

# THE PLAYBOY FORUM

*a continuing dialog on contemporary issues between playboy and its readers*

## PORNOGRAPHY AND CIVIL RIGHTS

While teaching a course on human sexuality, I decided to exercise my knowledge of phenomenological research by studying the relationship between the First Amendment and the civil rights of women. Accordingly, I had my students view a Phil Donahue program on which those issues were discussed (and on which, incidentally, Playboy Attorney Burt Joseph appeared) and then debate them in class for several days. During that time, two female students asked if I would show an adult film to the class. They wanted to see an example without going to a public theater, so I obtained one and showed it (not during class hours, of course).

Of 17 students enrolled in the class, ten attended. I instructed the students to view the film in a scholarly manner and afterward write a paper based on the film and the debate held on the Donahue program. Two days later, they were required to write another paper on any delayed effects they had experienced from viewing the film.

I was surprised at the results. While Pembroke State University attracts an extremely conservative student body, only one male student indicated a belief that women's civil rights had priority over the First Amendment. The group that saw the movie ranged in age from 19 to 28, with the average age 22; six of the students were female; five were white, three black and two American Indian. Five religious denominations were represented, including one Catholic and five Baptists. One of the women became ill after seeing the film, but even she thought First Amendment rights had priority.

Stephen M. Marson, Assistant Professor  
Department of Sociology and  
Social Work  
Pembroke State University  
Pembroke, North Carolina

For quite some time, I have followed the debate over erotica *vs.* pornography. My own opinion is that porn is not an asset to society and should be summarily trashed, but erotica always will and should be here.

For all the discussion, however, I have never heard a good and definitive distinction made between the two. Here is mine.

**Erotica:** material in which bodies (male or female) are portrayed in a way that, while stimulating, does not focus on one or two anatomical parts; erotica presents the whole person.

**Pornography:** material that reduces men to cocks and women to cunts.

In every magazine I have looked at

except one, I have seen men and women portrayed as sex objects, ready only to fuck or to be fucked. The picture captions tell of how "hard and ready he is" or how "wet and hot she is." This is disgusting.

The human body is beautiful. There is nothing wrong with nude photos, as long as the focus is the whole person, not a part.

The exception I spoke of is PLAYBOY. In it, women are photographed in such a way as to call attention to the whole person, and the short comments near the photos

---

*"Porn is not an asset to society and should be summarily trashed, but erotica always will and should be here."*

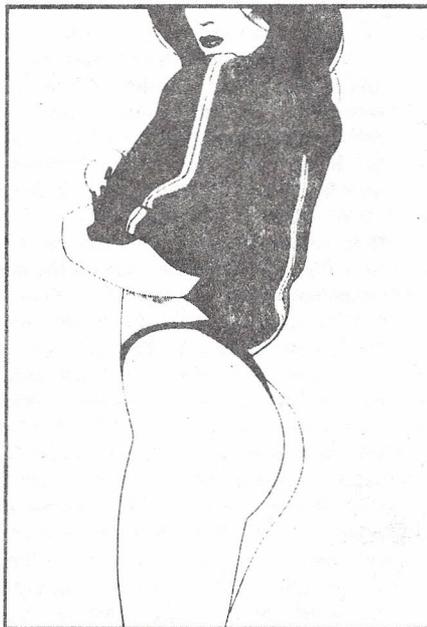
---

describe her feelings and opinions, her life and her activities, not just how ready she is to screw.

This is erotica, done in a way that is tasteful. It stimulates and arouses, which is its purpose, but it describes the person behind the photo.

Keep it up, PLAYBOY. You provide an example of erotica that all should follow.

David Hunt  
St. Paul, Minnesota



## PROBLEM PORN

Violent, weird, twisted and outright bad pornography is thoroughly repulsive to all but a tiny minority of the population. However, the people who produce and buy and like such stuff might very well start pursuing even worse hobbies than looking at ugly pictures if our self-appointed moral guardians cranked this societal safety valve shut.

O. J. Lehrman  
New York, New York

*We're not sure it's that simple. While we don't think the depiction of pornographic violence is a direct cause of sexual violence, we also don't write off the argument that the proliferation of such material might give some mentally unstable weirdos the idea that such behavior is socially acceptable. But anyone familiar with the history of censorship knows that giving such power to the state does infinitely more harm to society than good.*

## HEADS, YOU WIN; TAILS, I LOSE

About a year ago, my wife and I agreed to get a divorce. Before we made up our minds, one of the big causes of friction between us was her conversion to a fairly militant brand of feminism. She decided that ours had been a master-servant relationship, and equality now became her shibboleth. Every aspect of the way we lived had to be examined and equalized, every responsibility divided neatly between us. She demanded that I acknowledge her as my equal in intelligence, talent, energy and political acumen.

Then we hired lawyers and proceeded to negotiate a divorce settlement. What a change! From being as assertive as Bella Abzug, my ex-wife-to-be suddenly was as helpless as the legions who worship Phyllis Schlafly. In all those years we had lived together, she had learned nothing but homemaking, had acquired only the most rudimentary survival skills to go with her bachelor's degree in English and four years of premarital office jobs. If she did not receive 75 percent of my assets and 50 percent of my earnings, in perpetuity, she would end up sleeping in subway stations and carrying her possessions in a shopping bag.

When it pleased her to demand equality, she did. When she wanted the privileges that women enjoyed when they were considered the weaker sex, she had no hesitation in demanding them. She thus manifested a universal human trait called wanting it both ways.

But, while one may admit the naturalness of a predator's appetite, one doesn't