawford et al 1992) through which power relations and gender roles are established and reinforced; it is just boys' 'normal' behaviour. But sometimes these expressions of adolescent masculinity are brushed off as 'boys will be boys' - even by authorities. In schools, where feminine and masculine identities are generally policed (Buckingham & Bragg 2004), teachers tend to overlook girls' problems. Sexist incidents are excluded from the wider social and ethical context as the problem lies wholly with the individual (e.g. a provocative girl or an immature boy) (Alderson & Morrow 2004:60). Indeed, even though Natalie's school had labelled nude pictures on boys' folders as 'sexism', no official action had followed. For adolescents this can serve as another proof of the biological difference which by association affirms the gender dynamics in a society. Moreover, if sexual assertiveness is seen as an essential part of male's biological make-up, female aggression does not only become tabooed or pathologised; a 'tamer' form of boys' sexual aggression may be rationalized and hence unofficially accepted also by the public (Aaltonen 2006).

In this gendered role-casting girls are positioned as more 'mature' – by family, friends, institutions, and also by themselves. In terms of porn, girls should not get too offended, giggly, or overly interested in it or sex in general, for this makes them thin-skinned, childish, or over-sexed. Moreover, as the importance of boys grows in girls' lives, mature understanding must be extended from the social realm onto a much more personal level. Because it is almost *expected* that men use porn to a certain extent - and since the premise of the argument, sex, is only natural – it is therefore an individual girl's task to deal with whatever anxiety porn may evoke. Indeed, most of the participants had perceived and interpreted the thoughts and feelings related to porn as personal dilemmas

they had to resolve within their own psyche. For instance, for Cathy and Vicki, porn had become an inseparable part of a (heterosexual) relationship; a female either ignores her partner's usage, or starts to watch porn with them (hopefully finding it enjoyable). In this sense, acceptance is translated to a form of caring.

Furthermore, seeing oneself as mature and open-minded may be a strategy to negotiate intersubjective conflicts porn may evoke; they can become a part of one's self-image, qualities of an adult female identity. Although girls' laugher and joking can sometimes be defensive, adapting the masculine language (e.g. rating models) (Attwood 2006) might also increase their sense of control in relation to pornographic representations and the expressions of male sexuality; i.e. girls are no longer passive targets of such discourses, but active agents. Watching porn as a couple (especially in heterosexual relationships) can also have two coincident functions; it can simultaneously cause sexual pleasure (arousal caused by the images or mutual petting) *and* pleasure that stems from the reinforcement of a girl's identity (e.g. as an affectionate partner and sexually open-minded young woman). Thus, navigating in the gender/sex matrix can also be a 'happy struggle' as a girl takes pleasure in doing femininity right (Tolman 2005).

Nonetheless, despite the increased confidence in their sexual agency, even adult women are at risk of hitting the glass ceiling: in mixed-sex viewing sessions they are not expected to be as 'crude' or as 'into' porn. As some participants had bitterly discovered, the society still finds a talking and actively looking girl – features usually associated with masculine identity (Potts 2005) – as threatening, unfeminine, or attention-seeking. It is not just the content of imagery-based porn that is supposed to appeal to male sexuality while neglecting female desire; media consumption is in itself a gendered act (e.g. men watch porn) (Buckingham & Bragg 2004). Also, the link between gender and medium/format can also affect females' choice of material. For example, participants' preferences in terms of reading and/or watching had varied, or depended on, gender politics, sympathizing/relating with the actresses/actors, and on how the material fit her self-image (other factors had been the quality of sexual gratification one had been seeking, and favouring own imagination vs. ready-made fantasies).

But as participants recollections illustrate, girls *are* active in terms of porn – they are not passive subjects suppressed by other people and circumstances (Davies 1993; Haug 1987; Tolman 2005), or automatically traumatised by pornographic imagery (often emphasised in anti-porn arguments (Levine 2003)). The Internet in particular has increased girls' agency in relation to material, situation, and responses. Nevertheless,

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especially hardcore porn can be upsetting from a female viewpoint; some participants had been distressed because they had sympathised with the abused or degraded actress.

However, at least part of this distress may stem from contextual features, such as the degree of girl's control over the situation, and the extent to which such images may reinforce her understandings of female/male sexualities. Particularly graphic scenes of male dominance can cause fear in bi- and heterosexual girls who might identify with the actress as a subjugated woman in a patriarchal act – an act that does not seem to trouble, and indeed may even excite, the males around them. Although many participants had felt dissatisfied with their bodies and sexual appeal in comparison to porn stars, such feelings are often accompanied by male peers openly 'rating' or 'drooling over' models. However, in this respect, as few participants stated, porn is just another source for showing stylised portrayals of women's bodies that are then objectified by the public. Thus its influence on adolescent girls' body-image is difficult to separate from other media representations and cultural conventions.

Moreover, girls (especially those with a conservative or religious background) at the early puberty usually must deal with their experiences alone; images are not explained by adults (apart from being 'dirty' or 'degrading'), nor are they openly 'talked through' with female friends. The guilt wrapped in silence and shame might in some cases make it more difficult for a girl to recognise or accept embodied reactions as possible signs of sexual arousal (e.g. changes in heartbeat or breathing are just 'weird' sensations associated with 'dirtyness'). Devaluation of explicit and assertive expressions of female sexuality can hence function as an ego defence; e.g. unconsciously one may project own – sadomasochistically toned – 'badness', based on the early fantasies and psychic mechanisms of infancy, on the actress (Kipins 1999; Klein 1945; Segal 1998). On a conscious level, wondering what is wrong with the actresses/actors, or 'real' porn users, can be both an attempt to distance oneself from the dirty 'other' while nevertheless being able to express the repressed wishes and reactions (e.g. being sexually excited).

Although fluid and multiple identification (i.e. fluently identifying with a voyeur, actress/actor, projected self, part-objects, or the scene/passion) (Ciclitira 1998; Kaite 1995) might be easier for females than for males, taboos related to (active) female sexuality (Haug 2000:172), the assumption of heterosexual logic (being only attracted to opposite sex (Buckingham & Bragg 2004)), and more 'personal' position as the object of male sexuality (e.g. the simultaneous fear of and desire for the expressions of male sexuality (Haug 2000)) can make it more complicated for heterosexual girls. In other words, psychic

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structures reflect, to varying degree, the position society has assigned for individuals depending on their sex. Moreover, since homoeroticism and the 'otherness' of female figure are a part of female psyche (Irigaray 1985; Smith 1998), it is also oversimplifying to say that a girl's fantasy of engaging with a woman is directly linked with her adult sexual orientation, or that she is left to linger between the positions of an active man and a submissive woman (i.e. narcissistically wishing to have either the phallic power, or the seductive power of an object) (Irigaray 1985; Mulvey 1975).

However, if a girl is able to admit to herself being aroused by porn, and incorporate such new, 'weird' and confusingly pleasurable sensations into her identity and self-image, both fluid identification and turning inwards for standards may be significantly easier for her. Such reasoning challenges heteronormative discourses; she can begin, for instance, to distinguish her (and society's) fantasies from real-life wishes and phenomena: attraction to female figure from sexual desire, unconscious responses to degrading images from conscious concerns, and individual's sexual preferences from her/his biological sex. Laughter can have a similar function as humours often opens a space for reflecting on the reality and imagery of porn, while reducing one's guilt and sense of abnormality that spring from the double standards. In addition, the 'forbidden' quality of porn may also be utilized to defy gender appropriate expectations as it does not only signify the boundary between children and adults, but the self-society/other, too. For instance, girls can employ the Madonna/whore division (Day 1988) within their own psyche in order to abandon their social self and gendered sexuality which can be rediscovered again as soon as the watching/reading experience is over (Kristeva 1982).

The closer to adulthood girls get, the more normal porn becomes as a form of entertainment, masturbation, or foreplay; as was evident in participants diverse accounts, it can be educational and enlightening. Therefore, porn does not only provide a basis for intra-psychic fantasies amplified though 'masturbatory rehearsal' for boys (Hardy 2000:90) – it endows girls with images that they can use in creating or expanding their own fantasies. 'Positive' effects of porn can include increased self-confidence (linked with autoerotic and narcissistic pleasure), aid in self-reflection (preferences, sexual orientation etc.), offer practical tips, and have personal functions and meanings (artistic inspiration, stress relief, showing alternative ways to express sexuality/intimacy etc.). 'Involuntary' responses to certain scenes may lead to the questioning, explaining, and accepting aspects of oneself (especially since teenagers often consider themselves heterosexual by default (Griffin, 2000)). In this sense, girls actively form their (and their partners') sexuality by

participating in performative practices (Butler 1990) which are in turn interpreted as expressions of that very same sexuality.

The participants' recollections also illustrate how the meanings and interpretations do not only change as girls get older; above all previous understandings and experiences can be reworked retrospectively either within one's own mind, or with friends, partners, or student colleagues. Although watching/reading porn may make people more liberal towards pornography and its acts (Segal 1993), and even reinforce the gender dichotomy in some girls' minds, for others it may prove (often in association with feminist discourses and separating from the childhood environment) a medium for de- and reconstructing sexual relationships. Indeed, since mainstream porn in particular notoriously exaggerates gendered stereotypes, it may even enhance media literacy and the questioning of gender roles (e.g. in terms of TV ads, romance novels, music videos, classroom dynamics etc.).

Although the 'normalization' of women's porn usage and physiological equality stress the importance of recognising female desire and pleasure in their own right (Irigaray 1985), such arguments also have pitfalls. Since biological discourses are an inseparable part of the social context – within which they are often implicitly and explicitly utilised to affirm the heteronormative social order – they can also be easily used as a counter-argument, and thus hide, or even compromise gender politics. For example, some participants stated that since they found porn both socially problematic and sexually enjoyable (at least occasionally), they have been accused of hypocrisy. Furthermore, for those girls who are troubled by the overall sexualization of culture, physiological equality, normalization, and sexual open-mindedness may cause pressure and anxiety - rather than feelings of liberation. Such empowering terms are merely something more to be mature about while trying to deal with the mismatch between physiological and social equality.

4.2 Reflections on the Research Process and Methods

From the start, the questions of authenticity of the accounts, and also of intimacy and equality (ethics) between the researcher and participants have been the main concerns of the research design. In terms of the former, the issue was not so much whether the participants were 'real' young women, as majority of them had been recruited via universities' email-lists. Rather, the authenticity of the voices related to my capability to

avoid reading too much into the accounts (particularly since the lack of body language and of the chance for clarifying questions), and to the retrospective data collection.

There were indeed occasions when I had to step back to reflect upon my own values and belief systems to avoid structuring the data according to my presumptions of what perhaps ought to be the case with girls and porn. However, most of these misunderstandings resulted from the form of communication: participants either understood the questions differently, or used a word that had more than one meaning (emoticons, capital letters, and underlining were helpful on several occasions). In the analysis process cultural and ethnic nuances of the accounts posed challenges as well, although nowadays the Internet and the media in general spread the same imagery across the Western world (e.g. TV shows, superstars, and commercials).

In separating my views from the accounts, and in forming a coherent understanding of an individual participant and her experiences as teenager, I found useful the *Introduction Questions* and *event questions,* as they helped to put a face on each of those 'bodiless' young women from four different countries. Although *event questions* did not serve Haug's (1987) original goal – i.e. social change – they often proved to be more elaborative and vivid in imagery than open-ended questions thus underlining the importance of a female body and the often seemingly insignificant everyday events in the formation of a girl's sexual/gender identity. Although retrospective descriptions might reflect more the participants' current understandings than the immediate adolescent experience (Griffin 2000) – which I too noticed, especially if there was no reference to age – there was also an unanticipated advantage in using young women as informants. Since girls and porn is still a delicate subject, adolescent females – as Amanda (BI 47-8) pointed out in relation to herself – might not have even answered the questionnaires because of embarrassment to discuss pornography on *any* level.

Sometimes extra guidance was needed as the instructions of the questionnaires proved somewhat confusing, especially at the beginning. At times participants stated that they could not remember anything related to the particular *event question*, and left the section blank. Sometimes typing 'I can't remember anything' could have stemmed from the strenuousness of remembering; i.e. participants had to reminisce on their own, whereas in an original memory-work method group discussions can be used to evoke memories. Furthermore, some forms of forgetting – akin to suppression or repression – occur because there is no meaning available to make sense of the event; no discourse or language to articulate what has happened (Crawford et al 1992).

Similarly, the memories might have appeared too vague and meaningless in their everydayness to elicit associations worth sharing (Stephenson & Kippax; forthcoming); few participants noted that no one explicitly said girls should not watch porn – it was always a commonsense assumption. In the end, however, it is impossible to say what was the true reason behind blank answers. For example, despite her otherwise detailed accounts, Melissa did not answer any of the *event questions.* Although she only exercised the participants' right to choose the amount of information they wished to provide, there is a difference in whether she felt uncomfortable about writing in a story format, embarrassed about writing on such a personal level, or anxious because of the topics (not being able to pursue these features further was a clear disadvantage of the research design).

Such continuity in Melissa's answering style raised some questions linked to the second trouble-spot in my research: intimacy and equality. For instance, Ritchie and Barker (2005:52) argue that in the field of sexuality, researchers should be willing to narrow the subject-object gap by engaging in a close and personal exchange. However, in an online research it is not possible, nor wise, to form 'intimate' relationships with the participants, for cyberspace provides a specially suitable place for transference fantasies (Suler 1998). Therefore researchers must guard the boundaries around the self to avoid reading their own psyche into the answer, or getting too deeply immersed into the lives of the participants (Seymour 2001). Also, since there are no well-established ethical standards on the Internet (regarding consent, negotiating access agreements, or assessing privacy and boundaries (Alderson & Morrow 2004:54) it is often the researcher's responsibility to acknowledging these ethical defects (e.g. I did not recruit participants from forums of sexually abused women).

In my research, email communication from both sides was informal but appropriate for a research context (e.g. no 'flaming' or attempt to continue correspondence). However, the negative effects of the Internet's intimacy might have appeared as excess openness – a form of regression – which can increase people's vulnerability (Suler 1998). This may have happened especially with those few participants who left the study without prior notice. Excess openness can also be viewed in more positive light. For instance, the Internet might have provided a safer sphere, for example, for Brenda who had abusive experiences to share her story. For some participants the 'dehumanising' quality of the Internet may have made divulging easier. Considering the double standards of our society, the possible feelings of embarrassment might have also

been more harmful in a face-to-face setting in comparison to corresponding with a bodiless interviewer.

On the whole I was pleased with the chosen methods and the research process itself which required and granted a great deal of flexibility and creativity. The small group of participants – culturally diverse, but quite heterogeneous in social class and academic interest – posed some limitations, and even 'threats' on the analysis; for instance, in terms of representation, risk of having too many drop-outs, and unrecognized cultural nuances. However, due to these features I was able to indulge in rich data and analyse the plurality *and* similarity of experiences teenage girls have with pornography regardless of their background.

4.3 Conclusion and Future Prospects

The reasons for girls' encounters with pornography can be divided into three groups: contextual, conscious, and unconscious. They are not mutually exclusive; the meanings and content also change depending on an individual girl, and the stage of psycho-sexual development she is at (i.e. sexual curiosity changes in terms of its object and psychological function). Also at least as important as what occurs in porn itself, is what takes place in the social-context within which it is encountered. Since the same discourses are often repeated across the cultural, psychic and intersubjective phenomena, the effects pornography may have on the formation of adolescent girls' sexuality, fantasies/behaviour, and gender identity might be more reinforcements of already existing understandings than their clear-cut causes.

But the silence around girls and porn is loud. To assume that adolescent girls passively internalize media messages – i.e. to construct them as weaker than they are – is a form of patriarchal power functioning upon female sexualization. This is not to say that pornography does not have negative effects on girls' and boys' development that may expand beyond fantasy to social realm; it causes distress in many while providing vivid images of male dominance. Rather, the belief that girls are passive in their sexual agency, and also the assumptions of the possibility and effectiveness of protective actions (e.g. watersheds, pin code protection), simply do not meet the reality of most adolescents.

Moreover, just like the symbolic content of pornographic texts will not change before women actively participate in the *production* of it (Cornell 1995; Hardy 2000),

girls will remain as objects in erotic discourses, and their experiences stay marginalised until they can speak from other than a 'slut/bad girl' position. Therefore, it is important to create a discursive space for girls and young women to voice their experiences in their own words (this process has already began on the Internet). Although for some young women feminist discourses may prove to be useful in de- and reconstructing their understandings on porn, sex, desire, and gender dynamics, even such empowering approaches may sometimes backlash. Particularly anti-porn feminist discourses – that are often in line with more conservative thinking – may add to a girl's feelings of shame and anxiety over their own 'hypocrisy' and the unpredictable male sexuality (as was evident in some participants' accounts).

Feminists who theorise pornography need to look beyond the holy trinity of class, gender, and race - not only because it has become a mantra that marginalises other groups (e.g. the disabled), but also because too often it implicitly presumes that by becoming aware of the mechanisms of patriarchal social order, females could magically forsake years of psycho-sexual development (both theoretically and personally). To focus only on psycho-physiological development and context-specific effects, however, easily neglects an individual's agency in the formation of one's subjectivity.

Although the participants' complex, contradictory, and multilayered accounts shed some light on the plurality of girls' experiences regarding porn, this study is just a snap-shot. More research is needed about girls and porn so that the following questions could be answered: how do family dynamics effect girls' interpretations of gender roles on both sides of the screen? What part do ethnicity, religious beliefs, and socio-economical status play? In what manner does fluid/multiple identification manifest outside language and how gender specific is it? How the explanations given to bodily experiences draw on and reproduce a mind-body split (e.g. objectification of own body in imaginary)? How do pre-adolescent girls perceive themselves in relation to naked female models, and how does this changes during puberty? How do biological (female), gender (woman), and sexual (hetero, bi, homo, queer) identities develop in relation to one another (in psychological theories a child's notion of biological differences is taken as a basis of gender identity as well)?

Unaddressed conflicts in social and psychological theories, as well as in girl's subjectivity, are not only the source of anxiety – they are also the starting-point for personal and social change.

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APPENDIX 1 Summaries

APPENDIX 1.a Key to the Used Codes

Example: (Kayla, 19, H, b/f AUS: BI 14-6)

Participant Information Codes
- **Name**
- **Age**
- **Self-defined sexual orientation:**
  - heterosexual = H
  - queer = Q
  - bi = B
  - lesbian = L
- **Relationship status:**
  - single = s
  - boyfriend = b/f
  - girlfriend = g/f
  - fiancé = g/F or b/F
- **Country:**
  - United Kingdom = UK
  - United States of America = USA
  - Australia = AUS
  - Canada = CAN
- **Place in the Appendices (sorted by participant, Block, and line number):**
  - Appendix 3 (a-t, Block I, line number) = BI 1-n
  - Appendix 4 (a-q, Block II, line number) = BII
  - Appendix 5 (a-m, Block III, line number) = BIII
  - Appendix 6 (a-j, Block IV, line number) = BIV

Other Coding
- No answer was given = [-]
- My addition and cutting = [   ] and […]

APPENDIX 1.b Summary of Participants

* As defined by participants
** M = married, D = divorced, B = brother, S = sister

Name and Year of Birth	Sexual Orientation and Relationship Status*	Country	Family**	Living Conditions	View of the World and/or Ethnic Background*	Completed Blocks of Questions
1. Kayla, 1987	Heterosexual b/f	AUS	Parents (D) S: 16	With boyfriend	Non-religious	I, II, III, IV
2. Jessie, 1986	Straight (attracted to females) Single	CAN	Parents (M) B: 21/24	Childhood home, rural community	Non-religious	I, II, III, IV
3. Brenda, 1984	Bi (queer) b/f	CAN	Parents (M), grandma. B: 29 S: 26	On-campus	Atheist	I, II, III, IV
4. Linda, 1986	Straight b/f	UK	Parents (M)	On-campus	Non-religious	I, II, III, IV
5. Amanda, 1986	Straight b/f (aesthetic eye for women)	UK	Parents (M) B: 16	Boyfriend's flat, childhood home	Church of England (non-practicing)	I, II, III, IV
6. Nina, 1986	Straight b/F	UK	Father B: 16	Apartment (flatmates), childhood home	Non-religious	I, II, III, IV
7. Mary, 1984	Lesbian/queer Single	USA	Parents (M) B: 17	Off-campus, Housemates	Methodist (non-practicing)	I, II, III, IV
8. Evette, 1986	Heterosexual b/f	USA	Father S: 16	Childhood home	-	I, II, III, IV
9. Kim, 1987	Heterosexual Single	USA	Parents (M) B: 16/17	Childhood home	7th Day Adventist Caribbean	I, II, III, IV
10. Sandra, 1983	Bi g/f	USA	Parents (M) B: 17	Childhood home	Catholic (Italian)	I, II, III, IV
11. Natalie, 1988	Heterosexual b/f	AUS	Parents (D) S: 22/24	Childhood home (with father), Rural community	Non-religious	I, II, III
12. Cathy, 1982	Straight b/f	UK	Parents (M) S: 26	With boyfriend	Catholic	I, II, III
13. Melissa, 1985	Straight (attracted to females) Single	USA	Parents (D)	Alone, big city	Christian (non-practicing)	I, II, III

14.Taya, 1987	Heterosexual Single	AUS	Parents (M) B: 20 S: 19	Childhood home	Strict Catholic	I, II
15. Vicki, 1985	-	UK	-	-	--	I, II
16. Kate, 1986	Hetero b/f	UK	Parents (D) B: 24/13	On-campus	Muslim	I, II
17. Frida, 1984	Hetro Single	USA	Parents (M) 3 younger siblings	Childhood home	Non-religious	I, II
18. Heather, 1984	Bi Single	UK	With Mother S: 2	House, housemates	Catholic	I
19. Kali, 1984	Bi (hetero) b/F	USA	Parents (M) S: 23	With fiancée	Agnostic	I
20. Penny, 1984	Straight b/f	USA	Parents (M) B: 31/29 S: 26	Mixed sex community	Unitarian Universalist	I
21. Demonista, 1987	Bi (queer, 'sexual') b/f	CAN	Parents (M) B: 16	Childhood home	Atheist, radical feminist	-
22. Misty, 1985	Bisexual Single	UK	Single mother	On-campus	Moderate religious (Afro-Caribbean)	-
23. Ann, 1985	Straight Single	UK	Parents (M) S: 18	On-campus	Non-religious	-
24. Lora, 1986	Straight b/f	UK	Parents (M)	House, rough area	Non-religious	-
25. Cindy, 1987	Hetero Single	UK	Parents (D) S: 16/23	With housemates	Non-religious	-

n = 25, including everyone returning the Consent Form with Introduction Questions (UK = 11; USA = 8; CAN = 3; AUS = 3)

APPENDIX 2 Questionnaires

APPENDIX 2.a Block I Questionnaire

Girls and Porn Reseach

Block I

Pornography and Society

Thank you for your participation!

This is the first block of questions of the research. It is about how you think pornography was seen and talked about in our society, and what – in your opinion – might have been some of the reasons for this.

The block is divided into two sections.

Section 1 contains 13 questions (1-13): some of these questions are general and some personal.
- - If you wish, you can change the questions (words, order) or create new ones to better suit your views and experiences.
- - You may answer in as much detail as you wish – there is no word limit.
- - Although it is preferred that you answer all of the questions, you may, of course, choose to reply just to those you want to.

NOTE: Since you are asked to reflect back to your 'teenage' years, please try to specify the age or period you are writing about whenever you can.

NOTE: You may use CAPITAL letters or underlining if you want to emphasise
a word, a point of view etc.

Section 2 contains an 'event question' (i). This is about a specific event from your past. You will be asked to write a short description of that event – what happened and where, how you felt and thought, was anyone else involved and so on. There will be more detailed instructions in the Section 2 attached to the event question.

Please, take your time to answer: read the questions through and think about them. You have one week (a recommended timescale) to fill the form and send it back. Do not worry about the language, style or how 'accurate' your descriptions are – just write how YOU feel and think.

May the research begin!

Section 1
Questions
BI/1. What words or images does the word 'porn' bring to your mind (you may, for example, list 4-8 things or write using bullet points)?

BI/2. In your opinion, what is porn? For example, do certain body parts or acts have to be shown? Does it matter how much is shown and in what manner?

BI/3. Would you say that for instance some music videos, ads, or TV shows go 'too far' (i.e. become pornographic)? Why?

BI/4. In your opinion is there too much pornographic material (including the material you mentioned in the previous question) on cable, satellite television, and Internet? Should it be censored or controlled? Please, explain.

BI/5. How would you describe people who watch/read porn?

BI/6. Does it make a difference if the person watching/reading porn is a male/female?

BI/7. Do you think that the way men and women use pornographic material is:

   a. **Different?**
   b. **Similar?**

BI/8. What might be the reasons for these differences/similarities? For example, do age, living conditions or being in a relationship have any effect?

BI/9. In comparison to what you answered the questions above (1-8), to what extent do your current understandings of porn differ from the way you understood it when you were a teenager (i.e. what is porn, can other forms of media be considered as being 'pornographic', who uses it etc.)?

BI/10. How would you describe the way you talked about porn when you were a teenager with:

   a. your friends (female/male)?
   b. your parents/guardians (female/male)?
   c. teachers (or any other person/s)?

BI/11. Would you say that the way you talked about porn with other people matched the way you thought and felt about porn privately? For example, were there things you were embarrassed to tell anyone? Why?

BI/12. How was girls watching/reading porn seen and talked about in your community (e.g. family, school, social group)? What might have been the reasons for such views, reactions, and feelings? And did the manner of speech vary depending on who was talking (e.g. school boys, father/other adult men, mother/other women)?

   a. **What did you think about these people's views, reactions, and feelings?**

BI/13. How common do you think watching/reading porn was among girls? Did age (or anything else) make a difference?

Section 2

Event Question

i. *Girls and Porn*: Do you remember an occasion when you noticed that girls shouldn't watch/read porn? For example, did someone make a comment or joke about girls watching

it? How did this affect you – your feelings, thoughts, behaviour then and now? Please write about this particular episode, action or event as you remember it. Write:

1. in **the third person** (for example, instead of writing 'I was at school when my best friend…' write 'Lucy was at school when her best friend…).

2. in as much **detail** as is possible. Try to recreate the surroundings in which the even took place:
   - where, when, how old were you.
   - settings, sounds, tastes, smells, sensations.
   - who was/were there and what was said and done.
   - write down even seemingly small details such as colours, weather, outfits, and so on.

3. **without explanation,** interpretation, or life history (for example, you do not need to explain what may have caused you to feel the way you did). **Focus** only on describing the exact event or episode as you remember it!

4. **NOTE:** You do **not** need to go into details that may be too painful or distressing for you – write only about things you feel comfortable with.

This is not a writing test or a measure of your creativity – your writing will not be evaluated according to grammar or style. There is no word limit although detailed accounts are preferred. Please write under the subheading.

Girls and Porn

Please return the Block I filled within seven (7) days to: tetuniss@cc.jyu.fi
(Even if you decided to leave the form blank, please still return it to me).

NOTE: Late entries may not be included into the research due to time limitations.

In a week I will send the Block II which is about watching and reading pornographic material – it will also contains 12 questions and an event question. If you wish to receive Block II, please write either 'YES' or 'NO' here:

NOTE: Of course, if you now say 'YES', you can still choose not to answer the Block II form after receiving it.

<div align="center">THANK YOU AGAIN FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!!!

- Teija -</div>

APPENDIX 2.b Block Ii Questionnaire

Girls and Porn Research

Block II

<u>Watching and Reading Pornographic Material</u>

This is the second block of questions of the research. It is about how you first encountered pornography and what kind of material it was.

The block is divided into two sections.

Section 1 contains 12 questions (1-12): some of these questions are general and some personal.
- If you wish, you can change the questions (words, order) or create new ones to better suit your views and experiences.
- You may answer in as much detail as you wish – there is no word limit.
- Although it is preferred that you answer all of the questions, you may, of course, choose to reply just to those you want to.

NOTE: Since you are asked to reflect back to your 'teenage' years, please try to specify the age or period you are writing about whenever you can.

NOTE: You may use CAPITAL letters or <u>underlining</u> if you want to emphasise a word, a point of view etc.

Section 2 contains an 'event question' (i). This is about a specific event from your past. You will be asked to write a short description of that event – what happened and where, how you felt and thought, was anyone else involved and so on. There will be more detailed instructions in the Section 2 attached to the event question.

Please, take your time to answer: read the questions through and think about them. You have one week to fill the form and send it back. Do not worry about the language, style or how 'accurate' your descriptions are – just write how YOU feel and think.

May the research continue!

Section 1
Questions
   BII/1. Were you aware of anyone in your family (or in your close network) possessing or watching/reading material you think was porn?

> a. **If 'YES', How do/did you feel about it? Why?**

   BII/2. As far as you know, how did each family member feel about porn and how it was used (e.g. in your family, by people in general etc.)?

BII/3. How old were you when you first encountered porn and what was the material like (e.g. movie, magazine etc.)? Was the material you watched/read later in your teens similar to what you first experienced?

BII/4. Did you always watch/read the same material (e.g. one magazine) or did it vary (e.g. some of the material was pictures from the Internet and some books with a storyline)? Why?

BII/5. Did you prefer reading stories to watching videos or looking at magazines? How would you describe the differences between reading and watching sexual stories?

BII/6. How did you come across pornographic material? Did you watch/read porn on your own or with someone else?

BII/7. Would you consider any of your experiences (in relation to porn) having been abusive or distressing?

BII/8. How often would you say you watched/read porn?
   a. **Once:**
   b. **A few times:**
   c. **Often:**
   d. **Used to at one point but stopped (If so, how old were you, how long did 'using' porn last, and how frequent was it?):**

BII/9. Why do you think you watched or read porn (for example, did you find it to be arousing, educational, a forbidden 'fruit' etc.)?

   a. And also, IF you USED TO watch/read porn but stopped, what do you think were reasons for this?

BII/10. Did you use any other material for similar reasons (for instance, did you find some ads or magazines featuring articles/pictures of celebrities/ordinary people arousing or informative in terms of sexuality)?

   a. If you used any other material besides porn for the reasons you mentioned above, to what extent did they differ from each other (e.g. if you found both porn and pictures of celebrities arousing, would you say that the way they made you feel and think was nevertheless somehow different?)?

BII/11. Did you tell anyone about watching/reading pornographic material?

   a. IF you DID, how did that person react? How did you feel about it?

   b. IF you DID NOT, what do you think would have happen if anyone had found out?

BII/12. Compare the way you used to feel about porn and how you feel about it now: Are there any changes and what might be the reasons for them (for example.

learning more about sex from elsewhere, you growing up, other people's opinions etc.)?

Section 2
Event Question
i**.** ***Encountering Porn***: Do you remember the first occasion when you encountered pornographic material? For example, did someone give it to you or did you find it yourself? What kind of material was it (for instance, videos, movies, magazines/newspapers, adult cartoons, phone sex)?

Please write about this particular episode, action or event as you remember it. Write:

1. in ***the third person*** (for example, instead of writing 'I was at my friend's home when my best friend…' write 'Lucy was at her friend's home when her best friend…).

2. in as much ***detail*** as is possible. Try to recreate the surroundings in which the even took place:
   - where, when, how old were you.
   - settings, sounds, tastes, smells, sensations.
   - who was/were there and what was said and done.
   - write down even seemingly small details such as colours, weather, outfits, and so on.

3. ***without explanation,*** interpretation, or life history (for example, you do not need to explain what may have caused you to feel the way you did). ***Focus*** only on describing the exact event or episode as you remember it!

4. ***NOTE:*** You do ***not*** need to go into details that may be too painful or distressing for you – write only about things you feel comfortable with.

This is not a writing test or a measure of your creativity – your writing will not be evaluated according to grammar or style. There is no word limit although detailed accounts are preferred. Please write under the subheading.

Encountering Porn

Please return the Block II filled within seven (7) days to: tetuniss@cc.jyu.fi
(Even if you decided to leave the form blank, please still return it to me).
NOTE: Late entries may not be included into the research due to time limitations.
In a week I will send the Block III which is about watching and reading pornographic material – it will also contains 9 questions and a event question. If you wish to receive Block III, please write either 'YES' or 'NO' here:

NOTE: Of course, if you now say 'YES', you can still choose not to answer the Block III form after receiving it.
> THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!!!
>> - Teija –

APPENDIX 2.c Block III Questionnaire

Girls and Porn Research

Block III

While Watching/Reading Porn

This is the third block of questions of the research. It is about how you experience watching/reading pornographic material and what about it you like and dislike.

The block is divided into two sections.

Section 1 contains 9 questions (1-9): some of these questions are general and some personal.
   - If you wish, you can change the questions (words, order) or create
     new ones to better suit your views and experiences.
   - You may answer in as much detail as you wish – there is no word
     limit.
   - Although it is preferred that you answer all of the questions, you may,
     of course, choose to reply just to those you want to.

NOTE: Since you are asked to reflect back to your 'teenage' years, please try to specify the age or period you are writing about whenever you can.

NOTE: You may use CAPITAL letters or <u>underlining</u> if you want to emphasise a word, a point of view etc.

Section 2 contains an 'event question' (i). This is about a specific event from your past. You will be asked to write a short story or description of that occasion – what happened and where, how you felt and thought, was anyone else involved and so on. There will be more detailed instructions in the Section 2 attached to the event question.

Please, take your time to answer: read the questions through and think about them. You have one week to fill the form and send it back. Do not worry about the language, style or how 'accurate' your descriptions are – just write how YOU feel and think.

May the research keep rolling!

Section 1
Questions
   BIII/1. Did you tend to watch/read pornography alone or with someone else (e.g. with your partner, a friend, or in a boy/girl group)? If you watched/read porn with someone, who chose the material?

   BIII/2. How would you describe the surroundings when you were watching/reading porn (for example, home, bedroom, outside the house, when you were alone in your house)?

BIII/3. Did you ever wonder or imagine how watching/reading porn might feel for other people (e.g. for someone in the same room, or for people in general)?

BIII/4. How did watching/reading porn differ from your other media consumption (e.g. in comparison to watching horror/drama movies alone/with someone, how much you related to the character/s)?

BIII/5. To what extent would you say you related to/felt for:
   a. **the woman:**
   b. **the man:**
   c. **both:**
   d. **neither:**

   For example, did you imagine 'looking' through the actress'/actor's eyes, or watching them from a distance? Did you fantasise being in the actress'/actor's body, or imagining how they felt when performing the scenes?

BIII/6. What were your preferences/dislikes (and why) in terms of:
   a. **Female/male body:**
   b. **Body parts (penis, breasts, buttocks, faces etc.):**
   c. **Acts (female/male orgasm, intercourse, oral sex, a couple/group, tying up someone):**
   d. **Settings and objects (uniforms, outdoors, in the bedroom)?**
   e. **Other things that you preferred/disliked:**

BIII/7. How would you describe what you felt, thought, and sensed while watching/reading porn? How important each of the senses (sight, touch, smell, taste, and hearing) was, and was any of them more central than the others (e.g. the sight of buttocks/face, touching/being touched, sound of breathing/words etc.)?

   a. To what extent would you say that the way you felt, thought, and sensed while watching/reading porn was similar to what you experience while fantasising on your own?

BIII/8. Did you watch/read only material you preferred?

   a. If 'NO', why do you think you watched/read material you dislike (for example, that was the only material you could obtain; or despite of the dislikes you still found the material intriguing)?

BIII/9. How did you think about yourself when you were watching/reading porn in comparison to how you viewed yourself other times (e.g. what words or expressions did you use, or was there any difference in how you thought and felt about what was 'appropriate' sexual behaviour)? Why is that?

Section 2
Event Question
i. *Watching/reading Porn* OR *Favourite scene* (choose one, please): Imagine a time when you were watching/reading pornographic material. How did you feel, think and sense while you were watching porn? How did you feel about it afterwards?

Please write about this particular episode, action or event as you remember it. Write:

1. in *the third person* (for example, instead of writing 'I was alone at home when I started to read a magazine I had found…' write 'Lucy was alone at home when she started to read a magazine she had found…').

2. in as much *detail* as is possible. Try to recreate the surroundings in which the even took place:
   - where, when, how old were you.
   - settings, sounds, tastes, smells, sensations.
   - who was/were there and what was said and done.
   - write down even seemingly small details such as colours, weather, outfits, and so on.

3. *without explanation,* interpretation, or life history (for example, you do not need to explain what may have caused you to feel the way you did). *Focus* only on describing the exact event or episode as you remember it!

4. *NOTE:* You do *not* need to go into details that may be too painful or distressing for you – write only about things you feel comfortable with.

This is not a writing test or a measure of your creativity – your writing will not be evaluated according to grammar or style. There is no word limit although detailed accounts are preferred. Please write under the subheading.

Watching/reading Porn OR *Favourite Scene*

Please return the Block III filled within seven (7) days to: tetuniss@cc.jyu.fi
(Even if you decided to leave the form blank, please still return it to me).

NOTE: Late entries may not be included into the research due to time limitations.

In a week I will send the Block IV which is about watching and reading pornographic material – it will also contains 10 questions and an event question. If you wish to receive (the final) Block IV, please write either 'YES' or 'NO' here:

NOTE: Of course, if you now say 'YES', you can still choose not to answer the Block IV form after receiving it.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!!!
- Teija -

APPENDIX 2.d Block IV Questionnaire

Girls and Porn Research

Block IV

Growing up and Pornographic Images

This is the final block of questions of the research. It is about how you have experienced your changing body and how pornographic images may have affected the way you feel and think about yourself, your body, and other people.

The block is divided into two sections.

Section 1 contains 10 questions (1-10): some of these questions are general and some personal.

- If you wish, you can change the questions (words, order) or create new ones to better suit your views and experiences.
- You may answer in as much detail as you wish – there is no word limit.
- Although it is preferred that you answer all of the questions, you may, of course, choose to reply just to those you want to.

NOTE: Since you are asked to reflect back to your 'teenage' years, please try to specify the age or period you are writing about whenever you can.

NOTE: You may use CAPITAL letters or <u>underlining</u> if you want to emphasise a word, a point of view etc.

Section 2 contains an 'event question' (i). This is about a specific event from your past. You will be asked to write a description of that occasion – what happened and where, how you felt and thought, was anyone else involved and so on. There will be more detailed instructions in the Section 2 attached to the event question.

Please, take your time to answer: read the questions through and think about them. You have one week to fill the form and send it back. Do not worry about the language, style or how 'accurate' your descriptions are – just write how YOU feel and think.

May the last part of the research begin!

Section1
Questions

    BIV/1. Do you think there were any rules related to sex and sexuality in your family (for example, what you or other family members were allowed to watch/read, what you ccould wear etc.)? How were these 'rules' expressed and how did they change as you grew up?

    BIV/2. To what extent do you think male and female sexuality are different (for example, how males/females behave, what role emotions play in their sexuality, how often males/females engage in sexual activities etc.)?

BIV/3. How about similar?

BIV/4. In comparison to what you just answered above (the questions 2-3), to what extent have these views changed since you were a teenager?

BIV/5. To what extent would you say that porn is an accurate expression of female sexuality?

BIV/6. How about male sexuality?

BIV/7. In comparison to other sources of information (for example, sex education, TV programmes, magazines, advertisements, friends etc.), to what extent has pornography affected the way you think about:
   a. **What it is to be a woman?**
   b. **What it is to be a man?**
   c. **Sex and sexual relationships?**

BIV/8. How has viewing/reading porn affected the way you feel/felt and think/thought about:
   a. **Your changing body when you were a teenager?**
   b. **Your sexual orientation (for example, who you find attractive, who you find sexually desirable)?**
   c. **The kinds sexual activity you would think about engaging in?**

BIV/9. How would you describe the effects that pornography has had on your sexual fantasies (for example, are there scenes/pictures you like to repeat in your mind)?

BIV/10. How would you describe the effects that porn has had on your sexual behaviour? For example, would you say that you 'model' the behaviour of porn actresses/actors in anyway (e.g. they way they speak/sound, how and what they perform, how they relate to each other and other women/men etc.)?

Section 2
Event Question
i. *Maturing Body*: This even question will not be directly linked to porn, but rather focuses on how you felt and thought about your maturing body in relation to your sense of self, as well as to other people and society.

Do you remember an occasion when someone made you aware of being a woman or noticed your changing body? For example, did someone in your family or in school make a comment about your body or about your behaviour? How did this affect you – your feelings, thoughts, behaviour?

Please write about this particular episode, action or event as you remember it. Write:

   1. in ***the third person*** (for example, instead of writing 'I was walking on the street when I passed by a buss stop…' write 'Lucy was walking on the street when she passed by a buss stop…').

2. in as much **detail** as is possible. Try to recreate the surroundings in which the even took place:
   o where, when, how old were you.
   o settings, sounds, tastes, smells, sensations.
   o who was/were there and what was said and done.
   o write down even seemingly small details such as colours, weather, outfits, and so on.

3. **without explanation,** interpretation, or life history (for example, you do not need to explain what may have caused you to feel the way you did). **Focus** only on describing the exact event or episode as you remember it!

4. **NOTE:** You do **not** need to go into details that may be too painful or distressing for you – write only about things you feel comfortable with.

This is not a writing test or a measure of your creativity – your writing will not be evaluated according to grammar or style. There is no word limit although detailed accounts are preferred. Please write under the subheading.

Maturing Body

Please return the Block IV filled within seven (7) days to: tetuniss@cc.jyu.fi
(Even if you decided to leave the form blank, please still return it to me).

NOTE: Late entries may not be included into the research due to time limitations.

This was the last Block of the research! If you have any questions, concerns or you would like to clarify something you have said earlier, please feel free to contact me.

If you wish to receive a summary of the research, just let me know and I will send it to as the research is finished.

Once again, THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!!!

Sincerely,
Teija Nissinen
MSc (Psychology by Research) student, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK.