

Tankard Reist, M., & Bray, A. (Eds.). (2011). *Big porn inc: Exposing the harms of the global pornography industry*. North Melbourne, Australia: Spinifex Press. ISBN 978-1-876756-89-5. 310 pages

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The volume's editors, Melinda Tankard Reist and Abigail Bray, bring together a collection of international contributors – social and health researchers, feminists, activists, health educators, lawyers, psychologists, and commentators – who together argue that our lives are increasingly coloured by the “proliferation and normalisation” (p. xiv) of pornography. In discussing pornography, most of the contributors used the feminist definition of the term that considers the sexual oppression of women and others with less power (e.g., children, animals, gay men, and people of colour).

The book comprises five parts. The first, Part 1: Pornography Cultures, highlights the sexualised objectification of women, the sexualisation of children, the pornification of sexuality, and the medicalisation of sex that enables increasingly pornographic desires to be enacted. In this section, the authors articulate the increasing prevalence of porn sub-genres (e.g., bukkake, twink porn, crush, spankwire, wired porn, teen sex, pre-teen sex, animal sex, among many others); document the almost ubiquitousness of media-related porn (e.g., Internet, music video clips, advertisements, electronic games, sexting); describe the pornographic colonisation of couples therapy; and illustrate the partnering of pornography with the pharmaceutical industry.

Part 2: Pornography Industries, details the ways in which pornography is

increasingly profitable. In this section, the contributors align pornography with capitalism to show that the increasing violence and sexual subjugation occurs in the name of power and profit. Far from being freeing, empowering, and harmless, the contributors demonstrate that pornography is damaging to women, children, and men.

Part 3: Harming Children, presents the various ways in which children are victimised by pornography. Here, the authors describe the ways in which pornography is used in the grooming of children as victims of sexual abuse; critique the use of the term ‘incest’ in describing intra-familial child sexual abuse (as argued by the author of one chapter, such usage denigrates the victim by implying that the child abuse is/was consensual); and demonstrate the continued victimisation of child victims that occurs every time an image of their abuse is viewed, shared, sold, or downloaded.

Part 4: Pornography and the State, documents the role of governments in sanctioning pornography. Here, chapters are devoted to presenting the role of rape in genocide, the failure of legislation to deal with the escalating technologies of pornography, and the trend towards liberalisation of legislation that in effect promotes sexual enslavement. An author of a chapter included in this section presents a compelling discussion about the differences between free speech and fair speech, much like the distinction between free trade and fair trade, to argue that this conflation of free speech with fair speech occurs in order to defend and promote pornography.

Finally, Part 5: Resisting Big Porn Inc, is concerned with anti-pornography activism and resistance to mainstream pornography. These contributors in this section outline a vast range of actions ranging from informal, individual acts to highly-organised protests, petitions, lobbying, education tools, and marches, as well as articulating the ways in which they resist the attacks they attract from

having an explicitly anti-porn stance. Each of these five parts includes extracts and autobiographical accounts so, as the editors articulate, we are reminded that, “real people suffer real harm through pornography” (p. xxii).

There is content in this book that, once read, cannot be un-read. Some of the topics in this book are extraordinarily confronting and have stayed in my mind in the months between commencing the reading of this book and writing my review. For instance, after reading a chapter detailing child sexual abuse and its effects, I put the book away for about two months and contemplated finding another reviewer. Eventually, I chose to complete the reading of the book and the writing of the review so that I don't take the easy way out and ignore the atrocities documented in this book. Even now as I write, I'm finding it difficult to put my thoughts into a cohesive structure because of the emotional and cognitive 'noise' the book created.

Some reviewers of this book have compared it to works like Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* or aligned it with other works of literary activism against Big Food, Big Pharma, Big Oil, and so on. I'd like to think this book might have a similar effect. However, the book's multiple authors have resulted in the absence of a single voice or thesis and there are inconsistencies in the use of key terms such as pornography and incest. Despite this, there are several strengths of this book. From a community psychology perspective, I was very interested in the book's challenge to the co-modification of the discourses of choice, empowerment, liberation, and free speech; its contention that the harms of pornography must be scrutinised as a social justice issue; and its discussion about collective resistance to an increasingly powerful and global industry.