

# **Porn, Business and Morality: Examining Discursive Repertoires in Doing Feminist Porn**

**Lecomte, Louise**

**[louise.lecomte@dauphine.psl.eu](mailto:louise.lecomte@dauphine.psl.eu)**

**Université Paris-Dauphine – PSL**

**Flora Antoniazzi**

**[fan.bhl@cbs.dk](mailto:fan.bhl@cbs.dk)**

**Florence Villesèche**

**[fv.bhl@cbs.dk](mailto:fv.bhl@cbs.dk)**

**Copenhagen Business School**

## **Abstract:**

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In this study, we examine how persons working in the feminist porn industry make sense of their practice through examining discursive repertoires. As an “industry within an industry” (Taormino, Shimizu, Penley & Miller-Young 2013: 12), feminist porn is, just like mainstream porn, a media genre made for profit. At the same time, it sets out to be an alternative to the mainstream by aiming to expand liberal views on gender and sexuality as a social movement and by being committed to depicting diversity in gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, body size, ability, and age (Taormino 2013). As such, we can thus understand feminist porn as a movement that seeks to moralize the pornographic market, just as other markets are getting moralized - fashion, food, and more (Suckert 2019; Reinecke et al. 2012).

**Key words:** pornography, feminism, moralized markets, feminist poststructuralist discourse analysis

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# **Porn, Business and Morality: Examining Discursive Repertoires in Doing Feminist Porn**

## **INTRODUCTION**

In this study, we examine how the feminist porn industry workers make sense of their practice. As an “industry within an industry” (Taormino, Shimizu, Penley & Miller-Young 2013: 12), feminist porn is, just like mainstream porn, a media genre made for profit. At the same time, it sets out to be an alternative to the mainstream by aiming to expand liberal views on gender and sexuality as a social movement and by being committed to depicting diversity in gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, body size, ability, and age (Taormino 2013). As such, we can thus understand feminist porn as a movement that seeks to moralize the pornographic market, just as other markets are getting moralized - fashion, food, and more (Suckert 2019; Reinecke et al. 2012).

Developing out of a third-wave, sex-positive feminist ideology (Lieberman 2015), feminist pornography draws on concepts of empowerment and choice and claims authenticity through the ‘truthful’ representation of the female reclaiming her sexuality (Atwood 2009; Levy 2005; McNair 2002). It is built in opposition to the male centered and objectifying women mainstream pornography (Ferguson, 1984). Feminist porn is also argued to be grounded in a postfeminist discourse around relations of gender, sexuality, work, and power (Just & Muhr 2018; Villesèche, Muhr & Sliwa 2018; Lewis, Benschop & Simpson 2017). However, the dominant narrative of legitimizing the (self-imposed) sexualization of women is criticized for, then, “delegitimizing any feminist fight against such sexualization” (Just & Muhr 2018: 8), and for

controlling female bodies and objectifying women's sexualities by constructing empowered feminine sexuality (McRobbie 2009; Gill 2003; Just & Muhr 2018). The feminist literature on porn thus, overall, tends to either focus on hailing the ambitions and potentialities of sex-positivity or on condemning the commodification of women's sexuality as a dead end. We thus have little understanding of nuances in this debate, and few insights on the experiences and meaning-making of people who make feminist pornography. Pornography is a divisive issue in the feminist spheres. As synthesized by Stewart (2018), the sex wars of the 1980s and 1990s decades started in 1982 with the Barnard Conference, organized by pro-sex feminists (Gayle Rubin, Ellen Willis), that was boycotted by the Woman Against Pornography group (Robin Morgan, Andrea Dworkin, Catherine Mckinnon).

How persons working in feminist porn make sense of their practice is a crucial element to address, as from a post-structuralist feminist view discourses and the way they are combined both reflect and shape practice (Baxter 2002, 2008) and participate in the endeavor to moralize the market (Zelizer 2011). Also we need closer examination of how different means and ends of feminist porn are made sense of and discuss the tensions arising within and across discourses, not least with a strong focus on the commercial dimension of it. Finally, by taking interest in feminist porn practitioners' perspectives we address the downplaying of their voices. By feminist porn practitioners we mean actors/performers, producers, and directors, but also intellectual activists advocating for feminist pornography as educators in other media. For brevity, we refer to them as 'feminist pornographers' in the remainder of this article.

To investigate how feminist pornographers' make sense of their intentions and practices in doing feminist porn, we collected both primary and secondary data with a focus on the French context. We analyze the data with a poststructuralist feminist discourse analysis approach (Baxter 2008, 2002) and outline three discursive repertoires (Kelan & Jones 2010): feminist

porn as an alternative and inclusive product offer; feminist porn as an ethical product; feminist porn as socio-political activism.

With these findings, we contribute to scholarship on porn as an industry by showing how feminist porn, as a moralized segment of this market, consists of a complex set of discourses with inherent tensions. We thus bring nuance to the pro vs against debates around feminist porn, put a much needed emphasis on the organizational and economic dimensions of discourses in feminist porn, and take the voices of feminist pornographers seriously. We end the article by discussing the theoretical and practical implications of our findings across core concerns for the commodification of feminism, the ethics of authenticity in feminist porn, and the moralizing of fantasies across for profit and non-profit activism.

## **1. MORALIZING THE PORN MARKET WITH FEMINISM**

### **1.1. FEMINIST PORN AS A MORAL MARKET**

The literature on moralized markets typically concentrates on the emergence of ‘alternative’ or ‘niche’ markets where moral issues are proactively managed and even mobilized as an opportunity to access or sustain (new) markets. While all economic interaction is always embedded into normative orders (Fourcade & Healy 2007; Zelizer 2011; Beckert 2012), the moralization of market or market segments “has led to the emergence of *particular kinds* of markets where explicit morality is the key principle of market interaction” (Balsiger 2021: 59, emphasis in the original). We argue that the market for feminist porn constitutes a moralized market, i. e. feminist porn is organized around a values-based critique of mainstream porn and aims at representing practices and selling products along assumed ‘superior’ moral standards (Balsiger 2014) while still being coordinated by social *and* economic values, and thereby, do

not withstand market forces resembling those of conventional markets (Suckert 2019; McInerney 2014; Guthman 2004).

However, current research on moralized markets largely neglects the internal struggles due to diverse, or even conflicting, discourses and sets of values *within* these moralized markets. This diversity is, for instance, also reflected in the variety of market actors, or as Balsiger (2021) states, “[t]he observation that moralized markets are populated by a diversity of actors with varying commitments to moral standards must become the starting point for their theoretical description” (p. 60). We build on acknowledging this variety of discourses and values when we aim to develop a more nuanced understanding of what practices are shaped by whom and why on the market for feminist porn. Further, we combine our readings of the moralized market literature with a feminist post-structuralist approach as both, a theoretical and methodological perspective (Baxter 2008). This offers a way to account for the different value-laden discourses that shape practices on the moralized market for feminist porn. The feminist porn market is thus approached as a form of specific moral reasoning, where the ‘moral’ is different to what the ‘moral’ means in the mainstream porn market (Fourcade & Healy 2007). Our focus on practices as “materially mediated doing and sayings” leads to, due to their aggregation, “the understanding of organisational and social phenomena” (Nicolini & Monterio, 2016, p.2).

## **1.2. FEMINIST PORN IN CONTEXT**

Pornography is today just “a mouse click away” (Atwood 2009: xiii), i. e. easily accessible on various internet platforms. Depictions of sex(ualities) are no longer heavily censored, risky-to-possess or distribute, and are often free of charge and visible to everyone in contemporary Western cultures (McNair 2002). We acknowledge that the ‘mainstreaming’ of sex (Atwood 2009) can only be generalized as a phenomenon in Western nations: Especially for feminist pornography to be considered a truly global phenomenon, scholarship and conversations would

have to increasingly include non-Western contexts and voices (cf. Taormino et al. 2013). Likewise, we also argue that pornography indeed developed into a *global* industry, following a commercial logic and seeking economic rewards through “effective images of sexual fantasy” (Trachman, 2013: 8; Whisnant 2016; Tarrant 2016; Wosick 2015). It is difficult to make a clear point regarding the porn industry’s size and annual turnover as most of the material is illicit and not measured through official statistics but estimates run from 6 billion to 97 billion US Dollars (cf. Cookney 2019).

Further, the significance of pornography and sexually explicit media for culture and society has been an academic concern for many years, and since 2014, even a dedicated academic journal, *Porn Studies*, approaches pornography and specifically sexual and explicit media forms as a cultural product and service and that publishes work examining pornography’s “connections to wider media landscapes and [its] links to the broader spheres of (sex) work across historical periods and national contexts” (*Porn Studies*’ website 2022). As an object of scholarly research, pornography is typically studied with a focus on the aspect of sex *work* (Berg, 2021; Miller-Young 2014), or under the concept of ‘dirty work’, and thus as a stigmatized environment (Mavin & Grandy 2013) - similar to how erotic dancing, striptease, pole dancing, prostitution, and other kinds of emotional, sexual(ized) labor are approached in research (Wood 2000; Dalton & Jung 2019; Hong & Duff 1977). Other research foci include a closer look at pornography as an industry (Voss 2012; McKee 2012; 2016), the effects pornography has on culture and society (Dines 2011; McNair 2002), or the textual and contextual content of the medium (Comella 2013) and its effects on consumers (Atwood, Smith, & Barker 2021).

While porn has undoubtedly become ‘mainstream’ over the last centuries, one cannot conclude that it became ‘normalized’ (Atwood, 2009; Comella, 2013). Critics often present the industry’s media outlets as immoral practices of demeaning women, as a representation and reproduction

of hegemonic masculinity (cf. Connell & Messerschmidt 2005) that feeds into heteronormativity and that fails to accurately represent the world of lived experiences, i. e. diversity in bodies, sexualities, and desires. Further, the tendency to racialize, objectify, and exploit sex workers is emphasized in public debates and research on pornography (Miller-Young, 2014; Berg 2017) or pornography is treated as a social and public health issue, with researchers and healthcare professionals warning about pornography's risk for addiction and the effect that the depicting of (stereotyped, or even violent) sexual practices has on especially young people who do not have the necessary critical apparatus or own lived experiences to reflect on the content.

It is these critiques of mainstream pornography and mainly the “pornographic practices, discourses, and images primarily directed at men that reduce women to sex objects” (Ferguson, 1984: 110) that the concept of feminist porn is rooted in. Feminist porn grew out of a third-wave, sex-positive feminist ideology (Liberman 2015). One aspect that unites the many different accounts of feminist porn is that the label tends to center female desire and pleasure, and thereby, is not restricted to reverse mainstream porn by displaying heterosexual sex focusing on the female part. Stewart (2018) identifies Candida Royalle (2013) as a precursor in feminist porn who explained “I found myself wondering what porn movies that appealed to women might look like. I also began to feel a desire to give something back to the women after performing in male-identified porn that left women out. So why not create adult films that deliver useful information about sex and that represent women's desires?” (Royalle 2013, 63). Feminist porn thereby not only evolved out of but continues to include the genres lesbian porn or ‘couples porn’, targeting and acknowledging multiple female viewers with many different preferences (cf. Taormino et al. 2013). Feminist porn started to develop as an alternative to the existent content at the height of the porn wars (also known as sex wars) in the 1980s in the

United States. The porn wars emerged out of the debate between different feminist groups about the sexualized representation of women in society and “grew into a full-scale divide that lasted over three decades” (Taormino et al. 2013: 10), leaving the feminist movement deeply divided after the 1970s and 1980s (Duggan & Hunter 2014). Thus, through feminist pornography, the sex-positive feminist movement combines their criticism of mainstream porn with the will to make ‘better porn’, which requires changes in content, production, and supply of the porn industry and thereby opens a niche market that considers pornography and feminism as no longer mutually exclusive (Danaher 2019; Ryberg 2014). In the following section, we outline some of the key arguments deployed to justify this process of ‘unsettling’ and ‘expanding’ conventional depictions of sex that constitutes the creation of a niche-market grounded in feminist values.

## **2. FEMINIST AIMS IN PORNOGRAPHIC PRODUCTIONS**

### **2.1. TURNING AWAY FROM THE MALE GAZE**

Feminist porn initially started with the quest of representing sex(uality) from women’s points of view and is combined with the feminist striving for the right to have control over one’s own body, to have and express sexual desires, and to be realistically represented in porn productions (Ryberg, 2014; Berg, 2017). This includes, firstly, the acknowledgement of women as sexual subjects, and a woman’s “experience of herself as a sexual being who feels entitled to sexual pleasure and sexual safety, who makes active sexual choices, and who has an identity as a sexual being” (Tolman 2002: 6). Secondly, the representation of women’s viewpoints in feminist porn implies the concentration of female desires and viewership. Before feminist porn was considered a genre in its own right, its predecessors like ‘couples porn’ reflected “a softer, gentler, more romantic porn with storylines” (Taormino et al. 2013: 11). This reflects and

reinforces dominant stereotypes of female sexuality but can also provide a greater selection of sexual media to (female) viewers than what mainstream porn offers.

Today, feminist porn builds on these genres but also expands them in acknowledging the struggles of trying to capture, define, and understand sexualities and thus, provides an alternative to women *and* men, often including non-binary or transgender people in creation and marketing reasonings. Crucial to this approach is the understanding that feminist porn can be a space for exploring, or as Taormino and colleagues (2013) put it: “It [feminist porn] creates a space for realizing the contradictory ways in which our fantasies do not always line up with our politics or ideas of who we think we are.” (p. 15). Proponents of feminist porn thus argue that the genre can be way of reconciling a feminist striving for bodily and sexual autonomy with, for instance, being subjugated or other practices that do not seem feminist on the surface (cf. Liberman 2015).

Furthermore, feminist pornography’s quest for ‘realistically’ representing women’s sexualities continues in its depiction of how and what kind of sex is shown. In other words, while moving away from the pure male gaze of mainstream pornography, feminist porn introduces complex and various representations for ‘what women want’ or how they look but does the same for men, masculinities and other gender identities. Thereby, feminist porn is argued to create “its own iconography [...] committed to depicting diversity in gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, class, body size, ability, and age” (Taormino 2013: 262).

## **2.2. THE FEMINIST PORN WORKPLACE**

The realistic and diverse depiction of bodies, practices, and pleasures, i. e. the idea of authenticity, is used to differentiate feminist from mainstream porn which also implies “the possibility for performers to be themselves and to create unique and personal sexual relationships during shoots, as opposed to the pre-determined, artificial and staged sexual acts

and bodies of (mainstream) porn.” (Maina 2014: 183). The focus on the performers’ desires and self-conscious actions on set is further represented in feminist practices of porn production, involving improved labor conditions, or safe sex practices, and consent requirements. However, feminist porn “is still subject to the logics of media power and industry”, as Liberman (2015) states and, thus, the genre has to comply with the same, or at least similar requirements and limitations as other media productions: What is included in a scene or how much autonomy performers have on set, is embedded in cost-benefit-analyses and with a sales market in mind. The danger of commodifying bodies through the production of new, alternative formulas is often voiced by critics of feminist pornography who also warn of the fetishization and exoticizing of performers’ bodies.

### **3. CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON FEMINIST PORN**

We can see that feminist porn is heavily grounded in the postfeminist discourse around relations of gender, sexuality, work, and power (Just & Muhr 2018; Villesèche, Muhr & Sliwa 2018; Lewis, Benschop & Simpson 2017). However, the dominant narrative of legitimizing the (self-imposed) sexualization of women is on the other hand criticized for “delegitimizing any feminist fight against such sexualization” (Just & Muhr 2018: 8), and for controlling female bodies and objectifying women’s sexualities *by* constructing empowered feminine sexuality (McRobbie 2009; Gill 2003; Just & Muhr 2018; Whisnant & Stark 2004). As an “industry within an industry” (Taormino et al. 2013: 12), feminist porn is, just like mainstream porn, a media genre made for profit that at the same time sets out to be an alternative to the mainstream by aiming to expand liberal views on gender and sexuality as a social movement. In its clear distinction from mainstream porn, it heavily focuses on aesthetics, too: Feminist porn media aims to appear “hip enough to leave out on the coffee table” (Atwood 2012: 44).

Thereby, the commercial aspect “is not put aside in feminist porn” (Taormino et al. 2013: 16), especially as many “*effective* images of sexual fantasy” (Trachman, 2012: 8; emphasis not in the original) are produced by self-proclaimed feminists but often still distributed and funded by large companies or platforms. Feminist pornography is thus still concerned with selling sexually explicit media on a market but presents itself as a ‘moral’ alternative to the mainstream commodity. Critics of feminist porn therefore argue for, or rather warn against, the danger of commodifying sex, bodies, and fantasies, and hence, lastly jeopardizing (second-wave) feminist emancipation through a self-proclaimed ‘better’ alternative that, according to its critics, in fact functions under the same exploitative norms.

While all these critiques are relevant, this however means that most research accounts around feminist porn tend to be limited to exploring the opposition of feminist and mainstream porn and pointing to the added value of feminist porn or, in a distinct stream, to focus on the constitutive issues in the very idea of doing feminist porn. In other words, these narratives often evolve between the taint of sex work, or the selling of sexual desires and the empowering element of feminist porn. By applying a poststructuralist feminist perspective on the discourses and practices on the market for feminist porn, we aim to develop a more nuanced understanding of what feminist porn is. Moreover, we do so based on the narratives of practitioners in feminist porn. Specifically, we aim to account for the different sets of values and moralities that shape the market by unpacking what practitioners in feminist porn do to balance the complexities and tension inherent in operating on a moralized market segment.

#### **4. METHODOLOGY**

To dive in details in the pornographers’ feminist practices, this study is built on the single case study (Barzelay, 1993) of the feminist pornography moralized market. To explore the discourses of feminist pornographers about their intentions and practices in doing feminist porn,

we collected both primary and secondary data. The data collection was conducted by the lead author of this paper. For data access, familiarity with key figures in feminist porn, and linguistic proficiency reasons, most of the collected data is originally in French and from French-speaking pornographers. While there can be cultural specificities in particular markets and sub-markets, pornography is a global industry and production of feminist porn follows a similar trend. The market for feminist porn is growing, yet it still constitutes a niche market, which calls for exploratory work with an emphasis on qualitative data from which to generate insights. Moreover, given the sensitivity of the topic of pornography and even more so of its commercial dimension, and the polarization of perspectives about feminist porn including in academic research, getting access to feminist pornographers was envisioned to be a potential challenge and influenced the research design of this study.

#### **4.1. DATA COLLECTION**

We collected secondary data (Simon & Tellier, 2020) – data that were primarily collected on another purpose by journalists in our case – in a systematic way (Johnston, 2014). To start with, we searched for relevant press coverage of feminist porn. Press articles and other news media are relevant data sources as they “both [...] reflect and construct social reality” (Tienari et al. 2009: 506). We collected the materials through Factiva, Europresse and Google searches with keywords such as feminist pornography, pornography, or names of major content producers such as Erika Lust (Swedish erotic film director, screenwriter and producer, founder of Lust Films), or Paulita Pappel (Spanish feminist porn director and actor). We applied a purposive sampling strategy, based on two main criteria. First, we looked for press articles that featured interviews or reported on statements made by key figures of the feminist porn industry in France (directors, performers, researchers, authors, public intellectuals). This criterion was important to ensure that we can reconstruct and interpret the discourses of feminist pornographers rather

than report on opinions or analyses of their practices, i. e. judgements on the feminist character of the movies and other media production in feminist porn. In other words, even in secondary data, we are interested in the discourses *of* feminist pornographers rather than discourses *about* feminist porn produced by observers. Highly represented in press articles about feminist pornography, Erika Lust is the most represented pornographer in our data. Erika Hallqvist, alias Erika Lust, is a Spain-based producer, filmmaker and one of the globally leaders feminist porn movement (cf. Taormino et al. 2013). She was on the 2019 'BBC100 Most Influential Women of the Year'-list, is featured in the Netflix documentary series *Hot Girls Wanted*, and has held a *Tedx talk* about change in the porn industry. Lust founded various platforms of sex-positive, online adult movies, portraying "realistic hot sex, and offering a more inclusive and cinematic alternative to the mass produced mainstream porn" (Erika Lust Films press kit, 2022). The company was founded in 2010 as 'Lust Cinema' and today includes various online platforms targeting different aesthetics, as well as 'The Porn Conversation', a non-profit platform directed at and providing sexual education tools for parents and educators. Furthermore, 'Lust Zine' is an online magazine by Erika Lust Films where the founder herself and other writers (feminist activists, porn performers, and producers, or sex educators, for instance) cover "everything related to sex, kink, filmmaking, feminism, and the adult industry" (Erika Lust Films press kit, 2022).

We included some experts' discourses to benefit from their broad point of view and emphasize the actors' discourse. Second, we sought to have variety in our corpus of press articles across print and online media representing a range of ideological orientations to account for possible editorial choices (questions asked to pornographers, what part of their discourses are reported on, etc). For example, *Le Figaro* is a right-wing French national journal, while *L'Obs* and *Liberation* are left-wing French national journals, and finally some feminist outlets such as

*Madmoizelle*. We thus assembled a corpus of forty-one press articles about feminist porn from the French speaking press, twenty videos and one podcast equivalent to three hours and forty-four minutes.

During early-stage presentations of the ideas developed in this paper at a seminar and in a conference session the lead author was - to her surprise - approached by a couple of participants who offered to put her in contact with pornographers of the same representative company, we will call it Feminist Porn Films (FPF). Based on the initial contacts, we applied snowball sampling techniques to conduct interviews with additional collaborators. We met twice with a product and marketing manager, once with an intimacy coordinator and manager of a platform dedicated to sexual education, once with a director of a pornographic movie for a program from Feminist Porn Films, calling for young directors and once with a couple of independent porn performers, directors, and editors of their own content; additionally, they produced two movies for this company. The interviews lasted from 25 minutes to 1 hour and 30 minutes. Issues such as directors' claims, for-profit or non-for-profit dimensions, or choice of sexual practices were addressed. Even though all interviewees are connected to the same firm, we found that a variety of perspectives were expressed across the interviews, and that these views moreover enriched the emerging insights from the news media data. Although we tried to be conscious of this aspect when collecting the media data as described above, this made us further reflect on the editorial work that goes into producing media, while the interviews were an opportunity to get access to finer-grained elements and to ask questions that the secondary data could not answer. In the findings, we use pseudonyms when making direct quotes from the interviews. In addition to the interviews we also familiarized ourselves with Feminist Porn Films website contents, and browsed for additional press coverage (including in English this time) that would contain interviews of the founder and collaborators of this company.

**Table 1. Conducted interviews**

INTERVIEWEE	POSITION	DATE
Anne	Product manager & marketing	26th of August 2022
Chris	Intimacy coordinator and manager of the sexual education platform	14th of September 2022
Anne	Product manager & marketing	21st of September 2022
Susie	Director of a pornographic movie for the call for young directors	25th of October 2022
John & Luna	Independent porn performers (but also directors and editors of their own content), they produced two different types of movies for the company	27th of October 2022

#### 4.2. DATA ANALYSIS

In the analysis, we aimed to reconstruct discursive repertoires. In line with our feminist poststructuralist approach, we here follow Kelan and Jones' (2010) take that discourse is a social practice through which social issues are negotiated. We furthermore take inspiration from Baxter's work (2003, 2008) on the Feminist Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis (FPDA). FDPA is "an approach to analyzing intertextualised discourses in spoken interaction and other types of text. It draws upon the poststructuralist principles of complexity, plurality, ambiguity, connection, recognition, diversity, textual playfulness, functionality and transformation" (Baxter 2008). In this perspective, language is the site where social meanings are constructed and contested (Baxter 2002: 6). FPDA emphasizes the need to give attention to a plurality of voices beyond an opposition between oppressors and oppressed, and compared to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) does not prioritize a given theoretical perspective nor desired

outcome in the framing of the analysis. At the same time, FPDA aligns with CDA in its aspiration to give attention to marginalized voices, such as the ones of feminist pornographers in this study. FDPA thus supports “transformative feminist projects within a post-structuralist paradigm provided these are specific, localized, action-driven and temporary” (Baxter 2003: 182) such as feminist pornography understood as a project to change pornography and its market. The aim is to make the feminist perspectives visible and at the same time keep them under critical scrutiny (Baxter 2002: 12).

In the combined data set constituted by media contents and interviews, we looked “for certain rules that people apply in specific situations” (Kelan & Jones 2010: 31), and reconstructed discursive repertoires that feminist pornographers rely on to make sense of their practice. We delineated these discursive repertoires in several analytical steps. To start with, in each media piece and interview we sought to identify aspects related to our theoretical distinction between feminist and mainstream pornography. In parallel, we conducted open coding about how feminist pornographers made sense of this base opposition in relation to their professional practice. Some codes for example related to the emphasis on female consent or the avoidance of stereotyped representations. Second, the codes were aggregated across the data set to identify common aspects and differences. In this, we are inspired by Larsen’s (2017) analytical approach. Finally, after several rounds of combinations, the codes were further aggregated into discursive repertoires that account for different sensemaking of how to combine sex, morality and business in feminist porn.

We outline the three following discursive repertoires (Kelan & Jones 2010):

- feminist porn as an alternative and inclusive product offer;
- feminist porn as an ethical product;
- feminist porn as socio-political activism.

We identified these repertoires inductively from the data before discovering due to a reviewer's recommendation that it matches some Tibbals' (2014) conclusive elements that are also exposed in Stewart (2018): "I have noticed something interesting emerging from the adult industry community lately – awareness. And although different segments of the industry may choose to engage these issues in variable ways, awareness of authenticity and ethics is refreshing. It has had, and will continue to have, an impact on contemporary pornography overall." (Tibbals, 2014, p.133).

## **5. FINDINGS**

The analysis let us outline three discursive repertoires emerging from our data: feminist porn as an alternative and inclusive product offer; feminist porn as an ethical product; feminist porn as socio-political activism. These three discourses are not mutually exclusive and can be combined by pornographers as they are situated at different level of conceptualisation. Together, they constitute feminist porn as seen by the persons involved in this moralized segment of the market for pornography, and all three are grounded in a differentiation from mainstream porn. In this findings section we illustrate the three repertoires with data excerpts and interpret them in line with our theoretical framework. In doing so, we confirm insights from previous research, provide novel insights, so as to convey a finer-grained, more complex view of the potentialities and challenges in the feminist project to moralize pornography.

### **5.1. FEMINIST PORN AS AN ALTERNATIVE AND INCLUSIVE PRODUCT OFFER**

#### *Lust equality and diversity*

Echoing the literature on feminist pornography, our analysis shows what choices are made in order to align offer and demand while pursuing the aim to prioritize a female rather than male gaze. Feminist pornographers denounce such issues in mainstream porn and develop new

features in movies such as consent, a diversity of desires, and non-stereotyped bodies. To start with, we can see that feminist pornographers clearly denounce sexist practices in the mainstream pornography market, and advocate for the development and promotion of an alternative pornographic product offer that is free of patriarchal injunctions and gender stereotypes:

“I don't think pornography is inherently macho, I think it is a reflection of our society. [...] As long as we live in a patriarchal society, then the majority of pornography will reflect this male dominance. The good news is that feminist, or at least alternative, pornography is growing and surviving where more mainstream porn is dying.” (Ovidie - Former French porn performer and director, current PhD and writer about the porn industry, Michel Pieyre, 2016, Midi Libre online)

To denounce mainstream pornography, pornographers also problematize early exposition to pornographic contents:

“Underage consumption has been in the headlines for years, [in] 2018 [a] survey revealed that one adult in ten was confronted with porn before the age of 11 and six in ten before the age of 15. (...) with an average age of first sexual intercourse of 17, the youngest start their sexual life with porn.” (Maïa Mazaurette - French feminist journalist and author dedicated to sexuality, 2018, Le Monde)

There is a clear will to represent a diversity in terms of human bodies in opposition with mainstream porn, where they are objectified, and often racialized, and where there is also a paucity of variety in terms of sexual practices.

“my films send a positive message about the wide range of different sexualities while showing sex as playful and full of passion” (Erika Lust - Swedish erotic film director, screenwriter and producer, founder of Lust Films, Adam M., 2017, Nouveauxplaisirs.fr).

Moreover, the feminist pornography movement’s goal is thus to change the vision of women’s sexuality and to support women’s sexual liberation. This is noticeable in practices such as emphasizing consent in the film scenario:

“Feminist porn would deconstruct and play with the sexist codes established by ‘mainstream’ productions in order to highlight consent, female pleasure and the diversity of bodies and sexualities.” (Sandra Franrenet – French PhD in ethics and journalist, 2016, Madame Figaro online)

#### *Discursive tensions between ambitions and realized practices*

However, our data also show that there is an ambivalence between a strong ambition to represent lusts differently and promote diversity and the acknowledgment that even for feminist porn the largest customer pool are still men:

“I don’t remember the percentage but the customers [of Feminist Porn Films movies] are actually mostly men.” (Susie, Director of a pornographic movie for Feminist Porn Films, interview)

Moreover, feminist pornographers intend to change porn, but not to be seen as a ‘soft porn’<sup>1</sup> segment that would be stereotypically dedicated to certain types of women and thus stick to

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<sup>1</sup> Soft porn can be defined as a pornography that can be less explicit and detailed than usual pornography, or less violent

many mainstream porn tropes. Erika Lust, a self-claimed *feminist* porn producer and director, mobilized her own values and ideas as a basis from which to produce less offensive porn that she herself as a feminist would like to watch, thereby, refraining from reproducing mainstream depictions of sex:

“I understood that mainstream porn is not something that reflects truths or realities about sex, it represents a statement, an idea, expressing ideologies and values about sex and gender [...] I wanted to try to create something totally different in the genre [...] something that could express my own ideas and values.” (Erika Lust - Swedish erotic film director, screenwriter and producer, founder of Lust Films, Adam M., 2017, Nouveauxplaisirs.fr)

Because of the clear appearance of consent during sex scenes on screen, feminist porn manages to represent a variety of sexual practices, including some that can be considered violent and disturbing to some and empowering and liberating to others (cf. Taormino et al. 2013). Their aim is to represent and explore all types of lust, without stereotypes, so they do not stick to what could be a ‘soft’ pornography, but they pay attention to specifically show consent from all participants.

“I am not against dirty sex, repeats Erika Lust. I am in favor of clean values. That is to say: reciprocity, consent, realism and the fact that each and everyone finds pleasure in it, it can be a brutal fantasy or hugs in rose petals.” (Erika Lust - Swedish erotic film director, screenwriter and producer, founder of Lust Films, Camille Emmanuelle, 2014, Libération)

## **5.2. FEMINIST PORN AS AN ETHICAL PRODUCT**

### **5.2.1. Doing ethical porn**

We identify repeated discursive elements claiming that feminist porn is about developing an ethical product. In line with previous work, our data show that feminist pornography is embedded in feminist thought, more specifically in sex-positive feminist thinking, putting women's rights to both consent and pleasure at the forefront. The delineation of feminist and mainstream porn is an ever-present part of the arguments around developing an alternative to mainstream porn.

“I have then started to direct adult movies as I would have liked them, or as other women and men looking for something more fresh, sensual and ethical would like them.” (Erika Lust – Swedish erotic film director, screenwriter and producer, founder of Lust Films, Adam M., 2017, Nouveauxplaisirs.fr)

However, the feminist rhetoric is not the only one that is foregrounded, so that the label ‘feminist’ appears to be more of an umbrella term for many interpretations of what an alternative to mainstream porn can look like. Two of our interviewees even refused to define their work as feminist and argued for the term ‘ethical porn’:

“It’s not feminist, it’s ethical! ” (Susie, Director of a movie for Feminist Porn Films) and “I wouldn’t say it’s feminist, but it’s ethically made” (Chris, Product Manager of the sexual education platform at Feminist Porn Films, interview)

Among arguments in favor of a feminist pornography, the idea emerges that pornography exists and constitutes most children's source of knowledge regarding sex, so that it simply *needs* to be more ethical:

“in our modern age, pornography is part of our reality: so let's already fight to transition to a model where there is no more exploitation of minors, no more

paedocriminality” (Olympe DE G. - French author, feminist porn director, founder of an audio porn and sexual education podcast, podcast Jins by Kikina Studio, 2021)

### *Implementing ethical production processes*

Issues with the business model and the consequences on the workforce are also strong in mainstream porn. Mainstream pornography is mainly available on free online streaming platforms, called tubes, which leads to low production budgets:

“Thanks to the work of whistleblowers like director Ovidie, we know that content is systematically copied, and that actors, who are dreadfully underpaid, lose their image rights” (Maïa Mazaurette - French feminist journalist and author dedicated to sexuality, 2018, Le Monde)

The production conditions in freely available porn thus not only come with the precarisation of performers (and producers) but often includes the denial of consent as well as unsafe practices regarding sexual health:

“What do we mean by “ethical pornography”? Well, it is a pornography in which all partners consent, where the limits are not transgressed, where security and health measures are respected!” (Erika Lust - Swedish erotic film director, screenwriter and producer, founder of Lust Films, Kalindi Ramphul, 2018, Madmoizelle)

Feminist pornographers try to create the most comfortable conditions for performers. Susie explains that during the shooting of her film, she felt that the male performer was not at ease. She engaged in a dialogue and found out that he did not dare asking to go to the bathroom and she was very surprised about this. This could reflect how mainstream pornography sets treat their performers and what can be voiced at those production sites. Moreover, despite a low

budget for the film, and a non-pornographic experienced camera woman, Susie wanted the fewest possible people in the room with the performers during the sex scene to create a feeling of intimacy:

“We left the performers alone in a room with only the camera women so that they could have as much privacy as possible.” (Susie, Director of a pornographic movie for Feminist Porn Films, interview)

Accordingly, the producers enforce rules for the well-being of actors<sup>2</sup>. They set up businesses with paid access ensuring money income and offer higher wages than elsewhere in the industry. Some offer the services of ‘intimacy coordinators’ to ensure that the actors fully consent to the sexual practices that happen during the filming, or that they have a contact point in case they want to voice disagreement or refusal:

“We have felt the need to include intimacy coordinators on stage [...] the presence of the intimacy coordinators ensures that the actors will be taken care of at all times [...] constantly ensuring that the actors actively consent to the scenes demanded by the director. We really don't want anyone to feel like they are forced to do something.” (Erika Lust - Swedish erotic film director, screenwriter and producer, founder of Lust Films, Silvia Galipeau, 2021, La Presse+)

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<sup>2</sup> Erika Lust Films established some specific rules regarding actors wellbeing such as “No surprises Each part of the film is discussed and agreed upon with all performers well before the shoot.”, Equal Pleasure or Fair Pay. These can be found of the Erika Lust’s website at the following address: <https://erikalust.com/about/values>

Better working conditions on the set are closely connected to the broader goal of empowering people and promoting equality and justice. Feminist porn is, then, a high-end ethical product coming with a hefty price tag:

“People become responsible and think more and more about the way they spend their money [...] Our clients like the fact that the videos are HD on the website, that there is new content every week, subtitles in various languages, and making-ofs. They know that it comes with a price.” (Erika Lust – Swedish erotic film director, screenwriter and producer, founder of Lust Films, Elvire van Bardeleben, 2018, *Le Monde*)

Both producers and performers attach deeply personal values to their work in the industry. Ovidie, a now famous French director of pornographic movies and author of novels, sexual education books and comics, explains for example that when she started acting in porn movies, she requested systematically the use of condoms, already with the idea to protect her own health and to show something that was a healthy model to viewers.

“To contribute to the reflection on women’s appropriation of their sexuality, I felt it was necessary to propose something in line with my feminist activist convictions.” (Ovidie - Former French porn performer and director, current PhD and writer about the porn industry, Marie Vaton, 2018, *L’Obs* online)

### **5.2.2. Ethical porn as authentic porn**

However, we also see in our data an ambiguity between two ethics-related arguments for consuming feminist instead of mainstream porn: porn as a product that ought to be produced more ethically vs porn as a product that is ethical because it represents true, authentic sexual practices. Notably, an emphasized element that does not appear in the feminist porn literature

is the idea of representing what happens in reality, to overcome fantasies and practices that are presented in mainstream porn, and that can generate insecurities in people's – especially young people's – minds. The representation of 'reality' appears to be absent in mainstream porn:

“viewers are not used to seeing this kind of sex, which is based on real diversity”

(Anoushka - French porn director, *Laura / Elles créent, Rouge piment*, 2019, Numéro Une (online))

Realness as an important criteria for feminist porn is embedded in the perception of what viewers (with a strong emphasis on female viewers) want to see: “active desire, consent, real orgasms, power, and agency” while “passivity, stereotypes, coercion, or fake orgasms” are opposed (Taormino et al. 2013: 12). The quest for 'real sex' in feminist porn can go so far as the performers themselves not only choosing what they accept to do in front of the camera but also what they want to be shown by holding the camera themselves:

“I try to capture a real intimacy and chemistry between two people. I ask couples who know each other, who love each other, who are having sex, and I give them a camera.”

(Paulita Pappel - Spanish feminist porn director and actor, *Amandine Schmitt*, 2018, L'Obs online).

This is also reflected in our conversation with John and Luna, a 'real life' vlogger couple that produces sexually explicit content from the perspective of their daily life together. They explain how it is the core of their product offer to show the 'truth':

“We want to show real sex, so we have a vlog, you can see us cooking, surfing, and if we want to have sex, we do. [...] Once after a surf session, we wanted to do something quick and it was not easy with the full swimsuits, so we only went for a

blowjob, we don't really calculate what we do. [...] We want people to know us, if you know us from our daily life, if you see me pulling Luna by the hair, you know that it is how we are, we love teasing each other. [...] For the movie [with Feminist Porn Films] we were asked to emphasize consent more clearly as Luna was sleeping next to a fire and I arrived smoothly, it could be misunderstood.” (John and Luna, performers on the Onlyfans platform and actors for Feminist Porn Films movies, interview)

We highlight two important aspects of John' and Lunas' statements about their pornographic releases: Firstly, they emphasize authenticity in their videos and how they follow and show only what they want to do in a given moment. Secondly, contextuality plays a key role for casting their work as feminist porn. It was an issue when working with Feminist Porn Films, they had to show more consent and female pleasure than they would have done otherwise.

### **5.3. FEMINIST PORN AS SOCIO-POLITICAL ACTIVISM**

#### **5.3.1. Fantasies as politics**

Mainstream pornography sets up some sexual norms and standards normalizing, in particular, violent behavior towards women, sexist and racist clichés, or undiversified bodies. Being a cultural product consumed by both minors and adults, porn impacts common understandings of sex: “Pornography is the new vehicle for sexual norms.” (‘Thérèse Hargot - Belgian sexologist from a catholic background, anti-pornography, Eugénie Bastié, 2016, Le Figaro.fr).

Feminist pornography is closely tied to the sex-positive feminist movement and its political statements regarding porn: “The ‘sex-positive’ feminists dreamed of making porn a space of freedom.” (‘Ovidie - French author, feminist porn director, founder of an audio porn and sexual education podcast, Marie Vaton, 2018, L’Obs online). Feminist pornographers stress the possibility of showing *different* sex taking into account the effects on its consumers:

“[Porn is] not only a product made to masturbate, it's a social, cultural product. So the fact of proposing something else to see, [is] super important, because it allows us to show another way of considering sex” (Olympe de G. - French author, feminist porn director, founder of an audio porn and sexual education podcast, podcast Jins by Kikina Studio, 2021)

In line with this ambition to show different sexual norms, Susie – our interviewee – chose to depict non-penetrative sex scenes as an alternative to mainstream practices focusing on male lust and only offering a limited representation of sexual possibilities. Her inspiration for the pornographic movie she directed comes from her own experience, of practices she would have wanted to experience earlier in life and thus, aims to represent that to larger audiences. Sasha Grey, a Californian porn star, also came to porn based firstly on her personal experience:

“I entered the world of pornography to continue to explore my sexuality and to change the perception of the modern sexual woman.” (Sasha Grey - American actor for traditional and porn movies, Olivier Séguret, 2009, Libération)

The political purpose behind the pro-sex positioning is even argued to overcome the profit purpose:

“What one could say about alternative porn is that its main objective is not profit, but rather to deliver a message.” (Paulita Pappel – Spanish feminist porn director and actor, Amandine Schmitt, 2018, L’Obs online).

### **5.3.2. Porn as sexual education**

Besides the depiction of new, different fantasies on screen, we found a striking eagerness to play a role in sexual education. Feminist pornographers view pornographic content as a helpful educational tool with the purpose of ultimately liberating women:

“I think that in this patriarchal and sexist society, women are very limited in their sexual aspirations. They don’t have control over their sexuality. Through porn, they learn to become a sexual subject, which is liberating. One of the most popular feminist slogans, “My body belongs to me”, was used to obtain abortion rights. But it also works for sexuality.” (Paulita Pappel - Spanish feminist porn director and actor, Amandine Schmitt, 2018, L’Obs online)

Olympe de G. considers that porn videos might constitute educational content as such. She explains that some platforms offer porn videos but also tutorials about sexual practices. Also, feminist or alternative porn festivals contribute to legitimizing the educational dimension of porn by awarding prizes dedicated to sexual education aspects in movies:

“The [Berlin Porn Film Festival] jury found it interesting that there were subjects that were a bit "educational", especially on sex work and gender.” (Anoushka - French porn director, Laura / Elles créent, Rouge piment, 2019, Numéro Une (online))

This educational aspect aims at providing knowledge and agency to people about sexual practices, consent, but also about the broader topics of patriarchy and gender inequalities:

“It’s about representation on screen and how we are showing gender roles, not only women but also men. We know that women are being objectified. But men are also being reduced to penetrative sex machines; [...] it’s also how we are portraying all genders on screen” (Erika Lust - Swedish erotic film director, screenwriter and producer, founder of Lust Films, Amy Nickell, 2021, Glamour.uk)

Some videos are explicitly seen as education videos. Ovidie produced a sexual education video, and thereby sticking to the same medium she worked with before but moved from pornography to explicit sexual education.

“I think I started doing interesting things when I did educational porn. I made sex education videos, which were explicit, which were not porn in the masturbatory sense, which were explicit.” (Ovidie - Former French porn performer and director, current PhD and writer about the porn industry, 2020, YouTube)

Online media like magazines, podcasts, audiobooks, are used for a combined pleasure and education purpose. Examples here are ‘LustZine’, an online magazine by Erika Lust, including informative articles on the status of the porn industry, guidelines and tools for sexual practices, or activist claims for (feminist) porn. Another example is ‘Femstasy’, an online platform offering erotic audio books and stories for paying members and focusing on female pleasure through bodily self-experience. In addition, books and comic books are new media for pornographic content with a learning aspect paired with the educational value of recognition:

“some scenes are explicit and the comic is intended for adult audiences only. [...] The idea was rather to deal with sexuality in a realistic way, but without it being necessarily masturbatory. Rather, in a touching and slightly funny way where everyone can recognize themselves.” (Ovidie - Former French porn performer and director, current PhD and writer about the porn industry, Didier Faucard, 2014, Sud Ouest)

Authors claim that we are far from knowing all about sex, so they go for comic books to go into further details about sex issues such as orgasm or body representation:

“The authors of Make Love started from a premise: the overabundance of sex in the media or on the web gives the misleading impression that there is nothing left to learn. [...] [Porn] shows wild sexual practices, women who reach orgasm in two minutes and perfect bodies. It has nothing to do with actual sex. ” (Tina Bremer-Olszewski – journalist and Ann-Marlene Henning – sexologist – authors of Make Love, Elvire von Bardeleben, 2014, Libération online)

Feminist Porn Films, on the other hand, launched a platform dedicated to sexual education of young people with the help of parents, or the adults around them. As such, feminist pornographers explore other ways to get involved in sexual education. In our interviews, Anne and Chris, who present the sexual education platform developed by Feminist Porn Films, go in this direction:

“Feminist Porn Films launched a non-profit platform, a sexual education platform, [...] it’s like “the talk” for parents to talk about sex with their children. [...] The Founder and her husband faced many questions about how they talk about their work to their daughters [...] they tell them as much as they can in words that are appropriate for their age, so they wanted to help parents do the same.” (Anne, Product manager & marketing at Feminist Porn Films)

Finally, some feminist pornographers also got involved in sexual education in schools to address issues regarding porn and sexual education broadly with young people:

“When 10 year-old kids come across [porn] videos, of course it’s a catastrophe, I see it regularly during my sexual education interventions in schools.” (Ovidie - Former French porn performer and director, current PhD and writer about the porn industry, Marie Vaton, 2018, L’Obs online)

## 6. DISCUSSION

Our analysis led us to outline three discursive repertoires through which feminist pornographers make sense of their practice: feminist porn as an alternative and inclusive product offer; feminist porn as an ethical product; feminist porn as socio-political activism. These three repertoires contain elements that were previously identified in the feminist porn literature, but also reveal significant tensions in the intents of feminist pornographers and the way that they act upon it in the context of commercial ventures in which (feminist) morality comes into play. Across the three discursive repertoires, we now turn to discussing the tension inherent in commodifying feminism into a moral product and the tension in enacting an ethics of authenticity in feminist porn, and indicating related avenues for research.

### 6.1. COMMODIFYING FEMINISM INTO A MORAL PRODUCT

To start with, across the discursive repertoires, there is an overarching tension between a kind of moral duty to address the desires of social groups that are ignored in mainstream pornography, while feminist pornographers hope that their products and companies will be successful on the market, i. e. argue that they are seizing an entrepreneurial opportunity.

On the moral ambition side, there is a conscious choice for feminist pornographers to try and ‘fix the market’ by being in the market. If the market is the problem, then the market should and can be changed, since there are so many people out there that are not yet finding products that correspond to their desires and the representations of it they seek. By taking a commercial approach, feminist pornographers can generate revenues that allow them to make quality, ethical products for which they expect there is a growing demand. This demand may even spill over to attract customers from mainstream porn, as we learned from one of the interviewees from Feminist Porn Films that the largest customer base is actually men. In addition, grounded in the perspective of pornography being a cultural product (Dines 2011;

McNair 2002) we could see that feminist pornographers further justify the use of capitalist techniques to argue that this is a prime way to create awareness about safe sex, consent, and provide sexual education through the movies but also other media such as tutorials, books, or online magazines. In turn, prominent figures of feminist porn promote their products and values by themselves being interviewed in a broadening range of written media, both off- and online.

However, realizing the feminist project of sex-positivity mainly through commercial means may still be an utopia. While the ambition is to represent a large array of sexualities and bodies, the movies need to sell. If we follow the marketing adage ‘the customer is always right’, the market may still have to focus on a fairly normative understanding of what kind of porn people want to see, not least if men are still the core customer group. In that sense, integrating consent into a video with violent practices or practices that reproduce tropes of female submission and objectification may not be sufficient to decenter the male gaze. A risk there is thus to produce some sort of feminist infotainment, or to become the equivalent of the Dior t-shirt that says ‘Feminist’- but is critiqued for being expensive, non-performative, and hiding other issues in the fashion industries.

Moreover, while some companies deploy remarkable efforts to make the production process more ethical (e. g. detailed labor rights, fair pay, rules for directors, but also ethically produced sex toys and vegan catering at Feminist Porn Films), this means that the output is a high-end product that only few can afford - and perhaps even find and access. There are parallels here with for example discussions about consumption of organic food (cf. Guthman 2003). This is especially a concern if feminist pornographers want to reach and educate young persons, posing the questions of how to strike a balance between free and paid contents, and the dynamics of exclusion in this. We hope to see future research on such balancing dilemmas and on how alternative business forms such as social enterprises or public-private partnerships (e.g.

production of sexual education contents for the ministry of education) could be a step in that direction.

## **6.2. THE ETHICS OF AUTHENTICITY IN FEMINIST PORN**

Second, in the discursive repertoires used by feminist pornographers there is a tension between a moral commitment to represent real bodies and ‘true’ sexualities when making movies, i. e. fiction, as well as a tension between the aim to transform the market via consciousness raising among current and future consumers of porn while being commercially successful here and now.

As we could see across the repertoires, there is a largely shared claim that feminist porn ought to promote self-respect, be open to alternatives, respect for others, highlight consent, enforce norm critical thinking. A prime vehicle in this is to represent bodies that are not the ‘augmented’ or truncated bodies we see in mainstream porn, and instead show ‘real’ bodies and true sexualities in their diversity. This seek for ‘realness’ contributes to a representation of bodies that are not objectified or racialized, in opposition to mainstream pornography (Miller-Young, 2014; Berg 2017; Ferguson, 2014). It is further premised that doing so is, ultimately, *better* for consumers, that can reconnect to their authentic selves that they finally find represented on screen. We presented the example of the filmmaker that promotes non-penetrative sex, or the fact that actors may film themselves to be more free and authentic. Such arguments are also used in other industries where moral projects are deployed, notably in fashion and in the beauty industry with the body-positive discourse (think e. g. of plus-sized models or the Dove cream advertisement with different body shapes). This constitutes a kind of democratic approach via capitalism, capitalism for all, where we can all be recognized in our difference and buy products that encapsulate it authentically. In other words, ethical, moralized

fantasies are made into commodities that represent not only a *possible* alternative, but a *better* one that is being true to ourselves.

Moreover, claims about authenticity, about the validity of our values and desires may also become relativist and self-referential, as a typical characteristic of contemporary Western society (Taylor 1991). Indeed, as we could see in several of the quotes, feminist pornographers are keen on claiming that they follow and represent their values in their work, and thus assume that their desires are legitimate by way of being authentic to themselves. But, wouldn't someone who has very dark fantasies and is misogynistic be authentic, too, and have a real, true sexuality? Moreover, some writers such as Virginie Despentes have pointed out that women are also the product of the patriarchal society, and that some women may for example have rape fantasies and violent fantasies, too (Despentes 2006). Also, the figure of the drag in Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990) precisely suggests that there is no way to define essential characteristics of truth about bodies, gender and sexualities, or rather that doing so is a closing rather than an opening of the possible. As Baxter puts it, "however benign the approach, the 'will to truth' is also 'a will to power'" (Baxter 2008: 243).

We can see how feminist pornographers try to engage with such a tension, for example by publishing 'making of' videos that are testifying to how smooth and natural the process of making feminist porn is. But these are still edited. Also, given the commercial ambitions of feminist porn, besides some side-products that may be free or explicitly flagged as sexual education tools, this moralized segment of the pornography market produces enjoyable fictions (ordinarily referred to as adult entertainment) rather than quasi-documentaries about human sexuality. The solution, however, may not be to only blame this on the commodification aspect, as individualism and self-realization are aspirations shared widely in our societies. For Taylor, "this was the dream of various revolutionary movements, for instance Marxism. Once one

abolishes capitalism, only the great and admirable fruits of modern freedom would flower; the abuses and deviant forms would wither away. But that's not how it can ever be in a free society, which at one and the same time will give us the highest forms of self-responsible moral initiative and dedication and, say, the worst forms of pornography" (1991: 77-78). It thus appears important to further study such tensions and the struggles to promote freedom while agreeing on a shared moral horizon. Future research would also need to examine not only the discourses but also the practices in feminist porn with e. g. ethnographic methods or visual content analysis.

## CONCLUSION AND LIMITS

In this study, we intend to explore the practice of a moralized market, in the eye of its workers. Various actors of the feminist porn market, from press declarations of directors and actors, to interviews of feminist porn company employees enabled us to identify three discourse repertoires. Feminist porn is seen as an alternative, as an ethical product, or as socio-political activism. Sexual education is both a claim and a enacted practice for many of the pornographers we met or read in our study.

We only conducted interviews with workers of various status sharing experience with the same company dedicated to feminist pornography. It could be of interest to examine in more details how feminist porn practice can be differently elaborated from a company to another. There is also a porn that frees itself from capitalist and markets structures. This should be explored as well.

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