Horrorporn/Pornhorror: The Problematic Communities and Contexts of Online Shock Imagery

Steve Jones

Making an assessment of pornography and horror genres is problematic, not only because judgments of these have frequently been based on moral or ideological beliefs about what constitutes obscenity, but also because the viewing context impacts so significantly on their meaning. Obscene images are offensive because they contravene moral principles or because they portray what is considered to be indecent or repugnant. They are not necessarily sexual, although sexual behaviours are typically positioned as hidden or shameful in many societies. The conjunction of sex and other taboos such as defecation increases a depiction's propensity to offend. The body's uncivil nature - its sexual urges and the production of waste - may be inextricable from the self, but we are required to denounce those aspects of being, even though they can never be banished altogether (McAfee, 2004: 46). For Kristeva, this attempt at exclusion is a defining feature of subjectivity; "'I' expel it…I abject *myself* within the same motion through which 'I' claim to establish *myself*" (Kristeva, 1982: 3). In this violent process of abjection the 'Other' comes to stand in for "repressed…pathological violence and sexual perversion" (Bogue & Conis-Pope, 1996: 11).

Horror sub-genres such as the rape-revenge film and the more recent 'torture-porn' cycle revel in such juxtapositions, combining sex with violence and injury in a fictional context.[1] Online shock pornography, a form which also combines sex with violence, has been largely overlooked, perhaps because shock sites are such a recent phenomenon and because porn film is more readily suited to established interpretive models such as Mulvey's theory of the 'male gaze' (1975), and viewer-response paradigms (see Barker

& Petley, 2001) which remain at the forefront of horror studies, as well as underpinning the popular press's responses to online imagery.[2] The combination of violence and sex has been largely discussed from the viewpoint of 1970s feminist pornography studies (see Cornell, 2000: 19-165), which is not so readily applicable to the static images, animated .gifs and community contexts of online shock imagery. However, according to Jensen, extreme imagery of this kind is on the increase (Jensen, 2007: 16, 70), and needs addressing; a point which is underscored by the British Government's proposal to make it illegal to possess such imagery.[3]

In this chapter, I focus on internet shock sites, which consist of a single image, or video-loop that straddles the ambivalent boundaries between sex and abjection, porn and horror, not least because the image has been extracted from its original intended context. The imagery that is used in shock sites differs from mainstream pornography because it revels in the physicality of the body, destabilizing the ideological imperatives that underscore heteronormative representations of sex. Shock sites also exhibit bodies that are pushed beyond expected corporeal limits. Most images and videos found on shock sites have been culled from pornography (especially porn involving urolangia, coprophilia, or graphic homosexual imagery) or from medical contexts (pictures of bodily abnormalities, severe injuries, and corpses). Where the erotic and the abject are juxtaposed, the obscenity-effect deepens. Shock sites valorise such combinations, framing representations of the exposed body in terms of repulsion and amusement.

Shock sites should be differentiated from "sites with shock content", even if the material on offer is remarkably similar. In the case of the latter, the host site is searchable - for example, rotten.com features obscene videos and images, but these have to be sought via an in-site search engine or by browsing archives. Shock sites, on the other hand, are comprised solely by the image/video itself, the instantaneous revelation of which partially constitutes the affront to the viewer. In both cases, the

object is assumed to be "real" rather than contrived, the viewer's pleasure and/or disgust arising from the "unseen" being put on display. Communities that seek out extreme online imagery may do so from sexual motives, out of morbid curiosity, or for more malevolent reasons, such as its transmission to unsuspecting users, especially in an inappropriate context such as an unrelated chatroom. A viewer's potentially appalled response negates the subjectivity of the individual depicted, reducing them to an anonymous object, pushed to, and beyond, expected corporeal limits. It is vital to understand the interplay between users in examining such imagery - not only because an appreciation of context is required in order to construe its significance, but because the image only comes into meaning in conjunction with a viewer; a point that has been convincingly argued in relation to pornography, and especially the Dworkin/MacKinnon school of anti-pornography feminism (Parent, 1990).

In this chapter, I examine the moral and philosophical implications of representations that place the body in extreme states of sexualized deconstruction - both real and faked - and how these apply to images and communities in cyberspace. My attention is primarily focused on shock sites, the collectives that use them, and their potentially problematic negotiations of viewer consent. However, we must begin with a dissection of what constitutes the "extreme" imagery of shock sites and the socio-political implications of its definition.

The Pornography Problem

Pornography is taboo by definition, but its characteristic elements are continually shifting; as Alan Sinfield proposes, "labelling a practice pornographic reflects a decision to regard it as bad. Pornography is not the opposite of worthwhile sexuality, but a way of asserting which sexualities are worthwhile and which are not" (Sinfield, 2004).

Pornographies are deemed extreme only in relation to what is considered ideologically "normal" at any given time, just as the "abnormal" may become mainstream as the increased prevalence of anal sex in heterosexual porn during the past twenty years indicates (O'Toole, 1999: 357). "Extreme" porn images can therefore be seen as those which, in their presented context, gratuitously contravene dominant ideological discourses of sexuality at a given moment in time.

"Extreme images" depict that which falls outside the parameters of ideologically normalized sexual behaviour, even that shown in graphic hard-core pornography. They are obscene because their representations of "the body, violence, or sex…exceed the bounds of propriety that a significant part of the public finds appropriate for the context and requirements of the situation in which they are used" (Gastil, 1976: 231). In the current climate, images concerned with bodily waste (urine, vomit, faeces, menstrual blood, or cadavers) are considered "extreme", as are those that problematize the line of consent - hard sadomasochistic imagery (especially when featuring injured genitalia or rape), bestial/crush/squish films in which stiletto-wearing dominatrices kill animals ranging from insects to kittens, while directly addressing the viewer,[4] necrophilia, and pedophilia - whether real or faked. Pornographic imagery featuring fixations such as shoe fetishes or clown porn may be considered abnormal, but are not necessarily deemed extreme or shocking because they do not problematize the sex/horror division, and because the object of desire is non-bodily.

Sexual behaviors like these that are deemed to be or are coded as obscene and Other are relegated to less public locales marking their ideological segregation. Those failing to observe that they have been categorized as extreme may be forced to recognize that the moral majority does not concur. Ultimately, the Law enforces dominant ideological/moral principles, as demonstrated by the British government's proposed legislation against "extreme" pornographies.[5] Yet the authorities face a daunting task in

attempting to police cyberspace (see Akdeniz, 2002) because it defies geography; Gossett and Byrne question "the feasibility and legality of regulating personal computer access to a worldwide market of pornography…since there is no legal [thus, ideological] global community standard by which to regulate pornography" (2002: 704).

The internet has created new opportunities to market to all tastes with relative ease; as Feona Attwood observes, "[t]he last 20 years have seen the appearance of a much greater variety of porn…taking as its starting point the desire to reconcile the sexually explicit with radical politics" (2002: 94). But even given the pervasiveness of the internet, and the degree of anonymity available to the consumer of extreme pornographies, users of such networks are still wary of legal prohibition. Their abnormality is consolidated by their relegation to taboo locales as more mainstream pornographic representations become increasingly acceptable (see Levy, 2005, and Nikunen & Paasonen, 2007: 30).

Lemon Parties and Last Measures - Shock Sites

The availability of obscene and often illegal material is commonly centered around communities and facilitated by word-of-mouth, not least through forums, newsgroups,[6] P2P networks,[7] and private/instant messaging. The existence of such networks was infamously highlighted when it was discovered that American troops in Iraq were trading real-life horror (images of dead Iraqis) for pornography (pictures of nude women) through the site, nowthatsfuckedup.com.[8] This site appears to have been removed from circulation since the media furor - demonstrating the consequences of compromising anonymity in relation to shock material. The now defunct ogrish.com, a site specializing in horror photographs and footage such as the beheading of Kenneth Bigley,[9] has been transformed into the much "safer" liveleak.com, a site which filters its

submissions so as to avoid the more dubious content hosted by its former incarnation. Ero-Guro (erotic-grotesque) sites such as gurochan.com also explicitly combine sex and horror (including amputee sex, blood, scatological and hentai imagery), though a number of the representations are clearly digitally manipulated or fictional.

Shock sites unabashedly work against an axis of normality. This is clearly illustrated by their persistent reliance on Othering to instigate a shock-response. Shock imagery features nudity, genitals and/or sexual fluids that are contextualized, or have been re-contextualized, to cause offence or become the object of comic distaste, especially through the use of music and captioning. For instance, the shock site video-loop known as *Meatspin*, which focuses on the rotating penis of a man engaging in anal intercourse, is extracted from an anonymous gay porn context and framed as an instance of comic disgust. It is used to "shock" or offend inasmuch as the graphic display of the homosexualized male body is considered taboo in a society that regards the exposed female body as the epitome of normative pleasure. Infamous shock site images such as *Lemon Party* equally typify this trend by rendering the (homo)sexualized, elderly, or overweight body in terms of disgust or amusement. That the body in question is typically male reveals that such sites implicitly address their target viewer as young, heterosexual men ("normal"). They transgress normative boundaries - female bodies are accepted as a locus of sexual attraction, while naked male bodies (especially when homosexualized) are designated as taboo/Other.[10] Here, the abnormal Other is used to provoke, and can only do so if the receiver is positioned in accordance with such ideological value systems. Not all shock site imagery works against sexuality, age, or weight taboos so explicitly; *Tubgirl,* and the "Hello.jpg" of *Goatse* may be partially informed by these discourses, but their ability to shock arises primarily from pushing the body beyond its expected limits (in the case of the latter, by stretching a distended anus to a remarkable degree). However, both use the same normative body-conception to Other bodies whose integrity has been compromised.

The age of digital video streaming has made it possible to easily obtain pornographies previously only available "under the counter" in backstreet sex shops. These range from the simply hard-core (xtube.com and pornotube.com host free graphic sex videos), to more "specialist" imagery (beasttube.com, for instance, hosts amateur zoophilic video-clips). In the case of newsgroups and forums, the presumed anonymity of the internet is a means of protection, enhancing the communal aspects of file-share fantasy, via, for example, the bondage-degradation forums of extreme-board.com. However, the internet can also be a dangerous place where "the gullible are vulnerable to being taken for a ride" (O'Toole, 1999: 278). The distribution of uncertificated extreme horror or pornography is usually conducted anonymously - the individual is rendered as username and avatar and the material must be actively sought.

While their content may be comparable, shock sites and sites with shock content differ in terms of context. Most original shock sites are now affiliated with more general purveyors of extreme material such as consumption-junction.com or brooklynbizarro.com, the images having become part of community networks.[11] Online interactions are easily misread by those unfamiliar with the mores of such communities. Flaming (hostility between users during online discussions) can be playful and consensual (Kuntsman, 2007), much like sadomasochistic activity. These communities are characteristically formed upon playful one-upmanship, using shock imagery in an attempt to astound other willing participants with new images and videos. They gather around specific web-rings, or instigate their own closed forums to harvest dubious objects privately.[12] In contrast, shock sites have a wider proliferation, as they straddle the line between communities in a particularly problematic way. They usually consist of a single extreme image or animated .gif file, sometimes leading to an additional forum. Tubgirl.com is one of the more famous examples, and is typical of the material found on such sites.[13]

Shock sites have two primary functions - their *raison d'etre* is to amuse, or to offend. The two are not wholly incompatible as the amusement can arise from being affronted or from *causing* offence to others. Because of their similarity to some types of pornography, it may be inferred that these images are meant to sexually arouse the viewer. However, while the images themselves are not incompatible with this reading, the context of distribution is. For example, the front page of cupchicks.com contains video responses of viewers watching the shock material, not only to provoke the user into clicking the "view now" link,[14] but also to frame the experience in terms of gross laughter. Similarly, the animated .gif of blink-182.com has been placed alongside a previously unrelated pop music sample,[15] a juxtaposition that renders the image amusing because of the unexpected relevance of the lyric to the sexual act portrayed. Thus, while the imagery may be erotic in some sense, its context is crucial in determining its interpretation.

The fairly innocuous site name in this instance was designed to mislead fans of the popular American band, Blink-182, into accidentally encountering the video. This kind of naming is commonplace and is not simply to preserve the "anonymity" of the site. Shock sites are frequently linked, especially on open forums and chat-rooms, by users known as trolls who are often malevolent in intent. Being tricked into visiting a shock site, believing it to lead to something useful or advantageous, is potentially distressing for the unsuspecting user. Moreover, being directed to such a site by an anonymous stranger differs greatly from receiving the link from a user with whom the sender is acquainted (accompanied by a jovial message). If directed to a shock site by a friend, the image can be decoded as morbidly amusing, but not personally offensive. Yet such images can also be intended to disturb - and modes of dissemination which involve trickery are especially effective because "some of the main pleasures of computing include those of mastery and control" (Sofia, 1999: 61).

VirtualRape - The Issue of Consent

Thomas Craig and Julian Petley observe that "there are very few porn sites today which, apart from a few soft tempter images at the front end, are anything other than pay-per-view, thus necessitating a credit card transaction before anything remotely pornographic can actually be seen" (1998: 193). Even given a change in climate over the last decade which has meant that hard-core sexual imagery is now much more freely available, the viewer is still required to actively search for it. Shock sites differ inasmuch as they shift agency away from the recipient. The line between amusement and offence largely hinges on the viewer's assent; if one allows oneself to be exposed to an image willingly then it may be perceived as obscene, but permissible. Where the viewer is forced to see something beyond their consent to witness it, that image is re-contextualized as horrific, and may become the site of disgust. Thus, the image may cause offence not only because of its content, but because it defiles the viewer's control over their networking.

In shock porn, the content - often depicting genuine medical injuries, anomalies and authentic feats of the body exceeding its expected genito-sexual limits - is assumed, correctly or not, to be real. This is part of a more general cultural trend - as Shauna Swartz observes, "[f]aux reality has become the norm in pop culture" (2006: 318), and this is also true of mainstream pornography where faked amateur porn and the Xtube phenomenon have become a prevalent "pornosthetic". As Swartz notes, "[s]urrounded by convincing fakery, perhaps we're so hungry for something genuine that we're willing to suspend disbelief, ingesting even sham authenticity to sate our voyeuristic appetites" (2006: 320). In the same way that the myth of the snuff film persists despite a lack of evidence to support its existence,[16] extreme images that are contextualized as genuine are often treated as if they are authentic, both by viewers and by the Law.[17] It matters

little if the image *is* real, as long as it *appears to be* legitimate in context.

Also affecting the viewer's belief in horrific porn imagery is the acquiescence of the person portrayed; here the moral issues raised by reality porn (a vérité style of pornography that seeks to depict the sexual act in terms of authenticity, sometimes utilising or depending on tropes of non-consensuality) are a useful point of comparison. These include a concern with 'effects', based on the notion that a confusion between fantasy and reality will lead to the enactment of violence in real-life (Labelle, 1992),[18] and the contention that new reality porn genres are intertwined with and encourage misogyny and humiliation (Jensen, 2007: 57-64). Swartz notes that while "'Real' sex has always been valued in porn…what distinguishes this new smut from its predecessors isn't whether the action is scripted, but whether it's portrayed as nonconsensual" (Swartz, 2006: 318).

As Gossett and Byrne also contend of rape films, victimization *is* the selling point; the source of pleasure is the immoral, hyperbolic indulgence in the transgression of another's compliance. The omnipotence and dominance of the perpetrator, and the depiction of the victim as small and physically restricted are emphasized (Gossett & Byrne, 2002: 703-5). Because the victimizer is usually anonymous in this type of film (the footage being filmed from first-person perspective, leaving the perpetrator unseen), the act also situates the viewer as passive. The viewer is positioned as lacking control; only *vicariously* involved in the action, in contrast to the *real* pleasure of the victimizer and the *real* pain of the victim. The first-person perspective on the action denotes a private intimacy/violation made public, further emphasizing the viewer's absence from the act itself and its "reality". An additional appeal to reality is made through the moral context of the image which refuses to explicitly frame the footage as a performance. The pleasures of "mastery and control" which are inherent to computer use (Sofia, 1999: 61) take on rather more sinister overtones here, becoming intertwined with imagery that

specifically deals in the violation of another person's rights.

In the case of shock sites, the subject of the image is thus always-already victim of a double denigration; firstly in the misappropriation of their image as an object of pleasure/repulsion and secondly by being positioned as subservient to the viewer's self-interests. Even if the image was originally captured with the subject's consent, its re-contextualization in a shock site and its anonymous and virtual redistribution further distances the viewer from the depicted party. While pornography more generally is charged with objectifying bodies, shock porn intensifies this process because of its means of deployment, which renders the depicted party's body as abnormal. Moreover, the dissemination of the shock image may transgress the viewer's willingness to view the image, meaning that both the subject and consumer of the image are potentially violated by the user who circulates the image-link.

Cyberspace is the unique catalyst for this dichotomy. It appears to be an unreal non-bodily space of potentially infinite proportions; it is *known* and exists, yet always *is not*. As Sofia contends, "[c]yberspace forms an irreal technological cocoon with no necessary external referents" (1999: 63). The fact that the behaviors and bodies of shock porn are *represented* through this medium renders them "safe" for viewer consumption, even if they are horrific or disturbing. The fictional networks through which these images are disseminated also mask the reality of the viewer during their encounter with the image; the viewer is reduced to an avatar/username, profiles are often faked and accompanied by faux contact email addresses, locations, ages or genders. In this sense, for the duration of the interaction, the *user* becomes potentially two-dimensionally objectified; as deconstructed as the object-body of the shock image. As O'Toole suggests, cyberspace "seem[s] like a place where corporeality no longer has such a central role" (1999: 295). However, the shock image is designed to evoke a specifically bodily response; just as porn aims to sexually entice, the shock image may

provoke physical revulsion or laughter, possibly in combination with, or repression, of sexual arousal. These are not simply images of disgust, even if their aim is to repel; they are situated between horror, amusement, desire and morbid curiosity. Perhaps it is because of the mutability of what they signify - a propensity echoed in their contextual adaptability - that they are sought.

Even if it is only fleeting, belief in the reality of the image is necessary if the image is to shock the viewer. The perceived authenticity of the image, coupled with the sudden affront to normalized expectation, results in a shock that may momentarily displace the viewer's self-awareness; so strong is the impelling of attention towards the unexpected image of an Other, recognizably like, yet unlike, the self. This is why the viewer reconstitutes self as different to the represented Other with such violence, through the physical reaction of a full-body jolt of surprise, or nauseous revulsion. Such a response may reaffirm the bio-logic of the viewer's body, rejecting the image as virtual. This acts to re-balance the initial perception of the depicted party's body as real and of the viewer's status as a virtual presence while online.

As Gloria Steinem writes, the affix "graphos" in pornography, meaning "description of", implies that there is a "distance between subject and object…replac[ing] a spontaneous yearning for closeness with objectification and voyeurism" (Carter & Weaver, 2003: 97). The impossibility of closeness always dominates the experience of engaging with pornography. Engaging with online shock imagery is different. The viewer is potentially rendered powerless, forced into interaction with an image, and reminded that cyberspace can be an unstable place of instantaneous, malicious, and random violence. The viewer's belief in and objectification of the abnormal appear to collapse rather than accentuate the space between viewer and object, emphasizing that the online user is as virtual as the subject of the shock image - at least until the viewer's body reacts to re-assert their physicality, reality, normality and the distance between viewer and

object. The shock bodily reflex, stemming from the twin responses of sexual arousal and horror - and made possible by the portrayal of the depicted body as abnormal and Other - reminds the viewer of a physical reality that online identity threatens to negate. The return to physically sensate reality re-asserts and re-establishes ideological binaries, including the supremacy of the physical, evinced by corporeal response to the image.

Affrontiers - Shocking Conclusions

As Carter and Weaver observe, since the 1980s we have seen a general increase in "highly graphic depictions…devoid of meaning beyond the sheer delight of their (intentionally) shocking cinematic spectacle" (2003: 65). This is true of torture-porn and of obscene online imagery, both of which continually seek to "push the envelope as far as it will go" (O'Toole, 1999: 357). In both cases, the driving of the body to extremes may provide an opportunity for the viewer to redefine their relationship with their own body's limits. As Angela Carter notes, while "the pornographer's more usual business is to assert that the function of flesh is pure pleasure", impelling the body beyond typical frames of reference leads us to "question…the nature of pleasure itself" (1979: 22). This is all the more true when pornography problematizes civility - the "critical difference between man and animal" (Gastil, 1976: 239) - by literalizing the failure of the body to suppress physical requirements such as defecation, urination and sexual fulfilment of a non-reproductive kind, or when it radically asserts the biological tenuousness of the body by combining Eros (desire) with Thanatos (finitude).

Engaging with shock imagery may be included in C. R. Williams' list of "urban leisure activit[ies]" that "provide a license for temporary transgressions from normativity, for participation in playful deviance, and for the unbounded expression of subjectivity". Such activities typifies our "transition to aesthetic modernity" which has "ushered in a

new image of being human; one in which creativity and expression are linked to the ontology of human existence" (2004: 240-43). In the digital age pornography has moved from the backstreet sex shop to the home, just as reality culture has blurred the line between fantasy and our daily lived reality. The diffusion of the kinds of unsolicited sexual imagery that I have described represents a more shocking interruption of the construction of civility by reminding us of the "obscenity" of our own beings - the bodily urges and gratifications that are constructed as obscene, yet are inescapably part of our lived experiences. This disruption is much more extreme when the images that are featured are neither clearly of horror nor of porn, but a hybrid of the two. However, while this combination appears to destabilize the ideological imperatives that underscore hegemonic representations of sex, the more dramatically it shows the body pushed beyond its normalized or expected limitations, the easier it becomes for the viewer to Other what is portrayed.

Shocking images are no more dangerous than the recognition that the most normal of us are only as genuinely "normal", or real, as any of the bodies depicted in them. A consideration of shock pornography should lead us re-evaluate how we respond to horror and porn more generally. It is too often taken for granted that horror disgusts and porn attracts. The combined and confused lines between arousal and nausea, offence and pleasure, should make us question what body-genres seek to achieve, and how they permit us to reconsider our notions of beauty, pleasure, and visual gratification. This is increasingly important as the accessibility of internet pornography allows taboos to be more easily broken, and makes those hidden spaces of obscenity increasingly more visible. It is time to look for ways of accounting for the presence and appeal of such imagery, rather than simply trying to obscure, deny, or legislate against it.

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1 For more on the history of rape in film and the rape revenge cycle, see Read, 2000; Projansky, 2001; and Horeck, 2004. For an overview of the torture porn cycle and its alleged celebration of sexualized, misogynistic violence, see Cochrane, 2007, and Queenan, 2007.

2 Recent examples in the British press making this connection include; 'MPs Attack 'Dark Side' of YouTube' (Kirkup & Martin, 2008); 'Police Target YouTube Over Copycat Crimes' (MacLeod, 2007); 'Gangs and Gun Crime Rekindle the Debate on Tighter Internet Regulation' (Sabbagh, 2007); 'REVEALED: The British Links to Internet Rape Site Viewed by this Girl's Sex Attacker' (Nicol, 2007).

3 Criminal Justice and Immigration Bill Part 6: available online at
http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmbills/130/07130.43-46.html j400. All websites and pages referred to in this chapter were operational, and most recently accessed on 8.10.2007 unless stated.

4 See Thompson, 2002, and McGavin, 2002.

5 Criminal Justice and Immigration Bill Part 6: available online at
http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmbills/130/07130.43-46.html j400.

6 See Akdeniz, 1999: 22-6 for a discussion of police shutting down Usenet discussion boards and newsgroups over alleged child porn content.

7 Peer-to-peer fileshare networks allow content to be distributed between users as files rather than streamed as motion video.

8 See Harkin, 2006 for more detail of this incident. This follows from allegations that inappropriate modes of torture were being employed by the US army in Iraq. Leigh Gilmore (2005) observes that "images of torture at Abu Ghraib…resembled pornographic *tableaux vivants* with prisoners stripped naked and placed in sexual positions".

9 Similar shock-content site gorezone.com also appears to have disbanded, although rotten.com is still up and running at the time of writing.

10 Where female bodies *are* utilized, they are portrayed as grotesque; obese, anorexic, aged, menstrual, fecal and so forth.

11 Sometimes communities are founded specifically around the images - Facebook has a goatse appreciation group at the time of writing http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2207245174. I wish to thank the members of the "Off Topic Guys Forum" and "Inner Sanctum" for their help and primary material suggestions.

12 Sites such as lastmeasure.com and gnaa.us are of a wholly different order, containing embedded malware which opens an endless cascade of pop-up windows displaying pornography or horrific medical pictures.

13 My decision not to describe the image content is conscious, as the perpetuation of these images relies on viewer intrigue, and an ability to shock, which may be diminished with forewarning.

14 While this may make it seem as if it is a "shock content" site, it may be distributed as an instant-play

video via this link from the hub site; such dissemination thus alters the meaning of the image received, and testifies to its ambivalence.

[15] The music accompanying the imagery is a looped sample taken from Gwen Stefani's song *Hollaback Girl*, which chants "this shit is bananas".

[16] For a history of the myth, see Kerekes & Slater, 1995. The line between fiction and fact has been overlooked by many of the most irate proponents of these debates; see Labelle, 1992: 189.

[17] A specific point of contention raised during the House of Lords proposals to amend Clause 113 of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Bill which contains the phrase 'is or appears to be', meaning fictional material may also fall within its jurisdiction. See http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmbills/130/07130.43-46.html j400.

[18] Numerous feminists have argued against such a stance, including Cameron & Frazer (2000), and Segal (1993).