PORNSTARS, CONTENT CREATORS, AND SEX EDUCATORS:

A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF GENDER, SEXUALITY & RESISTANCE

IN THE WEST-COAST PORNOGRAPHY INDUSTRY

By

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ABSTRACT

PORNSTARS, CONTENT CREATORS, AND SEX EDUCATORS: A DISCOURSE
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Given the ease of Internet accessibility, the porn industry increasingly provides a

common socialization medium for conceptions of gender, sex, and sexuality. For my

master's thesis, I interviewed 10 industry film and video actors to better understand the

processes through which their experiences are created. Interviews provided the data for a

discourse analysis that considers systems of power that shaped actor interactions and core

definitions of sex, gender, and sexuality. Hegemonic constructions of gender, femininity,

and sexuality are pervasive in the industry; however, the industry also provides an arena

for transformative discourse and disruption of hegemonic ideals. This research is

important as it centers actor voices in providing insights into an industry that shapes actor

lives and the everyday experiences of millions of viewers around the world. In particular,

my work explores the extent to which actor experiences subvert, challenge or resist

hegemonic definitions of gender, race, sex, and sexuality, as well as those that evidence

reinscription of current ideologies. Actor experiences of gender, race, and sexualities

were often congruent with hegemonic definitions. However, many participants expressed

that pornography has the potential to create new forms of knowledge and meaning related

to gender, sex, sexuality, identity and more.

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And finally, thank you to my family. To my mom and dad- your undying love, support, and guidance have continued to be more than I could ever ask for. Thank you for supporting me through all my endeavors, letting me complain when things get tough, and reminding me that I can do it (and anything I set my mind to). To my siblings, Ryan and Lindsay- there aren't enough words; thank you for being the amazing people you both are. Thank you both for your love, support, and encouragement throughout this lifetime.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

I grew up in the millennial generation and the wake of the internet explosion and the knowledge that sexually explicit material was just a few clicks away. Peers routed around Internet search history logs and access controls that parents tried to use to control their engagement with this taboo content.   At the same time public education "abstinence or else" health curriculums created more hurdles for other frameworks for sexuality; instead, youth met an environment in which students were told to avoid sex at all costs and not have any questions about the topic. "If sex is the test, how else do you study besides watching porn?" my friend commented as we discussed the impact of internet pornography on our generation's conceptions of sex, sexuality, and gender.

Pornography is not something that is new: 4,000-year-old pornographic images were found carved into a wall in North-West China (Gayle 2013). However, pornography being free, online, and accessible essentially anytime and anyplace, is something new. Pornhub, one of the largest free porn streaming sites, has 81 million visits to its site per day, with roughly 50,000 searches occurring every minute (Review 2017). Additionally, this one website has so much free content, that every 5 minutes Pornhub transmits more data than the entire contents of the New York Public library's 50 million books (Review 2017). Being easier to access than ever, pornography has largely become one of the primary forms of sex education for young adults: young men and women view pornography and garner their understanding of what sex is supposed to look like, as well as the role of gender in experiences related to sex (Brown et al. 2017).

The goal of my thesis is to analyze the discourse of those working in the porn industry to understand the ways in which their narratives of sex, gender, and sexuality have been shaped by the construction of knowledge that surrounds pornography and the ways in which actors carry out or disrupt dominant discourses. The individuals who work within this industry are central to the ways in which pornography is created, understood, and disseminated. I am particularly interested in the deployment of power in narratives of those actively engaged in the production of pornography, and the related construction of gender and sexuality in the discourse. Through conducting a discourse analysis of this specific subculture, I develop a nuanced analysis of the ways in which actors understand their experiences in relationship to each other, the industry, and outside discourses surrounding sex, gender, and sexuality. Through collecting these narratives and analyzing their discourse, I contribute to an archive of knowledge about pornography and provide a snapshot of a small segment of the industry fueled by internet mediums.

In Chapter Two, I provide a review of relevant literature pertaining to the research, perspectives, and methodologies utilized within sociological scholarship to study the world of pornography. After discussing the ways in which the research that has been conducted on pornography indicates both positive and negative impacts of pornography consumption, I theoretically position my research through an examination of feminist literature on pornography. Following this is an overview of the way in which queer theory is utilized to subvert hegemonic understandings, and how this process of "explosion" is utilized as a mechanism to analyze pornography content. Chapter Three concludes with a discussion of social theorist and philosopher Michel Foucault's work on

power, knowledge, and discourse, and the way in which his work can be applied to the analysis of gender, sexuality, and by extension, pornography.

Chapter Four highlights the methodological processes used to conduct this research, from the way in which participants were recruited to participate in this research to the process of conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews. In Chapter Five, the findings and analysis of my research are presented. Chapter Five, therefore, provides an explanation and analysis of the emerging themes found through the in-depth interviews I conducted. Utilizing Foucauldian discourse analysis methods grounded in feminist and queer theory, I center systems of power as they relate to the current discourse surrounding pornography, and industry member's experiences within the industry. This thesis concludes with Chapter Six, which provides a discussion of the process of writing about the pornography industry, as well as how this research might provide the basis for future research conducted on the pornography industry and the members who work within it.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Pornography has been a popular topic of academic research in attempt to understand the various impacts and implications that pornography has on the individuals who consume it as well as our society (Gorman 2014, Peter and Valkenburg 2018). In this chapter, we examine the existing academic scholarship surrounding the topic of pornography. Typically relying on quantitative methods, academic scholarship on pornography focuses on the impacts that the consumption of pornography has on college-aged individuals. Academic research has highlighted both negative and positive impacts of the consumption of pornography, as well as the ways in which the consumption of pornography socializes individuals to the types of acceptable sexual scripts one is allowed to follow.

Pornography Today

Pornography in contemporary academia is typically understood as "as professionally produced or user-generated pictures or videos (clips) intended to sexually arouse the viewer" (Peter and Valkenburg 2016:1015). The main type of research that is conducted on the topic of pornography typically utilized quantitative methodologies, such as online surveys, in order to understand pornography and its impacts on consumers (Gorman 2014; Peter and Valkenburg 2016). From the 1990s- present, researchers have most typically used surveys to analyze the correlation between consumption of pornography, and impacts on their behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs surrounding topics

such as sexual permissiveness and rape myth acceptance (Gorman 2014; Peter and Valkenburg 2016). Research conducted that focuses on adolescents/young adults usage of pornography tend to look at the impacts of consuming pornography on the sexual behaviors of this age group (Peter and Valkenburg 2016; Bay Cheng 2013). Young college attending adults were often the subject of research on the topic of pornography because they are of legal age to be consuming pornography, and their presence within a university setting makes it easier for researchers to focus on recruiting participants (Peter and Valkenburg 2016). Researchers "typically relied on surveys to study the issue, similar to research on other sensitive issues" (Peter and Valkenburg 2016:1017). However, this means that there is little to no research conducted on individuals who consume pornography who are not typical college age, who are less educated or of different socio-economic status (Gorman 2014).

In regards to college-aged individuals, empirical research has largely highlighted the ways in which the underlying motivations for individuals that choose to consume pornography may be different, but has found that there are consistent themes among the impacts of this consumption, such as reinforcement of gender-stereotypical beliefs of sex and gender, as well as greater likelihood to accept permissive sexual attitudes including sex with multiple partners (Brown, Durtschi, Carroll and Willoughby 2017; Peter and Valkenburg 2016; Weinberg 2010). The research focuses almost exclusively on the consumers of pornography, as opposed to the individuals who participate in creating it.

The quantitative research highlighted a research tension between positive and negative impacts of the consumption of pornographic materials; negative impacts

research focus on increased consumer participation in risky sexual behaviors, as well as a greater acceptance of misogyny and rape myths (Peter and Valkenburg 2016; Foubert, Brosi and Bannon 2011). The work on risky sexual behaviors points to increased viewer likelihood of multiple sex partners or extramarital sex. As a result, the outcomes are framed as a "public health concern" to the extent that they encourage unsafe sex practices (Crawford 2007). The construction of pornography as a public health concern helps further the widespread notion that the consumption of pornography has detrimental effects for society at large, even though the perceived outcomes could still include safe sex practices (Crawford 2007).

In addition to the public health concerns highlighted in pornography research, pornography has also been linked with misogynistic content, and as a result, understood as perpetuating rape myths and rape cultures particularly among male consumers (Crawford 2007; Gorman 2014; Allen, Emmers, Gebhart and Giery 1995; Malamuth, Hald and Koss 2012). Pornography has been described as "intentional acts of sexual domination or even degradation" against females who participate in porn, and as a result, consumption of pornography is linked to greater acceptance of violence against women (Malamuth, Hald and Koss 2012:428). Cowan and Dunn (1994) found that men who were frequent pornography consumers were at relatively high risk for sexual aggression, as opposed to individuals who reported "hardly" or "never" consuming pornography. Other researchers (Foubert, Brosi and Bannon 2011) surveyed 62% of the fraternity population at a Midwestern public university on their pornography viewing habits. They found a correlation between consumption and fraternity member willingness to contribute

to rape: "men who viewed pornography were significantly less likely to intervene as a bystander, report an increased behavioral intent to rape, and are more likely to believe rape myths" (Foubert, Brosi and Bannon 2011:212).

Past research worked to highlight the various ways in which the consumption of pornography is detrimental to the individuals who participate and work within this industry, and as a result, that negativity is transmitted into the effects it has on its consumers (Boyle 2011; Gubar 1987). Correspondingly, past research focused on the negative impacts of pornography on the individuals who work in the industry, centering industry actor experiences as being adopted from existing worker exploitation discourse. Boyle (2011) and Ciclitira (2004) highlighted abuse of female pornography performers, such as exploitation and coercion to participate in sexual acts they were not comfortable with. Often times when women experience assault or violence on a pornography set, it dismissed and is seen as just part of their working conditions (Boyle 2011). Additionally, research highlighted the degradation of female actors to ensure male satisfaction, rather than focusing on female satisfaction or even comfort (Gubar 1987; Malamuth and Ceniti 1986).

More recent research considers "positive" implications of pornography consumption and the framing of it as positive is linked to a wider general acceptance of casual sex and diverse sexualities. Research conducted by Carroll, Padilla-Walker, Nelson, Olson, McNamara, and Madsen (2008) surveyed 813 participants recruited from six college sites across the United States to understand the impact of pornography on sexual attitudes and behaviors. This research indicated that, overall, young adults

considered pornography consumption to be an acceptable behavior; furthermore, consumption of pornography did not impact young people's understandings of marriage, parenthood, and other forms of relationships (Carroll et. al. 2008). Increasingly academic research supports the notion that individuals who consume pornography are more likely to self-report having positive attitudes regarding sex, where positive attitudes are defined as not finding the pornographic material to be threatening, inappropriate or distorting the images of men and women. (Crawford 2007; Franczyk, Cielecka & Tuszyńska-Bogucka 2014). Research indicates that individuals who consume pornography are more likely to self-report having positive attitudes regarding sex (Crawford 2007; Carroll et al 2008). These results indicate both moving towards a more sexually progressive society, as well as attempting to understand the impacts of pornography at the individual level rather than the societal level (Crawford 2007; Weinberg 2010).

The "third person effect" explains how research can find that individuals can believe that pornography is detrimental to society, while still having self-reported positive views regarding sex (Pariera 2015). The third person effect posits that people typically presume media to have a stronger negative influence on others than it does on themselves (Pariera 2015). This means that individuals are more likely to believe that pornography will negatively influence other members of society, whether or not that individual member is negatively affected (Pariera 2015). This could indicate why there is an area of conflict within the literature and research surrounding the impacts of the consumption of pornography.

There is a small segment of pornography research that does look at industry member experiences; however, that research often focuses on negative experiences. Chauntelle Tibballs is one of the few academic researchers that used qualitative research methods including ethnography and in-depth interviews to explore changes in "women's incorporation and opportunities for participation in the United States' adult film industry ...since the 1950s," as well as changes in content (Tibballs 2015:168; Tibballs 2010). Tibball's work explored the "processes shaping changes over time via an exploration of the development of women adult film industry workers' occupational incorporation and opportunities for participation" (Tibballs 2010:171). Tibballs explored the changes in the relationship between producers, consumers, and regulators of the pornography industry. Tibballs argued that their work is important to pornography research as it studied "more representative components of the industry," as well as highlighted "a vast array of working persons" (Tibballs 2010:175).

As previously mentioned, Tibballs work is unique because it focused on including pornography industry voices into the academic scholarship surrounding the topic. Regardless, it is evident that the topic of pornography has been a popular topic of academic research due to the potential impacts it can have on those who consume it. The quantitative research that has been conducted on the topic helps to highlight the way in which pornography also acts as an agent of socialization in terms of teaching members who consume it about appropriate modes of sexuality, gender portrayal, and more.

Sexual Script Analysis

Sexual script theory, introduced by sociologists Gagnon and Simon (1973, 2003), offers a new understanding of the human sexual activity that analyzes sexuality as being cultural, historical, and socially constructed as opposed to biologically based (Gorman 2014; Frith and Kitzinger 2001). Understandings of sex, sexuality and sexual behaviors are constructed socially through the incorporation of "individualistic and cognitive assumptions" of what sexuality looks like (Frith and Kitzinger 2001:211). Sexual script theorists understand "sexual encounters as learned interactions that follow predictable sequences or scripts" (Frith and Kitzinger 2001:212). As a result, sexuality and human sexual behavior are learned based on the culturally, historically and socially available messages that "define what 'counts' as sex, how to recognize sexual situations and what to do in sexual encounters" (Frith and Kitzinger 2001:213).

Sexual scripts are often times congruent with what larger society deems as being sexual, and as a result, sexual scripts serve to dictate what heterosexual activities are defined as acceptable. (Frith & Kitzinger 2001; Gorman 2014). Sexual script theory acknowledged that "without the proper elements of a script that defines the situation, names the actors, and plots the behavior, nothing sexual is likely to happen," and highlighted the importance of the way in which sexuality and human sexual behavior are identified and portrayed (Gorman 2014:30). As a result, sexual scripts are essential to be able to understand the relationship and directionality of the relationship that exists between the exposure to sexually explicit material and individuals' understandings of

sexuality and human sexual behavior (Gorman 2014).

Pornography, both in pictures or video clips, serves to create visual texts with the power to elicit a visceral response from its viewers (Cruz 2013). While pornography is created with the intention to sexually arouse the viewer, pornography also creates visual texts outlining what is and is not acceptable sexuality, sexual relations or gender expressions (Cruz 2013). Pornography, due to its widespread accessibility on the internet, has ultimately become the form of primary exposure to sex and sexuality for young adults; young men and women view pornography and garner their understanding of what sex is supposed to look like, as well as the roles the various genders should play out during sex (Peter and Valkenburg 2016, Boies and Knudson 2004). "Pornography has migrated from the liminal spaces at the margins of society (such as seedy stores and dingy theatres) to influence the mainstreams of society and become a central motif in its lifestyle and couture" (Langman 2008: 658). Since pornography has been able to move towards mainstream society, the visual texts and messages that it produces are now reaching more and more individuals. Additionally, due to a lack of adequate and effective sexual education for members of society, these visual texts often times serve as the basis for the understanding that individuals develop in regard to their own sexuality.

Pornography portrays "ready-made perceptions of a fulfilling intercourse, healthy sexuality and an acceptable deviation from the norm," thus creating and outlining supposed rules for power and pleasure (Gorman 2014:10). Situations played out in pornography are perceived as sexual because they already fall in line with society's sexual scripts and are a reflection of larger sexual scripts that already exist within society

(Gorman 2014). Often times it is understood that pornography enforces stereotypical gender roles during sexual intercourse, such as male domination and female subordination; it also can encourage violence against women in certain instances (Ciclitira 2004; Peter and Valkenburg 2016). Research indicates that there is, in fact, a correlation between viewing pornography and the type of sexual acts that participants, in turn, end up engaging in and finding arousing (Morgan 2011, Peter and Valkenburg 2016). Pornography, as a result, has the ability to create a form of "conditioned sexuality" in line with those that are depicted in pornography scripts (Aydemir 2016). Often times, the sexual acts and behaviors that are depicted in pornography shape the behaviors and attitudes of the consumers of pornography (Peter and Valkenburg 2016).

CHAPTER THREE: FOUCAULT, FEMINIST AND QUEER THEORY

In this thesis, I apply a Foucauldian lens to my analysis of the discourse of porn industry members and their experiences in the production of knowledge surrounding concepts such as sex, gender, and sexuality. In doing so, I adopt an exploration of power underlying narratives, as well an interest in queering sex, gender, and sexualities. Drawing on sensitizing frameworks informed by the history and development of queer theory, of which Foucault informs, this chapter seeks to illuminate the ways in which this framework comes together to inform a discourse analysis. As a result, this chapter begins with an exploration of Michel Foucault, his theoretical positioning's, and the way in which this influenced the conception of the Foucauldian Discourse analysis as a qualitative method. Following the description of discourse analysis is an examination to the way in which feminist and queer theory conceptualize, understand and analyze hegemonic constructions of gender, and sexuality, as well the way in which these theoretical canons can be applied as a means to analyzing the topic of pornography.

Foucault: Power, Knowledge, and Sexuality

Michel Foucault (1926-1984) was an extremely influential and transformative French thinker and scholar whose work is largely regarded as being a part of both the structuralist and post-structuralist movements who largely helped to influence, and expand the theorization of sexuality. He examined a wide range of topics such as sexuality, prisons, methodology and psychiatry, allowing his work and theorizations to

have an interdisciplinary impact. Foucault was also concerned with understanding the relationships between power and knowledge as a means of social control. Foucault's work, analysis and theories are tools through which one can examine social and political institutions and their practices, formations and evolutions as they exist within any given historical period (Murdocca 2014).

Foucault's theoretical work and analysis was largely concerned with how human beings were "placed in power relations which are very complex", and how he theorized this subsequently created a need for a theory of power (Foucault 1982:778). He felt that human beings were objects of transformation, discipline, and power (Foucault 1977, Hall 2001, Foucault 1977). Power, as understood by Foucault, is a productive force within society in the sense that it "shapes and guides all social relations" (Murdocca 2014:6). Power is not limited to one, centralized force within society; alternatively, power exists as an intricate network of operations that controls the conduct of individuals within a given society (Murdocca 2014). One of the ways in which power and power relations are enforced throughout society is through the bodies of the individual members of that society.

According to Foucault, we inhabit a disciplinary society that is influenced by two distinct forms of modern power: sovereign power and disciplinary power. Sovereign power is power that is considered to be "brutal, direct, and exact" and is typically administered by a ruler or a sovereign (Foucault 1975:780, Murdocca 2014). Disciplinary power is "ordered, regulatory" and rather than being administered outright, is the result of the surveillance practices that exist within society. Once individuals exist in an

increasingly disciplinary society, they begin to internalize those values and ultimately, begin to self-discipline in accordance with the rules and regulations of that society (Foucault 1975, Murdocca 2014). As a result, disciplinary power works to "produce bodies, practices, and subjectivities that, while not reducible to a particular political domain, nevertheless, bear the imprint of a given interest and logic, including the patriarchy" (Green 2010:326).

As understood and described by Foucault, power does not exist in isolation, rather, "power is situated among many social practices and is interwoven into our identities and into our behaviour" (Murdocca 2014:11). Therefore, the implementation of power throughout society impacts the creation of both social structures and cultural structures (Foucault 1975). Social institutions, such as schools and the workplace, are ultimately designed as not only means of being able to observe members of society through creating spaces in which hierarchical observation is allowed to take place (Foucault 1977). These spaces create positions of power that allow individuals to observe the behaviors of others and determine if they are acceptable for those spaces and ultimately society at large. Correspondingly, the cultural structures that are in place are directly impacted by the structures of power, knowledge, discipline, and punishment (Foucault 1977). These structures ultimately determine the ways in which social behavior is determined within social settings by dictating what is and is not acceptable as well as which behaviors are deemed punishable or not (Foucault 1977).

Since power infiltrates all structures of our society, there is a direct relationship that exists between power and the construction of knowledge within a society. Foucault

understood power and knowledge as existing in a symbiotic relationship; "there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations" (Foucault 1977: 383). The power relations of a given society have the capacity to privilege certain forms of knowledge over others, and ultimately use that knowledge to reinforce power relations on individuals (Hall 2001, Murdocca 2014). Knowledge therefore acts a mechanism of power, and in this way, "knowledge is always a form of power" (Murdocca 2014:9). Knowledge is directly correlated to the specific socio-historical power systems of a specific time, which causes knowledge to only be relevant during the time in which it is created (Hall 2001). The connections that exist between "specific contexts and sites, institutions, and historical contexts together produce what Foucault describes as 'regimes of truth'" (Murdocca 2014:12). The symbiotic relationship that exists between power and knowledge is one of the ways in which Foucault's theorizations highlight a society in which power relations remain at the center of social existence.

Foucault's theorized through discourse analysis that sexuality is the name that can be given to a historical construct (Hicks and Jeyasingham 2016). In Foucault's three-volume work, *History of Sexuality,* he briefly mentioned that prostitution and pornography, much like medicine and psychiatry, "have tapped into both this analytic multiplication of pleasure and this optimization of power that controls it" (Foucault 1978: 188). Foucault highlighted that knowledge produced around sexuality establishes moral and sexual hierarchies within our society (Foucault 1978, Hicks and Jeyasingham 2016).

"With regard to modern sexuality, Foucault's concept of disciplinary power is most fully realized. Here, sexuality is less something discovered than something cultivated and implanted- an effect of various institutionalized practices and expert discourses" (Green 2010: 321). Therefore, constructs such as pornography and prostitution are by extension workings of the disciplinary power of society as it constructs and controls acceptable and unacceptable sexuality (Foucault 1978, Bohdana 2017).

Foucault's work on sexuality highlights pornography as an important mechanism of power strategies to regulate sexualities within our society (Taylor 2009). Foucauldian analysis argues that pornography is an essential strategy of power that is utilized to surveil the population of sexually active individuals and has continued to evolve as a strategy of power within our society (Bohdana 2017; Taylor 2009). Pornography is a form of disciplinary power that does not require any direct state intervention; individuals confess to consuming pornography and as a result individuals become self-regulating in their deployment of their sexualities through their own individual consumption of pornography. Pornography also imposes power and discipline on individuals through the regulation and rigidification of sexualities - pornography portrays "ready-made perceptions of a fulfilling intercourse, healthy sexuality and an acceptable deviation from the norm", thus creating and outlining defined rules for power and pleasure, thus falling in line with the way in which pornography operates under sexual script theory (Bohdana 2017, Gorman 2014:30). By consuming pornography, individuals learn which sexualities they are allowed to deploy, as well as how they are deployed. Individuals become self-regulating as a result of this disciplinary power, and the state does not need to directly

intervene in order to control the sexually active individuals of their society (Foucault 1978).

Those involved in the production of porn inhabit both the subject and object positions as a result of their positionality to the discourse. These individuals are both individuals who personify the specific form of knowledge within the discourse, but they are also subjected to the discourse as well. Not only do individuals who work in the porn industry personify the specific form of knowledge by recreating it through their content, they are also subjected to the rules and regulations of the discourse that created pornography. As a result of inhabiting both subject-positions, the discourse of individuals within the industry will be a direct representation of the ways in which knowledge and power is created and understood throughout the discourse. Therefore, situating the topic of pornography within Foucault's theory of power highlights the ways in which the power of the state is entrenched into our daily lives, even in aspects of our life that we would deem private. (Bohdana 2017; Taylor 2009).

Foucauldian discourse analysis

As defined and understood by Foucault, discourse is one of the mediums through which power and knowledge relationships are deployed, reinforced, and perpetuated throughout society (Hall 2001, Murdocca 2014). While discourse is a term that is used to encompass conversations, Foucault established the conception of discourse as something that goes beyond the act of speaking or "the mere collection of sentences" (Carbó, Pilar, and Albertín 2016:365). Foucault's understood discourse as "a set of possible statements about a given area, and organizes and gives structure to the manner in which a particular

topic, object, process is to be talked about." (Cheek 2004:1142). It is through this process

of the ways in which things acquire their meaning that highlight the ways in which the

role of power shapes our knowledge (Murdocca 2014). Foucault understood discourse as

a "system of representation" within our society, in that discourse provides the means for

representing a specific form of knowledge within its given historical context. (Hall 2001,

Murdocca 2014). Individuals, institutions and social groupings each have their own set of

specified meanings and values that are expressed through the discourse they engage in

(Wodak and Meyer 2001). In this way, discourse has the power to bring life to concepts

that were once ignored; the way in which Foucault argued homosexuality did not fully

exist until there was discourse developed to illustrate it (Hall 2001). As a result, if

discourse surrounding an object changes, the object itself changes (Wodak and Meyer

2001, Hall 2001).

As previously mentioned, Foucault understood discourse as a "series of

representation" that provides the guideline for how an individual should think, talk about,

or understand a certain thing within a "historically determined social system" (Carbó et.

al. 2016:366). Foucault specified that in order to fully be able to understand the discourse

of a society, one must understand the wider historical context in which that discourse was

created (Hall 2001). Correspondingly, knowledge and power are also concepts that must

be considered within the social and historical contexts through with which they emerged

in order to fully understand the ways in which they led to the construction of a given

discourse. (Hall 2001, Murdocca 2014). In essence, discourse is about the production of

knowledge and power through language since discourse constructed in and constructive

of our current social institutions (Hall 2001, Murdocca 2014, Wodak and Meyer 2001).

As follows, discourse is representative of the larger power structures that are currently in

existence within a given society (Murdocca 2014).

Discourse sees language as an essential aspect in establishing and maintaining the

current power relations of a given society (Wodak and Meyer 2001). This is because of

the fact that the current power relations determine what is considered to be knowledge,

and this knowledge is what ends up shaping the given discourse surrounding a specific

topic (Hall 2001). "It is discourse, not the subjects who speak it, which produces

knowledge" (Hall 2001:75). As follows, discourse surrounding sexualization is

oftentimes constructed in line with the current political discourse of the environment

(Duits 2011). If there are current negative political perspectives surrounding women and

female sexuality, this is likely to result in negative sexualized discourse surrounding

women (Duits 2011). Since discourse is linked to political, historical and social time

periods, Foucault argued that topics such as sexuality can only meaningfully exist within

the discourse that are about them (Hall 2001). Discourse, as a result, constructs meaning

and representation of objects of knowledge within a given society, as well as social

realities. Since discourse guides the way individuals think about things, as well as the

way in which they understand those things, discourse helps to create versions of

"psychological and external realities" (Carbó et. al. 2016:366).

Additionally, discourse itself creates subject-positions in relation to the particular

discourse being analyzed. The concept of the subject according to Foucault are "figures

or individuals who personify the particular form of knowledge which the discourse

produces as well as produce a place for the subject (an audience or viewer who is subjected to the discourse)" (Hall 1997:74). All discourse therefore creates subject-positions that only make sense within that particular discourse. The subject-positionality that results in any given discourse is indicative of the power relations of that given society and the ways in which those forms of power manifest themselves in language and practice, and ultimately, in the ways in which the discourse around the topic is shaped (Hall 1997). According to Foucault, the subject is ultimately produced within the discourse itself and as a result cannot exist outside of that discourse (Hall 1997). As a result, it is the discourse itself, rather than the subjects who speak or participate in it, that produces knowledge. The subject is required to submit to the rules and conventions of that discourse that are reflective of the larger power structures that exist. By extension, the subject-positionality that results in any given discourse is indicative of the power relations of that given society and the ways in which those forms of power manifest themselves in language and practice, and ultimately, in the ways in which the discourse around the topic is shaped.

Discourse ultimately influences the various ways in which ideas about something are conceived, understood and put into practice. As a result, it is used to regulate the behavior and thoughts of others by dictating to members of a society the way in which they should perceive something. The discourse that exists surrounding a topic creates the regime of truth that exists, which is difficult to challenge or resist. The discursive formation that is born about any given topic is directly representative of the power structures that created the knowledge that produced it. In this way, discourse governs the

way in which a topic can be meaningfully talked about and understood by a society at large during any given time period (Hall 2001, Hall 1997).

Foucault's understanding of discourse, power and knowledge create a framework through which to better analyze representation as it exists within our society (Murdocca 2014). Discourse analysis looks at the role that language possess in regards to structuring and maintaining the current power relations that exist within a given society (Wodak and Meyer 2001). Discourse analysis requires "theorization and description of both the social processes and structures" that create a given discourse, as well as the "processes within which individuals or groups as social historical objects, create meanings" (Wodak and Meyer 2001:1). In regards to conducting discourse analysis surrounding the topic of sexuality, Foucault outlines a framework to follow to ensure that the analysis effectively conveys to power relations that created the discourse (Hall 2001). In order to conduct an effective and accurate discourse analysis on sexuality according to Foucault, it would need to contain statements regarding sexuality, the rules that outline the ways of discussing these topics, subjects who personify the given discourse, how the knowledge surrounding the given topic requires an authority to possess, and lastly, the ways in which societal institutions interact with the subjects of that discourse (Hall 2001, Wodak and Meyer 2001).

Gender, Sexuality, and the Feminist Canon

Concepts like gender and sexuality are largely constructed, perpetuated and reinforced through social institutions that seek to have these concepts align with the

hegemonic constructions of society at that time. Typical hegemonic constructions of gender and sexuality typically cast both as existing exclusively in binary terms: "bodies are either male or female...our sexuality is either heterosexual or homosexual" (Lorber 1996: 9). Drawing on these hegemonic constructions of gender and sexuality (as well as actively seeking to critique them), perspectives such as feminist theory and queer theory are often used as a means of theoretically positioning research surrounding the pornography industry.

Gender permeates every aspect of our society, including the ways we treat others around us. Since gender is often the first thing that is noticed about an individual, it is referred to as a "master status", or an individual's social position that is the immediate identifying characteristic and the main part of one's social identity (Gabler 2010). Subsequently, feminist theory calls attention to the social construction of gender, gender socialization, and maintenance of gender systems in society. Feminist theorists focus on displacing biology as the main component of gender creation; instead, feminist work theorizes gender as a construct that is created through social and cultural shaping, as it positioned gender as the social or cultural interpretation of biological sex (Fausto-Sterling 2000, Butler 1990).

Gender as a construct operates on various levels in regards to the way in which it is carried out and enforced within our larger society (Wade and Ferree 2015). Gender order within our patriarchal society creates a hierarchical binary where a higher value is placed on masculinities as opposed to femininities (Schilt and Westbrook 2009). Gender operates at the level of individual interaction, focusing on the ways in which individuals

"do" gender through their social interactions, as well as at the level of identity, in which an individual is seen as "having" or "possessing" a gender identity (Fausto-Sterling 2000). Gender identities are assigned to individuals at birth based on their biological sex characteristics, which is then the gender identity they are expected to "have" (Fausto-Sterling 2000, Wade and Ferree 2015).

"Doing gender" is used to describe the ways in which people perform their gender, as well as the ways in which people actively participate in and sometimes break the gender rules of our society (West and Zimmerman 1987, Schilt and Westbrook 2009, Wade and Ferree 2015). "Doing gender means creating differences between girls and boys and women and men, differences that are not natural, essential, or biological" (West and Zimmerman 1987:129). Through "doing gender," men are pushed to "do dominance" where women are pushed to "do submission, which serves to reaffirm the hierarchical gender positioning (Schilt and Westbrook 2009: 218). This process of "doing gender" involves the production and crating of gender identities that are in line with societies understandings of gender, and ultimately serve to reinforce the notion that gender identities are naturally derived from biology (Schilt and Westbrook 2009). The biological conception of gender, in turn, reinforced conceptions of what "doing gender" looked like based on an individual's assigned gender. In line with the ability to reproduce, women are expected to be nurturing, caring, and sentimental, and as a result "do gender" through carrying out social roles such as being wives, mothers, and homemakers (Wade and Ferree 2015). In order for one to correctly 'do gender' in accordance with the traditional expectations associated with gender, one must follow socially constructed gender rules

(West and Zimmerman 1991). Gender rules are specific guidelines and expectations within one's society that dictate the acceptable ways in which one should behave to be perceived as a man or as a woman (Wade and Ferree 2015, West and Zimmerman 1991).

Feminist scholars have long recognized the existing link between gender and sexuality in the way they are both constructed along a binary and enforced through society at large (Schilt and Westbrook 2009). "Sexuality is a broader term referring to all erotically significant aspects of social life and social being" (Jackson 2005:115). The hegemonic construction of sexuality operates on the same binary system as gender does; there is only heterosexuality and homosexuality (Schilt and Westbrook 2009). Once again relying on biological conceptions, sexuality is assigned based on one's respective gender and that gender's subsequent role in the reproduction process (Wade and Ferree 2015, Schilt and Westbrook 2009). "The stereotypes imply not only that female biological processes are less worthy than their male counterparts but also that women are less worthy than men" (Martin 1991:487). Correspondingly, men and women are expected to perform their sexuality in a way that is congruent with their assigned gender; women are supposed to be seen as sexually desirable and submissive to men, where men are seen as sexually dominating over women (Wade and Ferree 2015, Schilt and Westbrook 2009). When an individual performs their gender and sexuality in a way that is deemed appropriate, "we simultaneously sustain, reproduce, and render legitimate the institutional arrangements" that determine these hegemonic constructions.

Subsequently, the feminist theoretical canon provides the tools for critiquing hegemonic constructions of gender, gender relations, and the subordination of women

within a larger society. The feminist canon encompasses many different schools of thought, but the primary basis that the theoretical positioning rests on is the accepted notion that sexes "are culturally, and not just biologically, formed" and stand in opposition "to male defamation and mistreatment of women" (Treichler and Kramarae 1985:87). Early feminist theoretical work was largely informed by "sociological thinking on power relations within heterosexual relations and the interconnections between sexuality and other aspects of women's subordination" (Jackson 2005:112). Feminist theory explores the constructions, implications, and enforcement of the patriarchal ordering of society based on hegemonic understandings of sex, gender, and sexuality. The patriarchal construction of society understands gender as a "hierarchical social division between women and men" that is perpetuated through social institutions, practices and the individuals who embody gender (Jackson 2005:1). "The objective of feminist theory is not only to explain the status quo of gender relations but to also gain knowledge on how to change them" (Nentwich 2006:19).

There has been increasing feminist focus on the topic of pornography since the mid-seventies when many feminists began to echo the sentiment that pornography was one of the principal causes of women's oppression (Ellis, O'Dair, & Tallmer 1990). Pornography has typically been understood as utilizing and reinforcing gender-based stereotypes, encouraging women to maintain a submissive role in a larger society (Purcell 2009). It also emphasizes the notion that pornography is the manifestation of the human sex drive of the patriarchy, creating male dominant sexuality that claims that sex can be deployed to subordinate women. Pornography is largely seen as dehumanizing, making

the connection between rape and the depictions of women in pornography as victims of violence and abuse at the hands of male perpetrators, drawing emphasis to the ways in which the sexually explicit and degrading images work to fuel and ultimately justify sexism and violence towards women (Gubar 1987). This argument frames pornography as being a purveyor of violence against women, both at the individual and at the societal level (Shrage 2005).

Anti-porn feminists such as Catherine McKinnon and Andrea Dworkin introduced the famous slogan "porn is the theory, rape is the practice", further emphasizing the ways in which the perceived impacts of the consumption of pornography are seen as being detrimental to women (Duits 2011). In this way, anti-pornography feminists emphasized how pornography was a manifestation of larger forms of sexual violence against women, and as a result, was inherently misogynistic. In her speech, "Pornography Happens to Women", staunch anti-pornography feminist Andrea Dworkin states women portrayed in pornography are completely stripped of their humanity, saying:

> This is not a human being. One cannot look at such a photography and say, there is a human being, she has rights, she has freedom, she is someone. One cannot. This is what pornography does to women.

Anti-pornography feminists also view porn as a mechanism of sexualization that develops images of female sexuality in congruence with the larger patriarchal understandings of sex and sexuality (Duits 2011). Pornography is often viewed as the manifestation of the human sex drive of the patriarchy, creating a male dominant sexuality that claims that sex can be deployed to subordinate women (Shrage 2005). This argument frames pornography as a purveyor of violence against women, both at the

individual and at the societal level (Shrage 2005, Ciclitira 2004). This sentiment has influenced the type of research that has been conducted on pornography, which highlighted the correlation between the exposure to violent forms of pornography and the acceptance of sexual aggression and violence against women (Purcell 2009, Ciclitira 2004). Often time it is believed that pornography portrayed the sexual exploitation of women, reinforcing the notion of women as 'sex objects' to be utilized for male pleasure, in turn, impacts the ways in which women and female sexuality are viewed and understood by society at large (Duits 2011, Ciclitira 2004).

However, the anti-pornography sentiment is not something that is unanimously held by all feminists and feminist scholars. Some feminists theorized that seeing pornography as one of the key reasons behind women's oppression, and the root of male violence, leads to a "dangerous oversimplification that is ultimately harmful to women" (Ellis, O'Dair and Tallmer 1990: 17). Additionally, to focus on pornography as the primary cause for women's oppression ignores the rest of the issues feminism seeks to address (Duits 2011). As a result, there has been an emergence of feminism that views pornography as a sexually liberating and empowering medium for those who participate and consume it. Sex positive or radical feminists often times work to understand the functionalities of pornography in regards to its ability to provide a medium for empowerment and liberation for women (Shrage 2005, DeVoss 2012). In this light, pornography is viewed as an opportunity to provide both those who consume and participate in pornography a medium for unique and agentic sexual expression (Shrage 2005).

During the 1980s, there emerged of the category of "feminist pornography", or women's self-made and self-sponsored content (DeVoss 2012). The notion of "feminist pornography" ushered in a new era of pornography for women from the point of view of women, and as a result, several production companies began to emerge that were seen as sex-radical activism during the feminist sex wars (DeVoss 2012, Ryberg 2013). Feminist pornography emerged as a result of women seeking a space in which they could express their own sexuality in ways that were not congruent with larger societal expectations of feminine sexuality (DeVoss 2002). Until roughly around the 1980s with the emergence of feminist pornography, pornography had been predominantly created "by men for men"; thus allowing pornography created for women from the viewpoint of women to be considered as "radical" (Ryberg 2013). Feminist pornography as a media form can be utilized as a means to push back or subvert current norms and understandings surrounding gender and sexual normativity, providing a medium that can "destabilize the established binary model of female objectification for male viewing pleasure" (Miller-Young 2013:115). Correspondingly, feminist pornography creates a new form of pornography that has the potential to create and transmit new visual media texts that can actively subvert traditional ideas of gender and sexual normativity (Ryberg 2013, DeVoss 2002). Additionally, feminist pornography creates the potential for more women to participate in active resistance within the industry by actively having women be involved in various different roles within the industry which challenges the patriarchal structure of the industry (Ryberg 2013, Gorman 2014).

It is critical to recognize how the traditional feminist canon focused exclusively on the experiences and oppression faced by white women- rather than incorporating the oppressions faced by women of varying racial, sexual, and economic backgrounds. The notion of "intersectional feminism" emerged as an attempt to address the need for feminism to contain a more complex analysis- one that accounted for specifics and variances that emerged in different forms of subordination (Denis 2008). Traditional feminist analysis of domination often assumed that only one source- gender acted as the primary agent of oppression, failing to account for other sources such as race/ethnicity, sexuality and class standing (Denis 2008, Ortega 2009). "Intersectional approach to analyzing the disempowerment of marginalized women attempts to capture the consequences of the interaction between two or more forms of subordination" (Yuval-Davis 2006). Intersectional feminism seeks to take into account the ways in which these sources interact simultaneously to the constraints and opportunities of each (Denis 2008).

The application of intersectional feminist analysis to the pornography industry supports more nuanced analyses that center experiences of women of color. Black bodies are the most degraded within our society and that same notion carries through into pornography. The degradation of black bodies also works to create a fetishism of these types of bodies that further drives their representations within mainstream pornography (Miller-Young 2013). "Politics [of porn] are necessarily shaped by the stultifying power of race in pornography's structural and social relations. While all porn's workers are subject to the disciplining force of racialized sexuality, even the idealized white female porn star, women of color are specifically devalued within a tiered system" (Miller-

Young 2013:116). Under an intersectional or women of color feminist perspective, one can critically analyze the way in which black women's sexuality has historically been subjected to confining scripts that use black women's sexualities as one of the primary mechanisms through which to deploy "colonization, expropriation, and genocide" and how pornography might be a medium through which these types of racialized, gendered constructions are still perpetuated (Miller-Young 2013)

Queer Theory and Theorizing Sexualities

Much like feminist theory, queer theory also acknowledges the ways in which our conception of gender is socially constructed. Queer theory is recognized as having emerged in the 1990s when it was introduced in Judith Butler's book *Gender Trouble*, which highlights that gender is not biologically determined, instead highlighted the way in which gender is a performance carried out by individual members of society (Wolters 2013). Gender identity is achieved through "the persistent and stylised repetition of acts", and is not a result of a biologically distinct body (Hicks and Jeyasingham 2016:1, Butler 1990). Butler expanded the concept of "doing gender" by focusing on the ways in which gender is something that is entirely performative by nature, making it something that can be subverted, and transformed (Butler 1990). The introduction of queer theory as an academic perspective allows for the rethinking and reconceptualization of hegemonic constructs of gender, sex, and sexuality, while simultaneously "calling into question received wisdom about gender and sexuality" (Valocchi 2005:1, Hicks and Jeyasingham 2016).

Under the theoretical conceptualization and implementation of queer theory, the gender binary of male and female is recognized as an oppressive social system, and anyone who does not fall in line with that binary is subordinated in order to maintain the overall dominant structure (Hicks and Jeyasingham 2016, Butler 1990). Correspondingly, gender performativity is understood as a way in which social control and power are disseminated throughout society (Wolters 2013, Butler 1990). Oftentimes, queer theory is concerned with the "subversion of identity- the transformation of the perception of gender portrayals and identities" (Hicks and Jeyasingham 2016:2361). As a result, queer theory works to disrupt and transform our commonly held notions regarding sex, gender, and sexuality and challenge what "normal" perceptions of those look like (Wolters 2013). In this way, queer theory aims to destabilize sexual and gender norms within our society, not just through performativity but also through critically analyzing the social institutions that uphold and perpetuate these values (Wolters 2013, Hicks and Jeyasingham 2016). "Queer theory turns this emphasis on its head by deconstructing these binaries, foregrounding the constructed nature of the sex, gender, and sexuality classification systems and resisting the tendency to congeal these categories into social identities" (Valocchi 2005:760). Queer theory offers new modes, mechanisms, and ways of rethinking conceptions of gender, and sexuality (Valocchi 2005).

Queer theory also theorizes, conceptualizes and challenges the construction of sexual normativity within society (Hicks and Jeyasingham 2016). Hegemonic perceptions of gender and sexuality portray "heterosexual, monogamous, reproductive, and non-commercial" modes of sexuality as being the one and only 'normal' form, with

everything else being juxtaposed as being an 'opposite' or 'deviant' form of sexuality (Hicks and Jeyasingham 2016, Valocchi 2005). "This set of norms works to maintain the dominance of heterosexuality by preventing homosexuality from being a form of sexuality that can be taken for granted or go unmarked or seem right in the way heterosexuality can" (Valocchi 2005). In this way, queer theory destabilizes and challenges the notion of "obligatory sexuality" and allows for emancipation from this "otherwise determined field of normalization" (West and Zimmerman 1987:126, Green 2010). Queer theory provides the foundation for conceptualizing on identity when "there is no original from which gender and sexualities are derived" (Valocchi 2005:752). In this way, the application of queer theory as a theoretical orientation allows for "new ways of thinking about old concepts", and as a result, allows for new forms of knowledge to be created that challenges our hegemonic conceptions of normative gender and sexuality (Valocchi 2005:751).

Queer theory aims to not only create new definitions, but aims to subvert and transform current understandings and representations of sex, gender and sexuality (Hicks and Jeyasingham 2016). In a heteronormative society, not abiding to the gender binary and expected gender performativity, as well as non-heterosexual relations, can be seen as a radical act and a medium to combat the current heteronormative patriarchal system we operate under (Wolters 2013, Hicks and Jeyasingham 2016). If gender and heterosexuality are upheld through repetition, then they have the potential to be subverted through a new kind of repetition that breaks away from the normative presentation (Hicks and Jeyasingham 2016). Queer theory, and by extension queerness, is the modality

through which freedom and emancipation from the norms becomes possible (Wolters 2013).

Through the application of queer theory and its ideologies, dismissed or ignored objects are given the potential to fall under critical and theoretical scrutiny which in turn helps to generate new meanings surrounding that object, which allows for the creation of transformative understanding of commonly understood topics (Aydemir 2016, Wolters 2013). Queer theory challenges commonly held notions of what "normal" gender, sex, and sexuality, as well as questions the ways in which these concept are constructed (Wolters 2013). Queer theory also seeks to reinvent the terms of our current sexualities in order to disrupt the current binary that they operate on (Hicks and Jeyasingham 2016). Queer theorists view heterosexuality as one of the main factors that maintains the gender hierarchy that subordinates women to men, as well as subordinates other sexualities to heterosexuality (Schilt and Westbrook 2009, Hicks and Jeyasingham 2016). This elevated states of heterosexuality creates the notion of heteronormativity - the structures, institutions and practices that not only normalize heterosexuality but also privilege it (Hicks and Jeyasingham 2016). Queer theory provides a lens for subverting traditional understandings of gender and sexuality in pornography because pornography creates a visual text of normative gender, sex, and sexuality (Aydemir 2016).

As previously mentioned, this research employs a Foucauldian discourse analysis informed by theoretical frameworks provided by feminist and queer theory. This theoretical background helps to provide the necessary framework through which to position my research and my analysis. In the next chapter, I discuss the methods

employed for collecting my data, such as the way in which participants were recruited to participate in this study. In the chapter where I present my data, a Foucauldian lens influenced by feminist and queer theory informs my analysis and the insights provided. Drawing on this theoretical background, my analysis sought to answer these two following research questions:

1. How do West Coast pornography industry actor experiences challenge or reinforce hegemonic constructions of gender, race, sex, and sexuality?

2. How do West Coast porn industry actors understand their experiences within the industry in regards to maintaining hegemonic boundaries and engaging in resistance?

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

This research is based on a discourse analysis of 10 interviews conducted during 2018-19 with a convenience and snowball sample of individuals involved in the West Coast pornography industry. I found participants through the social media site Instagram and one key informant. I interviewed all participants over the phone and recorded those conversations for later analysis. I chose to utilize a discourse analysis to examine the power relations involved in the construction of sex, gender, and sexuality as frameworks for the analysis. The Humboldt State University Institutional Review Board approved the study on June 17th, 2018 (IRB 17-228).

Participant Description

Participants for this study were all West Coast-based individuals who were currently involved in the pornography industry (see Fig 1). Participants ages ranged from 22 to 60 years old, with participants time spent working within the industry ranging from 2 years to 35 years. There were five participants based in Los Angeles, four based in Las Vegas and one performer from San Diego. All of the participants identified as current performers/actors with several of the performers claiming other titles such as content creator, producer or director. Most participants for this study identified as bisexual or pansexual; no participant identified as heterosexual. Participant gender identities included cis male, cis female, as well as genderqueer, and non-binary.

Participants in this study were given the option between choosing a pseudonym, remaining anonymous, or including their performer name with their responses. "Allowing participants to indicate how they want to be identified, if at all, can be as important as whether they are identified" (Bruckman, Luther and Fiesler 2015:10). The majority of participants felt very strongly about having their performer name included and directly associated with their responses. Recent literature has begun to discuss the intentional inclusion of individuals' names in qualitative research, as opposed to utilizing pseudonyms (Bruckman et. al. 2015; Guenther 2009). While it has been common practice within social sciences to utilize pseudonyms as a means of conducting ethical research and maintaining participants confidentiality, more recently researchers have made deliberate decisions to move away from pseudonyms and include participants real names within their research (Guenther 2009; Lahman, Rodriguez, Moses, Griffin, Mendoza, and Yacoub 2015; Friedman and Resnick 2001).

The reasons for moving away from pseudonyms range from allowing individuals to be able to be connected with their responses, as well as an effort to allow research participants a sense of agency and autonomy within the research setting. "The act of naming is an act of power...Because names are powerful, choosing to use-or to alter-them is also an act of power" (Guenther 2009:413). Individuals who participate within the pornography industry are subject to being marginalized and as a result, each individual who participated in this study was given the agency to decide how they wanted to be represented within the study. The majority of the participants stated that they did

wish to have their names associated with their responses, and as such, the performer's

stage names have not been changed; only two participants decided to use a pseudonym.

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Name	Age	Gender	Race/Eth	Sexuality	Location	Roles in Industry	Time in Industry
Charlotte Sartre	23	cis Female	Caucasian and a quarter Chinese	Bisexual/ Pansexual	LV, NV	Actress/Performer, Content Creator, Site Manager, and Escort/Dominatrix	3 years
D. Arclyte	42	cis Male	Nonwhite / Hispanic	No Sexuality	LV, NV	Performer, Director, Writer, Dancer	3 years
Lance Hart	39	Mostly male	Caucasian	No sexuality	LV, NV	Producer, Performer, Content Creator and Site Manager	10 years
Mia Little	28	Genderqueer	Filipnx	Queer	SD, CA	Performer, Content Creator, Webcamer	6 years
Whitney Wright	26	Female	Caucasian and Native American	Bisexual	LA, CA	Performer/ Actress	2 years
Arielle Aquinas	30	Genderqueer	Caucasian	Pansexual	LV, NV	Performer, Content Creator, Script Writer, Scene Choreographer, Marketing Manager	9 years
Any	22	Non-Binary	Caucasian	Pansexual	LA, CA	Dominatrix/ Porn Performer	2 years
Rena	25	cis Female	Caucasian	Bisexual/ Polyamorous	LA, CA	Producer, Performer, Camgirl, Content Creator	3 years
Gia Paige	28	Female	Caucasian	Bisexual	LA, CA	Performer, Content Creator	4 years
Nina Hartley	59	cis Female	Mostly Caucasian	Pansexual	LA, CA	Performer, content creator, activist, lobbyist	35 years

Participant Recruitment

I recruited participants for this study using a combination of snowball and convenience sampling methods. At the beginning of this research, I started with the contact information of only one key informant. During my second semester of graduate school, I discussed my thesis project with an old colleague of mine who mentioned that, through their social circle, they knew someone who was actively involved in the West Coast pornography industry. They offered to try to put me in contact with Liz. My colleague sent an email to connect Liz and me. Once I received the IRB approval to begin research, Liz was the first West Coast pornography participant with whom I spoke. Although they were unable to participate in a full interview, they greatly assisted me in identifying what to look for on social media sites, as well as identifying prominent production companies that had a social media presence.

After being in contact with Liz, I decided to begin my search for participants through using the social media site Instagram. Instagram is an online social media site through which individuals create profiles and share photographs via these profiles. It allows individuals who create an account to develop a short biography about themselves and link an email address. Individuals who have Instagram accounts are then able to interact with other members of the site by interacting with the photographs that they post, directly interacting with their profile through a linked email address, or direct messaging within the site itself. After being in contact with Liz, I better understood the ways in which individuals who currently work within the pornography industry utilized social media sites such as Instagram to promote their content. As a result, I used Instagram as the main source of information about potential participants.

Once I decided to use Instagram to identify potentials study participants, I developed three criteria to narrow my Instagram searches. I searched profile biographies for keywords that indicated current involvement within the pornography industry. I further narrowed my search looking for indicators participants were based on the West Coast. And finally, I further narrowed my search to only those Instagram account holders who linked an email address to their profile. Through using Liz's Instagram account as a model, I identified the markers "XXX", "Adult Performer", "Adult Film" and "18+" within participant Instagram biographies as indicators that individuals were currently working in the pornography industry. Next, in order to identify if the individual was West-coast based, I searched biographies and image tags for location references. I defined West Coast locations as areas located in California, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, and Arizona. Finally, I selected individuals who had an email icon under their biographies and had a location in one of the above states.

In total from this process, I assembled a list of 81 Instagram account holders who met all three search criteria. I emailed each a direct message (Appendix B) inviting them to participate in the study. I followed up with a shorter second message (Appendix B). Most never responded to either message. In total, 22 individuals expressed interest in participating in the study and I sent them the informed consent form via email, as well as answered any questions they might have had regarding my project. Ultimately, I was able to schedule 10 total interviews.

Interviews

As previously stated, the methodological framework for which this research is based on is grounded theory interviewing. "Grounded theory is a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analyzed" (Strauss and Corbin 1994:275). While typical grounded theory work is conducted with no theoretical background, my work does utilize as a theoretical framework consisting of feminist theory, queer theory, and Foucauldian discourse analysis. As a result, my work draws on grounded theory methodology, but uses sensitizing frameworks informed by the history and development of feminist and queer theory in order to help develop my research questions. Basing my research in a mainly-grounded theory approach allows me to generate theory based on the data that is gathered through my interviews. Prior to conducting any interviews, I developed a semi-structured interview guide (Appendix A) drawing on Kathy Charmaz's interview guide for rooting interviews in grounded theory. Charmaz's grounded theory approach to conducting interviews outlined the process of devising a few open-ended, non-judgmental questions. These type of open-ended, non-judgmental questions "encourage unanticipated statements and stories to emerge" (Charmaz 2006:26). A grounded theory approach also allows for flexibility during interviewing whereas the interviewer I can veer off from the questions to ask a participant more about a particular experience or story, which I did in several of the interviews that I conducted (Charmaz 2006, Strauss and Corbin 1994). My interview guide, therefore, consisted of open-ended non-judgmental questions that ranged from how individuals got involved in pornography to a production they felt allowed them to challenge traditional notions of sex, gender, and sexuality.

All of my interview data was collected via a recorded phone conversation utilizing the mobile app "Call Recorder" and saved for later transcription. I opened the interview by reviewing the consent form and then answering any potential questions that my participant had at that time. During the interview process, I rephrased questions if participants required further explanation or the question was not clear. Interviews lasted between 46 minutes to a 1hr and 45 minutes. As I closed interviews, I asked the participant if they knew someone who might also be interested in participating and if they felt comfortable passing along their contact information, which was used to try to create a snowball sample. Two participants for this study were recruited using snowball sampling, the rest responded to the direct email I had sent.

Discourse Analysis: Methodological Overview

In order to analyze the data collected from these interviews, I used a Foucauldian discursive analysis methodology. As previously mentioned, discourse focuses not on whether or not things exist within a society but rather seeks to analyze and understand the way in which those things acquire their meaning (Hall 2001). A Foucauldian discourse analysis, in particular, focuses on the socio-historical systems of power and knowledge that allow, create and influence things to acquire a specified meaning within society (Hall 2001). As a result, utilizing discourse analysis as a methodology allowed for the generation of in-depth analysis that is focused at analyzing the power and privilege systems that cause things to acquire their meaning (Hall 2001, Cheek 2004). Discourse analysis utilizes a qualitative methodology to then analyze the data that has been

collected utilizing a discursive framework. "Discourse analysis uses "conventional" data collection techniques to generate texts able to be analyzed discursively from a particular understanding of discourse analysis and driven by a certain theoretical frame. These texts could be interview transcripts, newspaper articles, observations, documents or visual images." (Cheek 2004:1143).

In order to conduct an effective discourse analysis on the topic of sexuality, one must analyze the discourse of someone who embodies this notion of sexuality. In this case, those who embody the notion of sexuality within the discourse surrounding pornography are the performers and creators themselves. Aside from identifying the individual who embodies the discourse, conducting a discourse analysis then involves analyzing the data collected from the subjects for discursive statements. Conducting discourse analysis, therefore, involves recognizing statements made by subjects as "a special mode of existence which enables groups of signs to exist, and enables rule or forms to manifest" (Graham 2005:665). As mentioned by Foucault, subjects like 'sexuality' "only exist meaningfully within the discourses about them" (Hall 2001:72).

Utilizing qualitative in-depth interviews as a source for conducting discourse analysis allows the researcher to "understand the subjective experience of the informants with regard to matters of our research interest" (Carbó et. al. 2016:368). When applying a discursive analytical framework to in-depth interviews, the researcher must ask questions such as "what rules permit certain statements to be made; what rules order these statements?" (Cheek 2004:1143). The role of the researcher when conducting a discourse analysis is to interpret and analyze certain social systems of power that privilege

particular forms of knowledge over others (Cheek 2004, Graham 2005). Using

Foucauldian discourse analysis as my method for analysis allowed me to "interpret

statements as things said that privilege particular ways of seeing and codifying certain

practices" (Graham 2005:10). This allows for greater examination, interpretation, and

overall depth of the narratives and statements provided by the subject. Additionally, using

discourse analysis to analyze the narratives of a marginalized group such as pornography

industry members, allowed my research to produce understandings in regards to what is

considered "as mainstream at any point in time and why that might be so" (Cheek

2004:1145).

CHAPTER FIVE: HEGEMONY, RESISTANCE, AND DISCLOSURE

Through conducting my research, three overarching themes arose from the data. The first being the way in which the mainstream pornography industry sought to act as a mechanism that upheld and reinforced hegemonic constructions of gender, sexuality, and race. In this theme, participant narratives described the way in which the mainstream pornography industry focused on casting bodies that aligned with pre-fixed notions of acceptability. Additionally, the way in which pornography websites rely on the use of categories as a means of organizing video content often reinforces these hegemonic constructions. Under the production of mainstream pornography, several participants mentioned the way in which the construction and navigation of "interracial scenes" as well as the "blacklisting" of crossover male performers which served to reinforce hegemonic constructions regarding race and sexuality.

The second theme that arose from the participant narratives was the way in which pornography offered participants the opportunity to also engage in resistance to these hegemonic constructions. Participants described opportunities to actively resist these preconceived notions and create new forms of knowledge through being able to engage in transformative community creation, produce and create subversive film narratives. Additionally, being able to participate in areas of the industry that were separate from the mainstream, such as Kink/BDSM pornography, also provided participants more opportunities to engage in resistance. The third theme that emerged was the theme of self-regulation through engaging in the disclosure process of their status as a member of

the pornography industry. Participants described the ways in which their participation in the industry caused them to become self-disciplined to manage who, what, when, where and how they engage in the disclosure of their industry status.

Maintaining Hegemonic Boundaries: "ci-shet white men to fulfill their visions"

Pornography, much like any other form of media within our society, is influenced by the power and knowledge constructs that already exist within our society. The systems of power and privilege that are already present within our modern day society are therefore reflected, reinforced and upheld through the creation and dissemination of mainstream pornography. This means that power relations between gender, race, and sexualities, as well as the existing knowledge that has been constructed surrounding them, will inevitably be a part of the production and visual texts of pornography, and as a result, a part of the experience of those who participate within the industry. Respectively, actor experiences of gender, race, and sexualities were often congruent with hegemonic definitions.

Mainstream pornography most commonly refers to pornography that is produced and distributed by a large production company. As the title suggests, mainstream pornography created visual content that reflected popularly accepted sexual acts and trends. Mainstream pornography, in and of itself, is one of the main ways in which the pornography industry enforced and re-inscribed hegemonic boundaries surrounding sex, gender, race, sexuality and more. The categorization of "mainstream" pornography created a dichotomy where everything that is not considered "mainstream" is collectively

"othered" and positioned as a separate, lesser entity. As a result, mainstream pornography acted as a mechanism of power to re-inscribe traditional hegemonic forms of knowledge through enforcing barriers to entry, identifying desirable bodies, requiring film categories, generating pay inequalities based on race, and stigmatizing gay male performers.

Casting desire: identifying and pairing of normative bodies

One of the ways in which the mainstream pornography industry upheld hegemonic boundaries regarding gender, race, and class is through processes that identify, cast and pair ideal bodies. In these processes, mainstream pornography also reinforced hegemonic narratives surrounding desire and sexuality. Congruent with mainstream ideologies, pornography seeks to cast performers that are able to fit into what normative society identified as an attractive, desirable and sexual body. This is influenced by narratives of beauty in our society that promote a young, white, physically fit individual as being the most desirable body. Performers noted that one of the ways in which these hegemonic ideals of beauty, desirability, and femininity are upheld and promoted within the pornography industry lies in the various barriers to entry that several of the female performers encountered when they first attempted to enter the industry.

Several female performers commented that their tattoos made their entry into the industry more difficult. One of the narratives surrounding feminine beauty is the notion of purity and femininity, which is typically seen as being incongruent with possessing tattoos. Having tattoos is seen as a "marking" that is being made against an otherwise "pure" canvas, thus reducing the amount of purity that individual can possess. As a result,

several female performers noted that simply having tattoos on their body proved to be a barrier to entry since it served to disrupt the hegemonic ideologies surrounding attractive and desirable bodies. Tattoos also clashed with the idea of youthfulness. Mainstream pornography companies wanted female performers who looked youthful enough to be placed in a teen or 'barely legal' category.

Any was a nonbinary, pansexual 22-year-old Caucasian dominatrix and performer. They had been in the industry for 2 years. Any described their experience entering the industry as challenging. The industry wanted to market them as both a female and a teenager; however, since they had tattoos, they found this to be one of their main challenges entering the industry. Any noted:

> I'm very petite, I'm 4'11", and I am under 90lbs. They wanna throw me into a teen category all the time. It's kind of hard to do that when my nipples are shaped like hearts and I've got a big lotus on my chest. Out of like 300 companies, only some of them will shoot girls with tattoos. There are some companies that won't shoot girls that are altered at all.

This sentiment was echoed by other female participants who had tattoos, noting how tattoos acted as barriers to entry into the industry.

Charlotte Sartre, a 23-year-old cis female performer, actress, content creator, and escort who worked in the industry for 3 years at the time of interview, also echoed this sentiment. Charlotte commented that her biggest challenge in trying to become established within the industry was that she was heavily tattooed. She found work in more "alternative" pornography, as opposed to mainstream pornography. However, the fact that Charlotte's tattoos caused her to become a part of alternative pornography serves to reinforce the narrative that her body is incongruent with the types of bodies they are

trying to portray through mainstream pornography. Charlotte's body was better suited for the marginal spaces of pornography.

It is important to note that female bodies, in particular, must adhere more strictly to purity constructions of beauty, attractiveness, and desirability. As a result of living within a patriarchal society, women's bodies are subject to very different hegemonic constructions of beauty, desirability, and attractiveness than male bodies. Women oftentimes gain their social capital through their perceived desirability. However, the importance of being able to "look a certain way" was not lost on male participants. Male performers are still expected to uphold constructions of attractiveness and desirability, and as a result, are also cast in mainstream pornography based on their ability to uphold those ideologies. A gender fluid 39-year-old performer, producer, and content creator, Lance Hart, had been in the industry for 10 years when I interviewed them. Lance commented, "You have to have a look that people will want to hire. And you have to be realistic about that."

Participants who encountered youthfulness and purity as a barrier to entry noted that those who were in a position of power within the pornography industry were individuals who themselves embodied and upheld hegemonic ideologies of race, gender, class, and sexuality. "A lot of porn is made for the cis-gendered, male, white viewer that's over 50, so they are always hesitant to bring in something that is unique in a different aspect," explained Any.

Several participants mentioned their awareness of the role of pornography in the maintenance of hegemonic boundaries even prior to their entry. Correspondingly,

participants mentioned how they expected their experience in pornography to be reflective of heteronormative constructions of sex, gender, race, and sexuality. Mia Little, a 28-year-old genderqueer Filipinx performer, content creator, and webcamer had been in the industry for almost 6 years. Mia commented that they expected the maintenance and replication of hegemonic ideals within the industry. They provided this overview of their expectations going into the industry:

> …it was an industry built by cis-het white men to fulfill their visions and expectations of what sexuality is. And I knew too that like, expectations-wise, that in this industry ageism is a thing, racism is a thing, homophobia and transphobia exist as well. And I knew that going in.

This sentiment was echoed by several other performers who noted the ideals of "cis-het white men" were not only expectations they had about the industry but were ultimately very much a part of the casting, scripting and directing mainstream pornography. Charlotte Sartre noted that "most people buying porn are straight, heteronormative dudes, so you kind of have to fit into that little box." Since the members of the pornography industry who are in positions of power are recognized as being cisgender, heteronormative, straight males, these are also the individuals that are working to have the pornography industry reinforce and uphold hegemonic ideologies of gender, race, class, and sexuality. As a result, these individuals sought to cast bodies that are consistent with their understandings of desirability, attractiveness, and beauty, which caused the casting of mainstream pornography to further uphold those ideologies.

Tensions and contradictions of power: interracial scenes and bodies of color

Aside from identifying and casting bodies that align with hegemonic beauty ideals, mainstream pornography further reinforced racial inequities through the way in which bodies of color were cast, scripted, and subsequently paid within the pornography industry. While performers were encouraged by industry expectations to exercise agency surrounding their body and labor choices, existing systems of privilege encouraged performers to reinforce and maintain hegemonic racialized gender relations within mainstream pornography. Subsequently, these contradictions of performer agency and power arose in the navigation of interracial scenes, as well as the way in which systemic pay inequalities serve to reinforce racial inequities.

Participants experienced simultaneous ability and lack of performer agency to control their own bodies and their relationship to pay. Several performers stated that pornography promoted agency and empowerment over one's own body, since the performer is seen as being in control of how they will use their body in regards to their labor and pay. Several participants echoed that as a performer in the pornography industry, you have the liberty "to choose who you will and won't work with," which is one of the ways in which the knowledge of pornography being a job that "is flexible and you have a lot of liberties" came into existence. Arielle Aquinas, a 30-year-old, genderqueer, pansexual content creator and performer, who has been in the industry for 9 years, explained the way in which performer agency is promoted within the industry:

You choose your boundaries, you choose what you do, you choose who

you do it with. You know, you can sometimes negotiate how much you do
it for. It's definitely not something you'll find at other jobs.

As stated by Arielle and echoed by other participants, performers are given the liberty to decide who they will and won't work with, which further allowed the performers to feel empowered. Due to the intimate nature of the pornography industry, several performers noted that this power is critical for full agency over their physical body in respect to their labor. Charlotte described the way in which the systems of power and privilege can sometimes be actually be used as a means to reinforce hegemonic constructions, boundaries and inequities:

I think everybody is entitled, to you know, work with who they are
comfortable with and say no to things that make them uncomfortable, but
to the point that it's like, you are working around the fact that you are
racist or homophobic or transphobic, I don't think that's right.

This system of power that is meant to provide agency and liberty to the individual performer, exists as a space in which hegemonic constructions of race, gender, and sexuality were are able to be reinforced. When asked about the way in which ideas surrounding race, gender and sexuality are constructed within the pornography industry, several participants described the navigation, meaning, and systems of power and privilege that surround "interracial scenes." Interracial scenes are understood as scenes in which typically a white, female performer will work with a male of color, typically a black male. These scenes are then labeled and categorized as being interracial scenes, or 'IR' as used by participants. Participant narratives outlined well-established industry practices that re-inscribed (un)acceptable racialized sexualities and their relative monetary value. Several participants noted when white women performers are asked to

perform with men of color for the first time, these interracial scenes were seen as "a big deal", which perpetuates the narrative that "interracial" pairings of bodies is something that is taboo and out of line with hegemonic ideologies of race and sex. Participants noted that acceptance of interracial casting was not expected by all performers, once again referencing how performers can choose who they work with and as a result, performers have the liberty to not accept these jobs "at all"; which is where the ability for performers to "choose who they work with" can end up reinforcing racist scripts. The white female performers who did participate in these interracial scenes were paid a bonus for their participation where their black male co-star received their usual pay rate. This discrepancy in pay when it comes to interracial scenes helped to highlight the critical power structures of race and gender that are involved in the production of pornography.

The white female performer being paid a bonus served to re-inscribe hegemonic ideologies and narratives surrounding race, gender and sexuality, particularly perpetuating narratives surrounding pure, white feminine sexuality against "lesser" black, masculine sexuality, a narrative that has been perpetuated since slavery. The structural racism that shaped pay for interracial scenes also highlighted the tension between individual agency and participation in reproducing inequality. While the industry aimed to promote individual bodily agency among performers, it simultaneously acted as a mechanism of the replication of racial inequities. Several performers commented on how the apparent pay imbalance in regards to interracial scenes was "unfair," as well as commenting that this pay imbalance was something that would not be likely found in other areas of employment. They felt that this obvious discrepancy in pay between the

two performers is unique to the production of pornography and the construction of the

interracial scene. Charlotte Sartre expands:

> I always say if you worked at McDonald's and you got your schedule and
> you're like "Oh I'm working with this dude, now I don't work with black
> people, put me on another schedule." Or like, "instead of 8 dollars per
> hour I need 10 dollars per hour cause we are working together." Like that
> wouldn't be fair at all. So why is it fair in porn?

It can be inferred from these industry expectations, and intersectional analysis of casting,

that simply by participating in the scene, men of color are rewarded by their participation

and their ability to have sexual relations with a white woman. At the same time, it can be

inferred that interracial scenes are understood as having required a sacrifice on the part of

the white woman, which ultimately required and justified more compensation. This pay

inequality allowed mainstream pornography to reinforce narratives surrounding which

types of bodies are allowed to "go together", causing the construction of the interracial

scene to reinforce the idea that this is not a normal or typical pairing of bodies. The fact

that the female performer receives a bonus is one of the ways that the mainstream

pornography industry replicated forms of knowledge at the hegemonic intersections of

race, gender and sexuality.

Racialized and gendered inequalities in pay were not limited to the construction

and navigation of interracial scenes, they also existed between white and black female

performers seeking work within mainstream pornography. Any, a Caucasian dominatrix

and performer had taken notice of the discrepancies between her pay rate and the pay rate

of her roommate, who was a woman of color performer:

My roommate is black and it's always a bitch and a half to get her foot in the door. Normally what you would get offered for your first anal scene something like $1600 to $2000 or something like that. The same exact company went and offered her $1200, so it's very- a $400 difference for something that is her first scene- that's just incredible to see that and hear that.

Any's quote depicted a "taboo" sex act which required more compensation for the female performer to do - the act of anal sex. As described by Any, female performers are expected to receive a higher pay for having participated in this type of scene. However, this high price of the taboo act of anal sex is itself reduced when paired with a black body, as racial inequities within larger society position blackness as already impure. As a result of the possession of a black body, the act of doing this taboo scene therefore requires less compensation for that particular body.

However, this gendered and racialized pay inequity is not something that is solely limited to the world of pornography. In fact Any's quote is directly reflective of a society that already has gendered and racialized pay structures. Data released by the U.S. Census Bureau indicated that in 2018, black women were paid 61 cents for every dollar paid to white men, whereas white women receive 77 cents for every dollar paid to white men (National Partnership for Women and Families 2018). Therefore, Any's quote is simply reflective of the ways in which the pornography industry actively sought to reinforce and uphold current systems of power and oppression.

The existing systems of power, knowledge, and oppression surrounding constructions of race and gender that currently influence society are undoubtedly replicated and reinforced through the construction of mainstream pornography. As

highlighted by participants, the contradiction that exists between a performer's agency and the liberty to re-inscribe hegemonic constructions caused the navigation of interracial scenes to be a complicated one. However, the pay inequities that result from interracial scenes, as well as exist in the intersection of race and gender within the industry, simply upholds hegemonic boundaries and constructions of race, gender, labor and sexuality. Correspondingly, participant narratives highlight how mainstream pornography further perpetuates these constructions through the way in which bodies of color are cast, scripted, and subsequently paid within the pornography industry.

"No one cares if it's two girls": men, homophobia, and blacklisting

Another way that pornography worked to perpetuate hegemonic ideologies regarding sex, gender and sexuality are through the discourse and production of gay pornography. In this instance, the term "gay" is almost exclusively used to describe scenes that involve only male performers. "Gay like being male gay porn because no one cares if it's two girls," explained Any. While scenes that involve only female performers will be labeled as "lesbian" scenes, participants noted how those scenes were not regarded as being separate from mainstream pornography in the way in which male "gay" scenes were. Several participants noted a clear separation between the "gay side" of pornography and the mainstream side, describing how male performers who do gay pornography are limited in their ability to participate in the mainstream world, and are subjected to homophobia from fellow industry members. "That's a line that's drawn in the sand, like do not cross this line," Lance Hart states in regard to the separation that exists between the two.

This separation between mainstream pornography and gay pornography serves to reinforce hegemonic straight male sexuality. The notion that "no one cares if it's two girls" also served as a means of reinforcing these ideologies, because the idea of two women being physically intimate is not perceived as being a direct threat to masculinity: it is actually seen as a form of entertainment that in fact reaffirmed one's masculinity through finding the act to be sexually arousing. Two men being physically intimate is a direct threat to hegemonic masculinity: gay sex contradicts definitions of the "real man." This separation of gay male pornography only served to reinforce this type of narrative, while also making it clear that this type of sexuality is not something that belongs within the mainstream world.

In addition to having the category of gay male pornography be separate, male performers who did these scenes were also ostracized from production companies within the industry. As mentioned by participants, there are only a handful of male crossover performers in the West Coast pornography industry due to the ostracization and stigmatization that these types of performers face. A crossover performer is a performer who will work or perform with straight, gay, and Trans performers; they "crossover" from the world of straight pornography and gay pornography.

Producer, performer and content creator Lance Hart was one of the few prominent cross-over male performers in the West Coast pornography industry and was able to speak on the ways in which being a crossover performer has impacted his experience. He explained how because he is a crossover performer that he is currently blacklisted from several pornography companies: he will never be able to work with certain companies or

any of their members. His wife, Charlotte, is also subsequently blacklisted from those companies as a result of her relationship with him. Lance Hart explains:

> I pretty much can't work for any of the big, big straight production
> companies because I have done so much work, I'm on the blacklist. Like
> no, you can't work with us, because you've done so much gay stuff, you
> could give us AIDs.

D. Arclyte, a 42-year-old sexually fluid cis male performer and director, is also one of the few prominent crossover performers in the West Coast pornography industry. D. Arclyte's experience as a crossover performer in the West Coast pornography industry mirrored Lance's in terms of being blacklisted and ostracized from the majority of the mainstream world. D. Arclyte describes himself as not identifying with any single sexuality and felt this quality would help him succeed in the pornography industry as he could do work with all types of performers. However, once he became a crossover performer, he was surprised to find that this, in fact, limited the number of companies that he was allowed to shoot with. D. Arclyte explains:

> What I didn't expect was for it to limit my shoots on the straight side. I
> mean like there are agents of some of these pornstars and directors that
> just will not - and are not - comfortable working with males who have
> worked on gay shoots, or are even having gay sex outside of work.

Both Lance Hart and D. Arclyte expressed that they felt that this blacklisting from mainstream pornography companies was something that was veiled under the concern of the spread of HIV/AIDs. "There is still a lot of stigma surrounding gay sex and the spread of HIV" D. Arclyte explained. However, many participants, Lance Hart, and D. Arclyte included, also explained how all members of the industry must complete at 14-day STD test, regardless of whether or not they are engaging in gay pornography. Historically,

misinformation, exclusion, and ostracization of individuals based on the fear of AIDs has been an inherently homophobic practice and used to uphold hegemonic ideologies.

‘Fear of AIDs” rhetoric has always been used as a means to justify the exclusion of gay males from public spaces in order to reaffirm how homosexuality is an unacceptable form of masculinity. The framing of the fear of HIV/AIDs as a "health concern" is an excuse that supports the perseverance of homophobia. "No one is going to say, 'No, it's because you are gay.' They are going to say, 'No, it's because I want to be safe,'" Lance states. Utilizing 'fear of AID's rhetoric' justifies the exclusion of male gay pornography from the world of mainstream pornography, while serving to uphold hegemonic barriers surrounding sexuality and gender. "We all take the same test. Do you not believe in the test, you know? It's just fear, it's like fear of spiders - you can't talk someone out of it. They just have it," Lance continues. Perpetuating this type of knowledge in spite of all performing industry members being tested under the same protocols only serves to uphold homophobic forms of knowledge that exist within the larger society.

Mainstream pornography works to uphold fixed hegemonic ideologies surrounding sexuality and gender through separating male gay pornography from the rest of mainstream pornography and the act of blacklisting crossover performers based on fear of contracting AIDs in spite of all performers taking the same test. The practice of blacklisting performers also in effect "punishes" the crossover performers, much in the same way the separation of gay male pornography from mainstream pornography does, indicating to other industry members that being a crossover performer is something that

is not desirable in this marketplace. Additionally, the blacklisting of crossover performers helps to maintain the larger divide between mainstream and gay pornography, while reproducing the hegemonic constructions of knowledge that surround our notions of masculinity and homosexuality.

Cataloging porn: constraints of industry categories

In our modern technological society, information or artifact repositories are faced with the challenge of organizing the content they feature. Utilizing systems of organization and identification, such as categories, allows for ease of filing new additions to a given collection, as well as provide "road maps" for user identification or retrieval. Typically, categories for organization are often informed by systems of power that identify certain categories as being the most relevant or pertinent to a specific society. Pornography websites act as information repositories that also rely on using categories as a system of identification. In order to have videos organized for searches, as well as marketed, pornography videos need to be able to fall into pre-fixed categories. The categories that are utilized on pornography websites are also influenced by the same systems of power and knowledge that inform our ideas regarding gender, sex, and sexuality. As a result, the required placement of videos into categories on pornography sites serves to uphold hegemonic boundaries and make it more difficult to subvert them. According to Pornhub data, the most popular categories on their site for 2018 included categories such as "lesbian", "MILF", "Japanese", "teen", "Asian" and "ebony" (Review 2018). These categories re-inscribe hegemonic conceptions of gender, race, and sexuality in terms of clearly defining these as desirable and acceptable modes of expression.

Performers were also organized into categories in order to determine what type of content that individual will be creating. Nina Hartley, a 60-year-old cis female, pansexual performer, activist and educator who had been in the industry for 35 years at the time of interview, described the way in which individual performers undergo the same process of categorization.

> Well, now age and maturity are now exploitable categories. In pornography everything is really commodified- the size of the breasts, the size of the genitals, the size of the buttocks, the color of the hair, the color of the skin, what category you are- are you a barely legal or a twink? Are you a MILF? Are you a DILF?

Participants described the experience of being "typecast." Any said that, due to her petite stature, she is constantly placed in the "teen category." Due to Nina's age (60), she was always placed in the "MILF" category. MILF refers to "mother I'd like to fuck." While MILF is a popular pornography category, it is also a category that reinforces the way in which women are perceived as "aging out of" desirability and beauty. The use of the word "mother" indicates that when women do age out of being desirable, their primary societal status and function is the role of mother. MILF scenes typically portray a woman who is considered to be "older" and a younger man who is ultimately seduced by the MILF. To be seen as attractive and desirable as an "older woman" in American society is something that is not typically seen as being acceptable unless that woman is able to be placed within the designated category of MILF.

The adherence to these prefixed categories was pretty strict, and limited performer agency in choosing the content they produce, with whom they worked, and the type of content that defined their careers within the industry. Additionally, the prefixed categories

also limited the agency of content creators and directors. In order to be able to be navigated by users, websites that were self-created and run still needed to be able to have pre-fixed categories on their pages. Content creator, producer, and director Lance Hart described the need to use categories on his own website and the difficulty in subverting them:

> There's a category, categorical, I don't know if I'm saying this right- but everything is split into categories. So if, I just say I want to shoot my friend who goes by 'they', like doesn't identify as this or that, we're not at a point yet where I can just have a "they" category on my models' page, where someone can search that.

Lance explained that although he wishes to be able to engage in resistance to these pre-fixed categories, he notes that diverting from them could potentially cause users to no longer use his site or feel as though it cannot be navigated easily. In this way, the need to adhere to the prefixed categories acts as a way to ensure that both the performers and directors of pornography remain within the hegemonic boundaries of society.

The mainstream world of pornography not only acts as a mirror to our current societal order, but it also seeks to replicate and reinforce it. Hegemonic forms of knowledge regarding constructs such as race, gender, and sexuality in turn directly impact the type of performers that work in the industry, the type of content that is produced, as well as how that content is later organized on a pornography site. As a result, mainstream pornography reaffirmed these hegemonic forms of knowledge through its casting, directing, financial, and organizational structures.

Boundary Resistance and Subversion

Although pornography does act as a site through which racism, sexism, and homophobia are conveyed and reinforced, it simultaneously has the potential for resistance and subversion of those very same boundaries. Through the creation of alternative community and visual texts that "expand our definitions of pleasure rather than circumscribing them," participation in the pornography industry allowed participants to actively engage in resistance and subversion (Hartley 2013:235). While many performers stated that they were not surprised to encounter sexism, racism, and homophobia in the industry, they also emphasized the potential of pornography for disruption, subversion, and transformation of sex, gender, and sexuality as currently understood and portrayed.

Transformative community creation: on and off set

One of the ways in which participants felt that their ability to participate in the pornography industry allowed them to engage in resistance is through the ability to engage in community creation, both on pornography sets and in the informal spaces created by participation in the industry. Many participants commented on the ways in which their participation in pornography allowed them to become a part of a more accepting community through introducing them to a wide range of people that they would not have had the opportunity to know otherwise, as well as introduced them to spaces in which "awkward conversations" were able to occur. Participants noted how through pornography, they were able to engage in conversations surrounding various sensitive,

taboo, or questionable topics they never would have been able to otherwise, and allowed them to speak and learn about many issues surrounding gender, identity, boundaries, consent, and more. "Being in porn kind of like opens your spectrum of people to speak with. I love the fact that you can create a really open-minded community through doing porn," Any described.

By participating in pornography, participants were introduced to spaces such as film sets, trade shows, and other off set spaces where performers were able to actively engage in creating a community with those that were around them in the industry. The ability to be a part of this community allowed performers the opportunity to enter a space in which conversations they would have never previously been a part of took place. These informal social spaces empowered individuals to interrogate, resist, and subvert ideas about these topics, as well as construct new forms of knowledge and meaning related to gender, sex, sexuality, identity and more. The ability to be a part of a space that encouraged "awkward conversations" allowed many participants the opportunity to create new language and meanings in relation to how they described themselves, their identity, their sexuality and more.

Performer Mia Little described informal spaces that encouraged sometimes awkward, but important, discussions about healthy sexualities, boundaries, and relationships and led to the creation of new forms of meaning around these topics. With the support of industry friends, as well as the ability to engage in these exchanges, they were able to safely and successfully leave an abusive relationship. Mia Little explained:

 I was exposed to so many different models of healthy, respectful, reciprocal relationships. I was introduced to so many new ways of discussing boundaries and communicating consent, and conceptualizing that, as well as like having these new sexual experiences with my own body where I can like, reclaim sensations that were once very uncomfortable because of like abusive context outside of the industry in my personal life.

As described by Mia, the opportunity to participate in the transformative community creation of pornography allowed them to subvert prefixed understanding they held of their own body and the way in which they wanted to engage with their body. They were also able to find healing through the opportunity to reclaim experiences that had been tarnished by previous encounters. Through their participation in this community, Mia Little was able to create new forms for themselves that were cultivated through their participation in the industry.

Many other participants echoed this ability to create new forms of knowledge through participation in informal spaces. Gia Paige, 28-year-old bisexual, cis female, Caucasian, content creator, and performer had been in the industry for four years at the time of our interview. Gia Paige explained their experience this way:

I got into this industry and I got a better understanding of who I was sexually, and on top of that, there were misconceptions that I had about gender and gender roles and people. But the more I worked around these people, the more I realized that every thought I had was completely wrong. And I always like to say, porn has given me the opportunity to explore that not only sexually but mentally.

This sentiment of being able to create new forms of knowledge surrounding gender, sex and sexuality were also echoed by other participants.

Whitney Wright, a 26-year-old bisexual performer of 3 years commented on the changes they experienced. Whitney said that being in porn created new ways of thinking that were resistive of the types of thinking she had previously been exposed to:

> It definitely opened my eyes a lot more, like when I came out here and started doing all of this. You don't really deal with things a lot when you are just like in your bubble or working in your Oklahoma club at night, where the people with the same ideologies are coming and talking to you.

Not only does the participation in the pornography industry community allow for participants to create new forms of knowledge for themselves, but it also allows participants to create and discover new forms of language to describe themselves, their experiences, and their gender identity. Prior to their participation in the pornography community, Mia Little described how they failed to find language that they felt was able to encapsulate their identity. However, through participating in the communities created through pornography, they were able to question hegemonic ideologies, resist them and ultimately construct new forms of language and meaning for themselves. Little expanded:

> Looking and examining gender as constructs and like how they are upheld and perpetuated by social behavior, by many other factors outside of myself. And so, I was really able to really find language to describe my own gender, which is genderqueer. And to know that when I think of myself, I think of myself as definitely feminine and definitely masculine, like a blend of the two, that was really important.

One of the most significant spaces for "awkward conversations" is the set environment in which pornography films are produced. Set environments are critical in their ability to help foster these types of discussions, which in turns, helps to foster an environment in which the content that is produced has the potential to engage in

resistance. Participants recognized that their ability to be a part of productions that engaged in subversion to hegemonic constructions greatly lied in the organization and construction of the set environment. Through the creation of a set environment that allows for community building and transformative communication, it inevitably created a space in which resistive and subversive visual texts could, and were, created.

Mia Little mentioned a recent production they were able to work on with another Genderqueer performer, which was part of a larger on-set experience that allowed them to engage in resistance. Little described the way in which the set environment itself greatly encouraged conversations between the director and performers regarding how they felt about their portrayals and what they hoped to be able to accomplish during the scene. This open and comfortable set environment allowed open communication between the directors and the performers, which ultimately allowed them to create a scene in which the performers were able to engage in active resistance and subversion of hegemonic ideas of gender. Little expanded:

> And I think it really starts with having like a set environment that is
> open to challenging traditional understandings of sex gender and
> sexuality. Like the more room and opportunity that you have to
> overtly talk about these things and feel safe and comfortable and not
> threatened, that's pretty amazing.

As Mia Little pointed out, that environment is created in many subtle ways including something as simple as the intake form. Contrary to standard intake forms where performers were asked to select their identity from a prefixed list of gendered categories, Little described intake forms that deliberately asked performers how they wanted to be identified in regards to their gender. Little also described the way in which

one director encouraged the performers to talk to each other about their gender identity,

their physical and sexual boundaries, as well the way in which they wished to be

presented throughout the film.

These spaces, both on and offset, that were created through participation in the

pornography industry allowed individuals the opportunity to work with, be exposed to,

and speak with diverse groups of people who embraced their differences. The ability to

create a new form of community that contained individuals of various sexual, gender,

racial and class backgrounds created an environment that allows for "awkward

conversations" to take place that participants would not have been able to participate in

otherwise. Through participating in these types of social exchanges, performers were then

able to actively engage in the construction of new forms of knowledge surrounding

gender, sex, and sexuality that actively resisted and subverted hegemonic constructions of

these topics. Additionally, the type of set environment that was established within

pornography, in turn, allowed for the creation of productions that actively engaged in

resistance to hegemonic boundaries through subverting the narratives and tropes that

frequent mainstream pornography productions.

Producing subversive film narratives: production and content creation

Participants described opportunities for resistance through the creation of new

types of film narratives and visual texts, as well as the opportunity to become a "content

creator." The ability to write and direct pornography allows performers the opportunity to

create performances that actively challenge hegemonic boundaries and ideologies about

acceptable forms of gender performativity and sexuality. Correspondingly, several

participants commented on a recent production that they had worked on that they felt had allowed them to actively challenge hegemonic conceptions of gender, sex, and sexuality. In addition, many participants noted that it was a particularly memorable experience for them because it had been so vastly unique from the typical content they created or had come to expect to be creating. Part of the reason for this being a unique experience was participants mentioned how those scenes arose out of opportunities to work with production companies that specifically sought to use pornography as a means to engage in resistance.

Participants noted several West Coast production companies that created subversive content. "Unless the company is directly involved in looking at sex and gender from a different point of view, it's going to be pretty heteronormative" explained Nina Hartley. Charlotte Sartre described a recent subversive scene in which she had participated: "It was a boy-girl anal scene, but the guy is dressed in drag, like wearing a corset and a skirt and makeup, I'm the one that's having sex with him, and it was really cool gender-fuckery." Charlotte describes a scene that was written to subvert hegemonic constructions of male and female roles during sexual acts, by having Charlotte being "the one that's having sex with him". The role-reversal subverts the traditionally held notions of what is acceptable sexual roles for males and females. Additionally, the choice to have the male actor dressed in traditionally feminine clothing also subverts traditional conceptions of acceptable gender performativity, and what "men" are typically allowed to look like.

Creating visual texts that are transformative, resistive and subversive can also be something as simple as pairing performers of the same age group together. Sixty-year-old performer Nina Hartley described a recent production she had worked on where she was able to perform with someone who was her own age. "She might even be a year older than me," stated Hartley. Hartley explained that because of her age, the typical mainstream trope that she is expected to perform in is the older, "cougar" who seduces a young, teenage male. Simply being able to create a scene with someone who is close to her age allowed Hartley to subvert tropes at the intersections of ageism and sexism. In American society, women are seen as "aging out" of being desirable, sexual beings. As a result, older women have a narrow set of sexual scripts including the "MILF" category. Producing a scene with two older women challenges hegemonic narratives that desexualize them. However, this achievement did not come easily. Hartley noted that the company owner had to be "convinced" to allow the scene to be produced. Hartley explains:

> The company owner had to be talked into (it) by the director: the director said "it's going to be great, it's going to be great!" And the owner said, "I don't know, do people really wanna see that?" And the answer is "Yes. Yes they do." They want to see people their own age having sex with people their own age.

While participants were careful to note that there were only a few production companies or a few productions of this manner that they had been able to work on, they still recognized the potential that pornography as an industry has to engage in active forms of resistance. Participants also noted that as more and more content of this nature is created, the subversive power of pornography will come to be more realized and actively

practiced within the industry. "The shift is already there, it's already happening, we are already slowly taking over" Arielle Aquinas comments.

Participants noted that aside from working on these types of productions, that another way to engage in resistance is through becoming a content creator. Being a content creator allows performers the liberty to create the type of content that they want. By being a content creator, performers have the liberty to write, direct, and edit their own content. Through engaging in content creation, performers can work with who they want, and market their work how they want, etc. without having to adhere to the restrictions of a larger pornography production company or website. Typically individuals who are content creators will create their own websites or pages to showcase this content. "There's the mainstream porn, and then there is everything that you make and do on your own, as a content creator" Any explained. Participants noted that in order to be a successful content creator, they must have an already-established fan base in the industry. Nonetheless, the ability to be a content creator allowed participants complete agency in the ability to choose exactly the type of content they produced and marketed.

Sometimes performers became content creators on their own by creating and managing their own websites, as well as filming and producing their own forms of content. A few participants had been given the opportunity to create content within a designated production company space. In these instances, performers were able to have full control over the kind of visual texts that were being produced, and as a result, were able to engage in various forms of resistance. Gia Paige describes one such instance:

> I was allowed to write my own script for it, so it was all my own words,
> my own story, what I wanted to do, the people I wanted in it, the lighting,
> the set- the whole thing. I felt I really could do anything I wanted. I felt I
> could be as open and comfortable as I wanted to be.

Through the opportunity to be a content creator within a production space, Gia Paige acknowledged the ways in which the agency that she was given in turn allowed her to create content that could challenge the mainstream content. The agency afforded by being able to engage in content creation was something that was echoed by several participants. Mia Little described the way in which being a content creator allows them to create subversive visual texts and narratives through being able to control exactly what the content looks like.

> When I perform, it's more about this like social, physical and emotional
> exchange that I am documenting. And again, when I am making my own
> content, I can choose what gets centered and what not.

The opportunity to be a content creator, both within a production setting and self-produced, allows members of the pornography industry to create new forms of visual texts that actively challenge hegemonic boundaries or tropes that are present within the world of mainstream pornography. Participants explained how the ability to be a content creator allows them to find agency and empowerment in consciously creating work that is resistant and subversive. Respectively, participants recognized how being a content creator helps to allow pornography to become a medium through which this form of resistance is able to take place.

Fifty shades of resistance: the kink/BDSM community

In addition to the set environment and the type of films that are produced within the industry, several participants noted the subversive potential of "other side" of the pornography industry. Participants veered away from mainstream pornography through their participation in the Kink/BDSM community. The word "kink" is used to describe unconventional sexual practices or preferences that go against "normal" sexual boundaries. A popular kink is BDSM which stands for "bondage, discipline/domination, sadism, and masochism." It is a term frequently used to encompass a "variety of sexual activities that range from role-playing, dominance and submission, restraints and a variety of other sexual behaviors" (Ullmann 2015:1).

The Kink and BDSM community allows performers to engage in both transformative community creation, as well as the creation of subversive film narratives. Participants said that being a part of the Kink/BDSM community was one form of resistance for them. The Kink/BDSM community created far more overt opportunities for being able to engage in transformative community creation, as well as partake in more "awkward conversations". For example, Mia Little said that the BDSM/Kink community allowed them to be exposed to "rich, real-life education beyond the binary." Little expanded:

> What I didn't realize is that, as I started performing more BDSM stuff, is that there were far less instances of racism, and homophobia and transphobia and sexism because there were more overt conversations about like consent and boundaries and like how do we address your parts or your identity.

Since Mia Little was a part of the BDSM community, they were able to explore and

portray their personal gender identity. Since the type of content that is being produced

within Kink/BDSM is regarded as more "extreme," participants said that great care is

taken in communicating with everyone on set regarding boundaries, identity, and levels

of comfort. Essentially, the Kink/BDSM community acts as an extension amplifier of the

transformative community and awkward conversations that are found in some pockets of

mainstream pornography. Rena, a Caucasian, cis female 24-year-old performer, content

creator, and producer who had been in the industry for three years, described the overt

conversations that take place regarding consent and boundaries:

> On Kink and BDSM sets they do this- where you have to sign off on
> exactly what you are okay with you and your co-talent. Like me and my
> co-talents, we talk about this stuff beforehand but a lot of people don't.

This process of having these types of exchanges promotes an environment in

which resistance, subversion, and transformation take place. Just the structure in which

sexual conversation, negotiation, and consent are expected is transformative in itself. This

practice of having overt conversations regarding consent, boundaries, and identity served

to impact the expectations several participants formed regarding the way in which they

should be treated and respected within the industry. Charlotte Sartre described the way in

which her experience with Kink/BDSM production sets impacted her perception of the

way in which all pornography sets should operate:

> They really set the standards for ways I think a company should treat the
> models, like always being very open with communication and having clear
> boundaries before and during the shoot...So then anytime I was with a
> company that was a little less clear about boundaries and limits or didn't

> treat the models to the utmost, highest levels of respect, I was able to stand
> my ground better.

The ability to be a part of the Kink/BDSM community also offers performers the

opportunity to be a part of subversive film sets, film productions, and other social spaces.

Visual content that is created through the Kink/BDSM community is largely subversive

and resistive in comparison to the type of content that is normally created through

mainstream pornography. Additionally, the way in which the set environment of

Kink/BDSM communities are created and understood helps to bolster film production

sets where subversive film narratives and visual content can be created. As a result,

Kink/BDSM visual content showcases individuals with sexual interests, desires, and

representations that are not normally given the opportunity to be visually portrayed

through the visual texts of mainstream porn.

Through their participation in the Kink/BDSM community, participants echoed

sentiments of being able to gain forms of knowledge that transformed their perceptions of

the hegemonic boundaries that are put in place in the world of mainstream pornography.

Not only are performers given the ability to work in an area of pornography that actively

seeks to create visual narratives that deviate from the mainstream, but they are also able

to take the knowledge they gain through the Kink/BDSM community to be able to engage

in resistance in other parts of the pornography industry as well. The participation in the

Kink/BDSM community allows performers to engage in transformative community

creation and the production of subversive film narratives which ultimately allows

performers to challenge and create new forms of knowledge for themselves.

Pornography as a medium provides those who participate in its opportunities to engage in forms of resistance and subversion to pre-fixed hegemonic ideas surrounding gender, representation, identity and more. Through being able to create new forms of community, engage in awkward conversations, create subversive film narratives and be a part of the Kink/BDSM community, participants describe the ways in which their participation within the pornography industry allows them to find the agency and empowerment necessary to engage in resistance to hegemonic boundaries.

"I Work in Production": Self Discipline in Disclosing Status

In his work, Foucault discussed the creation and dissemination of pornography (Foucault 1978). His work described how the consumption of pornographic material leads to a society of consumers who are self-regulated and self-disciplined individuals; they are taught when, where and what are the acceptable modes of expressing their sexuality, as well as what the unacceptable modes of these expressions are. While the consumption of pornography can lead to the internalization of the power structures present in pornography and thus result in an individual who self-regulates, Foucault's analysis failed to account for the ways in which the members who participate in the creation of pornography are forced to become self-regulating and self-disciplined members of society as well. Pornography is usually seen as an undesirable and unacceptable form of employment. As a result, those working within the industry become self-disciplined and self-regulating, ultimately "concealing" their work/labor from the rest of the world. Participant engaged in measured self-discipline of concealment and

disclosure. They carefully decided to whom they disclosed, as well as the language that

they used to describe their professional work.

Several participants described the way that they navigated their disclosure as a

"process." They have to "feel out" others to gauge their likely reaction to their

profession within the adult industry. Mia Little said: "I don't know if a friend of a friend

is going to act weird when I talk about my work until they do, so I have to be mindful of

that." Aside from having to "feel out" an individual to determine the way in which they

would react to their disclosure, several participants described their disclosure as a

"process" through which they have to slowly introduce the idea that they work in the

adult industry, prior to fully disclosing their status as a performer. Producer and

performer Rena described the process that she engaged in when disclosing her status:

> Usually what I lead into is I say I work in production, and then it becomes
> a conversation. So I say I work in production, and that I work in LA and
> then people go "oh, what kind of production do you do?" and I go well it's
> not usually the kind of production we talk about in polite society, it's
> mostly adult. So it's like a gradual process. Okay I do production, I do
> adult production- I lead with that I direct and do other things, and then
> performing is the last thing that I mention.

Participants chose their language carefully. Several participants noted that they

have to be conscious and selective in the words that they used to describe their work. A

few mentioned that part of the way they navigate their language choice is based on the

age of the person with whom they are talking. If they are talking to older individuals, they

are more likely to use terms they deem to be "appropriate", such as "adult entertainment

professional" or "adult entertainment performer". When speaking with someone who is

younger, they feel more comfortable using more colloquial terms such as "porn

performer" or "pornstar." They used neutral language such as "sex worker" as a way to both normalize their labor and navigate any potential stigmatization.

Participants noted that the use of the word "porn" is weighted with stigmatization, and as a result, they engaged in the discretion of when and where they use that particular word. Any elaborated, "I feel like if I need to keep the respect of some people, I will use 'adult' instead of 'porn.'" Many participants felt that the word choice and language selection was a critical piece of the disclosure process, as the language that they used to describe their work influenced the ways in which others also understood their work. "I think I even used the term 'marital aids' to my mom once," quipped Rena. Mia Little explained the way in which performers are conscious of the impact that language selection has on their disclosure process:

> It really depends because there is so much language describing the same thing, right? Like I could say I'm a sex worker, I could say I'm a pornstar, I could say I'm a pornographer, I could say I'm a porn performer, so it really depends on the setting.

Some performers described attempts they made to resist the pressure to be self-regulating in the selection of language they use to describe their work. They made deliberate choices in their word selection in an attempt to disrupt the notions of what is acceptable language. Several participants noted how when they are with close acquaintances, they described themselves as being "whores" or "sluts" to deliberately use language that subverted the ideas of sexual respectability. However, participants noted that even when they actively engaged in resistance to being a self-regulating and disciplined individual, others were quick to step in and remind them otherwise. Charlotte

comments on how she finds empowerment within her ability to reclaim and use the word

"whore" as a self-descriptor of her employment. However, even when using this word

with close friends, they police her use of language. She comments on how they attempt to

guide her to a more appropriate language in order to help her disclose her role within the

industry and remind her of her need to be a self-regulating individual:

> I call myself a whore because I am proud of that word. I think it's really cool that sex workers and people who get paid to do adult services can reclaim that and get empowered by it. And I told that to my friend and she's like "oh I wouldn't say you're a whore, I would say you are an 'adult entertainment professional'" like that's very nice but also like whore and porn and stuff like that, it's not a bad word.
> Charlotte's experience highlighted the importance of language selection in the

disclosure process, as well as the way in which the disclosure process itself allowed for

larger conversations to be held. Several participants expressed the way in which engaging

in the disclosure process afforded them the opportunity to continue the theme of

"awkward conversations" and bring it into the real world. As a result, they saw the

opportunity to engage in the disclosure process as one where they could have a

conversation that surrounded their work, stigmatization, and misconceptions. Arielle

described her navigation of the disclosure process as an attempt to normalize her labor:

> If I'm like this is what I do and it's just no big deal, then they are like "yeah it's no big deal." I try to normalize it as much as I can. And what I have found is that my level of comfortability with it, makes other people feel more comfortable about it. I think that the more I normalize it, I think it helps other people normalize it too. It changes their perceptions of what sex workers are and what sex workers do.

The ability to be a self-regulating and self-disciplined member of society is not only

critical for individuals navigating larger social situations but is also critical for their own

safety and wellbeing. While performers found opportunities to utilize their self-

surveillance as a means of engaging in awkward conversations, the majority valued their

ability to self-discipline as an essential mechanism for survival. Several performers noted

how the navigation of disclosure of their status as a member of the industry is critical

because it can open them up to harassment or dangerous situations. Therefore,

performers' ability to be self-regulated and self-disciplined individuals allows them to be

able to safely navigate social situations to discern situations in which disclosure might

not be the safest choice. Mia Little stated how in regards to discussing their status as a

member of the pornography industry, they have to keep their safety in mind since

disclosure of their status has resulted in online and real-life harassment.

> I mean, I always have to navigate safety- that is something that I always
> have to be aware of. Because I have gotten, you know, death threats and
> threats of assault from random people on the internet. And I never know if
> anyone knows what I am or who I am like I could be driving down the
> street and someone will be hollering at me calling me by my stage name,
> I'm just like "oh my goodness" like what is this."

These concerns were also echoed by other performers. Charlotte specifically

noted that when she is in a situation with a male she does not know, such as an Uber

driver, that "I don't want to tell them I work in, like I'm a sex worker, because in the past

that has opened me up to harassment." As a result, Charlotte's past experiences help

inform the ways in which she should self-regulate the disclosure of her status as a

performer, allowing her to better navigate these conversations by considering her safety.

Part of being a self-regulating and self-disciplined individual is being able to determine

when disclosure could ultimately have repercussions, such as putting the participant in a

dangerous situation.

Many participants felt that having to be self-regulating when it comes to disclosing their status as a member of the pornography industry limited their ability to talk about, share and feel pride in the work that they do. Whitney Wright commented on the inner battle she experiences when trying to describe her work to people and the way in which it makes her feel:

> I love what I do, I wouldn't do anything else, I'm pretty much going to do this for as long as I am good at it and can make money, but sometimes when I meet new people that is a friend group that is from outside of porn and they are like "what do you do?", like I battle with it. Because I want- I'm proud of it, but I want to be openly proud, like I want to be like I do adult video or like I work in the adult industry, I make great money, I love it, I am treated amazingly and I don't think I would do anything else. But you can't.

This sentiment of feeling proud and accomplished with their job, but yet still needed to navigate the way in which they discuss their job, was something that was echoed by many participants. Several stated that they could not see themselves choosing another career path and that they "loved" what they did. However, the prevailing systems of power and knowledge that exist within our society still caused participants to have to be self-regulating individuals in regards to the way in which they disclosed their status.

Working within the pornography industry requires individuals to become self-regulating and self-disciplined individuals that must learn to expertly navigate who, when, and where they disclose their status. Being a self-regulating individual requires performers to feel out those they talk to, engage in a process of disclosure, navigate their safety, all while limiting their agency and ability to

discuss their jobs in the same manner that typical members of society are able to. However, the process of disclosure does offer individuals the opportunity to attempt to normalize their labor and challenge the constructions of knowledge surrounding acceptable forms of employment. As reiterated by Arielle: "I am totally glad that I chose this path. I mean it's been rough, and it's still rough, but I don't think that I would want to do anything else."

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION

As illustrated through this research, actor experiences within the West Coast pornography industry reinforce and highlight the way in which oppression and resistance can exist simultaneously within one space. Applying a foucauldian discursive framework influenced by feminist and queer theory, my analysis of this research highlights the ways in which these contradictions manifest and coexist. The West Coast pornography industry reinforced hegemonic constructions of gender, race, and sexuality, while simultaneously providing windows for engaging in resistance and subversion. As described by participant narratives, mainstream pornography upholds hegemonic constructions of gender, race, and sexuality through the casting of actors, categorization of content, and exclusionary practices for male crossover performers. Nevertheless, actor experiences evidenced that working in the West Coast pornography industry provides opportunities for resistance and subversion of gender and sexuality. Still, participants were self-disciplined in navigating their disclosure processes and identities as members of the West Coast pornography industry.

One of the things I have grappled with as I conducted my research is how to balance and make sense of the contradictions that emerged as a result of the theoretical brainwork of analyzing pornography. From Andrea Dworkin and Catherine McKinnon to Chauntelle Tibbals and Mireille Miller-Young, the world of academia provided a dizzying landscape of many twists and turns for someone who is reading, analyzing, and participating in theoretical work surrounding this topic. I found myself spending a lot of

time thinking about sweaty concepts, which feminist scholar Sarah Ahmed defines as "trying to describe something that is difficult, that resists being fully comprehended in the present" (Ahmed 2017:12). My topic itself is something I feel is a sweaty concept, something I felt resists being fully comprehended in the present and is difficult to describe- as often times there is a lot of descriptive, brainwork that has to go into my topic as soon as I saw someone go wide-eyed.

I have struggled with figuring out how to effectively discuss an industry that serves as a site of resistance to hegemonic sex, gender, and sexuality -- a site of sexual education, information, and empowerment -- while simultaneously harboring factions that reinforce and capitalize on sexism, racism, classism, homophobia/transphobia and ageism. How can I speak to the regenerative space that pornography offered without discrediting the spaces that have and continue to exist in the industry as sites of oppression, exclusion, and subjugation? How can I speak to the way in which pornography currently distorted our perception of sex and sexuality, while also evidencing that it can simultaneously repair them? I often times found myself thinking that it either has to be one or the other; struggling against the binary that said there is not enough space to discuss both.

One of the most important lessons I have learned through my work is that there exists enough time, space, and energy to discuss the element of porn that capitalizes on violence against women, while simultaneously acknowledging the ways in which it can empower women to take control of their sexuality and economic labor. Additionally, working with sweaty concepts such as these is part of what makes the world of academia

transformative: it is okay to allow all of them to coexist simultaneously in one space. My thesis is a perfect space for these contradictions to arise and be acknowledged. These contradictions exist in this work and within the larger pornography industry. It is impossible to critically analyze this industry without accounting for these contradictions.

Moving forward, it is critical that the topic of pornography remains a focus of academic literature and research. Through continued research and examination of the pornography industry, we as academics can offer further insight into the ways in which it impacts and socializes the members of society who consume it and participate in it. The issues I have discussed through the exclusion of bodies through the porn industry, as well as the impact the industry has on those bodies, ultimately highlights the need for continued research on the pornography industry, and continued exploration of the ways in which power structures continue to impact the creation of pornography. As the power structures change and evolve over time, so will the construction of knowledge in regards to sex, gender, and sexualities. Conducting research regarding the current discourse surrounding pornography can help to illuminate the ways in which gender, sex, and sexuality are constructed as a result of the current relationship between power and knowledge that exists within our society. Since pornography acts as an agent of socialization and normalization, the discourse surrounding pornography highlights the ways in which sex, gender, and sexualities are being controlled by the larger society.

Additionally, this research highlights the importance of including actor and producer voices in the research that is conducted on the pornography industry. As previously mentioned, research that has been conducted on the pornography industry

tended to focus exclusively on the impact that it had on consumers. The absence of

industry narratives and voices not only reinforced stigmatization of the adult industry, but

it created larges gaps in the academic documentation of this world.   Including industry

voices contributes to a nuanced understanding of the construction of power/knowledge in

industry systems, and the way in which this impacts the type of content that is created

through this industry. As performer Arielle said, "stuff like this that humanizes us is

crucial, it is crucial for our survival literally."

The research that is presented in this thesis is not without limitations. Such as

being my work focused exclusively on the West Coast pornography industry and was

based on a small sample of predominantly white participants. Future research should

explore an experiences of a more diverse group of industry participants. Additionally,

future research should examine and compare the pornography industry in other

geographic locations- such as the East Coast and areas outside the U.S.

Pornography, as a subject and media form, is something that has always played a

large role in the structuring of our society, whether individuals like to admit to it or not.

While many academics have critiqued the problematic way in which pornography served

to reinforce hierarchies surrounding gender, race, and sexuality, recent academics are

beginning to acknowledge the potential that pornography has to act as an educational

medium, and as a result, a resistance and intervention strategy. Pornography has the

potential to be able to act as a space where we can create new meanings that challenge

normative binary gender and sexualities. As Mia Little said, "And that's part of shifting a

paradigm. It doesn't happen overnight, it's gonna sort of come up against a lot of

historical meaning. And you are challenging that by creating new meaning because that is what it means to you." As a result, future research should seek to explore the ways in which pornography has the productive potential to create and act as a space of continuous resistance in spite of the existing hegemonic hierarchies that exist within our society (Ryberg 2013).

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APPENDIX A

Informed Consent
Research on Working in the Pornography Industry

You are invited to participate in a study about people working within the West Coast pornography industry.

I am Samantha Silver, a graduate student in Public Sociology at Humboldt State University.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete the an open-ended interview that will take between 30-60 minutes. The interview will be recorded. The recordings will be transcribed and then destroyed within 3 months of the interview date.

The risks involved for participants are no greater than the normal stress experienced in your daily life when reflecting on your participation within the porn industry. You may find benefits from the opportunity to think and talk about your experiences in the industry.

Your participation is voluntary. You have the right to discontinue the interview at any time without penalty.

All interview data will remain confidential. You will be asked to select a pseudonym if you wish. Only aggregated demographic information that could not be used to identify an individual will be reported out.

The transcripts will be maintained in a password protected electronic file and will be destroyed within 5-10 years. This consent form will be scanned and stored in a separate password protected file for the same time period. Original paper consent forms will be destroyed after they are scanned and stored.

If you have any questions about this research at any time, you can email my thesis advisor Mary.Virnoche@humboldt.edu. If you have any concerns with this study or questions about your rights as a participant, contact the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at irb@humboldt.edu or (707) 826-5165. You can also contact me, Samantha Silver, at scs139@humboldt.edu or (424) 772-9830.

I am at least 18 years old. I have read and understood the above information and agree to participate in this study.

_____   _____   _____
Signature   Printed Name   Date

APPENDIX B

Interview Guide: Research on Working in the Pornography Industry

<u>Entry</u>
      1. How did you get involved in the industry?
      (Significant people - how influenced, How old were you, location, what else
happening?)

      2. What were your expectations about the industry before you entered? (How
      shaped? How changed? Compare to experiences?)

      3. What were the biggest challenges?

<u>Experiences and Changes Working</u>
      4. Key people or events that impacted your experiences once in.

      5. How did your understanding of sex, gender and sexuality change, if at all, once
      working in the industry? (Significant events/experiences)

      6. How are ideas about sex, gender and sexuality communicated in the industry?
      (Formally - scripts & directing, informally?)

      7. How do you feel about porn industry portrayals of sex, gender and sexuality?

      8. Are there parts of the industry that you would change?

<u>Significant Productions</u>
      9. Can you talk about a production that you worked on that bent traditional
      understandings of sex, gender and sexuality? (How was that accomplished?)

      10. Compared to that production, what has been your typical experience? (How
      accomplished?)

<u>Relationship with Personal Life</u>
      11. How has working in the industry affected your personal life?
      (Who knows? Friend choices? Family? How do you talk about your work with
      new acquaintances? Your relationships?)

<u>Closing</u>

12. As you look back on your time within the industry, are there any other events that stand out in your mind?

13. Is there anything that you might not have thought about before that occurred to you during this interview?

14. Is there anything else you think I should know to better understand your experiences within the pornography industry?

15. Is there anything you would like to ask me?

Demographics
      Gender
      Sexuality
      Racial/Ethnic Identity
      Age
      Roles within the industry
      Time within the industry

APPENDIX C

RECRUITMENT

Email sent to participants:

RE: HSU Thesis Research
Hello ____,

I found your name on Instagram and am hoping you might be interested in participating in my study.

My name is Samantha Silver. I am a graduate student studying Public Sociology at Humboldt State University. I am researching people working in the West Coast pornography industry. Your participation would include one interview lasting 30-60 minutes. We could do this in person or over the phone. If you are interested in participating please contact me at scs139@humboldt.edu or (424) 772-9830.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing back from you!

Best,
Samantha Silver

Follow up email:

RE: HSU Thesis Research
Hello_____,

I previously emailed you regarding potentially participating in my thesis study and am just following up to see if you are in fact interested.

My name is Samantha Silver. I am a graduate student studying Public Sociology at Humboldt State University. I am researching people working in the West Coast pornography industry. Your participation would include one interview lasting 30-60 minutes.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.
Thank you and I look forward to hearing back from you!
Best,

Samantha