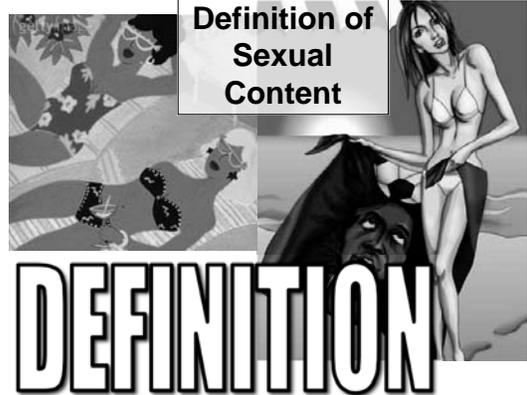


COM 242 Chapter 6 Sexual Content In The Media

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- Definition of sexual content ambiguous
- General label
- E.g. kiss to brutal rape
- Therefore, different genres of sexual content
- **Pornography, Erotic Media, Obscenity**

Definition



Sparks, G. (2004). *Media Effects Research* (2nd ed.). Canada: Thomson Wadsworth.

Sexual Content

- Mostly defined as any depiction of talk or behavior that involves sexuality, sexual suggestiveness, or sexual activities or relationships



Sparks, G. (2004). *Media Effects Research* (2nd ed.). Canada: Thomson Wadsworth.

Pornography



- Greek
- *Porne* = Prostitute
- *Grafe* = Writing
- Depictions of the activities of prostitutes

Cline, V. B. (2006). *Pornography's Effects on Adults and Children*. ObscenityCrimes.org.

Pornography

- Material that features **explicit sexual behavior and nudity**
- Usually where one character is exerting **physical or psychological dominance** over another
- Often contains **explicit violence** as well

Sparks, G. (2004). *Media Effects Research* (2nd ed.). Canada: Thomson Wadsworth.

Erotic Media

- Greek
- *Eros* = Love
- Works of art
- Material that features **explicit sexual content** *without violence and overt power dynamics*, as compared to Pornography



Erotica. (2007, February 23). [Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#).
Sparks, G. (2004). [Media Effects Research](#) (2nd ed.). Canada: Thomson Wadsworth.

Obscenity



- Legal term
- Defined by the U.S. Supreme Court in its 1973 *Miller V. California* decision
- Not protected under the First Amendment
- If judged as obscene, can be restricted from circulation

Cline, V. B. (2006). [Pornography's Effects on Adults and Children](#). [ObscenityCrimes.org](#)
Sparks, G. (2004). [Media Effects Research](#) (2nd ed.). Canada: Thomson Wadsworth.

Obscenity

- *Miller Test* (1973)
- **Criteria (all necessary):**
 1. Media message was designed primarily to stimulate or appeal to sexual or prurient interests
 2. No redeeming artistic value
 3. Violates contemporary community standards
- Little consistent success in declaring obscene media

Miller Test. (2007, February 9). [Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#).
Sparks, G. (2004). [Media Effects Research](#) (2nd ed.). Canada: Thomson Wadsworth.

EVOLUTION

Evolution of Sex in Entertainment

Since the early years...

In Cinemas

- Love Goddesses (1965)
History of sex
- Playboy: Sexy Lingerie
- **Modern times** still have sex and porn
 - James Bond trademarks
 - Basic Instinct



More

- Babel japanese actress (Rinko Kikuchi) walking brazenly nude, because she lacks love.



Media and TV

- American TV survey, Monique Ward (p120)
- Desperate Housewives, Sex and the City.
- Study --- Kaiser family foundation (pg 121) 68% of 1100 randomly selected TV shows had sexual content.



To Present-Day

- A FIASCO
- Janet Jackson wardrobe malfunction in 2004. She had to apologize.
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQsPjlltEwc>
- Significance



Rule?

- Telecommunications Act 1996 states that cable service should have effective signal blockage for explicit sex. If not, then there should be "505(b) requires "time channeling", i.e., that sexually explicit adult programming be transmitted only during those hours when children are not likely to view it. (Federal commission)

<http://www.fcc.gov/ogc/documents/opinions/1996/playboy.html>

Not Adhered

- Nobody cares about this
- Orgs set up: CWFA



Sexual Content Books

- Livre philosophiques in early France
- Therese philosophe (1748), Julie philosophe (1791)
- "it (pornography) now embarked on a career as a separate and distinct genre" (Steiner 1994)
- Sex would be "available to everyone".

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

Present novels

- Many adult novels which have crime or romance will definitely have sex in them.



Japanese Manga & Anime

- Last time, manga and anime such as Astroboy and Doraemon were more children themed



Modern Anime

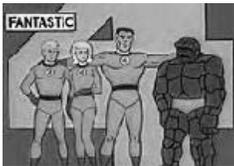
- Categories of
 - Ju-ne mono
 - shonen ai



- **Anime runs off \$495 million in the US alone 2002.**
- Good things are: friendship and kawaii animals ☺

Marvel DC comics

- **since 1931** , more action
- Women have accentuated breasts



Marvel comics scene

- 1955: Comics Code Authority
- 1970s Stan lee changed



THEORIES

The Commission on Obscenity and Pornography

- 1967, by the U.S. Congress (Led by Lyndon B. Johnson)
- How pornography affects crime and juvenile delinquency
- Pornography = sexually explicit (not violent)
- Major finding : there were no known harms caused by pornography

Commission Report's Aftermath

- **Trigger Hypothesis VS Safety Valve Theory**
- Exposure to sexually explicit materials will provoke people to commit sex crime
- or...
- Exposure to sexually explicit materials will satisfy people from their desire to commit a sex crime

Is the number of sex crimes decreasing in the communities which have easy access to pornography?



Research to Answer the Question

- **J. H. Court**
- Inconsistent results of sex crimes across the world
- Stable result : incidence of rape does not decrease when pornography is permitted
- Therefore, the commission report is not acceptable.

Why?

- Different materials at different times.
- The commission did not study the impact of sexually explicit material on children >> not applicable for all range of ages.

More Research Following the Commission Report

- **James Weaver (1980)**
- How the content affects the viewer's perceptions and behaviors
- Examined from three different contents : Sexual activity from the masculine perspectives, coercive/violent themes, and erotic (sexual fantasy) themes.

The Meese Commission Report on Pornography

- **Ed Meese, 1986.**
- Rejected by scientific community
- Interviews were conducted in an unscientific way
- The commission did not come with any conclusion of correlation between pornography and sex offenses.



Confusing Statements of the Commission

- Pornography >> sex offenses
- Other factors might affect sex offenses (e.g. sexual imbalance)
- BUT...
- "...the fact that correlational evidence cannot definitively establish causality DOES NOT MEAN that it may not be SOME evidence of causality, and we have treated it as such."



However...

- Two general effects
- **Psychological arousal** (elevations in heart rate, blood pressure, sweaty palms)
- **Sexual arousal** (more specific to the sex organs)

The Dynamics of Excitation Transfer

- **Dolf Zillman**
- "General arousal from any source can intensify an emotional experience and make it much more prominent than it would be ordinarily without the arousal."

The Dynamics of Excitation Transfer

- When something produces arousal in the system, the natural course of the arousal is to decay.
- Arousal has decayed, people think it's gone, but it's actually not.
- The left over arousal can transfer a new emotion and make it more intense.



EFFECTS

Research after the 'Commission Report'

- **James Weaver**

1. Characterization of current available content.
2. Viewer's perception
3. Viewer's behavior



Sparks, G. (2004). *Media Effects Research* (2nd ed.). Canada: Thomson Wadsworth.

Content Analysis

1. Standard Nonviolent themes
 - Portrays men to be competent and women to be sexually loose and immoral
2. Coercive & or violent themes (less prevalent)
 - "rape myth"
3. Erotic
 - Smallest number of films
 - World which you have created with sexual fantasies

Sparks, G. (2004). *Media Effects Research* (2nd ed.). Canada: Thomson Wadsworth.

Perceptual Impact

Dolf Zilmann and Jennings Bryant

Volunteers viewed sessions of mainstream pornography (absence of coercion and violence)

Results

- Thinking that rape is not a serious crime.
- High prevalence of sexual practices.
- Low satisfaction in their own sexual relationships
- Lost of trust in partners

Sparks, G. (2004). *Media Effects Research* (2nd ed.). Canada: Thomson Wadsworth.

Ed Donnerstein & Colleagues

- **Revealed the same results in with the involvement of violence and coercion.**
- **This research cannot be suited for nonviolent depictions.**
- **However Zilmann's research can be used as a form of evidence.**

Sparks, G. (2004). *Media Effects Research* (2nd ed.). Canada: Thomson Wadsworth.

Finally

- Both research groups have decided that:
 - Illustrations of "rape scenario and sexual violence" does encourage attitudes of sexual cruelty towards women and
 - A more easygoing attitude towards the perpetrators of rape.

Sparks, G. (2004). *Media Effects Research* (2nd ed.). Canada: Thomson Wadsworth.

Behavioral Impact



Stanley Milgram

- **Electric Shock Paradigm- obedience to authority**

Kenneth Leonard & Stuart Taylor

- **Effects of sexually explicit material**

Sparks, G. (2004). *Media Effects Research* (2nd ed.). Canada: Thomson Wadsworth.

What was done...

- 40 undergraduates who viewed either neutral or erotic slides in the presence of a female.
- “No cues”- no reaction
- “Non-permissive cues”- disapproving comments
- “Permissive cues”- variety of positive comments

Sparks, G. (2004). *Media Effects Research* (2nd ed.). Canada: Thomson Wadsworth.



Shock Treatment

IF THE CHOSEN SHOCK LEVELS WOULD BE INFLUENCED BY THE SLIDE VIEWING???



Results

- Erotic slides & “Permissive cues”
 - Higher levels of shock delivered
- Rationale: Women would allow inappropriate shock levels as she has tolerated the sexually explicit material on the slides.**
- **Calloused perception + tolerance portrayed**

Sparks, G. (2004). *Media Effects Research* (2nd ed.). Canada: Thomson Wadsworth.

- The perception of females being tolerant of sexually explicit content +
- Men being more eager to perform aggressive acts on women if they are provoked.
- With such attitudes (promiscuous women) getting stronger, the women would be treated harsher → *Donnerstein & Zilmann's research*

Sparks, G. (2004). *Media Effects Research* (2nd ed.). Canada: Thomson Wadsworth.

Key terms

- **Ecological Validity** - used to describe how the results (pattern of behavior) found in the experiment can be applied to the outside world.
- **Mundane Realism** - if the details from the experiment do not match up with reality.
- **Experimental Realism** - the emphasis on the meaning attached to the responses in an experiment.

Sparks, G. (2004). *Media Effects Research* (2nd ed.). Canada: Thomson Wadsworth.

Sexy Media Matter: Exposure to Sexual Content in Music, Movies, Television and Magazines Predicts Black & Whites Adolescents' Sexual Behavior

- *Pediatrics* which is an official journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Objective



- Assesses overtime if exposure to sexual content in 4 mass media (television, music, movies & magazines) used by early adolescents predicts sexual behavior in the middle adolescents.

Methods

- In home-longitudinal survey of 1017 black and white adolescents from 14 middle schools in Central North Carolina.
- Interviewed at a base-line of 12 to 14 yrs old and then 2 years later.
- Computer assisted self interview to ensure confidentiality
- Created a new measure of the teen's sexual media diet (SMD)

- *weighting the frequency of the use of the 4 media by the frequency of sexual content in each television show, music album, movie and magazine the teen used regularly.*

Results

- Found the white adolescents in the top quintile of the SMD when 12 to 14 years old were 2.2 times more likely to have sexual intercourse when 14 to 16 years old
- Black adolescents were 1.2 times more likely to have sexual intercourse when 14 to 16 years old

Factors

Encourage:

- Being a man
- Early pubertal onset
- Lower economic status
- Perceptions of more permissive peer sexual behavior

Discourage:

- Hands on parenting
- Perceived parental disapproval
- Having good grades

⊖

- Such perceptions may also be influenced by the kind of media they attend to.
 - Media portrayals of sexuality seem to be so consistent, that frequent media users may believe the world view portrayed and begin to adopt the media's social norm as their own.
 - Especially true for those with fewer alternative sources of sexual norms, such as parents or friends
- use media as a kind of sexual "superpeer" that encourages them to be sexually active.*

- *Exposure to sexual content in television, music, movies & magazines does increase the risk of engaging in early sexual intercourse.*

Conclusion



EFFECTS

Cont'd...

Effects on Adults

- Pornography can either serve as a major or minor contributor to sexual addiction



<http://obscentycrimes.org/clineart.cfm>

• First Phase: Addiction

- Got hooked, keep coming back for more and more
- Provides exciting and powerful imagery
- Many negative consequences
- Most intelligent man appeared to be the most vulnerable



<http://obscentycrimes.org/clineart.cfm>

• Second Phase: Escalation

- The addicted person required rougher, more explicit, more deviant, and "kinky" sexual material
- Due to the powerful sexual imagery in their minds

• Third Phase: Desensitization

- Pornography became acceptable
- Increasing sense that "everybody does it"
- Gave them permission to do it

<http://obscentycrimes.org/clineart.cfm>

• Fourth Phase: Acting Out Sexually

- Act it out sexually
- Grew into sexual addiction
- E.g. Head of church's committee is a serial rapist
 - An outstanding student in high school and college
 - Early adolescent addiction to pornography
 - Major consequences: The disturbance of the fragile bonds of intimate family and marital relationship.

<http://obscentycrimes.org/clineart.cfm>

Effects of Aggressive Pornography (Porno-Violence)

- Possibility of conditioning viewers into associating sexual arousal with inflicting injury, rape, humiliation, or torture on females
- Once deviant behavior were planted, men were inclined to act out their fantasies



<http://obscentycrimes.org/clineart.cfm>

- **Effects of non-violent Pornography**

- E.g. Child pornography, incest pornography, sex with animals etc.
- Unhealthy models of sexual pornography
- Give false information
- Can contribute to acquiring great variety of sexual addictions



<http://obsenitycrimes.org/clineart.cfm>

- **Other Effects of Pornography**

- People are affected by what they see
- Pornography as a form of sex education
 - Sex counseling
- The sexualization and the objectification of women in the media appear to teach girls that as women, all they have to offer is their body and face, and that they have to expend all their effort on physical appearance

<http://www.apa.org/pi/wpo/sexualization.html>

Gary Bishop

- Convicted homosexual pedophile
- Serial killer
- Murdered five young boys in Salt Lake City, Utah



<http://obsenitycrimes.org/clineart.cfm>

Gary Bishop

- *"Pornography was a determining factor in my downfall. Somehow I became sexually attracted to young boys and I would fantasize about them naked. Certain bookstores offered sex education, photographic, or art books which occasionally contained pictures of nude boys. I purchased such books and used them to enhance my masturbatory fantasies."*
- *"Finding and procuring sexually arousing materials became an obsession. For me, seeing pornography was lighting a fuse on a stick of dynamite. I became stimulated and had to gratify my urges or explode. All boys became mere sexual objects. My conscience was desensitized and my sexual appetite entirely controlled my actions."*

<http://obsenitycrimes.org/clineart.cfm>

Ted Bundy



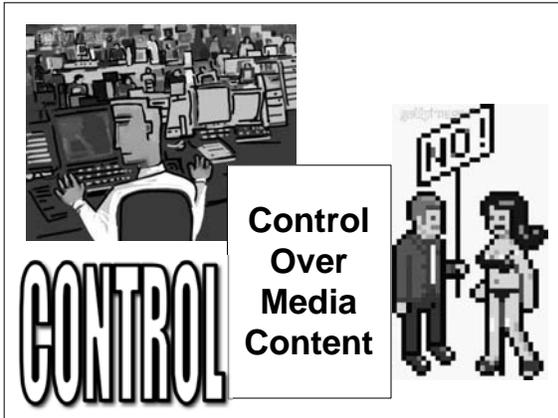
- Notorious serial killer in the U.S.
- Raped and murdered many young women across the U.S. between 1974 and 1978
- Confessed to over 30 murders, but total number of victims still unknown

<http://obsenitycrimes.org/clineart.cfm>

Ted Bundy

- TV interview with Dr. James Dobson:
 - Bundy made repeated claims of the pornographic "roots" of his sexually driven violence
 - The consumption of violent pornography helped "shape and mould" his violence into "behavior too terrible to describe"
 - He felt that violence in the media, "particularly sexualized violence," sent boys "down the road to being Ted Bundy's"
 - *"You are going to kill me, and that will protect society from me. But out there are many, many more people who are addicted to pornography, and you are doing nothing about that."*

<http://obsenitycrimes.org/clineart.cfm>



**Control
Over
Media
Content**

Sex and the Internet

- Internet is considered one of the major sources of information
- Number of web sites and web services are increasing daily
- As of January 2007, there are 389,392,288 Internet users just in Asia itself



(This statistic is according to Internet World Stats site)

Sex and the Internet

- Sexually explicit media has never been as readily available as it is today
- The content on the Internet is so easily accessible to everyone, even children
- Blocking software on public computers may prevent children from surfing objectionable sites, but it is not a permanent solution

Sex and the Internet

- Restrictions can be set up, but will they be useful???
- Set policies for Internet Use
- Monitor internet usage
- Use Firewalls



Sex and the Internet

- Assumption that internet pornography is harmful to children
- However, researchers have little to say about the effects of sexually explicit media on children
- Instead of controlling the flow of sexually explicit content people turn to legal, social/economic, and education solutions



Legal Control

- Obscenity is not protected by the First Amendment
- Obscenity is difficult to define
- Government has often attempted to control the flow of sexually explicit content
- People may object to sex in the media, but at the same time, they defend the right of the media to produce it.

Legal Control

- There is also claim that certain sexual depictions deprive women of civil rights
- Met with failure in the courts because
 - Concern about the implications these judgments will have on other kind of content



Legal Control

- There are acts that are already in place to regulate Internet content use
 - Communications Decency Act (1996)
 - Child Online Protection Act (1998)
 - Children's Internet Protection Act (2000)
- However, each act has been challenged by the First Amendment

Social or Economic Control



- Instead of enforcing laws, some groups have decided to take their own action based on social norms and economic impact
- Groups will hold boycotts of advertisers or businesses that sell sexually explicit content

Social or Economic Content

- Example : Convenience store in Cleveland
- Boycotts and economic pressure work in only some situations
- Not as effective for a long term solution for people will not be holding boycotts everyday, everyone will return to their normal lives eventually

Control through Education

- With the freedom of speech and expression, preferred form of control is education

Ed Donnerstein

- Males who were exposed to violent pornography became more sensitive to issues of rape

Neil Malamuth

- Similar findings



CONCLUSION

Conclusion

- Effects inconclusive
- Idiosyncratic findings – Unique to individual studies
- Our hypothesis – Threshold Effect
- Control – Forbidden Fruit Effect
- Increasing amount of sexual content in the media
- Has become a common thing, more acceptable

