

Film exposes horrors of skin trade

by Greg Harris

More than 700 people showed up at the Centennial Library Theatre Saturday night to see the National Film Board's disturbing film about pornography, *Not a Love Story*.

The library's small theatre was filled to capacity with about 300 people at 7:00 p.m. About four hundred others waited outside hoping to see the 7:30 p.m. screening.

Hasty arrangements were made to accommodate the 400 elsewhere in the library, and the three reel film was then shuttled back and forth between the two groups.

Not a Love Story is an unflinching look at the production, use, and effect of pornography in our society. The film contains many explicit examples of pornography available in North America either over or under the counter. The film makers caution, however, that the examples used are not as offensive as they could have been.

The film points out several revealing statistics about the size of the pornography market. Playboy and Penthouse magazines have a greater combined circulation than Time and Newsweek put together. In the video cassette market, pornography outsells regular cassettes by a ratio of three to one. And, it is estimated there are three to four times as many adult bookstores in the U.S. as there are MacDonald's restaurants.

Playboy was the first mass marketed pornography magazine, relatively tame by today's standards. Penthouse began in 1969, and introduced the showing of pubic hair. Then came Hustler magazine and Larry Flynt who, according to Hustler photographer Suze Randall, "made pussies look like flowers."

David S. Wells, editor/publisher of Hustler and Elite refers to these "fantasy" magazines as "head-fucking."

"I would say that the stan-

dards are a little rougher. The magazines (now) are more explicit, possibly because of women's liberation. Men have started to feel emasculated and they like to fantasize about women. They would prefer to dominate these women," he says.

Women being bound or silenced is a common image in pornography.

"Pornography is like a film that's projected on a blank screen and that blank screen is women's silence. Pornography is filled with

images of silencing women. Our silence is the way in which our status as objects is made real," says author Susan Griffin.

Marc Stevens, formerly an actor in pornographic films, says he got out of the business because he didn't like degrading women.

One of the effects of pornography is that it makes it more difficult for men to see women as human.

"The more that women can be just cardboard cutouts, or bunnies, or pets, the easier it is not

to have any feeling for them, not to have any compassion. Compassion is a very dangerous thing. It cuts across that domination relationship," says poet-writer Kenneth Pitchford.

Research Psychologist Dr. Ed Donnerstein suggests that not only does pornography reduce women to cardboard cutouts, but that it legitimizes aggression towards women.

"In pornography the men who rape are macho heroes," says Donnerstein.

"There's something about

the combination of pornography and aggression which becomes a very powerful image. If we list all the variables which we think can increase aggressive behaviour and rank the top ten, probably eight of them are thrown together in aggressive pornography," he says.

Donnerstein adds that continued viewing of pornography results in desensitization; after a while it no longer has any meaning. The pornography user seeks increasingly explicit or aggressive material to get his "fix."

A member of a "Men Against Male Violence" discussion group says that pornography tells us "how to hate," and makes close personal relationships with others a difficult goal to achieve.

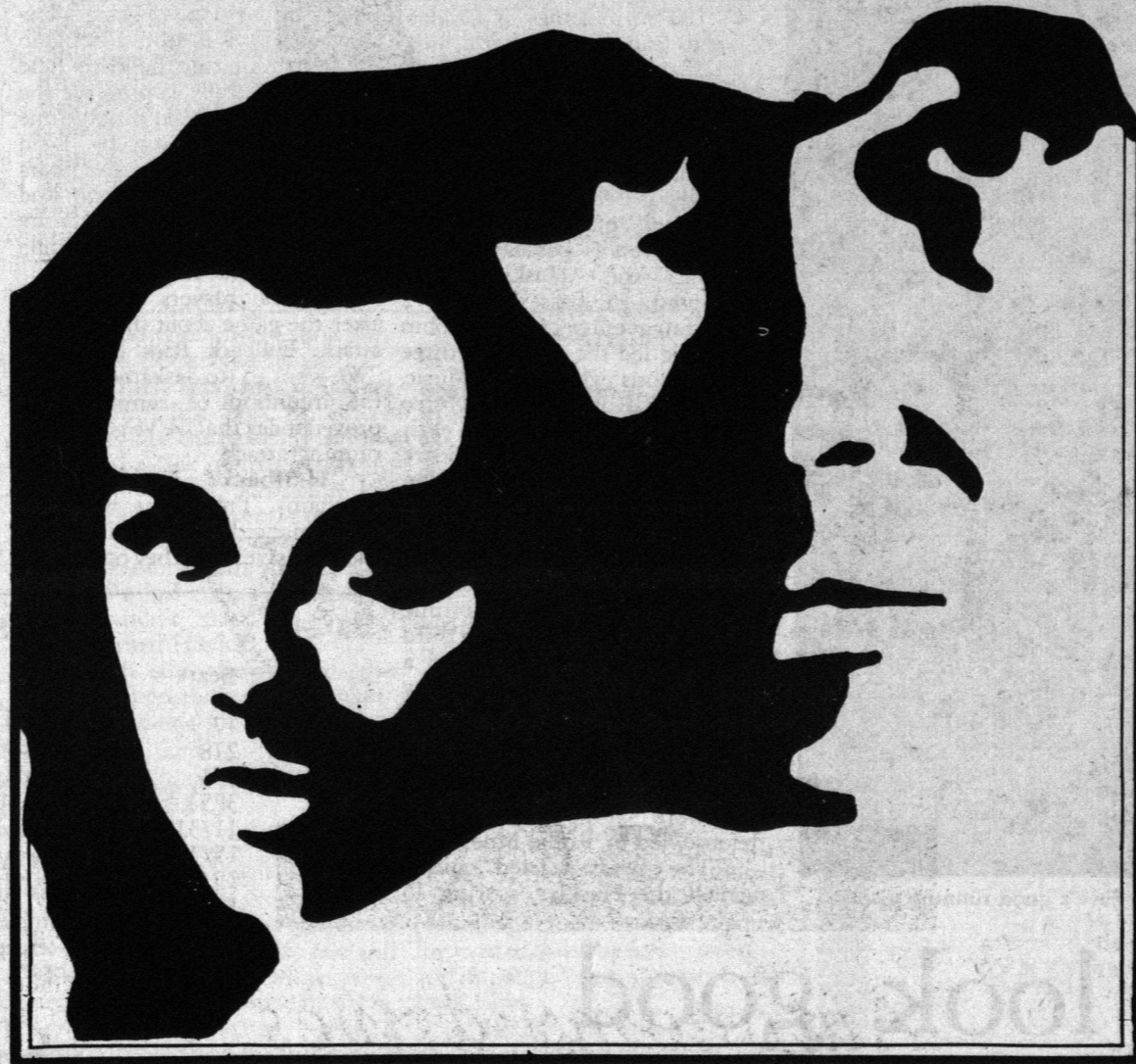
"You're the victim of your fantasies because you perpetrate the male myth of performance, goal orientation...and the ultimate irony is that they (the fantasies) are really self-inflicted," says another member of the discussion group.

In spite of the shocking and disturbing nature of the film, it does include at least a few weak rays of hope.

Author Kathleen Barry says that knowing what happens in pornography is the first step to liberation. Barry asks if any group of women "should be assigned to take all the perversion to protect the rest of us?"

Author Robin Morgan says that while the women who live with and understand the concepts of misogyny (women-hating) in pornography might live in pain, they at least won't die in pain. Morgan says that everyone must be informed about the pornography industry so that disappointment and rage will be heightened until "women will bow down no more."

The film will be shown in the Law Centre of the U of A on November 4. Call the National Film Board or the Alberta Human Rights and Civil Liberties Association for more information.



Porn: the ideological arm of social violence

VANCOUVER(CUP)

Pornography has its roots in misogyny and violence against women.

Debra Lewis, co-author of *Rape: The Price of Coercive Sexuality*, says misogyny, the hatred of women, is a standard theme in our culture. Violence against women in general, both in its more overt, systematic forms of assault, wife battering and rape, and the more subtle forms of manipulation and ridicule, is closely related to this theme.

Two major factors perpetuate the existence of violence and misogyny; the view of women as commodity, and their use as a weapon to ensure social control. Historically, the view of women as commodity arose with the concept of private property. Since paternity, unlike maternity, is difficult to assure, women came to be viewed as private property. This was a means of controlling inheritance. Laws were, and continue to be, based on women as the sexual and individual property of man. For this reason, a man cannot be charged with raping his wife.

The view of women as private property makes women a possession to be earned. Women are told they must reserve themselves for the highest bidder, whether the price be financial, emotional, or social security. And because women are objects to be obtained after considerable

struggle or competition, they are resented as withholding property men believe they have as a right.

As Debra Lewis says, "I suspect there are few women who can say they have always used their own sexuality as they wished."

The sexual revolution of the Sixties did not alter the basic relationships. The historical pressure on women to say "no" was simply replaced by peer pressure to say "yes" says Lewis. Women are now viewed as common property, not the property of an individual man. "We have become more accessible but not more secure."

The second factor contributing to the existence of violence and misogyny is its use as a tool to maintain the status quo, that is, the patriarchal state. Violence and coercion are not usually seen as having a role in social control, which does not take into account what is actually happening. Therefore their impact appears less than it is.

Pornography holds the whole system together. It is "the ideological arm of violence against women," which teaches us to accept the status quo. The proliferation of pornography since 1970 is linked to the male backlash against the women's movement, which has challenged the view of women as property.

The argument that there is no conclusive proof that por-

nography leads to violence is naive, explains Lewis. Currently there is evidence showing a correlation does indeed exist. Convicted rapists have been shown to consume significantly higher levels of pornography in adolescence than the average male, she said. Other studies have shown rapists frequently believe that their victims really liked being raped. Furthermore, they realize very few rapists are ever convicted.

An extreme example was given by Lewis: "One victim informed the rapist she was going to report to the police and he dropped her off at the station."

There are two issues in the control of pornography. The first questions the right of the state to

interfere with freedom of speech. Although the rights of racial minorities to protection are often recognized in questions of freedom of speech versus censorship by the state, the rights of women are not. The second issue is based on the concept of the family as a private domain. The family is the most violent institution in society, Lewis said. It is the site of wife battering, incest and rape. However, there is a reluctance to interfere because the family is regarded as private.

Solutions to these problems cannot be found entirely through legal action, even in the single area of pornography, because not all pornography directly advocates violence.

In addition to legal control,

other tactics such as organized economic sanctions and guerrilla warfare are necessary, according to Lewis. These tactics are seen as short term solutions to violence against women because they deal simply with the symptoms of the problem. Long term solutions involve a "radical transformation of the productive and reproductive relations of society." Women have the most to gain by becoming economically, socially and sexually self-determining.

Pornography is given high priority by Lewis because of its dramatic increase in recent years, and its emphasis of the idea that sex is equal to violence. An organized systematic response must be made; up to this point it has been "pretty sporadic."

Dworkin speaks out on porn

Feminist author Andrea Dworkin was recently in Edmonton speaking at a women's conference on the issue of pornography. Her most recent book is titled *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*.

Here are some selected quotes from her keynote address: "We know that when the technological means of pornography was limited to writing, etching and drawing it was an indulgence of upper class men." "It is important to note (with

pornography today) that men have not found it necessary to make the distinction between writing and drawing and etching on the one hand, and the use of women on the other."

"One does not do to human beings what is being done to women in pornography."

"An outcry would be expected if dogs and cats were being treated the same way."

"Almost without exception the main premise of pornography

is that women want to be forced, hurt, and cruelly used...it's the same assumption about the nature of women that men have always used."

"The pornography is everywhere, and its apologists are everywhere, and its users are everywhere, and its pimps are rich."

"Some feminists see the world turning into a whore house...concentration camps for women...a house of sexual slaughter."