

Queens of Anal, Double, Triple, and the Gang Bang: Producing Asian/American Feminism in Pornography

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In many video stores, race organizes the pornography shelves: Asian, Black, and multicultural. Asian/American women comprise their own special genre in American pornography.¹ Race determines Asian women's sexual

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1. I use the term Asian/American women, following David Palumbo-Liu and Laura Kang, in order to capture the tension of the term not only in terms of the persistent status of questionable citizenship but also as an unstable referent of image, fantasy, and material conditions of very different but conflated groupings of Asian and Asian/American women. See LAURA HYUN YI KANG, COMPOSITIONAL

subjectivity, practices, and roles, showing pornography as important for understanding racialization as a sexual process. We cannot understand the hypersexual bondage of Asian/American women without looking at, and seriously studying, pornography.² Through Orientalism in stag pornography, the enactment of yellowface—a form of Asian minstrelsy—by “real” Asian women in the 1950s, and the performance of polymorphous perversity on Internet and video by contemporary porn megastars, I show how pornography helps us to understand racial formation.³ Sexuality is a racialized process, and racialization is a sexualized process. In early and Golden Age⁴ pornography, we see visual manifestations of racial difference. In the contemporary scene, Asian/American female porn stars Asia Carrera and Annabel Chong use their sexuality in pornography to comment on the profound complexity of their racialization, and use their racialization to comment on the bottomless fluidity of their sexuality. As such, we need to study pornography not only to understand Asian/American women’s racial formation, but also to recognize the ways in which it recasts pain, pleasure, power and the political. It does so through a reminder of the unreliability and unknowability of the experiences of race, sexuality, and representation. Keeping open the complexity of images as well as the experience of their production and consumption helps me to formulate a theory of “race-positive sexuality” that takes seriously the challenge of defining sexuality in terms of Asian/American feminist women’s practices in pornography.

I. WHY STUDY PORNOGRAPHY TO UNDERSTAND RACE AND SEXUALITY?

The modern feminist debates on pornography continue from the wars between anti-pornography and anti-censorship feminists in the 1980s. Andrea Dworkin and Catharine MacKinnon offered a feminist theory of pornography constituted primarily of a harms-based evaluation asserting that pornography enacts violence upon women.⁵ Primarily understood as the ultimate objectification of women, pornography is framed as the monster arm of sexism

SUBJECTS: ENFIGURING ASIAN/AMERICAN WOMEN (2002); DAVID PALUMBO-LIU, ASIAN/AMERICAN: HISTORICAL CROSSINGS OF A RACIAL FRONTIER (1999).

2. In my forthcoming book, I argue that Asian/American women are bonded by hypersexuality in representation ranging from independent and industry stage and screen productions including Broadway, Hollywood, and Asian/American feminist films to pornography from the 1910s to the present. CELINE PARREÑAS SHIMIZU, *THE HYPERSEXUALITY OF RACE: PERFORMING ASIAN/AMERICAN WOMEN ON SCREEN AND SCENE* (forthcoming 2007).

3. See, e.g., MICHAEL OMI & HOWARD WINANT, *RACIAL FORMATION IN THE UNITED STATES: FROM THE 1960S TO THE 1990S* (2d ed. 1994).

4. The Golden Age was an era from the 1960s to the 1980s when high production values reigned in pornography, such as the use of film rather than video.

5. See, e.g., IN HARM’S WAY: THE PORNOGRAPHY CIVIL RIGHTS HEARINGS (Andrea Dworkin & Catharine A. MacKinnon eds., 1997); CATHARINE A. MACKINNON, *FEMINISM UNMODIFIED: DISCOURSES ON LIFE AND LAW* (1987); CATHARINE A. MACKINNON, *ONLY WORDS* (1993).

and patriarchy exemplified by Robin Morgan's popular adage, "[p]ornography is the theory, and rape the practice."⁶ Such rigid analysis, which prioritizes victimization in its understanding of the power of both sexuality and representation, does not accommodate pleasure, performance, or fantasy beyond accusations of false consciousness. The derivation of anything but pain and oppression from pornography leads to accusations of perversity and pathology. The derivation of pleasure supposedly indicates an agreement to one's own degradation.

In reading pornography differently, sex-positive feminists emphasize a differentiation between fantasy and reality, "[f]or pornographic fantasy has no straightforward connection with what may be its 'real-life' enactment, unless it's a stylized 'enactment' (as in consensual s/m) under the fantasizer's own control."⁷ Fantasy can find politically productive expression, such as gay men's usage of pornography to seek sexual legitimacy, redress, and education.⁸ Crude definitions of fantasy in anti-pornography feminist platforms do not account for such a productive use. Similarly, feminist film scholars recommend watching porn films closely as socially relevant texts and especially as a genre worth studying, rather than a social problem in need of annihilation. For example, through an evaluation of the "money shot," the recorded capture of ejaculation essential in contemporary pornography, Linda Williams identified the problem of visualizing women's sexuality as important to the language of pornography.⁹ Laura Kipnis encourages the study of pornography and its ability to tell us a great deal about power dynamics in society.¹⁰ Susie Bright, Constance Penley, and Naomi Wolf more specifically problematize women's identities and desires in pornography.¹¹ For example, women desire. Women express different kinds of sexuality. Women participate willingly in perverse practices. According to Wolf, male consumption defies Andrea Dworkin's prediction that the proliferation of pornography would lead men to do violence to women.¹² Instead, the opposite occurred; pornography lessened male libido for "real women."¹³

6. Robin Morgan, *Theory and Practice: Pornography and Rape*, in TAKE BACK THE NIGHT: WOMEN ON PORNOGRAPHY 134, 139 (Laura Lederer ed., 1980).

7. Lynne Segal, *Sweet Sorrows, Painful Pleasures: Pornography and the Perils of Heterosexual Desire*, in SEX EXPOSED: SEXUALITY AND THE PORNOGRAPHY DEBATE 65, 71 (Lynne Segal & Mary McIntosh eds., 1992).

8. TOM WAUGH, *HARD TO IMAGINE: GAY MALE EROTICISM IN PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILM FROM THEIR BEGINNINGS TO STONEWALL* (1996).

9. LINDA WILLIAMS, *HARD CORE: POWER, PLEASURE, AND THE "FRENZY OF THE VISIBLE"* (1989).

10. LAURA KIPNIS, *BOUND AND GAGGED* (1996).

11. Constance Penley, *Crackers and Whackers: The White Trashing of Porn*, in WHITE TRASH: RACE AND CLASS IN AMERICA 89 (Matt Wray & Annalee Newitz eds., 1997); Susie Bright, *White Sex: Pornography and the Politics of Fantasy in America*, VILLAGE VOICE, May 18, 1993, at 34; Naomi Wolf, *The Porn Myth*, N.Y. MAG., Oct. 20, 2003, available at http://www.newyorkmetro.com/nymetro/news/trends/n_9437/.

12. Wolf, *supra* note 11.

13. *Id.*

Located between the anti-pornography and sex-positive camps, racialized sexuality in pornography remains a problem that needs a more serious and more direct approach. Racialized analyses of pornography demonstrate how the simplifications of sexuality, production, consumption, and fantasy, as well as the rhetoric of gender victimization, register within the context of the lives of women of color. As Trinh T. Minh-ha argues in *Woman, Native, Other*, women of color live at the intersection of multiple oppressions as they experience racism, gender discrimination, and sexual harassment.¹⁴ For example, the history of racialized sexuality in slavery grounds Black feminist responses to pornography.¹⁵ Proponents of sex-positive versions of pornography must not belittle the power of the ongoing legacy of sexual slavery with regard to race. Too easily, racial discourses of pornography are seen as regressive victimology in an anti-sexuality platform, rather than as a discourse within history that needs confrontation.¹⁶ This insensitivity to race transpires in rather subtle ways, according to critics like Susie Bright, who comments on how Whiteness remains unmarked in discussions of sexuality.¹⁷ Magdalena Barrera identifies the exclusion of race in analyses of sexuality from popular discourses about Jennifer Lopez's butt to Laura Kipnis's analysis of *Hustler*.¹⁸ Laura Kipnis remarks that pornography "does exist, and it's not going to go away. Why it exists, what it has to say, and who porn thinks it's talking to, are more interesting questions than all these doomed, dreary attempts to debate it, regulate it, or protest it."¹⁹ While Kipnis argues against the likes of Catharine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin, we must take care not to conflate anti-racist critique that may look like what she describes as "debate . . . and protest" with anti-sex critique.²⁰ Sex-positive discourse, proposed by sex-workers and cultural critics like Carol Queen and Annie Sprinkle, is not mutually exclusive from race-positive sexuality.²¹

Black feminist theories regarding pornography use race and the identification of racism in pornography as the primary lens of analysis. For Tracey A. Gardner, pornography capitalizes on the underlying history of carnal,

14. TRINH T. MINH-HA, *WOMAN, NATIVE, OTHER: WRITING POSTCOLONIALITY AND FEMINISM* 83-86 (1989).

15. See, e.g., BLACK WOMEN IN AMERICA: AN HISTORICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA (Darlene Clark Hines ed., 1993); EVELYN BROOKS HIGGINBOTHAM, *HISTORY AND THEORY: FEMINIST RESEARCH, DEBATES AND CONTESTATIONS* (1997); DARLENE CLARK HINES, *THE AFRICAN AMERICAN ODYSSEY* (3d ed. 2005).

16. This is a particularly intense experience at conferences, where White feminists respond to my prioritization of race as sex-negative and feminists of color fear what the priority of sexuality threatens in terms of reifying the traditional pathology ascribed to women of color.

17. Bright, *supra* note 11.

18. Magdalena Barrera, *Hottentot 2000: Jennifer Lopez and Her Butt*, in *SEXUALITIES IN HISTORY* 407 (Kim M. Phillips & Barry Reay eds., 2002).

19. KIPNIS, *supra* note 10, at x-xi.

20. *Id.*; see also IN HARM'S WAY, *supra* note 5; MACKINNON, *ONLY WORDS*, *supra* note 5.

21. See, e.g., CAROL QUEEN, *REAL LIVE NUDE GIRL: CHRONICLES OF A SEX-POSITIVE CULTURE* (2002); ANNIE SPRINKLE, *POST-PORN MODERNIST* (1998).

diabolic, and evil myths constituting the lives of people of color in the United States, such as the myth of the Black rapist and the always consenting Black woman. For Gardner, pornography operates as a technology of racism, an arm of the monster.²² Luisah Teish's *A Quiet Subversion* describes pornography as undermining the Black Power Movement because it aims to pull back advancements gained by the Civil Rights Movement in order to return Blacks to non-human ontology.²³ If White women function as objects in pornography, Alice Walker's essay *Coming Apart* identifies a racial grid within pornography that sees Black women as animalistic and as less than excrement in the context of White female objectification.²⁴ She says Black women in pornography qualify as less than objects when signifying the scatological.²⁵ The diagnosis of pornography as negative continues in her collection of stories and essays *You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down*, wherein the love between a Black man and woman becomes undercut by the presence of pornography—so that what empowers Black men in the objectification of White women simultaneously disables Black female sexual pleasure.²⁶ Within this work, fantasy proceeds as nothing more than a specter of racism and a definition of masculinity that takes pleasure and power from female objectification.

Similarly to Black women, Asian/American women's hypersexuality, viewed as "naturally" excessive and extreme against a White female norm, directly attaches to a specific race and gender ontology. At the same time, the master narratives that hold for African American women, such as the centrality of slavery, do not necessarily apply to Asian/American women, who contend with hypersexual attribution that emerges from different colonial histories. While the figure of the Black woman in pornography as animalistic and intrinsically available derives from her historical debasement in slavery, the Asian woman, presented as culturally prone to sexual adventure and exotic difference, emerges from the colonial encounter of war. Like Black women, Asian/American women cannot flee from the racial categorization that Alice Walker, Luisa Teish, and Tracey A. Gardner describe in their essays on pornography.²⁷

Indeed, all women demonstrate sexuality in pornography, but the hypersexuality of women of color knots itself into racial identity and history. Asian/American women's sexuality subsists in history; this history embeds itself in the sexuality we see on porn screens. It is important to recall the historical context of sexuality inscribing the immigration of Asian women into

22. Tracey A. Gardner, *Racism in Pornography and the Women's Movement*, in TAKE BACK THE NIGHT: WOMEN ON PORNOGRAPHY, *supra* note 6, at 105-6.

23. Luisah Teish, *A Quiet Subversion*, in TAKE BACK THE NIGHT: WOMEN ON PORNOGRAPHY, *supra* note 6, at 115, 117.

24. ALICE WALKER, *Coming Apart*, in YOU CAN'T KEEP A GOOD WOMAN DOWN 41 (1981).

25. *Id.*

26. Alice Walker, *Porn*, in YOU CAN'T KEEP A GOOD WOMAN DOWN, *supra* note 24, at 77.

27. See *supra*, notes 22-26 and accompanying text.

the United States, as it significantly informs my exploration of alternative responses to sexuality in Asian/American women's presence in pornography. Figures of Chinese female prostitutes occupied a prominent place in popular culture, and this imagined threat shaped immigration, resulting in the 1875 "Page Law," which curbed their population.²⁸ At the turn of the century, Chinese female prostitutes were routinely harassed on the streets. Japanese women entered the United States as "picture brides" at the beginning of the twentieth century and as "war brides" in post-World War II America.²⁹ In Filipino American history, a woman was stoned to death for adultery—a gender and racial betrayal.³⁰ Korean women "war brides" arrived in the United States with their American G.I. husbands after the Korean War.³¹ Catalogs introduce mail-order or pen pal brides from the Philippines today.³² Specifically because their legal status exists conditionally as part of their marriage to a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, mail-order brides are especially vulnerable regardless of their experiences of domestic violence.³³ Asian women travel to the United States as sex workers.³⁴ The process of racialization in immigration centralizes the sexuality of Asian women as a subjugating force in ways that can better inform our approaches to pornography.

While we acknowledge the sexuality of women of color in history and Black feminist theory regarding the dangers of pornography, women of color who are cultural producers advocate for what I term "race-positive sexuality," which resonates with the work of women of color in pornography. A formulation that brings together the concerns of Black feminist theory regarding pornography and sex-positive discourse, "race-positive sexuality" emerges from the literature of Chrystos, Cherrie Moraga, Audre Lorde, and others, who present pleasure, pain, and trauma simultaneously, in ways that

28. Act of Mar. 3, 1875 (Page Law), ch. 141, 18 Stat. 477, 477. See generally JOHN D'EMILIO & ESTELLE FREEDMAN, *INTIMATE MATTERS: THE HISTORY OF SEXUALITY IN AMERICA* ch. 5 (1988); GEORGE ANTHONY PEPPER, *IF THEY DON'T BRING THEIR WOMEN HERE: CHINESE FEMALE IMMIGRATION BEFORE EXCLUSION* (1999); RUTH ROSEN, *THE LOST SISTERHOOD: PROSTITUTION IN AMERICA, 1900-1918*, at chs. 5-7, epilogue (1982); JUDY YUNG, *UNBOUND VOICES: A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF CHINESE WOMEN IN SAN FRANCISCO* (1999); Lucie Cheng Hirata, *Free, Indentured, Enslaved: Chinese Prostitutes in Nineteenth Century America*, in 5 *SIGNS* 3 (1979).

29. See, e.g., EVELYN NAKANO GLENN, *ISSEI, NISEI, WAR BRIDE* 17, 27 (1986).

30. See James Wood Collection, Box 1-3, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, cited in Rhacel Salazar Parreñas, "White Trash" Meets the "Little Brown Monkeys": The Taxi Dance Hall as a Site of Interracial and Gender Alliances Between White Working Class Women and Filipino Immigrant Men in the 1920s & 30s, 24 *AMERASIA* 115, 132 n.7 (1998).

31. See KATHARINE H.S. MOON, *SEX AMONG ALLIES: MILITARY PROSTITUTION IN U.S.-KOREA RELATIONS* 30-31 (1997); *SLAYING THE DRAGON* (NAATA 1989).

32. See, e.g., NICOLE CONSTABLE, *ROMANCE ON THE GLOBAL STAGE: PEN PALS, VIRTUAL ETHNOGRAPHY AND "MAIL-ORDER" MARRIAGES* (2003); Roland B. Tolentino, *Bodies, Letters, Catalogs: Filipinas in Transnational Space*, in 48 *SOCIAL TEXT* 49 (1996); VALERIE SOE, *PICTURING ORIENTAL GIRLS: A (RE)EDUCATIONAL VIDEOTAPE* (Valerie Soe 1992) (displaying text from mail order bride catalogs).

33. E.g., MARGARET ABRAHAM, *SPEAKING THE UNSPEAKABLE: MARITAL VIOLENCE AMONG SOUTH ASIAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES* (2000).

34. NORA OKJA KELLER, *FOX GIRL* (2002); *THE WOMEN OUTSIDE* (POV 1995).

embrace the liberating possibilities of sexuality while also acknowledging the risks of reifying perversity and pathology that are traditionally ascribed to women of color in popular culture.³⁵ The need to talk about pornography from the point of view of a particular psychic legacy of pain needs emphasis, and the continuity of White indifference to the different racial context for discourses of sexuality must be acknowledged.

Race-positive sexuality connects gender and sexuality in pornography to slavery and colonial history, while keeping open pornography's anti-racist and sex-positive potentialities. If Lauren Berlant correctly poses the White girl's role in national fantasy as the figure of innocence that must be protected,³⁶ then the Asian girl's extreme perversity appears in pornography as a quality attributed to her ethnic culture and race. Thus, the Asian girl in national fantasy remains unprotected. Acknowledging the tradition of women of color as cultural producers and critics who present sexuality as constitutive of their racial histories and subjectivities, race-positive sexuality argues for the need to acknowledge how sexuality can simultaneously be pleasurable, powerful, and painful. Rather than authorize critics to decide what good and bad sexualities look like for any racial agenda, we need to account for the specific ways sexuality works. Rather than advocate for a particular sexuality, I prefer to keep our definitions open so as to make space for those who experience sexual subjugation and are frequently silenced, and those who practice sexual perversity and who are too easily dismissed as dangerous, bad subjects who damage agendas of racial decency. I propose that we listen to Asian/American women who work in pornography, rather than succumb to the temptation of ascribing traditional hypersexuality bound in racialized images.

In *Rape and Asian American Women*, Kandice Chuh argues that because Asian/American women are depicted as always consenting, they cannot be raped in the eyes of the law.³⁷ Such a legacy amplifies the stakes for Asian/American women in pornography. If the actual rape of third world women and women of color finds explanation not in terms of White male power, but in a natural female propensity for hypersexuality, then Asian women's hypersexual ontology becomes described as essential.³⁸ Thus, an attempt to shift the traditional understanding of sexuality and visibility as

35. SHIMIZU, *supra* note 2, ch. 8; see also CHRYSTOS, NOT VANISHING (1999); CHERRIE MORAGA, *LOVING IN THE WAR YEARS* (2000). See generally AUDRE LORDE, *SISTER OUTSIDER* (1984). The work of these authors demonstrates the context in which women of color write about their sexuality. They assert the need to redefine sexuality in their own terms, as an act of defiance in the face of what Leslie Bow has termed acts of betrayal—or the trap of racial traitorship—for women who prioritize the gendered and sexual issues of racial experience. LESLIE BOW, *BETRAYAL AND OTHER ACTS OF SUBVERSION: FEMINISM, SEXUAL POLITICS, ASIAN AMERICAN WOMEN'S LITERATURE* 3 (2001).

36. LAUREN BERLANT, *THE QUEEN OF AMERICA GOES TO WASHINGTON CITY: ESSAYS ON SEX AND CITIZENSHIP* 22, 73 (1997).

37. Kandice Chuh, *Rape and Asian American Women*, in *PRIVILEGING POSITIONS: THE SITES OF ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES* (Gary Y. Okihiro et al. eds., 1995).

38. *Id.*

dangerous and damaging is understandably met with skepticism. What do we risk if we acknowledge the possibility that sexuality may be liberating if we look beyond the easy equation of the role of Asian women in national fantasy with disempowerment and damage?

While Asian/American feminists point out the “absence [of Asian/American women] in both the American and Asian American historical imagination,” their presence proliferates excessively in pornography.³⁹ We need to look at the role of Asian/American women in pornography to better understand the role of sexuality and visibility in the lives of Asian/American women. Contrary to Michel Foucault’s criticism that the incitement to speak about sex classifies, disciplines, and punishes,⁴⁰ speaking about sex in the racial context aims to make sense of a particular historical subjection.

Though Earl Jackson warns that pornography “cannot be satisfactorily summarized in any unitary fashion,”⁴¹ race persistently defines the appearance of Asian/American women. Both an Asian/American and Black feminist reading of sexuality must avoid falling into the trap of vilifying race and sexuality, especially in moving images. Chuck Kleinhans writes that “[f]ear of images erupts in even the most nominally progressive circles when it comes to sexual representations.”⁴² Instead, we need to take heed of Laura Kipnis’s argument about the value of looking at pornography.⁴³ We must allow for the complexities of sex and visibility to surface as part of formulating feminist and anti-racist politics. Asian/American women within pornography experience race as visible and sexual.

Looking at pornography helps us to understand the fantasies and fetishisms of Asian women in popular culture. Fantasies do not merely unleash domination upon people of color. Fantasies can project desire, open the psyche, and work as technologies for imagination for authors, spectators, and critics of color. We should keep the door open for redeploying fantasy in service of making space for those who need to articulate different deviancies and perversities in the broadest sense of political and social inclusion. Freudian understanding of fantasy emphasizes an alternative different from and at times defiant of reality.⁴⁴ Crucial to the formation of subjectivity, fantasy forms the

39. Linda Trinh Võ & Marian Sciachitano, *Moving Beyond “Exotics, Whores and Nimble Fingers”*: Asian American Women in a New Era of Globalization and Resistance, 21 FRONTIERS 1, 1 (2000).

40. 1 MICHEL FOUCAULT, *THE HISTORY OF SEXUALITY passim* (1990).

41. Earl Jackson, *Graphic Specularity*, in STRATEGIES OF DEVIANCE: STUDIES IN GAY MALE REPRESENTATION 126, 129 (1995).

42. Chuck Kleinhans, *Teaching Sexual Images: Some Pragmatics*, 40 JUMP CUT 119 (1996).

43. KIPNIS, *supra* note 10.

44. JEAN LAPLANCHE & JEAN-BERTRAND PONTALIS, *THE LANGUAGE OF PSYCHOANALYSIS*, entry on ‘Phantasy’ (Donald Nicholson-Smith trans., 1974) (using SIGMUND FREUD, FORMULATIONS ON THE TWO PRINCIPLES OF MENTAL FUNCTIONING 315 (1973)). See generally SIGMUND FREUD, *THE INTERPRETATION OF DREAMS* (1900).

terms with which one relates to the world.⁴⁵ If we examine fantasy as part of the racial experience in terms of self and others' perceptions, imaginations, illusions, and consciousness, agency opens as well as new levels of analyses regarding racialized sexuality. As Slavoj Žižek explains in *The Sexual Act in the Cinema*, the articulation of power can be seen and evaluated in the sex acts represented.⁴⁶ Yet fantasy does not belong to the powerful alone, but may be manipulated to express dissatisfaction and other critique. Fantasy and its expression in pornography function importantly in studying the politics of race, especially as a venue for Asian/American women to redefine the tradition of their hypersexual production in moving images.

In The Secret Museum's "The Pre-Pornographic Era," Walter Kendrick asks what enabled the development of pornography in the twentieth century.⁴⁷ He describes a shift in sexuality as an analytic subject "in its own right, sorting it out from the moral, legal, and religious contexts in which it had hitherto been embedded. Not until very late in the 19th century would the shifting be completed leaving us today with a notion of sex as something like advanced calisthenics."⁴⁸ Within Kendrick's definition, what do we make of "Asian" becoming synonymous with anal and other extreme sexual activities, like the special acrobatics of double penetration, triple penetration, and gang bangs in contemporary pornography? While keeping the door open to fantasy and the power of performance in redeploying their meaning, we need to understand the way Asian/American women are sexualized over time in pornography.

II. A SOCIAL HISTORY OF ASIAN/AMERICAN IMAGES IN PORNOGRAPHY

Stag films are short, illegally-made eight-millimeter and sixteen-millimeter porn films that circulated in the Americas and Europe during the first half of the twentieth century.⁴⁹ During the Golden Age of pornography in the 1960s to

45. LAPLANCHE & PONTALIS, *supra* note 44.

46. Slavoj Žižek, *From the Sublime to the Ridiculous: The Sexual Act in Cinema*, in THE PLAGUE OF FANTASIES app. 1 at 171 (1997). Žižek discusses the process of composing the sex act in cinema by actors and producers in order to make an assessment about its unrepresentability. *Id.* at 176. For example, pornography is "codified" rather than "spontaneous." *Id.* at 177. In his discussion of the sex scene between Willem Dafoe and Laura Dern in *Wild at Heart* (MGM Home Entertainment 1990), he discusses how we may see power dynamics in the sex act. *Id.* at 185. Dafoe's character demands that Dern's character state her consent to his sexual demands, and then rejects her. Through the focus on her hand, we see her resistance unravel towards willingness, what Žižek calls the "sign of her acquiescence, the proof that he has stirred up her fantasy." *Id.* His surprising rejection, according to Žižek, further humiliates her—in a demonstration of power dynamics in the moment of the sex act. *Id.*

47. WALTER KENDRICK, THE SECRET MUSEUM: PORNOGRAPHY IN MODERN CULTURE, at 33 (1996).

48. *Id.* at 65.

49. See, e.g., WAUGH, *supra* note 8; Tom Waugh, *Good Clean Fung*, in SCREENING ASIAN/AMERICANS (Peter X. Feng ed., 2002); Linda Williams, *Corporealized Observers*, in FUGITIVE IMAGES: FROM PHOTOGRAPHY TO VIDEO (Patrice Petro ed., 1995); Linda Williams, *Pornographies*

the 1980s, many films like *Deep Throat*, *Behind the Green Door*, and *The Devil in Miss Jones* made huge profits, as couples began to attend screenings in movie theaters together.⁵⁰ I examine the representation of Asian/American women in the Orientalism of the genital show and the showing of genitalia in the stag film⁵¹ as the central goal in early pornography from the beginning of the twentieth century, and in the production of yellowface in the Golden Age of pornography. In my discussion of stag films, I describe the function of Orientalism in the production design of the genital show. I scrutinize what we can claim for Asian/American women in looking at the legacy of these images. In Golden Age films featuring the earliest Asian/American porn stars, I interpret the occurrence of yellowface as a political act. By donning yellowface make-up and costume and applying linguistic approaches, such as accents and manner of speech, as well as the enactment of peculiar bodily movements, racial difference may seem reliably visible. Within such a problematic formation, however, the juxtaposition of the stereotyped role and the Asian woman's body and psyche captures a collision that ruptures the fantasy.

Early pornography problematized racial visibility. Since the fact of racial difference may not be visibly reliable, pornography finds ways to titillate through production design and narrative, such as in its intertitle texts or its dialogue. These elements work to establish racial difference as the erotic meat of pornography in early stag film. Later, the presence of Asian women defies fantasy and stereotype as a prelude to the ways in which modern Asian women porn stars use pornography to comment on their racialization through sex and their sexualization through race.

A. Early Stag Films

In the genital show of early stag films, Asian women's skin color difference may not be visually apparent in black-and-white depictions of racialized bodies. Thus, accoutrements act as visible evidence of race for the Asian/American woman in stag films, whereas for Black women in films such as *Two Nights and a Day*, skin color functions as certification of racial difference.⁵² Conversely, bodily objects racially mark Asian women in stag films. For example, in *China*,⁵³ viewers see that the racial essence of people can be found in their sexual exterior in pornography, discernable not only in the presentation of White women in yellowface, but also in the racialization of the

On/Scene, or "Diff'rent Strokes for Diff'rent Folks," in *SEX EXPOSED: SEXUALITY AND THE PORNOGRAPHY DEBATE*, *supra* note 7, at 233.

50. See *BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR* (Mitchell Brothers Film Group 1972); *DEEP THROAT* (Atrow Productions 1972); *THE DEVIL IN MISS JONES* (VCX 1973).

51. WILLIAMS, *supra* note 9 (also known as the "meat shot").

52. *TWO NIGHTS AND A DAY* (unknown producer 1953) (on file with the Kinsey Institute).

53. *CHINA* (unknown producer 1930) (on file with the Kinsey Institute).

narrative and the Other. The sex act demonstrates that Asian women's race cannot always be reliably established on film. Stag films' use of Oriental objects to establish racial difference helps to define my concept of the "seeing of race as the seeing of sex." Specifically, these films aim to show us the sexuality of the Asian woman (even though she may be a White woman in yellowface) in order to comment on her race and gender as being-for-the-White-male-actor/spectator.⁵⁴

China uses Oriental accoutrements to ensure the racialized meaning of the meat shots.⁵⁵ Because the genital difference of the Asian woman in the body of the White woman in yellowface is not racially distinguishable, the meat shots themselves require the presence of Oriental objects along with the genitalia in order to establish visible racial difference. *China* begins at the home of a woman dressed up to appear Asian: a bathrobe with Oriental patterns, a large white flower in her geisha-style hair.⁵⁶ She opens the door for a White man in a dark western suit. He auditions her as an "Oriental Interpretive Dancer" and hires her to dance at the Rialto Circus for seventy-five dollars per week. In turn, she rewards him with sex, narrated by the intertitles as "an ancient Chinese way of expressing gratitude." The heavily-embroidered, kimono-style silk pajamas, the big flower (another convention in marking the Asian woman in stag film), her bun-styled hair, and the set design that surrounds her (flowers, paintings, rice wine, and tea cups), make her into an Asian woman. A wide shot retains and amplifies the power of these objects to remind us of the supposed racial difference.

In the pre-sex scene, the Asian woman removes her jacket to reveal a matching dressing gown beneath. The edges of her shirt feature thick embroidery. The garments themselves help establish the seductive aura of the Asian woman by providing Oriental décor as difference in order to fetishize race. The tropes of White male upper-class-ness and Asian female sexual servility are presented through costume. His thin, dark suit provides a contrast to her overly embellished figure. The contrast again gives the composition of the frame visual interest, creating unexpected beauty.

Similarly, the sex acts make the racialized body's difference visible. In *China*'s first sex act, the wide shot of the kissing scene involves the whole room: the furniture, the fabrics all over the place, and the tea cups on the table in front of them. She also takes off her clothes and allows them to frame her body for a while. The ornate Oriental clothes do not leave the frame entirely; instead they accompany or supplement her. She also peels away the layers of

54. Structuring recuperation of Asian stag films for Asian male or female viewers is not possible in the same way that critics have approached gay spectatorship and subject formation. I have not found data available for Asian/American male or female spectatorships of these stag films, as they were viewed in predominantly racially segregated spaces of the American Legion and fraternity houses.

55. *CHINA*, *supra* note 53.

56. *Id.*

racialized clothing to reveal more clothing, in a deliberate showing of her body through her clothes. Finally, when the last of the clothing sheds, a different kind of skin is revealed. No special difference emerges.

Therefore, the fabric plays an active part even within the subsequent sex scenes and the close-up genital shots. These meat shots featuring the Asian women seem always to come with a kimono, parasol, or fan, in order to remind us of the fact of racial difference that does not actually exist in plain view. In *China*, the clothes—especially the ornate embroidery—enter the shot and prominently occupy the frame to an unnatural degree.⁵⁷ For example, the bottom corner of the Asian woman's embroidered kimono-style shirt inserts itself into the extreme close up of the genital action. The Oriental fabrics frame the genitals during the act of intercourse. To further emphasize the interracial encounter, the intertitle pops up with a name for a sex act that looks no different from any other male penetration of the female: "The Shanghai Gesture." If the film is not narrated, it seems that the racial difference gets lost. When the bottom of her dressing gown, particularly the part where the two front halves meet, comes together in the meat shot, the patterns also form a pattern on the screen. The objects remind us of race and also help to aestheticize the interracial sex act.

The narrative and production design racialize the sex act and also help to create an aesthetic particular to the interracial Asian-White sex act. Narrative and accoutrements team up to assert internal racial difference, as secured by external markings. In other typical stag films, like *A Country Stud Horse*, which features primarily White sex,⁵⁸ the sight of shoes during sex acts is a common convention. In *China*, even this common trope conveys Orientalism through its ornaments.⁵⁹ It functions in a different way, in speaking about racial difference instead of just mocking the sex act. When effectively inserted into the genital close-ups the shoe fulfills its purpose as a racialized sexual object. The shoe signifies excess sexuality, reminding us of the nature of the racialized being carrying out the act. The taboo miscegenation transpiring before us cannot be forgotten.

The sex act is expressly linked to the Asian woman's racial and cultural background. The narrative supplements the accoutrements to remind the viewer of the racial and cultural Otherness of the characters. The narrative line marks the sex and seduction as continually racial. The need for this line seems to give evidence of the filmmaker's belief regarding the racial nature of the sex act. Nothing of this sort occurs in *White stag*, where sex remains unmarked by race. Yet in stag films featuring interracial Asian sex, this theme appears continuously. When they strip out of their clothes, the intertitle reads, "When

57. *Id.*

58. *A COUNTRY STUD HORSE* (unknown producer 1920) (on file with the Kinsey Institute).

59. *CHINA*, *supra* note 53.

Buddha Smiles.” The accoutrements and the narrative both work together to create an intensely racialized sexual scene.⁶⁰ Thus, stag films included race as central to their production of Asian women through White women in yellowface.

B. Post-1950s Stag Films

The era following World War II witnessed an explosion of pornography out of the stag arena and into mainstream venues. In the fifties, anti-miscegenation laws started crumbling in the United States, just as American military men brought home war brides from Asia.⁶¹ The military rest and recreation industry in Southeast Asia began transforming into a commercial industry, which saw great global libidinal transactions in its economy.⁶² Hollywood produced movies problematizing the interracial love affair. They included popular leading men paired with beautiful Asian women in love stories bound for marriage: *Sayonara* featuring Marlon Brando,⁶³ *The World of Suzie Wong* featuring William Holden,⁶⁴ and *Walk like a Dragon* featuring Jack Lord.⁶⁵ Within this context, the elimination of anti-miscegenation laws and the

60. *China* can be compared to a similar film, *Geisha Girl* (unknown producer 1948-1955) (on file with the Kinsey Institute). In *Geisha Girl*, White men and women play Oriental in a fascinating fantasy of a monoracial coupling (that is less prevalent today). The convention of using Oriental accoutrements persists in the late 1940s as the woman wears a giant gardenia in her hair, which becomes included in representations of fellatio. The two men featured wear Oriental garb. In one sex scene, the man's long braid, another accoutrement that marks racial difference, gets in the way of his genital coupling with the woman. After wiping off the semen from one ejaculation, the woman lies down on another man's braid. The braid and Oriental robes help author the erotic grammar of the sex scene, serving as visual markers of the racial difference in the sexual encounter. While the skin color difference is not noticeable in such "Asian" scenes, the moustache, braid, clothing, and wigs take on larger significance. In *Geisha*, (unknown producer 1958) (on file with the Kinsey Institute), an Asian woman performed by a White woman in yellowface, akin to stag films from an earlier era, uses a kimono, flower in her hair, and Oriental paintings on the walls surrounding her to establish racial difference for spectators and for her lover. She converses with a man, who is looking around the space of her apartment, specifically her paintings, as the justification for his presence. She is brush painting a horse, and they drink tea together. She also wears a wig and dances in a strange hodge-podge of movements that is attributed to Oriental tradition. In these two examples, I note how Oriental decorative excess informs production design as necessary to the establishment of Oriental authenticity. To see the construction of race is to see how pornography is a process of racial formation, for it secures racial difference through its production.

61. For a discussion of Asian women's migration, see GLENN, *supra* note 29 and XIAOJIAN ZHAO, *REMAKING CHINESE AMERICA: IMMIGRATION, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY, 1940-1965* (2002).

62. See RYAN BISHOP & LILLIAN S. ROBINSON, *NIGHT MARKET: SEXUAL CULTURES AND THE THAI ECONOMIC MIRACLE* (1998); CYNTHIA ENLOE, *BANANAS, BEACHES, AND BASES: MAKING FEMINIST SENSE OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS* (1989); GLOBAL SEX WORKERS: RIGHTS, RESISTANCE, AND REDEFINITION (Kamala Kempadoo & Jo Doezema eds., 1998); SAUNDRA POLLACK STURDEVANT & BRENDA STOLTZFUS, *LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL: PROSTITUTION AND THE U.S. MILITARY IN ASIA* (1993); THANH-DAM TRUONG, *SEX, MONEY AND MORALITY: PROSTITUTION AND TOURISM IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA* (1990).

63. *SAYONARA* (MGM 1957).

64. *THE WORLD OF SUZIE WONG* (Paramount Pictures 1960).

65. *WALK LIKE A DRAGON* (Paramount Pictures 1960). See also GINA MARCHETTI, *ROMANCE AND THE "YELLOW PERIL": RACE, SEX, AND DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES IN HOLLYWOOD FICTION* (1993); *SLAYING THE DRAGON*, *supra* note 31.

gradual rejection of the Hollywood Production Code⁶⁶ witnessed a new kind of stag pornography from the 1940s to the 1960s. Stag films began to feature more “real” Asian women and fewer White women in yellowface. Two particular trends in the portrayal of Asian women on screen, regardless of the race of the performers (e.g., White women in yellowface), are apparent. First, an unusually high focus on extreme close-ups of the woman’s genitalia evokes thoughts of the genital “slant” which mimics her eyes, the ultimate manifestation of her racial difference. Second, the eroticization of the White male-Asian female marriage became more prevalent in society at the time, and so the stag film evolves to feature “real” Asian women who must nonetheless traffic in yellowface in order to sell racial visibility that would not otherwise seem apparent. How does yellowface function in these films? When we see Asian/American women putting on the fantasy of Asian women, it creates a disjuncture. It necessitates a re-evaluation of the reliability of the film medium, as well as its possibilities for political critique by Asian female actors.⁶⁷

Moreover, we can further see how pornography occurs as a process of racial formation when we examine how Asian/American women present yellowface sexuality in the context of a more dramatic change occurring in later stag films from the 1950s. While the technique of persistently illustrating racial difference persists in earlier stag films until the 1950s, the sudden appearance of Asian/American women playing Asian women, especially within the domestic intimacy of the Asian female-White male couple and the absence of Oriental accoutrements on the female body, is significant in the 1960s. In the film *Date Night*, erotic scenes produce Asian female-White male domesticity.⁶⁸ The shift becomes comprehensible if we take account of the historical changes occurring at this time. The White man no longer knocks on the door to encounter the strange Asian woman; she acts as his wife or girlfriend. Here, the sex scene’s lack of Oriental objects in the genital show finds revision. While we no longer see Oriental objects decorating the sex scene, the new objects domesticate the Asian/American woman.

The title of the film is confusing at first: *Date Night* hints at a night on the town and the need to prepare oneself by dressing up, not down. When the Asian/American woman prepares for her “date,” she undresses from her day clothes and gets ready to wind down. Unlike earlier stag films where the man—a talent agent, plumber or external figure—enters as an outsider to the home, the man in *Date Night* enters the home as her husband or boyfriend. We no

66. For more information regarding the Hollywood Production Code, see MATTHEW BERNSTEIN, *CONTROLLING HOLLYWOOD: CENSORSHIP AND REGULATION IN THE STUDIO ERA* (1999) and THOMAS DOHERTY, *PRE-CODE HOLLYWOOD: SEX, IMMORALITY, AND INSURRECTION IN AMERICAN CINEMA 1930-1934* (1999).

67. See Celine Parreñas Shimizu, *The Bind of Representation: Performing and Consuming Hypersexuality in Miss Saigon*, 57 *THEATRE J.* 247 (2005) (discussing the agency of actors).

68. *DATE NIGHT* (also known as *Chinese Babe* and *Oriental Girlfriend*) (unknown producer 1961) (on file with the Kinsey Institute).

longer see her opening the door; he simply comes in as if returning home from a long day at work. When he enters, she does not stand at all, but warmly welcomes him with a smile, without stopping the filing of her nails. The premise of the narrative has completely changed from earlier films, where the encounter between Asian women and White men transpired within an outsider-insider relation.

In earlier narratives of films like *China* and *Geisha*, the man, usually a stranger from outside the home, encounters an Asian woman, her body racially marked by costume, in her racially marked home.⁶⁹ In *Date Night*, the woman possesses no racially visible markers on her body or in her home setting.⁷⁰ The economy of their physical relationship differs in the intimacy of the greeting—he whispers in her ear and clutches at her robe as she leans in to embrace and kiss him. The genital shot differs the most, however. Instead of Oriental accoutrements, we see a wedding ring—a diamond placed in the depths of the genital show. The presence of this very unique sort of object in the sexual relations of the White man and Asian woman suggests a rewriting of Asian female presence in the later stag film, one that shows a link to historical events such as the entry of war brides into the United States. History and the unfinished legacies it leaves generate fantasy in pornography.

Date Night's sex scene engages the question of racial difference within the couple's interracial domesticity. The increased number of kisses relative to earlier films and the genital show establish a marital type of relationship that is absent from earlier films. The display of the Asian woman's genitals repeats again and again, as if it is anticipating the demand for visible evidence of racial difference. The demand, established in earlier stag films through intertitle texts, labels the vagina as slanted and instills anticipation for it as part of the erotic language of the shot sequence. The repetition of the genital shot in these later stag films demonstrates that no visible biological difference can be found in the Asian woman's vagina. The racialization that occurs here differs significantly from earlier stags that required the reminder of racial difference. Unlike earlier stag films like *Ménage Moderne Du Madame Butterfly*, where the intertitles insisted upon a biological difference for Asian women,⁷¹ the sixties stag films worked to establish the lack of racial difference by using extreme close-ups, such as the man's hand opening the woman's genitals with his fingers.

In *Oriental Girlfriend*, the latest among the stag films I discuss here, the White man enters the scene as the woman sits in front of her dresser.⁷² His arrival immediately initiates a sex scene peppered with conversation that we cannot hear. If we did not take into account the historical changes occurring at

69. CHINA, *supra* note 53; GEISHA, *supra* note 60.

70. DATE NIGHT, *supra* note 68.

71. MÉNAGE MODERNE DU MADAME BUTTERFLY (unknown producer 1930) (on file with the Kinsey Institute).

72. DATE NIGHT, *supra* note 68.

the time, the reason this film bears the title *Oriental Girlfriend* would remain a mystery. No racial décor marks the genital show as in earlier stag films, even if Oriental objects adorn the apartment. The sex scenes seem largely reciprocal: The characters take turns doing the same things to each other in a now rather subdued scene stripped of the garish racial circus of Oriental objects. They register as a couple accustomed to their sexual ritual, and here they keep intent on completing it together. While familiar domesticity frames the couple, fetishization emerges in the interracial sexual coupling itself.

In this Section, I have described how the later era stag films present sex acts that place Asian/American women within domestic intimacy in conjunction with the historical development of American men marrying Asian brides. That is, in later era stag films, a dynamic relationship ties history to the contents of the narrative, and historical movements inform and shape pornography featuring racial subjects. The introduction of Asian/American women to the United States as non-normative wives was eroticized in the pornography of the time. History in the form of Asian and American relations vis-à-vis war, the place of Chinatown in the popular imagination, and the specialized roles of Asian/American women continue to play in the emergence of Asian women in post-1950s pornography.⁷³ The depiction of Asian/American women as wives is unlike early stag films' defiance of yellow peril ideology through fantasy or the presentation of racial difference as a sexual treat. In both instances, however, the Asian/American woman's racial difference makes her more visible and more sexual. Race determines the erotic currency of the films in ways that continue in later pornography. Within this context, racial visibility as crucial to the sexual economy persists in Golden Age pornography, where Asian women complete a form of yellowface initiated by White women in early stag films. The inclusion of real Asian/American women's bodies disrupts the illusion of Asian/American racial visibility in the sex act and the fantasy established in the stag film.

C. Golden Age Porn Stars Linda Wong, Mai Lin, and Kristara Barrington

Linda Wong, Mai Lin, and Kristara Barrington appeared in hundreds of porn films in the 1970s and early 1980s.⁷⁴ Linda Wong appeared in forty-six films between 1976 and 1987;⁷⁵ Mai Lin appeared in 157 films between 1976 and 1999;⁷⁶ and Kristara Barrington appeared in 220 films between 1983 and

73. See GLENN, *supra* note 29; ZHAO, *supra* note 61.

74. See, e.g., CHINA BITCH (Paradise 1989); EXHAUSTED (Caballero 1981); FORTUNE COOKIE NOOKIE (Essex Video 1987); YEAR OF THE SEX DRAGON (Paradise 1986); YELLOW FEVER (LA Video 1984).

75. Internet Adult Film Database: Linda Wong, <http://www.iafd.com/person.asp?perfid=LWong&gender=f> (last visited Apr. 6, 2006).

76. Internet Adult Film Database: Mai Lin, <http://www.iafd.com/person.asp?perfid=MLin&gender=f> (last visited Apr. 6, 2006).

1999.⁷⁷ Through the production of yellowface in the Golden Age of pornography, we see the disjuncture between fantasies and the “real” Asian women acting these roles. When pornography attempts to correspond humorously with mainstream films like *Sayonara*,⁷⁸ *Deer Hunter*,⁷⁹ and *Apocalypse Now*,⁸⁰ we can see how both symbolic arenas cohere to establish in the popular imagination perceptions of Asian women as hypersexual. Popular representation, of which pornography is part, helps us to understand racial formation.

The grammar of Orientalism in pornography reinserts itself in the 1970s through the very bodies of Asian/American women who now play these fantasy roles. Relying on Oriental accoutrements, titles and content, Asian/American women themselves fulfill yellowface scripts. The racialized bodies of Asians are symbolized through Oriental objects like the jade pussycat and the green lingam. Objects, spaces, and racialized bodies construct the erotics of interracial pornography. Throughout the films, the Asian/American women are referred to by their race. Their sexual acts, practices, and identities are also organized by racial categorization. Race defines Asian/American women in pornography. Asian female porn stars use their racial sexualization in pornography to rewrite their subjectivities. Bound by sex, they use it to open up possibilities for theorizing how they negotiate their roles, stardom, and positions as Asian/American women.

In this Section, I survey various yellowface stagings by each of the Golden Age actresses. By studying how each fulfilled different yellowface stereotypes, we can see the production of race across time. Along the way, such a collection of scenes demonstrates the Asian/American woman behind the roles in a triangulation: actor, role, and character. Porn actors work to produce characters, and fantasies. Such a formulation encourages a theory of representation that should also extend to our spectatorship: we consume roles, characters and fantasies, not necessarily “real” Asian women. Pornography demands study precisely because the actors’ authorship and performance function as exchanges of power and deployments of resistance.

The first Asian/American porn star, Linda Wong, starred as a Dragon Lady in films like *Oriental Babysitter*, *Jade Pussycat*, *China Lust*, *China De Sade*, and *The Erotic World of Linda Wong*.⁸¹ These films mimic and parody Hollywood movies like the James Bond series, as well as *The World of Suzie Wong*.⁸² Within these films, Linda Wong’s race becomes classified as Oriental,

77. Internet Adult Film Database: Kristara Barrington, <http://www.iafd.com/person.asp?perfid=Barrington&gender=f> (last visited Apr. 6, 2006).

78. *SAYONARA*, *supra* note 63.

79. *DEER HUNTER* (MCA Home Video 1978).

80. *APOCALYPSE NOW* (Paramount Pictures 1979).

81. *CHINA DE SADE* (VCX 1980); *CHINA LUST* (VCX 1976); *THE EROTIC WORLD OF LINDA WONG* (Stardust Industries 1985); *JADE PUSSYCAT* (Caballero 1977); *ORIENTAL BABYSITTER* (VCX 1976).

82. *THE WORLD OF SUZIE WONG*, *supra* note 64.

not only in her personal description as a star, but also in the language of the film and its erotics. Race determines her sexuality and her role within the films where she established a reputation for welcoming all sorts of sex acts. This brand of sexuality makes up the erotic thrust of her sexual relations compared to other women, in that race defines the roles she plays: the innocent babysitter, sex expert, dominatrix, Spoil of War, Dragon Lady, and spy. In each, she represents the ultimate deviant. Racialized not only by her roles, but also by the narrative, props, costume, makeup, and the racial intensification of the genital show and the money shot, she occupies the role of an exceptional Asian who meets White normative standards of beauty.

In one of her most popular films, *Oriental Babysitter*,⁸³ Linda Wong plays a teenager whose babysitting jobs lead to sex with her White male and female employers. The film opens with an introduction to Wong, who looks directly at the camera and narrates her escapades from the position of a sexually insatiable, but otherwise innocent, young woman. She begins, “[w]hen I was younger, [I had] many fantasies,” as we see her caught in the middle of a White husband and wife’s fight. The man “looks towards me at any chance.” He comes home early to find Wong sleeping on the sofa and gently seduces her into sex by telling her to be “quiet . . . [I won’t] hurt you, [I want to] hold your body For an Oriental girl [you’ve got] large breasts.” She retroactively narrates the scene with pleasure. While her face expresses surprise and a little fear, her voice emphasizes the willingness and desire awakened in her. “The gentleman of the house . . . fondling my breasts,” while his hand covers her mouth. She feels sorry for him for being drunk, describing him as “poor man.” Constructed as a scene of coercion, she responds to him with a kind of recalcitrant passion, gyrating and welcoming him while saying, “Don’t please . . . stop, please.” The sex scene supposedly becomes consensual during cunnilingus, while at the same time, the shot emphasizes her youth, her smiling face in pleasure as ribbons in her hair unravel. He comes on her belly. She then describes how the man apologizes for taking advantage of her—which she counters in the voiceover as actually the fulfillment of her desires. She “really lived out one of [her] fantasies.”

Linda Wong delivers narration in a soft-spoken, sexually inflected tone without an Oriental accent. She delivers the following line adorned with jewelry and big coiffure rather than racialized adornments; “After a few more babysitting jobs, I thought I learned a lot. I would suck a man’s penis with dignity and total love.” The title *Oriental Babysitter* racially classifies her so that nymphomania, a common ascription in pornography, links to her racialization throughout the film. The racialization continues from the title to her lovers’ responses and to the emphasis on her Asian face as the punctuation of every sex scene in an intensification of the money shot. The face becomes

83. ORIENTAL BABYSITTER, *supra* note 81.

necessary in the 1970s porn convention of the money shot. When accompanied by the discourse of the Asian face as the “zone of contact” by David Palumbo-Liu,⁸⁴ the money shot has racial implications. The proof of the man’s pleasure on the woman’s face, as the vehicle of her sexual expression, serves as evidence of both the man and woman’s collective pleasure. When the ejaculate occurs on the Asian face, as the terrain where racial interiority manifests externally, it mobilizes the language of racial difference to infuse the proof of pleasure with racial eroticism.

In *Jade Pussycat*, Linda Wong plays a traitor to her White male lover, who secures a long-lost cultural treasure, the aptly named Oriental object, “jade pussycat.”⁸⁵ We first see Linda Wong performing fellatio for an extraordinarily long amount of time, with special emphasis on her face throughout, before her lover ejaculates all over her belly. As they linger together in bed, Linda’s comrades, a pair of Chinese men, arrive on the scene, revealing her duplicity. Like in James Bond films, where sexual encounter leads to betrayal, so operates the story of Linda Wong’s femme fatale character, Jasmine, in this part of the “Johnny Wadd, Private Detective” series.

In a later scene, a German dominatrix, played by porn star Georgina Spelvin, “requires” Linda Wong’s presence. The diminutive Spelvin commands the larger-bodied Wong: “Little Chinese girl with the name of a flower, undress and show me your body.” Wong’s Jasmine willingly and enthusiastically performs an interesting combination of Asian women’s quintessential servitude and Dragon Lady treachery. Cunnilingus ensues. Spreading apart Linda’s legs, Spelvin asks a question perennially rehearsed in pornography, “Is it true what they say about Chinese girls?” “Take a look,” responds Jasmine, as we see a close-up of her genitals. The racialization of acts and genitalia extends to identities. Within the film, Johnny Wadd refers to Jasmine as the “Oriental Chick.” The Asian characters ultimately remain supplementary to the film’s conclusion, where White sex remains the norm, and Asians are discarded. Similar to their plight in Hollywood movies, the “sneaky little Chinaman” plays a rapist and the Dragon Lady fails in her goal to conquer the White hero. White order restores a narrative of racial adventure. Racial identification overdetermines Wong’s sexuality in conjunction with other problematic themes, such as the production of her otherness as perversity: Dragon Lady, lotus blossom, or racial traitor.

The Asian/American woman represents the ultimate perversity for other deviant sexualities. In *China Lust*, another Oriental object, a “green lingam” actually symbolizes the sexual nature of the Orient and its “ancient sexual rites.”⁸⁶ Set in San Francisco’s Chinatown, a gang of hustlers seeks it for its

84. PALUMBO-LIU, *supra* note 1, at 93-94.

85. JADE PUSSYCAT, *supra* note 81.

86. CHINA LUST, *supra* note 81.

powerful magic. It brings “the good-hearted joy” and makes “the bad-hearted miserable.” Within the film, hustlers, lesbians, and a plethora of diverse characters use it in order to access the sexual power of the female Asian, who comes to represent a transcendent hypersexuality desirable to others. The sexually-fueled search for the green lingam concludes with a sex scene between a Black man and Asian woman, their racial visibilities fueling the eroticism of their climactic encounter. In a film that features a racial and sexual mix of characters, the two extremely perverse hypersexual beings fulfill each other. The pairing of two taboo, racialized sex objects conveys racial fetishism. The two powerful racial taboos join forces, creating the film’s erotic culmination.

The Erotic World of Linda Wong, completed just before the star’s death from a drug overdose, features her long awaited comeback as the first full-fledged Asian/American porn star.⁸⁷ Older, she continued to act while speaking without an Oriental accent, wearing her black hair extremely long and holding on to her extraordinary beauty. Gorgeous, tall, and long, she was an unusually good-looking woman not only in comparison to Asian women, but also to the other women with whom she engaged in sex. Wong’s beauty, however, while clearly Asian, was atypical of any woman. She was an exceptional figure whose stardom capitalized on her visible Asian-ness, noting that her extreme beauty made her simultaneously hyper-visible and invisible in terms of her race. In comparison to other Asian women like Mai Lin and Kristara Barrington, both Linda Wong and Asia Carrera⁸⁸ are bigger stars. Wong and Carrera are also closest to meeting the White ideal of beauty. They look “Whiter,” whether in stature or in features; thus, their stardom speaks of the marginalization of Asian women in pornography, who must meet impossible standards of beauty.

Stars like Mai Lin did not fulfill typical standards of White beauty. In her use of Oriental accoutrements, Mai Lin asserted a different form of racialized beauty and sexuality. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, a set of her films continued themes from the Vietnam War and other scenes of inequality, where race composed part of the sexual enjoyment.⁸⁹ Mai Lin, also known as Maile and Miko Moto, started her career in the mid-1970s and frequently featured extra long dagger-like nails in the style of Anna May Wong’s “longest nails in Hollywood.”⁹⁰ Having starred in more than a hundred movies, Mai Lin

87. THE EROTIC WORLD OF LINDA WONG, *supra* note 81.

88. See *infra* Part III.

89. See, e.g., FEMME FATALE (Vista Video 1984); FORTUNE COOKIE NOOKIE, *supra* note 74; RATED SEX (Essex Video 1986).

90. Anna May Wong was the first major Asian/American female star in Hollywood, most well-known for *Toll of the Sea*, (Image Entertainment 1922), co-starring with Douglas Fairbanks in *Thief of Bagdad* (MGM Home Entertainment 1924), and co-starring with Marlene Dietrich in *Shanghai Express* (Paramount Pictures 1932). See also Cynthia W. Liu, *When Dragon Ladies Die, Do They Come Back as Butterflies? Re-imagining Anna May Wong*, in COUNTERVISIONS: ASIAN AMERICAN FILM CRITICISM 23 (Darrell Y. Hamamoto & Sandra Liu eds., 2000).

deployed Oriental self-decoration in a form of racialized sexuality. Her roles as the maid; the prostitute with a heart of gold; the sex expert; the mysterious, forever-foreign Chinatown girl; the masseuse; and the Dragon Lady in a Bond girl type of situation are all racialized as different from White sexuality.

Excalibur Films describes Mai Lin as insatiable, frequently having sex even when the cameras are off. "She's a woman who revels in raunchy, raw sex and she'll happily participate in group scenes, back porch, kinky sex, double penetrations—you name it, and Mai Lin's done it many times."⁹¹ Well-known for experimenting with the widest range of acts with great enthusiasm, Mai Lin plays a maid seduced by her master in *Sexcapades*.⁹² While pornography regularly rehearses the maid and master trope, race shapes the power dynamics represented. Her innocent plea "not to get in trouble" with the mistress for cavorting with the master thrills him. He fetishizes not only her employment status but also her racialized body parts, wondering how she cleans with her long, long nails and stiletto heels. He directs her to carry out various acts. "Touch yourself," he commands. She responds with a mix of resistance and compliance. She says, "I don't want to make any trouble," then asks for clarification regarding his directions, as she touches herself. "Here?" she says coyly, skillfully manipulating her clitoris. In these scenes, race and class difference are thrilling factors in the sexual act.

As the maid, Mai Lin's racial difference plays a role in her sexual response and desirability. Dressed in a black cheong sam and shifting her long hair, Mai Lin responds to his question about his "cock"; "Yes, it is very big . . . I am scared." She emphasizes her smallness in contrast to his much bigger size. Her response also gauges the powerlessness fueling the sexual encounter. In a racial turn, the master eroticizes her exotic name when he asks where he should penetrate her, and all the while narrates his actions by uttering her name, "I am fucking you, Mai Ting . . . Come, Mai Ting." In these scenes, her visual presence, decorated with Oriental symbols designed to signify erotic meaning, racializes her sexuality. Racial difference counts significantly in the sexual eroticism presented in the film.

In *Rated Sex*, Mai Lin seduces a tourist with the lures of Chinatown and the attribution of sexuality particular to Chinese culture.⁹³ She delivers lines such as, "What do you expect—this is Chinatown!" Her racial identity provides erotic power to the sex scene through its difference from typical White sex. The tourist says "I've never had an Oriental girl before . . . never seen one . . . just in the movies . . . Suzie Wong," as Mai Lin glides her long nails along his body. She gives him "a nice Chinese massage," and then reverts to the Dragon

91. Excalibur Films, *Mai Lin Porn Star*, http://excaliburfilms.com/pomlist/starpgs/Mai_Lin.htm (last visited Mar. 20, 2006).

92. *SEXCAPADES* (VCA 1983).

93. *RATED SEX*, *supra* note 89 (crediting "Mai Lynn" on film, but "Mai Lin" on the tape cover).

Lady persona when she leaves him all tied up. In these porn titles, different fantasy scenarios are enacted, and Asian women are merely part of the various special options available. Racial difference relegates Asian female presence in the Golden Age to the realm of “special” desires, practices, and identities. Unlike the norm in pornography, where White women don various costumes, Asian women must always wear their race in terms of sexuality.

In the early 1980s, the mixed race Asian/American porn star Kristara Barrington, also known as China Lee, played roles both marked and unmarked by race in over 150 films.⁹⁴ Born in 1965, she supposedly retired in 1987, but continued to make films until 1989.⁹⁵ In films like *Oriental Jade*, *China and Silk*, *Samurai Dick*, and *One Night in Bangkok*, she stages the Asian prostitute, or Spoil of War, entangled with Americans during wartime relations in ways wherein her costumes and the settings contribute to the erotic grammar of the scenes.⁹⁶ *Oriental Jade*⁹⁷ opens like *China Lust*,⁹⁸ on a boat on the rivers of Southeast Asia, where we see a White man and an Asian woman having sex in the open air as the boat glides along the river in a direct reference to *Apocalypse Now*,⁹⁹ even mimicking the style of the voiceover. The narration contextualizes the scene as memory and describes the hypersexual ontology of the Asian woman.

I met her in the last months of the war years ago. Sex was the only commodity cheaper than human life . . . for a few . . . you can fuck anything you want . . . she was something different. Jade was a whore, all right: What else was there to be? But she had this real special quality with me, like she was really getting off and somehow it wasn't an act. At least that's what she made you believe. I think back on how much I hated that hell and then I remember her. Shit, maybe I wasn't in love but I was sure as shit hella in lust.¹⁰⁰

The narration emphasizes her enjoyment of sex as natural. The boat stops as they have sex, and we hear sounds of monkeys, roosters, and other animals. The setting and the sound design created a particular sexuality for the Asian woman, signaled as natural to her biology and her geography. Like Linda

94. Kristara Barrington played roles that included a Chinatown girl and Spoil of War. Asian women's racial difference, established both in the costume and in the narrative, persists in the grammar of seduction in other films like *Samurai Dick*. SAMURAI DICK (VCA 1984). Ron Jeremy offers an “American hotdog” to her “sashimi.” The Asian women in the film act as “little girls” dressed in kimonos having sex to Oriental muzak. In *One Night in Bangkok*, Kristara Barrington dons an Oriental accent of broken English within a narrative where soldiers compare the whorishness of Asian women to the innocence of the White women they left behind at home. ONE NIGHT IN BANGKOK (Caballero Home Video 1985).

95. Adult Pornstar Mall, *Kristara Barrington Porn Star*, http://adult-pornstar-mall.com/starpgs/Kristara_Barrington.htm (last visited Sept. 5, 2005).

96. See CHINA AND SILK (4-Play 1984); ONE NIGHT IN BANGKOK, *supra* note 94; ORIENTAL JADE (VCA 1985); SAMURAI DICK, *supra* note 94.

97. ORIENTAL JADE, *supra* note 96.

98. CHINA LUST, *supra* note 81.

99. APOCALYPSE NOW, *supra* note 80.

100. ORIENTAL JADE, *supra* note 96.

Wong, Kristara Barrington's roles as Spoil of War argue that Asian woman as the ultimate female deviant whose sexuality connects to the Black man, who is also marked as racially Other through sex.¹⁰¹

Barrington also acts as a madam of a San Francisco bordello. The history of Asian prostitution in San Francisco during the late nineteenth century plays into the scenario in *Yankee Seduction*,¹⁰² a film set in the South after the Civil War, where a Chinese prostitute takes over a brothel in a racially harmonious conclusion to a film set in an intense racial scene. Barrington orders a Black man to strip so she may fellate him. He speaks to her with deference. He asks, "May I fuck you, Miss Lee?" Race once again operates as a sexual treat for spectators who consume two hypersexual beings. She also fights with a White woman, who calls her a "San Francisco reject, traitor, criminal" and (former) bordello whore, before they engage in lesbian sex. In the context of the Vietnam War and the history of Asian female prostitution, the sexuality of race limits Asian/American women in pornography. Race operates as a titillating force in the cross-racial sexual encounter.

Race supersedes any other identification in Golden Age pornography, even for biracial Asian/American women. Kristara Barrington's films include her racialization as Asian as part of their erotic offering. While race may seem indeterminate for her as a biracial woman, race inevitably determines Asian/American women in pornography. She composed roles marked as Asian biologically and also historically. While Asian women grew visible in

101. The eroticization of racialized and cultural historical events, such as the Vietnam War and the poverty of the third world, provide erotic fodder for Linda Wong's other films, like *China De Sade*, *supra* note 81. Set "somewhere in Southeast Asia" during the Vietnam War, the scenery of riverboats, thatched roof huts on stilts, and coconut and palm trees organizes a tropical setting for erotic interracial relations. The music is similarly primitive, with drums evoking the grand scenes of *Apocalypse Now*, *supra* note 80, and the crew's journey on the river. The sex scene, set in an unspecified location in Southeast Asia, features a blonde White woman threatening a White man with a gun and forcing him down, as Linda Wong performs fellatio on him. A knife appears, and suddenly the White man is bleeding everywhere—blood drips all over the White man and Asian woman's hands. The Asian woman massages the blood all over her body. The White woman joins in the sex, and we see a knife cutting a slit across the man's arms. This sex scene shows how the Golden Age of pornography was a moment in the making of pornography where acting, directing, design, and craft took priority. The high production qualities came together to establish Asian women's perversity.

Within *China De Sade*, the poetic use of blood explains the history of colonialism and war as a frame for interracial Asian-White relations. *China De Sade* is about a veteran lieutenant seeking his long-lost Asian female lover Ming Lee. It seems to be inspired by war films such as *Deer Hunter*, *supra* note 79, and more closely, *Apocalypse Now*, *supra* note 80. *China De Sade*'s villain, Captain Krieg, evokes Marlon Brando's General in the performance of a sadist who surrounds himself with multiracial others. Here, they become sex slaves and masters. A Black male guard with a gun rapes the Captain's daughter in a scene later revealed as sex play. Ming Lee works as the Captain's dominatrix, commanding others to have sex while serving him sexually as well. The lieutenant protagonist reunites with Ming Lee and they have sex in a cage while he is bound. The captain captures Ming Lee and the lieutenant and forces them to have sex, while the daughter whips both of them. In these scenes, the lieutenant asks, "Why do I love seeing [Ming Lee] in pain?" as he extracts sexual enjoyment from her physical suffering during sex. The pain on her face, as legacy of colonial war history enacted on her body, seems to be part of Ming Lee's attractiveness to the White male lead. The sex performed is directly tied to colonial relations, in which the Asian woman is both dominant and dominated.

102. *YANKEE SEDUCTION* (Western 1985).

pornography, they did so as Asian/American women. Distinct because of race, Asian women are forever foreign against American men, Black or White. They play roles that seem like one-dimensional fantasies, such as *Dragon Ladies* and *Spoils of War*. They possess cultural traits in their sexual skills. Decorated with Oriental accoutrements, they are fetishized for their visibility as Asian women who are exceptional to their race. Myths of servility imbricate their sexuality—in ways they contradict or fulfill—but must nonetheless engage.

Race binds Asian/American female sexuality in pornography. They cannot flee its hailing. In studying Asian/American women in pornography, the connections between history and fantasy are revealed. Within history and fantasy, Asian women must answer the call to race. Within these roles, they must carve unique presences. They must work either within or against the parameters of the maid, the innocent lotus blossom and her latest incarnation in the servile wife/maid or the Dragon Lady that circumscribe the way that their race is seen. Josephine Lee argues that, in the context of enacting stereotypes, the Asian/American actors' bodies exceed the stereotype and reveal its construction.¹⁰³ The achievement of stereotypic yellowface sexuality in pornography reveals the fantasy of Asian women as being different from Asian/American women. While we see each actress donning the stereotype of the Asian woman in different films, her Asian/American body shows the construction of fantasy. This production of sexuality by porn stars developed in the contemporary scene, where porn stars enjoy celebrity in multimedia form. In contemporary pornography, two megastars show different ways of working within such racial legacy, using a multiplicity of media toward political ends.

III. CONTEMPORARY ASIAN/AMERICAN WOMEN IN PORNOGRAPHY

Within contemporary pornography, race continues to organize Asian female sexual acts, practices, and identities. Two Asian female porn megastars from the 1990s defy this cacophony of racial fantasy and fetishism in rewriting themselves through the Internet, and in rewriting sexuality through self-authored pornography. Through their self-authorships in and through pornography, I argue for reclaiming racialized sexuality in terms that prioritize Asian/American feminist expression. Asia Carrera also worked as Asia and Jessica Bennett from 1993 to 2005 in 369 titles, while Annabel Chong acted from 1994 to 2003 in fifty-one films.¹⁰⁴ While acting in significantly fewer films, Annabel Chong established a notorious career that shot her into prominence, not only in academic circles, but also in popular culture beyond pornography. Unlike previous Asian/American porn stars, both are also listed

103. JOSEPHINE LEE, *PERFORMING ASIAN AMERICA* 90-92, 97 (1999).

104. Internet Adult Film Database: Annabel Chong, <http://www.iafd.com/person.asp?perfid=AnnabelC&gender=f> (last visited Apr. 8, 2006).

in the Internet Adult Film Database as Directors: Asia Carrera directed two films in 1997 and Annabel Chong directed two films between 1998 and 2000.

The Internet becomes a new technology in these women's authorships. Whether as writer/director or creator of new genres, Asia Carrera uses the Internet to create a unique brand of racialized sexuality. By redefining sexual normativity through a program of embracing polymorphous perversity, she illustrates Katrien Jacobs's argument that politics finds expression in pornography if it creates new public spaces for sexual expression and for redefining sexuality.¹⁰⁵ In the 1990s, Annabel Chong initiated the program of the gang bang, taking the hypersexuality of Asian women to the extreme by embracing whoredom as a feminist practice rooted in her particular racial and cultural situation. She relinquished control of her commodification in favor of presenting what I call a theory of unknowable subjectivity and unreliable representation. Using a term deployed by Katrien Jacobs in her analysis of lesbian sadomasochism,¹⁰⁶ I show Annabel Chong's self-presentation as a "monstrous revolt" that diagnoses the results of the hypersexual tradition of Asian/American women in moving image representation, and offers a new theory of sex that can better accommodate the politically productive perversity of her presence as a feminist porn star and an avatar online. Unlike White feminist pornographers like Nina Hartley and Candida Royalle, who make works that aim to create a different sexual economy for women's pleasure,¹⁰⁷ Carrera and Chong do not shy away from presenting the fantasies of Asian women as crucial to their self and social legibility, so that their images reinscribe the tradition of hypersexuality as essential to race. Precisely because they teeter on the edge of the acceptable, in varying degrees, they offer truly new forms of sexuality as Asian/American feminists working in pornography.

A racially based organization of sexuality continues in contemporary pornography. Based on a study of *Adult Video News* reviews and Internet pornography database searches of "Asian," the current most common themes of Asian and Asian/American women emerge and reflect a relationship to contemporaneous history and globalization: girls from the Orient, young girls (uniformed school girls or poor enslaved girls forced to sell their bodies), the fetishized racial difference in interracial sex, Spoils of War, prostitutes, anal sex, and the discourse of stereotypes such as the model minority, good student,

105. Katrien Jacobs, Katrien Jacobs Fleshes Out Maria Beatty, Bleu Productions, <http://www.bleuproductions.com/interview2.html> (last visited Mar. 1, 2006).

106. *Id.*

107. *See, e.g.,* ADVANCED GUIDE TO ORAL SEX (Adam & Eve 1998); BOOK OF LOVE (VCA Pictures 1992); TASTE OF AMBROSIA (Femme Productions 1988); URBAN HEAT (Femme Productions 1984); *see also* Nina Hartley, Critique of Chyng Sun, Counterpunch, <http://www.counterpunch.org/hartley02022005.html> (last visited Mar. 27, 2006) (discussing monolithic approaches to pornography persistent today).

and small servile body as a pre-feminist haven.¹⁰⁸ While these images are occupied with different kinds of presence, one generalization emerges: race takes precedence over any other category of identification organizing the appearances of Asian women in pornography.

A. Asia Carrera

Within this limited array that includes the work of popular porn stars like Mimi Miyagi and Kobe Tai, the porn star Asia Carrera appears in over 345 films from 1993 to 2004.¹⁰⁹ She has written and directed at least two films, *Apassionata*¹¹⁰ and *Last Little Whorehouse*.¹¹¹ Asia Carrera's presence, like Linda Wong's, resonates, for both possess extraordinary forms of Asian beauty and exceptionally beautiful bodies that adhere to White idealized standards. Like Linda Wong, Asia Carrera presents a racially different body that nonetheless fulfills normative beauty standards. She chronicles the production of beauty through plastic surgery on her website, presenting the aesthetically pleasing body as part of her profession.

Like Linda Wong, Carrera's face plays an important role in the money shot in terms of emphasizing the racial difference at the moment of providing proof of pleasure. While the money shot typical in feature pornography indeed relies on the woman's face, in Carrera's films the money shot functions doubly, proving her racial difference and her particularity as an Asian sexual presence. We always return to it in a particularly coy and innocent expression: eyes wide open framed by false eyelashes as semen ejaculates all over her face. Close-ups on her whole face show her tonguing the semen as a form of beauty shot. Her face occupies the central object of vision. Linda Williams argues that the

108. Adult Video News, <http://www.adultvideonews.com/> (last visited Mar. 26, 2006). See also Google, <http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&lr=&q=pornography+asian&btnG=Search> (last visited Mar. 26, 2006).

109. Less recognizable in the mainstream but still popular are Asian/American porn stars like Mimi Miyagi, Kobe Tai, Mika Tan, and others, who must perform roles that fall clearly within limited parameters. In screening compilation films like *All Star Asians*, the selection of films is unified by the overdetermination of race in presenting Asian female sexuality in pornography, ALL STAR ASIANS (Vivid Films 2003) (starring Asia Carrera, Kobe Tai and others); for example, the fetishization of their body parts, such as in the smallness in stature of Kobe Tai in *Haunted*, where the male performer does not demonstrate connection to her as a subjectivity but as merely a body to use. HAUNTED (Vivid Video 2000). In *Ancient Asian Sex Secrets* directed by Ralph Parfait, Kia and John Dough perform sex within the context of yoga and breathing exercises. ANCIENT ASIAN SEX SECRETS (Vivid Video 1997). The dialogue employs the "ancient forces," "yin and yang," "jade stalk," and "jade gate," and the action involves Oriental massage. In *John Friendly Big and Small*, directed by John Friendly, the Asian women act as extremely enthusiastic, energetic, and servile sex partners coded as third world subjects. JOHN FRIENDLY BIG AND SMALL (Raw DVD 2001). While Asian women constitute a huge specialized genre in pornography, their appearances limit towards racial fetishism unless they are exceptional stars like Asia Carrera who asserts both a personal history and subjectivity other than race, such as, for example, gender dynamics in a marriage.

110. APASSIONATA (Adam & Eve 1998).

111. For comparison, Nina Hartley has directed approximately fifteen titles, for example, THE SECRET LIFE OF NINA HARTLEY (VCA 1994).

money shot offers a solution to the problem of visualizing female pleasure.¹¹² The proof of ejaculation occurs on the woman's face as she expresses pleasure. Asia Carrera's visible expression of pleasure while maintaining perfect make-up extends this shot to the realm of glamour and beauty extraordinary to pornography. An identifiable face loaded with meaning; the combination of model minority and exceptional beauty in dirty pictures constitutes the erotic power of her stardom.

In *Phantasm*,¹¹³ Asia Carrera co-stars with one of the most popular (White) porn stars ever, Jenna Jameson. Both Carrera and Jameson are "Vivid Girls," members of a collection of porn starlets retained by Vivid Entertainment Group, who represent a new breed of porn star; they do not look like typical down-on-their-luck porn stars, but like Hollywood movie stars in full glamour. This difference is brazenly advertised in billboards all over Los Angeles, especially around the mid-1990s. Pornography had come to be widely acknowledged as entering mainstream acceptance, and Vivid Girls exemplify this crossover. In this video directed by Bud Lee, Asia appears in money shots that simultaneously foreground her beautiful face, a merging of the conventions of romantic comedy and pornography. In a racially unmarked role, the narrative line focuses on her production as a sex machine. She comes to possess intrinsic qualities for achieving and generating great sexual pleasure.

In the film, couples enter a sex club and join a contest for individually demonstrating the best sexual abilities in a variety of scenarios. Possessing innate abilities for achieving such pleasure, Asia Carrera's character wins. Her boyfriend does not do so well until the end, when they both combine forces to give pleasure to the Madame-dominatrix played by Jenna Jameson. Both Jenna Jameson and Asia Carrera are presented as the exceptional beauties of the film. The other characters do not meet the traditional standards of beauty in mainstream popular culture and are presented as secondary characters. Carrera and Jameson, on the other hand, exceed the normal expectations for beauty and are shot accordingly. Asia Carrera, beautiful like Jenna Jameson, displays particular talents for moving her body well into the shots. They both traffic in the currency of pornography in terms of possessing beauty both typical and excessive of their racial group, such as in the long black or blonde hair and exceptionally tall and seemingly surgically altered bodies.

Thematizing gender and sexuality, Asia Carrera also directs and writes her own films with her now ex-husband Bud Lee, credited at times as Bud Carrera. The wife-and-husband team of Asia and Bud Carrera directed *A is for Asia*,¹¹⁴ a production owned by Asia herself, and *Apassionata*.¹¹⁵ Both films purport to

112. WILLIAMS, *supra* note 9.

113. PHANTASM (Wicked 1996).

114. A IS FOR ASIA (4-Play Video Inc. 1995).

115. APASSIONATA, *supra* note 110.

present autobiographical themes. *A is for Asia*¹¹⁶ presents a narrative about “Asia’s First Anal” while presenting the very act itself several times. In the opening shot, we follow a woman’s legs outfitted in white stilettos walking along a dingy alleyway. Revealed as Asia Carrera, the woman approaches two men, presumably drug addicts, as one lays on the ground and the other rummages through a dumpster. We hear “Cut!” and Bud Lee enters the scene to give Asia further direction. The title sequence then shows the behind-the-scenes processes and equipment required in making the film. We see a White male crewmember’s hands in very dirty gloves collecting cable, setting up c-stands and lights, and handling a Makita Drill. The credits show us that the film is written, directed, and produced by Asia and Bud, as he enters her dressing room to give specific prompts about her craft as an actor. He says, “Your man tells you ‘You’re not cool enough to be with his friends and family.’” So dressed in white stilettos, fishnets, and a dress, she flees her fiancé to have sex “with guys like these . . . [with whom I] know what I’m getting.” The scene continues with the same opening shot of stilettos until she has sex with both of them from various angles and positions. The clever behind-the-scenes approach allows for the crew’s inclusion in the shooting of the sex scene. We see camera operators maneuvering intricately and acrobatically in order to illuminate particular angles we subsequently see.

Throughout this scene, Asia Carrera acts with a kind of bright, cheerful wholesomeness composed of her enthusiasm, energy, and great flexibility. In every moment, she actively engages her partners and directs the action. She summons one to carry out an act while she positions herself to involve the other. She actively initiates and composes actions in the sex scene. In this scene, Asia’s work shows how women as stars have a role in the authorship of their pornography. The choreography of sex needs full coverage in terms of shooting from a variety of camera angles. The film highlights quite centrally the sexual partnership between actors working together to do what feels right while selling the work of sex. Orgasm also requires her craft. The sex scene ends with Asia Carrera’s flawlessly and heavily made-up face, licking semen while presenting a very happy, open, and flirtatious face. Afterwards, she and Bud discuss what happened. She explains her creative choice in acting and the direction she pursues as an actor; “I thought you wanted a nasty finish. You didn’t like it?” He concurs, “You’re right.” She responds, “You’re not pissed at me . . . [I followed] the heat of the moment . . . fans will love it!”

In this discussion, Asia and Bud establish the collaborative and creative process in the production of pornography. Asia Carrera authors sex scenes herself in an explicit demonstration of agency and authorship of her sexuality, as well as an engagement of the question regarding the primacy of the actor or the framing of the director and writer. As such, writing and directing a film

116. *A IS FOR ASIA*, *supra* note 114.

about the making of a film demonstrates a conscious acknowledgment of and engagement with the power dynamics in pornography. Bud Lee suggests the idea of “being in this business two years now . . . doing something outside yourself . . . [a real] attention getter.” Asia immediately responds “no,” indicating the difficulty in deciding how far one goes with one’s stardom. The film subsequently follows the process of her first anal scenes, accompanied by a shooting style that “exposes” the processes of porn stardom.

In the next scene, Asia defends her choice of shooting her first money shot as “know[ing] what sells,” in order to present her self-authorship within pornography. A discussion about the anal sex scene shows her fictional husband’s inappropriate possessiveness. Demonstrating savvy business practice regarding self-reinvention, she says, “I want to give my name some lift as an adult film star.” Jonathan belittles her by saying, “Knowing Bud, it’ll probably be a DP [double penetration]!” Asia asserts her power to shape her own career by responding to his sexism and using it as an opportunity to advance a non-moralistic and feminist definition of sexuality; “If I want to do an anal scene [for] a broader fan base,” she will. Her fictional husband describes the anal act as “the only thing I have with you.” Her response vacates her sexualized area of any such investment. Asia asserts, “Let’s not equate my love for you with my asshole; it’s more than any sex act. I love you with all my heart and not my ass, okay? You’ve got the best parts of Asia Carrera.” She convinces him to agree. The film presents the anal sex scene as a revelation of a private Asia executing a brand new, never-before-seen or -done sex act in her home space. This enables the shooting of two anal scenes as Asia’s first time.

The movie ends with Asia’s anal with Tom Byron and double penetration with two dildos, as her fictional husband watches. Framed within her autobiography, the reconciliation scene demonstrates what her real-life husband and co-director Bud (Lee) Carrera declares on camera as the end credits scroll; “Another happy ending to another movie in Carrera-ville!” Through this scene, we learn about Asia’s engagement of gender in pornotopia. In the postmodern presentation of film within a film, the play between Asia Carrera’s porn life and true life provides erotic fodder. Bud’s taking on Asia’s name also signifies an acknowledgement of her star power and the gender power dynamics raised in their working relationship as husband and wife.

The commodification of her autobiography also informs the next film she writes and directs. Co-directed, written, produced, and composed by Asia Carrera, *Apassionata*¹¹⁷ follows the life of a runaway homeless girl and her fantasy life as a racially unmarked princess in the time of Mozart. The film, a period piece with high production values, begins with Asia dressed in a white wig and ball gown in a scene that establishes her as a royal princess under the tutelage of Mozart, with whom she has a torrid affair. We realize these period

117. *APASSIONATA*, *supra* note 110.

scenes are fantasies of a runaway, hitching rides on the highway and trading her musical talent for food. Dressed in combat boots and overalls rather than Oriental accoutrements, Carrera stands out as racially distinct among the cast. The incongruence of her racially visible composition within the setting works as part of the allure. Nonetheless, her star persona as a model minority—a member of MENSA (the high IQ club recently acknowledged her membership) and a piano prodigy—inserts itself into the language of pornography. Indeed, part of her popularity comes from her racialized history; she played piano at Carnegie Hall in her early teens and taught English as a teenager in Japan, all details inserted in her porn star biography.¹¹⁸ Through these details, she continues to appear in the exceptional vein, whether as extraordinary beauty, strikingly non-typical as Asian, or as typically Asian in her background. These biographical details highlight her exceptionality: What is such a good Asian girl doing in pornography? Her racialization occurs differently. It plays into the marketing of her stardom in pornography in a commingling of the intimate and the Other. The girl-next-door image combines with the model minority image.

Asia Carrera retired from porn stardom in 2005. She runs an extremely popular website and weblog¹¹⁹ where she sells videos and other products, as well as propagates a sexual polymorphous perversity critical of heteronormativity. She aims to control her own commodification by presenting testaments regarding her sexuality and lays bare anxieties about her career decisions; should she return to pornography? Her blog includes seemingly frank sexual self-presentations. For example, she describes her “luck” as vaginally orgasmic.¹²⁰ Her published wedding vows, humorous and irreverent as well as serious, reflect sexuality far from puritanical norms.¹²¹ Unapologetic about her profession, she rejects moralism blatantly in an embrace of seemingly contradictory identities that I describe as polymorphous. She embraces and finds no contradiction in her positions as mother, wife, porn star, exhibitionist, and Internet entrepreneur.

Since 1996, Asia Carrera’s website has received 24,000,000 hits.¹²² Characterizing herself as a self-taught nerd, she proudly designs her own website, which she markets as the primary mechanism for getting to know her outside her films. It features recent pictures in Hawaii after gaining twenty pounds in her post-retirement transition, a humorously written weblog that chronicles her weight gain during her pregnancy, a chat room (without private chats available), frequently asked questions, make-up tips, and a biography. The site details her National Merit finalist award and full scholarship to Rutgers University, a confession of her plastic surgery exploits, and a testimony on

118. Asia Carrera: Bio, <http://www.asiacarrera.com/bio.html> (last visited Mar. 20, 2006).

119. Asia Carrera Bulletin, <http://www.asiacarrera.com/bulletin.html> (last visited Mar. 20, 2006).

120. Asia Carrera FAQs, <http://www.asiacarrera.com/faqs.html> (last visited Mar. 28, 2006).

121. Asia’s Wedding Vows, <http://www.asiacarrera.com/vows.html> (last visited Apr. 6, 2006).

122. Asia Carrera Homepage, <http://www.asiacarrera.com/index3.html> (last visited Mar. 20, 2006).

“Why I Do Porn Even Though I’m Very Bright And Could Have Done Whatever I Wanted.”¹²³ There are numerous photographs available for free or for-pay. We see her working on her computer and posing in the nude. She manages to bring the two images together: porn star geek. In sum, she presents a critique against moralistic approaches to sexuality, as well as a commodification of her racialized identity.

In my analysis, I acknowledge how web-based self-representations work like self-publishing. They tend to present more idealized and edited versions of the self. Asia Carrera’s website testimony focuses on a racialized childhood that leads to sexual freedom. She describes a struggle similar to Evelyn Lau, the award-winning writer of *Runaway: Diary of a Streetkid*.¹²⁴ Both Asia and Evelyn describe strict Asian/American/Canadian households. Due to the demands of her parents, Asia ran away from a strict and demanding upbringing as a “model minority” Asian/American child. Asia shows her response to such conditions as an American one and, in the process, positions herself as part of and surviving an Asian/American interpellation:

I was grounded for every “B” I got, and beaten for getting anything lower than that. I was not allowed to socialize at all, or go to parties, because they said there’d be time for that after I got into a good college. Well, I did what any red-blooded American kid would do, I’d sneak out. And get caught. And get beaten. And get grounded again. Without launching into too much detail, let’s just say I was unhappy. (I tried to kill myself a lot) (Asian kids everywhere have e-mailed me to verify that this is standard practice in Asian households –what a relief to find out I’m normal, huh!) . . . Sometimes I fucked people I didn’t want to, so I could have a place to sleep, or a good meal. I gritted my teeth a lot, and did what I had to, rather than crawl back home and grovel for my folks’ forgiveness.¹²⁵

In the passage above, she identifies with other Asian/Americans, especially young people, almost like a role model. The experiences she details are not only racial and cultural, but also gendered. Rebelling against her parents’ policing of space and coping with her dire situation as a runaway through sex display a gendered experience. She battles moralistic judgment of her choices and her situation by highlighting her financial autonomy, eye for the future, and “love for life.”¹²⁶

Such testimony in Asia Carrera’s very personal website attests to the particular stardom she occupies, one not present for other Asian women in pornography. While Asian/American women constitute a huge special genre in pornography, racial fetishism confines their appearance unless they are

123. Asia Carrera Biography 2, <http://www.asiacarrera.com/bio2.html> (last visited Mar. 27, 2006).

124. EVELYN LAU, *RUNAWAY: DIARY OF A STREETKID* (1995).

125. Asia Carrera Biography 2, *supra* note 123.

126. *Id.*

exceptional like Asia Carrera, who asserts her personal history in her authorship, directing, and acting. Asia Carrera celebrates race-positive living, intelligently analyzes racial subjection, and critiques moralism regarding the experiences of sexuality and race. On her website, we also see a successful entrepreneur negotiating her commodification in a form of feminist power.

B. Porn Megastar Annabel Chong: Monstrous?

By initiating the trend of the massive gang bang in the porn industry, Annabel Chong shot to the attention of popular culture critics and scholars. She appeared on *The Jerry Springer Show*¹²⁷ and is the focus of a documentary that premiered at The Sundance Film Festival.¹²⁸ Today, hundreds of essays on her work are available online, from academic journal film reviews to newspapers to blogs.¹²⁹ Annabel Chong achieved fame particularly for her affinity for doing perverse acts while proclaiming herself a feminist. Like Asia Carrera, she is regarded as a “thinking” porn star in a kind of eroticization of the model minority stereotype—especially since she worked in pornography while an undergraduate at the University of Southern California. Unlike Carrera, who enjoys recognition as having a “good head on her shoulders,” Chong encounters more questionable reception, since both anti-pornography and sex-positive feminists may claim her. The expressive contortions of her face and body demonstrate the unreliability of representation, and her ambiguous presentation of the appearance of pain or pleasure. She also resists commodification by forwarding a deeply contradictory identity that negotiates the bounds not only of pain and pleasure, but also of good and bad. She does so in well-spoken ways that seem to counter well her affinity for nasty sexual practices. As such, she receives more of a contested response for pushing the buttons of acceptable sexuality even within pornography.

In *The Child Defiled*, an article by Gary Morris in the *Bright Lights Film Journal*,¹³⁰ the subtitle asks, “Liberated Porn Queen or Psychological Wreck?” Annabel Chong’s record of putting on extreme acts can be assessed in her well-known films such as *I Can’t Believe I Did the Whole Team!*¹³¹ She has acted in over fifty porn films, and the *World’s Biggest Gang Bang*¹³² established her fame for achieving the first world record for the most sexual partners for a

127. *The Jerry Springer Show: I Slept with 251 Men in 10 Hours!* (NBC television broadcast May 1, 1995).

128. SEX: THE ANNABEL CHONG STORY (Strand Releasing 1999).

129. See, e.g., Gaby Bila-Gunther, Review of *Sex: The Annabel Chong Story*, <http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/00/8/sex.html> (last visited Mar. 27, 2006); Gerald Peary, <http://www.geraldpeary.com/reviews/stuv/sex-annabel.html> (last visited Mar. 27, 2006).

130. Gary Morris, *The Child Defiled. Sex: The Annabel Chong Story*, 29 BRIGHT LIGHTS FILM J. (2000), available at <http://www.brightlightsfilm.com/29/annabelchong.html>.

131. I CAN’T BELIEVE I DID THE WHOLE TEAM! (Fantastic Pictures 1994).

132. WORLD’S BIGGEST GANG BANG (AMZ 1999).

single woman in one session (251 men). When the “intense, disturbing”¹³³ documentary about her experiences, *Sex: The Annabel Chong Story*,¹³⁴ premiered at Sundance, it sealed her stardom outside of pornography. The caliber of Annabel Chong’s stardom, parallel to Linda Wong and Asia Carrera, developed on different grounds. Unlike Wong and Carrera, who fulfill White standards of beauty in pornography, the smaller, shorter, and darker (more visibly Asian and less racially ambiguous) Chong fulfills the extremely perverse expectations for racialized sexuality in order to offer a radical critique of commodification and stardom.

*The World’s Biggest Gang Bang*¹³⁵ touts itself as an incredibly unique project and no less than a historic event establishing a (short-lived) world-record number of sex partners. The film begins as the director and crew prepare for the shoot scheduled for the next day. The director explains the gang bang as Annabel Chong’s idea. She explains the project’s aim quite succinctly—to prove women can work as “studs,” not “sluts.” Accordingly, the set celebrates the extreme athleticism in her claim to power, and evokes Greece and the Olympics with its white pillars and statues. We meet Chong, who seems an alert, aware, and self-possessed young woman, as she surveys the scene of her dressing room and her set. Dressed in a suit and speaking loudly in a British accent of sorts, she confidently walks through the sound stage—referring to her goals for the project and to her life as a student. Her navigation of contradictory words and worlds—wholesome, intelligent student speaking in an educated manner, coexisting with porn stardom—and the specificity of her fame as based on extreme perversity, combine to contribute to her appeal.

“The industry’s attraction to Grace Quek (Annabel Chong’s real name) is clear—she’s very pretty, naïve-looking, agreeable, a kind of Asian child bride—and the lure of defiling this image is clearly the driving force.”¹³⁶ Chong’s voice and appearance stand out not only in person, but also within the industry. Kimberly Chun explains:

Whatever her motivation, an ad for nude models in the *L.A. Weekly* led to meetings with directors such as Ed Powers, director of *Dirty Debutantes*, and John Bowen, the director of *World’s Biggest*, who talks about taking “this girl with an Asian look and an English accent” and making her into the nastiest porn star ever, who stages particularly extreme acts.¹³⁷

Her director, in the passage above, measures the performance of perversity by Chong within fetishistic and patriarchal logic. That is, he finds worth in her

133. Morris, *supra* note 130.

134. SEX: THE ANNABEL CHONG STORY, *supra* note 128. Annabel Chong also directed two films that I have not seen: OFFICE CRUELTY (Impressive 2000) and PORNOMANCER (New Machines Studio 1998).

135. WORLD’S BIGGEST GANG BANG, *supra* note 132.

136. Morris, *supra* note 130.

137. Kimberly Chun, *Sex: The Annabel Chong Story*, ASIANWEEK, May 4, 2000, at 2.

ability to complete men's sexual aims based on her looks and abilities for particular acts. An Internet porn star biographer lists Annabel Chong as "the one porno starlet who it can be said specializes in gang bangs, having appeared in lots of kinky group gropes for Bone [Director John Bowen] . . . She is a kinky, crazy sexual dynamo who is one of the most popular Asian porno stars ever."¹³⁸ This description both confirms and undermines her self-proclaimed platform as a feminist who works in pornography to make a statement about moralism, sex, power, and gender. In one of many interviews, she offers the following critique; "I really believe that when you talk about banning porn because it's exploitative of women or because it's obscene, then it's terribly fascist."¹³⁹ While delivering this critique, she also delivers what may seem a contradictory statement. A *CNN* article states, "Quek . . . says she likes being treated 'like a piece of meat.'"¹⁴⁰

Chong aims to confront "the myth of the passive female"¹⁴¹ in a critique of gendered and racialized expectations for women's sexuality. In doing so, she also offers a more egalitarian, "equal opportunity"¹⁴² approach to the porn process. In *World's Biggest Gang Bang*,¹⁴³ she proves the sexual abilities of women like herself with a multitude of partners. Claiming to have mastered the "triple penetration," an act involving vaginal, anal, and oral sex, Chong occupies a new face of feminism, worlds apart from anti-pornography feminists Dworkin and MacKinnon and Black feminists Walker, Garner, and Teish.

A wide range of interpretations, from enslavement to empowerment, surround the notion of feminism in the commodification of Annabel Chong. Her facial expression of pain cannot serve as factual evidence of her oppression when her facial expression of pleasure looks similar. The picture of her face presents much more complexity. In *The World's Biggest Gang Bang*,¹⁴⁴ the director lauds her entry; the beautiful Annabel Chong! In other scenes, she seems to be ridiculed by others:

Scenes of her sidling up to [porn star Ron] Jeremy [emcee of the gang bang], Bowen, and others in the porn industry as if they cared about her are undercut by interviews [in *Sex: The Annabel Chong Story*] in which it's clear that she's been totally commodified in their minds—Bowen doesn't even pay her for the gangbang video that he himself

138. World Sex Hosting, <http://www.worldsexhosting.com/~pstars/annabel.html> (last visited Sept. 5, 2005).

139. Robin Askew, *Life Through a Lens: Annabel Chong*, SPIKE MAG., available at <http://www.spikemagazine.com/1000annabelchong2.php> (last visited Mar. 28, 2006).

140. Paul Clinton, *Sex Sobers in Controversial Sundance Documentary*, CNN.COM, Feb. 10, 1999, <http://www.cnn.com/SHOWBIZ/Movies/9902/10/annabel.chong/>.

141. Matt Cale, *Sex: The Annabel Chong Story*, RUTHLESS REVIEWS., <http://www.ruthlessreviews.com/movies/s/sex.html> (last visited Mar. 28, 2006) (film review).

142. Sam Adams, *Sex: The Annabel Chong Story*, PHILADELPHIA CITY PAPER, Apr. 20-27, 2000, at 1.

143. WORLD'S BIGGEST GANG BANG, *supra* note 132.

144. *Id.*

calls the best-selling video in porn history. Once her record of 251 guys is eclipsed, she's dismissed as "all washed up," and ends up gagging with second-rate pornmeisters over a few hundred bucks.¹⁴⁵

The *World's Biggest Gang Bang's*¹⁴⁶ most noticeable and enduring image must indeed be her contorted face, expressing what most certainly looks like pain, with enough ambiguity, however, so that it could also be pleasure. She demands for the men to have sex with her, or summons them to her. Her commanding power in inciting the men to give it to her competes against the extreme close-up shots of her face in pain (or pleasure). Since we cannot read pleasure or pain, we must remain open to the possibilities her critique alludes to, no matter how contradictory. Rather than follow the pornographers who dismiss her feminism in service of her commodification, I acknowledge the powerful way Chong brings to light the hypersexuality of Asian women within her professional experience. In this film, Chong seems to successfully appropriate technologies of the camera and the contest for perversity in pornography in order to diagnose conventional understanding of female sexuality as bound and limited. She presents herself as an unreliable subject. So if anti-pornography feminists claim her as a victim, she counters their appropriation by offering a more contradictory subjectivity; a porn star that enjoys seeing herself sexually represented as a feminist claim to power.

Critics call *Sex: The Annabel Chong Story*¹⁴⁷ "difficult to watch and utterly compelling" in the same breath with which they question the subject's reliability; "feminism's heroine or patriarchy's victim?"¹⁴⁸ The film documents her experience of filming the gang bang and follows her for the next two years. Directed by her then-boyfriend, it shows Annabel Chong jeered by the audiences of *The Jerry Springer Show*.¹⁴⁹ When asked why have sex with so many men, she answers "why not?" matter-of-factly. The film recollects the shooting of *The World's Biggest Gang Bang*¹⁵⁰ and her declarations of reclaiming promiscuity for women and relinquishing the classification of "slut," in order to claim "stud."¹⁵¹ A set of interviews on campus and in her home, a motel room apartment of sorts, allow us to see Chong speak further on her feminist platform. We also hear from her classmates and professor. In contrast, we see porn producers with incredible valley views from their homes as they comment on Chong. The disenfranchisement between actor and producer becomes particularly revealing when we discover that she never received payment for her work in the gang bang. We then follow Chong as she

145. Morris, *supra* note 131.

146. *WORLD'S BIGGEST GANG BANG*, *supra* note 132.

147. *SEX: THE ANNABEL CHONG STORY*, *supra* note 128.

148. Linda Ruth Williams, *Sex: The Annabel Chong Story*, in *SIGHT AND SOUND* 53 (2000) (film review), available at <http://www.bfi.org.uk/sightandsound/review/493>.

149. *The Jerry Springer Show*, *supra* note 127.

150. *WORLD'S BIGGEST GANG BANG*, *supra* note 132.

151. Chun, *supra* note 137, at 3.

returns to England where she was raised and gang raped, and returns to Singapore to “come out” to her parents as a porn star. Chong herself understands the film as a somewhat “fair” but skewed image. Indeed, the discourses around the film center on her victimization and feminism.

Critics note that Annabel Chong’s contradictory “double life” of porn star and academic needs further study. In her *AsianWeek* article, “Sex: The Annabel Chong Story” or “From a Singapore Schoolgirl to the Nastiest Porn Star in the World,” Kimberly Chun asks:

How does this woman reconcile her third-wave feminist studies with the objectification of porn; her Christian upbringing as a Chinese girl in Singapore with her toils as sex worker in the raw, Gen-X gonzo porn genre; and her speeches about sexual freedom as female empowerment . . . by the adult industry’s overwhelmingly male producers and directors?¹⁵²

She reconciles those contradictions with what Chun describes as hints of substance abuse. Critics admire the quality of her openly sexual personality as well her assertion that women can “love sex and . . . take control of their lives,”¹⁵³ as a critique of “puritanical” ideas about sexuality.¹⁵⁴ Regarded as suspect, others describe her affect as “both unsure of herself and in total control at the same time.”¹⁵⁵ Critics ask if the producers of *World’s Biggest Gang Bang*¹⁵⁶ duped and used her; two years after the gang bang, she still has not received payment for her work. Chun illustrates Chong as far away from her spunky self at the end of the film; she seems “ready to be directed” rather than ready to direct her life.¹⁵⁷

In Annabel Chong’s work, an important critique of pornography and documentary that present the truth of Asian women as “special genre” emerges. Chong offers a feminist platform that prioritizes sexuality as critical analyses against the victimizing discourses that tend to dismiss her critique as political and as feminist. The prioritization of sexuality and her voice within the film both argue for a new subject of feminism: the Asian female sexual pervert. Her figure presents perversity as a feminist position. To borrow Morris’s description, she “defiles the lure”¹⁵⁸ of Asian women as passive victims by becoming the active participant in sex. In this endeavor, the difficulty in assessing the pleasure or pain of her expression becomes productive. Precisely because of the difficulty in assessing the face, we should not forget that the encounter between others across difference cannot be assumed. Especially as

152. *Id.* at 1.

153. Cale, *supra* note 141.

154. Mark Penny, Horsechamp, http://www.horsechamp.qc.ca/new_offscreen/annabel.html (last visited Sept. 5, 2005).

155. Clinton, *supra* note 140.

156. *WORLD’S BIGGEST GANG BANG*, *supra* note 132.

157. Chun, *supra* note 137.

158. Morris, *supra* note 130.

her iconicity remains rife in debate as monstrous or feminist, we must keep her meanings loaded with possibility.

Where this engagement leads needs further examination. In *Sex*, Chong confirms that she felt presented in a limited way.¹⁵⁹ Later, we find out from other sources, such as Morris and Chun, that Chong was sleeping with the film's director, Gough Lewis, during some of the making of the film. Chong says this film should more appropriately be titled *Sex: The Gough Lewis Story*, as told through her body and life.¹⁶⁰ If a racialized porn star can remain spoken over in a documentary, what happens in pornography, where she neither directs nor owns the production? Annabel Chong understands the importance of performance. She presents Grace Quek, documentary subject, and Annabel Chong, porn star. This occupation of an unstable subjectivity that shuttles from one position to another needs serious study for its political possibility. Rather than remaining stalled within the shocking nature of the sex acts, we can see the dynamic process of producing and creating them. Her voice remains strangely perplexing, however. As an unreliable subject, seemingly affected by drugs and alcohol, she makes the question of her agency difficult to answer. I believe it questions why we need to find her agency, or political possibility, as a sex worker and porn star.

Through the force of unreliability, she rewrites racialized sexuality beyond victimization, in favor of achieving an elusive and out-of-grasp subjectivity. It turns out to be too tempting to relegate Annabel Chong to victimhood, to frame her gang bang with the gang rape highlighted in *Sex: The Annabel Chong Story*,¹⁶¹ and to say that she did not succeed in turning the slut into stud, especially since she did not get paid. In her own words, she dispels the appropriation of her position as raped and victimized in *World's Biggest Gang Bang*.¹⁶² As someone in front of the porn and documentary cameras, her economic exploitation somewhat silences her powerful intellectual critique. Like the actresses on Broadway, the Hollywood Asian/American femme fatales and the porn stars preceding her, the processes of race, sex, and representation, as well as money, bind Annabel Chong. From this position, she directly provides an intellectual, social, and philosophical critique of these technologies and categorizations. Hypersexuality accompanies her powerful critique, developing it as an unstable and contradictory position that attests to the complexity and ambiguity of sex, race, and representation.

Chong's interviews offer a nuanced critique of the filmmaker of *Sex: The Annabel Chong Story*, as well as the porn industry and restrictive Asian cultural values. Not only did she want to critique gender limits for her own sexuality

159. SEX: THE ANNABEL CHONG STORY, *supra* note 128.

160. *Id.*

161. *Id.*

162. WORLD'S BIGGEST GANG BANG, *supra* note 132.

and for sexual roles for women, she also presents a major race-sex-and-gender critique:

“Don’t you think,” she says, “that by putting women on this terrible pedestal, where they’re all pure and perfect, is kind of terribly constraining on women? It really puts this terrible limit on what they can do in life. It’s just another way of controlling—limiting the avenues of exploration that women are allowed to do.”¹⁶³

Annabel Chong, porn star and social critic, tests the bounds of hypersexuality. In claiming hypersexuality as political and personal critique, she is rendered unacceptable. It makes sense that since then, Annabel Chong no longer makes herself available, and instead presents another persona entirely. The writing on her website offers an even more effective refusal of the question of her resistance.

Annabel Chong’s own words and own voice reject further inquiry regarding her character of Annabel Chong. Like Asia Carrera, Annabel Chong’s website represents her voice in cyberspace after her retirement in 2003. I quote most of the brief site here in order to give indication of Annabel Chong’s complex understanding of her self-formation as an avatar, announcing “game over” to those pursuing her further. She chooses a new anonymity in cyberspace:

Whatever happened to Annabel Chong?

Annabel is dead, and is now replaced full time by her Evil Doppelganger, who is incredibly bored with the entire concept of Annabel, and would prefer to do something different for a change. From her shallow grave, Annabel would like to thank her fans for all their love and support all these years, and to let them know that she will never forget them.

In that case, what is this Evil Doppelganger up to nowadays?

The ED is a diabolical yuppie who is working as a web developer and consultant. She specializes in ASP and .NET with C#, Database Development and also does web design. While the divine Ms Chong was busy doing her Annabel thang, the ED was surreptitiously going to computer boot camp to pick up some skills, so that she can permanently kill off Annabel Chong and begin her new life of peace and relative obscurity. Now she is making a pretty decent living being a horrible geek and all that, proving that there *are* second chapters in American life, to hell with F Scott Fitzgerald.¹⁶⁴

In the above short passages, Annabel presents multiple subjectivities within the same racialized and sexualized Asian female body. Whether or not true, she seems to confirm her unreliability as well as the political power of her position as a bound subject. In direct contrast to Asia Carrera, Annabel Chong’s refusal

163. Chun, *supra* note 137.

164. Annabel Chong, <http://www.annabelchong.com/> (last visited Feb. 15, 2006).

to traffic further in self-commodification speaks to her particular significance in pornography.

Katrien Jacobs uses the term “monstrous revolt” to describe the work of sadomasochistic lesbian performance artist Maria Beatty.¹⁶⁵ The monstrous “assume[s] that women are urged through false consciousness to act out and improve their fantasies in relation to the ‘original’ heterosexual act.”¹⁶⁶ Instead, Jacobs “show[s] how Maria Beatty commands “complex processes of desire, bodily exchange, how she fictionalizes and aestheticizes her sex life in order to reinvent definitions of female sexuality which can be stimulating and negotiable for women.”¹⁶⁷ Monstrous revolt may not be appropriate to use for the life and work of Annabel Chong. Annabel Chong does, however, more than any other figure I study, teeter on the edge of the real and imagined. As unreliable, she rewrites sexuality outside of race as simply victimizing. As monstrous and outside legibility, however, her meaning registers as primarily bad, undesirable, and powerless.

Where deviancy and hypersexuality stand as the norm in pornography, race provides the difference. Even through their racialization, Asian/American female porn stars craft their own personas, direct their own videos, and insert Asian/American female priorities in pornography and their websites as feminist and anti-racist critique. Through mainstream pornography, we can ultimately see that the vocabulary of pleasure does not exceed politics. Asia Carrera and Annabel Chong show us how the embrace of bad womanhood does not occur uniformly in its political critique. In their work, however, the study of the dynamics of fantasy, fetishism, money, power, and history in pornography can point to how we may expand Asian women’s roles in the national imaginations to include their work of redefining race and sex in pornography. As feminist practices, they expand our understanding of how sexuality helps to define race, and how pornography opens up space for the study of Asian/American women’s power.

IV. THE UNRELIABILITY OF REPRESENTATION AND THE UNKNOWABILITY OF RACE AND SEX: PERVERSITY AS FEMINIST PRACTICE

What if we study Asian/American women’s representations by centering sexuality as their own, even if that sexuality looks different from what typically constitutes the normal and acceptable? Within racialized communities, acknowledging perverse pleasures and enjoyment in sex and in viewing, performing, and criticizing offers a more viable politics of recognition. At the same time, the experience of pain and the fear of re-inscribing images through

165. Jacobs, *supra* note 105.

166. *Id.*

167. *Id.*

the power of cinema must remain part of our analyses. For example, to reinsert sexual pleasure in discourses of racial pain would not only recast hypersexual images of race as an unstable figure rather than a knowable entity, but also acknowledge how moralism disciplines Asian/American women.

Because of the strong establishment of perverse interiority associated with particular racial visibility—as we see through production design, narrative, and cinematography in pornography—the study of hypersexual representation can get caught up in an agenda of scopophilia, moralism, and propriety, especially if more precise definitions of sexuality do not arise. The repudiation of sexuality in stereotype critique as fueled by moral panic, or the irrational fear regarding how sexual issues challenge the basic moral fiber of societies,¹⁶⁸ becomes apparent in the binary between anti-pornography and sex positivity, which exist as the predominant frameworks for assessing pornography. Such an approach exemplifies how subservience and non-normative sexuality in representation are continually framed as bad, negative, and ultimately injurious. Applying such a restrictive framework of bad versus good to an ambivalent process often leads to the view of sex as simply resulting from systemic racism and fails to intimate the dynamic and ever-complicated specificity of history.¹⁶⁹

The attendant scopophilia and sexual moralism galvanized in response to racialized sexuality in representation marginalize Asian/American women. To panic about sexual, visual, or gendered images reifying Asian/American women ignores the importance of engaging with the way racialized sexuality constitutes subjectivity. The existing approaches to the study of Asian/American women's images include defining racialized sexuality within heteronormative standards, and repudiating visuality through the method of classifying—and thus calcifying—images in a form of moralistic scopophilia or visual paranoia. When theorized as injurious, our understanding of the political utility of these images is undermined by moral panic responses that shut the door on different kinds of viewing, as well as on alternative sexual forms and relations that emerge from the experience of both sex and representation.

We need to insert Michel Foucault into this discourse: Sex forms identity, and thus expresses new horizons of being that need to be mined for their political possibilities.¹⁷⁰ When moral panic continues to influence our

168. See Gayle S. Rubin, *The Traffic in Women*, in TOWARD AN ANTHROPOLOGY OF WOMEN 157 (Ranya R. Reiter ed., 1975); Gayle S. Rubin, *Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality*, in THE LESBIAN AND GAY STUDIES READER 3 (Abelove et al. eds., 1993); The Fifth Annual Conference by IASSC on Sexual Rights and Moral Panics (2005), <http://iasscs.sfsu.edu/conference.html> (last visited Mar. 28, 2006).

169. See Jennifer Ting, *The Power of Sexuality*, 1 J. ASIAN-AMER. STUD. 1 (1998).

170. "Sexuality is a part of our behavior. It's a part of our world freedom. Sexuality is something that we ourselves create—it is our own creation, and much more than the discovery of a secret side of our desire. We have to understand that with our desires, through our desires, go new forms of relationships, new forms of love, new forms of creation. Sex is not a fatality: it's a possibility for creative life." Interview by Bob Gallagher & Alexander Wilson, in Toronto, Canada (June 1982),

understanding of racialized sexuality in representation, informing theories that privilege normalcy, we lose the opportunity to re-imagine the concepts that are unaccounted for and excluded in the normal—such as perverse practices that criticize the disciplining of women through sexuality.¹⁷¹

When we dismiss Asian/American women's embrace of sexuality in pornography as simply dangerous and immoral, we deprive ourselves of the profoundly interesting ways that race, sex, performance, and visual culture work together to convey creativity, pleasure, and trauma simultaneously. Our concept of sexuality—as punishment, discipline, pleasure, and possibility—can be informed by studying Asian/American women who introduce alternative possibilities to the norm. Furthermore, when we run and hide from sex, we do not solve the problem of how the pathology of hypersexual images will haunt and return—invading our self-perceptions and defining our most important relations and our very movements in the world. If the Asian/American woman cannot be imaged outside of sex, her self-formation must occur in terms of redefining sex.

Looking at sex in terms of the quality of unknowability, rather than as a containable entity in the form of race-positive sexuality, emphasizes a process of enlarging the imagination and enabling entry into the dialogue of pleasure, as well as pain, in race-positive sexuality. I use the term unknowability¹⁷² to discover the limits of moving image media to adequately represent social experience. Representations are historically situated attempts to comment on social experience. Moreover, any representational facts are up for debate. While there are indeed certainties about what may occur on screen or stage, the concept of unknowability insists on the ultimate unreliability of representation, as well as the ever-changing understandings of subjectivity, memory, and history. Race-positive sexuality embraces both the unknowability and the unreliability of the social experiences of representation, race, and sexuality,

ADVOCATE, Aug. 7, 1984, at 26, *reprinted in* Michel Foucault, *Sex, Power and the Politics of Identity*, in ETHICS, SUBJECTIVITY AND TRUTH 163 (Paul Rabinow ed., Robert Hurley et al. trans., 1997).

171. It is easy not to think about power differentials when it comes to the intersections of race, class, sex, and gender analyses. For example, Nayan Shah also cautions us against the valorization of sex, especially in queer critique, if it ignores the sexual and gendered marginalization of women. Nayan Shah, *Sexuality, Identity, and the Uses of History*, in Q & A: QUEER IN ASIAN AMERICA 141 (David L. Eng & Alice Y. Hom eds., 1998). Martin Manalansan's work on public cultures of homosexuality, such as NBC's *Will and Grace* and Bravo's *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, also offers a similar cautionary critique. See Martin Manalansan, *Race, Violence and Neoliberal Spatial Politics in the Global City*, 23 SOCIAL TEXT 3-4 (2005). Manalansan asks us to interrogate the kind of sexuality being celebrated. How are queers, and especially queers of color, marginalized when celebrating homosexuality as handmaidens to normative heterosexuality? *Id.*

172. In her study of the materiality of film itself, Laura U. Marks describes how video can bring to being what is lost and unsaid, while also failing to do justice to the densities of experience at the level of the senses. LAURA U. MARKS, *THE SKIN OF THE FILM: INTERCULTURAL CINEMA, EMBODIMENT, AND THE SENSES* 29-30 (2000). She describes the unknowability of the Other in zoology, pornography, and ethnography as attempts that capture what is gained and lost in video. *Id.* at 229-38. Similarly, I insist on keeping open the possibilities raised in works too easily condemned as knowable because they engage the taboo or embrace the non-normative perverse.

while acknowledging the special and risky position of re-inscribing the pain and violence of hypersexuality. It prioritizes making room for sexual minorities who advocate perversity as a political practice critical of normative positions of race and sex.

When we see the production of fantasy for Asian women in early stag films, the production of yellowface in Golden Age pornography, and the performance of perversity by Asian/American porn megastars, we recognize an intensely racialized formation of sexuality in representation. Asia Carrera and Annabel Chong emerge from this hypersexual legacy in order to provide two different political engagements with pornography. Annabel Chong especially challenges acceptable forms of politics and power; she insists on the unreliability of representation and the unknowability of the race, class, gender, and sexual experiences. She shows this complexity by exposing her vulnerability as hard to pin down. Then, she runs away. I surmise that her flight is an attempt to flee the oppressive power of classification, and to keep the debates about her power or powerlessness open. Along the way, she opens space for the formulation of race-positive sexuality that attests to the need for us to maintain the complexity of representation.

To center the sexuality of Asian/American women in pornography as a feminist critique of racial and sexual representation rightly and more accurately complicates the instinctive stereotype of the process of viewing as simply an act of violence on the viewer. We can acknowledge images of Asian women as perversely and pathologically sexual in Western cinema, and from there argue that the condemnation of non-normative sexuality and the simplification of the process of viewing a film do not sufficiently illustrate the political possibilities raised in watching race and sex on screen. The space between bondage and freedom in defining racialized sexuality proves vast, ambiguous, and complex in ways we need to sustain as ever-mysterious and surprising in terms of their political possibilities.