

Pleasure and Power: The Ethical Dilemmas of the Pornography Industry and an Analysis of Porn

by Alice Walker

While pornography is framed as an issue of free expression and a matter of personal choice, the industry conceals grave ethical concerns beneath the surface. My research dives into how pornography exploits performers, reinforces harmful power dynamics, and contributes to a culture that normalizes violence and objectification. I will argue that, due to economic and gender imbalances, the intrinsic dehumanization of women, and the shaping role of consumer behavior by the industry, there is no ethical way to consume pornography. An integral part of my research looks at Alice Walker's short story *Porn*, which critiqued the industry's impact on relationships and intimacy. Through the protagonist's discomfort with pornography's presence in her relationship, Walker shows how it creates emotional disconnect and objectifies women, an echo of real-world concerns about the industry.

Essentially, in analyzing this issue, I combined literary analyses with vast research into realities in the pornography industry, including accounts from former performers, psychological studies on the effects of porn, and industry reports. What I have discovered is the industry is riddled with coercion, compromised consent, and unsafe working conditions for the performers, while consumers are being exposed to content that desensitizes them against violence and distorts their views on intimacy.

This work questions the concept of whether pornography is harmless or neutral and demands an in-depth reflection on its ethical consequences. This, in the end, is a call for my

research to change the way we think about sexual media, moving the culture toward respect, autonomy, and genuine human connection rather than exploitation for profit.