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**SEMIO-SEX: THE PORNOGRAPHIC MOMENT OF
TRANSGRESSION AND DESIRE**

by
Berkeley Kaite, B.A., M.A.
A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
January 1989
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ABSTRACT

The thesis analyzes the conventions of the pornographic photograph, and how they vary across genres. It is argued that 'the pornographic' is a radical play on difference and 'otherness'; rather than reinforce the normative 'sexual fix', it unsettles categories of masculinity and femininity so they threaten to collapse around simulated androgyny. The "cut" is used to theorize this logic of seduction in the spectator-text relationship. The "cut" institutes desire, and the subject, in a nexus of both difference and indifference, or loss and plenitude. In the pornographic spectator-text relationship this means the male reader is placed at the keyhole to witness a play on difference, but one which always threatens him with his own loss, and deprives him of his plenitude. Desire cannot be represented; nor can the phallus.

The undersigned hereby recommend to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
acceptance of the thesis

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submitted by
Berkeley Kaite, B.A., M.A.

in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis undertakes a semiotic analysis of the pornographic photograph. It is argued that the pornographic moment involves the deployment of the sexual phantasization of desire which is disrespectful of the "sexual fix", the rigid codification of sexual difference (Heath, 1982). By this is meant that pornography is a radical play on difference and 'otherness', to the extent however that normative boundaries of masculinity and femininity are transgressed. Sexual difference, far from being the apparently visible and immediately knowable instance which rises and falls on representations of the essential body, is actually a 'textual fix'. The 'pornographic' engages in the systematic transgression of codes of sexual difference so that 'sexual difference' is a negotiated strategy or subject to constant re-negotiation. Pornographic significance lies in the way it flouts respected categories of difference so that textual bodies 'speak' the language of the other. This involves an erotic consort which privileges not the phallus but a language (an exchange) whose elements are borrowed from both the masculine and the feminine in the service of 'simulated androgyny'. This, it is argued, is part of the logic of seduction.

The inquiry into this seductive moment is synchronic in that it suspends the photograph in an analytic space and descends

into it.¹ The analysis proceeds by considering the relationship among the elements of the visual narrative. These recurring elements, the conventional symbolic gestures and fetish nominations (and the absence of others), are isolated to investigate their systematic deployment under the sign of 'the pornographic'.

Implicit to this kind of inquiry, a close textual reading of the photograph, is attention to the relationship between text and spectator. The photograph has a formal rhetorical structure, and in addressing an ideal spectator, invites the reader to become part of its signification. The public photograph thus speaks the same language as its readers; as with any linguistic or symbolic exchange this involves many unconscious and repressed associations. We may say that the pornographic photograph is a 'published dream'.² The illusion of private consumption is disrupted on acknowledging the circulation and popularity of the genres.³ The first word in the phrase 'published dream' is what locates the text as an artifact. It has not only the structure of a dream sequence (more on this below) but it is a dream for specific publics, or which specific publics are having. It is a dream - like myths, symbols, rituals and other artifacts which appear to be anonymous utterances; and it is symbolically stratified.

To say that the pornographic photograph is like a 'published dream' is to suggest a number of things. A dream is a production of seemingly incoherent features. Frequently anti-narrative, it is a particularly dense articulation of unconnected visual and verbal images, characters whose identities shift, signifiers whose meanings are repressed both in the dream and within the psyche of the individual. Furthermore, through dream analysis (or in this case dream-as-text), the dream as a finished product is dismantled to render itself as rather incomplete or unfinished, or in which meaning is deferred. Various aspects of the dream are disassembled to allow for particular elaborations and, linguistic associations which in the telling, or the writing, are much longer than the dream itself. And, as important, things are often not as they first appear, or the inverse of what they appear; surface 'realities' give way to a reservoir of meanings, associations and narratives which are read from within the text of the dream and, are also interpreted and have significance outside it. Dreams operate on a number of levels and are analyzed by extracting the various layers for scrutiny.

The textual organization is not necessarily in pursuit of a super-text, i.e., there is no obvious transparency of meaning or constellation of meanings. Each incident, detail, datum, etc. might work against the other and a small, seemingly unpowerful

element will dominate and take on a significance beyond a mere surface description of the dream. These are the "condensations" and "displacements" that circulate in the production and subsequent consumption or reading of a dream (Freud, 1900).

Freud:

"Dreams are brief, meagre and laconic in comparison with the range and wealth of the dream-thoughts. If a dream is written out it may perhaps fill half a page. The analysis setting out the dream-thoughts underlying it may occupy six, eight or a dozen times as much space," (1900:313).

The observation that female porn models are never completely naked, refers to the workings of condensation: to understand this fragment of the representation one assumes the fusion "into a single action all events of interest which occur simultaneously" (Freud, 1900:212n). The accoutrements and the biological credentials of the models are the repository of linguistic, psychic, cultural, sexual significance. Other words and phrases used by Freud are "compression" and "rapprochement forcé" ("enforced convergence") which suggest a rather eloquent schema for understanding the corpus of the dream. The analytic separation of dream content and dream thoughts (and also a discussion of what is 'absent' from the dream, including the dreamer) also allows for a 'symptomatic' reading, a nuanced treatment of aspects of the dream-text as symptoms of an overall, larger structure. The symptoms which surface in the analysis imply that linguistic and visual representations are the overt

expression of unspoken wishes and fears.

"Displacement" is equally tricky and complex. It refers to distortions in dream content which channel psychic intensity into (often) censored wishes, so that the resulting representation appears diffuse, contradictory or distorted. The high heel shoe on the female model, in a straight magazine, is 'feminine' (and convergent meanings would claim sexiness, sometimes the prostitute, etc.) and also, within the pornographic genres, has special significance. One might ask why the semi-naked (or partially clothed) model almost never has a bare foot and almost always sports the spike heel. How does it signify the 'pornographic' in these instances? The shoe as 'sign' is exchanged, in devious and transgressive ways, for manifest and concealed signification - the spike heel also falling under the familiar rubric of the 'phallic symbol'.

I am concerned to locate the tensions and negotiations around meaning, pleasure and 'difference' in the spectator-text relationship. I treat the 'sexual story' in the pornographic machine as a dream whose narrative elements take us beyond the biological nominations of sexual difference. And the analysis engages problematics of 'sexual difference'. That is, the pornographic text is implicitly concerned with the construction of 'identity' within the visual order, a discursive identity

which works as a cultural technology. It is composed with a specific public or audience in mind - in this case the gendered (as masculine) subject. And in the case of the artifact which implicates discourses on sexuality, the issue of the production and reproduction of gendered identity is of central importance.

Emergent literatures which problematize subjectivity persuasively suggest that the 'ideal' sexed subject is in fact a fiction, an unstable one at that, and voyeurism and narcissism may often overlap (Rodowick, 1982; Green, 1984; Young, 1987). These implications jeopardize the commonly held assumptions that it is (1) the exacerbation of sexual difference, and (2) the radical separation of the 'one who looks' and the spectacle (or subject and objects) which characterize the pornographic regime (Dworkin, 1981; Griffin, 1981).

A reading of what constitutes a logic of seduction is offered as a subversive, rather than oppositional, dialogue with the pornographic text. Laura Mulvey makes the point that "alternative" readings of any symbolic cultural product must still rely on the linguistic apparatus, of which it is a part: "...the problem (is) how to fight the unconscious structured like a language (formed critically at the moment of arrival of language) while still caught within the language of the patriarchy" (1975:7). Her suggestion, however, is to embark on

the "destruction of pleasure as a radical weapon" through examining the cultural artifact (itself a product of the phallogentric economy) "with the tools it provides." I take this to mean that the subversive option is to dismantle the symbolic imagery on its own terms, from within its own language.⁴

John Ellis provides an illustration of an 'urban feminist gorilla' tactic that is deconstructive in its attempt to dismantle the authoritative voice contained within the representation (1980). The example he recounts involves an alternative to the familiar placing of stickers which read "This insults women", on posters and advertisements thought to 'objectify' women. This first of all confuses the real with the representation and subsequently fails to confront the representation on its own terms. Ellis suggests a more effective strategy is to ask (or create stickers which ask) "Who does this poster think you are?" as it directly addresses, and unsettles, the voyeur. The former leaves the male viewer "voyeur to women speaking to the advertisers": still a voyeur (1980:88).

For our purposes, some issues contained within Ellis' example are useful. These are the sensitivity to linguistic modes of address, and the exposure of the limits to representation. If the image is opened up to signify all it can, it is rendered a different significance.

THREE PORNOGRAPHIES

A note on methods. The specificity of what is meant by 'pornography' is the motivation behind this thesis. It is an investigation of pornographic media, and sexual - textual mediation in the spectator-text relationship. To address the first, I chose what are known as 'mainstream' pornographic magazines, those which are in fairly widespread public circulation. With respect to the soft-core (straight) genre, Penthouse, Playboy and Hustler are perhaps emblematic of the genre, highly visible in both convenience stores and sex 'boutiques'. Certainly Penthouse, and Playboy are considered to be the Time and Newsweek of the porn industry.⁶ Other magazines circulate as well: a selection would include Club International, Elite, Mayfair, Eros, Honey, Adam, Skin Flicks, Men Only and Celeb. The selection of soft-core magazines totalled at least 50; at an average of 50 - 60 photos per magazine, the total number of photos in the sample would be approximately 2500 - 3000.

Hard-core refers to graphic sexual representations: erections, penetration, ejaculation. That genre is notoriously more difficult to identify in statistical terms (the Report of

the Fraser Committee estimates there are about 540 titles, of all genres, available in Canada.) The reason for this seems to be related to the illicit nature of the medium. That is, many magazines only publish one issue (this is also noted in the Report of the Fraser Committee). It is not clear if this is because magazines don't survive long enough to publish a second volume (given the competition among possible titles this may be the case). It may be possible that a publisher will put out many issues, each with new and changing titles; this might heighten the consumer's appetite for the 'newest' product. With hard-core titles there is no mast-head, thus it is not possible to trace their point of origin, nor their publisher. This may be to avoid identification in the case of a legal altercation, or social opprobrium. It is thus very difficult to determine which magazines are the most popular (store owners in particular are loathe to discuss such matters). In any case, in the course of the research it became clear that the discursive structure of the photographs in hard-core magazines conforms to a highly repetitive narrative. Once the magazine is identified as hard-core, the formula (discussed in the thesis) complete with narrative closure, imposes itself on the genre. I looked at 25 magazines, for a total of approximately 1000 - 1500 photos.

As the thesis engages pornographic media and mediation, it is concerned with questions regarding the symbolic legislation of

sexual difference. To that end, although the bulk of the analysis centers on the straight genre (soft and hard core), it elects to investigate other genres as a contrapuntal measure. There is, for example, gay pornography (soft and hard core). Some soft-core titles would include: *Blueboy*, *Mandate* and *Torso*. Gay hard-core seems to be untraceable as to its point of origin, as with straight hard-core (i.e., many titles appear as Volume 1, Number 1.) As noted above however, the formal narrative structure of the text is apparent upon isolation of the dominant themes and motifs. The highly repetitive nature of each genre suggests that sample size and traditional sampling techniques are secondary to a textual analysis which uncovers the thematic cohesion of the photographs as the analysis unfolds. That is, after a period of casual yet sustained viewing of the material, the rigid and conventional structure of the photograph begins to assert itself.

The thrust of the thesis addresses the spectator-text relationship and the way it elaborates the drama of sexual difference. Another genre presents itself to seemingly confound, on the transparent surface, the categories of sexual difference. This genre, soft and hard-core "TV" pornography in which the transsexual or hermaphrodite dresses up as a 'woman' (hence "transvestite"), is included in the sample of magazine photographs to, as it were, 'test' the arguments about

'difference' and 'otherness' made in the earlier discussions. Soft-core photos are included in such mainstream magazines as Club International, for example. Hard-core has its own genre and titles: TV Tight Ass, TV House Party, etc. The question pertinent to the phenomenon of "TV" porn regards the mediation of sexual difference, in the service of seduction, on a body that doubles as its other and thus appears to cancel out 'otherness' and difference. How is this freakish, transsexual body desirable? I argue that discourses which contain an element of 'sameness' are at once also about the discursive negotiation of difference and 'otherness'. Just as it is with the straight genres which are a play on 'indifference' as well as difference.

While it is acknowledged that there are other sub-genres or exclusive tastes, attention to these three genres is used to demonstrate the variations in dominant visual motifs, as they address configurations of sexual difference.

Again, the analysis is a semiotic one, attendant to the rhetorical strategies of meaning construction. It is also sensitive to a deconstructive thrust which tries to open up the text to reveal its contradictions and ambiguities, the ways it plays on signification. It was only through the course of the analysis that I could systematically isolate the repetitive conventions and motifs which structure the pornographic moment.

It was in this way (after looking at thousands of photos) that the research proceeded and after which time theoretical explanation about the logic of seduction and desire was formulated.

The analysis begins with a summary of the major contributors to the pornography 'debate'. This leads up to the theoretical orientation chosen for its utility in understanding the desire for difference, how this works in pornography, and how it is transgressed under the sign of pornography. I am referring to the notion of "cut" and the inauguration of the sexed subject, a wholly contradictory enterprise which always tests the boundaries between self and 'other' (Silverman, 1979).

Two sections follow, "The Body" and "The Fetish". Each is comprised of two chapters which investigate configurations of body and fetish, to some extent overdetermined, and around which pornographic meaning circulates. In each chapter I try to identify the specific deployment of sexuality, subjectivity, signification and desire, as they center on the "genitals", the "gaze", the "shoe" and, "jewellery and lingerie". Their service in the name of the pornographic moment, and their possible meaning for the reader, suggest that far from 'revealing all', the pornographic photograph represses what it cannot tolerate saying.

To open up the text is to prevent it from attaining full narrative closure, or the imposition of one ultimate, authoritative, meaning on the text (Norris, 1982). As Toril Moi notes, in Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory, the essentialism latent in the search for the pure, authentic, voice of the text (either the full closure of the subject or of the representation) is precisely phallic: "the seamlessly unified self ... is in fact a phallic self, constructed on the model of the self-contained, powerful phallus. Gloriously autonomous, it banished from itself all conflict, contradiction and ambiguity" (1985:8). Confronting the text in an oppositional discourse, in the sense of establishing a radical separation between objects and subjects, reproduces the voice of 'Man' and the idea of a transcendental signified: this is the ultimate closure, from which no exit is possible (cf. Moi, 1985).

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1. Locating these concerns explicitly within an historical or economic context is not antithetical to this analysis. Judith Williamson, for example, attempts a "Marxist Semiotics" in "Woman is an Island," and argues for an analysis of "system(s) of meanings ... (which) function within actual historical systems" (1986:110). She relies on the notion of 'difference' and 'otherness' to explore the ways patriarchal capital sets up categories of 'otherness' and then exploits them, as depicted in advertising. In Studies in Entertainment, edited by Tania Modleski, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986. With respect to pornography, Barbara Khrenreich suggests the appearance of Playboy in the Fifties was a statement of rebellion against social conformity, through the rejection of monogamy and the pursuit of hedonistic pleasures. Understanding how the erotic is encoded in the representation, however, requires more than taking for granted that magazines promote the consumption of images as commodities. I discuss this more fully in the next chapter. cf. The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment, Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1984. Other sources which investigate the complex relationship between social change, gender differences and material and/or symbolic consumption are: J.C. Flügel, The Psychology of Clothes, New York: International Universities Press, 1931; Michael Renov, "From Fetish to Subject: The Containment of Sexual Difference in Hollywood's Wartime Cinema," Wide Angle, 5:1, 1982; Andrew Wernick, "From Voyeur to Narcissist: Imaging Men in Contemporary Advertising," in Beyond Patriarchy: Essays by Men on Pleasure, Power and Change, edited by Michael Kaufman, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1987.

2. The phrase is akin to one used by Robert J. Stoller, "published daydream", in Observing the Erotic Imagination (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985). I prefer to use simply the word 'dream', along with the connotations of the published artefact, because this suggests more strongly the unconscious manifestations of form and content (rather than a conscious construction of the 'dream' in the waking state.)

3. Estimates of the popularity and sales of pornography are notoriously difficult to pin down. The Report of the Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution. Volume 1 (Canada: Minister of Supply and Services, 1985) suggests that Penthouse and Playboy have monthly sales of 500,000 and 300,000 (magazines) respectively (in Canada) (91).

4. Some examples of this strategy are found in 'urban feminist gorilla' tactics. The examples I'm thinking of involve the defacing of billboard messages, photographed and then reproduced

on post-cards available at women's bookstores. c.f. 1) An ad for a Fiat car with the caption, alongside a photo of the car, "If it were a lady, it would get its bottom pinched." The gorilla response, spray-painted in large letters: "If this lady was a car she'd run you down." 2) An ad for a smaller version of the standard Volvo, this caption with a picture of the car: "To Volvo, a son. 4,297 pounds." The response: "Better luck next time." 3) An ad for nylon stockings called "Pins", depicting a side view of pair of legs from the thigh down, taking a wide step, feet sporting open-toed spike-heeled shoes, and the caption: "Where would fashion be without pins?" The response: "Free of little pricks... stop needling us." 4) An ad for a chain saw, with a visual of a woman from the shoulders up, standing close to a tree trunk. The caption: "Renew his interest in carpentry." The response: "Saw his head off."

5. cf. The Report of the Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution, (Canada: Minister of Supply and Services, 1985) for excerpted submissions to the committee from women's and religious groups, teachers' federations, pro and anti-censorship organizations, etc. Also, Berkeley Kaite, "A Survey of Canadian Distributors of Pornographic Material," Research Paper prepared for the Ministry of Justice, Canada, 1984.

Chapter 1

PORNOGRAPHY AND DESIRE

Pornography is a regime of representation which, as Rob Coward notes, organizes sexualized meaning in conventional ways, according to which a society interprets as pornographic (1982). Although pornographic magazines, as an economic phenomenon, take their place among the circulation and exchange of commodities designed for profit, their economic activity is dependent on other forms of activity not so visible (in the positivist sense of recording the number of purchases and money generated). Precisely how the pornographic artifact is consumed is not so easily identifiable (Blachford, 1978/1979; Brown, 1981; Coward, 1982; Myers, 1982a, 1982b; Vance and Snitow, 1984; Kuhn 1985). One can acknowledge that there is a pornography industry, and commodities, which by extension commoditize images of sexuality. But 'the sexual' is commoditized in other media, suggesting there is nothing inherently pornographic (Blachford, 1978/1979; Myers, 1982a, 1982b; Kuhn 1985; Brown, 1981; Coward, 1982). These issues, the problems of mediation and consumption, open onto issues of 'exchange' which extend beyond the economic imperative of the cash nexus. Pornographic photographs are commodities exchanged as signs and sign-value is heavily invested with signification and symbolic exchange value, not use value

(Baudrillard, 1981). What is more, they enunciate phantasies which in some way elaborate a logic of seduction and desire.

Pornographic magazines dramatize what in Western society is the quintessentially private act, but for anonymous and fairly public consumption. It transgresses the normative and the licit; as such it confronts a reading subject who, at the point of purchase, is already engaged in behaviours and fantasies considered to be 'deviant', whether morally, sexually or legally. But this narrow formulation of social deviancy assumes a 'subject' who is in some way at odds with social definitions of acceptable behaviour. He is in control of his behaviour, however mis-guided. How the pornographic photograph works, for and through the reader, and to incite desire is left untheorized. These assumptions of the mythic rational, self-determining subject are challenged by the contribution of psychoanalysis, particularly Lacanian, which illustrates the failure of identity and the struggle involved in the never-complete internalization of culture (Lacan, 1977; Lacan, 1981; Mitchell and Rose, 1982; Rose, 1983; Henriques, et al., 1984). Pornography as an illicit cultural artifact signifies sexual imagery and sexual difference in specific ways; and it engages the sexed subject determined not cognitively but, it will be argued, by transgressive effects (Chevalier, 1989). That is, identities are acquired under threat and decentered from consciousness; and the eroticization of

'tabooed' material recalls and replays those contradictory and negotiated strategies of sexual difference, desire, voyeurism, fetishism, etc. Pornographic signification involves those strategies, in choreographing the body and the fetish, ultimately to veil and counterveil sexual difference.

In the next two sections I will discuss behaviourism and humanist feminism which take sexual difference for granted and which assume a transparency of meaning both in the subject and on the surface of the artifact. 'Behaviourism' and 'humanist feminism' emphasize, in particular, the 'pernicious' image and its effects on the behaviour of the male consumer. These two positions undertake to study, in some way, the machinations of visual artifacts.¹ They rest on the assumption of the rational ego who encounters the singular, hegemonic meaning of the photograph; he is the bearer of false consciousness in need of education or re-socialization. A 'feminist post-structuralist' approach to the pornographic problematic comprises the third section. It emphasises pornography as a discursive practice which structures a plurality of meanings and it locates a de-centered (contradictory) subject formed in the desiring economy of the pornographic 'moment'. Then, I offer some preliminary comments on contextualizing the appearance and circulation of pornographic artifacts. Following this, I address questions of difference, desire and the logic of seduction.

BEHAVIOURISM AND THE ACT

The behaviourist approach utilizes the methods of social psychology to suggest that elements in the pornographic image, its sexual explicitness or, in some genres, depictions of 'violence', are linked with anti-social, aggressive, behaviour (Zillman and Bryant, 1982).² It is assumed, in linear fashion, that there is an unfavourable connection between media exposure and aggressive behaviour. Other studies suggest that although media images affect behaviour, the effect is cathartic, the image acting as a surrogate for repressed emotions (Kutchinsky, 1972; cf. Diamond, 1980, for an argument against this). There are a number of assumptions about both the image and the social actor, embedded in this research. First of all, there is the notion that there is only one meaning which can be unproblematically read off of the surface of the image.³ Donnerstein, for example, notes with respect to films: "Given the nature of most erotic films, in which women are depicted in a submissive, passive role, any subtle aggressive content could act to increase aggression against females because of their association with observed aggression" (1983:228-9). The complex strategies of identification, and the rôle of fantasy in the negotiation of meaning, for instance, are left out of the behaviourist equation

which assumes meaning as 'given' and not a productive site. As another example, in their study of the proclivity of the "self reported likelihood of engaging in rape" upon viewing "sexual violence", Malamuth and Check conclude: "A subject who perceives that he is aroused to portrayals of sexual violence, irrespective of whether corresponding (penile) tumescence changes occur, may infer that he would be sexually aroused by an assault" (1983:274). This behaviourist framework cannot accommodate the possibility of what McCormack calls the selectivity of 'effects' and behaviour based on social values (1985). Nor does the model address the subtle negotiations involved in the spectator-text relationship: the aforementioned rôle of fantasy, the complex formation of sexual difference as a social discourse, for example.

As well, the 'representation' is confused with the 'real', even thought to supplant and subvert 'reality'. Concern is with the immediately observable and the empirically verifiable, both measured in controlled situations (Zillman and Bryant, 1982).⁴ Moreover, the viewing subject, in this stimulus-response model, is assumed to be a blank slate onto which contents are projected, but only some contents: within 'effects research' generally it's not assumed that images of 'niceness' or 'goodness' affect behaviour (cf. McCormack, 1985). The fetish for measurement and empirical investigation does not consider what might be missing

from (for our purposes) the photo, nor what may be unspoken in the subject/reader.

The assumptions reviewed above characterize ego psychology. The 'reader' or 'viewer' in this model is referred to as 'the individual', unmediated and represented by the autonomous 'ego'. In this sense the ego is seen as the distillate of the 'individual', a non-discursive individual who is formed cognitively, whose responsibility it is to structure and manage social behaviour (Henriques, *et al.*, 1984:24). 'The individual' is fixed and given, self-determining and rational, self-centered and uncontradictory, the 'author' of his/her statements and actions. Within 'ego psychology' 'the individual' internalizes social values, norms and roles by cognitive mechanisms (Henriques, *et al.*, 1984:20). How this internalization occurs is left largely untheorized. The cognitive process is attributable to the workings of socialization, the successful assimilation of the normative structure. Therefore, implicit to this model, pornographic magazines are clearly illicit. 'Effects' research is not concerned with the production - economic, cultural, symbolic - of pornographic artifacts. Their consumption points to the improperly socialized individual, he who transgresses social norms. As with all positivist assumptions about 'deviant' behaviour, in this case the individual engaged in disreputable pleasures can un-learn defective socialization through rational

measures: punishment or enlightenment (education usually). So, consumption is the product of a social (anomic) collapse and/or, as with effects research, will lead to it.

Engaging in the pornographic 'element' is supposed to be the transgressive activity of the bourgeois ego, the "unitary individual or rational intentional being as a point of origin" (Henriques, et al., 1984:24). The problem is one of faulty cognition on the part of 'the individual', reflected in the popular slogan: "Real men don't need pornography." These assumptions are converted into legalistic terms, the solution to the problem being the withdrawal of materials from public circulation. Again, the representation is thought to subvert the 'real' and distort or mis-represent the reality of the reader (he assumed to have an existence prior to representation). Pornographic magazines and films are "reality-distorting portrayals" of sexuality (Zillman and Bryant, 1982:19). There is assumed be an 'essence' of both masculinity and femininity, dominated and sullied by the representation. But how the representation works, as a mediator of sexual difference, is left unproblematicized.

HUMANIST FEMINISM AND THE IMAGE

The humanist feminist arguments share many of the behavioural assumptions as social-psychological research, although the analysis and conclusions often differ. Robin Morgan, for example, appropriated behaviourist dogma when she coined the infamous phrase: "Pornography is the theory, and rape the practice" (1980:139.⁵ This rather orthodox feminist perspective on the issue of pornography is illustrated by works which isolate the offending pornographic artifacts as the discourse symptomatic of the larger picture: the exploitive and oppressive relations between the sexes:⁶

"Male power is the raison d'être of pornography; the degradation of the female is the means of achieving this power" (Dworkin, 1981:25);

"It (pornography) is an enacted drama which is laden with meaning, which imparts a vision of the world. The altar for the ritual is a woman's body. And the ritual which is carried out on this altar is the desecration of flesh. Here, what is sacred within the body is degraded" (Griffin, 1981:79);

"Pornography, like rape, is a male invention, designed to dehumanize women, to reduce the female to an object of sexual access" (Brownmiller, 1980:32).

Susanne Kappeler also offers an indictment of the pornographic impulses of a society driven by gender exploitation and oppression. Her discussion, in The Pornography of Representation, encompasses much more than simply the magazine photograph or film (1986). Kappeler's critique is of the status of the representation (literary or visual) and extends to questions of censorship; the distinction between "erotica" and

"pornography"; the status of the phallus within Freudian and Lacanian literatures (although she relies entirely on a few secondary sources); and, depictions of sexuality within literary genres.

Like many other humanist feminist tracts The Pornography of Representation relies on the metaphysical assumption of the radical separation of subjects and objects. This surfaces in a number of formulations, e.g. 'men look, women appear'; 'men control, women are manipulated'; 'men objectify, women are intersubjective'. One of the fallacies of this kind of reasoning lies with positing the non-discursive and therefore essential status of 'the individual'. In her discussion of "Subjects, Objects, and Equal Opportunities", for example, Kappeler valorizes the 'author' and the 'speaking subject'. That is, she invokes 'representational logic' in reifying language in opposition to and unproblematically reflecting the 'real' world. She writes: "As a speaker, I am always present as the subject of my speech" (52). The assertion that authority lies with the speaker, not the spoken, and that one masters the word, allows her to offer that "The pornographer is the speaking 'I' of the pornographic representation" (52). But we know, at least from the work of de Saussure and the structural linguists following him, that language systems precede the subject and consequently structure subject positions (1974; Coward and Ellis, 1977;

Silverman, 1983; Henriques, *et al.*, 1984). One occupies, for example, the positions 'I' and 'you' at the same time, depending on one's location in the linguistic chain, or linguistic exchange. The important thing to retain from an analysis of the symbolic effect of language is that each unit within the speech act (the signifier) is arbitrarily assigned a signified (meaning, affect, etc.). Meaning thus is unstable and unfixed; and in the process of exchange (crucially left out of the humanist discussions) meaning and subject positions are both rather fluid. In other words, the relationship between viewer and representation is structured whereby one 'speaks' to the other, in meaningful terms. The 'object' captured in a photo 'speaks to' its audience and in so doing assumes a subject position(s). The reader, similarly, stands in 'otherness' (not opposition) to the image and is 'object' to its 'subject'. There is a little bit of the object in the subject, and the subject in the object.

Kappeler does note, usefully, that the representation is a surrogate for other cultural negotiations. This point is also made by Geraldine Finn (1985). She argues that as a cultural artifact circulating in a masculine phantasmatic scene, the pornographic photograph is part of the phallic economy which relies on the conventional and institutionalized representations of masculinity (or mediations of male power). While I try to show that the pornographic moment is constitutive of erotic

transgressions, and impurities in the so-called phallic code, Finn's point that the penis can only salute the phallus (is no stand-in for it) is useful. However, she does not extend the notion to include a discussion of the instabilities and contradictions inherent in representing the phallus and desire (a thread which runs through this thesis).

Although within these literatures the concept of 'discourse' as the production of meaning for meaningful subjects is not used, emphasis is on the ideological role of pornography in exacerbating the hegemonic gender relations of dominance, the privileging of a mode of representation. Thus, the problem with 'images' of women⁷ within pornographic genres is that they are said to 'dehumanize' and 'objectify' 'women' by 'representing' them in sexually explicit poses and contexts - men look and women appear (in a limited repertoire).

One of the problems with this literature is the confusion of content with form⁸ (although any discussion of content mysteriously does not acknowledge that models are in fact dressed up; as one writer puts it, unfavourably: "...the sex shown is not 'natural sex', the mere unadorned rubbing of skin on skin", Paden, 1984:28). Or sexually explicit contents are confused with the formal features of the medium of photography. Questions of

media or mediation are elided in favour of a blanket description of what appears to be 'on sight' an elaboration, and exacerbation, of sexual difference (Stern, 1982). The charge that nakedness and the model put into a sexual discourse are the culprits behind 'dehumanization' reveals a visual fetishism which ignores, the equally fetishistic articles of clothing, what is repetitively absent from the photos, and the symbolic configurations of bodies and bodily adornment. The mediated effect of photography, the fact that much nudity exists in other media, and the prevalence of sexually provocative prosa escape the critical eye of both the behaviourist and humanist feminist approaches. Within the humanist feminist perspective the contexts of production, mediation and reception are elided in favour of an assumed transparency of content. It is silent on questions of the symbolic language which constitutes either recognition, or transgression, of the normative 'masculine' and 'feminine'.

Within this blurring of contexts (or the collapse of form into content) the photograph is implicitly considered to be more distortive than the painting or the written word. Overwhelming emphasis in humanist feminist analysis is on the soft and hard-core photo, not the written text which accompanies it (and which is connotatively more 'violent'). A further confusion of content with form is demonstrated when photographs and films are

chosen indiscriminately and imprudently to transform their meaning from the pornographic to the educational (or enlightened). Frequently within the humanist feminist discourse, photos and images are selected for their educational value (the whole premise behind the National Film Board's "Not a Love Story", at the same time denounced for their sexual value. That is, there is a certain hypocrisy in denouncing photographs contained in pornographic magazines while using the same photos to make another point, but to a different audience; as though certain (properly socialized) audiences will know better than to get aroused.⁹ Barrowclough, in a critical response to "Not a Love Story", notes for example how the pedantic selection of material for the viewers in the audience positions them as voyeurs: an ironic, if not parodic, 'point of view' in a film purportedly aimed at critiquing such a point of view (1982).

Despite the rush to categorize what pornography is or does, the humanist feminist approach does not address the problem of the construction of sexuality and the pornographic moment (especially the presence of men in hard core photographs), other than to suggest the reader is poorly socialized and that the 'pornographic' is recognizably different from the 'erotic'. In this vein, depictions of violence frequently are isolated as the 'truly pornographic' (Longino, 1980; Clark, 1980). Dworkin (1981) and Griffin (1981) assume all pornography connotes

violence. The problems with this formulation are outlined by Vance and Snitow (1984) who point to the metonymic illusions in associating all pornography with "violence". This involves the conflation of various genres, the conflation of behaviour and fantasy, and the functional coupling of pornography and violence which results in the syllogism: if porn is violent and sexuality is the stuff of pornography, then sexuality is violent (Vance and Snitow, 1984). But there is no systematic textual analysis nor analysis of the suturing process, the process by which readers are addressed as meaningful and 'written into' the text (Miller, 1977/1978; Heath, 1981; Silverman, 1983; Linker, 1984).

When the treatment of 'violence' is highlighted to generalize to the pornographic oeuvre, visual stills accompany articles on "media violence" and images are borrowed to contextualize the humanist feminist concerns - but to anger, not arouse. For example, on the cover of a feminist publication ("Special issue: Images of Media Violence Against Women") there is the deliberate superimposition of fragments of photographs depicting an ankle in chains, a woman whose arms are bound, different looks of horror and terror, onto the outline of a female figure; another article about the pernicious effects of pornographic images is accompanied by the graphic drawing of a female form, bound from head to toe, like a mummy but with some exposed skin, gagged and with tape over the eyes.¹⁰ It is

assumed that the 'ego' shall discern the correct message given the context. But this confounds the argument that something inheres in the image which marks it as pornographic.¹¹ Again, there is a representational logic which privileges a 'real' subverted by its inauthentic, offensive, representation. Within these discussions there is an implicit hierarchy of 'acceptable' (morally 'safe') sex and judgements about 'real' vs. voyeuristic sexual relations, photographic activity against the written word and reality as against fantasy (Barrowclough, 1982).¹²

The above analyses may put the porn issue on the political agenda but are in the end quite uncritical about their object. The isolation of the portrayal of violent acts is without critical attention to the discourse and the medium. For example, typically in the genres without bondage (clearly the norm) it is the woman who wields the whip and leather. How this constitutes 'violence against women' is not theorized.¹³ But more troubling is this uncritical blurring of text and context. For example, depictions of violence (fighting, death, murder, blood, etc.), as part of a nightly newscast are considered to be prime footage. These televised renditions of violence, supposedly live (unlike the 'dead' referent in the photo) are for the voyeur's intellectual titillation. But dramatic violence for sexual arousal, or the sexual voyeur, is judged differently. The issues taken up in subsequent chapters concern questions around

strategies of identification within the visual imaginaries and pleasure in looking. For the time being, following Silverman (1979), Dyer (1982) and Neale (1983), it is suggested that instabilities, both in the subject and in ocular techniques, allow for multiple and oscillating subject positions. It is suggested further that the reader may identify just as often with the anti-hero or the 'wound d' and thus assume a position of masochism (Silverman, 1979).

The concern of humanist feminism, regarding the misappropriation of some essence of femininity, is not restricted to pornographic imagery. In denouncing the normative 'fixity', the body, identity, subjectivity, sexual difference and desire are left unproblematized. The 'reality' of dominant discourses is assigned to a terrorism of lived sexuality: a description of the 'realpolitik' based on norm, stereotype, cliché - a surface reading of representations assumed to anchor sexual difference. These are liberal critiques, radical or not, which assume that identity is constituted and firmly fixed through socialization, the self is fully rational, apparent, and uncontradictory; hence, "men have this self (which) women must, by definition, lack ... To him it is given, by faith and action, from birth. To her it is denied, by faith and action, from birth" (Dworkin, 1982:13-14). At the level of the representation this assumes an unproblematic masculine/feminine polarity, the symbolic and

immediately knowable differentiation along sexual lines. And what we perceive as 'the feminine' in culture's dominant technologies is a distorted rendition. So, specific to the feminine sex is the 'dark continent' (Adams, 1978:70). Brown and Adams argue that the "feminine body thus stands for... the individual against the mechanisms of social control" and that normative strategies govern binary structures: possession/control, individual/social and body/sexuality (1979: 34, 47). The imperative of the "sexual fix" is assumed also in terms of regulation and social law (Heath, 1982). Suleiman refers to the theorizing of the bodily feminine subject the "unproblematic desideratum - let woman speak her own body, assume her own subjecthood" (1986:7). This kind of work is characterized by a demurral to the 'sexual fix', "the confines of sexual categorization, whether in language or in life" (Suleiman, 1986:22).

'The sexual' is seen as the possession or property of the individual (not the discourse), one's most truthful essence. This "repression hypothesis" (Foucault, 1980a) - that there is a true sexual secret awaiting its liberation, a single sexuality (not sexualities) - is similar to a representational logic which imputes an anterior sexual reality searching for an appropriate picture. This 'picture' is charged with the responsibility of liberating (or subverting) that which exists outside of

discourse, namely relations of power and social exchange.¹⁴

The humanist notions of 'freedom' and 'liberation' accompany these behaviourist and feminist treatments of pornography; that is, it is assumed that the individual can engage in liberation struggles, to 'liberate' the true, hidden, libidinal identity not compromised by the constraints of society's dominant fictions. The fully conscious 'self', the knowable ego (the 'I'), is assumed to exist outside of relationships, exchange, and representation. One's sexual identity is touted as the secret, repressed and unable to flourish 'on its own', 'freely', or to find its own 'voice'. Yet, as Foucault notes, this supposed secret always threatens to erupt, emerge, is spoken about, finds many voices in regulated discourses (Foucault, 1980a: 64).

To sum up, much analysis of pornographic imagery centers on 'what should be done' about it, with assumptions that 'the pornographic' circulates with a certain transparency of meaning (Ellis, 1980). The reading subject is rendered simply to have the wrong attitude, to be poorly, or under-socialized, again with the power to change: the former stripper-turned-anti-porn crusader depicted on her odyssey from sinner to saint in "Not a Love Story" (Barrowclough, 1982; Rich, 1983) says in an

interview, "We have the freedom to change course if we so choose (...) we have that potential" (Georgakas, 1983:10). This is behaviourist, ego psychology, a characteristic of humanist feminism, as well.

Behaviourism focusses on the act, particularly the alleged pernicious effects of the pornographic image or artifact on the 'measurable' attitude and behaviour of the male consumer. The concern for humanist feminism is the status of the image and its so-called mis-representation of the 'reality' of women. The limitations of both these approaches center on a number of things. Firstly, they unproblematically accept a transparent and singular meaning, which supposedly resides on the surface of the representation. Both approaches employ a representational logic and are thus silent about questions of fantasy, and 'reality' as an endlessly mediated process. They are also elitist in assuming that the uneducated and politically unenlightened will read one meaning and the politically correct (i.e., academics and liberal feminists), another. And finally following from this, other questions remain unexplored. These are the critical inquiries into the construction of subjectivity in the spectator-text relationship; the construction of the desiring subject, addressed and reconstituted in a sexual discourse; the production of pleasure through the text; and the struggle to symbolically represent sexual difference, desire and the phallus, in the

representation and for a reader. All these are taken up below and in subsequent chapters.

What follows is a brief discussion of accounts of the body, the pornographic oeuvre, the 'subject', the text and desire, which fall under the rubric of 'post-structuralism'. They lead into an excursus on the theoretical orientation which shapes this thesis.

FEMINISM, POST-STRUCTURALISM AND PORNOGRAPHY

Within both the behaviourist and humanist feminist positions there are assumptions about the 'nature' of sexuality, subjectivity, the spectator and processes of identification. Masculinity and femininity are seen as different and distinct. The last three (subjectivity, the spectator and identification) receive the least attention, and these silences are precisely what need investigation. But first, a sketch of post-structuralism and its utility for a contemporary problematic of sexual discourses and subject-ion begins with Foucault and his indictment of the bourgeois sexual subject (1980a).

Since Foucault's The History of Sexuality it is possible to conceive of sexuality as the history of discourses (1980a).

Foucault's work has premised the idea of the textual body, thereby pronouncing a death-sentence on the biological body (1980a). His disquisition on sexuality (or sexualities) upset those notions according to which the body itself is the repository of unbridled passions, meanings and sexual desires - heretofore 'repressed' - and that the body always signifies in the same way. To Foucault, the body is no transcendental signifier. To talk of the discursive body, however, suggests the shifting associations attached to social and local bodies and that our sexual desires are formed for us in discourse, in economies of regulation, confession, technique (Foucault, 1980a; Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982).

The privileging of discourse over the 'body' hence foregrounds the idea of the body as 'spoken', articulated within and around a corpus of signification. Foucault demonstrates how the body is subject to historico/medical discipline and how sexual 'abnormalities' are pathologized (1980b). In the "Introduction" to Herculine Barbin: Being the Recently Discovered Memoirs of a Nineteenth-Century French Hermaphrodite, he addresses the status of the hermaphrodite in sexual, legal and medical terms. The discursive voice of the hermaphrodite, a corporal statement of staunch refusal to be inducted into the "happy family of sexually confirmed individuals" (Heath, 1982:78), who wears a biological duality for which language does

not exist ('Is it male or female?'), has changed slightly since the Middle Ages. At that time the granting of a "true sex" to a body with the potential for a plurality of pleasures was the responsibility of the father or godfather (the one who "named" the child), at baptism. The option to change the label, not the biological disposition, was available to the individual upon another initiation rite, marriage. "Biological theories of sexuality, juridical conceptions of the individual, forms of administrative control in modern nations", all these combined to formulate the idea of a single-sexed body.

Within the medical discourse the aim, when confronted with "terror-inspiring monsters", was to "strip the body of its anatomical deceptions" and anchor it within a determining, single sexual identity (Foucault, 1980b:vii, viii). Frank Mort also notes, using a more contemporary example, how this most severely non-normative (hermaphroditic) body is subject to regulation - talked about in medical circles but solely in medical terms (1980). It is a body de-sexualized, totally naked, stripped of identity through the black obliterating mask/bar over the eyes; in medical photographs it stands ramrod straight against a normalizing grid, set to measure it for abnormalities (and therefore against the 'norm'). But here's the rub: the same hermaphrodite or transsexual circulates in pornographic genres ("TV" or "transvestite" porn) and is subjectified/sexualized; it

is a body speaking to a discourse of sexual transgression, in excess. And this is presented as erotic. It is a body spoken through clothing, sexualized body language and other vocabularies of instituted desire. What makes these two (same) bodies different is the way their transgressions (for they both transgress the boundaries of the genetic, sexual 'fix') are deployed and institutionalized: the first is a body constructed for medical observation and intellectual arousal; the second for sexual curiosity and sexual arousal. The first is placed in a textbook, the second in a magazine for purchase in an X-rated store. One is for the 'chosen' of the medical profession (historically, mostly men); the second is available to the 'masses' of men.

The 'body as text' is the body spoken and presupposes a discursive structure which delimits how the human body, a figure before discourse, "arrive(s) at the condition of being 'male' or 'female'" and masculine or feminine, defining the province of the body and subjectivity (Silverman, 1984:324). The body 'spoken' also presupposes a listener, a reader, an ideal consumer; and in the production of this corporal discourse, in signification, one could say there is a reader for the text and a reader in the text (i.e., the photo).

It would be a trap, however, to speak of 'pornography' as

just another discourse on sex. That would be to hypostatize the structure (as with all structuralisms) and speak only of the regulation and institutionalization of the pornographic 'voice'. The pornographic voice - a regime to be sure, "special knowledges, analyses, and injunctions" - speaks to a reader and does so in meaningful terms (Foucault, 1980a:26). Foucault's indictment however is largely inattentive to the 'subject' and the formation of desire, other than to suggest that sexual subjectivities are formed in a power-knowledge nexus;¹⁵ our desires are formed for us and sustained in discourse. Foucault's perspective presents a challenge for feminism in its insistence on problematizing the mediated body, a body shot through with strategies of signification and power.¹⁶

Linda Williams is one author who uses Foucaudian ideas about the discursive power of the body and sexuality (as against any essential power), as implicated in the surveillance techniques of photography and cinema (1981). In particular, she investigates the ways the female form is fictionalized in the photo essays of Eadweard Muybridge (1981). Briefly, Muybridge is known for his photographic study entitled "The Human Figure in Motion" (published in 1887) in which photo stills are placed beside each other (to form a strip across a page), to animate a 'moving' picture of human motion. Frequently his figures (of children also) are completely naked and depicted in simple

activities, for example walking, running or jumping. It is Williams' contention that the women in Muybridge's series, although naked, are marked as 'sexually different' through their engagement with "props". A woman dries herself with a towel or another, draped in chiffon, dances. These props, according to Williams, endow the female body with a "diegetic surplus of meaning", an over-determined structure of difference which "fictionalizes" women, women "playing assumed roles ... not there as themselves" (1981:26).¹⁷ Williams' uses Foucault to suggest power works through the body and the power of pleasure is manipulated through an intensification of the visual. In this way the fetish (the prop) is recalled as something to see and yet something which masks the unseen (the elusive phallus, the mark of difference; more on this below).

But the problem of the negotiation of sexual difference, in this Foucauldian perspective, disappears into the 'body', i.e., difference is assumed in its biological visibility. 'The sexual' is reduced to 'the biological'; the making and management of difference are left unquestioned. Desire is also assumed (although they are not foregrounded; Foucault is dismissive of the preoccupations of psychoanalysis), and there is still a curious and perplexing nostalgia for the 'essential' sexual, the 'essential' woman, a pre or non-discursive 'body'. Williams argues that the staging of the female body as something to look

at, and the marking of it as different through fetishes¹⁸, denies it "any existence apart from the marks of difference" (1981:27). Representations of the body within cultural artifacts are fetishized to please the male viewer "whose first effect is to deny the very existence of women" (1981:27). However, resurrecting an essential, truthful body is antithetical to an investigation of the cultural regulation of sexuality. Sliding sexual difference under the self-centered body excludes the spectator from the production/negotiation of meaning within the image - production which is only complete upon consumption (Linker, 1984a). Juxtaposing an ideal of 'real' difference (the body) against a 'false' construction (the marks of the fetish) assumes a transparent and unproblematic difference; and, it elects any object to the status of a fetish (i.e., it takes the fetish for granted).

In a study of hard-core pornographic films, Williams, via Foucault, suggests the 'body' (again under-theorized and heavy with the responsibility of signifying difference) is "saturated with sex" and implicated in the confessional apparatus, the pleasure-power structure which characterizes the modern deployment of sexuality (Williams, 1986b:7; 1986a; Foucault, 1980a). This kind of critique focuses on the "will-to-knowledge", supposedly the thrust behind the regulated pornographic discourse, an example of a "lyrical outpouring from

the sexual mosaic" (Foucault, 1980a:64); or, "the will to reveal the truth of female sexual pleasures" (Williams, 1986b:22; 1986a). Pornographic visual pleasure (perhaps a 'will-to-vision') is thus a dis-embodied, counter-repressive move to uncover all that can be seen. The Foucauldian obsession with confessions of the body and the incitement to discourse emphasizes the graphic genital exposure that is the mainstay of the pornographic narrative (Williams, 1986a; 1986b). And, Williams argues, a central feature of the confessional apparatus (for the male reader) is the intensive specularization of the female form: "... partly because it can never be satisfied by the visual strategies of these films, the woman's pleasure has become its fundamental theme" (1986a:5). But, can pleasure or desire ever be satisfied? Williams' focus is on 'the visible' and relentless display of women; in her article there is corresponding under-emphasis on the male - and his presence - in the photographic or filmic narrative. Whither the spectator in this panoply of bodily excesses? And his inability to be satisfied?

While Foucault's episteme is a major challenge to the Western, metaphysical subject, for our purposes it still cannot get at questions of eros, seduction and desire (Dews, 1979). When applied to the 'perverse' pornographic moment the Foucauldian paradigm is limited to a geneology of the 'seen' and

a taken for granted recognition of sexual difference 'on sight'. That is, within this and the standard psychoanalytic account, male fear of castration is consolidated upon visual recognition of female lack of a penis (Freud, 1905; Freud, 1908a; Freud, 1924; Freud, 1927). The scopophilic motivation is to see what isn't there, what the male in fact wishes were there. Fetish inscriptions thus are compensations for what is visually absent (or all that cannot be 'seen' or represented), the female figure is thus endowed with a stand-in for the missing penis (Williams, 1986a). And even though foregrounding 'the fetish' opens onto maneuvers of the 'unseen', the 'will-to-vision' cannot account for strategies of desire, particularly seduction and desire in the illicit/perverse visual moment. Any disclosure and investigation of the machinations of the 'fetish as absence' point to the limits of representation.

I take up questions of the fetish object and fetishistic relations in subsequent chapters; suffice so say for now that the mere descriptive identification of 'the fetish' as central to male erotic pleasure does not adequately identify the precise nature of the seductive enterprise. Where is the reader's desire? Why should castration fear also be erotic? In other words, the reader is left out of this scenario, unless the fetish is theorized as a transaction or significant exchange involving displacements, losses, investments and ultimately transgressions.

More on these later.

In other words, there are still troubles in the text, and in the spectator-text relationship. How the photograph/text actually works, or means, in conjunction with a desiring subject/reader, is not articulated. The 'reading' which I offer in the body of the thesis begins with representation and signification as productions, systematically structured and constituted for viewing subjects, with a specific mode of address and regime of representation (Kuhn, 1982; Kuhn, 1985). The questions which guide my investigation draw from work on textual gratification and cultural artifacts, particularly the "visual imaginaries", which places the struggle over meaning at the intersection of language, the unconscious, representation and desire (Metz, 1975). These are the concerns of a post-structuralist semiotics which argues that the cultural artifact, the publically circulated photograph, is a productive machinery, not a reflection of some anterior reality/meaning. Meaning is thus produced in the representation and in each encounter with it, the reader is re-produced as well (Hall, 1981; Morley, 1981). The reading subject is positioned vis à vis the discourse or text; with respect to the illicit and "transgressive" visual imaginary (Sontag, 1976; Gubar, 1987; Kuhn, 1985) this positioning would appear to be an elaborate negotiation of meaning which relies on the unspoken and, in the

case of photography and the fetish, the unseen, both in a desiring moment. The subject formed in signification replaces ("dethrones," Hall, 1981:157) the unified ego, "the authorial 'I', assumed to be both the source and the guarantor of the 'truth' of any associative statement" (Hall, 1981:157).

Theorizing pleasure

There are literatures which address the complexities of the spectator-text relationship, with particular emphasis on the peculiarities of the pornographic artifact and its mode of address (Ellis, 1980; Willemen, 1980; Brown, 1981; Pajaczkowska, 1981; Coward, 1982; Myers, 1982a; Myers, 1982b; Stern, 1982; Kuhn, 1982; Kuhn, 1985). These literatures draw from the post-structuralist emphasis on the discursive production of language, subjectivity, the production and reproduction of pleasure in the illicit moment, conscious and unconscious (hence contradictory and incoherent) motivations (Weedon, 1987).¹⁹ And they are sensitive to questions of the emergence of the 'subject who knows'; this sensitivity recuperates the feminist agenda and its concern with the structuring of sexual difference and the organization of knowledge and power relations which inhere in the social practices through which 'sexual difference' is negotiated, resisted, transgressed and subverted. The feminist

post-structuralist intervention in the 'pornography debates' is, in short, concerned with the "cultural contexts of spectatorship" (Kuhn, 1985), and the cultural technologies which engage - and reconstitute - a 'meaningful' subject.²⁰ It departs, thus, from behaviourism and humanist feminism in two crucial ways: post-structuralist feminism questions the transparency of the 'subject' in both behaviourism and humanist feminism, based on the concept of the self-motivated, fully-conscious, authoritative ego. And, in rejecting an essential core of masculinity or femininity feminist post-structuralism opens onto questions of mediation, or meaning (and the subject) as non-fixed.

Post-structuralist interventions make 'the subject', meaning, desire, and sexual identity symbolic transactions. To be sure, pornography is concerned with looking and with the fetish, both problematics of sexual difference (Ellis, 1980; Willemen, 1980). But, a close examination of pornographic texts reveals formal rhetorical characteristics which rely on certain familiar, "everyday" objects, according to Beverley Brown, a "highly fixed repertoire of postures and props" (1981:9). It is of semiotic interest how these specific objects and images circulate in a particular medium - are mediated - to produce the 'pornographic'.²¹ Brown (1981) and Myers (1982a; 1982b) discuss how the conventions of the pornographic moment, - explicit genital exposure and lingerie - circulate with a tenacity in

pornographic discourses. However, other media, for example advertisements in women's magazine call upon similar pornographic conventions but in contexts which are not pornographic. This is due partly, as Myers notes, to assumptions of the ideologically positioned audience: if the lingerie ad is destined for a female audience it is not pornographic (1982b). The reader in both contexts is 'already' addressed as a specific, meaningful consumer, the medium central to the negotiation of meaning.

Photography is the medium of the mass circulated pornographic artifact. Brown (1981), Coward (1982), Myers (1982a- 1982b) and Stern (1982) critically engage the status of the representation as it intersects with the medium of photography (the "presumed real", Metz, 1985:82), negotiations of sexual difference, and the spectator. First of all, when any representation enters the realm of photographic discourse it surrenders to the possessive and non-partisan eye of the camera (Sontag, 1977). One of the most common political indictments of pornographic imagery is for its objectification and mis-representation of the 'reality' of 'women', through the way it deploys the body. But the object of scorn, as mentioned already, is the photograph, not the sexually explicit painting, sculpture or novel. As Brown (1981) and Coward (1982) note, it is the precise nature of the photographic regime of

representation to fragment and objectify, in fact freeze and capture the referent (or invoke the death of the object²²). Post-structuralism is discerning about the discursive production of meaning. In that sense, one of the intellectual struggles for orthodox feminism vis à vis the pornographic medium is the attempt to define "erotica" as distinct from "pornography" (Steinem, 1980; Ridington, 1983), to save the former from the signifying defiles of the latter and preserve 'erotica' as the essential, 'true' picture of sexuality. Many problems emerge in the positing of recognition 'on sight' (cf. Brown; Stern, 1982) of the "clear and present difference" between erotica and pornography (Steinem, 1980). Steinem, in an oft-quoted phrase, writes that erotica is "a mutually pleasurable, sexual expression between people who have enough power to be there by positive choice" (1980:37). But, one needs to ask: "be where? In the photograph?" This assumes the photo supplants a 'truer' reality, i.e., that the depiction is the (photographic) 'negative' of women's sexual nature. It also denies the photo's ability to activate fantasy or recall the death effect (i.e., its mediated effect). And it confuses the staged vocabulary of the profilmic event with the social conditions of labour.²³

The post-structural emphasis on 'discourse' is antithetical to the authorial voice ('I') and the idea of natural sexuality (of men or women). The attempt to distinguish between

'pornography' and 'erotica' (on moral or political grounds) is an attempt at reifying the fictive unity of the erotic, libidinal ego, seen to be distorted by the mechanisms of society's pornography. The problems already mentioned in 'behaviourism' and 'humanist feminism' point to the fallacy of representational logic. And both, because they don't isolate the specificity of the medium, unwittingly embrace an elitism and hypocrisy, which is more than just a conceptual problem. The attempt at separating erotica from pornography isolates 'a sexuality' pre-dating language and discourse, and suggests 'a sexuality' bound by class distinctions.

But at least since the work of Benjamin (1955), photographic activity is conceptualized as having a productive and aesthetic specificity which allies its technique with 'mass' production, indeed the 'masses'. Photography does not carry the marks of the 'hand' of the author and is not awarded the same aesthetic value as the painting, which is said to issue from the creative vision of its author.²⁴ The photograph is endlessly reproducible and the original remains indiscernible from the copy. In contrast to the mass produced and mass circulated pornographic magazine, the 'erotic', as Myers notes, is often 'authorized' by its lack of anonymity (1982b). If photographic 'works' are stamped with the name of the author, the 'work' is restored to 'production' (as opposed to unauthorized consumption)

and elevated above the masses (e.g., Tony Benn's "Perfect Body: Perfect Production, the nudes of Robert Mapplethorpe and Arthur Tress".²⁵) 'Erotica' may be in the eye of the beholder; 'pornography' is in the eye of the masses.²⁶

Certain post-structural interventions challenge these assumptions. Brown (1981) notes that in those literatures which treat pornographic representations as the essence of patriarchy, the "everyday" is considered more galling than the exotic. Hustler and hard-core, for example, are often singled out as the more offensive or 'truly' pornographic of media (Ridington, 1983). And they are profoundly everyday: the models approach the reality of everywoman, complete with blemished bodies and slightly tarnished attire. They do not possess the perfected bourgeois ideal but flaunt their 'common' appearance, complete with torn stockings, chipped finger nail polish, blemished skin, etc. Objections to the working-class connotations (as against the unattainable, fantasied perfection in other magazines, e.g. Penthouse and Playboy) are hypocritical at best. Angela Carter puts an end to class bias in considerations of the dominant sexual discourse:

"When fear, shame and prudery condemn the poor and the ignorant to copulate in the dark, it must be obvious that sexual sophistication is a by-product of education. The primal nakedness of lovers is a phenomenon of the middle class in cold climates; in northern winters, naked lovers must be able to afford to heat their bedrooms. The taboos regulating the sight

of bare flesh are further determined by wider cultural considerations. The Japanese bathed together in the nude for centuries, yet generations of Japanese lovers fucked in kimono, even in the humidity of summer, and did not even remove the combs from their chignons while they did so. And another complication- they did not appreciate the eroticism of the nude; yet they looked at one another's exposed genitalia with a tender readiness that still perturbs the West" (1979:10).

Carter's point that desire and gratification are sustained within institutionalized and regulated discourses is well taken. However, the precise nature of pornographic signification requires a synchronic reading of the systematic and conventional coding of the image, and an investigation into how (and why) elaborations of sexual difference, simulated gratification, and machinations of the fetish are desirable. More on these later.

Codes of fragmentation and objectification (Coward also includes codes of "submission" and "availability", 1982) are not restricted to the pornographic medium but are deployed with a specificity which helps anchor pornographic meaning. The critique of fragmentation within the humanist feminist literatures is prey to the romanticization of the bourgeois subject: the 'portrait' photo of the individual from the neck upwards fragments the body but in ways acceptable to the humanist equating of the face and head with the whole individual. Fragmentation in other contexts, for example the concentration and isolation of the foot and ankle in a shoe ad, does not meet with opprobrium or hostility. Merck asks why there is less tolerance for physical objectification than intellectual

objectification - or liking a person for their intellect: "Is it wrong to fancy someone because of the colour of their eyes - and right if they agree with you about this article?" (1987:156).

Coward notes with a certain perspicacity and wit:

"I am not convinced by arguments that the sexual response should only be provoked by 'the whole person', and I have yet to hear a convincing argument as to why it is wrong to gain pleasure from representations of bodies or even 'snatches' of representations of bodies. Anyway, in viewing pictures which we might find pleasurable, it is often a detail on which we might focus; a certain expression in the eyes, the nape of the neck, the way a hand rests on a part of the body. There's no guarantee that in confining a sexual response to the whole personality we will perceive this personality as it really is and not according to our projections, nor that we will necessarily do, or be done, less harm in a sexual encounter. Not to mention the fact that desire might be killed stone dead by the whole personality" (1982:17).

These interventions take the text seriously enough to question it and how it works. The production and reproduction of sexual meaning become a central problematic; as does the mediation of sexual difference. A challenge is put to the transparency of the ego in bourgeois ego psychology to suggest there are ambivalences around the negotiation of meaning and the negotiation of sexual difference. Beyond reifying the photo, as in representational logic, with its investigation of the surface imagery, to hypothesize about the nature of fantasy (Coward's "projections") in the construction of meaning in both subject and photo.

Through the work of semiologists and theorists of

photography and film we know that what is missing from the text is as important as what is there (Barthes, 1977; Burgin, 1982; Burgin, 1983; Mulvey, 1975). The reader is of course one of the things missing from the text and thus my analysis is, *inter alia*, an encounter with him and the text before him. Burgin notes that there are material and suppressed absences in a "visual medium" because the "visual medium" is "invaded by language in the very moment it is looked at: in memory, in association, snatches of words and images continually alternate and intermingle" (1983:226). And Stern asks with regard to the privileging of the workings of desire and representations for arousal, both *modus operandi* and *raison d'être* of pornographic scenarios: "Pornography becomes a site of exploration ... where explicitness is posed not as an embodiment of sexism but as an embodiment of desire. If desire is somewhat literally put in the picture, what of desire that is left out of the picture?" (1982:8).²⁷ Which returns us to the reader.

SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Although the analysis is synchronic, there are approaches to the phenomenon of the public circulation of pornographic materials which are not incompatible with the perspectives or arguments made in the thesis. They address in some way the

'politics of desire', and either locate the sex industry in the context of the larger economic and cultural picture; or they provide the broad contours for shaping what a cultural analysis of the sex industry might look like. For example, although histories of fashion are notoriously long on detail and short on analysis, they would provide a starting point to questions about the appearance of different fetishes in different epochs, and consequently their use as symbolic artifacts in the photograph (Banner, 1981; Lurie, 1981; Kunzle, 1982; Lurie, 1982; Steele, 1985; Wilson, 1985). In all cases, the recuperation of a feminist agenda is sometimes only implicit, or needs to be inferred; the preliminaries for such a project will be laid out in what follows. I will begin with a discussion of some of the literatures which attempt socio-historical specificity with respect to pornographic phenomena. Throughout, I will focus on the elements of each perspective which harmonize with the approach and analysis outlined in the thesis.

The humanist feminist approach has put sexuality at the center of gender politics, or the gender relations of dominance. The limitations to their approach are outlined above, insofar as they center on assumptions of the bourgeois ego of the reader and the unitary subject of the representation. Their relevance for understanding the public regulation of sexual materials, it appears, also falls short of any rigorous analysis. Typically,

the problem is viewed in static terms: female nature is distorted by male culture; pornography as an artifact of male culture is somehow part of "the" transhistorical patriarchy: "Women are the generic object of culture, culture is the monologue of the male gender" (Kappeler, 1986:215; Dworkin, 1981; Griffin, 1981).

Political Economy

Some coherence around contextualizing the appearance and rôle of pornographic phenomena (the 'why here', 'why now' questions) is invoked by a base-superstructure model. That is, the economic and social arrangements of society (the underlying structure) give rise to corresponding cultural forms (the superstructure). Varda Burstyn, for example, speaks to the "root causes and structural problems" (1985:26) which inspire all forms of female oppression, and sexism in the media. Burstyn writes that "sexist pornography" (24) is symptomatic of that political territory - delimiting the body politic and local bodies - that has been historically (and currently, she argues) problematized in terms of gender relations. She outlines the economic reality of women's structural position in society: their disadvantaged relation to the wage, and the overdetermined patriarchal division of labour, in the work place and the family. Also, state-regulated discourses have shaped control over women's sexuality,

traditionally through the control over procreation, and the creation of laws against abortion and adultery. Sexual expression in the cultural sphere is, in the last instance, due to the political, economic and social control of men over women. Burstyn notes: "Like other forms of sexist culture, pornography will go away when women no longer need to sell their sexuality and when men no longer need or want to look to sexist pictures to find out about sex ..." (1985:24).

Burstyn's attempt to locate pornographic production at the intersections of class, political and gender relations is laudable and proper. Her analysis leads her to suggest, with a large but unacknowledged nod to Marcuse, that pornography is a site of 'repressive de-sublimation', the commoditization of a narrow range of sexual images is functional to 'the system'. 'Liberation' entails the search for more "pluralistic" sexual expressions (Burstyn, 1985:156). Although the edited collection is entitled Women Against Censorship, and Burstyn's are the only articles to explicitly address questions of social and historical specificity, her writings are strangely un-feminist if only because they never get at what is 'sexist' about pornography. In the same vein, they don't actually speak to 'the sexual', other than to relegate the 'erotic' and the 'pornographic' to the nether regions of ideology. This leaves unexplained pornography's capacity to captivate and shock an audience; and,

questions of consumption, contradiction and resistance are left unexplored.

Barbara Ehrenreich does not explicitly address the 'sexual' either, in The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight From Commitment (1983). But she does take the post-war period as her starting point for understanding the mass appeal of Playboy (launched in 1953) and as such focusses on the consumption of artifacts as a way to theorizing them as a social phenomenon. For example, Ehrenreich argues that Playboy allowed men, in fantasy, to "escape from the bondage of breadwinning" (51) at a time when a new consumer ethic clashed with social responsibilities centering on the family. Consumption, of objects and images, created rebels of leisure who resisted the financial burdens of the family and the emotional burdens of monogamous fidelity. Ehrenreich's discussion leaves out the taken-for-granted issues of sexuality, sexual representation and sexual difference. However, it implicitly opens onto questions of the circulation of sexualized commodities and a sexual discourse which releases sex from heterosexual monogamy and procreation. These last two immediately suggest that porn places sex within particular contexts of leisure and consumption: the wholly public expression of what is still, in Western culture, considered to be the quintessentially private act.

Making the Sexual Textual

Steven Marcus, in The Other Victorians, places contemporary pornographic and sexual discourses within the context of generalized mass consumption (1974). He notes the proliferation of "sexually focused" materials, encompassing self-help sex manuals as well as pornographic media. This he relates to socio-economic activity (and here his interest is the novel). In the nineteenth century the primary cultural concern was with the male orgasm, spoken in terms of "accumulation, production, and excessive expenditure": the language of industrial society (xv). In the late twentieth century, consumption is the dominant metaphor and the central "organizing image" is female sexual pleasure:

"It can hardly be an accident ... that the idea of large or virtually unlimited female orgasmic capacity should act as a centrally organizing image of our time. The notion of a multiply orgasmic female corresponds exquisitely to the needs of a society based on mass consumption - particularly if we add to this image the further details that she is probably masturbating, alone, with the aid of a mechanical-electrical instrument - including the difficulties and anxieties involved in its management and sustainment" (Marcus, 1974:xv-xvi).

Marcus' book is a study of the Victorian pornographic novel, principally My Secret Life, an eleven volume anonymous autobiographical account of sexual fantasy and fact. Although his book is given over to an investigation of the common themes

in the written form of the novel, Marcus provides some possible hypotheses as to the emergence of what he terms "pornotopia", the "undefined, limitless and shapeless space (the "featureless freedom") through which the pornographic culture moves and by which it speaks a 'lingua franca'. The utopian aspect of the pornographic oeuvre is its fantasmatic element, its pared down verbal and visual imagery in which repetition is clearly the norm. (Marcus asks, as part of that 'genius loci' of the pornographic moment: "To that question 'What time is it in pornotopia?' one is tempted to answer, 'It is always bedtime,' for that is in a literal sense true", 269).

The essence of timelessness, evoked by Marcus, suggests that the 'enduring present' is a feature of both the novel (which he studies) and the magazine photograph, to which he eludes by way of a move to historicize 'pornotopia'. That is, while acknowledging that the growth of the contemporary pornographic industries "is inseparable from those vast social processes which brought about the modern world" (282), Marcus states the very useful proposition that pornography could only flourish upon the growth of the novel. Marcus isolates the division between public and private as the primary factor in creating a climate for consuming pornography. The emergence of an urban, literate population gave rise to an audience, ready to consume the social artifact in private. This move to privatize is seen as,

initially, part of the industrial process which separated production from consumption. The latter took place under conditions of isolation and separation and gave new and particular meaning to official definitions of sexuality:

"If the novel is both evidence of and a response to the needs created by the possibilities of increased privacy and private experience, then pornography is a mad parody of the same situation. No experience of reading is more private, more solitary in every possible way" (Marcus, 1974:282).

Marcus is still referring to the non-pictorial pornographic genre. His comments however can be extended to apply to the phenomenon of visual pornographic discourses, particularly the mass circulation of the sexualized photograph. Marcus attempts to trace the trajectory of modern, privatized, sexual life; he notes the contradictory impulses at work in the almost sub-terranean growth of pornography while (by now the nineteenth century) the regulation of dominant discourses of sexuality were concerned with repressing representations of sexual excess. At the center of this contradiction, he argues, Freudian psychoanalysis emerged to rescue an essential, enduring sexuality. The institutionalized talk about the inexhaustible search for the multiple orgasm, the existence of the "G" spot and the mythological ejaculating female all give shape to assumptions about the 'true' nature of female sexuality. At the same time, it is these representations of sexuality which are elected to

stand in for the elusive 'real'. Marcus may provide the necessary, preliminary, groundwork towards understanding the contemporary phenomenon of photographic pornography.

The Society of the Spectacle

At a time of high literacy rates in the Western world, pornographic magazines occupy a contradictory place among other artifacts which increasingly rely on visual signification. There has been a generalized decline in the written text contained within advertising, for example (Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 1986). It is now commonplace, particularly in advertisements for clothing and perfume, to feature a model or models wearing the designated article with the simple notation of the designer's name (for example, a billboard ad with a double for James Dean modelling underwear, with the sole wording "Calvin Klein"). Or, just as common, fantasmatic scenes in which bodies intermingle, the boundaries between bodies and body parts blurred (the Calvin Klein "Obsession" perfume ads are emblematic of this); or, a beer ad on television is comprised of a montage of 'clips' recalling lifestyles, objects and music from the sixties. In all of these examples, the material object for sale is alluded to, suggested and, sometimes absent from the ad altogether. The selling of the product is forfeited to the manufacture of a mood or image; the

mood or feeling is subsequently returned to the product. And all of this is achieved non-verbally and without a written text to accompany the constructed images.

This heavy reliance on, indeed celebration of, the fantasmatic and hyper-visual spectacle loosens the relationship of the 'real' to its 'representation'. As many argue, the 'real' is increasingly eclipsed by the representation. Following Marshall McLuhan and his work on the technological "massage", characteristic of the pervasiveness of the televisual image and the mediated environmental sensorium, Jean Baudrillard calls this the "ecstasy of communication" (McLuhan, 1964; Baudrillard, 1983b). Emblematic of the post-modern condition, the contemporary mediascape is dominated by "simulacra", the wholly technological moment whereby the spectacle of serial reproduction redefines 'reality', meaning and the referent. Before identifying 'the post-modern' in historical terms, I will briefly outline some of its features as they apply to the phenomenon of mass consumption.

When the post-modernists speak of the new aesthetics of the contemporary semicracy, particularly the ecstasy of the obscene, they are referring to the endless proliferation and consumption of a screen of images (Baudrillard, 1983b; 1983a; Debord, 1983; Linker, 1984b; Foster, 1985; Kellner, 1987). This

ecstasy and obscenity is part of the spectacular society in which virtual images merely quote an anterior model, a mediated reality, not some essence waiting to be represented. The fabrication of visual images makes a commodity of the sign, not the commodity as use value, but the sign as exchange value. Baudrillard writes:

"... it is not only the sexual that becomes obscene in pornography; today there is a whole pornography of information and communication, that is to say, of circuits and networks, a pornography of all functions and objects in their readability, their fluidity, their availability, their regulation, in their forced signification, in their performativity, in their branching, in their polyvalence, in their free expression ... It is no longer then the traditional obscenity of what is hidden, repressed, forbidden or obscure; on the contrary, it is the obscenity of the visible, of the all-too-visible, of the more-than-visible. It is the obscenity of what no longer has any secret, of what dissolves completely in information and communication" (1983b: 130-131).

Which is to say that for Baudrillard there is nothing outside the simulacra. The omnipresent media stage images (of objects, moods, events) so that signifiers of events replace direct experience or knowledge of the event (the signified or referent) (Kellner, 1987). Added to this is the desire, itself, to be caught up in the play of images and spectacles that bear little relation to an outside, external reality (Kellner, 1987; Baudrillard, 1983b; Jameson, 1984). The ubiquity of simulated images creates, in the consuming public, a total scene (a mediascape) which fascinates, is ecstasy, is solitary and narcissistic (Baudrillard, 1983b). The consumer's

"media-saturated consciousness" is, according to this view, in a state of narcosis; the masses are the "silent majorities" awash in a media massage (Kellner, 1987; Baudrillard, 1983c). They are positioned not in relation to their labour or what they produce for a living, but are so identified in terms of what they consume, their 'lifestyle' (Kellner, 1987).

The orders of simulacra follow the technological trajectory and the replacement of a natural code (Baudrillard, 1983a). The simulacra - "shimmering masks of absence ... instruments of illusion" - pass through stages which implicate politics, culture, value (Linker, 1984b:45; Baudrillard, 1983a). The "third order simulacra", the signpost of the twentieth century, is the industrial simulacrum preceded by two other distinct signifying systems which problematize the 'referent' (Baudrillard, 1983a; Linker, 1984b). The first order, that of the "counterfeit", is an inquiry into aesthetic expression which privileges a relationship between reality and appearance, or the original and its model, reflection or imitation. The original in this era is nature, its signification is a reciprocal, non-arbitrary sign (based on the natural law of value) (Baudrillard, 1983a; Linker, 1984b). The second order replaces the "stucco angel", the possibility of pure imitation, of the first. It is characterized by signs which refer to human production; its model is the machine and the mercantile law of

value. The "hegemony of the robot", as the metaphor for industrial production, is the proliferation of mechanical models which claim not to resemble man or nature but are sustained by their self-referential logic (Baudrillard, 1983a:96). The post-industrial phase, or the 'time' of the post-modern 'space', proceeds smoothly from the era of production and the arbitrary or abstract sign to the age of serial re-production whereby what dominates is the model, and models of models, and the loss of the original referent. There is no longer a master text, be it nature, God or science, but a master code. The master code is simulation, or the sign which borrows from other signs to create a code of exchange.

For the purposes of situating the appearance and abundant plurality (of copies) of pornographic magazines, some elements of the post-modern perspective are worth noting. And these are the points which take off from those suggested by Steven Marcus regarding "pornotopia" and its affinity with the novel. That is, we may argue that in the contemporary semiocracy the urge to consumption is realized in the mass re-production of signifiers (objects and/or images) which are modelled on prior models for which no original ever existed (Jameson, 1984).

The circulation of inter-textual images, and the reduction of events to a 'point of view', characterize the current world

view, a world view Heidegger calls "the age of the world picture" (1950). Each epoch, he notes, is distinguished by metaphysical claims to what is known or interpreted as 'truth', or specific truthful comprehensions. Within the modern age, scientific rationale, the calculation and mastery of nature, combined with the objectifying potential of technology to create at least two effects. The first is the scientific incitement to empiricize the so-called real world and transform things into objects; thus is the basis of 'truth', the certainty of 'representation' (Heidegger, 1950). The second is the conception of the world in terms of a picture, a metaphysical entirety: what stands before us, stands for us. What 'is', in the current age, comes into 'being' through representedness. This is the spiral-effect of technology, seemingly without beginning and without end, by which things are transformed into pictures ("I get the picture"; "I see what you mean"). Heidegger: "'To get the picture' throbs with being acquainted with something, with being equipped and prepared for it ... 'world picture' when understood essentially, does not mean a picture of the world but the world conceived and grasped as a picture" (1950:129).

The imperialism of the image and the conquest of the world as a picture, which Heidegger writes of, implicates the camera and other constituted entities, metaphysical as well as economic and cultural. And here one can identify the 'voyeur', the

consumer, 'difference' and 'otherness'. The construction of the voyeur is explicitly possible through the medium of photography. As Sontag notes, the invention of the camera enlarges the social inventory of what is "worth" looking at, of what we have the right to observe (1977). The camera injects the private moment into the public realm, a prelude to the blurring of these divisions. The position of 'voyeur' achieves a particular poignancy when standing before the semocracy, with its subjection of virtually everything to the simulated code. The prevalence of the televisual, and increasingly computerized images (think of Max Headroom) and graphics, heightens the irreality of the "uncontrollable sign play" that is contemporary culture (no distinctions between 'high' and 'low') (Chambers, 1986:221). The consumer thus consumes not just material objects but symbolic objects as s/he is caught up in the "delirious surround" of the urban scene (Foster, 1985:90). Typically, a voyeur is positioned to search longingly for what s/he wants but cannot have.

The post-modern consumer/voyeur is perhaps perfectly suited for scenarios of loss in those simulated moments, involving as they do the abduction of virtual images to create a pastiche of new models. In this sense the market is saturated with mass produced items, waiting to be consumed en masse. Pornographies would be just one of the spectacles. But the

specificity of those pornographies may lie in the way they stage parodic displays of sexual excess. And the way they induce, or are part of, the seemingly inexhaustible search for 'real' sex through its representations speaks to a particular kind of consumer/voyeur. What Fredric Jameson refers to as the "consumers' appetite for a world transformed into sheer images of itself and for pseudo-events and spectacles" (1984:66) suggests the consumer is lost among the representations, searching for the promise for 'real' sex, the master text gone missing. Given that the readers of pornography are (as far as we know) generally male, and if Baudrillard and Jameson are right, the spectator is consumed in a vicious nostalgia as he engages in the 'look'. That is, he is looking for signs of his sexual self, lost in the simulated world of the obscene. Baudrillard addresses this point with exact reference to pornography: "It may well be that pornography is there only to reactivate this lost referent in order to prove a contrario, by its grotesque hyperrealism, that there is however some real sex somewhere" (1980:89n).

A Note on the Fetish

As already noted, the pornographic body is a textual body replete with fetish inscriptions. Situating the emergence of a particular fetish proves to be a difficult task. The favourite

fetishes of the contemporary pornographic discourses are the high heel shoe, and lingerie and stockings. I provide an analysis as to how these objects might function in the logic of seduction. But their historical appearance is frequently no more than itemized, along with other fluctuations in fashion, in the literature on the history of clothing. Elizabeth Wilson, for example, makes only passing reference to the shoe in the fourteenth century: "Shoes became exaggeratedly long and pointed" (1985:20). She later quotes Daniel Defoe (writing in 1725) who describes the transformation of a "country girl", upon her occupation of a "fashionable town house", as visible in her appropriation of the sartorial style of her employer. Defoe notes her, "neat's leather shoes are ... transformed into laced shoes with high heels; her yarn stockings are turned into fine worsted ones with silk clocks ... her poor, scanty, linsey-woolsey petticoat is changed into a good silk one four or five yards wide" (Wilson, 1985:23). The initial association between rank, wealth and certain styles and fabrics is made: silk and the high heel are for the leisured classes, the bourgeois classes. This phenomenon might suggest that there are some anachronistic, transgressive, affiliations between object and its symbolic status in the photograph. For the pornographic model is a slut, speaking street language but in what were once the clothes of the drawing room.

Valerie Steele notes, however, that by the mid-nineteenth century lacey undergarments (no mention of the shoe here) were the prerogative of "women of easy virtue" (Steele, 1986:193). By the 1880s, the idea that the "respectable married woman" might also enjoy "decorative and seductive" underwear was in vogue (Steele, 1986). This meant there was a certain cultural, and sartorial, tension between outerwear and under-clothing: the Victorian cult of virtue ("a ballet-dancer fragility of looks... they wore their hair parted in the centre and demurely sleeked down and looped to frame a madonna oval face," Wilson, 1986:29-30) fashionably covered over the hidden eroticism of lingerie. This was the "great epoch of underwear", 1890-1914 (quoted in Steele, 1986:192). One can speculate that these tensions center on contradictions around the public and the private, and emergent re-definitions of both, during the Victorian period. The growth of an erotic emphasis in women's underclothing, designed to be seen in private, flouted the public ideology of prudery. It cut a flirtatious edge: the naughty sexual expression at a time of hypocritic social tyranny. What might elect lingerie as an enduring fetish is its appearance, in late Victorian England, when it straddled that line between the visible and the hidden (designed to be seen but not always; in other words simultaneously 'there' and 'not there'), the illicit and the acknowledged. This is the period Steven Marcus writes of in The Other Victorians (1974). It is that contradictory

undercurrent of sexual sub-culture, he suggests, which gives the Victorian pornographic novel its purchase. In fact, in one of his most interesting chapters, Marcus discusses the recurrent theme, "a veritable flood", of flagellation in these novels. He outlines the structure of the beating fantasy; it involves very typically a boy or man being beaten by a woman, the latter experiencing pleasure from the transaction, the former a mixture of pleasure and pain (Marcus, 1974:252-265). But Marcus makes the crucial point, and this relates to any discussion of the fetish as a symbolic artifact, that because conscious role-playing is a common feature of these narratives, and because the point of view and first-person voice shifts through each beating scenario, "differences between the sexes are blurred and confused" (1974:257). The ambiguity is what Marcus emphasizes and is what I would retain to help explain the power of the fetish. The fetish objects which I discuss in the thesis are, I argue, objects which suggest an erotic theft in the way they simulate qualities of both femininity and masculinity. That some of these objects appeared during the age of so-called sexual repression might make them all the more ripe for fetishization, for even as they enjoy mass circulation, they embody the illicit. In short, they mark the struggle between emergent tensions around re-definitions of the public and the private, the social and the sexual, production and consumption.

David Kunzle, in Fashion and Fetishism: A Social History of the Corset, Tight-Lacing, and Other Forms of Body-Sculpture in the West, argues that the tight-laced corset, far from an example of the repressive horrors of Victorian society and the masochism of its female fashion victims, was an expression of sexual desire and erotic pleasure (1982; cf. Hollander, 1982, for a review of Kunzle). It seems to be that contradiction or ambiguity is one of the things which sustains the fetish, in this case visual as well as moral. Kunzle notes, for example, that the tight-laced corset looked uncomfortable, and for some women it may have been. The waist was made abnormally small, and the bosom and posterior were both thrust outwards. But Kunzle, Hollander and Wilson note that the use of the corset suggested an eroticism of enormously long staying power - "a sexual readiness deliberately prolonged, an erotic tension stretched to the breaking point" - and thus both pain and pleasure conjoin to speak the erotic (1982; Hollander, 1982:21; 1985).

To sum up, there is still a marked shortage of explanatory material regarding the ideological function of certain fashion statements. Historians typically supply endless details and documentation about the vicissitudes of lingerie or stilettos. But they will also slip into a contemporary mind-set when they impute 'natural' meaning to the appeal of specific articles. For example, Flügel writes that high heel shoes "make a great

difference to the whole position of the body when standing. They render impossible the protruding abdomen ... but by the upright carriage that they necessitate they tend to give a corresponding prominence to the bosom" (1931:161). Similarly, William Rossi, in The Sex Life of the Foot and Shoe, argues that the spike heel positively emphasizes the contour of the legs, ankles and feet while at the same time thrusting the bosom forward (1977). While these might functionally be the case, we must remember that the objects in pornographic photographs endow the image with exchange value, not use value. As such, their symbolic language complicates and loosens the original referent.

THE DESIRING SUBJECT

So how do pornographic photographs work? What can one say of the photo and the reader and the ways they intersect to coalesce around 'the pornographic'? Two of the above formulations - the behaviourist and the humanist feminist - preserve a binary distinction both in the photograph and in the determinate readership. The behaviourist and humanist feminist positions assume that pornography is a vicious elaboration of what we already know: men and women are constructed as different. The feminine discourse is one of exhibition and sartorial display, a fashionable marking of 'otherness' as a sexual

spectacle. The masculine discourse invites possession of the gaze, the power behind the look. The masculine and feminine presence then are premised on a relationship of, what the oft-quoted John Berger has called, surveyor to surveyed (1979). But this is to accept the 'woman as sign' hypothesis, i.e. that representations of 'woman' are anchored around sexual difference, immediately recognizable and centered on configurations of the body. But how do we know that what we are looking at is a 'woman'? Is the pornographic model female, speaking the female language? How do we know? And does this discursive arrangement equal the tenacious "sexual fix" (Heath, 1982)?

The post-structural literature questions the spectator-text relationship with a view to exploring the specificity of this illicit exchange. This view privileges an investigation into the textual organization of desire as well as the reproduction of meaning in and through the text, and through the subject. This involves considerations of language as a coded sign system. This implies that meaning is constructed not by speaking subjects - the fictive authors of enunciations assumed by behaviourism and humanist feminism - but through linguistic nominations in a discursive context. Meaning thus is not fixed and is without a stable referent. With respect to understanding the machinations of the pornographic image:

"What we need is the description of a textual circuit articulating 'positions' of masculinity and femininity through processes of identification, the maintenance of these positions being the work effected by us as subjects each time we understand the meaning of a sentence, each time we 'get' the joke, each time we 'make' the film make sense" (Pajaczkowska, 1981:83).

One of the instabilities of the pornographic photo-text centers on the negotiation of sexual difference. The post-structuralists mentioned above provide the preliminary work towards refusing a 'representational logic' (Ellis, 1980; Brown, 1981; Barrowclough, 1982; Stern, 1982; Coward, 1982; Myers, 1982a, 1982b; Burgin, 1982, 1983; Merck, 1987).²⁸ They set the stage for investigations into how, precisely, that difference is negotiated, managed and transgressed. The analyses in the following chapters draw from work in psychoanalysis and film theory which take as their starting point the idea that desire and difference are negotiated transactions. For example, pornographic texts may stage sexual scenarios for a 'masculine' reader, and buying public; this may involve, on the surface, the construction of woman as 'other'. As well, some authors suggest that the spectator-text relationship - pornography may be subsumed under this rubric - is a problematic of signification charged with representing difference or otherness in text and in reader (Mulvey, 1975; Doane, 1981; Penley, 1984; Kuhn, 1985). Signifying difference, within pornographic genres, is an especially dense problematic upon acknowledgement of the omnipresent fetish accoutrements and their supposed role in

allaying castration fears (Mulvey, 1975; Ellis, 1980; Pajackowska, 1981; Lurie, 1982). For if the female must have the fetish to represent desire and difference, and the fetish is a stand-in for the phallus, then two problems immediately present themselves (to challenge the behaviourist and humanist feminist models, and extend the concerns laid out by the feminist post-structuralists already discussed). Firstly, the fetish dresses up the woman in partially phallic terms; it points to instabilities in the text and in the masculine subject (if he must look for phallic replacements, on the female, to feel complete, or without a fear of loss; and if this somehow suggests a desirable and seductive transaction). Hence, Elizabeth Wilson comments on the pornographic spectator-text relationship: "Far from being the celebration of male power, pornography sometimes seems designed to reassure men and allay fears of impotence" (1983:166); although this ties in with the 'fear of castration' thesis it moves the discussion into the realm of the subject and its inherent instability. Annette Kuhn also notes that "certain kinds of pornography may combine pleasure and unease - perhaps even at moments threatening to disrupt, rather than confirm, the spectator's masculinity" (1985:35). Moye (1985), Gubar (1987) and Segal (1987) mention, in passing, masculine "anxieties" in relation to the pornographic text, all having to do with the structure of fear. Segal goes so far as to suggest masculine "paranoia" in textual gratifications. Pajackowska (1981) and

Barrowclough (1982) both hypothesize that because strategies of identification, and signification, are unstable and often contradictory, it is possible that the male reader of the pornographic text (film or photo) is positioned passively in front of the artifact, and/or identifies with the female in the image.

These are useful proposals. In the chapters that follow I attempt a systematic semiotic analysis which these authors implicitly suggest is wanting. That is, each chapter isolates a convention of pornographic genres. This is done to identify the dominant themes in pornography's regime of representation. The textual organization of the photo operates with a logic of seduction, a moment of meaning which implicates the reading subject in negotiations of desire, sexual difference and the illicit. The questions which guide the investigation concern what constitutes the desiring moment labelled 'the pornographic'. Because of the predominance of fetish signifiers in pornographic imagery, the question of castration is central to machinations of desire both within the text, and for a reader placed 'at the keyhole' to these illicit representations. That is, the graphic exposure of 'castrated' genitalia, in conjunction with fetish accoutrements (and in hard core, the presence of a male model), speaks to a so-called structure of fear combined with the 'erotic'. The subject, reconstituted at the moment of viewing,

is enlisted in a negotiation of these contradictory manoeuvres of 'castration' and eros (or thanatos and eros).

Thus, this thesis is concerned with the construction of 'sexual difference' and seduction, and attempts to take us beyond the simple theorization of the hegemonic production of 'woman' as 'other'.

We now turn to an elaboration of 'the subject', which breaks with the 'humanism' of both the behaviourist and orthodox feminist accounts. 'The subject' in post-structuralism is constituted by a visual imaginary, not constitutive of it. And because the visual imaginary in question is a drama of sexual difference the account below is necessarily sensitive to the acquisition of sexed identity, particularly the struggles and contradictions involved in this process of signification - in the text and for the reader. The discussion begins with, and is to a large extent informed by, attention to what Silverman (1979) calls the "cut", that moment (doomed to be perpetually re-lived) when the sexually differentiated subject undergoes losses necessary to the processes of differentiation. The losses associated with (sexual) differentiation, necessary for the emergence of the sexual subject, involve sacrifices, are painful. Because, however, they are necessary to cultural integration, they are also moments of pleasure. The induction into structures

of sexual difference, re-played upon encountering a drama of sexual significance, is thus a struggle around shifting identifications.

THE "CUT"

How can one explain why difference is desirable, and the fascination in looking at configurations of sexual difference? Problematics in post-structuralism, psychoanalysis, film and discourse analysis have questioned the specificity of the formation of the subject within gender relations of difference, particularly the construction of the subject in relation to cultural technologies. This entails the study of the role of unconscious structuration in the production and reproduction of meaning, mediation through language, and the social and psychic workings of desire.

Pornography reveals a language of desire. To penetrate the problematic of the pornographic discourses is to enter into the machinations of sexed subjectivity and desire in language. And it is to question a libidinal investment by a reader who must find himself in the photograph and possess the model(s) at the same time. In encountering the representation, he is affirmed as separate from and simultaneously addressed by the model(s) before him. Pornography thrives on a system of coded differences which is based on the appropriation of gender differences. Pornographic photographs (particularly soft-core) are to a certain extent a play on the feminine form for the masculine reader. But it can be argued that ambivalence (i.e., tensions

around difference and indifference, the subject who desires and the subject who longs for narcissistic in-difference) might be more appropriate to negotiating subjectivity in the pornographic text. Silverman (via Lacan) uses the formulation of the "cut" to embellish the notions of both agency and repression in the emergence of the subject (1979).

The "cut" is a two-edged manipulation. It is the process whereby the subject is fashioned as both distinct and separate from cultural representations (texts designed for the 'ideal' reader, or 'ideal I'), and at the same time defined by them (Silverman, 1979). Within sutured discourses, particularly, the subject experiences the ambivalence of absence and re-presentation in the reading of a text. The subject stands in for what is absent in the diegetic space; in the words of Jacques-Alain Miller, suture is "the relation of the subject to the chain of its discourse," 1977/1978:25. The process of suture marks the incision through which the subject is cut out of the text only to be re-addressed as part of its operation. And in porn, unlike with cinema, the reader is directly acknowledged, through the gaze of the model, as the complicit consumer/sexual spender.

The "cut" is the discursive structure which speaks to a subject formed amidst "phenomenal loss and cultural recovery"

(Silverman, 1988:10). The "cut" can be used to demonstrate the centrality of loss in the negotiation of sexual difference and relations of desire. It is the construction of the subject formed in ambivalence or the discordant coupling of two moments. One side of the "cut" insists on the severance of the subject from an imaginary plenitude. This moment is the guarantor of identity ('one' as different than an 'other'). Identity: "absolute sameness" or "sameness of essential or generic character in different instances" (Oxford, Webster's). It is from the Latin, "same" which comes from iterate"; and "iterate" is from the Sanskrit, meaning "the other" (Webster's). Contained within the etymological affiliations around "identity" are the workings of simultaneity: the subject is granted 'oneness' only in separation from an 'other'; and, one is always the 'other' against which another subject's identity is constructed. So subjective cohesion is but a fiction, an imaginary wholeness. If 'one' is defined only in relation to an 'other', identity is always threatened with loss: to be 'one' is always to take the position of the 'other'. Identities are thus relationally constructed and involve giving up something of oneself to 'see' oneself from the position of the other.

The "cut": visual otherness

The "cut" first of all establishes a system of binary differences. It is the fully social instance of self-recognition, the subject perceiving itself as 'other-than' (i.e., 'one'). And the "cut" implicates both the 'visual' and the 'linguistic' in paradoxes of presence and absence. Anyone familiar with the pornographic discourses (as with, *inter alia*, the horror film) will know that intense fascination and pleasure in looking accompanies sometimes disgust and horror. This recalls the time when the subject was 'en miroir', dominated by an "imaginary equation" which helped define it as 'other', first within a scopic regime (Rose, 1986:174). The captivation and allure of the visual imaginaries partly recalls this scenario whereby subjective cohesion is simultaneously an alienation. The 'image' granted the subject at this early stage severs it (the subject) from its imaginary and indifferentiating omnipotence and grants it an imaginary coherence, through its distinction - separation - from the reflection of others. Paradoxically, this 'self'-identity (how the subject 'sees' itself) is constructed as a fictive plenitude through separation. The subject assumes an image as separate from, and defined by, others (those who 'hold' the 'mirror'). Its reflection is only a totality in alienation, mis-recognition; the subject's ideal image ("imago", cf. Lacan, 1977) is delimited by the shape - and desires - of another. The vision of coherence supplied by the external, mediating work of the 'mirror' is the work of culture. Silverman argues that the

mirror phase is not the offering of an 'empty' space which the subject fills with his own reflection; rather it is reminiscent of "traces of cultural intervention" (1983:160). The 'ideal I' (the idealized self-image) is part of a value system which precedes and mediates between structure and subject. This is the pleasurable perception/reflection through which the first steps towards 'identification' begin (and painful severance too).

The sense of completion granted by the unifying mirror, or that which gives back a reflection, also produces a corresponding effect of alienation. What is important to retain from the above is an emphasis on the loss involved in the emergence of the pre-linguistic and linguistic subject. The loss is generic to the individual and confronts him at the various stages of his/her constitution as subject. Lacan writes that the subject is formed in alienation, an essential division occurring with the first rupture as the infant is separated from the maternal body at birth (1981:203ff). Another 'splitting' occurs with the inauguration of the sexed subject: "In the psyche, there is nothing by which the subject may situate himself as a male or female being... at sexed reproduction... the living being, by being subject to sex, has fallen under the blow of individual death" (1981:204-5).

Certainly the pornographic spectator-text relationship is

reminiscent of the mirror stage with its dialectic of vision: i.e., in 'looking' one is given back a rendition of one's self. This partly pleasurable moment is one based on alienation from the specular image: the subject defined in opposition to, and separate from, an image granted outside himself. Which makes him 'other' as well, and thus the subject is a continual oscillation in (and from) positions of 'otherness'. This is the trope of the Imaginary phase; and it is carried through to the Symbolic, lives on in it, and is particularly salient in the subject's engagement with "techniques of the imaginary", i.e. moving and still images (Metz, 1975:15). Imaginary oscillations are the guarantor of the specular subject but the deed is necessarily a fiction (an illusion), based on a 'mis-recognition'. The scopic investment (scopophilic, Freud reminds us), however, positions the reader to witness a sexual scene (the key hole to a mirror of another kind). The subject/viewer is necessarily outside of the diegetic space of the photograph, there to contemplate its 'presence' in the photo by way of absence and signifiers of absence.

The subject in language

The Symbolic is where the subject fully emerges as different and sees his desires as circumscribed by the presence and desires of the other. Difference (the constitution of the

subject as 'one', but not at one with the other) is a discourse of the 'other' and sexual difference is the fully symbolic effect of linguistic signification (the "cut").

The "cut" also refers to the linguistic and metaphorical device used to designate the creation of sexed subjects of and for culture, and the relation of the subject to textual pleasures and unpleasures. Within the linguistic paradigm it reveals the "bar" or gap (severance) between the signifier and signified. To begin with, language is a naming function which locates and repositions the subject vis à vis the 'object' world. However, language is a shifting anchor (Lacan, 1977:154, 298; Jameson, 1977; Weedon, Tolson and Mort, 1981). Within the structural relations of the family, the father is in the "privileged mode of presence" and from his position emanates the Law or Name-of-the-Father. This is the most significant position in the family configuration, around which all significations of desire circulate. The nomination, however, exists independently of the biological father; it is a linguistic designation which "provide(s) a liberation from the here-and-now of the Imaginary" (that pre-linguistic period, marked by plenitude and imaginary perceptions, Jameson, 1977:326). Language initiates a separation, in this case, of the nomination 'paternal father' from the biological character of the role. This is "precisely what permits the child to take the father's place in his turn"

(Jameson, 1977:362). Thus the structural-linguistic axiom about discourse - 'language speaks us' - is profoundly social. The Name-of-the-Father corresponds to the symbolic function which "from the dawn of history has identified his person with the figure of the law" (Lacan, 1977:67); he is the chief signifier at the head of the family table.

What stands between the signifier and the signified - the function of the bar - intervenes to impose meaning on the signified ("the signifier answers to the function of representing the signified ... the signifier sends forth its light into the shadow of incomplete significations, Lacan, 1977:150, 152; and: "the signifier ... anticipates meaning ... make[s] us wait for it", 153). The meaning and word/object exist in imprecision vis à vis the 'other', in relations of tension, friction. This "semiotic fraction" (Jameson) instigates a splitting: it separates the "real subject" from its representation. The bar, the primacy of the signifier over the signified, intervenes between the subject and the subject's needs, which are hence located in the bloated signifier, its defiles. And the signified is still but another hidden signifier.

The subject is "figured in symbolism" by substitutes (for something that doesn't exist as a distinct reality). The stand-in for the subject is a signifier, defined and obtained

only in relation to other signifiers: a father is defined against a son, although a son will be a father some day. As well, a son, passing through the defiles of the signifier, will learn to repress desire for both his mother and father and appropriately desire other women. The subject's representation - the process by which it represents itself in language, meaning and culture - is its division or exclusion from the symbolic chain (Lemaire, 1977:929). The construction of the unconscious then is comprised of alienation and repressions "through the very processes by which, in receiving a name, it is transformed into a representation of itself" (Jameson, 1977:363). A subject is formed in language and a linguistic chain (in syntagmatic and paradigmatic insistence), hence, Lacan's statement: "a signifier is that which represents the subject for another signifier" (1977:316; 1981:207, 236). The symbolic cut, or what Lacan calls the "cut in discourse ... the strongest being that which acts as a bar between the signifier and the signified" (1977:299) is the 'cut' out of the self and into representation.

This cut is, first, an incision out of the body (the 'real' organic, phenomenal form and experience); and the gap, rupture or lacuna which structure the unconscious (Lacan, 1981:153). Then the linguistic severance forms the subject - the bar in the signifying chain which "verifies the structure of the subject as discontinuity in the real" (Lacan, 1977:299). The cut is central

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to the subject "in its constituent relation to the signifier itself" (Lacan, 1981:43). And again, is the bar, that which bars the subject from full witness to its signification, representation, or at least full representation of its drives. The subject is perpetually left longing to see representations of its desire. The cut is a structural relation, tied to the fashions of the signifier, from which "everything emerges" (the subject, meaning, language, desire, Lacan, 1981:206). Hence, the phrase the "cut of desire", desire emerging out of the structural organization of drives (Lacan, 1981:237).

The crucial abstractions here revolve around the structuring/rupture of the subject in absences, gaps, frictions, which sustains the subject in relation to an/other (Lacan cites, from Freud, the "scar" - the mark of the unconscious- the result of the neurotic coupling of the real and the subject (i.e. the subject's longing to remain in "harmony with a real" [1981:22]). Or, the "cut" is two fold: difference instituted (self-identity) and difference transgressed (self-denial) (cf. Chevalier, 1989).

The cut and the desiring subject

Silverman argues that cultural mastery (the acquisition of language, the symbolic nomination of the subject from the place

of language) is an ambivalent nexus of pleasurable integration into culture, and, of course, the sliding under the bar of signification, or cultural mastery (cf. Lacan, 1977:154). She re-reads Freud's allegorical tale of the mastery of unpleasure, the observations of his grandson's enactment and re-enactment of the disappearance of his mother, in the form of a game (Freud, 1920; Silverman, 1979; 1983). The game involved tossing a spool on a string to make it repeatedly disappear and announcing "fort" ("gone"); the child is gratified, if not enthralled, in the re-enacting of the unpleasurable scenario. (This is away from Freud who argued unpleasure would be merely tolerated while on the way to the "pleasure principle".) The induction into language gives the subject a speaking voice but orchestrates the positions from which it will speak (and is spoken). This lawful appropriation of the subject is again an inscription into dramas of loss and desire - but as scripted by the other.

Silverman locates the "fort/da" episode within the Lacanian strategy by establishing that the child's linguistic pronouncements - "fort" ("gone") when the spool is out of sight, and "da" ("there") when he reels it in - activate the unconscious. This is contrary to Freud who argued that the mastery of unpleasure makes way for cultural pleasure; Lacan's argument is more dialectical. It associates both words "fort" and "da" in a linguistic chain, one signifying only in terms of

the other, particularly "da" surrendering to "fort". The idea of the alienation or "fading" of the subject (as Lacan calls it) is strengthened when one notes, in Freud's account, that the child enacted the first part of the game ("fort") more often than the completed version. The oblique suggestion is made by Freud, explicitly by Silverman via Lacan, that the child was actually involved in making himself disappear along with the toy. Hence:

"... (the) first signifying coupling ... enables us to conceive that the subject appears first in the Other, in so far as the first signifier ... emerges in the field of the Other and represents the subject for another signifier ... Hence the division of the subject - where the subject appears somewhere as meaning, he is manifested elsewhere as 'fading', as disappearance" (Lacan, 1981:218).

This fading or loss is subjection to the signifier, language, or culture and is the "pleasure of mastery" (Silverman, 1979:3). This is the agency of the "cut" and is re-enacted everytime we encounter cultural texts (themselves a play on signification, an exchange of meaning within a coded chain): "in so far as they master us: ... to the extent that they oblige us to re-enact those moments of loss and false recovery by which we are constituted as subjects" (Silverman, 1979:3).

Transgressing the "cut": desire and indifference

Central to the paradigms of subjectivity discussed here are

the forfeitures involved in the negotiation of an identity. Jacqueline Rose puts it well: "subject(ion) to a master image, and ultimately to the image of the master (the Oedipus complex)" (1986:175); or, "symbolic castrations" (Silverman, 1988). Central also is the oedipal scenario which fixes the moment of sexual difference and full inscription into culture at the recognition of castration or difference. This is the same side of the cut as the "negation" of the self vis à vis the mirror-other (Rose, 1986:175); and the marking of the cut through the coded operations of language. This is the half of the equation that posits the subject formed in scenarios of 'loss and false recovery', in systems of differences: self image slides under the mirror, subject/signified slides under the signifier; the former - the mirror - is the master of self-illusion; the latter - the signifier - is endlessly commutable and able to resurrect another signified (which then becomes another signifier). Both supply difference at a cost, and suggest a difference that is chimerical, unstable and constructed within the discourse of the 'other'.

The "cut" refers to the severances, fissures, gaps and absences which figure in the emergence of the subject. Metaphorically, it is particularly useful to conceptualizing the scenarios of 'castration' and oedipus: the losses involved in locating oneself structurally within language and the family

drama, i.e., as a sexed subject. Both Freudian and Lacanian accounts of the subject revolve around the primacy of castration fears as the foundation of the oedipal law. But, to stand at the cut is to encounter those moments of cultural mastery (confronting symbolic castrations) which are nonetheless pleasurable.

For Freud, the ritual encounter with the castrated other (principally the mother) is an anatomical discovery; the "threat of castration" is the "deferred effect" of the oedipus complex (Freud, 1924:318). One possible form of erotic communion (a transgressive behaviour) for the male child is to possess the father and displace the mother as the feminine object; another would be to compete with the father for the mother's affections. Both are incestuous impossibilities. The latter, though, leads to the intense cultural identification with the father and the ensuing threat of castration is unconsciously experienced as just punishment for guilty wishes to annihilate him (and therefore possess the mother). To allay castration fears, the male subject fetishizes the female, giving her the missing penis. The Oedipalization of the male subject - his cultural positioning and repositioning - is coupled with, and resolved by, the visual glimpse of female genitals and concomitant horror and fear.

To be sure, the Lacanian account elects the discursive

phallus, not the anatomical penis, as the figure in scenarios of desire. The Lacanian subject is de-centered, constructed from the standpoint of 'otherness'. The subject as somewhere - floating, a nothing, in the non-space - in the nexus of the other-than: the subject is positioned in alienation from the 'other' who grants him a self-image, albeit skewed, as it is how the 'other' sees him. Lacan notes the wrenching involved: "When, in love, I solicit a look, what is profoundly unsatisfying and always missing is that - you never look at me from the place from which I see you" (1981:103). And the subject-formed-in-distance also sees the 'other' as precisely that. This is profoundly cultural as it places the subject in (social) relations which delimit the possibilities of desire, the knowable, the representable and, within language, the sayable.

The phallus figures within the Lacanian Oedipal drama, again subject to the laws of signification in the linguistic field (cf. 1977:281-291), and is central to a discourse of desire (the discourse of the other). What does the 'other' have that I don't have? Lacan would say 'the phallus', symbolic privilege. The phallic privilege first belongs to the mother (the one perceived as 'having it') and this is before recognition of 'castration' or sexual difference. This is a crucial and insinuating trope, again working through absence (perception and disavowal): Lacan notes the phallus as signifier "can play its

role only when veiled" (1977:288). The signifier only works through displacement, absence, in search of a signified to slide under. And what does it signify? Desire, desire of the other (desire of his or her desire) : that is, the child's initial demands intervene in the (m)other's field of desire. The demand for love (to be loved) is the veiled demand that one's desire be the object of the other's desire. The phallus will signify the desire of the other: "the demand for love" is "the test of desire" (289). That is:

"...the phallus stands for that moment of rupture. It refers mother and child to the dimension of the symbolic which is figured by the father's place. The mother is taken to desire the phallus not because she contains it (Klein), but precisely because she does not. The phallus therefore belongs somewhere else; it breaks the two-term relation and initiates the order of exchange" (Rose, 1982:38).

To get the love of the other one must satisfy the desire of the other. The subject wants the other's desire - more appropriately wants to see signs of it, and if the other 'has' the phallus it is only in discourses of the other's desire that the subject can have access to it. But if the phallus is the place of absence, it cannot be seen, nor can desire (the "non-representative representative" [1977:218]), one can only simulate it (desire, signs of desire). It is veiled: desire and the phallus only working through their signs. If the desire of the mother is the phallus, then the child will wish to be the phallus "in order to satisfy that desire" (289). Phallic desire

is part of a competitive relation whereby people (and objects) are not desired for themselves but for what they represent. Desire is thus a reciprocal play of substitutions, obstacles and models, doubles and signifiers in a chain: the rival is a model for another's desire. Once again difference in the structure of desire - to see signs of the 'other' which, and only then, will incite the desiring subject. Desire is not a privileged object, and not a simple relationship between subject and object; it is a deferral, a stayed engagement. The cut out of demand and into desire, is a 'castration'; in the words of Jacqueline Rose:

"Castration means first of all this - that the child's desire for the mother does not refer to her but beyond her, to an object, the phallus, whose status is first imaginary (the object presumed to satisfy her desire) and then symbolic (recognition that desire cannot be satisfied" (1982:38).

The cut into language - the "Law of the Father" is also a castration. It recognizes and grants difference, a castrating and desirable transaction.

Castration and the cut evoke a fetishistic economy: it is around the fetish that many of the above issues coalesce. That is, the fetish is a stand-in, a substitute; not an object, but a relation. It is a representation without a referent, in the sense that it refers to absence or loss; it points to the limits to representation. And it calls upon castration fears in affiliation with an instance of sexual arousal. The fetish is

assumed to have strong discursive power and the transcendental responsibility of disavowing knowledge and fear of castration, to make women the palatable other. The following are some examples, in the more contemporary literature regarding the theorization of fetishistic representation, which posit the patriarchal code as a singularly phallic code dominated by the fear of and subsequent compensation for castration:

" the female figure poses a ...problem. She ...connotes something that the look continually circles around but disavows: her lack of a penis, implying a threat of castration and hence unpleasure" (Mulvey, 1975:13);

"...physical sexual difference is no longer unmentionable within public representations of women that are designated 'pornographic'. Physical sexual difference can be promoted within these representations because the fetish has been shifted from compensating for woman's lack of a penis to the finding of the woman's phallus in her sexual pleasure ... Both security and abolition of separation from the representation are provided for the spectator by this arrangement" (Ellis, 1980:104);

"The mechanism of fetishism ... is that which provides a defence against symbolic castration and in so doing makes 'woman' adequate as a sexual object..." (Pajaczkowska, 1981:89).

Within such formulations difference is necessarily achieved as part of a cultural code which subjects individuals to signification whereby the signifier is always phallic and desire centers on an object: the phallic signifier. Transgressions to the code do occur; these are usually the concern of sociologists who study 'deviance' (like the behaviourists mentioned above) and psychoanalysts who chronicle the various fetishisms which accompany 'perverse' behaviour. These 'perversions' are

problematized around, as it were, the 'un-fixing' of the sexual subject, the instabilities of sexual categories. And while the pornographic discourses are, it should become clear, a play on fetishistic scopophilia and scenarios of castration, I will argue that phallic signification can be subsumed under the logic of seduction and desire which presumes a structure of relations and exchanges, not objects. The evident 'perversions' which exist in pornographic discourses are 'normal perversions'. That is, the logic of desire implicates a structure of loss, self-denial, surrender, castration. It is, essentially, an asceticism of will and of the body turned erotic. The giving of the fetish to an other, for example, entails the symbolic dis-empowering of 'one'. Giving another the penis (or the phallus) entails renouncing one's own; it is an act of self-denial. And within our cultural institutions these are pervasive perversions. The logic of the "cut" presumes that the possessive marks ('signs') of desire are sought out and surrendered. That is, there are encoded differences; but because the 'cut' is desirable, there are also encoded transgressions which hover at 'indifference', the desire to give up the phallus.

Porn is about relations of desire within an imaginary scopic register. We must return to the discursive subject and his engagement by the pornographic/photographic regime. The "cut" is useful here as it is the negotiation of difference

within a discourse of desire (i.e. the other). Desire is unspeakable in two senses: there are no words to describe, with precision, *jouissance*. As Barthes notes, "bliss" signals both the "pleasure of the text" and "a mode of vanishing, of annulment of the subject" (1985:173). And, our desires are unconscious, formed first in the 'inter-dit'. As desire cannot be represented, only simulated, it is at the edge of the cut or wholly ambivalent. Desire is an investment in the signifier, a signifier which signifies loss and points to an absent signified. Desire is mediated from the place of another. The exchange which instigates the workings of desire within the photographic regime is a series of displacements, losses (one has only the impression of reality) and absences - of the reader, most importantly, but also within the diegetic space as well. The photos are full of signifiers, but what are they signifying? What makes the photo desirable is the way it straddles the cut. Porn is a sexual discourse and it is charged with the (mis)management of difference within the visual realm. This management is at once about difference and indifference.

In conclusion, desiring subjects are placed at the "cut", a synchronic alienation and guarantor of fictive wholeness. On the one side, full separation from either visual or linguistic signification would imply pure difference, or the isolated ego.

Pure difference is an impossibility (and anyway would signal pure indifference). The alienations involved in the structuring of difference are the gaps, ever present, between the fictive self and its representation (either a coupling with the mirror or the substitutions and forfeitures which are part of the induction into language).

On the other side, full reunification with an imaginary plenitude requires the relinquishing of one's vital possessions to become one with another. It too is an impossibility; a total engagement with the mirror would signal the subject's narcissistic complement, the tragic mark of indifference, or death. Similarly, without the linguistic nominations by and through which gendered subjects take up positions in signification. The subject is thus formed amidst losses, but desire is not simply the longing for false reunification. The losses are the culturally significant moments of pleasurable integration. What is ultimately desirable are the simulations which comprise representations of the "cut" - those moments which mark a refusal to respect full closure around either difference or narcissism.

Desire is related to strategies of difference. Desire is not a property, and certainly not the possession of 'one'; it is worked out in relation to the 'other'. It is also a relation of

impossibilities. What gendered subjects desire are not objects, not even significant others, but visible signs of an/other's desire. This involves negotiations of 'otherness', the gaps, absences and losses which structure 'oneness'. The phallus is the ultimate absence, an impossible possession, the ultimate signifier of desire. Hence the pathetic thrust in the pornographic machinery: the phallic urgency of the pornographic moment elects signs of desire to stand in for desire itself. Desire is the language of the other; it thus looks for and speaks the language of the other. Signs of the other's desire are what stimulate desire. But first it must be simulated.

Pornography depicts a partial effacement of difference, an androgynous longing (to desire castration) but in unspeakable (unconscious) terms. Hence the excitement of the simulated moment - the simulated androgynous terms with which the pornographic body textual is written. Desire is a simulated moment, entailing as it does gaps, absences and losses and 'signs' of the 'other'; thus the phallus is a simulation. Any simulation involves losses, necessarily, in the friction of the feigned moment. The simulation is the counterfeit and something of the original is always lost in the staging of mimetic desire. And in this case, desiring the other with the other's desire is to give women the simulated phallus. The way this is done is through the discursive corporal arrangement and the ambivalence

around the fetish: which is, after all, an institution of the phallus-bearing woman. Total androgyny (a plenitude, being at one with one) would leave nothing to desire.

If symbolic castrations precede the acknowledgement of anatomical sexual difference (cf. Silverman, 1988), the phallus is distinct from the penis. The castrations are the losses associated with separations from beloved objects (e.g., breasts, faeces, the spool-on-a-reel in the "fort-da" game) and alienation in language (Lemaire: "... the word is the murder of the thing and ... this death is the condition of the symbol," 1977:85). The inauguration of sexual difference is fundamental to the oedipal, castrating scenario under the law of the 'paternal metaphor'. The Name-of-the-Father is the prohibitory, castrating function; and this foregrounds the move from nature to culture and, within the oedipal scenario, institutes the phallus as the signifier of desire. To assume an identity is to assume the other; this is the approximate loss of self (the "cut"). The paternal phallus (or the father's phallic desire) is the organizing principle, the gap, producing sexual desire. To want the father's phallus/desire (unattainable in the real) is to desire castration/sameness. One cannot possess the phallus but one can (and does) yearn after its absence (the longing to desire no more), absence which is a dialectical play on presence. Sexual difference, determined by who is perceived to have or not

have the mythical phallus, is then a play on possession, and fears and desires for dispossession.

The ambivalence of the phallic code of desire is this friction around fears and desires of castration, both of which must be disavowed; and the longing for a surrogate to stand-in for the missing desire. All these transactions involve the fetish, fetishizing the female form, endowing the fetish with the projections of what the male does not have, his longing for the "cut". The fetish, that is, takes the place of something (is an 'other', Lemaire's murder and death-like symbol, the lifeless site of desire) and it disavows that which it resurrects, at the same time.

SEXUAL FIXATIONS: THE BODY AND THE FETISH

Pornography is about textual, transgressive bodies. 'Sexual difference' is not the unproblematic assumption of an immediately visible binary opposition. Porn, perhaps in particular, apparently re-presents a text of difference where the actors take up their place on one side of the sexual divide: the women are women and the men, if any, are men. This is because on the surface porn is about bodies. But pornographic bodies are dressed up in the fabric of culture's desire (total nudity is not

just a sight unseen in straight genre but, a 'turn-off'; flesh and gristle: how would you know it was a 'woman' without a visual text to say so?) And pornographic bodies are set into discourses of pleasure, desire, difference (although , as will be demonstrated, the boundaries of difference are continually transgressed and this is the pornographic affinity, precisely). Foucault is useful in demonstrating this; The "TV" body demonstrates 'the textual' best as it presents a body upon which difference collapses - but to which a precarious and erotic difference is restored through adornment; and the rules governing how the body is staged - as masculine or feminine - through clothing, form a discursive structure which takes over where biology leaves off and which exists beyond the conscious whim of the individual reader. Hence, again, a dream, public and without an author.

But the body in "TV" porn is, admittedly, the textual excess of sexual boundaries.

I attempt to demonstrate that the 'straight' genres (soft and hard core) also simulate an androgynous code which signifies in the pornographic chain of command. 'Otherness', whether on the "TV" or straight body, threatens to cancel itself and collapse in indifference. It will be argued that the pleasurable moment that is pornography is the simulated movement between

difference and indifference, signs of desire coded as significant in an approximation of androgyny. That is, in the visual, illicit, imaginaries the reader/viewer is positioned to desire and see signs of what is desirable. As Chevalier argues, the machinations of desire require those sacrificial signs which indicate a longing to possess and to be possessed, a "wishful simulation" (1989). In this process, the sacrifices constitute one's dispossession; in a semiotic play, this is the dressing up of the body in signs of the other's desire: she, the simulated phallic model is poised to penetrate the partially feminized/objectified reader. At its most explicitly sexual this involves trading places in a erotic communion which resembles a simulated androgynous union. E.g., In a scene from Penthouse (February, 1986) "Toni" is described as:

"determined to star in major movies. Still the tough city girl, she tells us what her dream role would be. 'More than anything, I would love to be a female Charles Bronson type. There's no doubt in my mind I could play a tough-guy role as well as a man.' Is there anyone out there who wouldn't line up to watch her in 'Death Wish Part V'?"

A symptomatic reading, what I offer here, identifies the recurring images and associations which insist on being spoken. The pornographic text 'speaks' through fixations on the 'body' and the 'fetish'. I have isolated the conventions of the pornographic photo. They are: the genital configuration; and the structure of the gaze. And the recurring fetishes: the high heel

shoe; and lingerie and jewellery. I move now to investigate their structure within the pornographic 'moment'.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

1. These two approaches are distinguished from that of the 'radical right' which casts a net wide enough to include all things thought to characterize the "permissive society", particularly anything in contradistinction to heterosexual monogamy (cf. John Ellis, "Photography/Pornography/Art/Pornography," *Screen*, 21:1, Spring, 1980). It is not included here for discussion as it does not attempt a systematic analysis of the photograph or image, other than to assert that sexually explicit material goes against Christian values.

2. cf. Thelma McCormack, "Making Sense of the Research on Pornography," in Women Against Censorship, edited by Varda Burstyn, Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1985; and Lynne Segal, Is the Future Female? Troubled Thoughts on Contemporary Feminism, London: Virago, 1987, for comments on the limitations to behaviourist research.

3. cf. McCormack (1985) for a discussion of this aspect of behaviourist research.

4. cf. Augustine Brannigan and Sheldon Goldenberg, "The Study of Aggressive Pornography: The Visissitudes of Relevance," Critical Studies in Communication, 4:3, 1987, for excellent critiques of this approach.

5. cf. Dolf Zillman and Jennings Bryant, "Pornography, Sexual Callousness, and the Trivialization of Rape," Journal of Communication, 32:4, Autumn 1982; and Brannigan and Goldenberg for an elaboration of this criticism, i.e. the strange bedfellows that conservatives and feminists make. Also, Edward Donnerstein, "Pornography and Violence Against Women," in Pornography and Censorship, edited by David Copp and Susan Wendell, New York: Prometheus, 1983; and, Neil Malamuth and James V. P. Check, "Penile Tumescence and Perceptual Responses to Rape as a Function of Victim's Perceived Reactions," in Copp and Wendell (eds.).

6. cf. Andrea Dworkin, Pornography: Men Possessing Women, New York: Perigree Books, 1981; Susan Griffin, Pornography and Silence: Culture's Revenge Against Nature, New York: Harper and Row, 1981; Laura Lederer (ed.), Take Back the Night: Women on Pornography, New York: William Morrow and Company, 1980; Murray S. Davis, Smut: Erotic Reality/Obscene Ideology, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983; Walter Kendrick, The Secret Museum: Pornography in Modern Culture, New York: Viking, 1987.

7. cf. Griselda Pollock for an illuminating, early, discussion for problems inherent in the use of the term "images of women" and all that it implies: i.e., a falsified opposition to a real

entity, 'woman'. Pollock's suggestion is to locate the 'female' or the female body as signifier in a chain of signifying discourses. "What's Wrong with Images of Women?" Screen Education, 24, Autumn 1977. Reprinted in Rosemary Betterton (ed.), Looking On: Images of Femininity in the Visual Arts and Media, London: Pandora, 1987.

8. Much focus is on the sub-genre of images of violence, a minority portrayal. cf. Dworkin; Helen Longino, "Pornography, Oppression, and Freedom: A Closer Look," in Laura Lederer (ed.); Lorenne Clark, "Pornography's Challenge to Liberal Ideology," Canadian Forum, 59:697, March 1980.

9. "Not a Love Story", which contains scenes of live sex shows in New York and California and 8mm shorts of sado-masochism, etc., was designed for educational purposes and, outside Québec, was played to "environments of concern" (in the words of censor boards). Apparently this mode of viewing is safe for the intellectual, but not for the public. cf. Susan Barrowclough, "'Not a Love Story'," Screen, 23:5, November/December, 1982. For another critical discussion of the film "Not a Love Story" cf. B. Ruby Rich, "Anti-Porn: Soft Issue, Hard World," Feminist Review, 13, Spring 1983.

10. cf. Hysteria, 3:1, May 1983; Bonnie Kreps, "The Case Against Pornography," Homemaker's, 17:5, June 1982.

11. Nor does it explain the possibility of arousal on the part of the female reader, with depictions of violence or non-violence. cf. "Behind the Fragments: A Conversation with Ros Coward, Yve Lomax and Kathy Myers," Camerawork, November 1982, for a discussion of this possibility and how to theorize it. On the topic of female scopie pleasure, specifically in the pornographic moment, cf. also, Annette Kuhn, The Power of the Image: Essays on Representation and Sexuality, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985:31, Kathy Myers, "Towards a Feminist Erotica," Camerawork, 24, March 1982.

12. cf. "Talking Sex: A Conversation on Sexuality and Feminism," Deirdre English, Amber Hollibaugh and Gayle Rubin, Socialist Review, 11:4, July-August, 1981, for a discussion of these issues as they relate to many sexual practices, including heterosexism, but also problems with the orthodox feminist position on pornography.

13. There is a sub-genre of lesbian prose and pornographic photos, interestingly an attempt to characterize consensual sado-masochistic sexual activity. cf. Coming to Power: Writings and Graphics on Lesbian S/M, edited by the Samois Collective, Boston, Massachusetts: Alyson Publications, Inc., 1982; and,

Caught Looking: Feminism, Pornography and Censorship, edited by Kate Ellis (et al), New York: Caught Looking Inc., 1986. Foucault is also libertarian on matters of sexual "freedoms" and practices: "... I think that what we want to speak about is precisely the innovations that those (S/M) practices imply. For instance, look at the S/M subculture, as our good friend Gayle Rubin would insist. I don't think that this movement of sexual practices has anything to do with the disclosure or uncovering of S/M tendencies deep within our unconscious, and so on. I think S/M is much more than that; it's the real creation of new possibilities of pleasure, which people had no idea about previously ... I think it's a kind of creation, a creative enterprise which has as one of its main features what I call the desexualization of pleasure. The idea that bodily pleasure should always come from sexual pleasure, and the idea that sexual pleasure is the root of all our possible pleasure - I think that's something quite wrong." "Michel Foucault, An Interview: Sex, Power and the Politics of Identity," by Bob Gallagher and Alexander Wilson, The Advocate, 7 August, 1984.

14. For a clear and concise discussion of theories of sexuality with special attention to Foucault, cf. Jeffrey Weeks, "Sexuality and the historian," Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800, London: Longman, 1981.

15. cf. also Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics, Great Britain: Harvester, 1982; Mark Cousins and Athar Hussain, Michel Foucault, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984; Greg Ostrander, "Foucault's Disappearing Body," Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory, 11:1-2, Spring 1987.

16. cf. The History of Sexuality, New York: Vintage, 1980; and Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics, New York: Harvester, 1982, for an elaboration of the 'body' and 'sex', determined first by disciplinary technologies (control of productive populations, generalized surveillance, etc.), and then gradually by a proliferation of official 'sexualities'. See also, N.P. Ricci, "The End/s of Women," Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory, 11:3, Fall 1987, for a discussion of Foucault's utility for contemporary feminism.

17. From Williams: "Some of the movements and gestures in the women's section ... parallel those of the men. Yet even here there is a tendency to add a superfluous detail to the women's movements - details which tend to mark her as more embedded within a socially prescribed system of objects and gestures than her male counterparts ... A frequent feature of the various male activities is some kind of simple prop that is either carried or

manipulated to facilitate different muscular and kinetic activities: dumbbells, boulders, baseballs... But when the women's gestures include props, these props are always very specific objects, never a simple weight that can be re-used in many different situations... Although these props serve the ostensible purpose of eliciting certain kinds of motor activities and although we do encounter some equally specific props for men as well, the props associated with women's bodies are never just investing her body with an iconographic or even diegetic surplus of meaning" (1981:24).

18. Williams grounds her discussion in the photographic works of Muybridge and films of Méliés, and the fetishes she refers to are hardly prototypical: e.g., in Muybridge's "A Human Figure in Motion," a woman climbing into bed pulls a sheet up to cover her body; a woman dries herself with a towel, no genitalia exposed, and does not acknowledge the camera. cf. "Film Body: An Implantation of Perversions," Ciné-Tracts, 8:4, Winter 1981.

19. They attempt a 'closer' analysis of any artifact than those found in, for example, Formations of Pleasure, edited by the Formations Collective, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983. Other works which investigate the intersections between feminism, pleasure, the image, sexuality and subjectivity (not restricted to pornography) are, Teresa de Lauretis, Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984; and, Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film, and Fiction, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987; Rosalind Coward, Female Desires: How they are Sought, Bought and Packaged, New York: Grove Press, 1985; Cora Kaplan, Sea Changes: Culture and Feminism, London: Verso, 1986; Judith Williamson, Consuming Passions: The Dynamics of Popular Culture, London: Marion Boyars, 1986.

20. cf. Chris Weedon, Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987, for an elaboration of the principles of post-structuralism and their utility for the feminist project.

21. One example of this is offered by Janice Winship who explores the specific deployment of masculinity and femininity in advertisements through the signifying function of hands. Her argument is that the seemingly simple use of the hand relies on certain mythical associations (in the Barthesian sense) of "natural" sexuality, or the "natural" work world of men and "natural" domesticity for women. She problematizes the 'obvious', and her analysis is a particularly useful example of the semiotic method. cf. "Handling Sex," Media, Culture and Society, 3:1, January 1981, reprinted in Looking On: Images of Femininity in the Visual Arts and Media, edited by Rosemary

Betterton, London: Pandora, 1987.

22. cf. also, Roland Barthes, Camera Lucida, New York: Hill and Wang, 1981; and "Behind the Fragments, a Conversation with Rosalind Coward, Yve Lomax and Kathy Myers", Camerawork, November 1982.

23. If one wants to argue that porn models are oppressed and exploited (as Linda Lovelace outlines in her Ordeal, New York: Berkley Books, 1981), and this is resurrected often as a good reason to denounce the pornographic representation, this is no different from many other labour processes which regulate behaviours on the job. The modern open office, arranged for easy supervision and surveillance, is one example of occupational policing. Having to ask for a key to use the washroom is another. The insistence on a certain 'look' to promote the image of the corporation is a subtle form of harassment (cf. Sam Ion, Dear Sam: Advice to the Working Woman, Toronto: Personal Library Publishers, 1980). In any case, a labour process is not to be confused with a photograph.

24. cf. Janet Wolff, The Social Production of Art, London: Macmillan, 1981; Janet Wolff, Aesthetics and the Sociology of Art, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983 for discussions of the concept of the 'author', artistic value and art as the production of ideology. She does not focus on photography, however; and although this is not a problem, for my purposes emphasis must be placed on the mass production of the photograph, something some post-modern theorists have put at the center of the 'death of the author'. cf. Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "Winning the Game When the Rules Have Been Changed: Art Photography and Postmodernism," Screen, 25:6, November-December, 1984; Douglas Crimp, "The Photographic Activity of Postmodernism," October, 15, Winter 1980; Hal Foster, Recodings: Art, Spectacle, Cultural Politics, Port Townsend, Washington: Bay Press, 1985; and the work of Victor Burgin, especially "Seeing Sense," in Language, Image, Media, edited by Howard Davis and Paul Walton, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983, The End of Art Theory: Criticism and Postmodernity, Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press International, 1986, and "Photography, Fantasy, Fiction", in Thinking Photography, London: Macmillan, 1982.

25. Tony Benn, "Perfect Body: Perfect Production, the nudes of Robert Mapplethorpe and Arthur Tress," Camerawork, November 1982.

26. Or, as B. Ruby Rich notes, "If I like it, it's erotic; if you like it, it's pornographic." "Anti-Porn: Soft Issue, Hard World," Feminist Review, 13, Spring 1983.

27. Angela Carter states, in her aptly named "Polemical

Preface", that the raison d'être of pornography is "propaganda for fucking" (The Sadeian Woman, London: Virago, 1979:15). Carter assumes this follows from her prosaic definitions of pornography, i.e., sexual graffiti, "a universal pictorial language of lust" (4). But this representation of pornography is just as vulgar as the standardized and repetitive depictions she argues characterize the medium: the reduction of humanity to body parts. In other words there is no room, in Carter's admittedly polemical account, for fantasy, contradiction, not the complicity of the subject in the reading of the text. One might ask, "What does 'fucking' have to do with the photo?" Again, she reverts to a representational logic in wanting to assert an essential reality which is mis-represented in the photo.

28. For a brilliant, feminist, critique of representational logic, cf. Alice A. Jardine, Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.

Chapter 2

THE GENITALS: SEXUAL TECHNIQUES

At first glance, all pornographic genres appear to be characterized by nakedness¹: a visual (and obscene) excess of bodies and bodily configurations, rendered objects, undignified and immodest through lack of apparel. And the essential fixation of the pornographic moment appears to be on the graphic, if not grotesque, representation of the "forbidden site of specularity and ultimate object of male desire," the female sex organs (Nochlin, 1986:77).² The embedded assumption in the literature is that 'difference' is thus visible "on sight" (Stern, 1982), and the genitals are an unsightly figure with which to image the female form and its otherness. As though representations of biology were given. The pornographic body however, is constructed through its discursive arrangement: the body is not naked but adorned and dressed-up, is not disciplined in terms of sexual pathology but is set in a sexual discourse: the pornographic speaks to sexualities. Pornography as a discourse on sexuality (like all discourses which in some way implicate individuals and the human form: medical, economic - Foucault's Malthusian couple, artistic, criminal, etc.) constitutes the body, not vice versa.³

The medical discourse is one which subjects the body to an empiricism of the image. The sexually abnormal body (the "sexually deviant subject") is objectified and scrutinized "to reveal (the) visual truth" (Mort, 1980:79, 81). The pornographic body, on the other hand, is placed in an arrangement of discourses; as in the medical discourse the bodies are coded to incite a number of culturally and sexually significant meanings. But pornographic discourses rely on a display of another kind. The pornographic body is more fully subjectified and inserted into discourses which call upon much more than a corporal existence. They offer fragments of a corporality which are so strongly discursive they place the body into the 'meta-anatomical' and threaten to transgress the discursive limits of the biological corpus (the pornographic body knows no textual limitations), if not annihilate the 'body' altogether. The 'body', then, is an imbroglio of fetish inscriptions, through clothing and jewellery, and configurations which code and position it in ways which are also transgressive of the 'sexual fix'.

In what follows, the conventions of the pornographic body are isolated and examined with a view to understanding their specific deployment in this spectator-text relationship.

SOFT CORE: the breast

The breasts are not just breasts within the pornographic genres for they too are coded beyond the materiality of their form. The breasts aren't depicted in any 'natural' incarnation but are subjected to a privileging of the singular: the most common representation is of the single breast, or the breasts 'separated' by jewellery or clothing, e.g. a string of pearls dangling between the breasts. In soft-core the model is usually sole occupant of the diegetic space, and configurations of her body are given over to the display. The most notable signifiers of femininity are, of course, the breasts and the genitals. So, it is of particular interest that the single 'breast' is the favoured icon (as opposed to both pictured together).

Margaret Miles (1986) investigates the single exposed breast in early renaissance art. She argues that the prevalence of the Virgin's/Mother Mary's single breast in religious imagery is "not susceptible to simple naturalistic interpretation." Miles writes of the Florentine emphasis on the "Virgin with one bare breast" (1986:196) and her thesis is that the the "Virgin" is depicted as "nursing" a fourteenth-century public ravaged by "famine, plague and social chaos" and thus the single exposed breast represents the (female) "body's best show of power" (1986:205). These virginal images constitute, according to

Miles, a dialectic around the ideal of the powerful Virgin mother (with "power over life and death") and the actual material reality of women at the time. Although she is an art historian and does not speak in psychoanalytic terms, Miles implicitly privileges a pre-oedipal textual formation. I would argue, however, that the soft-core pornographic 'moment' is reflective of the oedipal inscription with all its emphasis on scripts of sexual difference and a dramatic play on desire and loss. The pornographic scenario is decidedly sexual, and the privileging of only one breast is a curious technique of the body charged with confessing all the sins of the flesh.

The breasts are, of course, profoundly feminine: fleshy protuberances on the female body, icons within sexual discourses (Flügel notes: "With the greater freedom of emotional life that distinguished the Renaissance ... and from that time onwards ... the bosom has always been a centre of special interest in feminine dress", 1931:160). And, referring to Miles' thesis, a maternal source of comfort and life. They contain a liquid, a life-sustainer, milky white (indeed, "jugs" is slang for breasts); the maternal and the sexual coalesce on the breasts to render them 'feminine'.

Having said this, the pornographic discourse takes the breasts and subjects them to a singular principle. The favourite

configuration re-zones that aspect of the feminine corpus and re-presents the single breast (no fidelity to the anatomical rendition). One is offered the single 'tit', as it were. Partridge tells us that a "tit" is both "a girl or young woman... the female pudend" and "the penis." As well, a "tit" is "a foolish and ineffectual man." The individual 'tit' then has the symbolic properties of both masculinity and femininity, a simulated androgynous offering. The uniform breast is a marriage of two instances of the feminine (the maternal and the sexual) and, the masculine which anticipates the phallic code in a conspiracy: the feminine form (contains milky secretions that resemble the seminal flow). The single breast resembles the single erection: there is only one phallus, one erection, and it strains to be represented, to be significant. The breast in pornography is represented alone, protruding from the body. The nipple is erect and most often when the breast is displayed in this singular fashion it is offered to the viewer on its own; without competing for the viewer's attention with other visual offerings, e.g. the genitals. It is a simulated phallic offering, the masculine writing on the female breast. The model's bodily configuration is in keeping with her phallic endowment: the individual exposed breast on the pornographic model is her simulation of the phallic moment. The model is penetrating the reader but not to "nurse" him.

The 'breast-as-phallus' is one of the body's 'best shows' of power but also its 'best show' of desire: erect, taut, peeking out from behind a blouse, brassière or other form of lingerie. Like the fetish (itself a simulacrum, the part standing in for the whole, a disavowal of the knowledge of what it stands for) it is the body's 'part-object', either always there, or always threatening to peek out and greet the reader. If the breast pokes out from under a sheet, it appears not as part of the body but with an object-status all its own. It appears as an appendage. And like the fetish it is held in fascination, by both reader and model. She gazes longingly, and with intense passion, at the exposed breast: it is an object of fascination for her. She touches it, licks it, reinforcing its visual status; indeed, the skin is often wet or oiled to heighten the part-object's specularly. This seems phallic somehow or at least masculine in the sense that the single breast is a curious organizing principle and fascinating to the model and to the reader in the way the penis typically is. The breast fascinates in the sense of being 'irresistible', 'enchanted', 'charming' (Concise Oxford). Both model and reader are (fascinated) 'bewitched' (Webster's) and under its 'spell' (Oxford). In this sense, the breast may be the body's 'part-object', part-of-the-body, and thus a fetishistic precondition.

The glimpse of the single breast as a carnal fragment is

not simply a tantalizing display of the nakedness to come, for we know that the pornographer's body is NOT the body divested. The artifacts adorning the body are as important as the bodily display itself, and not used to merely indicate what will soon be exposed, or what was previously covered. The breast, in the workings of the "photographic lexis" (Metz, 1985:81) - with its own referent, its homage to death, and anxiously playing on the edge of presence/absence, the imaginary off-screen - is "a commemorative trace of an absent object" (Solomon-Godeau, 1986:67-68). If this calls into imaginary space what is absent, the image would still activate another single (absent) breast. This really is the doubled play of 'there/not there', a simultaneous imaging of the seen and unseen, what Metz calls a "pocket phallus": the fetish and the phallus are implicated in narratives of loss ("and protection against loss" [Metz, 1986:84]) and both are part of a visual order in which perception and disavowal share the same frame. The exposed breast may then be the "pocket phallus", the part-object always recalling the whole, yet suppressing it at the same time, "replacing an absence by a presence" (Metz, 1985:86). It is the 'there/not there' structure which is held in fascination within this context. The 'tit' is distinctively and pretentiously ambisexual.

When the two breasts are visible within the diegetic space they are often (as noted) symbolically separate: jewellery, such

as a strand of pearls, falls between them. When held apart their doubleness and singularity are emphasized. The conspicuous separation of the two breasts heightens the visual investment - one's eyes dart back and forth to accomodate this zoning of the feminine body for pleasure. This configuration of the upper body points to a fashionable ambivalence: the breast is part of a spectacular articulation of the body which re-presents femininity in partially phallic terms. It is rendered so through their transformation from natural flesh to fetish, and through the discursive privileging of the singular. The female body threatens, allays the threat and induces fear and desire at the same time. The breasts are separated into single instances of visual pleasure and partial phallic endowment: breasts straining against lingerie, clothing, and, towards the camera/eye of the viewer, complete with erect nipples.⁴

SOFT CORE: The Genitals

Typically, in soft-core the model's genital offering takes one of three forms. She either (1): presents a frontal and fully exposed view of the vulva, usually in grotesque and exaggerated form as her hands enunciate the vulval area to allow for the closest possible scrutiny; (2) presents a visual arrangement of the buttocks to include both vulva and anus; or, (3) offers a

'rear' view that is profoundly anal. These are more than merely the "exposing to view certain acts or anatomies" (Brown, 1981:5) but a curious inscription into economies of difference, difference at a cutting, castrating edge.

Within the classic psychoanalytic lexicon, a male's glimpse at the female genitals prompts the imagination of the "loss of his own penis... and the threat of castration takes its deferred effect" (Freud, 1924:318). Pornographic images are full of castrating scenarios which dominate the narrative. The female genital exhibition is an admixture of 'castration' (she is without a penis), sexual difference (she is other than male), and an erotic play on both (she is desirable). (This would, of course, overlay with fetishistic inscriptions and the desirous notations on the body textual of the model: she's castrated, the fetish is either penis or phallic symbol, and she's part of a seductive narrative). In many instances (especially in the case of Penthouse and Hustler, for e.g., less so in the more 'conservative' Playboy) the model flaunts her genitals ostentatiously to expose, in graphic terms, the potential for penetration. Just as it is an invitation to invade her body it is also a flirtation with a castrating scenario that should normally frighten the male viewer. He stands in front of the classic 'vagina dentata'.

The intersection of the 'vagina with teeth', obvious castration and a seductive spectator-text relationship moves away from theorizing the dramatization of castration as fearful. The marking of difference is a writing of the body around inscription and loss, of both model and viewer. The female body marked as castrated is missing the penis (her inscription into loss); she, at the same time, is poised to castrate: this is the reader's loss. This spectacle, i.e. the elaboration of 'difference', not having the penis, foregrounds castration in a most indiscreet, if not brazen, way. And like anything sensational it provokes a look; the vivid representation of the castrated form connotes a 'brilliance' in the sense that it 'radiates', and has a specular lustre. Often the vulva is accentuated by subtle beams of light which enhance it as a 'fascinating' image. The area is also highlighted and 'dazzles' in another way: it is wet and shiny, it glistens, no doubt also to heighten the illusion of her desire. She wants the reader to see that she wants him. That territory of her desire demands the gaze of the reader; this is the colonization of the body to a technical brilliance. The zoning of the body for pleasure is its spectacular prerogative, and again desire only refers to referents of desire: desire is a representation, visual in this case - which always implicates, invests, an 'other' (the reader). Accordingly, the signs of desire must be present: her sexual eagerness is apparent through her bodily writing of desire.

Surely this is part of a narrative economy of sexual difference, the body as reminder of the great divide between men and women. But so discursive a display extends beyond biological boundaries (as will be evident in "The Gaze" and the following chapters on "The Fetish") and actually disturbs them. The model may not possess the penis yet she circulates within phallic representations of desire which bring her close to possessing the phallus (no one can). Recall, however, that the Lacanian phallus is not the possession of 'one' but a signifier which is endlessly commutable within the structures that govern the laws of desire: the phallus is always a deferral, the nostalgic longing which is in relation to an 'other', a loss, what is missing. She may be sexual difference, constructed as 'other', but only (and always) within the context of the reader's constitution and reconstitution as 'other' - as he is recognized from the place of the model's desire. If the model is castrated and this has symbolic value in an erotic spectacle this places her within certain phallic terms of reference. The reader, sutured in absentia, is in the position of viewing a model who, although fetishized, does not cover up her castration (she in fact flaunts it). She is a play on both presence and absence. The reader, his subjectivity mediated in his encounter with the desirous/desiring model, is also in a drama of plenitude and loss. Just as the model bears the signs of her desire, the

reader, constructed as meaningful in and for the representation, invests the narrative with signs of his. His investment is in seeing the model endowed with 'difference'; but her visible mark of difference is at the cutting edge of indifference. That is, the reader's investment is also his divestment: the desire of the other is closest to one's own desire. As scenarios of desire are founded on loss, the reader's loss is in seeing the model castrated and yet with the phallus, the phallus which approximates the reader's and which he has surrendered in order to see signs of the model's desire. The reader thus hovers at a desire which castrates.

The imagery discussed above is a play on both thanatos (castration) and eros (union). Within the classic Freudian schema the trauma of the castration scenario invites "disavowal", that "energetic action", a "defence against the claims of external reality":

"It is not true that, after the child has made his observation of the woman, he has preserved unaltered his belief that women have a phallus. He has retained that belief, but he has also given it up. In the conflict between the weight of the unwelcome perception and the force of his counter-wish, a compromise has been reached ... In his mind the woman has got a penis, in spite of everything; but the penis is no longer the same as it was before. Something else has taken its place, has been appointed its substitute ... and now inherits the interest which was formerly directed to its predecessor ... (T)he horror of castration has set up a memorial to itself in the creation of this substitute. Furthermore, an aversion, which is never absent in any fetishist, to the real female genitals remains a stigma indelebile..." (Freud, 1927:353).

This disavowal is said to take the form of 'I know she doesn't have it but nevertheless maybe she does have something like it...' To use our own symbolic material, the model clearly does not have a penis but she is given the phallus in the form of the fetish, and other things. In spite of her graphically castrated genitals she carries the marks of phallic power in the discursive bodily arrangement and the body's insertion into a semiotic code. Although she does not possess the unadorned penis denoted by the pound of flesh, she enters the phallic/masculine discourse by proxy: she has the "substitute". Her simulated phallic offerings are apparent in the single breast, the eyes, the fetish accoutrements, etc.

Or, she is the "substitute". She penetrates even though she is 'castrated' (i.e. without the penis). The reader is witness to the divestment of her biological power yet, at the same time, he gives it back to her in metaphorical (phallic) terms. Thus, castration is associated, indelibly, with the pornographic moment. It is not so much the Freudian arrangement which realigns 'belief/disbelief' around the fetish but a scenario of wishful seduction. In desiring the disclosure of the model's desire the reader is closer to the "cut" whereby the model's power is procured at the expense of the reader's loss. He gives away his desire in order to see signs of her's. Desire

has a metaphorical temperament and is constituted as the 'non-representable'. But somehow (as with any spectator-text relationship) the reader is constituted at his encounter with the narrative. That is, there is a negotiated 'space' between the vivid genital revelation of castration (the model's loss) and the phallus (the "impossible referent"⁵). It is within this space that the reader is constructed as 'different/'difference' vis-à-vis the genital impression placed before him. It is where he fleshes out his desire, and is still reminded that he has the 'real thing' (is the precious object, the phallus). But he only knows this, and only knows his desire, through representations of the 'other', always an ambivalent other.

The reader encounters his illusory self in the oedipal (castrating) scenario. His 'otherness', seeing the "cut" other, is granted under threat of privation. If desire "is opened up... through a structuring absence" (Rodowick, 1980:85), the castrated/castrating other is the perfect meeting place of narratives of desire. The absence of the viewer, the model's penis, and the phallus, instructs the operation of desire as the search for the non-representable: both bodies and texts as absence.

The model is phallic equivalence in other ways. As noted, there is another standard genital feature in soft-core:

representations of the vulva together with the anus. A common pose has the model on her knees, buttocks offered to the camera. The back is in a concave arch and the posterior of the body is elevated slightly to expose both the vulva and the anal area. This is quite an elaborate exposure, a graphic spread of the genitals and anus, bodily apertures that take in and emit, open and invade. Both are organs which symbolically (and not only symbolically) trap (here, the 'bowels' of the [mother] earthy model). They contain and they castrate; but they also expel, producing decomposed matter that greets the reader and the phallus. The anus is poised to expel, like a phallic ejection. So the anal phallus is wasted matter. What does that say to the reader?

The anus is poised to devour, a posture more aggressive than the 'vagina dentata'. Positioned 'to devour', it also penetrates, as if the reader were recipient to anal excesses. This anal scenario most often accompanies bodily configurations which privilege penetration by the (model's) eyes and the heels. Again, in these instances there is an ambi-sexual masquerade to the body: it appears 'feminine' yet possesses qualities which transgress femininity. This is a body which challenges the designated locations of 'the masculine' and 'the feminine' by positioning a body for both penetration/ejection/emission and reception. The body flirts with a dissolve around the 'sexual

fix'; it teases the critical edge of the great gender divide.

But the picture is not one of total harmony. It involves not so much an equilibrium but a cutting edge. A simulated ambisexuality threatens the anatomy of binary structures which proportion gender identity on one side or the other. The body positioned to devour and invade (while it positions the reader to 'penetrate' as well) hovers around a 'sameness' which jeopardizes the categorization of 'other(s)'. But 'otherness' is resurrected and reinstated in the fetish inscriptions which signify a cultural femininity. And desire is circulated (otherwise the jeopardy would be complete, and desire foreclosed, if it weren't for the reader) in the construction of the reader as 'other', as he is enlisted in scenarios of loss, exchange, surrender and death. This discourse calls upon, in this visual imaginary, signs of the model's desire - both on the body and in the fetish- and a place for the reader to insert his. But his desire is only represented in signs of his own loss- he gives away signs of it to see hers; in a semocracy, representations supplant the real. And within a libidinal economy and economies of desire, an exchange of signs is the investment in the circuitous route towards 'meaning' (yet always a meaning 'system' in flux; the polysemic text unsettles any notion of the fixed referential status of meaning).

In the world of simulation - precisely so in the chimerical zone where desire cannot be represented - that gap between desire and the straining to represent it is where desire is fleshed out. This is a simulated moment, the space between the image and the referent, only in this case the referent has gone missing: the simulated moment has become the 'real'. This is simulation without a referent, an offering of signs which promise there is some real sex somewhere - 'real' women, 'real' sex, 'real' desire, etc. This is the ultimately pathetic, and parodic, 'real' moment of the pornographic image. Its viciousness lies in its attempt to re-present the real, desire and the phallus, and thus supplant it. It achieves a reality greater than the real: the representation wins. As reality is subverted (the poignancy of the photograph also ensures this) the representation is the reality- and mediated- effect.

Where is the reader in the *mise en scène* which speaks to castration, both textual and corporal? It can be argued that the reader is constructed in a narcissistic exchange and this is most pronounced with the privileging of the anal signifier. Analinity is an aggressive fusion of the gender/genital divide. There is an indifference to difference invoked by the anal imagery: the anus is possessed by both males and females; hence, in these narratives, the partial effacement of demarcations of otherness. The reader encounters signs of himself in the textual body of the

model; and the anal imagery stages a castrating drama so that sameness (indifference) becomes a picture of castration. The reader meets his double in the castrated genitals of the model. This is his symbolic dispossession, the witness to the little death of the male (viewing) subject. He surrenders to the displacement of both sexual identity and desire onto the construction of the model's body and through the sartorial code. This is the dispossession of the subject in the visual dimension. Death is, as well, held in both the fetish and the photo. The overlay of death, the fetish and the photographic code hinges, in this instance, on the depiction of the castrated genitals. And as will be noted in "The High Heel Shoe", anal obsessions are infused with masochistic identifications with the mother and introjection of the father's penis (Grunberger, 1966). This is a particularly aggressive refusal of difference.

To summarize, in soft-core the body is organized to feature the single breast; the genitals grotesquely arranged to expose and flaunt embodied castration; and, the anus poised to accept penetration but also poised for the possibilities of devouring and expulsion. All three representations choreograph the soft-core 'pornographic'. And all three do so in a discourse of desire verging on the rule of androgyny.

The breasts are the feminine principle. They are body parts emphasized and fetishized with an enthusiasm which appears to transcend history (Flügel, 1931; Steele, 1985). There are two of them (as against the single penis) and they embody some apparently opposite attractions. They are a maternal source of life and nurturance; they are erotic. The single breast subverts a binary opposition and subjects the feminine form to the masculine, phallic, principle. It contains a milk, substance resembling semen and is depicted in its fully erect and protruding state, like an appendage or erection on the body. Why else represent the breast alone if not to incite desire? The seemingly ultra feminine breast simulates the masculine code in its singular incarnation. It borrows from the feminine (the round flesh, the milk, the duality), and the masculine (the semen, the engorged and erect state, the singular), both of which come together to effect an erotic conspiracy.

The genital exhibition provides a perspective on the body which at first glance suggests an uncompromising structure of difference. The model as 'other' is presented to the reader and her 'otherness' is signified by her genitals. But even they cannot adhere totally to an unyielding 'sexual fix'. Although their particular denotation in the soft-core discourse seems to be unadulterated, natural, nakedness, they are not semiotically

unadorned and present some contradictory possibilities. The genitals may zone the body for difference but they do so in a threatening fashion. Vaginal imagery is relentlessly sought out and plays on the visible absence of the penis. This goes against the grain of the orthodox scenario, positing as it does the centrality of castration fears to the formation of the masculine subject. In these configurations, the conventional iconic figure of the castrated woman and her meaning as 'sexual difference' is pronounced, the fetish doing nothing to minimize that visual and psychic disclosure. The reader is not simply addressed as 'other than' castrated. By the time the reader encounters the exposed genital configuration he has already encountered the penetrating gaze of the model, the single breast which assumes a masculine writing, and the fetishes, themselves a phallic writing on the feminine form. The reader encounters simulated versions of his own likeness in the discursive arrangement of the body: indices of castration precede the acknowledgement of the model represented as 'other' (knowledge which is anyway disavowed). His losses are what constitute the model and her vocabulary as desirable.

Another possibility is the anal invasion. This is particularly pornographic; the anal orifice is poised to both expel and devour at the same time as it effaces sexual difference. The reader is positioned to meet a representation

that combines penetration with indifference, both on a female body. As a result the feminine discourse is transgressed as desire straddles the "cut".

In hard-core, the sexual maneuvers are complicated by the presence of the male model, the male model's penis, and a reader who is engaged with a fetishistic and voyeuristic look. All conspire to render the photo vulgar, vicious and subject to greater psychic censorship than the soft-core treatment of pornography. Why? It is to this that we now turn.

HARD CORE: "a moment of sight which fabricates the real" (Krauss, 1985:71).

Configurations of the breast in hard-core compete with other organs and displays of sexual and fabricated phallic excess. The defining criteria of 'hard-core' are: erection of the penis, penetration of any orifice and ejaculation. The single breast is occasionally represented but just as often both breasts are displayed. Within this genre there are many other phallic codes, centering on the penis, the phallus-as-fetish, the partial masculinization of the female model through the penetrating gaze, the 'writing' of the body as aggressively desirous through the lingerie (her "be-longings", Chevalier, 1989) and scenarios involving the 'anal penis' (Grunberger, 1966). There is nothing surreal about hard-core (nor in soft-core, but hard-core is perhaps the strongest attempt at verisimilitude, or replication of the 'real').

Surrealist photography (always black and white) is a play on the physical form. It renders "shapeless" the defining boundaries of the body and hence conventional meaning attached to its materiality. The "aggressive assault on reality" (Krauss, 1985:41) utilizes the "informe", the upsetting of the body's familiar reassurances. The "informe" imposes a fluidity on the body's form and "redrafts" its map through the trompe l'oeil, the use of animal imagery, the highly metaphorical- and lyrical-

visual reconstruction of the body's surface: an assault on the body from without. The result is a body rethought and invented to become less human, a body cavorting with animals ("The body cannot be seen as human because it has fallen into the condition of the animal", Krauss, 34). It is a body without alibi - with no fidelity to a stable referent or transcendental signifier. Krauss completes her clever essay, "Corpus Delecti," by suggesting that "woman ... is nowhere in nature" and the use of the "informe" potentially deconstructs the categories which prefigure the authority of the gender divide.

Similarly, the pornographic moment offends as it transgresses - perhaps the same boundaries - but for other reasons. Its pretense is to a reality - the real world of sex; it strains after a referent of desire (impossible in the real!); it claims to verisimilitude but transgresses boundaries anyway. Hard-core pornographic images depart from the surreal partly because they are in colour. Soft-core photos are colour as well; however, in hard-core the authenticity of colour conjoins with the obdurate materiality of the genital display. And the brilliant colour and sexual graphics overlay in a particularly vicious offering which is parodic and ugly, leaving us wanting the surreal, the "origin without an original" (Nochlin, 1986) - a surreal that continues to lurk behind the pornographic imagery in spite of all images to the contrary.

Fear of castration or transgression?

Part of the hard-core regime of representation is the fragmented body (particularly in terms of the genital exhibition); this is not as emphatic in soft-core. Fragmented concentration, in hard-core, is on the face of pleasure - hers - (documented in "The Gaze") and on penetration. The privileged signifier is more often the penis/phallus.

The visual narrative usually begins with a clothed encounter between two strangers who quickly disrobe to varying states of undress. A few conventional genital arrangements are represented. The genitals, male or female, vaginal or anal, are seldom depicted on their own (often only two or three photos per magazine, out of a possible 30-40). Instead the bodies are in consort, the genitals being the conduit where they meet in a kind of corporal and specular harmony. The most common deployment involves vaginal penetration by the penis and this is often in a framed close-up, heightening fragmentation. But the spectacle has a doubling effect: the genital union appears to be an ambisexual charade. That is, the bodies' parts form a textual

closure in their manifestation as one physical reality. There is a loosening of boundaries around the body's immanence as the female genitals merely appear to be an extension of the penis. A body doubles as its other. The two corporal entities are feigned as one, a unity in a circuit of desire, which passes through its representations: on the male body (in its turgidity) and through the fetish (on the female).

'Otherness' is still drawn and anchored however through the lingerie on the female model: this heightened visual intensity - the investment in the fetish, a visual exchange of 'difference', desire, the phallus - is part of the pornographic code, always a play on 'otherness' (and misplacement of difference). The sight of genitals copulating in this close-up would be merely that, a non-discursive site/sight of the sexual, were it not for the fetish/lingerie peeking out from the edges of the photo. Genital penetration would be full sexual disclosure; but foreclosing all signs of desire. The erect penis, for example, would be the bloated representation of desire, desire straining to be assuaged. Desire needs a tension and the pornographic tension in these hard-core photographs goes beyond the mere renditions of genitals copulating for the camera.

There is a space for the reader here, rather than his total exclusion from the scene before him. The space is the moment

between desire's inception and its re-presentation, the space for the dramatic play of the reader and his phallus. This also involves the threats against it, threats of its demise (the death of the subject). The carnal union of genitals is more than the mechanical operationalization, the "...self reduced to its formal elements... represented by the probe and the fringed hole, the twin signs of male and female in graffiti..." (Carter, 1979:4). The fetish inscription of the lingerie - the traces of garters on the legs, the inch or so of stocking at the top of the thigh - however, is a nod to the 'pornographic', the surplus visual exchange which unsettles with its alibi status: it speaks to what is not there as the narrative moves towards closure (the referent, the 'real') which can never be achieved.

Which is to say a number of things. Difference is more than its biological assignment; more importantly, it is activated in discourses which structure subjectivity and desire. The creation of difference in the subject is a matter of separation in the service of 'otherness'. The male reader would be excluded from the graphic depiction in front of him (i.e. the parodic re-creation of the exemplary sexual act) if the scenario were complete. The total exclusion of the reader would not only suggest an unerotic and uninteresting scene but would also point to signs of a pure phallic economy: desire fully self-contained within the text, the reader disinherited by the sexual

choreography in the photo.

But the reader is enlisted within the desiring scenario in at least a couple of ways. For one thing, the text invites the reader's gaze by offering the penis not fully penetrating. The privileged visual moment is witness to an event 'in completion'; and there's more to see. There's more difference to see, the penis' extension from the vagina is the partial union of opposites, and desire before its exhaustion. The reader's interest is far from exhausted at this moment. Were the penis totally enveloped by vaginal absorption, the material evidence of copulation would not be so apparent; too much would be left to the imagination - in this, the most shameless and indiscreet of sexual discourses. What offends in the pornographic is the obdurate materiality of the photo and its depictions, which on the surface (and on the surface only) leave little to the imagination, purporting as they do to a representative photographic, objectifying, realism. Both are unrelentingly 'real', offensively so.

In this case, the part-penis is there to see, a willing suspension of belief against disbelief that the male model has got it (but always threatened with losing it). Also visible are the male's testicles, indices of his virility (the marking of his difference). The testicles, however, are also his more feminine

counterpart. These are 'limp' connotations on the male body - because the testicles are not turgid but round and more feminine. Because until desire is realized, the penis/phallus is forfeited to a narrative of sexual transgressions; the male model simulates femininity while the female is masculinized. The male model gives away the signs of his desire for the female, and is divested of his controlling interests (the woman, her body, its semiotic power, is her own capital investment⁶). According to Partridge, "to do one's balls on" is "(of a man) to fall utterly in love with". Can we then say that he's got "balls on" for her, has relinquished signs of his desire to see signs of hers? (We return to these, and other, etymological associations below.)

Paradoxically, the partly introjected penis and the visible testicles phallicise the female model as she appears to be an extension of the penis, thus protracting the specular moment. The reader is implicated and enlisted in this visual register. He is called upon, in a discourse of desire, to locate his 'difference' within the diegetic space. He is different from the photographic narrative in the sense that he is not of it; he is spoken in terms of a text that plays out the negotiation of sexual difference. The text also shows up the tensions around sexual difference and creates that space for transgressions to occur and for the reader to engage in the economic exchanges which structure the pornographic moment, both libidinal and

symbolic. Any exchange involves metonymic transactions which rely on relationships of contiguity, absence, and a reinvestment of desire in missing signifiers and signifieds. The subject (the reader) is placed before the cultural text and occupies that space created by metonymic associations in the text.

More precisely, genital depictions in hard core are economized in favour of the image pared to its bare essentials. The chain of signification is limited to a visual diachrony: the linguistic narrative is downplayed and confined to a few sentences, words which often don't correspond to the accompanying photos; or there is just as often no descriptive passage. The fiction is structured by the parameters of flirtation (at the outset), a striptease, a variety of sexual machinations and, finally, the resolution of desire, the male's 'petite morte'. In between the seduction and the moment of consummation are a series of close-up shots of genitalia, sometimes combined with the gaze, but always in association with the fetish. Penetration is clearly the norm; as already noted, partial penetration privileges the testicles. The subject, formed in loss, finds himself in the scenario of loss in the photo. The picture threatens loss of difference (the death of the subject) as each body 'doubles' as its other: the male is feminized and the female masculinized. The fetish restores phallic difference, though (and this is the partial masculinization of the female model), and

institutes the maneuver of the "cut".

A second popular genital configuration involves a close-up of vaginal penetration. But rather than the high visibility of the female pubic area, the visible orifice is the anus, hers. To heighten the 'anality' of the image either model will separate, with the hands, the female's buttocks so that the anus is poised, not for rear entry, but as an invasive orifice. It is not there to take in but to expel. It shares the same diegetic space as the penis partially penetrating the vagina. If the phallus defies representation, and if the reader is enlisted to supply it, then the "military anus"⁷ accomodates the reader to an insinuating posture which treats the phallus and the reader as shit. The impertinence of the female pornographic model is her aggressive anality.

Anal associations are aggressive, voyeuristic and sadistic (Grunberger, 1966). The "liberation of aggression" (Grunberger, 1966:164) in the anal-sadistic model is intrusively phallic, precisely so as the signifier - shit - signifies in its absence. And the anal moment is castrating: it can capture upon entry into the bowels. The anal delivery signifies a certain 'unrestraint', a bold confrontation to the male model, the reader, and the "sexual fix", i.e., the grand orthodoxies of the sexological (Heath, 1982). The model's anus (her "beastly backside" - Angela

Carter, 1979:5) is the third term which disturbs the "economy of physiological balance" (Heath, 1982:22): the anatomical display here flouts the classic hetero-sexual distinctions.

A summary of anal associations is offered here as they are marked in hard-core, that genre said to viciously elaborate sexual difference. For one thing, the anus symbolizes the repression of difference: it is ambisexual - container and content (Grunberger, 1966) - as it potentially expels as well as traps. It expels faeces, with part-object status: if part-object, anal expulsions are fetishized (like emissions from the phallus). Perhaps they are the perfect fetish in that they are not seen, only imagined and symbolized, thus faeces-as-fetish are held in place by their elusiveness. The reader is again re-affirmed in the search, the longing that instigates the endless interrogations of the female body to restore the missing phallus. The fetish, by definition, must be a stand-in, an alibi organized around absence. In this case, the 'un-seen' faeces-as-fetish has a doubly phallic hyper-inscription: the invasive stamp of the anal matter and the peculiarly metonymic structure of the 'fetish' places it within a "phallocratic habit" (Smith, 1987:34). Smith points out the perverse paradox of the fetishizing - of anything - within problematics of difference. To fetishize, he writes, is to set up relations of difference, i.e. the 'other' always carries the fetish; and the model in the

pornographic text designated as 'other' is 'feminine'. In hard core the other is the woman whose body textual is rendered aggressively indifferent through anal signification, and is fetishized. This is a strange disavowal of femininity by endowing women with the anus-trap, set to devour, and the phallus.

The body as a configuration of part-objects (the fetish) is 'the pornographic'. The breast, anality and the shoe (to follow), and all they may connote, offend the regulation of sexual discourses by fetishizing the body, desire, difference. They also set into place the dangerous edge, the "margin of disturbance" (Heath, 1987:42), a cutting edge which establishes difference but at a cost - symbolic castration (Silverman, 1988), or the threatened loss of difference. To be sure, the avowal of difference is what constitutes the creation of the subject upon entry into culture. One thus desires difference; a difference which is also founded on desire and the impossibility of representing desire. But the imperative of difference is an injunction to dispossession: for the man, to be dispossessed of his (masculine) properties. This is never achieved without a struggle and the desire for narcissistic fusion (the primal non-differentiating relationship) is the subtle, yet vicious, undercurrent to the sexual scene.

It is within anal imagery that one sees the erasure of sexual difference, a sadistic (and perverse) denial of all difference (Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1978). The male reader engages in a vicious harmony - difference with a vengeance - with the 'maleness' of the model: her "anal universe" is poised to eliminate differences, she is granted a host of masculine attributes. At the same time as she is phallicized through the fetish, her 'otherness' slides under the sign of the fetish, the anal signifier. This is to say that masculinity is not the standard against which 'otherness' is measured; rather, 'otherness' is the nexus where the phallus and the "cut" are negotiated - it is a formal structure, not the reflection of content. This libidinal exchange is self-referential, perhaps a post-modern economy in the sense that signs work through their reference to other signs (like modern power) and desire is a semiotic performance: a threatening and seductive pull of 'otherness'.

'Anality' is invasive and acquisitive: it connotes expulsion in the form of 'faeces-as-phallus'. Anal emissions/ejections are symbolically shared by the phallus: a child is the "spitting image" or "dead spit" of his father, a "speaking likeness" (Partridge).⁸ In this particular imagery one is afforded a close-up of the anal orifice aspiring to balance differences between the sexes, and between the properties of

intrusion and immurement. The other visual perspectives are of the coupling of the anus with the penis partially consumed by the vagina; and, the testicles. The anus is always hers (signified by the bejewelled hands which separate the buttocks), never his - that would be the literal homosexualization of desire, a close-up too close for comfort.

The metonymic association of the anus with the incomplete introjection of the penis puts both organs in the orbit of an insinuating exchange. Both anus and vagina coalesce around the fetishistic structures of the seen/unseen and represent a duality of expulsion and introjection; the spectacle centers on balancing the possibilities of elimination (dispossession) and intromission. Regarding intromission, the "trap-anus" (Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1978:30) parallels the vagina: the anus has the potential of ingesting its prey (or decomposing it) while the vagina is actively consuming.

In Anal Fantasy ("the intimate confessions of a beautiful woman!"), the female model's anus is said to be "winking out" at the male model. Her anus (like most in the written text) is referred to as her "bung". A "bung" (from Partridge, Webster and Oxford) is: a stopper or plug (traditionally used with casks of beer); the anus; and, "a blow, a punch". The term is derived from the Latin "pungere", "to prick - more at 'pungent'". And

"pungent" is akin to Latin 'pugnus', fist, 'pugnare', to fight, Greek 'pygmê', fist; having a stiff and sharp point ... sharply painful" (Webster's). The model with the 'bung' is positioned to penetrate "stiff and sharp"; this is reminiscent of the incisive and predatory gaze - both orifices are also phallic, castrating, and are implicated in voyeuristic discourses. The "bung" as a plug or stopper signifies a displacement or affinity between the anatomical mechanism of the anus and the associated fears of its power (as container and content: to ingest and expel), hence the rush to "plug" it ("bung it!" means "stow it!").

Drawing from Grunberger's work on the Rat Man, an anal obsessive whose compulsions involved the twinning of overwhelming desires and obsessive fears, the connection between the aggressivity in both voyeuristic and anal impulses (1966). Anal castration is a complex overlay of scopic drives and narcissistic seduction by a powerful other, in which, to reverse the pornographic equation where the bung/anus is the winking eye, "the eye acts as a sphincter" (Grunberger, 1966:160). To "bung one's eye", from Partridge, is "to drink a dram till one's eyes close". Once again associations are with the reader's desire to be dispossessed: of his eyesight, his penetrating eyes, his masculinity.

The penis, while perhaps "stiff and sharp" itself, is

partially obliterated/castrated, in visual terms, by the vaginal enclosure. The juxtaposing of this representation with the doubled performance of the anus - i.e. it is poised to project, expel, (it must be "stopped", "stowed"), defile, penetrate, and, at the same time, is an organ set to contain, seize, capture - is an incitement to castration. The "pungent" anus, "sharply painful", threatening to become un-plugged, is the metonymic twin of the phallic projectile. And, the fetishized penis, visually a part-object engulfed by the vagina, is 'cut' to reveal more of the testicles than the penis itself. Both representations set up the reader to be absorbed, engulfed, unmanned, hence feminized.

Pornography is about sexual transgressions and unobserved prohibitions. In terms of its economy, the spectator is drawn into a relationship with the text which is not one of simple opposition: he is not subject to its object(s), or the master of the text. Nor is he indifferent to its powers of "dangerous fascination" (Siegmán, 1964:319): his enthrallment with the image is a masochistic identification with the model poised to castrate. The penis in the process of being castrated is displaced and projected onto the fetish/part-object. The narcissistic investment in the photo emerges with the reader's identification with the simulated phallus in its anal form and in the form of the partially introjected penis. The unobserved prohibitions involve the reader's pacification and his

repressed homo-erotic engagement with the phallic model who is castrated at the same time as she is castrating. The 'there/not there' duality of the faeces/fetish, penis/phallus enlists the reader in the search for a specular wholeness. What is missing from the diegetic and symbolic space is as significant as what is visibly present. The fetish is constituted through its elusiveness: it is always present in the shoe and the lingerie.

But it is also a surrogate for what isn't there: the woman's penis. To give the penis to the 'other' is to phallicize her (she can't really have a penis, but she can have phallic desires). It is in that suspended space - the space of simulation, where boundaries are chaotic or drawn with invisible ink - that desire is created and sustained. The 'there/not there' structure of the fetish implicates the body's part-objects (of desire) in the form of the missing yet symbolically renewable faeces, the fractional penis, i.e. what is not seen but could be seen, what is perhaps better left unseen so as not to disturb the reader's sexual integrity. However, precisely because that integrity is a fiction it is continually under threat, especially when confronted with visual imaginaries that straddle the invisible threshold between difference and indifference.

The emasculatory anus - paired with the both 'there and not totally there' penis - redounds back upon the reader. The

reader, reconstituted for, by and in the text, must be reassured that he can be the donor of phallic satisfaction. He has got the 'real' thing, but that status is continually threatened with loss. If the model is castrating and phallic she embodies the reader's desire to be dispossessed of his phallus and his masculinity. His desire is double-edged: yearnings for difference and indifference are part of the same 'perversion' and both are central to the mechanisms of the "cut". That is, the desire for difference - to be differentiated by the text, to be positioned as 'other' to its textual desires (and the textual desires of the model) - is to encounter the rupturing effects of separation, but also independence and loss (in so far as one is transformed from 'one' to 'other' and the alteration of body image that that implies). The desire for indifference is a surrender to castration, sameness, loss of identity and a narcissistic death. Desire must then, originate, or is imagined, in the transgressions of difference, and in simulated otherness. And the reader is enthralled with the boring yet fascinating pornographic moment. The desire for transgressions and the longing for loss are what sustain the reader's interest in this most vicious flaunting of the official, symmetrical, sexual discourses.

The body in pornography is a discursive composition of part-objects. In hard core this is especially true of the penis.

Which brings me to the third most common image in the pornographic bodyscape. In terms of bodily fragmentation, and in refutation of the feminist-humanist challenge to depictions which somehow efface a person's humanity by their fractional representation, it is the male body which is sexually compartmentalized (while the female model, in fact, resides with the humanist equation of head = the whole person). A popular sexual disassembly of the male body involves two versions of an oral sexual encounter: either a close-up of fellatio, i.e. the female face and the penis; or, a middle-range shot of fellatio which includes a view of some of the rest of both bodies (complete with fetish). The close-up of fellatio includes two possibilities. Either the penis is partially eclipsed by the model's mouth, i.e. the shaft visible, although partly occluded by the female model's hands. Or, oral sexual activity is about to happen, and is a suspended visual moment. The penis is disembodied, distended, and about to be 'taken in' by the female model. Again this implicates desire, and the impossibility of its representation: the heightened visualness of the phallic projection is the self-importance of desire. The bombastic strutting of the cock, a part-object itself, is a prelude to the ultimate in narrative closure: visible signs of orgasm, or semen. The typical resolution to the text incurs the detumescence of desire (his) as witnessed in its corporal form.

The female model performs the vernacular 'blow job' on the male model. I cannot find any historical, slang, references to the cultural roots of this phrase but in piecemeal fashion a certain cohesion emerges. One association with the word "blow" is to lose money or spend it recklessly. To 'blow one's wad' is to forfeit all one's money and to ejaculate. To "blow through" is (of a man) to copulate (Partridge). So, also, is to "blow in one's pipe"; and, "pipe" is slang for "female pudend" (Partridge). Thus the affinity is deployed between "to blow" and the male sexual subject: a man is 'blown', a woman is not. Similarly, these depictions contain the prelude to exhaustion, depletion, the draining (or death) of the 'spent' male model, his 'petite morte'. He is getting ready to "blow" all his money on her (indeed, the pudend is also a "money box"). He will pay for her, and he will pay for it with his little death (more on the semen/money connection below).

The reader encounters a truncated version of his own body, at its most fragmented, fetishized and sexual. It engages with the head, mouth and occasionally eyes of the female model. This is a most perverse posturing for the heterosexual reader. If we assume that the scenario reconstitutes the oedipal drama, and the reader is ensconced at the key-hole, he is clearly positioned from the vantage point of loss. He is excluded from the visual text - he is not in the picture. Within narratives of loss he is

witness to a re-creation of the oedipal coupling, the original binary exclusion and that which fully locates the sexual subject vis à vis the vicious triangle: 'mommy-daddy-me'. The reader then has access to the narrative by his nomination as "the one who looks"⁹; the alibi for his observer status is precisely his exclusion from the scenario, his access to the "cut". That material and symbolic space between the reader and the text is the necessary distance to create the reading, desiring, subject. But it's a space which can never be filled, other than with longing. It points to an eternal recurrence which brings the subject back to his ordination as the empty phallic signifier, the one whose potential to be castrated lies in giving up signs of desire to see the desire of the 'other', without his loss ever being absolute.

What the reader sees is the phallic protrusion of the male model, ultimately oral assimilation by the mouth of the female: a "thankless mouth" is defined as the "female pudend" (Partridge). So is "the mouth that cannot bite" or "says no words about it" (Partridge). But the mouth that does the fellating definitely has teeth and, in many senses, speaks volumes. Discursively, it is a central signifier in the production and reception of pleasure, an orifice that takes in and emits. In terms of the accompanying written narrative (a standard feature of hard-core) it is almost without exception the woman who controls the

speaking voice: "Suddenly I had the urge to get down there and suck on that squirming dick of his. Maybe he thought that he had everything under control when in reality I was the one holding the reins all the time. When it comes to sucking cock then I am not going to let anyone stand in my way!". This speaks to a phallic mouth in two senses: it is a picture of the classic "vagina dentata", the organ with teeth (thankless indeed!) poised to suck the life out of the 'paternal signifier' ("fellatio": of the Latin, "to suck"; a model in Hustler, June 1988, is described as a "cock-muncher"). It also contains its own phallic protrusion, the tongue. And the tongue signifies in phallic ways: in scenes where the model is about to orally introject the penis, her tongue is extended in phallic celebration; and they sometimes meet in a kind of phallic communion, one approximating the other.

But it is all a mock phallic display, the penis itself a stand-in for desire. This is a parodic performance where everything passes as a masquerade of the phallus and of phallic desire. What the reader encounters is a representation of the male model's ceremonial (and pedantic) state of sexual excitement. Visible signs of her desire appear to be absent as she administers pleasure and, we might assume, receives it from her laborious activities. Indeed she often does bear the look of labour - eyes closed in concentrated effort as she studiously

works at extracting the pearly promise of his sated desire.

But appearances to the contrary, desire, like power, can only work through its representations. The reader encounters two versions or representations of desire: that of the male model whose disembodied penis symbolizes a truncated desire. It doesn't stand alone but is quickly attacked by both the hands and mouth of the female, eager to tame its imperious intrusion. The standard narrative begins with a meeting between two fully clothed actors. By page two of a typical magazine, an article of clothing is stripped away to reveal some body part. Physical maneuvers quickly accelerate to all manner of exposure and penetration, climaxing with visible traces of the man's orgasm (his spit): perfect narrative closure. In French Pussy a man and woman begin their sexual choreography with the simulated introjection of her (single) breast into his mouth. What we actually see is his extended tongue meeting her nipple; phallus to phallus, as it were. The scene heightens the phallic associations of the single breast and thus its perpetual visibility. What follows is an exchange where his tongue meets her vagina (her genitals spread apart rendering a view more appropriate to a gynecological exam). She in turn 'tongues' his nipple and then the 'blow job' begins. The cock is grabbed by the female's hand and is held in approximate distance from her mouth; but this, in diegetic terms, is quickly followed by its

intromission into her mouth and then the penis's disappearing act. The organ is partly consumed by the mouth and the tactile is intensified by her hand (Freud notes that "seeing ... (is) an activity that is ultimately derived from touching" [1905:69]). In subsequent photos there is a graphic orchestration of various sexual positions, exposures and penetrations, the majority of which are close-up renditions of, as already mentioned, vaginal or anal penetration. (The medium long-shot affords a view of many fetishes: shoes, stockings, lingerie, garters, etc.).

Other transactions accompany phallic intromission and insinuation; typically, couples never actually kiss but oral contact offers a certain phallic affinity. One protruding tongue is seen grazing another protruding tongue. Body contact is afforded maximum, yet surface, visual intensity. Maximum in the sense that everything is revealed. But what is there to see? Surface in the sense that the bodily contact points are merely a conduit of desire and difference is a slow dissolve to a pallid remark on a surface sameness. The contiguity of the tongues is an endless duplication of the sign, in the sense that Baudrillard writes, a surface reflection where "the reality of the bodies is erased by the resemblance" (1983:144); although within economies of desire, one has to note they are never fully erased. The extension of the female model's tongue (always hers), connotes sexual eagerness, a further visual intensification of the

extraction of (her) bodily desire.

The narrative returns (most often) to oral sex which then leads to the completion of the picture: traces of his orgasm, semen, which become part of her corpus. as he 'comes' on her face/neck, or on her pubes/stomach following vaginal penetration (or in the anal region following anal penetration), her body contains visible signs of his desire - now in its exhaustion - and possesses a significant and tactile mark of otherness. And then death. His "petite morte" is her possession: in pornographic films, the vorticular for male orgasm, in its visual eminence, is the "money shot". It is the male's final payment, his milky secretions. From Partridge, "milk" is "sexual spendings". "To milk" is "to cause sexual ejaculation", and "to gain possession, or sight, of by trickery or artifice". "To give down one's milk" is "to pay"; and, "the milking pail" is the female pudend. He has been milked dry. And we have proof of it.

This final event (the orgasm) is perhaps the quintessential indifference in the sense that the representation of the end of desire (the milky secretions) is the 'real' thing, endlessly commutable as a sign, the perfect equivalent exchange (cf. Baudrillard, 1983). The idea of an original reference points to an impossibility: we can only have signs of desire, it is impossible to represent desire other than in its simulated form,

as endless re-production, repetition, and a play on the signifier. This is the pornographic sexual technique which depends on the visual code for its hyperreal effect: desire is on the surface of the body, not in it. Orgasms (his) take place outside of bodily orifices, the signs of which must be seen, witnessed.

What does this mean in psycho-analytic terms? The spotty, milky semen is the extraction of signs of desire from the male body. As these signs are substitutes for desire, the repertoire of images circulate within a generalized phallic equivalence and exchange. The 'real' for the reader is only knowable through these representations and as he witnesses the ritual milking, the exhaustion of the male model at the mouth and hands of the female, it must be the curious climax of his own desire. Is this desire upon the death/loss of the phallus? The seductive moment is the reader's phallic inscription into an economy of indifference. Clearly at this stage in the narrative the models are indifferent to the reader; but only after he has already been enlisted, by the mechanisms of the "cut", into a transgressive scenario. That is, he has already been constituted as 'other' in relation to the spectacle before him. The perversion (or one of them) in these instances is that the reader has to give away so much in this tedious and predictable seduction: he is lost in the simulated orbit of desire, just when the male model has 'spent

his money recklessly'. What does he have left? He's broke? Not totally, complete narrative closure restores the phallus back to the reader.

Recall that in French Pussy the ritual death was delayed: the format begins with fondling, teases with the 'blow job', then embellishes with penetration before a return to the blow job, and then the orgasm or "money shot". There is still the final picture, however, the back cover, and it engages the reader again. Just before the reader is in danger of certifying his homoerotic desire he is invited back into a dialectical relationship with the text. He is constituted, as it were, as subject for the objects in the text. A number of possibilities are presented to enlist the reader. The back cover of French Pussy and Hot Black Boxes restores the reader to a position of desire, albeit cynical. The male model is once again reduced to his most significant part, his penis, and the female is 'blowing' him (she's about to make him lose his money again). But she's also gazing at the reader with a look that speaks to a detachment from the (male) model, or at least his representative (the cock). It signals her boredom as well as full knowledge of her duplicity (in fact she knows too much, another one of pornography's textual excesses). She is no prude, as she is jointly engaged with the model and yet directs her gaze out of the diegetic space to confront the reader. And she confronts the reader with his

duplicity in the text, for the text, and with the illusions of his own desire. She's mocking the model and the reader, saying to the latter (the reader who is reconstituted for the text): "This is just a penis (and one that's already been spent, no less); you got the (my) phallus, the true sign of your (my) desire. This is just a stand-in for the (your) real thing."

This is what gives pornography its pathetic urgency: the powerlessness of the representational apparatus, its inability to capture the workings of desire as the search for a lost object. Both the reader and the text are implicated in a discourse which represents desire in its exhaustion, as it is emptied out and signified only in its death-like form. And this is also a transgressive moment. Signs of desire can only operate through their visible representations, or substitutions, that surpass or double for the 'reality'. Desire always involves a loss, an investment, a forfeiture; in this 'monied', libidinal, and phallic exchange the reader is the taken-for-granted witness to the sexual scene in front of him. As witness he takes up the position of spectator seduced by the image, a testimony to his desire. As he surrenders to the image, he becomes object to its fetishized subjects; he gives up his desire to the artifice of desire, to see its contrivances in the photo. What he sees is the self-conscious and self-referential nature of phallic desire - including the model's extensions. It looks as though, for

example, the cock extends out of her mouth (just like the anal penis or the tongue). And there is a certain expression of the male's desire, at least in its truncated form: the penis is partially concealed by her mouth, hands or both. The reader, as witness or donor of phallic knowledge, then is called upon to complete the circuit. To supply what's missing from the text.

But this is no picture of harmony. If the reader: is at the key-hole (mastered by his voyeurism); fills in the absences in the narrative; is addressed as 'other' to this visual imaginary, then he might supply the missing feminine element or be feminized at his point of entry into the text. Recall that he is already seduced, 'stripped', penetrated by the model with the "cock in her eye". Recall, too, that he can identify with the shared orifice exhibited by the anal region and what is ultimately a statement (its emittance) of his yearning to be unmanned. The imagery this transgresses the sexual fix: the phallic exchange within the text masculinizes the female and creates a surplus of phallic associations. If the narrative is a subversive play on 'men fucking men', then the reader is a man desiring not men but, women with men's desire. His feminization completes the picture.

The partial 'feminization' of the both the male model and the reader is rendered precisely when he (the model) is

penetrating, about to enter the nether regions of pornographic pleasure. Just before he spends it, loses it, the male penetrates the female, both vaginally and anally as the visual tension revolves around the there/not there axis. The top half of the penis disappears into the vagina, her anus is poised to envelope/invoke (both castrating scenarios), and his testicles are brought to the fore, enlarged beyond the phallic rule.

Why the balls? We learn from Partridge that "ballock" (according to OED, a version of "ball") is a testicle. "Apples" is also slang for testicles, as is "nutmegs" (hence "nuts"). The last term is derivative of "noz" (nut) + "muscada... more at muscat"; from "musky", "musk", and refers to "cultivated grapes". Further, "musk" is from the Sanskrit "muska" or "testicle... akin to mouse"; and, "mouse" is slang for a "woman or a timid person" (Webster's). To "knock out an apple" is to "beget a child" (Partridge). These fruity associations place the testicles within the feminine half of the ambisexual territory: an "apple" is also a woman's breast, an "apple dumpling shop" is a woman's bosom; an "apple monger" is a "harlot's bully" or a "male bawd" (Partridge). Linda Nochlin points out the metaphors around "prime topoi of erotic imagery: (the) comparison of the desirable body with ripe fruit", most specifically the "likening" of women's breasts to apples (1972:11). Nochlin uncovered a nineteenth century photograph, entitled "Achetez des Pommes," of

a woman wearing low black leather boots, black opaque stockings to the thighs but naked from the thighs up. She is holding a tray of apples at the level of her bare breasts. The associations are with feminine sexuality and harlotry. hence with the "bawdy" one whose sexual wares are ripe for the picking, but at a price. The genealogy of "nutmegs" also indicates that when his "nuts" are on display he's revealing his feminine, fruity, even "mousy" analogue. This is balanced against the penis and the simulated masculinity of the female model. As well, testicles are like breasts: both apples and both contain and emit a milky substance from a 'pouch' (the "jugs") which is a source of life. The "pocket phallus" could be the breast.

The model has got his "balls on". To "do one's balls on: [is] (Of a man) to fall utterly in love with". In checking "balls" we are referred to "cods". A "cod's-head" is a fool. A "cod" is "the scrotum", "a pod"; a "pod" (from Webster's) is "probably an alteration of cod bag - more at 'codpiece'" and, "a seed vessel or fruit ... an anatomical pouch". Indeed Partridge locates "cod" with "a purse (...) whence cod of money". Recall the visible traces of the male orgasm, the "money shot", the model "spent"; the discursive biological form is akin to the feminine or uterine symbology of the bag, pouch, pocket. Flügel notes that men carry "what is needful" in their pockets (women of course use purses; 1931:186). Notice how common it is for a man

to 'play' with, or jingle, the money/coins in their pockets; money talks. In this case he's anxious to spend it.

There is a final component to the hard-core regime which overlays with the Foucauldian arrangement of the sexual, confessional apparatus. Although not a dominant motif (sometimes 5 - 10 photos per magazine), cunnilingus is an interesting feature among the repertoire of possible exposures. On the one hand, it presents a picture of insinuation. Typically, in an exhibitionistic pose, the vulva is displayed in terms that resemble more properly the gynecological domain. The male model spreads the vulvar lips with his hands and extends his phallic tongue towards the female's "money box". In so doing one is offered the perverse, hyper-close, examination of female genitalia. The genitals are rendered obscure and given over to a physicality that visually privileges folds of flesh, redish, purplish, wet and ultimately indiscernible. All is revealed and still one is given the impression there might be more to see: the male approaches the vulva with his mouth and both hands, unrelenting in his investigations¹⁰. Some of these close-up shots are so detailed (imagine a close-up of the labyrinthian workings of the ear, for example) they are devoid of fetish. At the same time they conjure up the 'structure of absence' so necessary for the construction of the simulated reality and also for invoking the status of the 'fetish-as-lost-object'. The male

model appears to be searching for the lost object, the fetish, the penis, the phallus. The female appears to be presented in castrated form, upsetting the conventional wisdom which assigns negative anxiety to "the threat of castration and a protection against it". But Freud does go on to suggest that the fetish "saves the fetishist from becoming a homosexual, by endowing women with the characteristic which makes them tolerable as sexual objects" (1927:353-54). The fetishistic relationship has already been established by the time the reader encounters the tortuous anatomical structure before him. At this moment he is once again implicated in the management of fetishistic transactions which employ that balance between belief and disbelief, the seen and unseen, imaginary presence and absence. The exposure of her genitals, to render apparent their internal mysteries, also presents another possible orifice for sexual intrusion.

Given, that penetration could take place in hard-core (indeed, is one of its defining criteria and has already occurred within the diegesis) why doesn't it? Why this graphic surplus of imagery? Could it be that the cunt is strangely phallic, capable of expulsion itself? It is castrating, of course; along with the mouth, it engulfs the cock, cuts it off, rendering visible the balls. But it also circulates with a certain phallic meaning in two ways: it is visually paired with the tongue of the male

model. That is, he fully extends his tongue, a phallic protrusion, and places it very close to the vulvar area, taking care not to conceal the orifice. This economy of substitutions sets into place a phallic exchange; his tongue, in this case, is a curious stand-in for the phallus. More importantly, the clitoris, "homologous to the penis" (Webster's), is exposed. The clitoris is another female protrusion, a visible sign of yearnings of the flesh. Unlike the vagina it does not envelope and contain but is that sexual appendage which is tumescent and noticeably turgid with desire. It is most apparent when there is vaginal penetration; so, it accompanies the 'penis part-object' and the visible testicles. Its erect state is a contrasting statement to the partial 'feminization' of both the male model (via his testicles) and the reader. The vulva is phallic and castrated at the same time.

This seems to be an eroticization of her castration; the threat to the reader's coherence is erotic as well. Linda Williams argues, in "When the Woman Looks," that in horror films there is an affinity between the female heroine (the "silent screen vamp") and the monster or Phantom (1984). She suggests that 'when the woman looks' or tries to look, and actually sees, she encounters ("within patriarchal structures of seeing") the mutilated body of the monster - really her double, her representational 'other' - and is inscribed into a masochistic

drama. Williams' ideas here are intriguing and useful, provided that they're inverted. That is, the pornographic reader is the one who confronts the provocative (partially castrated) spectacle of the women in the photo. Perhaps there is no "safe distance" which "ensures the voyeur's pleasure of looking" (Williams, 1984:86). In any case, the mutilated ('cut') body is that of the female model. Is it not possible then that when the reader looks he encounters the freak, his 'other' mutilated body? And flaunts his identification with it? Certainly the model flouts the normative sexual order by disturbing the feminine scenario: no repression here, no shameful pudenda (from "pudere": to be ashamed). There is nothing bashful about the pornographic 'cunt' ("cunt": akin to "prostitute", according to Webster's); nor is her genital overture a modest entreaty. As mentioned, the vulvar area is brazenly displayed, a simulated emasculation. These close-ups do disclose the brute physicality of the mutilated folds of flesh which is the feminine form. There is no penis here and occasionally there isn't even a fetish disguise, only the obtrusive anatomy of difference. In hard-core porn, the woman, in her bold genital exposé, is a vicious, yet scrutinized (the clitoris can be located) reminder of the other's loss in conjunction with the other's desire. Williams suggests of the monster:

"is remarkably like the woman in the eyes of the traumatized male: a biological freak with impossible and threatening

appetites that suggest a frightening potency precisely where the normal male would perceive a lack" (1984:87).

I would substitute 'woman' for monster. And 'when the woman looks' she encounters "the horror version of her own body"; in the pornographic spectator- text relationship, however, the (male) reader also looks at the sometimes phallic, sometimes mutilated body and genital zone of the female. This is a horror or vampire version of his desire to be dispossessed. The vampire (read: woman) sucks blood, "the life fluid of a victim"; Williams draws comparisons between this and "milking the sperm of the male during intercourse" (89). She also points out that the word "nosferatu" (the Transylvanian blood-sucker) means "splashed with milk ... the word connotes a homosexual allusion of 'sucking for milk'" (99, n. 17).

Williams' reading of these films is filtered through a sort of neo-Kleinian impression which locates the vampire (the male in the films) as difference from "a phallic 'norm'": i.e., the vampire/monster is feared by both the male and female spectators but represents to men what castration would look like at the hands of the all-powerful mother. Difference is thus mutilating. These are suggestive meditations and for my purposes offer, at least, an exploratory angle on this genital exposure which combines castration with the phallus. Part of the desirable scenario which is pornography is the relentless visual

interrogation of the dismembered, wet, genital flesh of the female. If he sees his mirror reflection in the grotesque display of the 'monster-model', sees his castrated 'other' wielding the potent fetish and the 'little penis', then the moment, and the model, are quite powerful indeed, if not perverse. The reader is brought closer to the "cut".

To conclude, the discursive body in straight hard core centers on a hyperbolic visual excess. The genitals in couplet aligned with the fetish are the main attraction. The vulgarity of hard-core lies in a number of things. The two sexes depicted elaborate sexual distinction: but the difference threatens to collapse around the array of possible perspectives on penetration and the way the genitals are put to use in the service of hard-core.

The reader is positioned as voyeur to the sexual scene. But his exclusion from the diegesis and the photo is incomplete: that would mark the total foreclosure of desire. Strategies of identification and pleasure vis à vis any cultural technology are always complex and particularly so in the case of sexual identities and the illicit. In spite of the viewer's apparent absence from the text, there is still a way in which he is enlisted into the machinations of eros.

My claim is that the voyeur is not simply controller of the authoritative gaze but is actually mastered at the keyhole (Silverman, 1987; 1988). As will be argued in "The Gaze", one way this happens is through the unsettling gaze of the model, the gaze that says (among other things): 'I know you're watching.' Another way this is done is through the transgression of the "sexual fix", in the name of both otherness and difference. First of all, codes of fragmentation in hard-core are in no way restricted to the female of the duo or trio. The truncated body of the male challenges the reader to a fascination with his own loss. He sees the penis of the male model; and often it is a penis displayed only to be partially 'cut' out of view, whether by the mouth, the vagina or the anus. Significations of the male model's desire meet signs of the female's desire for him. This involves the partial emasculation of the model and representations of his simulated femininity: his testicles are his 'heir apparent' to femininity. What the viewer also sees is the partial phallicization of the female through the way she is discursively positioned to penetrate. These arrangements play on an exchange of difference; however they are poised at an indifferentiating edge as they are combined with the nonaligned anus. That is, the anus is nonaligned with gender but its affiliations are with penetration, aggression, expulsion. It moves towards abolishing difference (and transgressing the

"sexual fix").

The 'TV' body appears to be nonpartisan as well. But a closer examination reveals that the perversions lie in attempting not to simulate androgyny, but difference.

'TV' PORNOGRAPHY

'TV' pornography - both soft and hard-core - commercializes the hermaphroditic or transsexual body. In the case of soft-core the narrative is the solo effort of the "ultimate she-male". She is alone in the diegetic space; and her body is again a discursive configuration which makes a mockery of biology and the artifice of gender (cf. Kuhn, 1985). The body is in excessive evidence of perversity but it contrasts with the genre of medical photo in which 'the body' is standardized and calculated against the norm. The perverse body which makes it into the medical textbook institutes the desire of non-desire, the body strategically disciplined to reveal its physically depraved state. It is abnormal, maybe, but not sexual and not displayed in a state of sexual desire. And it is objectified in two ways: it is stripped to be measured against an organizing principle of sexual difference (and against other normative systems). The eyes are typically blackened-out to conceal the subject's

identity but with the effect of obliterating identity, subjectivity and power: we can look at them but they can't acknowledge us as voyeurs. That body is pathologized, not sexualized in spite of its sexually deviant status. The medical photograph of the sexually abnormal subject conjoins with photography to construct a realist code and it's understood there is a manifest dialectical relationship between the representation and the 'real'. The photos are supposed to refer back to the anatomical hegemony of sexual difference in the 'real' (cf. Mort, 1980).

The problem for pornography is in the 'real', the problem of signifying difference within discourses of desire. The hermaphroditic body strains after a stable referent. But the 'TV' body shows up the flaw in the 'real'; as it has no referent in the real, it is the simulated hyper-real. The way this body is positioned, discursively, insinuates itself into a slippery signification whereby meaning won't stick, where the photo and the discursive body are saturated with meaningfulness. With what meaning though? There are no fidelity claims to a transsexual status in the real. The representation is no alibi for the real: it is a medium capable of reproducing itself. Also, the pornographic model (TV or otherwise) is subjectified through 'her' desire, her gaze, her ability to bring the reader closer to the "cut".

Having said this, there is more than indifference operating here as the model is identified as the "she-male"; difference remains a sine qua non of desire.

In 'TV' soft core the 'she-male' is a biological and discursive oscillation between masculine and feminine, male and female polarities. She possesses male and female secondary sex organs both of which are visually prominent to the extent, at least, that the reader knows she is in possession of both. In one photo layout "Sulka" is introduced to us in centrefold fashion. In a two-page spread Sulka is surrounded and partially draped by black gauze and heavily endowed with fetishes: a black leather corset to just under her breasts, black leather gloves which extend to mid-bicep, a silver snake arm bracelet wrapped around her upper arm at the tip of the glove, garters and a silver studded leather collar. Her ample breasts are apparent, although one is suggestively and slightly covered by the gauze. It just barely peeks out and the other is the single breast with phallic pretensions. The black netting also conceals the genital region of her body so creating the illusion of a certain femininity. But the reader knows that Sulka the "she-male" (she has built her reputation on her polysemic body) is about to disrobe to reveal the concealed penis. Who is s.he kidding?

The photos on the next three pages attempt to contain the gross enigma that is the 'TV' body, and contain that compelling contradiction: this is called "TV" porn, an acronym for 'transvestite'. The model, however, is a transsexual and the designation of "TV" suggests that what signifies pornographically is the way the body is dressed up or the way the body and the fetish objects operate together to create a vicious collapse and resurrection of sexual boundaries, at the same time.

As the narrative unfolds, the breasts are exposed along with the penis. The placement of the model's hands at her genitals, usually around the end of the penis (sometimes to totally occlude the testicles), ensure that the photo 'moves' in such a way so as to privilege both sexual sites, the feminine and the masculine. The eyes of the reader travel between these two areas; is he asked to believe this is somehow real? The ambi-sexual model is restored to femininity through the fetish accoutrements which adorn the body and place it, more firmly, within a textual sexuality. Her 'she-ness', s.he the "she-male" (not the 'he-female'), is a 'textual fix' (without a "sexual fix"), a location designated by her lingerie and her exaggeratedly feminine hairstyle and make-up.

The reader is spoken to as the prototypical heterosexual consumer of the straight soft-core genre: these photos are

inserted into, for example, Club International, a publication originating from Britain and with a slightly modified version for distribution in the U.S. Here the reader encounters certain fictions. One revolves around the cultural arrangement of clothes which allows the model to masquerade as female. This happens all the while the penis is displayed, thus centering on this impersonation of femininity, so clearly a hyperbolic pose. Another fiction involves the poseur him/her self. The body has its own ornamentation which simulates a desirable bisexuality; it meets the "culturally" feminine fashions and the penis is hyper-visible. This is a curious discourse for the avowedly heterosexual reader. Thus the sexual/cultural narrative and the body textual are exposed as counterfeit. As is the reader.

This model unsettles the "sexual fix" and is a semiotic performance of 'otherness'. This choreography commanding the wandering eye of the reader exposes the reader's fictional performance. Whither belief? Whither the phallus? And what about his desire? This genre is so 'state of the artifice' that (phallic) pretensions are what work. Unlike with all hard-core genres, wherein the text includes ipso facto a male, a penis, phallic desire and any number of phallic equivalents, this soft-core (straight) sub-genre doesn't just tolerate but promotes the penis as a focus of desire. The phallicization of the model would appear to be complete: 'she' modifies 'male', and the

preeminent signifier is the penis, clearly marking 'otherness' on the body itself. The textual construction designates this as a woman with a penis, not a man with breasts. But it is not so much this which is the anomaly, otherwise it would fit into the medical technology. This is a textual body constructed 'other-wise' where the simulation/pretense is the featured attraction. The world of this 'body double' is a simulated world which can never achieve any meaning in the 'real'; it is the "impossible referent" (Pacteau, 1986).

The model appears to possess both the penis and the drive, if only a rather 'limp' desire. She is an active carrier of the fetish, hence the fetishization of desire. When she presents her derrière it is accompanied by the whole lower torso, and therefore the legs, complete with stockings, garters, high heels; she engages the reader with her gaze. The anal resolve also ensures a certain phallic tenacity. Although she already has the penis, it is limp and is rather unremarkable anyway in assigning the model her status: s.he is a "TV" not a "TS" (transsexual). The fetish prevails. Her demeanor connotes a demureness: she draws her shoulders together slightly (this is not a brazen, proud chest), her lips are pouty, she plays with her hair (shyly, coyly) with one arm bent at the elbow and close to her left breast. She looks at the reader but not so beadily. She is dressed-up to look so artificial, a fabrication. Artifice

prevails. S.he is poised for the quiet contemplation of herself as a spectacle (Debord, 1983).

There still appears to be a surplus of phallic endowment; why the doubled effect of the penis with simulated phallic desire? It may be that the phallus exhausts itself when it meets its supposed referent, the penis. Hence the limpness of desire. This model is obviously not castrated, patently so, and her freakish nature is precisely what implicates the reader. If she embodies 'other-wise', if she is not emasculated and refuses to respect categories of difference, the reader must surrender to her power (her omnipotence, as a spectacle, in commanding the gaze), be castrated himself (otherwise he is without loss, without the "cut" and desire is foreclosed).

In 'TV' hard-core the transsexual model engages in hard-core sex with a man. In discursive terms there are specific genital conventions which set up a slippery binary opposition in this sexual puzzle. The narrative, first of all, involves forms of intercourse and penetration, always of the "she-male". Her male partner does not engage the reader visually. He is not penetrated himself, in spite of the presence of 'her' penis (probably rendered perpetually limp through the injection of female hormones) and in spite of the active presence of a dildo. He is often depicted with a non-erect penis and is, like the

'male' counterpart in gay porn, not fetishized.

A salient configuration is actually a form of genital suppression, i.e. the "she-male's" penis is visually subordinate to her testicles. She suppresses her penis in two instances. The first is when she is represented alone and pulls a thin strip of leather (although another phallic understudy) between her legs so that the penis is literally undercover and the testicles, as it were, peek out on either side. The other occurs during anal penetration when s.he pulls her penis up towards her stomach to reveal not only his penis and balls but hers too. Thus she is rendered the more 'feminine' counterpart in the photo. In contrast to the solo "TV" impersonator in soft-core, this one is not costumed in such phallic terms. S.he is a she-male but must also conform to the sexual polarity which has 'otherness' as its defining characteristic. This is still a genre for straight men. Both models must make room for the reader and downplay any enigma which would represent the literal homosexualization of desire.

To sum up, a precarious difference is restored to the transsexual body, exhibited with such provocative technique. Part of what makes it spectacular is that difference appears to be irreconcilable. But in soft-core the feminization of the model is anchored around the fetish accoutrements, culturally

marked as 'feminine'. Her phallicization is achieved through these same fetishes, plus her gaze and her anal pose. This accessorizes the exposed, limp, penis. In hard-core, the 'she-male' shows up phallic otherness as necessary to the desiring subject: she has the penis, but she also wields the dildo. She cavorts with a man, which restores her to the status of a female. The viciousness of the 'TV' genre lies in its openly straddling the cutting edge of difference and indifference.

GAY: SOFT CORE

In gay pornography the male body is set up for spectacular vision, colonization, fetishization (but only some of the time). In soft-core the penis is sometimes depicted in its erect state, but there are no scenarios of penetration or ejaculation. The model touches his genitals with some frequency; this directs the reader's gaze to the privileged male organ. He holds his penis, sometimes with a tight fist, and this has a dual effect (on top of manipulating the look): it makes the penis appear erect and it exposes the testicles and gives them at least equal share in the diegetic framework. When the penis is completely limp it is routinely placed to the side of the balls, resting against the top of the thigh; this also allows for full view of the

testicles. The partially-limp penis endows a rather passive quality to the model, and this overlays with the already narcissistic discourse of which gay porn partakes (this would be true of any discourse which establishes the masculine subject as 'object of the look', for another masculine subject).

His partial phallicization is achieved in other ways. As mentioned previously the model often pierces the reader with his gaze; but if the penis is erect it is presented as disembodied in the sense that in fragmenting the body it is displayed alone and distended from it. Dyer suggests this represents a kind of phallic achievement, the penis trying to "live up to the mystique implied by the phallus" (1982:71). The erect, phantom, penis "looks awkward, stuck onto the man's body as if it is not a part of him" (72), striving to represent phallic mastery. In terms of the larger narrative, the penis is most definitely attached to a body, but the body is also curiously 'feminized'. It is a body for the eighties, betraying an intense narcissistic investment in itself. The result is 'beefcake': exaggeratedly pronounced muscles in the legs, arms and torso. Paradoxically, the muscular form creates a roundness on the body. Hard but curvaceous; not fat, but not lean either. These are the signs of intense labour (years of strenuous work-outs in the gym, invisible production) but signified as the labour of narcissism. A common motif is the gymnasium; a typical fetish would be athletic articles of

clothing on the body surrounded by sports equipment. And the penises are very often abnormally large. Why then also the balls? As noted earlier in the discussion of hard-core, the testicles/balls are the body's 'feminine parts', in this case an androgyny on the body. The body's 'otherness' is its testicles, its feminine counterpart, presented to an 'other', the gay reader. So, the reader is masculinized via à vis the model who shows his 'pouch'. This returns the reader (and his phallus) to the phallic referent: the reader still has the 'real' thing.

There is an ambi-sexual quality in the genital metaphor of the oyster: from Partridge, an "oyster" is slang for both female pudend and semen. In the chapter on "Jewellery and Lingerie" the 'pearl', emitted from the oyster is taken up further to illustrate the ambi-sexual nature of the significations of desire in the pornographic moment. Suffice to say for now that the oyster connotes something shared by both sexes; it is both container and content. Homosexual desire brings the reader close to both his own body and a narcissistic investment in the image. But narcissism is not an object, nor does it, in itself, explain the logic of seduction and desire. These gay images do rest on the side of indifferentiation; still it's an uneasy resting place as 'difference' is resurrected in a biological language made up of androgynous oscillations for both model and reader. To save the moment from total self-absorption and narcissistic death,

this desiring apparatus signifies an 'otherness' on the body itself. When a spread is done on a duo, 'otherness' is conveyed through the use of fetish clothing: one of the models, the 'woman', first appears dressed and is then ceremoniously stripped, little by little, of articles of clothing. 'S/he' too is the one who looks at the reader, suggesting there is a feminine identification with fetishized 'otherness' (more on this later).

Another common theme in the gay soft-core visual imagery is the presentation of the rear end to the camera/reader. The way this is done however differs from its stylization in straight soft-core. In those magazines the female model confronts the reader with her buttocks and, to the point of insinuation, her anus. The gay model, however, makes a pass at the reader without the graphic exposure and invasion of the anus; instead he offers merely the fleshy buttocks, a more feminine concession in what appears at first blush to be a hyper-phallic discourse. A "buttock" (from Partridge) is "a low whore", "a shrew", "a common prostitute... also a pickpocket". The gay model appears to make a number of sexual overtures, not all of them decidedly phallic. When he deploys his buttocks, without the cheeks spread wide to reveal the invasive anus, he is the common harlot, selling his sexual wares to the buyer. The reader then buys a certain identification with 'femininity'; and he will also have his money

spent for him, by the thief in the picture. The model's discursive 'femininity' carries a 'difference' which can then position the reader to desire the model constructed 'otherwise'.

A model reclines, on a bed, or outside on the grass. He lies on his stomach and presents his rear end but is not perched aggressively, on 'all fours' like his female counterpart in straight porn. Along with this softer bodyscape, however, is a peak from under the buttocks and between the legs, at the testicles and penis. This presents a sort of bi-sexual masquerade, a reminder that this is still a body with the potential to penetrate. This rear view is most often accompanied by a 'look'. It might be of 'quiet contemplation', with eyes closed, as though asleep. In this case, the model transgresses the phallic code as he is established as the pin-up. But the more common look engages the reader as voyeur and also phallicizes the model, all the while as he is 'feminized' through his whorish offerings. Perhaps because any gay discourse is already transgressive of the normative 'sexual fix' textual transgressions are played down or at least phallic penetration is not played up. Transgressions thus involve feminization (the testicles, buttocks) to minimize narcissistic death. Because the homosexual reader acknowledges his dual nomination as penetrator-penetrated he is perhaps positioned as the one who desires, as his erotic counterpart, "a woman with a penis" (Freud, 1908) (or

to be a woman with a penis?)).

GAY: HARD CORE

Gay hard core pornography involves two or more models and differs from soft-core in the way it foregrounds penetration and ejaculation. The most common genital configuration involves oral penetration. The close-up shot highly fragments the bodies so that the look of pleasure, a key feature of straight hard-core, is difficult to discern. What is given visual preeminence, however, is the penis. It is partly injected by the mouth of one of the models; unlike in straight hard-core, however, the model performing the blow-job does not engage the reader, and never look at the camera (although the one receiving it will). Most often, it is his fascination with his own penis that sustains his look.

The penis is the spectacle, the proletariat of the body politic, in service of bodily desire: in hard-core it does the body's dirty work. The heightened specularity of the penis and its disembodied state maintain a hyper-phallic mood and the partial narcissistic investment which characterizes the homosexual moment. The erect (and disembodied) penis is the representational equivalent of desire, a stand-in, standing at

attention (saluting the reader, as it were), a phallic distension which signifies desire. It is a desire of the 'same', for the 'same', in that the ideal reader is a male homosexual. But it is also inserted into a discourse of otherness in that it signifies desire on the body of one who is at once the other. The visible masquerade of desire would be the phallic properties of the 'other', the other's bodily signification, more powerful than a penetrating gaze, more powerful than a fetish, more powerful than the 'real' thing: desire (impossible to represent), the penis, the reader's penis.

The phallic desire of the models threatens to feminize the reader: a view of the typically erect penis privileges it and not the testicles (the balls are less often exposed to view; the ratio is easily two-to-one). In a duo, one model's posturing is a mapping of the meaningful body: he very often grasps the bottom of his penis thus masking the testicles. The penis in Triple Treat (a magazine containing scenarios of a threesome) is an organ destined to be devoured. It is referred to as "meat", "sausage", the reduction of the body to its pure instrumental functions. And bodily desire works through its simulations, endlessly commuted in phallic terms, in this case carried out by the phallic term - the penis. This tyrannical and pedantic policing of the body, this extracting from the lyrical body, has the body speaking in disembodied terms. "Grinding sausage

3

Microl

through the grid" is the text which accompanies photographs of the penis extending through the nylon weaving of a lawn chair, as though straining to be significant. It is highlighted as if subject to clinical measurement and an intensification of pleasurable identification. The model looks at it as it pokes through.

In similar fashion, another magazine capitalizes on a relationship of otherness by staging interaction between a black and white model. The black model is the 'other': he is black; he engages the camera as 'women' in straight genres do; the discourse of sexual pleasure is his, it's his injunction to speak. In one photo in this magazine the black man's penis is poised to penetrate through the slats of the back of a chair and the rungs of a ladder. Elsewhere the cock is straining through a chain link fence. In all three scenarios, involving the ladder, the fence and the chair, the penis is introjected by the mouth of the other (white) half of the duo. In both cases - distending from an object, standing on its own with its own ontological status, and the cock's oral intromission - the organ is cut off at one, or both, ends. Given the relative lack of fetish objects in the hard core genre, it appears that the penis itself is fetishized. That is, the man's organ is an ambivalent play on specularly: it's there but only partly there; it is disembodied and so circulates on its own but is always harkening back to the

phallic referent (desire) and the body which (apparently) sustains it. The fetish is invoked in its 'there/not there' status and is powerfully ambivalent. The penis strains to signify phallic desire but is aborted in its attempt. Numerous castrations take place: the penis, as already mentioned, is un-incorporated, has taken leave of the body, is a phantom signifier which disavows its bodily attachment. Within this streamlined and self-referential economy it carries the heavy weight of all manner of signification on its back: it is given over to meaning (it is heavily meaning-ful) and thus simulates the phallus, the man, desire, the reader. And in its disembodied state it signifies all those absences as well (the phallus, the man, desire, the reader). One ambivalence: it is there (partly) but what does it mean? In straining to signify it is emptied of all signification. Another ambivalence.

Another castration: the penis is lost within the mouth of the other, the other male performing the blow job. A few frames after the photos of the fragmented body, however, the erect penis is given full view again. At the hands of its 'owner' it is devoured by its own desire and lies detumescent, surrounded by its milky spendings. The "money shot" is the final unmaning of the male, the scenario of loss. And it signals the loss of meaning, or at least the inevitable limpness of desire in the face of its representations (and of the representation in the

face of desire). Ambivalence implicates the cock once again. It symbolizes the power of difference - signs of the desire of the 'other', the 'other's sacrifice - and a powerful indifference: it is invested as a narcissistic proxy, a physical representative which is the same. Indifference, also, because the reader is suitably absent; that is, he is rarely engaged by the gaze of the model.

Gay pornography works through the reader in ways different from other genres. The penis, for example, is typically represented side-long: it is not poised to aim at the reader; there are no spike heels to do the work of the phallus; nor is there a surplus of anal penetration or anal imagery. These absences somehow exclude the reader. The gay reader is, within the possibilities of the amorous situation, ready and willing to be penetrated. This reader is perhaps more the voyeur, not as disturbed (marked as absence) by the gaze. The fetish is not as strong an acknowledgement of 'otherness' as in the straight genres.

But this gay genre still plays on absence and indifference. Although, the intense and narcissistic focus on the penis, its length, its turgidity, disembodied or penetrating, heightens phallic identification. As a stand-in for desire it is still a limp substitute. Why? If the fetish "is a matter of separation,

segregation, isolation ... of petrification, ossification, glaciation ... of idealisation, mystification, adoration" (Burgin, 1986:106), and if there is a relative absence of fetish accoutrements in the hard-core genre, then there is a surfeit of presence here. Desire is represented through its biological stand-in: the penis is the object of (for) desire and it is the ossified object, that which (if a fetish) denies absence. But in so doing only serves to register that absence on the body itself. Desire written on the (gay) body, the penis-as-fetish, points to a profound discursive absence and narcissistic trap.

This porn (most often) without the object-fetish, without the object to signify 'separation, segregation, isolation', re-presents a closeness to the reader (the homosexualization of desire). He is thus ossified at the keyhole; and the excessively close identification with the bodily objects in the photographs is a narcissism which petrifies (as Burgin notes), a closeness that mirrors death. This is perhaps a genre privileging a bodily articulation which offers up too much to see (as opposed to those genres in which absences/castrations are objectified through the fetish and the mutilated genitalia); and it is in this narcissistic fusion - there appears to be nothing lacking in the field of vision - that equivalent exchange cancels out the phallus, or the reader. If the penis is the fetish it is merely an inflated substitute for the real thing: close, obviously, but

no cigar.

In straight genres the female model treats the reader and the phallus like shit. In this hard-core genre I would argue the phallus is shit, the decomposed vestige of a lost desire or original plenitude, the closest the reader can come to possessing his own likeness. The clearest example of this is in a magazine whose motif is 'otherness' captured through the sexual intimacies between a black and white man. As noted, in this sub-genre it is the black man who is 'serviced', whose visible signs of pleasure and desire are solicited. It is his body which is fragmented, his loss of desire is lamented with the demise of the phallic stand-in, the withering away of the turgid penis with the 'little death' of its author, his orgasm. The black model is also the one who gazes at the reader (he is, in that sense, the 'female' of the couple, again apeing the conventions of straight genres by establishing himself in the 'feminine' rôle). There are a number of photographs of the blow job, one of them constituting the centrefold and one of them on the back cover, in which the black penis extends through the back slats of a wooden chair. And in four photos the white model/partner has his mouth open slightly; i.e., his mouth is not wrapped tightly and intently half way down the penis. The organ is not being devoured but appears to be nibbled on. It also looks like faeces. The reader is treated to a close-up, side-long view of the disembodied penis, the slats of

the chair, the white man's fist close to the balls, almost a full view of his head, and only a vague outline of the black torso which is pushed off to the left side of the photos. The privileged view is of the penis as a black pole, being 'eaten' by the other white model. The associations are unmistakable: the white guy looks like he's eating shit. Surely these are collusions and not accidental; after all, any model could be chosen for this spread and, as well, of course, the white model could just as easily be serviced, displayed, fragmented, disembodied. But he is not. He does the blowing, his nibbling posture resembles the 'vagina dentata'. He does the blowing, the terminal point being the exhausted, wasted, spent and decomposed phallus: the penis as shit.

Perhaps this accounts for the relative absence of anal imagery in gay hard-core. The penis is already in danger of decay. It can signify almost nothing: it can't sustain significations of desire, it cancels itself out in exchange with other penises, working ineluctably towards its own detumescence. And the reader is already in a position to be penetrated. One exception occurs in Triple Treat, a magazine featuring a ménage à trois and with both anal and testicular imageries. This is again a play on difference and indifference as the reader is excluded by representations of, as it were, his own. The actors are indifferent to the reader and invasions of the reader's space are

anal. In one photo with two models, one penetrates the other anally with the following exposure: the model on top rests on the buttocks of his partner, legs spread to present a full view of his invulnerable anus, and his testicles. The genitals of the model on the bottom are quite visible between his slightly parted legs: his penis is aimed at the reader. In straight pornography, soft and hard core, the spike heel penetrates the reader when in the company of anal intrusions (and of course in other scenarios). It has a doubled significance as the phallus, circulating within the same orbit, each reinforcing and exchanging with the other. In this genre, however, there is a marked absence of heels, corporal or on the shoe, and the penis takes up the work of the phallus which puts it in the anal zone: once again it is shit.

All in all, the most interesting signifying feature of gay pornography is the penis. It is charged with representing sexual desire but turns out to be a poor substitute for either desire or difference. In soft-core, the model is pacified - non-erect - which makes way for the turgid desire of the reader. Relations of difference are, on the surface, subverted in gay porn. The investment in narcissism in the gay scenario is privileged up to a point. Dyer, for example, notes the preoccupation with sexual 'selfism' associated with the world of athletics, a world

frequented by gay models (1982). The authoritative voice of narcissism, however, is an indifferentiating death; and perhaps because castrations and loss are already apparent in the narcissistic drama, penetrations are at a minimum. Otherness and difference are only precariously achieved in soft-core through the deployment of the gay model as a more passive spectacle.

In hard-core, the mood is hyper-phallic. The typical hard-core scenario circulates with a closeness, framing both models and reader, which points more forcefully to a narcissistic death. The penis cannot satisfy phallic desire and is always threatened with its own detumescence. The phallus thus is affiliated with loss and death upon consumption. And consumed it is: the penis, first of all, in exchange with another cancels it out in the name of sameness. Its oral or anal intromission and its disembodied state orient it towards a phallic referent in decay. The phallus is not exchanged for the penis either; but it may be exchanged in the "cut". The hard-core gay discourse pretends to the fiction of the phallus.

Conclusion:

The genital configurations in all pornographic genres are not a simple matter of an obscene visual excess. Instead, what is 'pornographic' about the deployment of the genitals extends beyond their biological designation. In the straight genres, soft and hard, the female models transgress their "sexual fix" even though their genital exposure would seem to amplify their status as 'different' than the reader. But what begins as the biological demarcation of difference quickly moves into 'otherness' through the textual deployment of the genitals. The approximation of androgyny code is achieved through the masculine writing on top of the feminine form. In soft-core, this is contrived in the subjection of the milky, maternal, breasts to the semen-filled, singular phallus. Even the genitals are a choreography of two partners. The sight of the castrated feminine form as 'difference' becomes, under the sign of desire, an entreaty for the reader to encounter his other. Not in the sense that he is searching for his other feminine side, but more in the sense that in this exchange both model and reader must release signs of desire as part of the logic of seduction. The reader wants to see signs of her desire, her desire to see signs of his; just as he'll give up signs of his for her. That is the reader's dispossession. The spectacle of castration may unsettle but it's a complicated transaction. Because it is paired with other penetrating simulacra, and yet so clearly prominent, the

anatomy of pornography enters the discourse of the other. What eroticizes the genital representation is its metonymic affiliation with the fetishes, and the "anal universe" (Grunberger, 1966). The impudent connotations of the posterior region and the intrusions of anality suggest not just a model poised to invade; she offers that orifice which both model and reader share. This is the maneuver of indifferenciation.

In hard-core, the ambivalence is more viciously pronounced. Hard-core partly flattens out difference through the cloning of signs of masculinity. Difference is problematized around managing the presence of the penis, the penis in intromission (orally, vaginally and anally) and the penetrating orifices of the female. The transgressions are the borrowing from the 'other' to incite desire. In so doing, difference is a slow dissolve toward androgyny.

'TV' and gay pornography begin with a structure of indifferenciation. But the ambivalence which characterizes the straight genres also pertains to these as well. That is, difference is a play on the textual 'other' and resurrected through the strategic genital, and fetish, deployments. These last two genres demonstrate the limpness of the penis as a signifier of desire and, in general, the cracks in the phallic code which permit bodily divestment (of the male - both model and

reader) in the pathetic striving to represent desire.

The next chapter investigates another bodily discourse, that which organizes the structure of the gaze. Conventions of the gaze within pornography assign the power of the 'look' to the female model, inciting a spectacle that provokes, unsettles, penetrates. This marks another transgression of the "sexual fix".

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1. John Berger, in Ways of Seeing (Harmondsworth: British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books, 1972), distinguishes between depictions of the 'naked' and the 'nude' in artistic traditions. To be naked, he writes (paraphrasing Kenneth Clark), "is simply to be without clothes", while nudity is an artform, drawing from conventions which dress it up; it assumes a number of social disguises. I'm not sure this distinction is useful and I would not go so far as Berger in suggesting that a body can be depicted "simply" without clothing and thus rendered almost meaningless. As in medical discourses, for example, the body is still problematized around gender identity and this is a social construction. Affiliation to the law of sexual difference means there is one identity, not a plurality of sexual identities, thus genitalia becomes a kind of dressing on the body. Also, Berger writes that the 'nude' is more reflexively social as it presupposes a spectator, is put together with the ideal viewer in mind. However, I would argue that all texts invoke a reader and all discourses implicate a 'speaker' and a 'listener'.
2. Dworkin, as just one example, writes: "In the male system, women are sex; sex is the whore. The whore is pornê, the lowest whore, the whore who belongs to all male citizens: the slut, the cunt. Buying her is buying pornography. Having her is having pornography. Seeing her is seeing pornography. Seeing her sex, especially her genitals, is seeing pornography"; and in reference to depictions of pregnant women within certain specialized genres: "The women display themselves, display their sex, display their bellies. The huge belly is fetishized but the whore behind it stays the same: the cunt showing itself" (1981:202, 222).
3. In "Sex, signification and pleasure," Mort writes of discourses through which sexuality is defined and regulated "as integral to their functioning", e.g., the family. One of course would add the pornographic discourse(s); cf. Mort in Formations of Pleasure, Formations Collective (eds.), London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983.
4. Robert C. Bak, in "The Phallic Woman," The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child, 23, 1968, discusses the "breast-penis equation" in a clinical case; and, J. C. Flügel also notes the "unconscious equation of breast and penis ... the breast is also known sometimes to play a part in the formation of the castration complex," "Polyphallic Symbolism and the Castration Complex," International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 5, 1924:171.
5. The phrase "the impossible referent" is from Francette Pacteau, "The Impossible Referent: representations of the androgyne," in Formations of Fantasy, edited by Victor Burgin,

James Donald and Cora Kaplan, London: Methuen, 1986.

6. The phrase "this woman is her own capital investment" is from a talk by Linda Hutcheon, "The Post-Modern Erotic", presented at "The Semiotics of Eroticism" conference, sponsored by the Toronto Semiotic Circle and the International Summer Institute for Semiotic and Structural Studies, 13 June, 1987.

7. The phrase is from TV Tight Ass, a pornographic publication which depicts transsexuals in feminine drag.

8. Germaine Greer refers to the female body as a "human spittoon". cf. The Female Eunuch, London: Paladin, 1970:254.

9. cf. Raja Silverman, "Fragments of a Fashionable Discourse," in Studies in Entertainment, Tania Modelski (ed.), Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986.

10. Henry Lihn provides a case study in which the subject had fantasies of "being kept in a cage or enslaved by dark-skinned Indian or Negro women whom he obediently served by performing cunnilingus...." cf. "Fetishism: A Case Report," International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 51, 1970:353.

Chapter 3

THE GAZE

As outlined in Chapter 1, a central feminist criticism is levied against porn for its alleged construction of 'woman' as a sexual spectacle. The idea is that within the pornographic discourses (not unlike any other photograph or film which assumes a male spectator, or sometimes female, cf. Doane, 1987) the male spectator possesses the gaze, a gaze used to appropriate if not conquer the 'woman' in the representation. Within the orthodox feminist literature this reputedly unequal relationship, based largely on the active aim of looking, is taken for granted. As noted in the discussion of this literature, any notion of a mediated text is elided in favour of the radical separation of subjects and objects, and meaning that is somehow acquired outside of exchange. For some, the activity of looking is theorized around the 'pleasure in looking' itself, as in the work on the cinematic apparatus and structures of identification in the spectator-text relationship (Mulvey, 1975; Mulvey, 1981; Doane, 1981; Kuhn, 1982; Kaplan, 1983). These analyses assign a powerful scopic impulse (from 'scopophilia', the love of, and fascination in, looking) to the male viewing subject. Generally it is assumed that this drive stems from the castration scenario; that is, the phantasied presence of the castrated woman marks the

absence which signifies the symbolic phallus (more on this in 'The Fetish'). What the feminine form lacks is supposed to structure relations of difference; this suggests a phallogentrism, whereby the threat that the female image generates is managed through the "determining male gaze" (Mulvey, 1975:11). The controlling gaze is instituted to allay castration fears (for Freud, at first a visual apprehension); it symbolically endows the woman with the missing penis and elects the fetish to stand in and, ultimately deny difference. Thus the elaboration of the visual narrative is to subject the discourse and female desire to the control of the 'patriarchal gaze' (Kaplan, 1983).

The classic narrative text involves the possibility of three 'looks' (Kaplan, 1983): (i) of the characters within the visual text. Their gazes at each other organize the "to-be-looked-at-ness" of a (usually female) character; men gaze at women who in turn receive the gaze and are determined by it (Mulvey, 1975; Kaplan, 1983; Willemen, 1980). (ii) the look of the spectator, engaged to identify with the dominant gaze in the film, i.e. that of the male character; and (iii) the appropriation of the look of the camera which also directs the viewer's gaze and selects 'what is worth looking at' (Kaplan, 1983). All of these three 'looks' structure the pleasurable narrative and suture the viewer, through these visual

machinations, into its operations. The one look which is missing is the one which would disturb the complacency and coherence of the viewer's imaginary relationship with the text: that is the look of any of the characters on the screen, towards the audience. That would be, in effect, to be 'caught looking'. One of the determining features of the pornographic manoeuvre, however, is precisely this "fourth look": the model possesses the gaze, directly addresses the reader, and in so doing "destabilizes that position and puts it at risk" (Willemsen, 1980:56). This is a curious return of the look, a possession of the model which challenges her object status and endows her with a penetrating gaze, and all it may connote: "If the woman looks, the spectacle provokes, castration is in the air" (Heath, 1978:92). The association of blindness (in women) with loss or frustration of sexual desire is a familiar discursive strategy in films (Williams, 1984; Doane, 1986).¹

The gaze and specular identification are central to the workings of visual imaginaries. Mulvey's argument concerning the construction of sexual difference in and through "erotic ways of looking and spectacle", is by now classic (1975). Doane also argues that the cinematic apparatus operates around the axes or twinned oppositions of seeing/being seen and male/female (1981). The setting up of these axes is germane to discussions of narratives which are also restricted to the still (pornographic)

photograph: it is saturated with sexual meaning and the formal strategies of elaborating difference. These concepts, however, do not represent antinomies when applied to an analysis of the gaze for it is contradictory and oscillating. As will be demonstrated, the look may be possessed by both the reader and the subject of the representation. The subject positions of male/female are only as good as their discourses: i.e., designations of masculine/feminine do not represent a picture of unity but are themselves unstable, shifting and rife with cross-currents. As noted by Rodowick, the "look" engages both 'subject' and 'object' and circulates within an economy of imaginary absences. There is "the act of the look, but also... the return of the look from the imaginary other in which that vision is verified" (1982:7).

Visible Maneuvers

According to recent developments in film theory and its appropriation of Lacanian psychoanalysis, within the spectator-text relationship, the subject is sutured at the moment of reading and is formed in specularity (Kuhn, 1982). The photo is "read" in its visual manifestation; the photos in pornographic genres position a sexed spectator/reader who is enlisted scopically in their meaning. The notion of suture, as providing

an optical point-of-view, is easily applicable to the photographic enterprise. Photographic spreads "move" (or direct our eyes to do so; Lacan notes how anything visual "is a trap ... as subjects, we are literally called into the picture," 1981:93, 92); similarly, an individual photograph contains a "punctum", that punctuation which marks the photograph according to the logic of its details (Barthes, 1981). Moreover, photographs "mean" in structurally significant ways and one of the ways this is elaborated is through the look or gaze. Within classical suture theory (Oudart, 1977-78), the logic of the narrative is revealed through the functioning of its images. The profilmic event depends on absence to signify presence and, particularly, sutures the reader as he (in this case) fills in the gap created by absence on the screen- or the photograph. This presence/absence is negotiated through the structuring of looks or gazes to appropriate the look or gaze- the subject position- of the reader. Oudart's phrase, the "Imaginary of the filmic space", refers to the dependency of presence/absence in the creation of meaning in the spectator-text relationship. The look/gaze is central to the Imaginary during whose reign identity is established as mis-recognition, alienation, difference and loss. The "mirror phase" is the dual-sided metaphorical mirror-reflection: the child is inscribed in difference and separation upon its visual recognition AND through the look returned from the mother which signals a separation from the

initial merger with her body.

Within the scopic economy, and vis à vis regimes of representation, the spectator may be activated in one of two looks (which, it will be argued, can loosen and complement each other). There is the narcissistic look and the voyeuristic look. Narcissism refers to a look which enhances identification with one's own self or body; the voyeuristic look is allied with the look of the camera (Kuhn, 1982). The typology outlined by Kaplan is useful for the analysis of the pornographic gaze as possessed by the model(s) and, in the spectator-text relationship, elicited from the reader. The twin themes of subjectivity and desire are centered on visual moments, perceptions of 'looking/being looked at' whereby 'perspective' is the metaphor for signification. Different discourses of desire operate in pornographic genres. Models, male and female, address each other; that is they assume positions of desire through modalities of the structure of the gaze. The models address the camera/spectator to anchor the narrative by inviting voyeurism, narcissism or combinations thereof. The reader is both included in the construction of the sexual narrative and threatened with occlusion through the denial of his "space" within the movement of photography.

What follows is an analysis of the machinations of the

pleasurable gaze, by genre.

The Gaze in Straight Pornography: SOFT-CORE

The key distinguishing feature of soft-core pornography is the female model represented alone. Desire and pleasure circulate around her body, its codified display and highly fetishistic adornment, and her signifying look which directly addresses either the reader or parts of her own body.

Typical of the soft-core genre is a visual narrative with its own closure. The model is the only individual occupying the diegetic space and photographs are arranged strategically so that the 'story' reaches its climax with the centrefold. This is preceded by a spread of photographs which are smaller in size than the centrefold (sometimes three and four to a page) and contain images of models engaged in activities, some sexual (e.g. only partially clad, fondling themselves, etc.), some not (e.g. talking on the telephone, 'portrait' shots, etc.), and in various stages of undress. This is all simulated foreplay. This raises questions about the positioning of the reader, through the gaze, in this particular narrative style, his engagement with the construction of the narrative and the central discursive space given to displays of the female body, symbolically adorned as

gender-specific and sexual. The desiring spectator is addressed in ways which allow him to participate in and complete the play-of-desire of the model.

A 'story' often accompanies and anchors the photographic spread, depicting the 'lifestyle' of the model. It presents a general portrait of her life and many interests, hobbies and fantasies (not just sexual), always with emphasis on her availability (she is single) and unceasing energy for sexual encounters (often with the proviso that sex combined with love is the ultimate expression of passion and desire, even for the Playboy centrefold). The idea seems to be that the 'girls' are sexy and daring but not too sluttish, really the girl next door. They cannot be available for every man, otherwise the reader would be in a position of having to compete for what, in fantasy, is the continuous presence of embodied desire. And there is the look which acknowledges the illicit nature of the consumption of pornographic material: the sidelong, sly glance which barely whispers, "This look is for you, which only you can see." It connotes, in its slyness, the clandestine and furtive nature of the exchange. What is really the generalized address (any adult in the public domain can buy and read these magazines) appears destined for the individual consumer, and only him (i.e., sexual consumption is still rendered private and essentially monogamous), through the suturing gaze of the model.

Alternately, there is the 'look' of pleasure: the closed eyes, the open mouth, often with tongue protruding. This is the spectacular look: it accompanies auto-erotic activity, fondling of the genitals or breasts. These instances invite the voyeuristic gaze, the reader occupying the position of the camera. The model and her self-possessed look (her eyes are closed) threaten to exclude the reader through self-satisfaction of her own desire; however, the self-contained look forms part of a larger visual narrative in which the reader has already been addressed via the gaze of the model and thus is already inscribed in sexual scenarios which demand his presence. (The model also knows she is being looked at, that she is on display, even if she is not actively catching the eye of the reader.) The photographs offer little diegetic variation; they are constructed and move in such a way that distractions and extraneous details are kept to a minimum. The model's body or parts of it, in fact, is usually given over to the full visual space of the photograph, leaving... what kind of space for the reader? He occupies the space of the voyeur and his presence is signified specularly: as long as he can 'see' her watching him, watching her. Circuits of desire are in place.

The model's look of pleasure is also the look of love's labour but it is more than a labour of love: in this libidinal

economy investments are not gratuitous. What is exacted from the model's face is the industrious look of bureaucratic administration: the functionary's ministerial efforts. In this visual moment the 'look' is embellished and weighted with the responsibility of the display of the objects of one's labour. The laborious, indefatigable, never idle machinations, all in the service of the production of value/meaning. These are the official discourses of sex; which is to invoke Foucault's intensification and "analytical multiplication of pleasure", "power... brought to bear on the body and on sex" (1980:48, 47). Pornographic bodies are discursive bodies written on; and the signs of this intensification are registered on the models' face in conjunction with the body saturated with desire (other discourses surround the fetish, to be taken up in other chapters). The face conveys the look.

The epicene eye

The visual moment in any medium (and one would argue this is especially so with pornography) is a courtship between image and looking, the vehicle of which is the eyes, those which manage the look. In the case of pornographic photographs there are models who 'look', and who solicit a series of looks from the reader. This solicitation involves an exchange of looks

circulating within a libidinal economy. The investment is in a sexual discourse privileging a commerce which is by definition ocular, not carnal. To speak of the gaze is to invoke a metaphysics of staring: the gaze is not the glance, but the stare, the "gaze gone hard ... tends toward a certain violence, a will to penetrate, to pierce, to fix in order to discover the permanent under the changing appearances, which implies a certain anxiety in the relation between spectator and object seen" (Caws, 1986:270).

The eye is an orifice, the window to the bodily soul, an opening which takes in the perceptible world. It is the body's peep-hole; an eye-opener, after all, is that which shocks and surprises, a revelation, to have seen the light, an act of revealing to view, an enlightening disclosure. A hollow organ, the eyeball is penetrable, like the eye of the needle, that through which thread passes. Its bisexual qualities are nonetheless apparent: the eye is also an agent of illumination, providing light, an orifice of projection. To "cast an eye on", "lay an eye on", to "have eyes for", to "look into something": the eyes are active agents of capture, possession, penetration. They do not just receive but they take in and they do this through the light they shed. In short, the eye is figuratively feminine and masculine. Like the eye of the camera, it is an aperture which admits light; as a metaphor for looking, however,

it is aligned with a masculine trajectory and the ability to extend vision to the spectacular. Ocular penetration offers up documentation of the perceptible world, hence in-sight; a visible inventory which is partisan from the start (like the 'reality' captured before the camera lens).

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder; and this signifies an aesthetic or intellectual perception or appreciation. To "have an eye for" is to submit a point of view or judgement. In this predatory way there is power in the workings of the gaze. Lacan speaks of the voracious eye, the "appetite of the eye on the part of the person looking", how "envy" ("invidia") stems from "videre" (to see, [1981:105-115]).

There is an epicenity to the eye and its inscription in the gaze. Power may also reside in the eye of the beholder and in this case is shared by the model who is the subject doing the looking. This is clearly visible in the pornographic photograph which organizes the eyes around the workings of desire as they permit a reciprocity between both masculine and feminine possessions, i.e. one captures at the same time as one is being caught.

Modes of ocular insight

The most notable opposition in all genres is that between opened and closed eyes. The opened eyes project a certain kind of look: they are beady eyes, with lids in slight descent. These are not wide open, youthful, innocent and naive. The beady eyes are like the beads they connote: small, round, "shiny with interest or greed" (Webster's New Collegiate, 1976). A bead is also a "small knob in the front sight of a gun"; to "draw a bead on" is to take aim at something (Concise Oxford, 1976). These eyes like beads (also a perforated object for threading) are taking careful aim at their object, are eyes in focus. The beady-eyed look is guilty of knowing what's going on, complicit in the illicit, a feminine surrender to the 'masculinity' of the desiring subject. That is, the model bears the marks of masculinity in her eyes/look. The eyes of her desire are signs of masculine projection, an erection in front of the male viewer.

Beady eyes are "small and bright" (Concise OED). The beady eyes do not provide the most candid view (they are not wide open to all possibilities). They are hiding something, are not

without guile and are subtly cunning: the one with beady eyes is not to be trusted. The less than candid model is the one who acknowledges the illicit exchange of sexual glances with a photograph, with a stranger. The illicit exchange threatens the stability of both subjects: the subject of the representation, she who desires to be looked at and in so doing carries the mark of his- the other's- desire; and the subject who is reading the representation, who is enlisted in his 'feminine' surrender to penetration. The model's piercing acknowledgement exposes the non-spontaneity of the profilmic event, its staginess, and reproduction (simulation) for the camera.

This desiring female subject is looking, casting an eye at the "apple of her eye", that highly cherished object. The "apple" of her eye can also refer to, according to the *OKD* and Partridge's *Historical Slang*, the pupil, eyeball, the object of one's desire and the slang for 'testicles' hence the sexual core of the reader. There is a symbolic rapport between the eyes and testicles which invites their sexual affinity even further. Both are associated with "light" (the eyes take it in and throw light on, eyes "see the light"; the testicles are the apple of the eye and provide the seed or the light of life, they emit fluids of seminal light). and both are claims to "truthfulness": the "eyewitness" is the one who bears testimony based on his own observation. 'Testicle' is derivative of the Latin 'testis' or

witness and is thus related to 'testimony' and 'testify', both referring to the provision of evidence, demonstrable proof, a declaration, confession or affirmation based on the "truth". To give evidence, to testify, to bear witness: she is witness to his virility, calls upon him to provide evidence of it and offers up her body as testimony to his virility/masculine desire. All of this she does through gazing.

The slightly shut eyes, focussed intently on the unsuspecting viewer (the beady eyes), are not eyes wide open. Again, from Partridge: to "have one's eyes opened" is to be robbed. Hence the "eye-opener" is the lesson learned, instruction for the uninitiated. The model in question, however, is already 'in the know', not wide-eyed and bushy-tailed, but savvy enough to give away her desire only once she sees evidence of his.² This she demands; nothing can be taken from her. Thus, the look has its passive and active sides. The model in this case looks as a projection of her desires; she also desires to be looked at and solicits this visual rapport with her desiring reader.

The viewer is engaged in the fantasy of the satisfaction of his desire. This involves the visible expression of the model's desire, projections which put her within a simulated masculine discourse, the partial masculinization of her body, its

'positions' and its symbolic adornment. The opened eyes are the window by which this desire is read, entered. But the eyes opened (and ready for business) emit more than they take in, hence they are beady. Beads are often sacred relics, icons of religious ritual (rosary beads, the largest being the 'paternoster', the Name of the Father); beads are also jewels. The beady eyes in this case are fixated and focussed on the 'apple' of the model's eye, that is, the 'apple' of the reader: his "family jewels". The look is 'eyeball to eyeball': an intense gaze, a "close confrontation" (Concise OED). The beady eyes engage the desire of the 'other'. And the beady eyes are ambi-sexual: possessed by a woman who longs to be possessed by a man and exposes her yearning through a wishful simulation of the possession. In so doing incites his desire. In so doing she possesses the family jewels with her insightful/inciteful gaze.

The eyes can be a projection of desire. The effect of the sexually explicit and illicit unsettles the reader (he with the open eyes) as the sole power behind the gaze. The model is empowered. As the saying goes, to "have someone by the balls" is to have someone utterly in one's power, especially of women over men (Partridge). She catches the viewer by the eye-ball.

The closed eyes which accompany a display of auto-eroticism do not simply denote the creation of a passive spectacle,

however. Eyes closed in simulated pleasure or ecstasy follow, in the photographic spread, the look which has already penetrated: there isn't a singular or unproblematic eye. The closed eyes prevent ocular penetration of that orifice. However, although the eyes may be closed, covered by lids, sunglasses or the brim of a hat, they are viewed in conjunction with parts of the body that are offered for penetration. As will be shown later, closed eyes consort with parts of the body, and its symbolic adornment, masculinized to the point of being capable of penetrating themselves.

Consider two literal renditions of photographs in which penetrating techniques circulate around the discursive body and the fetish:

(1) "Kathy" is lying on a small coffee-table, head at one end, rear end resting at the other, her legs bent to balance her pointed toes on the floor. The view we have of her is from the side, a long-shot. This is what we see: her back is arched, her head tilted back on the table (eyes closed), her chin is in the air, and her breasts are protruding with fully erect nipples. "Kathy" is sporting white lace finger-less gloves, her hands are resting just above her breasts on her collar bone. Her stockings are studded with small shiny beads, and ballet slippers encase the feet, similarly arched to point the toes, elongate the feet

and legs, and support the upward-arching of the back. Two areas of her body are 'highlighted' through the use of beams of light which appear to enter from an unseen window. Each beam points to, and highlights, both the breasts and the pubic area such that both are shiny and glowing. The former - her 'highbeams' - are erect and looking to penetrate; the latter a pleasure zone highlighted for penetration. The model in this picture does not possess the incisive gaze but her body is no passive spectacle/receptacle either.

(2) "Susan" "loves to flirt with strange, unsuspecting men by turning them on only with her beautiful brown eyes." She shades her eyes with sunglasses while she spreads her legs, bent at the knees, to reveal wider possibilities; at the same time her breasts are in the path of a light-beam (the "eye-beam" of the reader). "Susan's" hair may also partially occlude her vision; she then sports a man's tie whose tip ends at her most feminine point of entry. Her long, blood-red finger nails, in the closed-eye shots, are placed on the pubic or anal area, signalling again points of entry, as well as the body's protrusions. The heel of her shoe serves the same visual and phallic function as she contorts her body to aim it (the high heel) directly at the vaginal orifice.

This is the masculinization of the model's desire to

satisfy the viewer's desire. The closure of the model's eyes does not simply mean that she is looked at because in fact she is doing something: desire is written on her body and her self-containment (the apparent exclusion of the viewer) is still an active solicitation of the interests or desire of the reader. The model knows she is being looked at- she has already engaged the reader through the previous exchange of looks and glances. However, she is not merely reduced to an orifice (she has put the lid on that orifice that invites ocular penetration) as her body bears the simulated marks of masculinization, male insight. Her physique carries, its own projections, erections, protuberances: the breasts- or in slang, 'headlights'- are prominent and thrusting outwards or the nipples are fully erect. And excrescences are abundant (the anus is a favourite offering/invasion). This is the simulated world of sex, the "delirious surround" of the spectacular, the consumption of meaning which defies representation (Foster, 1985:90). The display is not but one half of the real/representation juxtaposition but is itself a simulated world of signs which anticipate and shape the real. How do you represent desire, that which is only ever the desire of an Other, which only exists in a non-referential exchange and is not the property of One? In this case it is written on the body in a series of simulated codes; the body only shows up simulation as the real reproduction (Baudrillard, 1983). The masculinized body of the woman has no

referent but is a composite of signs which only refers to signs of masculinity anyway: it is hard, taut, turgid with desire and bearing protuberances loaded with indices of wishful penetration, the desirous 'be-longings' (Chevalier, 1989) of an androgynous commerce. A masculine code is an integral part of the female body.

In soft core, the model's gaze penetrates when her eyes are open, beady. The look is direct in its ability to pierce and hold the reader; alluring, inviting, and surely unsettling. The model eyes the viewer flirtatiously, slyly, knowingly. Her glances are coquettish; her come-hither looks acknowledge the dalliance of a reader engaged in the illicit. Part of the allure of pornography is this fantasization of desire involving the illusory dyad and not the woman shared by other men. The look is a 'peek-a-boo' look which also acknowledges the 'naughtiness' of the 'public' consumption of the quintessentially private act. The open eyes are a prelude to what will follow: the eyes will close, the model will engage in auto-erotic activity, and the body will be offered up for visual entry. This may explain why the reader relinquishes the privilege of the power of looking and allow himself to be penetrated, if not virtually castrated, by her gaze. Although the reader may long to be caught by her eyes, his power in gazing is partially restored when the model surrenders hers. The closed eyes are the picture of simulated

desire, the foreplay which precedes the 'real' thing yet to come. And what is to come, penetration of her, is signified by her body simulated with the possessive marks of her desire for this. This is pronounced and visible when she relinquishes the power behind her looking, when she, at the same time, puts closure on her "eye-hole" ("hole to look through", Concise OKD) and the option of being penetrated there.

The look of the coquette solicits the reader in another important way. It is dangerous, insinuating and works diachronically towards its own antidote, i.e. the look which displays pleasure at the model's own hands, thus to the apparent diegetic exclusion of the reader. However, although masturbatory/auto-erotic sequences are very common in soft-core pornographic material, the reader may project his desire onto/into other parts of the model's body as he can see her desire written on it (protuberances, openings, projections and 'be-longings'). And this will occur after the reader has been enlisted in a penetrating exchange.

A photo spread entitled, "An Evening Off", is typical of the solipsism of the desiring subject. A variety of shots and poses depict a model carressing her legs and breasts in obvious masturbatory pleasure. Of seven photographs, two contain muted glances (chin tilted downwards; head horizontal and off to the

side) at the camera; in another scene of self-contained desire the model describes posing "as if the camera were my lover and I was sharing my entire body with it": a body invaded by the eye of the camera. In the other photos the 'look' is of concentrated pleasure, eyes closed, open mouth, the look of ecstasy. Her solipsism however is complemented by the simulated marks of the spectator's inclusion into the textual body. These are the masculine marks of her desire for the reader's desire: the finger nails, the heel, the erect nipples, and orifices offered for possession, penetration. The look of self-containment, the exclusion of the male reader from the diegetic space of the photograph, is accompanied by full genital display or the offering of buttocks and anus to the camera- but with facial signifiers of pleasure visibly flaunted by the head turned and tilted upwards, face contorted. A small narrative text accompanies the auto-erotic scenes; the models' desire is further enunciated through her own confessional statements: "Sometimes, I just have to take an evening off and really get into myself. That way I make sure I make myself happy- and boy, do I!" This occurs after she has already "gotten into" him; she now solicits his look.

The observations made above raise questions about identification in the libidinal/narrative economy and the exploitation of sexual difference within the pornographic moment.

How and through what mechanisms is the male reader represented to himself? What, in these cases, is "the spectatorial experience of sexed individuals" (Rodowick, 1982:5)? The separation of subject and object in this exchange is not so unproblematic; nor is the look (of the reader) a picture of unity. It is an imbrication of both narcissistic and voyeuristic components. For example, the viewing subject is placed in front of a representational object; he then occupies the imaginary space between himself and the text, and in an exchange which mimics the fetishistic relation which Marx describes in Capital: "There... is a definite social relation between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things" (1887:72). The fetishism OF commodities, or objects, also requires a fetishism FOR subjects and "the peculiar social character of the labour that produces them" means that objects create subjects and vice versa (Marx, 1887:72).³

Is there pleasure in this for the male viewer? Although a popular 'look' is the sly one, coy and cunning, this knowing look is accompanied by a sharpness which is penetrating and which fixes the gaze of the viewer. The model has a security about her, a sureness of motive, a subtle command. She is the designing woman, not without guile, whose cunning device is her eyes: the gaze attracts and locks the look of the reader, no innocent bystander he. Her eyes enter his bodily soul (which the

eyes, after all, mirror): he is caught. But pornography is not about sex; and representations of the model who insinuates, and the viewer who is interpollated (and interpellated) in a perverse cultural role-reversal, suggest the construction of subjectivities and sexualities rife with contradictions as well as the uneasy separation of subjects and objects.

How can this be accounted for in psycho-analytic terms? In terms of libidinal and symbolic economies? The discursive position of the model invokes the operations of the "cut" and challenges the "simple equation of exhibitionism with passivity, and voyeurism with aggression" (Silverman, 1979:5). This is the theorizing of pleasure found in subject-ion, in passivity. In this case the spectator is male and it is suggested by Silverman, via Lacan, that there is pleasure in submission to painful experiences, in their "mastery of us" (1979:3). Lacan's rhetorical subject is formed in alienation, visual and linguistic, from the signifying 'other', and sees itself from the vantage point of its 'otherness'. The ego's ideal image is an impossibility, established in separation from its picture of unity, the original plenitude which lends the subject a specular image of coherence, albeit fictive (Silverman, 1979; Lacan, 1977). The process by which the subject assumes an image is "predicated on the painful sense of loss" (Silverman, 1979:3) associated with the 'otherness' which is 'mirrored' back to it.

The 'other', polysemic in its ability to continuously signify, introduces a "'gap' into the operations of the subject... keeping the goals of desire in perpetual flight" (Bowie, 1982:134).

Visual imaginaries can thus position the subject at the point of his cultural integration. Silverman's point is that this is a nexus of both pleasure and pain- the pain of alienation from the mother/other is constitutive of subjects. The passivity of the male reader, at the moment of suture, is a narrative of loss and plenitude. The photographic text implies a relationship between the shot (plenitude, the picture, the mirror) and the subject (absence, the missing element), that which perceives the shot (Silverman, 1979). That "missing element" (gap, loss) calls upon the discursive subject to stand in, assume the "position of a taking-the-place-of" to provide closure or imaginary coherence to "reading" or cultural integration (Heath, 1981:84; Silverman, 1979). In terms of the drama of the subject, the "cut" is intimately bound with the suturing process (Heath, 1981:85). The "cut" is the rupture between the 'I' and the 'Other':

"The cut which severs the imaginary plenitude of the shot also provides the means by which it is integrated discursively, just as the splittings by which the subject is constituted provide the means by which he/she is integrated culturally. There is this difference, however: the viewing subject, for whom the isolated shot represents an imaginary plenitude, has already moved beyond the mirror stage, and is fully contained within the Symbolic. Thus the moment of the cut can only be experienced by that subject as a re-integration of image into syntactic structure, as a repetition of the transition from imaginary to symbolic. The

viewing subject has learned to take pleasure in the pain of imaginary loss, in the re-enactment of the traumatic dialectic of presence and absence" (Silverman, 1979:4).

Pornographic photographs play on a watchful eye and a potent gaze, both of the model and the spectator. Paradoxically, the model carefully 'eyes' her subject with a vigilance verging on the microscopic panopticon. The eyes of the model and her 'look' may exclude the reader but can clearly activate his desire: in this dyadic relationship model and reader only have eyes for each other. Instabilities around masculine subject positions are held in view at the moment of encountering 'the representation'. Suture which structures the availability of the subject founded on absence (Heath, 1981:85) entices a cultural (and psycho-analytic) re-reading of simple equations of: sadism/active looking and masochism/passive display. As well, these two categories are not binary exclusives. Castration of the male (submission to the Law, language and desire) is part of access to the Symbolic and crucial to machinations of desire. How better is this signified than by the male who, in his representational equivalent, is positioned so ambiguously?⁴

Is the gaze male? What I have attempted to demonstrate in the preceding is that the manipulation of the gaze is central to the formal features of the pornographic genres. In so doing, I have emphasized a number of points which situate the 'look'

within a problematic of identity and dislocation. The pornographic consumer, to be sure, is enlisted scopically; what he looks at is problematized around the metaphorical eye. The eye, however, is never neutral. If the model's eyes are shaded they prevent entry by that orifice; at the same time the gaze of the viewer may be directed towards another orifice, or fetish, or simply the outline and surface of the body. But what stimulates the pornographic movement is the privileging of the model with the beady, penetrating eyes. She is the model who solicits the attentions of the reader, making a visual pass at him, projecting her gaze at the reader, taking aim at him. Her incisive and penetrating gaze meets the reader. What makes the moment pornographic is this partial masculinization of the ocular orifice, an orifice which begins as ambi-sexual, i.e. it can receive as well as emit. As part of the pornographic maneuver the eye is aggressive, acquisitive, possessive: it invades the space of the reader, implicating him not only in the activity of looking but also as the one who is looked at.

In hard-core, the 'looks' must compete with other graphic configurations of genital display, sexual activity and the fetish object. However, the 'look' still signifies in important ways: as a signifier of pleasure; as part of the narrative economy which directs the gaze of the reader toward the erogenous zones; and as a acknowledgement of the reader.

The Gaze in Straight Pornography: HARD-CORE

The hard-core genre is the "eye-popper". In it the reader is privy to the graphic "exposing to view certain acts or anatomies" (Brown, 1981:5) and is voyeuristically ensconced at the peep-hole. His projection is also a visual one: his eyes "pop out of his head" in shock, fascination, identification and desire. At the same time he is also emasculated. To have eyes "pop out of the head" is to lose one's eyesight, which in colloquial terms implies unexpected and very intimate view of a member of the opposite sex (Partridge). Paradoxically, it is then the viewer who is robbed, whose eyes are opened in the act of gazing, who surrenders to the penetrating gaze of the model, who is disempowered, rendered sight-less by the female "eye-popper"?

Scenarios of blindness are associated with the Oedipal drama: guilt and castration. As noted above, in the classic narrative film woman's loss of vision is aligned with some other medical, sexual disturbance, or as punishment for 'seeing too much', for appropriating the 'masculine' gaze. Metaphors of lost vision are the somatic inscription of a limp or repressed desire. This is precisely the look that the pornographic model

appropriates, in the sense of stealing it from the viewer: "With a cock in her eye: hence sexually desirous" (Partridge, emphasis mine.).

The look of the reader of hard-core pornographic material is the voyeuristic look: what is 'on display' is the sexual encounter among two or more individuals, chance, spontaneous and between strangers as ascertained from the written text. The criteria which shape the legal definition of hard-core pornography (magazines and films) are erection, penetration, ejaculation and the graphic depiction of same. The semiotic characteristic of hard-core pornography is narrative closure: a sexual encounter begins with disrobing (of the woman), follows through various sexual positions, acts, displays and looks and ends with the explicitly visual display of male orgasm (traces of semen on both the man and woman).

There are three possible looks of the model in this genre: (1) the look of pleasure; (2) the look which is directed at the genitals; and, (3) the model's gaze at the camera/reader.

(1) THE LOOK OF PLEASURE In hard-core (straight) pornography the look of pleasure accompanies not auto-eroticism but the graphic depiction of penetration of the female by the male; men never touch or penetrate each other, except in a threesome-chain: i.e.,

'A' (male) touches 'B' (female) who touches 'C' (male). And they do not engage the reader by looking at the camera. The reader is doubly excluded from the representation. He can only offer his look and relinquish desire to the already present and erect penis, that which does the erotic work for him. The suture allows that the viewer is there but also that he is excluded from the representation, a redundant player in this ménage. The question of how he identifies with the drama then revolves around oscillations between the voyeurism of the 'peeping Tom' and the narcissist who enjoys looking at BOTH women, men and himself, or his stand-in. The joys of the narcissistic bond however are never threatened through the male model's direct visual address: that would disrupt the fiction of heterosexual stability of the viewer. This would upset, too obviously, the dominant discursive sexual arrangement which assigns 'otherness' to women. The reader displaces his look onto the gaze of the woman in the representation (these arguments are taken up more fully in the discussion of hard-core gay pornography).

The look of pleasure is a look which simulates sexual ecstasy and is signified by closed eyes, open mouth and head tilted back. It is also the look of labour, a studied, concentrated look which treats its sexual object solemnly. It is the look which signifies female pleasure, itself a predominant pornographic fetish, as Ellis notes (1980). The face of the male

model is never given diegetic dominance; when it is figured at all (and more often it is not) it bears either the look of amused or bored detachment or combinations of pain and ecstasy. As with soft-core, there is the bureaucratic exacting of compliance, consent, and a kind of auto-production of pleasure. The emphasis here is on the feminine look of pleasure produced, the consuming of passions. Again, the rhetorical (viewing) subject is enlisted as the cultural voyeur yet his psycho-drama is an oscillation between positions of pleasure and pain.

Whereas the soft-core photograph is usually restricted to only one body and its codified display is less graphic (there is less activity), hard-core depictions, given their surfeit of signifiers (bodies, body fragments, looks, fetishes), the hard-core narrative is more ornate. There is movement in the photograph which more actively enlists the 'absent one' in the suturing process. But this is done in a curious way as the viewer is doubly excluded: (1) by the self-contained look of pleasure of the female model; and (2) through the inclusion in the diegesis of the already-present male model. This conjures up the exclusion of the viewer from scenarios of this fantasization of desire. It may be that the viewer, in these cases, surrenders or is acted upon: he is partially alienated from the representational narrative, he surrenders to the pleasure of the 'cut'. His cut or loss is his surrender; it is also his

receiving the signs of the other's desire.

(2) THE GENITAL 'LOOK' The models in pornographic sequences only look at each other under certain circumstances: i.e. if they are women. If two men are featured with one female model, they are merely signified by their genitals and their connection to each other is by vicarious association: they inhabit the same diegetic space and are there to give pleasure to the woman or extract it from her. Both men and women will look at their genitals (in contact) and circuits of desire are sustained in the 'signifying chain' of genitals and bodies. The frontal display of genitals gives an illusion of uninterrupted pleasure. The locking of genitals through intercourse creates a singular body: the female body appears to be an extension of the penis. There is continuous and pervasive touching: tactility is a pervasive feature. However, strictures against male homoerotic affection are in place and men will never touch each other.

A few words about narcissism and the voyeur. The drama of the 'primal scene' is played out for the voyeur; the cropped photographs and truncated bodies do nothing to truncate desire but instead channel it through the 'keyhole'. The 'illicit' combines with a lust for verisimilitude, coalescing neatly with the 'eye of power', the camera. Within the hard core pornographic moment voyeurism and narcissism overlap, the scopic

drive being essentially auto-erotic: its object is the subject's own body, a guarantor of imaginary self-coherence. Identifications are shifting and mobile, involving narcissistic fantasies and, initially in the development of the subject, a search for auto-erotic satisfaction (Freud, 1914).

The construction of the spectacle, then, does not so easily fall into an equation of opposites, i.e. activity/voyeurism; passivity/exhibitionism. The voyeur surrenders in the moment of sexual suturing and identifies with the male, "marked as the object of an erotic gaze" (Neale, 1983:8). Again, the masochistic component is activated, that is to say the subject has taken up "multiple identificatory positions, whether successively or simultaneously" (Bergstrom in Rodowick, 1982:10).

If voyeurism implies a gap and depends on a separation "between the seer and the object seen", it collapses somewhat in the hard-core genre as the gaze turns to narcissism (Ellis, 1982:47). In other words, the gap between spectator and spectacle is partially filled by the male model in the pictures. Thus 'looking' is also marked by a narcissistic narrative whereby pleasure is in masculine display, at least in part. Absence gives way to presence; and lacunae- of the narrative and the psyche- are filled. Yet the look between spectator and his imago (ideal image) is not direct enough to threaten the (conscious)

'sexual fix' of identity. If that were possible, the male model would penetrate the viewer's (very) open eyes; within the heterosexual motif this is too subversive. The diegetic looks then are mediated by the exchange of looks among the models in the photograph (Neale, 1983). As well, the male body is not adorned as an "object(s) of erotic display" and thus sexual difference is doubly sustained in the semiotic language of desire (Neale, 1983:14).

(3) DIRECT ADDRESS The look which most clearly enunciates the gaze of the reader is that which addresses the camera. This third look, only of the woman, is returned to the reader. It occurs towards the end of a sexual scenario and accompanies fellatio and other forms of sexual intercourse, i.e. when the model, poised on top of the male, glances over her shoulder. As with soft-core, this look is naughty, acknowledging the illicit pleasures of spectatorial sex; it has a particular place in this genre. Although men are given diegetic space in the hard-core narrative their look is intercepted by female models only. Direct address to the viewer by the male model might solicit unspoken signs of homoerotic identifications, thereby closing the gap between subject and representation and unsettle the viewer's/voyeur's position at the keyhole.

When women directly address the reader as if to say "Look

at what I'm doing", they strike an exhibitionist pose. Yet this insightful look is contained in a close-up photo which is a display, not of her genitals, commonly associated with the idea of exhibitionism, but of her face and his organ. The point is made by Freud that the exhibitionist is "at the same time" a voyeur (1905:81); again, as with the soft-core counterpart, the look is direct, penetrating and this time cynical and mocking. The model, imbricated in the archeology of the panopticon, 'makes visible' the reader. In that sense, the model is also doing the watching; she is in control of her own gaze at the same time as she is on display.

To conclude, the manipulation of the gaze is a formal feature of the operations of hard-core. All three looks both elaborate sexual difference and dramatize indifference at the same time. The first two possibilities, the look of pleasure and the genital 'look', direct the look of the reader at signs of the female model's desire, and signs of the desire of the male model. But it is a desire which frames the exclusion of the reader who stands outside a representation that depicts pleasures and desires, yet never achieved at his own hands. Difference is marked primarily through the genital arrangement. The genital 'look' does not simply denote the female genital display but also includes detailed signifiers of masculinity. This excludes the

reader again as he encounters his stand-in in the diegetic space. His stand-in is a fragmented version of his own body, usually in conjunction with the female's facial signifiers of pleasure. So while the reader may project his look onto that of the female model, it is a voyeuristic look which overlaps with narcissistic identification: he searches out a look of pleasure affiliated with his fragmented body.

The third possible look within the hard-core genre is the female model's possession of what Paul Willemen has in fact called the "fourth look" (Willemen, 1980). This is the dynamic look which confronts the reader with an eye aimed to penetrate, thus setting into place a "relay of looks" (Kuhn, 1982:82) which upsets any linear notion of 'subject-object' relations within a spectator-text exchange. This 'look' is a mode of address which engages the spectator directly and is closest to the "cut" in its challenge to the reader. The "fourth look" endows the female model with the discursive possibilities of ocular penetration, ocular phallicization; her textual body borrows the masculine code. In this sense the machinations of the gaze is one convention of the hard-core genre which inspires its viciousness: what appears as the gross elaboration of sexual difference is vulgar because it straddles difference and indifference, a cutting edge.

In the two following genres sexual difference appears to collapse in indifference. In 'TV' porn the transsexual body itself is apparently indifferent to difference, carrying the marks of otherness within its own closed economy. And the desiring gay body exchanges with a gay reader and, in hard-core, another male body. Difference and otherness, again, seem to be sacrificed in the name of sameness. But the structure of the gaze within the machinations of desire invokes sexual difference - as we will see.

The Gaze in TV Porn

The construction of the look in TV porn primarily engages the reader (as opposed to the solipsistic/narcissistic look of the model at her genitals). The soft-core pictorials are contained within the 'straight soft' genre as a special attraction or insert ("A 6 page photo set! Sulka! The ultimate she-male!"). The still photographs are one to a page (i.e. eight inches by ten inches) giving the reader a full view of the body and the look of the model is of the direct kind. Sharp and penetrating, it is a look which cannot elude the reader and accompanies every body position: i.e. even when the model offers her 'rear view' to the camera s/he glances back over her

shoulder, her look firmly implanted. The gaze is not the central signifier here as the body is a discursive play of transgressive sexual positions and competes with the look of the model for the reader's attention. However, there is a direct look which is carried by the transsexual.

The gaze of the model in soft-core TV porn is not so sly, not so 'come hither' but more penetrating. It is direct, straightforward, a look candid and outspoken. She (her eyes) captures the eyes of the reader and controls the movement of his look. This critical perception accompanies a body whose biological disposition subverts sexual difference. The instabilities of the model fascinate; the reader's subordination to her gaze is perhaps doubly threatening to the already loose 'sexual fix' in the individual. If the body textual is written as 'feminine' through the fetish signifiers of lingerie, high heel shoes, etc., wouldn't this render the (fully obvious) penis obsolete or at least dispensable? Phallic meaning is restored however through the symbolish objects which are necessary to the functioning of the pleasurable narrative.

In hard-core TV porn the simulated production of men who, in a reciprocal play of desire, desire masculinized women echoes throughout this visual text. This challenges the social

construction of gender identity (the post-modern 'death of the social'?) through the representation of subjects who, in desiring what the other desires, enter into sexual arrangements which continually threaten the "sexual fix".

The narrative begins with the exchange of looks between the models as they initiate sexual contact. A few 'introductory' photographs provide the setting for the story: a chance encounter between a transsexual/hermaphrodite whose 'true' identity is concealed by clothing, and an unsuspecting, yet persistently willing, male. The story unfolds as the transsexual model gradually reveals her hermaphroditic body through the shedding of clothing. And there are two possible looks here: the 'genital look' (the fascination with genitals and/or genital contact), the look of pleasure and 'direct address'. With the genital look one or both of the models engage the phallus, as it were. This occurs most often with intercourse or with auto-erotic fascination; hands are a feature which partially structure this look. In the case of an ambi-sexual and a male model, the fascination with looking (on the part of the viewer as well) appears to take on the voyeur's aim of looking outside himself: he is again implicated in the highly illicit consumption of 'public sex'. Sexual pathologization doubly heightens curiosity: the body/subject so discursively arranged is not just displayed in acts which should be consumed in private but is the morally

unhygienic body; it subverts a system of normative difference based on binary opposites (Mort, 1980). Penises, anal entry, and the literal phallus (the transsexual playing with a dildo in mock sexual ecstasy) are key signifiers: the common shot is of the 'female' model spreading her buttocks to display 'rear entry' (she in the 'dominant' position, sitting on top of him); or in a view from the front she covers her genitals either in mock-masturbation or to hide her hermaphroditism. But can that knowledge be suspended? In a curious way we have men looking at men; and men in circuits of desire *vis a vis* MEN. I have argued that the female models in straight porn carry masculine attributes (and this is further born out in the chapters on the fetish) but this resonates in TV porn.

The look c pleasure accompanies intercourse and is signified by closed eyes, head tilted back, open mouth often with a protruding tongue or tongue licking the lips in sexual or oral readiness. It is a look of pleasure at anal penetration. Freud (1908) says of anal eroticism that:

"An invitation to a caress of the anal zone is ... used ... to express defiance or defiant scorn, and thus in reality signifies an act of tenderness that has been overtaken by repression. An exposure of the buttocks represents a softening down of this spoken invitation into a gesture... both words and gestures are introduced at the most appropriate point as an expression of defiance" (213).

So the viewer takes pleasure in looking at bodily configurations which visually privilege the anal-erotic. The 'fe.male' model, however, is the one with the "defiant" offering (he is never anally penetrated) and her boldness (not to mention her "filthy" offering [Freud, 1908:214]) would challenge any vulgar reading of 'male domination' in this case. The aesthetic vulgarity may lie in the challenges which are put to the fictive male subjective coherence. Also there is the overlapping of voyeurism with narcissistic identification as phallic signification abounds.

Direct Address is the look of the transsexual (men never look at the camera) which meets the gaze of the reader but is not often 'straight on'. That is, the model looks over her shoulder, while offering a 'rear view' of penetration, or shifts her head, in a reclining position, to partially face the camera. Her eyes directly meet those of the reader. It is a look which talks, as if to say either: 'Are you watching me?' or 'Caught you!' or both-- the reader is caught in the act of watching. Both model and reader are complicit in the act; in that way the gap between image and spectator, the "absent field, the place of a character who is put there by the viewer's imaginary" (Oudart, 1977-78:36), is sutured by the look.

The Gaze in Gay Pornography: SOFT CORE

Gay (soft-core) pornography for men resembles its 'straight' counterpart in its narrative display: typically, the model is alone in a series of poses which simulate both narrative and sexual closure through the use of small shots which lead up to the big climax of the centrefold. One difference relating to the gaze, however, is the absence of the look of pleasure (unless two models are pictured, as it were, in a 'duet') and the predominance of the gaze which directly engages the reader.

The popular look of 'gay' models is the one which is incisive and challenging: the men are continually acknowledging the reader. This look takes on two forms, either the sidelong glance or the look that is 'straight on'. The sidelong glance is 'beady', taking aim at the viewer. It accompanies the head tilted slightly downwards, or, if the body is not positioned for a full frontal view, the head inclined sideways. The obliqueness of this cockeyed look suggests it is not 'on the level' and has devious connotations. The model looks as though he's just been 'caught in the act' (e.g. of undressing or semi-clad in a weight room) and he's enjoying it. He doesn't smile but participates in the serious business of sex. The knowing look of the model acknowledges with an exciting subtlety the illicit circumstances surrounding this act of consumption. It addresses a reader

engaged in a discursive sexual practice which contravenes two normative structures: it is 'anti-humanist', promoting sex with a representation (and purchased with money) and without the abstract (and bourgeois) qualities of love, romance. This look may recognize the 'closeted' sexual response it incites, the popular homosexual expression still being subordinate to the dominant heterosexual motif.

Another look addresses the reader head-on with the eyes less cunning, hence the no-nonsense look. It is very much a look of display, not caught in the act but ready, waiting and willing. The eyes never leave the absent reader, missing from the photo and the diegetic space. It is the look of 'direct address', frank and self-conscious, the model is a poseur in front of the camera/reader. He resembles models in advertisements in the way his (open) eyes acknowledge, openly, the viewing public and the complicity of his actions in front of it. The eyes are not exactly wide-open to the point of innocence, eager to admit anything. But they are a less insinuating variation to the beady-eyed look and thus the model is more 'passive' certainly than his female counterpart in both soft and hard core; this look is an antidote to the gaze that possesses, is more focussed on the "apple" of his eye. He is on display and looked at, his legs are spread but only to reveal a flaccid penis, no turgidity of desire here.

The most remarkable difference in the discursive arrangement of straight and gay genres (along the ocular theme) is in the open/closed pair of ocular possibilities. In gay (soft) porn the model's eyes (if he is depicted alone) are always open: there is an absence of the look of pleasure (eyes closed, face tilted slightly back in simulated ecstasy) at the model's own hands. Accompanying this look is the body on display connotatively passive. The bodyscape is largely without fetish, often completely unadorned by clothes. The photographic layout, as with its straight (soft) counterpart, follows the sexual drama beginning with a collection of smaller photos (a fiction of foreplay) which leads to the climax/centrefold; the denouement is again an assembly of many small photographs to a page. In some spreads the eyes, while not 'beady', are shaded. They are figuratively darkened from view and apparently incapable of seeing as much through the 'shades' (shades, or sunglasses are another way of signifying the closed eyes which will not admit, but still stressing the orifice-function of the eye). The body (unlike in straight porn) is not a simulated display of hardness or penetration: it is hard, taut and round, like a sculpture. The models are extremely muscular with well defined brawn and more often than not stripped of all clothing to expose this to view. A typical scenario involves the nude model in the weight-room or the model disrobing himself from athletic clothing.

The look of pleasure only occurs in conjunction with two men in a scene of flirtatious pursuit. One model will display sexual pleasure, marked on his face, at the hands of the other. The models do not look at each other; however, the model receiving the pleasure (there is clearly one giver and one taker here) will engage the reader in a glance that is sidelong, illicit, knowing: it is the beady-eyed look that takes possession of the reader. Once that is in place (there may be a return to it in a subsequent photo) the signifier of sexual satisfaction dominates and the model's eyes are either closed or his face is turned downwards so that his eyes are blocked from view. His partner, the other who does not visibly display pleasure, avoids looking at the camera.

What we have here is a representation of homosexual men engaged in a sexual drama which is an analogue to the heterosexual coupling found in straight pornography wherein a predominant fetish is women's pleasure. In this genre the cultural/sexual dyad based on difference is invoked by marking the body of the 'Other' as 'feminine'. The clothes in this case make the 'woman', the receiver of pleasure: 'she' is characteristically and fetishistically endowed with articles of clothing, the one who secures the penetrating gaze (recall the "she-male" in TV porn) and carries the fetish. Again, it can be

argued that the fetish (and its association to scenarios of penetration and castration) is not to disavow knowledge of castration and thus allay castration fear, but is coincident with eros and thus castration desires. The view of the body, with the look of pleasure, is the full-frontal view. However, the male reader is only able to offer his narcissistic look, not the look of the voyeur: the model's body, for example, is not positioned to allow anal entry as it is with women in soft core.

The other popular look is the 'faraway' look which is cast outside the diegetic framework. It is a look which is directed at a space beyond the view of the reader and is either fixated on an invisible object or person, or it strains to look upward, outwards, the face tilted and the body contorted to aid this look. The latter look is powerfully endowed: the models are posed in natural settings, for example, in a tree, on a beach, in a field, at one with the elements. The body is part of the panoramic view, communing with nature. It is a leisured body, muscular and bearing the signs of labour, the look fixed on a higher sight, not on a lowly object or the reader. This 'look' denotes a bodily posture rather than ocular possibilities. The whole body is exposed to view, the face/head/eyes do not dominate the photograph, the configuration of the model does not suture the reader's eyes in any penetrating way. Rather the model's glance is away from the reader, does not acknowledge the reader,

and the body is put on display. Unlike with female models in the straight soft-core equivalent, this uninviting look is not associated with auto-eroticism. These models are not caught unawares; the viewer is enlisted in a narcissistic scene (as opposed to voyeuristic complicity). The body is without fetish, but forms part of the cultural mandate regarding the muscular and taut body. The 'au naturel' body is fused with the landscape, part of 'mother nature'. The look is not beady and neither is the body written in a way that is poised to insinuate, i.e. it is bereft of erections. And there is nothing for the reader to penetrate, i.e. the eyes are not held in view and there are no anal offerings.

Dyer (1982) notes, with reference to the male "pin-up", the emphasis on muscularity and the denial of the spectacularly sexual: the model disavows the reader by not looking at him. The power which accrues to the models here is not necessarily sexual in its associations. The muscular body and the connotations of 'haute' masculinity or strength (with the mise-en-scene of the weight room or athletes' clothing) suggest a body perhaps ready for action (Dyer, 1982). However, a contradiction emerges: the model's body (in these scenarios of the 'faraway' look) is supine; there is a marked similarity between the contemporary model of feminine beauty (and hence power?) and a masculine picture of muscularity. Female models in representations both

pornographic and non-pornographic more often than not approximate the lean, hard bodies of young boys. cf. Women's magazines such as *Vogue*, *Cosmopolitan*, and the proliferation of magazines for the woman enlisted in popular discourses on health and fitness. These emphasize the body without flesh, without voluptuousness, whose only curves are those defined by the arc of muscle formation, not breasts, hips, thighs or other feminine, fleshy, marks of sexual difference. In other words, muscularity is no longer the sole possession of men, or is it in pornography a simple indicator of power or activity. Female models invoke power through their appropriation of the gaze that rivets and are more active in their desire than the male model who wears his muscularity like a second skin. This is a strangely inactive body, more the passive object of the look. Does this point to a phallic redundancy? The penis which "can never live up to the mystique implied by the phallus... straining after what can hardly ever be achieved", (Dyer, 1982:71); for this faraway look is the only projection the body wears and extends beyond the purview of the model and the reader to the mythic, the unrepresented, the unrepresentable phallus.

The Gaze in Gay Pornography: HARD CORE

The hard core (gay) genre contains the three sexual and

semiotic criteria which gives 'hard core' its definition, i.e. erections, penetration and ejaculation. The scenario begins with the chance encounter between two or more men who quickly disrobe. This is followed by various sexual vignettes which privilege the visual representation of phallic penetration.

The look:

The look in gay hard core is more oblique than in other genres. The constellation of looks is not so neatly fixed around categories of pleasure, penetration or masturbatory diversion. Rather it slides in and out of view; bodies are severely cropped, often heads are "cut off" leaving only an out of focus mouth for example. Eyes play less of a role in suturing the reader. The central motif is phallic with the reader being displaced as the donor of phallic pleasure.

The dominant 'look' of the models belongs to the one 'acted on' while receiving (usually oral) pleasure. It carries open eyes and is fixated on genital union, or genital-oral contact or the mouth, of the other model. This downward glance at the other performing fellatio is a look of 'auto-voyeuristic' fascination in which the model peeks at himself - and someone else - in copulation. The model is a peeping Tom on his own sexual

activity.

The one performing oral sex keeps his eyes closed. There are very few instances in which the camera/reader is engaged directly: the penetrating gaze is kept to a minimum as the camera isolates, for the viewer, close-up shots of oral or anal penetration. The penetrating look, the eyes beady and shifting, excludes at the same time as it pierces. But it rarely stands alone and competes with other genital exchanges. It challenges the reader who can offer only his look (he is reduced to observer status) at the same time as the penetrating gaze is paired with the erect penis - being consumed orally.

The look that acknowledges the reader-as-voyeur is uniformly from above, the model's eyes in a downward glance, connoting domination, a literal towering over or standing above the other (in the photograph) and the reader.

The look of pleasure is written on the body via the face (not the phallus which signifies desire). The head tilted slightly backwards, the eyes closed, signify a pleasure received by the 'passive' member of the duo. It accompanies oral gratification and the diegetic space is given almost equally to depictions of the sexual interchange and the face of the one bearing the look. Again the closed eyes are coupled with genital

introjection and a body that carries its desire like a flag: there is the erect penis. The reader in this case has a scopic investment in the drama before him, offering his look in a narcissistic bond with the specular imagery: this must be the mirror of his pleasure at surrendering his desire to representations of the codified desire of the 'other'. This apparent exclusion of the reader may be seen as part of the workings of desire. There is a guarantor of unity in this visual moment which offers the viewer the satisfaction of seeing the apparently sated 'other'. At the same time, to witness the 'other's' desire is to get as close to the "cut" as possible. The longing for subjective coherence on the part of the reader is coincident with his alienation from the mirror which represents the self back to its self. The 'gap' is painful, necessary and central to a dialectic of desire within which the subject is culturally positioned. That voyeuristic moment is the separation from the original ideal image and the subjection to the cultural position of otherness. This is the "false recovery by which we are constituted as subjects" (Silverman, 1979:3). In this pornographic moment, the reading subject is confronted with his 'stand in', phallic, no less. That is, he 'sees' himself in the representation yet he is absent from the scenario. His pleasure is based thus on his mutilation, his being 'cut out' from the scene, his subjection to it. In that sense the male subject (reader) is playing out his loss; his loss mocks him at every

turn, he is so eminently substitutable as his desire is played out without him, through the signifying power of what are undoubtedly enormous signifiers. He is a witness, having already been grabbed by the eyeball, enlisted in this testimonial of domination, the discourse of the Other. He meets his stand-in.

Still, how is otherness, (sexual) difference marked? The anatomical bodies in gay hard-core are adorned only with their biological apparatus and each (physical) body is the same. There are no articles of clothing in this genre and fetish objects are remarkably downplayed. However, the textual body is embellished in a writing of sexual difference. It follows from the description and analysis of straight and TV pornography (both soft and hard core) that difference is marked as a discursive, not biological, configuration. And in pornography the witness to 'otherness' is a feminine discourse: it is 'women' in straight (soft) porn who are displayed but also whose gaze penetrates, whose eyes permit sexual transactions between viewer and model. It is women who are traced with desire through looks of pleasure and pain and a body marked with protrusions. And it is 'women' in straight hard-core porn who engage the reader by looking at the camera, whose gaze is incisive and whose pleasure is sought and signified. In TV porn sexual difference is partially elided in favour of a feminine "sexual fix".

'Femininity' in all of the above is the look of pleasure and both the flirtatious and piercing gaze; and it is the body adorned with accoutrements symbolic of feminine sexiness: lingerie, high-heel shoes, make-up, jewelry, etc. There is a similar discursive arrangement in the gay genres, both soft and hard. That is, 'otherness' is marked around enunciations of desire whereby difference is represented by, and projected onto, the feminine. It is always women who engage the (male) reader/camera, who register pleasure and who carry desire through the look which pierces or the body which is written within a penetrating exchange. Within the gay genres the 'woman' is recognizable by 'her' 'visual' courting of the reader: she looks and she guarantees spectatorial pleasure at the same time. 'She' is also the one to be adorned with the fetish: clothing, sun glasses, etc.

Thus the preceding should indicate that the organization of desire is a spectatorial regime which implicates both subject-spectator and the formal properties of the visual text (cf. Rodowick, 1980). We must shed light on why one model in the duo is assigned a feminine space, i.e. the one engaged in ocular penetration or the one weighted by its marks (she carries the fetish and all it can signify). This calls up the role of the male viewer, and dialectics of 'reading' in a visual exchange, as not just endowed with scopic weight but as in the threatening

position of being the object of the gaze as well. The feminization of one of the models in the gay pornographic genres softens the unsettling effects of the gaze which has already caught the reader. Within the workings of desire the "cut" can only go so deep and the viewer is not asked to peek at his own gaze. This would be too disruptive and would be an abuse of identity and total surrender to the logic of castration. The viewer has already witnessed the phallic insight of the (feminine) model.

The 'masculine' model looking at the reader would signal a surplus libidinal investment, a surplus of excitement and danger in the courtship of the reader and his image. Identification is both narcissistic and involves a loss. It is narcissistic in its experiential "sexual pleasure in gazing at... (the) body" (Freud, 1914:104); it is predicated on loss as it requires an expenditure, a projection, an extension of the subject. The reader feminizes the 'male' with whom he exchanges penetrating looks to soften and partially obviate the effects of this symbolic possession. Hence we may say there is a shifting nature of the gaze in the operations of desire.

To sum up, both 'TV' and gay pornography downplay sexual

difference. The 'TV' body cancels out otherness by signifying both sexes at once. And the gay male body either interacts with another male body or is on display for the gay male viewer. But in both genres there is a sliding into difference through obvious fetish accoutrements (especially in the case of 'TV' porn). As well, otherness is resurrected through the 'relay of looks' generated by the model designated as 'other'. Indifference is transgressed towards signifying moments of difference.

The gaze of both the 'TV' and gay model addresses the reader as 'other' and foregrounds the reader's desire: to be a desiring subject is to see signs of the desire of the other. In both 'TV' and gay porn this desire and otherness is, among other things, an ocular projection.

Conclusion:

The structure of the gaze in the workings of the visual imaginaries is what activates the subject. The gaze forms part of the organization of the diegetic space and partly orchestrates the narrative movement of the photograph. It also sutures the reader into the text in a way which depends not just on his absence or place outside the textual operations. The look

of 'direct address' depends as well on acknowledgement of the viewer's position as voyeur, caught in the act of watching. He is being watched. The occupation of positions of both subject and object is one way the viewer confronts the "cut" in the pornographic moment. Moreover, he is enlisted into narcissistic scenarios; the pornographic discourses problematize strategies of identification between spectator and text.

That there is pleasure, and pain culturally constituted, in the gaze for the male viewer is perhaps an understatement. But part of that pleasurable apparatus involves the reader standing before the penetrating gaze of the model, no passive object she. Her appropriation of the threatening and active gaze works to place the model within a discourse which transgresses the normative 'feminine'. The reader is thus positioned in a transgressive relationship regarding the normatively 'masculine'. Difference is not so firmly fixed. And 'otherness' is a discursive construction based on visible signs of the other's desire: the model displaying hers, the reader giving up some of his.

The pornographic body confounds the boundaries of sexual difference. Similarly, configurations of the fetish suggest that the objects which adorn the body are a transgressive site,

fabricated under the sign of erotic theft. The high-heel shoe enjoys a stubborn presence in all straight genres. It is to this that we now turn.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

1. One can find examples of the fatal destiny of female characters who have the power of the gaze, or see too much (or have 'too much' sexual desire, à la "Fatal Attraction"). In the Hollywood film "The Bedroom Window" (1987) a woman who witnesses an attempted rape and murder is murdered herself. But this is not simply a case of killing the 'witness'. The narrative begins with an illicit sexual encounter between the married, female, 'witness' and her young lover (a colleague of her husband). Thus we know that she has enough desire to satisfy two men; then she witnesses the attempted rape and murder. She was 'caught in the act', i.e. her seeing the sexual violation follows immediately upon her adulterous tryst. She jumps out of bed when she hears something outside the window, shortly after, she is murdered. But the twist is that her lover, the younger male claims in court to be the witness; still, the woman is the one who is punished.
2. For an interesting analysis of precisely this visual circuit and the figure of the look in the movie *The Pirate*, cf. D.N. Rodowick, "Vision, Desire, and the Film Text," *Camera Obscura*, #6, 1980.
3. By this logic, objects dominate their producers, those who also consume them, and the 'subject' surrenders to the (dead) power of the 'object', subjecting himself to its domination. The subject then is 'objectified' in the face of the 'object', endowed with a certain exchange-value. In the case of the pornographic representation, the spectator-text relationship is an oscillation between positions of subjectivity and objectivity; a reciprocity of looks. The exchange of glances operates to, in a tidy dialectic, enunciate the role of the voyeur (the reader) AND a space wherein he surrenders to the powerful meaning of the photograph. In the identificatory process of the reading of a narrative text, "the production of pleasure guarantees the place of the subject both in and for the text" (Rodowick, 1982:6), just as, in material commodity production, the subject is 'free' to become objectified (dominated by fetish objects) in the labour process. The will to be subjects may also be accompanied by the will to be objectified; the tokens in this object-relationship involve the reader/buyer surrendering money to buy the magazine.
4. Thematics of castration will be explored in other chapters on the 'fetish', especially with reference to the assumption that fetish elements which adorn the female body disavow knowledge of castration and therefore allay subsequent fears.

Chapter 4

THE FETISH: THE HIGH HEEL SHOE

A clichéd formulation within both psychoanalytic paradigms and contemporary film theory suggests powerful associations between the 'fetish' and castration.¹ The metonymic affiliation or semiotic contiguity based on 'part-objects' and substitutions,² assigns fetish objects an erotic, substitutive, quality that serves to disavow knowledge of feminine 'lack' ('castration') and allay the perceived threat this knowledge brings. The castration complex, and its attendant representational apparatus, is the attempt at reconciling knowledge upon observation that girls don't have the penis with the "conviction... energetically maintained" that this cannot be the case (Freud, 1927:113). Substitutes for the missing penis take on a fetish character and endow the female body with textual features, assume a 'writing' on the body. The negotiation of sexual difference based on possession/ non-possession of the penis relies on a visual investment and thus theory which informs work on the visual imaginaries is concerned to uncover the fetishistic endowment of the female body as an erotic spectacle. The tension between the pleasure in looking and the threatening glance at the 'castrated' female body is managed through the performance of the fetish.

As previously noted however, the scopic moment may combine aspects of the castration scenario which are both threatening AND pleasurable. Certainly the surfeit of fetish signifiers alone would testify to the empowering of the female body and the consequent psychic dis-investment experienced by the male. The (male) reader stands in relation to the signifying power of the female textual body and in encountering the fetish, allows it (or belief in it) to work for him.

Freud cites instances of the fetish masquerading with phallic proportions and locates a favourite organ and object in the foot and the shoe. Again, an "uncanny and traumatic" moment is invoked in the fetish - and allayed by the same; and while I dispute that the fetish only represents fears of castration, I will argue that it is associated with a phallic endowment of women. Precisely how the "uncanny and traumatic" operate informs the thrust of the thesis, i.e., is there possible pleasure in this painful recall of recognition of castration? or pleasure in the recognition of moments of 'loss', the giving away of signs of desire. In what follows I discuss the 'fetish' and the high heel shoe as both are common features of the pornographic photograph.

The fetish cuts both ways

The popular assumption in the psychoanalytic literature on the 'fetish' is that in searching for the lost phallus the masculine subject is trying to close in on lack. But the phenomenal fact in pornographic genres is that the fetish and the fetishized body of the 'female' model - which carries signifiers of masculinity - are associated with both castration fears and seductive and prohibited pleasures. If rhetorical subjectivity is re-fashioned in narratives of plenitude and loss, the circulation of the fetish suggests its meaning lies the way it speaks to both coherence and dispossession. Fetishistic transactions provide the necessary distance between reader and text, subject and object, desire and the representation, the viewer and the object.

Visual pleasure, the 'fetish' (and photographic syntax), depend on a "missing element" (a loss, or that which has 'gone missing'). In the case of visual imaginaries and the suturing of the reader into the discourse, the "missing element" is the gap into which the viewer is inserted. The 'fetish', too, fills in the gap between belief and disbelief, is a stand-in for the missing element (the reader, the phallus, desire). This "missing element", or the inauguration of the "cut", comprises oscillations between absence, separation and imaginary plenitude: the "cut" is at the centre of both separation and merging, or the suturing/'sewing in' of the subject. The "cut", just as it

fragments an imaginary, corporal coherence provided by the fetish site of specularity, also arranges the subject discursively as he is integrated culturally. Dialectics of pleasure and pain coalesce around meaningful objects, those that viciously suggest both presence and absence.

Death and the fetish

It is common enough to draw associations between photography and death (Barthes, 1981; Sontag, 1977). In "Photography and the Fetish," Christian Metz persuasively notes how the photograph also overlays with the fetish (1985). The photographic picture is a continual displacement of the object photographed, not just the 'capture' of the person: "that moment when she or he was has forever vanished ... 'dead for having been seen'" (Metz, 1985:84). The eye of the camera appropriates its object(s), is a "take", "immediate and definitive", "the instantaneous abduction of the object out of the world into another world, into another kind of time" (Metz, 1985:84). The photographic objects are testimony and timelessness, incapable of change except as they might circulate contextually. They are timeless (and unchanging) because of their associations with stillness and memory (that abduction). Metz argues that photographs are a "cut inside the referent.. a fragment, a part

object, for a long immobile travel of no return" (Metz, 1985:84). The objects then take on fixed and fateful qualities, preserved as fragments of the past, and a simultaneous activation of it. With the photographic medium this is insurance against loss, a symbolic investment in the photo, the object and 'the past' and their ability to recall part of the whole. In that way, photographic objects are still in memory, refer to the death of the object, the freezing of time, and they simultaneously resurrect (from the dead) that which is displaced by the object.

The fetish, too, cuts into a referent and survives its death only through its refusal to forget. Like the photograph, it is twinned with repression, absence and loss. As within all systems of exchange the fetish object is a stand-in for the original motivation. It embodies 'loss', absence, an immutable association with 'death'; and, it preserves the re-presentation of that death. Fetishistic recall points to a profound investment in 'dead objects'. Objects which are precisely dead are also a delivery to the past through a presence: the narcissistic attachment to the object based on its death-like claims, a significant object that continues to live on in its death. Freud notes the strong affiliation between "the work of mourning" at the death of a loved one and, in terms of the will to survive, a love for "this object as dead" (in Metz, 1985:85). Photography, the fetish and death are implicated in a reliable

compromise such that the "livingness" of a thing is preserved in its stillness, is a stand-in for 'the living'. This is a symbolic redundancy; a cut to the referent (what the fetish represents) and a 'cut' out of the living, a return to the living via death, a desire for the "cut".

But why an erotic compromise? Although the fetish may be a masculine prerogative, and is phallic in its properties, the pairing of the fetish with castration fears is questionable. The marking of 'woman' as different is a dual manoeuvre: the fetish preserves the fiction of 'otherness'. In that sense the fetish is like a mirror: the reader sees himself in the phallic death-wish. But, on the other hand, that otherness - the writing that signifies the feminine - is a phallic discourse which allows for a 'delicate' difference, like the high-heel shoe the model sports, a precarious balance. So, pleasure is in difference but difference at the cutting edge: the collapse of difference into androgyny would be the death of desire (and anyway is the "impossible referent"). Simulated androgyny, however, plays on the edge of death and desire is the discursive construction at the heart of the pornographic moment. The shoe condenses androgynous properties to coalesce around a moment which is erotic, s(t)imulating, and a fetish which contains the other's desire.

THE SHOE

A fashion editor at *Vogue* magazine, describes the appearance of the stiletto heel in the mid-fifties as "fashion with a vengeance" (1981:58). This most telling accomodation of 'feminine' adornment with revenge conspires to make the pornographic spike heel the 'fetish with a vengeance'. It appears with a vengeance, described as the "zenith of the very feminine look" (Probert, 1981:58), but is noteworthy in its sexual ambivalence. The shoes are feminine in terms of vestmentary codes but within the agencies of sexual representation they are coded as ambivalent. For example, they have thin, delicate straps to reveal the foot's instep and the toe protrudes phallically from the front. The heel is also "slivered to the slimmest shapes ... as dainty and delicate underfoot as a Cinderella" (Toomey, 1953:13). An announcement of their arrival on the fashion scene notes "heels ... are described with daring new words like pinpoint, needle and stiletto", a zenith by any other name (Toomey, 1953); zenith: the culminating point, the highest point, time or place of greatest power. The pornographic shoe is a Cinderella with power, a fetish with a vengeance in the sense that the spike-heel shoe is fashionably ambi-sexual. It is unmistakably feminine (in cultural terms: delicate in shape) yet carries the weapon.

It is transcendent in its ability to recall the fetish; in popular film, television and other cultural artifacts, women in spike heels signify danger. Danger is an enduring feature of the fetish and its associations with threats of absence, loss and castration. The shoe embodies difference, is a strategy of its containment; in the pornographic instance what makes it signify is its masculine heel, but a heel within a feminine frame of reference. The foot is shod, furnished or equipped; the footgear, however, is a balancing act between the foot clad and partially exposed. There is the hardness of the leather and heel and the shaky footing provided by the spike heel. Most often the shoe's delicate quality is revealed by its lack of support: the shoe is a feminine sandal, open-toed with thin straps of leather covering the instep. And the heel causes one to totter, no sure-footed model here.

The shoe: SOFT CORK

Steele notes that the shoe is symbolic of a bi-sexuality: it carries the phallic heel and toe; as well, it "could also symbolize the vagina into which the phallic foot (is) slipped" (1985:25). The tension between the 'active' and 'passive' components to the shoe, and what it can symbolize fetishistically, contributes to an androgynous writing on the

body. It is an economic balance of two parts: a womb-like enclosure and the phallic extremity.

The shoe in soft core is the high-heel, also called the 'spike' or 'stilettto' (the exceptions are minor: in a sub-genre, models simulating young girls wear sneakers and/or knee socks; or, a model may wear cowboy boots, for example, as part of a "Western" motif). The stilettto-heeled shoe is accompanied by nylon or silk stockings, and some form of lingerie or under garments. And it is prevalent: regardless of the scenario, whether the model be in bed, on a couch, in a bath tub or photographed in a natural setting, the shoe is visible within the diegetic space.³ The high-heel elongates the leg and re-zones the body for pleasure as it invites glances to the top of the triangle - the genital region - framed by the legs. However, the pornographic model is not typically depicted with lower limbs extended; more often than not, the legs are bent to position the foot/heel in one of two directions. Either it is directed towards the camera/reader, or it is poised near or at the genitals.

Heel aimed at the reader

The first possibility, heels aimed at the reader,

accompanies, most often, the rear-end offered to the camera. But it is not just fleshy buttocks which are on display; rather the anal region is fully exposed and one may say the psychological terrain is anal as well. In psychoanalytic literature anal affiliations are aggressive, voyeuristic and sadistic. Both Grunberger (1966) and Chasseguet-Smirgel (1978) locate anal representations within a seemingly 'perverse' order. As with all Freudian derivations the perversions are part of "an original and universal disposition of the human sexual instinct" (Freud, 1905:155). Firstly, the associations are phallic as they may involve anal projections: the "outward projection of inner tensions ... in direct relation to (the) anal regression" (Grunberger, 1966:166). And they are associated with castration. Grunberger tells of the 'anus-as-trap'. This refers to a 'perverse' 'role reversal' whereby the (male) child engages in passive homosexual fantasies of the father and invests in a masochistic identification with the mother. This fantasization entails anal introjection of the father's penis, a defense against the "positive" Oedipus complex. The result is a sadistic impulse: the "anal penis" and anal castration are themes in which the father (his penis) is "devoured" by the anus, a dual fantasy/fear. This overlays with a voyeuristic incitement to "search for the phallic mother ... the voyeur-fetishist attributes numerous phalluses to the woman in order to take them away from her one by one (castration of the phallic mother)"

(Grunberger, 1966:161, 160).

Grunberger suggests however that this obsessive provocation (the confluence of anal sadism, voyeurism and 'the phallus') is a structured fantasy, a play on transgressions. The "voyeuristic search for the phallic mother" may be a "search for the father's penis detained by the mother and introjected through devouring" (1966:161, n.3).

The anus is both "the content and the container" (Grunberger, 1966:161), able to take in (introject) and expel. It can represent thus a "narcissistic fusion" and a narcissistic confirmation: the castrated father (or castration of the "phallic mother") represents the homoerotic attraction. He is desired, his penis introjected ("the trap-anus closing in on its prey" [Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1978:30]) and is thus an activation of castration fears/desires. Anality is also the "universe where all differences are abolished"; it is the possession of both sexes. This symbolization of the loss of sexual difference is an anality where men resemble women (and vice versa), a healing of the narcissistic wound (Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1978:32).

Anality, and all it may connote, is in the diegetic, narrative and symbolic company of the spike heel. In these photographs the heel of the shoe circulates among an exchange of

equivalences. It is long, hard and phallic; it is offered on the same visual plane as the anus and is equated with anal invasions, anal protruberances and faeces. The shoe walks on dirt; a "shit-shoe" or "shit-heel" is "derisive to one who has bedaubed his boot"; "shit" is a term of contempt applied "rarely to a woman" (Partridge). In these photos, the body is positioned so that the model either 'moons' the camera, i.e. leans over and exposes the buttocks to a rear view, or sits with knees bent and pulled towards her chest, and in a frontal view the anal region revealed. The model's hands, with long finger nails, often are placed to spread open the buttocks and further display not so much a point of entry but another penetrating possibility. The eyes are also their most beady and incisive, surveying the reader with a vigilance that lets him know he's being watched. The watchful eyes, the stiletto aimed at the reader, and the anal invasion all belong not to a supine body but a body's text which is exhibitionistic, voyeuristic, defiant and phallic⁴; but all the while, 'female'.

Why the phallic and anal endowments? Pornographic discourses are perverse, but the perversions are located within a structure in which the laws of sexual difference are continually transgressed, i.e. women are positioned as men, men search for the phallic mother and still want to castrate the father. This is a play on difference, wanting it and wanting to

abolish it at the same time, the tension between the narcissistic fix and desires dependent on a referential 'other'. Which is to say there is a reader in/for all this. As he sees signs of another, and more importantly signs of another's desire, he encounters his own phallic projections, longings and desires. What he sees, and what is pleasurable, is a simulated rendition of his own masculine possessions. That they become part of her bodily text is what makes them desirable. The heel is the simulated phallus and speaks to the male reader's forfeiture, dispossession and loss, within a scenario of desire.

Heel aimed at the genitals

The other possible configuration of the shoe fetish involves the arrangement of limbs (the legs) to position the heel of the shoe towards the genitals, in mock phallic effect. In such instances the body is contorted to aim for penetration; only aim, however, for the heel/phallus is merely a stand-in and can only reach limited phallic proportions. In such instances the heel is poised at the vaginal/anal orifice, both handily exposed to view (this may be the heel of the foot itself, sometimes unshod but covered by stockings).

The heel

But the heel... for the spike-heel is part of the code. What is a heel? Flügel writes of the "unconscious phallic symbolism attaching to the heel" (1931:161n); Kraft-Kbing regards the shoe-fetish as a "latent form of masochism", representing the "desire to be trodden on" (in Ellis, 1937:174, 176). In the vernacular, a 'heel' is the morally impure man, the "untrustworthy or despicable person" (Oxford Concise), "contemptible" (Webster's). Associations are with domination and power: to be "at the heels of" is to be "close behind", "under control or subjection" (Webster's). The model is "heeled" or "armed with a revolver" (Oxford). And the heel is affiliated with money, wealth and status. The "well heeled" are those "supplied with money" (Oxford), the 'filthy rich' no doubt. Those "down at the heel" are slovenly, shabby. A 'stiletto' is a short, thick-bladed dagger. A spike is a sharp point, a large nail, according to Webster's in slang it means a "hypodermic needle" and "action potential". As a verb it means "to pierce or impale" or render a drink potent ("spike it") by adding something highly reactive (alcohol).

The pornographic model who sports the heels and confronts the reader with her stilletoes is well-shod to the point of being filthy and rich, in two metonymic affiliations. First, the

proximity of the spike heel to anal imagery conjoins the body's projections and the aggressive impulse. Freud's "connections between the complexes of interest in money and of defaecation" aside (1908), the model subjects the reader to the text of her well-heeled body and, of course, the text (the magazine) for which the reader has paid money. The model is but a 'fee-male'.

These are heels with the potential of piercing, penetrating, and thus have powerfully invasive qualities. This is a model with the power of intrusion and a model worth paying for. Why is this erotic for the male reader? Why the pleasurable surrender to the phallic extensions of the model?

The heel and phallic desire

In soft-core, phallic equivalence is written on the female body. If there are men in this genre, they still cannot signify desire through erections or penetration. They are erotic accoutrements themselves, their presence is scarce and depictions of desire are given over to the 'feminine' form, the fetish and the peculiar way it masculinizes the female body. The fetish is a stand-in, a simulation of the reader's possession (his phallic properties) and a dressing up of the model's desire to be possessed by the masculine body - the reader's. The 'gap'

between reader and photograph is wide, in this genre, the reader only able to see himself in the hysterical inscription on the model's body. What is desirable for the reader - visual display of the model's desire - is a semiotic reference, referring only to signs of desire. Desire is a simulated offering of signs of masculinity: an approximation of the pleasurable yet potentially annihilating effects of an androgynous union (Pacteau, 1986).

The simulation of desire, through its representations, is a painful reenactment of that which cannot be achieved. The sexed positions of spectator and spectacle within pornographic imaginaries are unsettled (and unsettling); as already noted, 'female' models also possess the gaze and in so doing operationalize the codes of power. The spectator is implicated in a discourse which treats its subject(s) to a dialectic of pleasure and pain: i.e. this erotic communion involves moments of separation and loss, mastery (by the 'object'), a formation of the subject amidst contradictory positions.

Desire and the fetish

The female body is a textual excess, in excess of its own femininity. There must be an Achilles heel in all this, a vulnerability suitable for a woman and fitting a (male) reader

who finds pleasure in the pornographic moment, which in the last instance cannot be totally threatening (not a total divestment of the reader), merely "la petite mort". The femininity of the model is a cultural demarcation belonging to an economy of sexual difference. The female desiring subject is engaged, within this exchange, in a 'mimetic paraphrase of desire', her enunciations speak to the enigma of his (the reader's, the 'other's') desire. This is still "enunciation under the force of a woman's desire" (Jacobs, 1981:91) but from her discursive position as 'desiring' she carries wishful marks of his desire for her. The model's desire is thus married with his énoncé (the origin of this discourse).⁵

Lea Jacobs, has written about feminine discourses of desire in the 1942 Hollywood film, "Now Voyager", noting how codes on the body shape its fetishization and inscription into a larger sexual order. It has been noted (Doane, 1986) that in "women's films" (in the 40s, although one can argue this may still be the case) 'femininity' is aligned with 'pathology' and the enigma which resolves the narrative is the woman's "cure", usually a somatic shift, for the viewer, from an "erotic gaze" to a "medical gaze". The body is the site of the clinical, masculine gaze and the "manuscript to be read" for indications of feminine hysteria or the problematic question of women's desire (Doane, 1986). One enigma of the feminine subject revolves around her

inability to desire; Jacobs' analysis of "Now Voyageur" reveals the the "cure" for the "spinster", and her initiation into sexual desire, "is to transform the ugly oxfords and thick stockings of (the) initial shot into high heels and stockings which show off Charlotte's legs" (1981:96).⁶

It is acknowledged (by Doane, Jacobs and others writing under the rubric of "feminist film criticism") that woman's desires and narratives are part of a dominant fiction, a construction of the 'other' and a slow dissolve around what is ultimately a master - masculine - discourse. However, just how phallic this desire or shoe is, is not emphasized strongly enough. Both carry with them, in the context of the pornographic shot, a potential "violation of the categories of sexual difference" (Jacobs, 1981:99).

What is the shoe penetrating? If the 'sexual fix' is transgressed then two possibilities present themselves, both having to do with desire and the lost referent/original. Firstly, in this sutured discourse viewer positions oscillate around a number of distinctions: seeing/seen, desiring/desired, voyeurism/narcissism, subjectivity/objectivity. Thus within this circuitous economy the reader is implicated in a decidedly phallic discourse whereby 'women's' desire is still only knowable in phallic terms, from the point of view of his writing of the

'other'. His desire is for her phallic expression (of his desire for her phallic expression ...); her desire is still an enigma. Thus, fascination is with this feminine silence, getting it to speak. And the fetish fascinates and penetrates that space/silence between reader and text, Imaginary and Symbolic, and is necessary for the representation of desire. Her énoncé, 'statements' and fetish objects of desire, puncture him/his desire, so in desiring she is also desirable (cf. Jacobs, 1981). Secondly, desire has no natural referent, nor is there any way of representing it except in its repressions and displacements. Nochlin suggests that the "reality" of woman, in a masculine discourse, is the "ultimate-meaning-to-be-penetrated" (1986:77).

To represent an 'ultimate meaning' within a mimetic scenario of desire the model must carry both marks of his and her desire and thus simulate an androgynous union of opposites. She wears the stiletto heel, often poised, at the genital orifice, to penetrate her, and just as often aimed to penetrate him. She desires and in so doing is desirable. This is a sexual dis-location.

The shoe fetish in soft core plays on absence; that is, the model is a spectacular sensorium whose textual body is a visual projection, of the reader and, in her masculine vocabulary, a projection back to him. In this gap there is a 'space' for the

reader; he stands in fascination at the spectacle, the simulated moment which has lost any faith in its realism (Foster, 1985:79-96). The fetish is an hysterical display to foreground, against the 'figure' of her body, a symptomatic desire. The marks of sexual longing - the fetish objects of her clothing - are implicated in a circuit of desire: his desire to see the likeness of her longing to be possessed, signified in the body's vestimentary code. This is a phallic investment in which the reader's desire - to see hers - is exchanged for the commodity-object (heel, money, shoe, etc.). The 'meaning', as in any semiotic chain, is surrendered (lost or repressed) in exchange for the object. And the meaning is (his) phallic desire.

Absence signifies desire in a number of ways: the reader must give up some properties of his desire to witness/conquer the desire of the model. Loss and the fetishized relation are the terms of castration, the fetish as a stand-in or part-object for anxieties around (fears of) the 'missing penis'. So the real penis is absent, but the fetish recalls that absence in perverse yet pleasurable ways. The distinguishing absence, in this genre, is a representation of the reader (the model stands alone) as well as (as Metz notes of the reader vis à vis any photograph) his look or gaze: the fetish recalls them. And they are solicited by the model. He lends his gaze to the image, is

robbed of his manly penetrating properties; and, he is simultaneously stripped of his phallic properties as he dresses up the model in the image of his desire. That is, the fetish shoe is modelled in his penetrating and incisive image, a weapon-extension on the female body.

Absence is signified, most subversively and again in 'castrating' terms, in the loss of a phallic referent; there is no natural referent for desire, no natural way of representing the terms of its form except within a "dialogue of lovers" (Lacan 1981:192), a parenthetical space in which desire is imagined. The viewer is only realized, in his position vis à vis this sexual discourse, through his liquidation; his partial recovery is achieved through the fiction of the fetish a substitute, and recall of the traumatic moments of loss. Paradigms of loss signal a repression (a loss harkening a nostalgia and hope for recovery), a desire for repression and hence the fetishization of what's missing.

The ritual adornment of the foot with the stiletto-heeled shoe is one way of lending the body its pornographic status. It is a writing on nudity to confer (along with the gaze and lingerie) significance on the terrain of the physical. The shoe is 'in excess', given to greater visibility, often, than the breasts or genitals. As a fetish, the spike heel structures the

narrative around difference. It locates the female model on one side of the sexual divide, i.e. it is a shoe only women wear. It also structures and sustains the reader's gaze. What is there for him to see is a difference with a vengeance: the phallic extension. Unlike with hard-core, where the reader meets his stand-in in the form of a male model, the fetish in soft-core, bears the responsibility for creating otherness. If the fetish domesticates the threat of otherness, it reinstates it at the same time, and in phallic terms (Greenacre, 1953). The shoe is, as I've attempted to demonstrate, a sign of the model's desire. But in recalling the phallic properties of the shoe in the inscription of the model's desire, it steps into the discourse of the reader's desire: signs of his, but on her possession. Simulated difference is intact.

The shoe: HARD CORE

The shoe in soft-core plays on absence, of the viewer and the phallic referent, so that the pornographic moment is the simulated world of desire, the fetish as stand-in for what's missing. In hard-core, the scenario is more complex and the female model less of a spectacle in the sense of a "simulated reality, a total illusion" (Foster, 1985:80). For the fetish in hard-core is not the only sign of masculinity. The

distinguishing feature of the hard-core genre is the diegetic presence of men and the 'penis as a phallic symbol'. Thus, there are two impulses to this scopic moment: the spectator is a voyeur at the peep-hole, privy to a re-enactment of the primal scene, or at least a 'private' viewing of the quintessentially private act. And, the voyeur's fascination overlaps with narcissistic identification.

The spectacle in hard-core is fascination in a phallic exchange (not fascination with the sole female model), which circulates, seductively, around a surplus of masculine signification. The 'woman' already possesses a penetrating gaze and carries the stiletto-heel. As well, there are male models who already occupy narrative positions within the photograph, usurping the place of the reader. He within the photo re-presents the reader to himself, a narcissistic image for the reader and a double exclusion: phenomenologically he, of course, is outside the frame of the photo. And his 'presence' is replaced by a part-object, what Metz calls a "pocket phallus" (1985:86). This 'present absence' points to a phallic redundancy and a phallic displacement which is the partial exclusion of the reader. Only partial because he can still 'see' himself (or signs of his desire) in the fetish-heel: it is her phallic property that he wants to see.

The high heel in hard core signifies in important ways. It is one of what Beverley Brown calls pornography's "non-transparent features... a repertoire of milieux and costume", an 'everyday object' given specific form within the pornographic regime (1981:6, 7). The shoe is a curious feature of the pornographic imagination, a surplus investment on the body and a superfluous 'aid' to the sexual act. It is an investment in the body which dis-invests it of any essential power, an exposure of a non-corporal desire. How does one represent desire, always a referential exchange? The shoe/fetish adorns the body not, I would suggest, to equate the body with objects (to 'objectify' it) but in a way that vitalizes the objects, makes them 'work' in a "process of ideological labor" (Baudrillard, 1981:94). The lifeless object, the commodity/shoe, is a fetish of the 'code', in Baudrillard's sense. He writes, in For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign, of the structural properties of fascination, valued and sustained in exchange (1981). Fetishistic forms are dominated by the code, not the object and are charged with the marking of difference ("epitomizing a whole system of differences") within a system of 'value' propagated by a generalized exchange. The 'shoe' is a marker of sexual difference ('the feminine') but its materiality slides into signification as it takes on the ideological properties of 'otherness' and difference. The female body as castrated and the continual reminder of this is held through the

hysterical inscription of difference on this textual body. But the object-shoe is 'difference' in a more perverse way. That is, the hard, slender extension and protruberance is sharp, a projection on the female body. This stiletto is the 'heel' (that masculine object) of the female body, its instrument capable of penetrating, cutting; a phallic writing on the 'feminine' surface. A colonization of difference.

But it is difference within an exchange which threatens to cancel out 'otherness', collapsing difference into simulated indifference. The shoe in hard-core is metonymically and spatially twinned with the phallus. It accompanies the fragmented body (usually his), visual signifiers of her pleasure, erections, penetration and ejaculation. The shoe is a surplus signifier, a companion to BOTH scenes of genital display (a readiness for penetration) AND the graphic penetrating act. The spike heel is visually associated with the female genitals. Her legs are bent at the knee, genitals exposed, and the shoe and heel are partially or fully included in the diegetic frame of the photograph, thus circulating within a simulated economy. The open genital spread is exchanged for the foot and the heel of the shoe. In this semiotic interference sexual opposition is a partial collapse on the body's discourse: the very body to be penetrated carries its own phallic extension. During scenes of explicit genital intercourse, the heel is a simulated phallus, a

redundant sign whose referent is still only a representation of desire. The body is contorted so that the heel is aimed at the reader; the 'feminine' stiletto is intrusive while the body is already locked in genital exchange.

Absence and the fetish

Fetishistic negotiations mock the reader at every turn. In a parodic display both reader and male model are framed within a surplus of signification, a hyperreal where something is 'real' only insofar as it can be (mis)represented. Both reader and models are superfluous, subordinate to a phallic signification in excess. Both bodies (male and female) in this genre are surrogates for phallic (dis)investment. Hers is named under the sign of the fetish through its masculine vocabulary, a writing of desire in its simulated code. In that sense, her 'androgynous' encoding is poised at the seam of the 'cut', an ephemeral possession which betrays a tenuous 'sexual fix'. To be a desiring subject she must 'speak' in the terms of the 'other'. But a total effacement of sexual difference would be the death of desire: 'otherness' is central to all the repressions which constitute the subject in language/desire. Its semiotic demise would signal the "impossible referent". The incorporation of the fetish into the hard-core genre is a 'cut' into indifference, a

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MicroD

simulated androgynous void: penis exchanged for heel exchanged for phallus. All in the service of representing desire. It's exhausting. These misrepresentations do, however, allow for the reader to insert himself into that void (more on this below).

The anatomically masculine body seems less potent than the body culturally designated as 'female'. Its discursive form includes the penis, of course; but it too is only as good as what it can represent: an inflated desire which is only the prelude to its "petite mort". Narrative closure is achieved through the waning and eventual death of desire. seminal traces on the woman's body are his detumescence, the draining of desire in its corporeal form. The model's desire, however, is a surplus of signification, like the hysteric's symptoms, an expression of "repressed wishes" (Freud, 1905:36). There is a natural terminus to his desire; not so for the semiotic performance of the female model who represents the "infinite repetitiveness of desire" (Nochlin, 1986:86).

Where does the reader fit into this phallic exchange which privileges the simulated order in which the 'real' is surpassed by its representations? The female model is still left wanting; her desire is a paraphrase maybe, but not assuaged. There is no 'little death' for her. Because the reader stands outside the diegetic space, as voyeur he witnesses a narrative which excludes

him as the donor of phallic pleasure. He does, however, have the 'real' thing which is activated in the service of desire. He fits into that indifferent void, the side of the 'cut' which transgresses the sexual fix and works through divesting the subject (the reader in this case) of signs of his desire.

As narcissist his visual investment is in the doubling effect of the fetish/phallus. This is not a visual discourse which celebrates masculinity in its 'original' and obdurate form, (via the penis) but is a quest for the missing referent, the lost phallus. The representation covers up the flaw of the 'real', masculinity as the lost referent: and (mis)representations of desire are more desirable than desire itself - which anyway can't be represented. The reader of the hard-core genre is in a profoundly ambivalent relation to the photograph, as it works through the fetish. Fetishistic transactions cut both ways; that is, hard-core heterodoxy is a radical play on 'otherness'. The fetish instills the threat of difference and manages it at the same time, thus effecting a partial collapse around sameness. Hard-core is more subversive than soft-core as it problematizes sexual difference, through the structure of fetishism and phallic redundancy, as "both there and not there, nothing to see and nothing to hide" (Solomon-Godeau, 1986:103). The reader's complicity in the exchange is his 'little death' in the midst of all this nothingness. Nothing

exchanged for nothing: his desire is invested in the deflated representations and lost referentials of desire. Thus cancelling out the reader and desire.

TV

If the hard-core (straight) genre is a radical play on 'otherness' - in the sense that the exteriorization of the viewer's masculinity is written all over the place - "TV" pornography represents what looks like the most vicious collapse of sexual difference sustained on the body. In "TV" porn the "she-male" body is a textual surplus of signification; and while the high heel shoe is worn by the female model, it is, along with the other fetish objects, an hysterical inscription on a body which is already a play on difference. "TV" porn is all about appearances and the suspension of belief (but seemingly without absence): it appears to be a significant in-difference to the binary biological opposition yet still a semiotic concession to signs of gender.

In "TV" soft-core a single transsexual model occupies full diegetic space. S.he is adorned as feminine in exaggerated style, a symbolic construction of the feminine subject on a body doubled as its 'other'. The model's gender identity is held in

the fetish adornment of the body and in the model as female poseur, an enunciation of comportment codes. She is on display and holds the penis as if to emphasize the masculine component of the body. Her demeanor is coy and her sexual allure is carried in her erotic accoutrements: the stockings, the garters, the corset, the stiletto heel. The high heel is part of a generalized phallic equivalence; the model is phallicized beyond 'her' natural biological over-endowment. The penis, although on display, is subordinate to the body dressed-up and adorned as 'feminine'. It appears as though an attachment to the feminine body (in its simulated form), a fake projection of masculinity on what is really the discursive figure of femininity. The penis is soft, an understatement of signs of desire.

What makes this body different is its wishful disregard for sexual opposition and the way it flaunts transgression of a fixed sexual location. What makes this discourse desireable is the way the body is adorned to deploy gender, but again in lawfully transgressive ways. The model is partially phallicized, i.e. in a position to desire the reader and to solicit his desire for her. In granting the model certain phallic terms of desire, the reader is suspended in loss, having given up signs of his phallic properties. The model is 'other' and in the symbolic legislation of sexual difference the reader is re-affirmed as 'other than' the model but it is an 'otherness' that "cuts". Fetishistic

maneuvers sustain phallic equivalence on the body, a reminder that women have not been castrated. Their 'otherness' then is expressed in phallic terms and this is a seductive scenario for the reader.

But the model is missing something too, in spite of her prodigious biological frills. Her indifferentiation violates the sexual fix and it seems there is no 'otherness' to desire. Difference, however, is resurrected to counteract her lack of difference as a bodily demarcation. 'Her' transgressive body is restored to one side of the binary cut through her feminine, fetish, apparel. This apparel, of which the shoe is an important part, is the 'true' simulation of androgyny and of desire, and of what she's missing: representations of the reader's (phallic) desire.

"TV" hard-core also operates within an economy of excessive visibility where there are no surface absences. The heel in this genre takes its place among the surplus and simulated phallic investment: the presence of ~~two~~ penises, the dildo (grasped by the 'she-male') in mock phallic display and, on top of all this, the cultural 'feminization' of the transsexual through erotic accoutrements. The dual nature of the spike heel harmonizes with the body that doubles as its other. It appears to be a

suitably feminine article of clothing; but, it carries both masculine and feminine properties and the heel's metonymic associations suit a masculine code, i.e. a 'heel' is a man. It is a spike, a stiletto, a masculine weapon on the female body. In this genre masculine signification abounds, all the while within a feminine frame of reference; indeed the transsexual model is referred to as a "she-male", teetering precariously on the fine line between male and female, masculine and feminine, the discursive and the real.

Where is the reader in an economy of desire which appears to be foreclosed? How is he redeemed in his position as desiring/desirable subject? First of all, the transsexual is coded as 'feminine' not just through the lingerie and make-up, but also by virtue (in hard core) of 'her' interaction with another male model. In that sense, the two models perform in a heterosexual dyad, a coupling which, although perverse, is within a sanctioned discourse. Although his signifier of masculinity, the penis, as well as facial or genital signifiers of his pleasure, are subordinate to the diegetic and semiotic space of the "she-male", 'her' penis is still perpetually limp, unable to achieve phallic heights. 'Her' desire is only simulated through the fetish accoutrements; in this case the heel of the shoe is the perfect stand-in for that which cannot be achieved, only represented. The limpness is a pathetic concession to a phallic

economy in which the feeble mis-representation has surpassed the real. An insistence on loss allows for the reader to take up that space created by the phallic slip-ups: the limp signifier.

As noted in "The Genitals", the display of testicles is an advertisement for the 'feminine' counterpart to the penis. It makes way for the fetish as part-object (partial to her loss and his desire) and creates a space for it and for the reader. The penis, as the ultimate masculine protuberance, is not so readily available, apparent, or active in the service of sexual difference or the signification of desire. The heel may be, then, a 'penis-symbol', taking up the place, on the she-male's body, of a lifeless rendition of the cock.

The heel is a penis-extension on the body, harder, sturdier even, than the frail penis (visually subordinate to the testicles). The reader is then enlisted in a choreography in which he might still become the final donor of phallic pleasure, the life-giver in a fetishized exchange. At the "margin of disturbance" (Heath, 1987:42) that characterizes a fetishized economy, the fetish carries its own conditions of fascination, but in terms of 'there/not there', hence implicating structures of absence. In those oscillations between belief and disbelief there is a place for the reader, wishfully granted the real thing, the 'real' phallus, more than just a penis-symbol, and

symbolic of a desire to satisfy the desire of the radical 'other' in the form of the (fe.male) model.

The reader's inscription into the photographic memoir and the fetishistic narratives of difference and loss are part of the "immobility and silence" which accrues to the photo and its death-effect (Metz, 1985:83). The space, the silence and the vacancy (the fetishistic overlay) are filled in by the reader. What are 'filled in' are phallic mis-representations, part-objects of desire, proportionately greater than (and unrepresented by) the limp biological possession of the model.

Fashioning the fetish

The recuperation of difference is a reinvestment in loss. Difference is established in the transsexual's biological and sartorial narrative. But it is a difference whose name is 'femininity', dramatized through vestmental codes (lingerie and shoes) which adorn the body in a fashion that is culturally feminine. The 'femininity' of the model is also written on the body's surface, a limp penis, a bogus phallus: merely a masquerade for desire. Desire is then signified by the erotic accoutrements donned by the transsexual, AND in that seductive edge: the 'margin of disturbance', in which impersonations of

masculinity/femininity play on a partial annihilation of difference. 'Difference' is however recovered (covered up) in the 'outfitting' of the model as feminine. This is a fidelity to categories of gender opposition (not biological oppositions and signification; those designations are already inscribed on the body). And inscription into narratives of gender is the reader's surrender to desire and loss of some of his phallic properties.

In "TV" hard-core, the "she-male" eludes phallic perfection and is hence dressed up. Her body is fetishized beyond its biological construction (already a fetish deployment in the way it activates formations of 'there/not there'). Masculinity and desire are simulated; the ultimate masculine protuberance is not so apparent, although never out of sight. 'Fascination' is perhaps at its most spectacular in this genre, fascination with the "irreality" (Foster, 1985:79) of this contemporary spectacular site. The imagistic 'body double' subverts the traditional authority of the sex and gender divide: structures of difference are exhausted in a choreography which strenuously defends belief against disbelief (and all the 'losses' that that embodies). The "ultravivid mode of fascination" (Foster, 1985:90) is the consumers' orgasm in a culture of seduction/simulation. What defies representation - desire, the phallus, an origin - is given shape in a spectacular style, a "parodic rehabilitation of all lost referentials" (Baudrillard,

1983:72).

Nostalgia, a longing for what has been lost, and the fetish associations with death, combine to fascinate and thrill. In a seductive economy of "sheer text(s)... without truth content" the spectacle fascinates, Foster argues, as it participates in the 'loss of the real' (i.e. the phallus) while simultaneously assuaging this loss through the circulation of the fetish (1985:83). And the spectacle fascinates in its power to submit the reader to the illusion of the perfection of the image. In so consuming, the spectator is partially excluded/consumed, like the "passive position of the dreamer", and as with the commodity "all traces of productive labor and material support are erased" (Foster, 1985:82). The reader, however, is never fully excluded, nor is he ever in full possession of the image. His loss is also his desire. Perfect narrative closure, the double exposure of the hermaphroditic body, would be the death of desire: there is no 'other' held as its referent.

The reader's 'longing' is his desire and is sustained in difference. This is also realized in the contrast between the heel and the phallus. Their differences are of a metaphorical structure and implicate the penis. The phallus is fetishized as absence; the heel carries a frailty like the penis, limp with non-desire. The reader, however, is presumed - mere flattery -

to have the shoe on the other foot: i.e., he has the real thing. This pornographic genre, although circulating within a partially phallic economy, can only hover, teeter, around its articulation. The "TV" body is symptomatic of the tension between the erasure of difference and a longing for it at the same time.

The fetish, in this genre, is the impossibility of representing pure difference, hence the invoking of the phallus; the shoe is the perfect exemplar of this. There is the nostalgic reconstruction of masculinity as the lost referent: masculinity in its representational form is thus fetishized. I.E., Bodily configurations are a surplus of phallic writing. The male body, in this genre, wears the penis as part of its biological dress code; it interacts with a body, that of the female, that flirts with a 'difference' on the body's text. Is she or isn't she? Is s.he a 'she'? That body's fleshy configuration carries a signifier that won't go away; but a signifier which is a mockery of the masculine, as much a 'put-on' as the lingerie. This penis-signifier is not masculinity at its most turgid, rather a potential exhaustion of desire: sustaining, still, a space for the insertion of 'the phallus' (as a reference to the reader). The penis (and the testicles) and the phallic attributes of the ('she-male') model compete with each other; the phallus wins all the time precisely because it can only be represented symptomatically, like the hysteric's corporeal enunciation. The

fetish-as-masquerade heightens the phallic exchange so that the body is outfitted in (simulated) androgynous terms: the spike heel and lingerie are cultural statements of femininity, yet at the same time are the artifice of desire (and therefore a referent to the symbolic construction of masculinity). Freud wrote that the "normal prototype of fetishes is a man's penis" (1927:357); but in the coupling of the penis and its phallic reconstruction on the body of the transsexual, the fetish character of desire aligns the excessive marking of the body as 'different' with the 'phallus', not the penis. The fe.male is both feminized and phallic at the same time, the ultimate 'other'. Which is still an appropriate exchange for the reader to negotiate, in his attraction to the fetish-death connection, his own phallic space and supply what's missing: his desire, his penis, his impersonation of the phallus, the 'real' yardstick of seduction.

In conclusion, the discourse of the transsexual model (and the penis-signifier) enters the simulated world of fascination through the fetish(es) which serve not to suspend belief (that the fe.male has been castrated) but to domesticate, and eroticize, the threat that phallic desires pose to the male reader: the fetish eroticizes her castration. But the fetish objects disavow the annihilating effects of the model's (and the

reader's) castration (which would, after all, be the death of the subject); at the same time, castration in its simulated/desirable form is offered in the acknowledgement of sexual difference.

It would seem there are no 'absences' in this genre, no losses, no "fright of castration at the sight of a female genital" (Freud, 1927:354). The simulated world attempts to put a hermetic seal on perfect phallic equivalence: the fetish and the phallus appear to be aligned as one, men fuck men (difference with no loss) who simulate women or men desire women with men's desire. But the fetish again sustains difference and in this case is the signature of its allure as well. The fetish accoutrements disrupt the perfect symmetry of the 'androgynous' and place the body within a discursive context: it is culturally assigned as 'feminine' and semantically as 'transvestite'. They create the threatening image as well as overlay it with desire, a "seduction before undressing" (Pacteau, 1986:78). The reader, not even needed to satisfy the model's desire (and how would one satisfy the doubled desire of the ambi-sexual?) can still locate himself at every turn within an economy of difference elided in favour of a balancing act: phallic projections compete with feminine fashionable statements, as the body doubles as its 'other'.

Gay: SOFT CORE

The body in gay pornography (soft-core) is seldom adorned, perhaps testimony to the visibility, and potency, of biological embellishment. That is, the body is already male, masculine enough in its 'dressing', the penis being its most distinctive biological motif. But the 'penis' is represented as a 'disembodied phallus': the body is often cropped and fragmented so that the head and face are not shown and prominence is given to genital display. And the phallic protrusion is on a body without, unlike the 'female' in straight pornography, a discursive array of fetishistic inflations; it circulates among a phallic commerce in which the privileged signifier is the penis. The penis is inserted (if you will) into a masculine or phallic discourse overdetermined by its association with the world of men. Frequently models are depicted within sport or athletic settings, a locker, weight or gym room for example; or, a soccer or basket ball may be nearby. 'Athletic' affiliations are also sustained through the donning of 'sweat' shirts, 'sweat' bands and jocks straps, the latter usually pulled down to reveal the penis. The fetish may however be foot-related: occasionally the model wears socks, or athletic shoes are scattered about amongst the gym equipment. But foot and shoe are not part of cultural, or fashionable, discourses on masculinity: they are not fetishized to the radical extent they are for women. Due to the

phallic dressing on the body, it doesn't have to be fashioned (fashion: to alter or transform) to penetrate. The penis can penetrate, the look/gaze doesn't have to (although it engages the reader, the eyes are not beady).

This is soft-core and penetration within the diegetic space does not occur. When a couple of men appear in a narrative, however, the arrangement designates positions of femininity and masculinity, in spite of the presence of two biologically male bodies. One is fully naked and does not engage the camera/reader; the 'other' is a feminine temptress. He (who invokes the 'woman') is the one who gazes at the reader and the one who is 'dressed up', who wears fetish objects. He is feminized to the extent that he is designated as 'other', and it is his face which registers the look of pleasure. In a visual narrative in Mandate the more feminine of the two men in the photo spread is 'groomed' for the camera by the other fully naked model, who combs his lover's hair (he who is fetishistically adorned). An 'otherness' marked on the body, a demarcation of sexual difference. What does the fetish signify in these instances? It will penetrate, at the moment of the 'cut' and as part of their sexual play gay men are penetrated.....

Gay: HARD CORE

The one object which is a common adornment on the 'gay' body is the 'cock-ring', a small metal or leather ring which circles the end of the penis behind the testicles. It is a sexual aid which is said to help sustain an erection. A look at gay, hard-core pornographic photographs, and the fetish, is to notice the 'cock', "jauntily or defiantly" erect (Oxford); raised in "readiness for firing" (Oxford). The penis is omni-present but disembodied, threatening to cut away and become a signifier on the loose.

First of all, fetish accoutrements are notably absent. A scenario may begin with a model, or models, partially clothed to reveal a hard body, taut with muscular definition. And the clothing is of the 'athletic' variety: running shorts, sweat socks and tennis/running shoes. There may be some sexual activity without total nudity and then a 'quick strip' to nudity without the body fetishized in the classically pornographic way. The bodies are divested of all forms of clothing and sexual difference is demarcated through the gaze, i.e. the 'feminine' model has a "cock in her eye", and penetrates the reader/camera. Typically, it is his pleasure which is sought out and represented facially. Otherwise, in this true phallic economy, 'difference' is inscribed in narratives of desire and the penis/phallus (cock) is the writing of that desire.

The cock appears otherworldly, a phantom phallus, an awkward addition on the body, standing at full attention, saluting the 'other'. The 'penis as part-object' takes up alot of the diegetic space, becoming radically fetishized, appearing to detach itself from the body and circulate as the signifier of signifiers. This suggests a narcissism for the subject/reader, the phallus/fetish is a model of perfection, "marked as the object of an erotic gaze" (Neale, 1982:8). It represents that "satisfying sense of omnipotence" (Mulvey, 1975:12) and invites surrender to the mastery of the (complete) image. There appears to be no losses, and no fetish-objects. Yet the perfection and narcissistic fascination is an exclusion, "in the name of... internal logic or perfection... perfect closure effected by signs" (Baudrillard, 1981:96). In this case, the power and omnipotence represented by the erect penis-as-fetish are part of a sign play in which the penis is only an artifact of desire. And, castration is effected through the semiotic display of the penis/fetish which is poised to penetrate, either (usually) the mouth of the other model, or the gap between text and reader.

All of which is to say that the relative absence of the fetish in gay genres is due to the nature of the fetish and its rôle in denial of absence. It is not as necessary to sustain

distance between viewer and model as homoerotic identification works towards closing that gap. But of course the gap between subject and representation is a phenomenal fact and the election of the penis as fetish suggests two things: (1) the phallus is not the penis, and it defies representation, always speaking to losses and what can never be recalled; and (2) the homosexual reader may be a more passive recipient to the erect desire of the model, thus penetration may be written on the body.

Scenarios of desire within pornographic genres are dependent on other fetish objects. The shoe is not the only one which endows the body with pornographic meaning. In the last chapter we look at lingerie and jewellery as they signify 'difference' at the cutting edge.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

1. Historical sources on various fetish accoutrements are notoriously long on description but weak on analysis. cf. Elizabeth Wilson, Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity, London: Virago, 1985; Valerie Steele, Fashion and Eroticism: Ideals of Feminine Beauty from the Victorian Era to the Jazz Age, New York: Oxford, 1985; Lois Banner, American Beauty, New York: Knopf, 1983; Prudence Glynn, Skin to Skin: Eroticism in Dress, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983; Alison Lurie, The Language of Clothes, New York: Random House, 1982. In Fashion and Fetishism: A Social History of the Corset, Tight-Lacing and Other Forms of Body-Sculpture in the West, David Kunzle suggests that the social practice of tight-lacing was in fact a 'liberating' gesture on the part of women who surreptitiously took pleasure in expressing their sexuality, Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1982.

2. Alfredo Zenoni, in "Metaphor and Metonymy in Lacanian Theory," Enclitic, 5:1, Spring 1981, provides a useful distinction between metaphoric and metonymic transactions in linguistic chains of signification and the rhetorical mechanisms of condensation and displacement. A metaphor "affirm(s) the resemblance... the identity between things," the resemblance does not precede the metaphor (7). Metonymy refers to the pairing of substitutes, brought into contact through their occurrence within a certain discourse. Zenoni writes: "It is only in so far as the signifieds and the referents are articulated in discourse, and thus placed in relationship with one another, that they can function as signifiers. It is only in so far as there is no signification that things can be metonymized mutually, that they can each function as the name (nom) of the others. It is because reality is caught in a net of references that an empty space can designate its contrary, that the peripheral can designate the essential. It is thus on the level of signifying contiguities that the accent can be displaced onto details which are stated only to refer to other contextual elements, and even to the context as a whole" (13).

3. One exception I have found occurs only after the female, whose narrative involves the 'liberating' of her fantasies, is sexually satisfied. In a final photo her feet are bare - she no longer needs to simulate desire.

4. cf. Béla Grunberger, "Some Reflections on the Rat Man," International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 47, 1966, for a discussion of these traits with respect to the case of the "Rat Man."

5. Jacobs uses the distinction between enoncé and enunciation

and their overlapping within the terrain of sexual difference, in "Now Voyageur": Some Problems of Enunciation and Sexual Difference," Camera Obscura, 1, 1981.

6. "... Charlotte's body (is) an image which allows desire to circulate and thus permits a narrative to take shape. The fetishization of a woman's body is valorized as the precondition of the entrance into the story, and therefore romance. Her body-image is read not only as the doctor's work but as the satisfaction of Charlotte's desire itself... This image caps the Walt Whitman poem, the woman's body becoming the final guarantee that this is the definitive discourse" (Jacobs, 1981:96).

Chapter 5

THE FETISH: JEWELLERY AND LINGERIE

The following applies to the soft-core genre. Pornographic bodies, as noted, are dressed up by the processes of desire. They are 'spoken' with transgressive possibilities. The corpus of the model threatens biological and discursive boundaries (showing up biology as yet another discourse, a malleable one at that).

Nudity is not the norm; the pornographic display is one of adornment, which plays upon the ambi-sexual nature of 'otherness' and an ambivalence around desire for sameness and otherness. The female disrupts conventions of the spectacle; she also is not passively nude, she wears the 'modest' immodestly. She exposes her undergarments, her lingerie (her desire) and turns the 'private' into a public discourse. She borrows the language of the street, i.e. iconography of the hooker - the spike-heeled shoe, the fish-net stockings, the cigarette.¹ He (in gay soft-core) is more often completely nude, quietly contemplative.

Flügel writes that "clothes resemble a perpetual blush upon the surface of humanity", bodily adornment always a balance (ambivalence he calls it) between "displaying our attractions"

and "a means of hiding our shame"; as such, clothes enter into the psychological terrain whereby the neurotic symptom is negotiated (1931:21, 20). This combination of ambivalence (modesty and display) and neuroses allows us to imagine forms of bodily dress as transgressive, contradictory, and involving an interplay between wearer and the wearer's public. The neurotic symptom is:

"... something of a compromise, due to the interplay of conflicting and largely unconscious impulses. Some symptoms of this kind seem indeed to serve as a compromise between almost exactly the same tendencies as those which find expression in clothes. Thus the attacks of psychological blushing, from which some patients suffer, are, on the one hand, exaggerations of the normal symptoms of shame, but, on the other hand, as psycho-analytic examination has demonstrated, at the same time involuntarily draw attention to the sufferer and thus gratify his unconscious exhibitionism. In terms of this very close analogy, it may indeed be said that clothes resemble a perpetual blush upon the surface of humanity" (Flügel, 1931:21).

We have already seen the erotic compromise effected through the discursive body, the shoe and the reader enlisted in scenarios of difference and indifference. Another exists in women's lingerie and jewellery. Flügel also notes that a central modern difference between the sartorial make-up of men and women is women's "double weapon of exposure and of decoration" (106). This statement would aptly characterize the deployment of fashion statements as they apply to the organization of the pornographic body textual. The 'double weapon' is a curious endowment of the

female body in a sexual scene, and when implicated in discourses of desire (for men). For it will be demonstrated that jewellery and lingerie are also objects which effect a simulated androgyny in a seductive fashion. We will now discuss the interaction between nudity (selective exposure) and the appointment of sexualized beauty through jewellery and lingerie.

JEWELLERY

It is the the protocol of all straight and "TV" genres to elaborate sexual difference through the use of jewellery. This kind of costume is related, as Flügel notes, to the display of wealth: "... wealth in a more readily exchangeable form may be carried in the shape of ornament. In civilised societies the most common approach to this is the wearing of precious stones as jewellery ..." (1931:33). Jewellery gives rise to connotations of wealth, possession, currency, ostentation and vainglorious Customarily the woman wears jewellery; it is not uncommon, in cultural practice, for women to wear actual coins or imitations of coins, on charm bracelets, necklaces, belts, etc. "...Coinage, or its equivalent, may be carried, not only to show that the wearer is rich, but actually to enable him to buy what he requires" (Flügel, 1931:33). Although the relationship is complex, it does suggest that purchasing power resides with both

reader and model and that the models are fee-bearing.

There are slight variations in what each (female) model wears: a ring, a bracelet, sometimes earrings, seldom nothing at all. As with the shoe-fetish, some form of jewellery is present as a micro-fetish or at least part of the symbolic organization of femininity-in-desire. There is a recurring motif in neck ware. A necklace often draws the gaze upwards towards the face/eyes - and separates the upper torso, i.e. the breasts, from facial signifiers of pleasure and desire. This is if the necklace is small, short enough to rest on the collar bone. The more popular version of ornamentation is the longer necklace which extends between the breasts, serving the purpose of individuating the breasts, separating them visually to make them conform to the principles of singularity, the simulated phallic principle.

The article that has the most currency is the string of beads, notably pearls. The immediate fashionable associations are with the feminine; pearls are worn by women, never men. Why the pearl? A pearl is: (from Webster's) "a dense... and lustrous concretion", "a gem ... choice or precious"; "smooth, hard, roundish, formed around a worm or foreign body within the shell of an oyster"; "akin to [OE] 'heel'". 'To pearl' is "to sprinkle or bead with pearly drops", "to give a pearly colour or

lustre to".

A number of considerations emerge from these etymological associations. The female model is adorned with a precious or semi-precious "gem" (her jewels), an "object of great beauty or worth; choicest part of; prized thing" (OKD). And the gems have "lustre": "gloss, refulgence; shining surface, brilliance, bright light... distinction" (OKD); "radiant in character or reputation" (Webster's). The pearly gems are a specular prize, something to be looked at, their lustre commanding attention. As a prized thing or choice object, they connote an object of desire and a mark of femininity: they are like a glimmering trophy, feminine in their to-be-looked-at-ness. But they are also distinctively radiant, a shiny beacon to the one who looks. In their specularity they project to, and reflect, the reader.

The pearly, light filled beads are akin to the beady eyes. Their polished hardness is a masculine compliment to their round feminine connotations. And they insinuate themselves within the oyster - slang for both female pudend and semen. If the "world is your oyster", as the saying goes, you've 'got the world by the tail' - your potential, fantastic desires shall be realized. A "tail" is also both penis and female pudend; "tail-feathers" - pubic hair; "tail-flowers" - the menses; "tail-fruit" - children; "tail-juice" - urine or semen; "tail-wagging" - intercourse

(Partridge). The oyster/tail too has its erotic and ambisexual component. As does the oyster/pearl, in other ways: for example, the oyster is both hard and soft, hard shell, soft lining, hard pearl. Pearls, as jewellery (the family jewels?) are round and threaded; the round uterine-like pearl is simultaneously pierced to create a string of pearls. It again carries a doubled disposition or capacity for uniting a binary opposition, i.e. a string of pearls is a combination of hollowness and hardness, a unity-in-difference.

Why the pearl? They are the oyster's excretion and this gives rise to at least two possible renditions of its significance in the pornographic oeuvre. The pearl is white or whiteish; in its lustre it adopts a sheen, a surface brilliance. It looks wet. The pearls which drape the model's neck and extend between her breasts resemble the pearly drops of semen which, significantly, adorn her body (and sometimes his): his excretion, his precious, thick "liquid seed" (*Anal Fantasy*), his gem stones. In that sense, the pearls are a motif of sated, spent desire, the product of his being "milked" ("I intended to tease her for as long as possible, but there was no question as to who was teasing whom ... she continued to squeeze and milk me...", *Penthouse*). The product of the oyster - the pearl - is the oyster's excretion, its shit, posing as milk. This elimination from the body of the oyster is its own metonymic twin: both a sign of life

(seminal lustre) and death - a discharge, shit, the elimination from (of) the body.

Corporal desire cannot sustain itself and only signifies in its death, its loss. The pornographic moment uses the pearl as a fusion of eros and thanatos, of desire and life; in its visibility, and materiality, it signifies the exhaustion of desire, the body, and difference (for if desire is the discourse of the other, this writing of difference is its death).

Pearls appear to be ultra feminine. But if a pearl is 'akin to a heel' can one then say the pearl is akin to the oyster's phallic projection (semen/shit), and, as worn by the female, signs of her (phallic) desire? Could it be that these jewels at their most feminine are part of the masculine charade?

If the model does not wear pearls she is very often adorned with a string of beads of some other description. Other articles of jewellery include earrings, rings, bracelets, often bejewelled. This heightens their specularly (and that of the wearer) but at the same time, the brilliance of the diamonds and other gems which are positioned to catch and reflect light dazzles and enthralls, captures the gaze, and, as with an iridescent light show, temporarily blinds the reader. The effect

is bewitching, a brilliant display, fantasy, the body as a shimmering screen, all surface glitter (ultimately incapable, of course, of being penetrated). In blinding the reader however - the classic castration scenario - she is poised to penetrate.

A reading: Lisa, in a Penthouse spread (June 1988), is fetishistically endowed in a variety of different styles and poses, at times more scantily clad than others. In a typical scene she is sitting on the floor, wearing a blood-red dress which falls off her spread legs which are bent at the knees. one leg is at a right angle to her body, to reveal her crotch. She is also wearing red spike-heeled shoes, the heel of one placed close to the vulvar area. One breast is exposed, the other is covered by her long tresses of hair.

It's a photo about trickery, deception and longing. These are conveyed through the body's fashionable text. Lisa's jewellery consists of: diamond-studded drop earrings, a diamond-studded, triple strand necklace, a triple-strand diamond bracelet and a very large, solitaire diamond ring. Her belt buckle is a beaded design about four inches wide. All glisten, dazzle and reflect: she is a light show. And in other ways too. The lighting is shaded (typical of this genre, especially Penthouse and Playboy), creating a hazy impression. Shadows contrast with beams of light which highlight her one exposed

breast and her crotch. There are also beams of light on the wall behind her. She is a dangerous tease, à la film noire. She sports a wide-brimmed black hat which partially shades one eye; and there is a black veil (complete with fake beauty marks) both which 'mystify' her face but allow for the clear beady-eyed gaze. Indeed, one eye is accentuated with a spot of light - a seductive twinkle, as it were. The gleam in her eye, the beams of light inspiring her penetrable but ultimately penetrating body parts, and her flashy jewellery project out towards the viewer.

She is like a display terminal "an immanent surface where operations unfold - the smooth operational surface of communication... (her) body... a control screen" (Baudrillard, 1983:127), the reader caught in the glare of her optimal projections. These items of jewellery - particularly the earring (the hard object piercing the soft fleshy lobe - again a unity-in-difference) - are the ritual signs of femininity. Yet they are also signs of desire: to be looked at (to manipulate the gaze of the reader), and the desire to represent sexual desirability and sexual expressions of desire. They are her 'be-longings', for him, and to serve as signs of his longing for her, or his longing to be possessed by her desire. They embellish the textual body of desire; they are part of the fashionable discourse of femininity. Within the discourse of the "strip-tease" (Barthes, 1980:84ff), they "smother(s) the

spectacle under a glaze of superfluous yet essential gestures" (Barthes, 1980:86). They are like magical icons, icons of power with the ability to bewitch and "restore(s) to the spectacle its erotic power" (Barthes, 1980:86).

This is more akin to the 'sexual' fetish, not (as Barthes would have it) the commodity fetish. The argument for commodity fetishism would posit the equation of human beings with objects such that the former are reduced to the status of the latter. The part then stands in for the whole, the person identifying with her jewellery - mineral objects - and their object status. But the sexual fetish serves to sexualize the person. The pornographic body is not naked but dressed up, adorned in clothing and ornamentation. Furthermore, the fetish objects in pornography recur with a tenacity that is anything but random. Their conventional use creates an urgency around their sexual deployment and their life-like properties. It is not that the body is objectified through its strategic and intertextual re-coding of objects; but, objects are subjectified and expected to perform the functions and have the qualities of emotional and psychological states. Not unlike Marx's fetishism of objects, the objects do assume and consume a significance beyond their object status. The objects stand in for emotion - desire, longing, and the body's flesh (i.e. the spike heel).

Jewellery, pearls and diamonds notably, are desire's masquerade and identify the body's difference. The model is culturally coded as feminine (the contemporary phenomenon of men sporting jewellery indicates a nascent elaboration of the masculine discourse as it organizes the show of the public body) but in ways, given the arrangement of meaning within the photo, which speak to sexual desire. They project to the reader; they exist alongside, for example, other accoutrements which position the photo rather firmly in the pornographic oeuvre. All of these items taken together construct a ambi-sexual and fetishized subject for the camera.²

The Finger Nails

The heel has already been discussed. It is a precarious balance between a feminine enclosure and the spike-projection. Other signifiers (of simulated phallic proportions) are: the finger nails and lingerie. The hands function to direct the gaze at bodily orifices - the vagina and the anus, and they are put to work in the service of love's labours: they spread the ass cheeks or vulva lips apart to foreground the penetrable and figure the body for scrutiny. The "appropriately gendered hand" (Winship, 1981), distinguished through polish and jewellery, manipulates the handling of sex in the representation and reading of it. But

the hands have an overdetermined significance in that the finger nails are invariably long and painted - usually red. The protrusions mimic the performance of the phallus and take over from the missing penis (hers) and that of the reader. And they are blood red, slick (they look wet) and are clearly within the danger zone. The long, extended claws are those of the wild animal. They are the fingers' weapons, daggers on the hands, extensions of the powerful body. They don't intrude on the reader (i.e. are not aimed at the camera) but indicate the body's pleasure zones. And, if for example they are touching the breasts, they set into contrast the difference between the soft, fleshy breasts and the sharp, hard nails. Again a textual inscription of difference.

LINGERIE

Lingerie is another pronounced and indispensable feature of pornographic strategies. The deployment of sexual technique circulates around this public exposure of the language of the bedroom: the female model takes and displays what are culturally designated for private consumption, undergarments which are normatively contained underneath the functional clothing. These items also refer to the language of the street and implicate the prostitute's discourse. It is one perversion of pornography that

underwear is exposed to outer view - stockings and garters may peak out from under a skirt, for example - or may provide the privileged view. That is, the reader occupies that spot at the keyhole and is witness to the goings-on in the bedroom. The women never remove these articles of clothing, not even their shoes, during their auto-erotic sequences and/or their simulated love-making with either another male or female- and this perhaps more than anything else underlines their profound significance for the pornographic moment. The female model may be positioned in a bedroom scene. The setting will typically be Victoriana or at least contain rather elaborate and busy details - again of the feminine genre, e.g. the bedsheets may be pink; pillows are covered in ruffled cases; curtains are lacy; the furniture is intricately carved. She is a self-conscious self-delighter: she unabashedly pursues sexual ecstasy at her own hands, and also unabashedly excludes the reader from her ability to please herself. But, of course, she catches and masters him by looking at him and disturbing his solitary fantasy placement at the keyhole.

Even if the scene is not of the bedroom *par se*, lingerie (occasionally some other article of clothing) is a recurring motif and the reader is still positioned as voyeur - by definition excluded from the scene (primal or otherwise) yet necessary to its production and reproduction. He is affirmed as

a sexual, desiring subject before it, reconstituted in its reading. He lends his various properties: his eyes and a writing of desire, in the lingerie. If there is a reader for every text and a reader in every text, the ideal consumer of pornography must, then, negotiate his textual desires and those of the model. The photograph must speak his language and it is here (discussed below) that lingerie signifies within the organization of simulated phallic desire.

By lingerie is meant pornography's stock-in-trade: stockings (never pantihose) secured by garters and some form of lacy camisole, brassière or, sometimes a corset. And clearly lingerie is a statement of excess - once again like jewellery, a strong cultural mark of femininity and testimony of difference. Her 'otherness' is a mapping of the body's terrain. Lingerie (the mark of difference) is unnecessary - if not an impediment - to the sexual act, yet clearly necessary to the workings of desire.

Stockings

How does lingerie work? The stockings, sheer but with an opacity as well, are expressive in their specularly. As indicated, they are stockings which extend to mid-thigh - the

kind that need to be suspended by garters. This highlights the vulva, of course, but the typical 'gynecological' spread which provides easy visual access could just as easily be achieved through total nudity. Why the stockings? First of all, they offer a contrast: the flesh of the leg stands out more clearly against the colour tones of the stockings (usually black or white). There is a difference held in the way the two - flesh and fabric, skin tone and colour tone - are set against each other. The stocking maps the body and creates a heightened visual space at the top of the thigh. The most important part of the leg - from mid-thigh to tip of the toe - is almost disembodied in a visual zone all its own. That is, when encountering the stockinged legs, the eyes are drawn upwards towards the genital zone but, as well, they are pulled downwards to focus on the foot/shoe/heel. As such, the stockings create movement on the body. And they elongate the leg in the sense that they deliver the leg in its own package, the stocking, and give it its own status.

The legs then appear to exist independently of the body - they are covered, clothed, while most of the torso is naked and bereft of sartorial signification. Perhaps one signifies the other: clothing 'means' against nakedness and vice versa. But, more pointedly, and to emphasize the semiotic and psychoanalytic power of the objects, the stockings give the leg a protrusive, if

truncated, effect; in effect they phallicize the leg up to a point where it is contained within the shoe. Which also has its own phallic heel. The stocking 'colours' the leg in phallic terms, fetishizes the body's extremities, endows them with meaning, power.

The stocking, no fetish in itself, and without the transcendental signifying power of the high heel, for example, fetishizes the leg. It endows it with a shimmery specularity, elects the leg as a stand-in for the phallus. The sheathed leg is typically bent at the knee (a crack in the phallic code) so that a wide view of the vulva is provided and the heel of the foot and shoe is aimed at the genitals. To give the leg its phallic, penetrating power, to signify it as more than a leg, it is fetishized to make it specular, and longer, at least as it directs the gaze both up, towards the genitals, and down, towards the toe. It is as though the leg is the penis slipped into its vagina-like accoutrements.

An equivalent scenario involves the long black glove, used by strippers, which extends to the upper arm. Typically they are removed at some point during the performance; Barthes, in "Striptease", one of his short essays in Mythologies, writes of "the whole spectrum of adornment" (85) which characterizes the erotic spectacle. He locates one powerful aspect of the

dramatization, "the shedding of clothes which makes voyeurs of the public", in its movement or the way it calls upon memory and projection. "There will therefore be in striptease a whole series of coverings placed upon the body of the woman in proportion as she pretends to strip it bare " (84). The body's insertion into (clothing) discourse presents and sustains a certain narrative. The bits and articles of clothing invite a cover up; the privileged gaze at the intimate apparel creates a fantasy space in which to imagine the activity of dressing, slipping items on, adjusting the garters, smoothing the fabric against the skin; and also, one can project forward to the promise of undressing - although that would be the death of desire and the sexual invitation. Fantasies of what preceded are called upon, giving the image a diachronic status.)

Lace

Lacy lingerie and leather implicate a fabric fetishism. Lace is a double-play: it partially covers areas of the body while permitting partial access to the same areas. The access is tactile as well as visual. So is the fabric. Lace, like leather, is multi-sensory (leather and rubber, two well known sexual fetishes, also 'smell'). Lace provides a visual motif and is something which invites the touch. It is audible - it

rustles. The fabric, too, creates movement between the seen/unseen, effecting a there/not there or there/partially there condition.

'Lace' is part of an interesting signifying chain, with a few metonymic associations. The familiar definitions apply - noun: "fine open fabric"; "cord or leather strip for fastening or tightening"; also, "braid for trimming men's coats etc. (usually gold or silver lace)" (OKD). From the Latin "laqueus, to snare - more at DELIGHT" (Webster's). Delight: from "delicere, to allure" (Webster's). The body adorned with lace is poised to elicit (indeed snare) in this case the illicit look and both take great pleasure in its exhibition (delight in) and seductive moment for the reader. Verb: "fasten or tighten"; also, "lash, beat, defeat" (OKD); "to add a dash of an alcoholic liquor to" (Webster's). This definition applies to the verb "to spike" (akin to the heel), to make something potent. From the Dictionary of Historical Slang "to lace" (either strong liquor or sugar added to) is derived from "lace as an adornment", which is an interesting direction for the meaning to take. Also a "lacing" is a flogging, a "laced mutton", a wanton woman. All indications are that lace is an admixture of sexual enticement, danger and loss of control (his).

The female model is the one who dons the lacy apparatus;

who is sporting the lacy undergarments (though fully exposed to view). She is capable of "lacing" (although she could be "laced-up", the more typical lingerie item is "lacy" and without ties and stays, characteristic of the 'merry widow'). She is therefore 'laced' or spiked with something potent. She is a fee-bearing model who "delights": both herself, in her flagrant auto-eroticism, and, the reader who indulges in the forbidden look. She "allures" the reader - to allure: "tempt, entice, win over ... fascinate, charm" (OKD). A charm is a "word(s), act, or object supposedly having occult power...; thing worn to avert evil etc., amulet; trinket on bracelet etc.; ... indefinable power of delighting" (OKD). To charm is to "bewitch, influence (as) by magic". And from Webster's - allure: "more at LURE"; and the origin of lure is: "bait ... an inducement to pleasure or gain: ENTICEMENT", synonyms for which are: inveigle, decoy, tempt, seduce. "Charms" are also slang for: "(Always plural) A woman's breasts" (Historical Slang).

The above suggests the model who wears her lacy charms enters that region of the intersexual. The 'charming' model (the one with the breasts) is also poised to lure, ensare, bait, tempt. This is pretty powerful stuff, written, in condensed form, in the fabric of the fetish lingerie. The lacy fetish is associated with the threatening eroticization of feminine attire; these costumes of e deimonde are poised to allure and have the

power of the fetish, the missing magical phallus. The lace, *inter alia*, fascinates, charms, bewitches 'as if by magic' and like the fetish recalls, in its absence, properties which are themselves powerfully alluring, delightful, etc.

They (and by extension she) are so powerfu' as to serve as protection. Flügel notes that the imperative behind clothing is protection, not simply decoration; and protection against "discarnate psychical forces" (1931:72). Many items and articles in popular culture have superstitious value, a hold-over, Flügel writes, from a time when decorative trinkets were "supposed to have defensive properties" (73). He goes on to locate the function of the "amulet" in primitive cultures, as that of warding off "the evil eye". In contemporary terms the amulet (and I would offer this applies to the lacy 'charm', the blinding diamond and the lustrous pearl) has psychoanalytic significance: enter the fetish.

According to Flügel, the "'evil eye' was supposed to harm its victims ... by damaging their reproductive powers or reproductive organs" (1931:74). Thus the amulet and 'evil eye' are brought together via the castration complex: defensive objects (ornamental stones, precious jewels) are symbolic of the male or female reproductive organs, designed to assure that "potency and reproductive power" have not waned (74). Within the

pornographic genres, one can argue, the ornamental symbols are of the simulated androgynous order - hyper-coded statements of sexual desire - and are related to reproductive power at least in the sense that they obliquely refer to the biological discourses (of penetration, protrusion, etc.). But the jewels are related to reproduction precisely in terms of signification: they have reproductive power in their exhaustive attempt at signifying (for they don't deflate like the penis in gay porn), at setting meaning into place, at presenting and (attempts at) representing desire. This is their reproductive power; they empower the body they adorn as they ward off the 'evil eye' of the reader. In this sense, too, they have potency: the female model cannot be castrated, her "potency and power" intact, she is fetishized to charm. Even her "charms" (breasts) are partially phallicized, i.e. separated to form the singular fetish. And the pearl would be the supreme example of a fetish of reproduction: it is a unity of the masculine - drops of semen, and the feminine - on the female body.

Leather

"To some extent, fabric always stands for the skin of the person beneath it ..." and black leather may be "slick and tough" (Lurie, 1981:38). Leather lingerie (mostly black), corsets or

brassières, connote toughness, if not evil, resistance to the elements, a second (impenetrable) skin. Leather also has a sheen and in these photos is a glossy leather and invites the look, the touch, the smell: the model is about to give the reader a "leathering" - "a thrashing" (Partridge). Leather, in particular, is an erotic theft, producing a fashionable, pornographic ambivalence. Leather gives the appearance of leanness and tautness - it contrasts with the feminine fleshy curves, especially the breasts as, with its tight fit, it streamlines the body. There is an erotic ambivalence because leather is the (male) biker's uniform, because it provides a tough (plus specular and odorous) sheath, a second covering to the skin. And leather is the fabric of the shoe, the fabric of the whip (which women also brandish): it shares an affinity with objects that are used as weapons. Leather is not a man-made second skin but part of the animal world and in this case the ambivalence and theft refer to the co-existence of hard leather with the sexual scene and the feminine body ("leather" - "female pudend"). The feminine 'leather' moves into the masculine domain as the model articulates the masculine vocabulary in expressing her desire. The reader, at the same time, sees expressions of her desire for his desire and, we may say, sees it in phallic and transgressive terms.

Balint (1935) suggests that if a fetish 'smells' it may be

particularly durable and dense, given its ability to recall strongly repressed anal-erotic significance. And, as noted by Freud, there is the synthesis of narcissism and defiance which assembles around fetishizing the anal object (1917). The use of the colour black suggests something slightly wicked; for example, "black", etymologically, is akin to "fire" and "to burn", fairly incisive associations. Black also suggests that the fetish is most strongly a visual investment as it is a slick and shiny leather (as least in these photos). The notion of faeces-as-fetish-as-phallus (noted in preceding chapters) coalesces with a salience around leather. The leather fetish could be the 'phallus as shit', the casting of one's skin, i.e. body refuse.

All these symbols are mediators of desire, the artifice(s) of desire within an exchange. The objects themselves, particularly the jewellery, lacy lingerie and stockings, connote a fragility (in spite of their reproductive potency). They can so easily be removed ("the fetish is a lifeless thing, which can easily be taken away from its legal owner," Balint, 1935:482) and are so obviously a fabrication; but this again points to the origin of the fetish, as Baudrillard has noted:

"The term fetish ... originally (it) signified ... a fabrication, an artifact, a labor of appearances and signs. It appeared in

France in the 17th century, coming from the Portuguese feitico, meaning 'artificial', which itself derives from the Latin factitius. The primary sense is 'to do' ('to make', faire), the sense of 'to imitate by signs' ('act as a devotee', etc.; this sense is also found in 'makeup' [maquillage], which comes from maken, related to machen and to make). From the same root (facio, facticius) as feitico, comes the Spanish afeitar: 'to paint, to adorn, to embellish', and afeite: 'preparation, ornamentation, cosmetics', as well as the French faint and the Spanish hechar, 'to do, to make' (whence hechizo: 'artificial, feigned, dummy')" (1981:91).

And "hechicero" is the "sorcerer" (in Spanish). Any fetish casts a kind of spell (is the sorcerer's apprentice), induces as if by magic, the "cut". The fetish is a play on difference and indifference; fetishistic transactions endow the object and therefore the person with otherness. The reader, in encountering the fetish, 'gives' the model signs of himself. The fetish makes present what can only be, and is always, absent, and in this case shows up the 'artificial' nature of desire. The artifice, the jewels and fabrics, is a simulation of both masculine and feminine attributes. This is a safe writing of the masculine - jewels which are hard, which blind; fabrics which are tough or spiked - on the feminine form. In soft-core the reader relinquishes his phallic attributes in exchange for the "cut"; difference is negotiated at the price of the body doubled (as the other), a small, narcissistic, death.

Straight: HARD CORE

Consider, first, the soft-core uniform. The pornographic uniform. And occasionally there are precisely uniforms: e.g., the nurse, the business woman in a grey flannel suit, all who strip to reveal erotic accoutrements underneath the ascetic exterior. Like all uniforms these carry certain designations, notably those of rank and occupation, and one aim is to subvert the external 'reality' for a reality of a different kind (i.e., seduce the puritan, the recluse, the abstainer, and unleash the wild, untamed, fully desirous animal restrained by society's uniform: e.g., she had "animal lust"; a "wild, untamed look about her"). One of the most cunning distinctions among soft-core genres themselves involves the way the women are signified, via a formal elaboration of the pornographic technique. For example, Hustler very often receives more opprobrium, from the feminist contingent, than do Penthouse and Playboy. The sub-text of this contempt relates, I believe, to Beverley Brown's contention that within the "more violent protest... it is the everyday which is perhaps more galling than the exotic" (1981:6). And, Hustler is incessantly 'everyday': the models are photographed without, it seems, the benefit of soft lighting, gauzed lenses, or even the

perfectly airbrushed body. The effect is a harshness, i.e., a greater fidelity to 'reality' (the same is true of hard-core, and that genre elicits the greatest outrage). These women have zits on their ass, greasy hair, runs in their stockings, chipped finger-nail polish. They look, in other words, like the 'girl' next door. By conventional standards they are ordinary, and not at all different. Their more exotic, fantasy-like sisters in Penthouse and Playboy whose bodies are airbrushed to near-perfection are deemed less offensive, more erotic (as opposed to pornographic), more artistic or aesthetic.

In hard-core there is often the uniform; if no formal code there is still a surfeit of fetish inscriptions in hard-core regime. Models (both male and female) frequently wear many articles of clothing: i.e., men leave their shirts and socks on. (As well, the settings are 'busier'; the 'everyday' is invoked in living rooms complete with crooked paintings on the walls, couches with loud prints, book shelves, lampshades; fetishes clashing with objects all over the place.) Within scenarios of difference and otherness this is a curious attempt at disavowal of difference. Why fetishize either body when biological signification establishes a binary opposition? The fetish contributes to the exhaustion of difference; giving women the penis when the penis is already in the picture. Reality effects are strongest in hard-core; but even the fetish cannot cover up

those flaws in the real as the reader is caught up in searching out those blemishes - the truly everyday body complete with flaws, the completely fallible body.

The hard-core get-up is similar to that of soft-core (straight) with less emphasis perhaps on jewellery. The greatest currency is aligned with the graphic sexual drama and investment in lingerie-as-fetish. The viciousness of hard-core lies within its simulation of the androgynous sexual union; the female model is poised to penetrate: with the heel, and anally, with her eyes, and the penis - erect, penetrating and then deflated - is seldom far from view. The reader loses something, is willing to be mastered, in his desire to witness the scene before him. And the viciousness of hard-core is its play on ambivalence: as it hovers in the nether regions of desire it plays off difference and indifference against each other. Difference is marked out fetishistically through the deployment of the feminine-sexual apparatus (lingerie, etc.) and yet this is at the cutting edge of indifference as it pairs with the anus (the "anal universe" which gives the same orifice to each sex, "erogenous zones... interchangeable and faecalized," Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1978). The male model's penis (narcissistic identification) and the lingerie as symbolic of ambisexual potency are worn by the woman to 'leather' and entice.

A reading of Anal Fantasy should embellish this notion of a economy of loss and ambivalence. This particular magazine involves a visual narrative which is in some ways quite at odds with the accompanying written text. The linguistic text locates an exchange between a psychiatrist and his female patient:

"Gina had gone to a psychiatrist to confess her obsessive sexual fantasies, visions of erotic pleasures that were with her day and night. The head-doctor was no fool! He quickly persuaded her to 'work out' her fantasies, and he had her out of her clothes in no time."

Of course, the person quickly out of his clothes is the (male) 'doctor' while his 'patient' retains both her desire and her fetishes, those crucial articles of clothing. She inadvertently seduces the 'doctor'. The photographic account is typical of the genre: of the fifty photographs in the magazine, only eleven depict the male in clothing (a three-piece suit). In ten of them his erect penis sticks out from behind his fly. The female model is wearing a red and black dress; we see the tops of her black stockings, garters and a veiled glimpse of her vulva. So, in fact, there is nothing in the visual fiction which even remotely suggests a doctor-patient relationship. This contrasts a bit with the descriptive passages which are an eroticization of the injunction to speech: "erotic confessions"; "let me tell you about my fantasy"; "... and her sexual hangups were gone!". But they are her fantasies, her sexual narrative, her desires: "Her hot dreams had them both creaming!"

The fetish inscription of the female body is a powerful statement of the discursive other. There are two main scenarios presented, in this magazine, distinguishable by what the female model is wearing. In the first (including the front cover) she is wearing: a black leather, silver and gold studded, collar; gold earrings; darkly painted eyelids; black leather gloves which extend above the elbow; black silk stockings secured by a red garter belt fringed by black lace and with black garters. On her feet are knee-high leather boots with high-heels; in her hands she carries a black leather riding whip. She is a woman dressed to kill; a small death looms ahead.

In the opening photo she holds the end of the riding whip threateningly against the male's neck while, with the other gloved hand, she grasps his erect cock and devours it orally. In this photo he is standing on a low settee, pinned against a stark white wall. Her fantasy continues. It is explicitly stated as, "I ride a man's mouth with my cunt, whipping him, kicking him with my boots", and guides the reading of the following photos which consist of him servicing her (in the manner of her fantasy), orally, vaginally, anally. The riding crop is in view as is the collar, stockings, boots, heels and semen around the anus. In one photo she holds the riding crop pointed at his neck while he partially penetrates her vagina. In another, he

administers to her voracious sexual appetite by penetrating her orally - she is lying on a small duvan, he is squatting at her head - and he inserts a dildo into her vagina. Clearly she is calling the shots. The next five photos are of fellatio (he still in his suit), each one slightly larger than the preceding one, as if to narratively privilege the climax. In all the photos of fellatio the collar is visible (in three the leather glove is partially there), the testicles are subservient to the penis (they are hidden between his legs), his index and middle finger surround the base of the penis. And the climax comprises two photos in which the visible fetishes are the leather collar and the simulated semen dripping off the nearly detumescent penis. He does look as though he's 'died' at his own hands and at the voracious mouth of his partner.

In the second scenario which follows the female model sits on a black leather couch, this time without her whip, boots or black leather gloves. Her dress slips up to reveal the tops of her (black) stockings and garters as well as the fact that she isn't wearing any underwear. However, she coyly covers her crotch with her hand prohibiting any unadulterated look at her genitals. So both partners are 'in uniform' in this exchange: he in his suit, she in her dress and lingerie. Eventually he sheds his apparel to afford a full frontal view of penetration as she sits on his lap and both 'face' the camera (although neither look

at it, suggesting that there is already penetration in excess). And they proceed with the usual sexual machinations; however, the sub-narrative in this case creates a different twist. The linguistic chronicle, complete with 'headlines' (e.g., "FANTASY NUMBER TWO: He Fucks Me With a Dildo!"), which interact with the visual narrative and attempt to anchor it, is structured around the woman's fantasy desires. Because the male depicts her 'doctor' within the psychiatric discourse, the descriptive passages cite the object of her "cure" as the acting out of her sexual obsessions and repressed desires. As articulated in the written text her "cure" is to engage in her wildest fantasies and surrender to her carnal desires.

But the visual imaginary constructs a slightly different script. Upon the simulated satiation of her desire she is literally stripped of the fetish(es) heretofore adorning her body. That is, the consummation of her longings is signified through the removal of her garter belt and stockings. The male pulls off her stocking, for example, until she is finally stripped naked, bereft of the fetish, i.e. no longer ("cured") in a position to signify and project her desires to her partner or the reader. A small portion of the garter belt and stocking (remnants of her unfulfilled desire and longing) peek in at the edge of the photograph. In the few photos before the logical culmination of desire and the 'death' of the male subject (i.e.,

his organ) her desire is replaced by a dildo. Once, while the male strips off her stocking he inserts a dildo into her vagina while he, interestingly, sucks on her bare foot. In line with the phallic foot previously slipped into the shoe, is he giving her a blow job? At least he is licking her feet, is her man-servant ["foot-licker": "A servant; toady", Historical Slang.

The dildo would be the stand-in for the phallus, since with the denuding of the body of the fetish, the 'moment' is then dependent on mere biological distinctions (hardly erotic). The question then becomes, since the male in the photo already has a penis, why the dildo? The dildo takes over from the fetish, does its work, is the real phallus, clearly more powerful than the penis. When the fetish is gone, so obviously is the phallus; but in this case it is resurrected through the appearance of the dildo. Then, in a seemingly perverse twist, and leading up to the climax, she is given back the phallus: she inserts it into his anus. His legs are spread apart (one pointed upwards towards the ceiling, the other bent at the knee); his hand grasps his penis to reveal a full frontal view of the tip of the penis, but also his testicles and the partially inserted dildo. He is literally penetrated in this instance, feminized by the one who wields the phallus. She wielded the riding whip (held it against his body), and she wielded the lingerie ("In her imagination, she was naked - except for a sexy garter belt and fine silk stockings

- but striding about in riding boots and wielding a wicked leather rider's crop"); and now she wields the phallus (or a penis substitute). Her divestment of the lingerie (at his hands) accompanies her satiation of desire (so she loses her desirous 'belongings' , i.e. she surrenders signs of her desire and gives up the fetish after she is fulfilled as a prelude to his fulfillment).³ But she is then reinvested with the phallus (in the form of a dildo) and a discourse of difference is sustained as her partner is feminized. All of this takes place while the limp reminder of desire (hers) rests at the edge of the bed.

Narrative closure consists of four photographs. They begin with depictions of oral sex, in the first an extended tongue and visible teeth, inching towards an erect penis; in the second she engulfs the tip of the penis. In both photos his hand grasps his organ giving his testicles a prominence as she inserts the dildo in his anus. Finally, we witness his orgasm ("Droplets of gooey come [sic] clung to her pubic hair") and limp penis: he spends himself on her body.

The fetish accoutrements in hard-core point to an excessive indifference. At first blush, that is, the hard-core regime appears to intensify and aggravate sexual difference: the women and men are identifiable by their body parts and each sex is elected to 'perform' - he penetrates and she is penetrated (in

the words of Angela Carter: "the probe and the fringed hole, the twin signs of male and female in graffiti," 1979:4). But the discursive bodies and the fetish arrangements create an excessive phallic display. The female model who appropriates the masculine vocabulary, and who 'bewitches' the reader through her jewellery and lingerie simulates the androgynous code (and in some scenarios actually holds the dildo/phallus in her hand or mouth). The male model has a penis (and retains articles of clothing), is fetishized in excess (fetishes cancelling out the penis). The sexual choreography in front of the reader is more indifferent than different; and the reader too 'sends himself' on the bodies beyond the keyhole, lost in the fabrications before him.

Gay: SOFT CORE

The male models in the gay pornographic genres for the most part do not wear undergarments. They are typically without fetish accoutrements: the body stands on its own or one could say the penis stands on its own (so to speak: it is more often flaccid than semi-erect); or the penis (as noted in "The Genitals") is pulled aside to make way for the testicles. But there are two dominant motifs which suggest a fetishization of a slightly different hue. These motifs have to do with the settings in which the pornographic discourses are played out.

One is the 'natural' setting, in which models are located in nature, i.e., outside in the woods, sittings on rocks, standing beside waterfalls. They are almost always totally naked, their bodies at one with the natural world. The models are figuratively aligned with the benign side of Mother Nature: they are, for example, most often supine, 'limp', indeed a passive display, not, as Dyer suggests, "standing taut ready for action" (1982:67).

However, I think Dyer is right to argue that the location of the male pin-up in a natural setting creates the following association: a "generalised physical exertion is conflated with the energies of nature" (68).⁴ The photos of the 'natural' man render an image of an unconstructed natural, phallic power. The contrast of the body, it is lean, muscular and hard, with the 'soft' and more benevolent aspects of nature, sets up a discourse of difference. In these nature scenes, for example, models are frequently surrounded by plants and flowers, or hold flowers in their hands or against their penis/testicles, as though implicating their genitals in the fruity bouquet.⁵ This too is a feminine decoration and flowers and femininity are a tenacious association: women receive the names of flowers - Rose, Violet - are given flowers as presents, etc., and defloration refers to the feminine induction into sexual practice (Flügel, 124-5). The "flower" is that part of a plant "modified for reproduction"

(Webster's) ("her snatch overflowed with the thick liquid seed of his balls"). A "flower pot" is the female pudend; a "flower-fancier" is a whore-monger; "flowers": the menstrual flux, 'monthly flowers'; "flowers and frolics" is a rhyming scheme for testicles (all from Partridge). These associations suggest a feminization of the male model, but within limits. The limits of this feminization would be reached if the penis were not in view; however, the biological discourse of masculinity is recruited in the service of otherness. Just as the female model in straight pornography is a play of simulated androgyny, so too are these 'men'. That is, the porno model, in a homoerotic discourse of desire, exchanges signs of his desire to simulate otherness. The homoerotic discourse is at variance with the biological otherness; 'otherness' is a discursive play, and inserted into the gap between the representation and its object is the marking of the model as 'feminine' other. Transgressions thus enter that side of the "cut" which leaves (apparent) indifference and moves into structures of representational difference.

This pacification of the model, I think, fetishizes the non-phallus (or the non-presence of the phallus), its presence sustained in its absence. The phallic referent can thus be returned to the reader, or he can be the site of 'real' phallic power. The reader is engaged in homoerotic identification with

the model; to endow the male model with the fetish, to cover his body with phallic substitutes would close in on the 'cut', fill in the gaps necessary for the sustenance of desire. The transcendental fetish would phallicize the model in ways which would harken narcissistic death. The reader in this case is addressed as 'other' than the model, can donate the phallus that is not there, so painfully absent from the photo. This is also the reader's 'loss'. The photo in return, loses some of its potency (or doesn't have too much to begin with). The construction of desire, in these photos, is such a pallid comparison to the performance of women in straight genres; perhaps the most perverse transgression. To fetishize nature is to fetishize the feminine; by contrast, the fetish in straight porn is partial phallicization.

The other motif which circulates within this genre involves the 'sport' theme. A model may be portrayed in a locker room or, more commonly, is simply sporting a sweat band or jock strap or shorts and shirt. Unlike the spike heel, garters and lace, these items do not have any independent sexual meaning (each could not neutrally signify something sexual, erotic or pornographic) but within the context of signification in these photos they are obviously of some sexual purchase. They at least connote muscularity. Although this is something achieved, in the photos we are presented with a view which appears more effortless, i.e.,

we can see signs of the labour involved, the sweat - labour working through its representations - but not the actual labour), muscularity as a "sign of power - natural, achieved, phallic" (Dyer, 1982:68).

But one must return to the thematics of castration and the fetish to unravel the workings of the fetish in this genre. The fetish is always a production (whether in Marx or Freud), invested with qualities which appear magical or at least without evidence of the labour (physical or psychic) that goes into their sustenance. While masking its production value, however, the fetish circulates as exchange value, works through its representations. It works through its ability to recall and signify, in this case, fears of the missing phallus, and works (again through its representations) to resolve those fears. The fetishes in these photos - the basketball, the jogging shoe - are from the hyper-masculine world of sports. And as with the fetishizing of nature, and the phallus in *absentia*, this universe of the sports world fetishizes a brute physicality in its presence (the models are muscular; the suggested character of the mise en scene is one of muscular exertion) and in its absence: i.e., the fetish objects stand-in for the (still) missing phallus.

Whither the penis? Its value does appear to be withered

in comparison to the phallus and phallic substitutes (the fetish objects or the fetish for the hard muscles, fabrications themselves). Adorning the male body in this ritualistic fashion (and muscles are a biological adornment) gives it the phallus it doesn't possess. If the fetish is to allay castration fears and restore the expendable penis to the body (typically, of course, of the woman) what is it doing on the body already so disposed towards a, fleshy, penile projection? What does this perverse phenomenon suggest about the castration scenario as it pertains to the fetish and the phallic body?

A close reading of a five page spread in *Blueboy* may provide entry to the workings of the 'gay' fetish. The diegesis is an erotic encounter between two men; again, the differences between this and straight porn are marked: these two models are depicted against a plain white background, which foregrounds their bodies. But the bodies are further differentiated through their adornment. One member of the duo is fully naked, the other is dressed. The one 'dressed' is actually always in a state of partial undress, his partner doing the undressing. And he is sporting a tuxedo, complete with suspenders (akin to the garter belt). The depictions are of the two men, sitting or standing, the naked model in some way attends to the 'other' partially clothed. He, for example, ceremoniously strips off his partner's articles of clothing and, in spite of his nakedness,

presents his partner (truly an 'other') as the preeminent scopic object. In fact, we are provided with only a vague glimpse, once, of the naked model's flaccid penis: he stands beside and slightly to the back of his friend with one arm around his shoulder and with the other hand pulls one suspender off the other shoulder, the end of which dangles at his crotch occluding most of his cock.

The clothing makes the man here. Or does it? The clothing is a fetish feminine demarcation of 'otherness', desire, difference. The model wearing it circulates within a discourse of 'other-than' maleness in its nudity. The bodies are distinguished by their accoutrements (or lack of it). The 'different' one is the one adorned, displayed and otherwise constructed as 'feminine'. That is, he appropriates the 'feminine' vocabulary of straight porn. He is the one who looks at the camera, who pierces the reader, is the one to-be-looked-at, is the one fetishized. He is otherwise a woman. The fetish in straight porn incorporates masculine attributes. The gay fetish is a feminine inscription on the masculine surface. The clothes envelope, the sock covers the whole foot (sock is slang for pocket), 'pocket' is "a small bag... a purse" (Webster's); recall the man with "no money in his purse", the impotent one. And a "bag" of course is slang for a "woman" and "milk" (Partridge). And there are the flowers and the athletic

balls, like the feminized testicles. Which is to say that the fetish is simulated otherness (in this genre it captures a feminine writing), that it can only belong to the 'other', it is a "cut" into the referent of 'otherness'.

The fetish is at once a demarcation of difference and sameness. It establishes, within the homosexual discourse, firstly an indifference around sexual identification: the masculine bodies traffic with each other (and the reader) which is a play on the narcissistic interest. But the erotic transformation of one body into the desirable object takes sameness and re-presents it, sartorially, as different. But it is a difference within the same masculine economy of clothing. In both straight and gay porn the fetishes are apparently appropriate to the gender of the wearer (feminine/straight: lingerie, heels, jewellery; masculine/gay: sports clothes, the tuxedo). Both signify desire through carrying the simulated writing of otherness or androgyny. This is, after all, a soft-core genre, and desire is usually not signifiable on the body: erections are illegal. Desire thus circulates through the fetish.

Why give the man a phallus, when penises are easy enough to signify? Any article of clothing (fetish or otherwise) is in intimate contact with not just the skin of the body but also the

flesh of the unconscious. And here we are back to the castrating possibilities of the pornographic moment. Freud (1927) notes that the fetish is a precarious balance between affirmation and denial and suggests that it is that balance (the friction, the ambivalence, the movement, the tension, the s(t)imulation) which ensures the enduring performance of the fetish. If the fetish is the reliable stand-in called upon as reassurance against the threat, why is it in gay porn? Instead of being doubly phallicized (by wearing the fetish) the fetish cancels out the penis; that is, the fetish on top of the penis (as it were), in a manner of equivalences voids the penis. The fetish thus feminizes the model and thus moves, again, indifference into difference; it sustains otherness, or castration, on the body.

As noted, the 'feminine' of a duo is the one wearing clothing, and who engages the camera. 'She' is the castrated other, negotiates the cut. One could say thus that the reader in straight porn is the castrated one; in gay it is the model. But gay pornography reconstitutes a reader who has little to penetrate: the models limply display their wares but don't offer their anuses. And, viewing the body with the penis is not enough for erotic contemplation; endowing it with the fetish, the trompe l'oeil of the pornographic oeuvre, signifies it in powerful ways. And the penis is evident, so, again, as with all fetishistic transactions, the movement which sustains the fetish as an

enduring presence is its play on the there/not there, the space between belief and disbelief, taunting the reader and so cynically played out before him. Which is the real thing? This places the reader at the keyhole of the primal scene and the keyhole of simulated belief.

But the gay body (in soft-core) is not always fetishized. I would argue that there is a 'movement' between the unfetishized body and the body so adorned - for each magazine contains a bit of both scenarios. This 'movement' reflects the homosexual ambivalence around the dual sexual nomination of the gay male. The positions of femininity and masculinity, passivity and activity, are both available in the photographs and are both available to the reader. The reader is witness to the potentially feminized and fetishized model and also the otherness of the model(s) without the fetish. This is a rather vicious indifference to the sexual fix. The oscillations between fetish/non-fetish are akin to the elusive power of the fetish: it designates something as 'there' when really not 'there', a fragile 'double' which in the case of the phallus is an investment in something which doesn't exist and can't be represented. The gay male, in particular, refuses to be 'fixed', is at once 'other' to the 'same'. The election of the fetish to do some of the dirty work is a narcissistic investment in that simulated moment (the fetishization) and this is both pleasurable

and death-like (the fetish, like the photo, condenses both the production and consumption of otherness and desire , but as they are mediated through a dead object.)

Gay: HARD CORE

The typical scene involves bodies which are totally naked. Because this is hard-core, there are two or more models and erections and partial penetration are the norm. The bodies are in a position to signify desire. To a certain extent castrations take place through the disembodied phallus. The only fetish accoutrement that appears, although infrequently, is the cock ring, the circular band placed at the end of the penis and behind and underneath the scrotum. It is used, technically, to maintain the erection by concentrating the blood flow in the penis. Semiotically, however, it has a visible presence. The rings are made of different materials, usually studded leather or silver or gold. Why are they there? They are a kind of jewellery on the body, a distinctly masculine 'ring' and located within that zone of sexual significance within the terms of a phallic exchange. It too, though, is an artifact of desire, clearly a fabricated statement of the body, a fetish for the reader. Again the penis on its own is not enough; it must achieve an erection. A stand-in for desire so the cock, with its

erection can salute desire, but not meet it.

A sub-genre in gay hard-core consists of leather sado-masochistic paraphernalia.⁶ It's not difficult to situate these "object-choice(s)" (Freud, 1927:351) under the rubric of the phallic-wielding master. In "A Contribution on Fetishism," Balint makes a number of interpretations regarding the dignified (sexual) status of "worthless object(s)," chosen for their ability to induce, and endure, sexual satisfaction. His hypothesis that fetishes which 'smell' (i.e., leather) "surely" signify faeces, is pertinent here (1935:482). Given the anal-erotic insinuations of the gay discourse, and the aforementioned kinship between faeces and the fetish, Balint's point is particularly well-suited to the male body swaddled in leather accoutrements. If in soft-core the fetish clothing bears the marks of femininity, in hard-core the leather connotes a hyper-phallic extension to the body.

Again, the fetish is invested with properties which take over from biological signification. Leather is more typically masculine. In the case of gay hard-core then it puts the 'writing' of the body into the most ascetic side of the "cut", that which involves sacrifices to indifference. The leather phallicizes the model with the penis; this will, if there are two models together (one with fetishes and the other without),

structure otherness around possession/non-possession of the phallus. If both are in leathers the fetish will again cancel out the penis in favour of the phallus (not the more 'feminine' fetish in soft-core). This is an indifference which is close to the "cut". The reader is placed at the keyhole to witness phallic desires penetrating phallic desires: this is the viciously indifferent world of gay hard-core. And he (the reader) is feminized, or castrated, in releasing his phallic properties in order to see the surplus of phallic desire on the body of the male models.

Gay pornography would appear to efface difference in the name of the homoerotic impulse. In soft-core however the gay body is written as feminine thus sustaining 'otherness' vis à vis both biological signification and the reader. And the reader is returned to a phallic referent. In hard-core otherness is terrorized as difference collapses on the body: the penis and the phallus meet.

TV: SOFT AND HARD CORE

The fetish inscription on the transsexual body is its strongest pornographic anchor. Otherwise the body would be merely a curiosity, the stuff for medical journals. But "TV"

porn presents the grotesque feminine subject: 'she' is elaborately coiffed and made-up; she wears spikes, stockings, garters and corsets; she has enormous breasts; s.he has a penis. Without the immodest sartorial exhibition 'she' would be a hermaphrodite, and thus surrender to a discourse of genetics and the unproductive body, anatomically undisciplined (cf. Mort, 1980). But dress it up in those culturally feminine sexual signifiers and it enters the nether regions of desire, refusing to be disciplined, in fact highlighting the play on indifference, the friction and ambivalence around sexual meaning.

Otherness and difference are restored, however, through the 'feminine' apparel (itself a picture of simulated androgyny on top of the androgynous body). Transgressions are so clearly the norm in this genre; transgressions on (of) a body which is in fact highly productive. It works so hard at presenting difference on a body which appears indifferent to sexual opposition. Difference is a play on phallic femininity, not a discourse of the body but, with the circulation of the fetish(es), a performance of simulation and erotic theft. What appears as the ultimate in transgression is refashioned as difference. Desire is negotiated in the engagement with the "cut": precisely the borrowing of erotic properties from the other, in the lingerie, on a body which doubles as its other.

The invitation to explore the fatal delights of "Sulka" the she-male begins with a 'killer' pose. Sulka is sitting, legs extended. She is leaning slightly to the left and resting on one arm. The other arm is resting on her right leg (at the knee, slightly bent and pulled toward the body). She is attired in black leather: shiny, slick gloves to above the elbow, a leather corset which leaves her breasts exposed, a black leather studded collar at the neck; black garters and stockings. There is also a silver snake bracelet wrapped around upper arm, over the black glove. Her pubic area, though, is occluded by filmy gauze. The diegetic space in the photos that immediately follow, however, is given over to the capricious display of the essential signifier. It's that penis that won't go away.

The body fashioned in feminine (i.e., masculine) terms serves to heighten the allure of the model and also mitigate against the overly-close identification of the reader with the penis-bearing woman. In the pictures subsequent to the leather masquerade, the penis is evident and the model, though still a poseur, abandons the leather for the more sedate silky garters and stockings. The latter are not so much difference with a vengeance; they accompany the body already in possession of the penis - although limp - and breasts and fetishize the body-double. The leather lingerie (as with straight porn) is the more phallic mediator on the body which, at first, appears to

recuperate femininity (when the penis isn't visible). In other words it fastens difference on a body, up until then, written as feminine.

She is still dressed to kill. She is, through the fetish accoutrements, designated as 'other', but this is 'otherness' with a vengeance. Once again, the fetish/phallus is invoked to adorn the body already in possession of the penis. The penis pales in comparison; it is merely a limp rendition on a body which cannot signify without its fetish inscription. The collapse of meaning on the body is too much to witness (or at least would be the death of desire). The simulated androgynous moment is written on top of the already androgynous body; desire is recuperated through the simulated impulse behind the lingerie. Obviously simulation is the 'real' thing; it constructs the indifferent body as different.

This spectacular moment contains a body in excess of normative and pleasurable transgressions. The 'body double' in "TV" pornography, in its symbolic, sexual and feminine masquerade, is a body that doubles as its other. I conjecture there is pleasurable (yet unspeakable) surrender, on the part of the (male) reader, to the "cut", that incisive moment formed around loss and pleasure. At the moment of 'reading' the subject is reaffirmed as subject/other, a position originally

formed in reflection, opposition, otherness. Also, borrowing from Williams (1984) I suggest that the "freak" in the representation encounters the freakish and mutilated ("cut") body of the viewer. In "TV", each meets the double of the other, in a body which doubles as its other, which bears the marks of a simulated androgynous writing. That is, categories of sexual difference collapse around a law which prescribes transgression of the 'sexual fix' such that there is potency in that "different kind of sexuality" (Williams) but this is a desirable transaction, not totally threatening.

In "TV" porn potency resides in the 'body double', weighted with meaning in a non-aligned sexuality, and transgresses the sexual fix. The 'apparent' feminine body, read thusly through its erotic accoutrements, simulates androgyny not simply through its biological adornment. It must be desirable beyond the fleshy configuration which always threatens to emerge: discursively, psychoanalytically, symbolically, sartorially and literally - the penis/phallus is never 'out of sight'. That is, the surplus of clothing which marks the masquerade also carries the possessive marks of masculine desire. Thus the 'androgynous' bears the marks of simulation (the erotic clothing), a writing of what might never take place. Simulation as incomplete synthesis, which is why the body is written on top of its androgynous properties. In other words, the 'androgynous' far from being a unity of opposites

(or the desirable, lost, original union) is 'jouissance', that which cannot achieve closure, and plays on the open seam of the "cut" through its simulation (clothing).

This seemingly perverse pornographic moment carries more (hidden) subversive elements which coalesce not around a 'body' contemptuous of categories of difference. The spectacular body that 'speaks' masculinity through its biological adornment is refashioned as feminine through the fetish. Difference repairing indifference in the name of desire.

A close reading of all pornographic genres reveals that penetrating exchanges are initiated and carried by the 'feminine' model. Masculine projections: heels, a penetrating gaze, fetish objects, carry the marks of (simulated androgynous) desire and pleasure. These are the reader's 'be.longings' on the female body; this erotic theft surely speaks to the 'flesh of the unconscious', the unsettling body double where the laws of transgression speak the unspeakable, where women in fact are allowed to be men and encounter a reader who, in his fixation on the androgynous model, transgresses his own apparent 'sexual fix'. He lends his vision to a 'she-male' - she costumed as 'female' but only as a masquerade against a surplus of masculine identification.

The freakishness of the "TV" body is this: even when its excessive biological apparatus is exposed the ultimate and more desirable exposure circulates around simulation and loss. The renaissance of desire is not in the excessive biological capacity: in contrast to what appears it cannot signify both male and female at the same time - or at least this isn't desirable. What is desirable is the simulated or transgressive effects of the lingerie: anything simulated will involve an erotic theft, a borrowing from the other. The freakishness is the "TV's" signs of loss, not excess.

This is the most apparent threat to the 'sexual fix'. This is, in Williams' phrase, the "extreme excitement and surplus danger when the monster and the woman get together" (86). The freakishness of the "TV" display is the "TV" façade always slipping away to reveal the "TS" (transsexual) underneath. To be totally stripped, however, would be the death of language (Pacteau: "Discussions of androgyny... come up against a resistance... from language itself... Any attempt to define androgyny... takes us to the limits of language... such definitions ask for their own dépassement") (1986) and the death of desire. The vestmentary code anchors meaning to what appears to be the ultimate transgression, although androgyny is still the longing for loss.

The TV hard core story unfolds as one model gradually reveals her hermaphroditic body through the shedding of outerwear (and the male, although surprised, is no less desirous at this point). This discourse certainly speaks the unspeakable: the ("she-male") model is dressed up in the possessive marks of masculine desire, the reader stripped. All of which is not to say that the reader enlists in total annihilation in front of the monster/hermaphrodite, but that he surrenders to "la petite mort", the pleasure of his simulated death. He sees himself in the distorting mirror which is the unity of the voyeur and exhibitionist; his own mutilated form repeatedly "cut" at the visual moment. The look which mocks the reader and the display of the dildo/phallus enjoys the partial surrender of the reader to the "distorted mirror-reflection of (his) own putative lack in the eyes of ..." (...) Williams is talking here of women's self-recognition in encountering the monster, her lack in the "eyes of patriarchy"; I would say that in this instance it is his loss in the "eyes" of desire. Her clarity of vision is precisely phallic and s.he gazes at the mutilated body of the viewer who meets himself in the mirror of the (dressed up) androgynous model who carries the marks of his desire.

Do clothes make the wo.man? This "cross-dressing inscribed on the body itself" (Brooks, 1984:1) is more than a play on transvestism or the masquerade. In this case, the 'feminine'

writing on the body is a parody (of difference) as it cannot disguise the fleshy masculine extremity; and at the same time it parodies the penis as it is clearly called upon to signify, beyond the biological mode. This is an erotic theft, a masculinization which points to the textual body as the site to anchor sexual difference. And the fetish as that object which restores the lost phallic potential to a body that never had it in the first place.

Pacteau characterizes androgyny as that which eludes a semantic anchor; that is, it is easy enough to identify the androgynous body in physiological terms, but the lines of demarcation between the subject and its object of desire (the androgyne which fascinates) are continually oscillating. True enough. However, in "trying to organize a meaning for androgyny" she argues that the concept represents a repression of desire, that the nature of ambiguous sexual appearance and identity is the specular image of an "uncanny double": nostalgia for the imaginary space during whose reign "desire is unobstructed". This desire- a resurrection of the original plenitude, merging, a disavowal of 'otherness'- is repressed within the laws of sexual difference. But I would argue that sexual mutations are not simply a "disavowal of sexual difference" upon observation, a "pleasurable perception" (Pacteau, 1986:78). Transgressions are the law behind the deviations of the 'sexual fix' and the desire

for repression (not the repression of desire) is part of the (simulated) androgynous union (Chevalier, 1989). The androgynous textual body is a possessive site of desire, the embodiment of the partial 'be.longings' of the other. In the case of "TV" porn, the body masculinized is in simulated possession of the desirous be.longings of the masculine viewer. Transgressions are the norm, an eroticized 'dialogue of lovers', representing desires, in the case of the male reader, for women to be more like men. The 'feminine' enunciation may then be a phallicization for the reader, a discursive drama of his desire to be possessed by the powerfully penetrating subject of the photograph.

"The androgynous figure has to do with seduction... before undressing..." (Pacteau, 1986:78). It is not so clear that the "fashionable discourse" is the effete prerogative of women, at least within the codes of the dominant representational doxa: i.e., the male reader lends his eyes to the image, a highly exhibitionist one at that. Within the contemporary ideological framework men are charged with negotiating the "look", and seeing themselves as 'the ones who look at women' (cf. Silverman, 1986). But normative transactions within specular economies invite transgression of the boundaries around an apparent fixity of sexual identity and desire. There are limits to this cultural lawbreaking: misrecognition, suspension and disbelief (that the

reader is looking at a man, himself, "cut" at the moment of his inscription into sexual difference) are anchored on the textual body in the sumptuous display of the transsexual/transvestite model.

At the same time, identification involves visual projection, a loss and surrender. In this case the visual object oscillates between the 'feminine' and the 'masculine'. I would argue this represents more than the (repressed) pleasurable wish for a reunion with the original plenitude. That would be the death of the subject (Bataille: "... human beings are only united with each other through rents or wounds..."). The pleasurable spectacle is the body which has annihilated difference and which at the same time tries to resurrect it through the surplus of ('feminine', fetish) signifiers to create the body textual. Does the fetish disavow difference? In "TV", as with all porn, it bestows a virility on the body making it a body, still in its feminine writing, poised to penetrate and invade. Desire is not opposed to its correlative threat but may itself be threatening, involving as it does, subjection and death ("la petite mort"), the consumptive expenditure of a small death. But why speak of a fetish, a stand-in, when the 'real thing' is so unabashedly visible? It may be that the fascination with looking at the androgyne (the 'freak') does not contain the lustful search for a lost 'wholeness' but the seductiveness of the image promises a

"representation of moments of separation and loss which captivates us more than the promise of plenitude" (Kelly, 1984:31).

NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

1. The cover of Penthouse, July 1988, has the model smoking a cigarette, an item which still signifies in interesting and metonymic ways. For example, a highly typical plot in the daytime soap opera involves the "double", usually an evil twin ressurected to confound and disrupt the family romance: typically she seduces her sister's husband, wants to embezzle money and/or murder. The audience is introduced to the evil double (and any sexually loose or immoral female character for that matter) through a thumb-nail sketch, i.e. the camera first focusses on the cigarette (sometimes the spike-heel) and we see the character smoking before we actually know she is the evil double that she is. In Walt Disney films (animated), the evil step-mother is often found smoking, powerful enough to signify to young children who are not yet fully socialized. In American Beauty Lois Banner notes that by the mid-1850s in New York prostitutes distinguished themselves from other women by smoking cigarettes because "fashionable women themselves were wearing makeup as well as gaudy attire" (76). The associations between smoking and the slut are, it appears, strong and transcend many media and cultural texts.

2. A lesbian scenario in Hustler (June, 1988) does not conform to the idea of the body as a spectacular and over-coded screen. Although the bodies offer a shiny palate, orifices accentuated through graphic exposure or painted lips, extended tongues, extended finger nails, the narrative is still a variation on the currency theme. The two models enact a primitive "cave" scene and thus wear, in their hair, around their ankles, in their ears, shells, bones, teeth, unpolished beads; as Flügel notes, this is a primitive form of currency [1931:33].)

3. This contrasts with what Mary Ann Doane writes about the female body in "women's" films, that desire is manifest in the hysterical body, that the erotic body becomes the medical body. In the case of pornography desire is manifest in the fetish and the on-discursive body is precisely un-sexual, and more easily inserted into a medical discourse, e.g., hermaphroditism (as opposed to the transsexual). cf. "The Woman's Film: Possession and Address," in Re-Vision: Essays in Feminist Film Criticism, edited by Mary Ann Doane, Patricia Mellencamp and Linda Williams, Frederick, Maryland: The American Film Institute, 1984.

4. In this particular passage from "Don't Look Now", Screen, 23:3-4 (September/October, 1982), Richard Dyer is writing about the black male image and its associations with the jungle and savagery. His comments, however, apply to discussions of gay porn, with black or white models, and in terms of the homosexual audience (although, again, Dyer is looking at both pin-ups for

the male and female reader.)

5. Griselda Pollock argues that "woman" as a signifier shifts the "ideological nature" of any representation. She draws from an example constructed by Linda Nochlin, designed to illustrate how the 'sexual' accrues to women, without a similar reversal when the tables turn on men. Nochlin, in Woman as Sex Object, published a nineteenth century pornography print of a woman, naked from the waist up (she's wearing high black boots) who is carrying a tray of apples held directly under her exposed breasts. The print is entitled "Achetez des Pommes". Nochlin aped the style of the original and had a male pose instead: this time wearing socks and shoes and, stooping slightly, holding a tray of bananas just below his exposed crotch. Pollock says - I think correctly - that this reversal does not work; the response it receives is laughter. Neither Nochlin nor Pollock push representation to its semiotic limits, however - which might be to suggest the male hold the same tray of apples at his cock. I think then the response would unsettle. cf. "What's Wrong with 'Images of Women'?", in Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock (eds.), Framing Feminism: Art and the Women's Movement 1970-1985, London: Pandora, 1987.

6. In soft-core magazines there are also ads for leather products, jock straps, masks, straps to bind the torso, boots, gloves, whips, etc. Tom Waugh documents these instances in gay hard-core film and makes passing reference to gay magazines. cf. "Men's Pornography: Gay vs. Straight," Jump Cut, No. 30, March 1985.

CONCLUSION

Pornography is about sexual difference. However, far from being a vicious elaboration of binary categories of gender differences, the pornographic manoeuvres flaunt the 'sexual fix' and transgress the fine line between the 'feminine' and the 'masculine'. A discursive analysis of the physical body uncovers the body textual. The machinations of the fetish reveal an ambivalence around voyeurism and narcissism. As a scenario of desire, the pornographic moment is a play on 'difference', but not a radical difference.

In the straight genres what appears as 'difference' 'on sight' reveals a body dressed up in discourses of desire. Desire always originates from the place of the 'other'. According to this logic, the model's signs of desire are the reader's enunciations. This effects her partial masculinization. She is 'written' with a penetrating gaze; her mouth and genitals are poised to consume and invade and her fetish inscriptions also unsettle the so-called picture of feminine harmony. Her desirous notations are drawn from humble objects which speak to a cultural femininity but borrow the language of masculinity to signify desire. This suggests that within the pornographic moment (at least) the logic of seduction is a play on otherness and simulated androgyny (emphasis on the 'simulated').

Any simulation involves the transgression of differences towards a new 'technique', itself not an original but based on theft from prior models. Thus simulation is always a scenario of loss and longing (for the lost original). Within a sutured economy the reader is cut out of the representation and then re-addressed as part of it. This process of incision, the "cut", is used to theorize those moments of loss and fictive recuperation. The "cut" is invoked to suggest that negotiations of sexual difference are based on mis-recognition. The "cut" is at once about the accession to the (speakable) Symbolic, involving as that does 'rents and wounds', and that which is just barely speakable (indifferentiation). Pornography re-enacts those moments whereby sexed identity is achieved in a struggle against a narcissistic little death. It's pathetic urgency lies in its inability to represent desire, or the phallus; in other words, it shows up the flaws in the 'real', that place where both can only be simulated, never 'seen'.

Repressions are necessary for self-recognition, for differentiation. In that sense pornography is not so much explicit as it is aesthetic. It is a sign play around difference, the relinquishing of one's symbolic properties. What is desirable is not androgyny - no losses, nothing to desire - but a simulation of signs of one's 'other'. This is simulated androgyny or the institution of desire founded on loss. This is

also instituted indifference.

In conclusion, I offer two brief comments regarding meta-theoretical questions or directions, drawing from the analysis here. The relationship between 'the political' and the 'aesthetic' is particularly complex, especially so in a semiocracy where struggles are played out over meaning and symbolic possession. A deconstructive interpretation takes seriously the surface of the representation and offers a reading which radically problematizes signification. This can only be done by confronting the artifact on its own (linguistic) terms.

The dispersal of subjectivity, whether central to the formation of identity or a post-modern phenomenon, is a crucial concept to theorizing sexuality as it is constituted in gender relations. This in itself may lead to a critique of phallogentrism (or critiques of, critiques of phallogentrism).

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