

PORNOGRAPHIC CODING

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“Program code is like pornography. It has linear logic, but no meaning. There is an accumulation of things already known. The focus is always on the same explicit facts. Repetition and boredom rule.”
(Adapted from a Neoist slogan)

“Art is sanctioned pornography.”
(Neoist slogan)

WE DEMAND A SHAMANIC PORNOGRAPHY

Capitalist “progress” destroys the imagination through a frenzy of the visible. What we see we no longer need to imagine. A famous zero from the popsicle academy was once moved to write that every time a man had an erection it was a triumph of the imagination. Power to the imagination, and to sex – for they are one and the same thing. Pornographers of the world close your eyes. You have nothing to lose but your bodily fluids! It is time to decondition ourselves by going beyond the known world.

There are the shamans of old ingested psychedelic mushrooms, while today we are further armed with a battery of chemically synthesised drugs including ecstasy and LSD. These psychedelics are psychic elevators that can power us through the seven levels of human consciousness. The first four levels of consciousness can be reached in ordinary everyday life. Level Five requires either chemical assistance, or long hours of arduous interaction with your computer, and when you hit this level, sexual activity is vastly enhanced. Once you go above Level Five consciousness you don’t necessarily need coitus. Indeed, at Level Six you are telepathic and sexually combined with your fellow hack-

ers, and this integration is even greater at Level Seven (aka total fucking zero and one pornography).

Drugs and code are the ancient and modern tools with which we can investigate our own minds while turning our bodies into one vast erogenous zone. Our message to purveyors of representational porn is: HANDS OFF (OUR) EJACULATIONS (both male and female). WE WANT TO CUM IN ALL THE COLOURS OF ALL THE FLAGS OF ALL THE CONSULATES. As an initiated shaman, Jean Cocteau was able to come through the sheer power of his imagination, he could do this without using his hands to manipulate his genitals. Let's keep our hands free to impute data on our computer terminals, and use the convulsive power of codes to bring us to orgasm.

PORNOGRAPHY AS POPULAR COMPUTING

The effectiveness of art is generally hard to judge. Pornography as an art creates ecstatic perception, triggering arousal only through symbolic codes. Cybersex is by no means new, porn is its oldest device. Computation and programming have likewise been known in pornography for centuries. In *The 120 Days of Sodom*, Sade imagines a ceaseless execution of coded game rules. There is no single point of originality, but only combinations computed out of a set of sex partners and their organs. Porn as speculative programming has been long neglected. Along the lines of *.walk* by *socialfiction.org*, we demand psychogeographical computers built from pornographic imagination and shamanic sex acts.

Carl van Bolen, author of *The History of Eroticism* (1966), and Eduard Fuchs, author of *The History of Erotic Art* (1922), coin a programming language of Greek-Latin terms for those combinations. But only with modern day commercial pornography do those exhaustive computations become real. A mainstream porn video shop like Erotic Video Service in Berlin with its 24,000 tapes and DVDs for rent: www.evs-video.de, could be called a pornographic Library of Babel, based on a brute force algorithm of sheer masses of data. The poets of the French Oulipo group, the "workshop of potential literature," which from the 1960s onwards explored algorithmics and formal restraints in writing, announced a chapter for pornography, Oupornpo, but this seems to have remained a dirty old man's joke. Contemporary writer Simon Strong makes up for it in his forthcoming novel *66mindfuck99* for which he created "a list of criteria defining legal and extra-legal sex acts," arranging them with help of a spreadsheet to what he calls "an optimal set of erotic episodes."

Does the potential of pornography exhaust itself in the simple mechanics of sexual combinations? Surely not, although we want to show that it is too easy to sweepingly denounce this approach. Through its minimal variations in endless repetition, it is clear that pornography has become purely parodic, in other words, that each pornographic coupling, scene and image becomes the parody of another, or the same in a deceptive form. Ever since pornography started to circulate, an effort at total identification has been made, because each pornographic detail ties one operation to another. All pornography would be visibly connected if one could discover at a single glance and in its totality the

tracings of Ariadne's thread leading pornographic codes into their own labyrinth. But their coupling is no less irritating than the copulation of bodies. And when I scream I AM PORNOGRAPHIC, an integral erection results, because the mere verb "to be" is the vehicle of sexual frenzy.

PORNOGRAPHY IN STEWART HOME'S FICTION

I included large chunks of repetitive pornography in novels such as *Blow Job* and *Cunt* because few publishers would consider putting out books of fiction that were less than sixty thousand words long. By including essentially the same pornographic scene on every other page I only needed to write about thirty thousand words. Bergson claimed that repetition was the basis of all humour, and I certainly found using it as a device to expand my books to a length that was acceptable to the publishing industry, and side-splittingly funny. I was also convinced that if anyone was sexually aroused by my pornographic material (some of which was lifted directly from out-of-copyright sources) then that was a tremendous achievement. It's a demonstration of shamanic power to be able to laugh and have an orgasm at the same time. The imagery I used in my early novels was shamanic too, it was conceived as a revelation of the true nature and scope of the unconscious, a sudden shift away from the standpoint of the atomised individual to the point of view of the entire cosmic movement: a 'timeless psychedelic moment' in which the universe is experienced in the act of waking up and becoming aware of itself. One could find the beginnings of the cosmic metaphors I used in pulp fiction, where characters having sex might be described as no longer in control of their bodies because 'the DNA had taken over.' I sought to extend such imagery until it was on a par with the visions of the shamans of old. In order to do this, I would write about DNA codes being scrambled and unscrambled across the muscular structure structure of my bulk, about the sexual act leading me to imagine myself as the first amphibian to emerge from the sea and feel the warmth of the sun on my back, about genetically encoded memoirs of the first star exploding and about being out on the mudflats of pre-history...

THE EROTICISM OF BOREDOM

I.I.I.I am. My identity. Mine. I exchange it with another and step outside where the sun is shining. Another person walks up to me and gives me some words. I respond by giving her some pleasure I have with me.

If you use words often enough they become interchangeable. Infinity, limitation, enthusiasm, depression, imagination, concretion. Give me back pleasure. I need to get more words with it. Chasing your mind's tail, the back of your image unfolds into warm breeze. Throaty sound and smell of petal marshland. Five minute stare into the eyes of another being. Breaking the silence, I say "I wanna go down on you." Stepping back and removing pleasure, giving words. Is this porn?

Pornography. The mind is pornographic. I shape the word "cunt" in it, only to prove to myself that there is obscenity. Cities, streets, romantic dreams of the perfect dirty im-

age flickering like a single frame of film. Slow down the projection and blink while you watch it.

PORNOGRAPHY IN DREAMS

Pornography in dreams
 Pornography in books
 Pornography in cars
 Pornography in advertising
 And everywhere repression
 Repressed living as the expression of everyday life
 Free your mind and your ass will follow
 Pick it up, let it move, make it happen
 Go with the code
 Arm yourself with drugs, magic and computing
 Fuck with fucking and drift into abstraction
 Zeros and ones turn me on

PORNOGRAPHY IN COMPUTING

Computing has been sexual ever since John von Neumann, the creator of modern-day computer architecture, conceived of self-replicating automata. Nowadays, they translate into computer viruses and the rhetoric of preventing infection uses the same concepts and terminology as rhetoric about preventing sexually transmitted diseases. Computer users know that the electronic message “I love you” is just as true as its non-electronic equivalent, meaning in reality “I want to fuck with you.”

If codes can fuck your computer, where's the porn that depicts them?

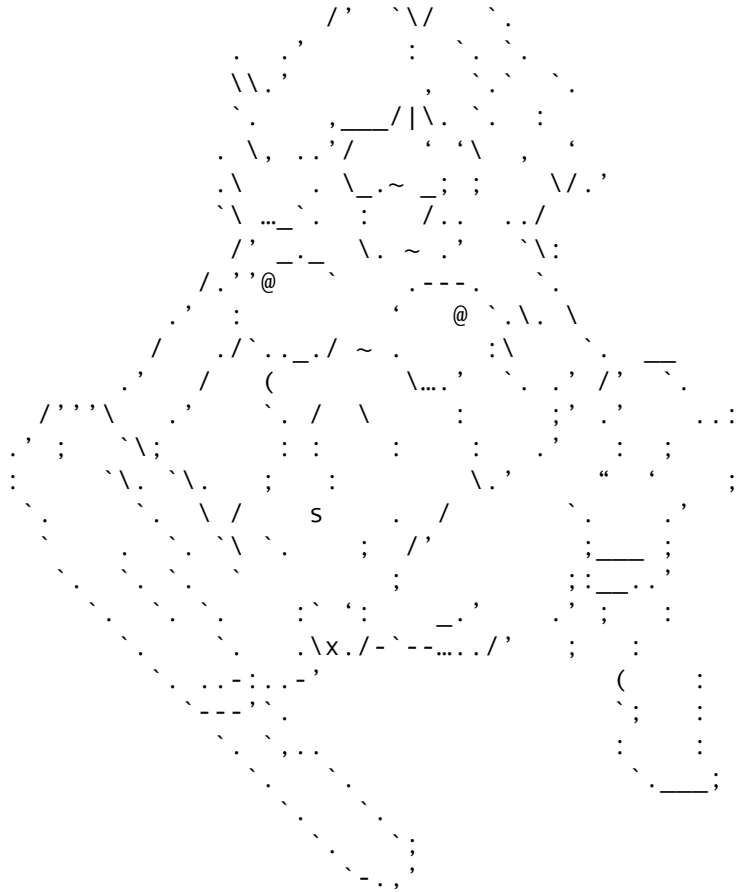
Porn, of course, flows through computers in abundance, and software has been adapted to it. The Linux-based image and video display program “pornview” is, according to its manual, optimized “for unattended presentation of images for hands-free viewing.”

DVD videos can have multiple camera angles, a technical feature created to cater to the porn industry and its customers. The image rendering component of the free Mozilla browser was originally called “libpr0n,” “pr0n” being hacker code speak for “porn.” Another GNU/Linux program, “driftnet” taps into a local computer network, and displays all images that co-workers are currently browsing. The developers of the program recommend that “if you are possessed of Victorian sensibilities, and share an unswitched network with others who are not, you should probably not use it.”

But in these examples, the pornography remains outside the software itself. Obscenity on program code level exists, too, but doesn't necessarily render the running software obscene or pornographic. The Linux kernel, for example, contains the word “fuck” 56 times in its sourcecode:

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[Sorry. Ignored \begin{small} ... \end{small}]
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But Linux hardly fucks anything in operation. Another example of non-operational code-level pornography is the ASCII pr0n genre, pornographic images drawn as typograms:



Originally a hack to bring visual pornography into the world of alphanumerical computer terminals, they became ironic retro chic in 1990s net art, above all in “Deep ASCII,” a typographic rendering of the movie “Deep Throat.”¹

“Prograsm,” which the hacker “Jargon File” defines as the “euphoria experienced upon the completion of a program or other computer-related project,” is another example of ecstasy outside the running program. However, a concept of prograsm that involves the code and the process has existed since the Middle Ages in ecstatic Kabbalah. The oldest known kabbalistic book *Sefer Yetzirah* (Book of Creation) contains mathematical combinatorics, and Kabbalists like Abraham Abulafia practiced computational readings of the Torah as a sexually ecstatic technique. In an 18th century autobiography, Salomon

Maimon tells us how he learnt that:

“the name Jehova represents [...] the person of the Godhead generis masculini, while the word Koh means [...] the person of the Godhead generis feminini, and the word Amar denotes sexual union. The words 'Koh amar Jehovah,' 'Thus saith the Lord,' I therefore explained as follows: [...] an actual union of these divine spouses took place from which the whole world might expect a blessing.”

In other words, the Kabbalah imagines God as able to fuck himself by the virtue of his male and female attributes, in the medium of the words put down in the Torah. The Torah becomes pornographic writing, a code whose execution generates divine physical arousal.

Duchamp's *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*, can be read as another auto-erotic obscene and pornographic mechanism, secularised however as modern art. Still more secularised are the corresponding technologies that exist in computing today, such as the “Brainfuck” programming language and program code recursion code executing itself in strange loops, a key structure among others in the programming language LISP. While this code is, by its nature, a pure formalism, its coupling is no less irritating than the copulation of bodies. When I scream I AM THE PROGRAM, an integral erection results, because the verb ‘to be’ is the vehicle of obscene frenzy, bastardising the formalism of the software and my informal being to a dirty code.

Reroute via gender strippage [simple cognitive shift allocation], strip to the violence inducer core and wipe with a pseudo stroke. Instruction: Regenerate the Mis[s][User.

TOWARDS AN OPEN SOURCE PORNOGRAPHY

Richard Kern: Suicide Girls is a mystery to me because I thought only women ran the site.

Daniel Robert Epstein: Does that make a difference?

Richard Kern: I had heard from various models from there that my type was not liked there because I was a guy exploiting women and SuicideGirls is a feminist site. No matter what anyone says, its still naked girls and still guys checking them out. There are girls checking in also but a lot of guys too. It's the same thing no matter how you cut it.²

No doubt, indie porn is the pornography of this decade, if not of the whole century. Beyond that, it appears to be the first significant new cultural movement of the millennium. It has replaced net.art as the aesthetic avant-garde of the Internet. Websites like Suicidegirls.com, Cleansheets.com, ThatStrangeGirl.com and FatalBeauty.com combine the punk styling of their models with visual punk aesthetics and do-it-yourself punk attitude.³ The site IndieNudes.com, lists more related sites and resources.⁴ It thus seems as if there is finally a non-industrial and erotically imaginative pornography for hetero-

and bisexuals, after the avant-garde of lesbian and gay pornography had reached the same level already in the early 1990s, with magazines like *On Our Backs* and porn video labels like Cazzo Productions.

In reality, indie porn is just like indie pop. It pretends to be different from the industry, but works with the same business model. Just as punk and indie pop saved the music industry in the 1980s and 1990s, indie porn will save the porn industry of today. It is the research and development arm of the porn industry. An industry that otherwise would go bankrupt because everyone freely shares its products on the Internet.⁵



Figure 1. Sample image from *sucidegirls.com*

Most indie porn sites are based on software and editorial formats created in independent net cultures, most of all, weblogs. Central to the aesthetics of indie porn is a concept of the authentic. Not only are the models unmodified by surgery (except for tattoos and piercings) and Photoshop. They are also accessible in chats, personal blogs and homepages: a key feature of most indie porn sites. They thus produce a simulacrum of the “real” that is no different from the popular genre of industrial pseudo amateur pornography. The rough look and production values of indie porn not only simulates authenticity, it’s also a means of cutting production costs and outsourcing labor when, for example on the site IShotMyself.com, the models become their own photographers.

Glamour and synthetic cyber pornography as well as hentai anime are more radical than indie porn because they show sexual alienation openly and make no attempt at clouding the fact that authentic moments can’t be found in them. Just like mainstream pop star Michael Jackson is ultimately more subversive than The Manic Street Preachers, commercial pornography is superior to indie porn because it offers less for the imagination to work with. By offering more variation in the imagery, indie porn preempts, and



Figure 2. Sample image from *nofauxxx.com*



Figure 3. Dahlia Schweitzer, "Lovegirl" photo series, *nofauxxx.com*

thereby erodes imagination. A digital pornography that would strive for true honesty and imagination should reduce, rather than increase, its visual imagination. In the end, it should present itself as nothing but code, teaching us to get off on mere zeros and ones, thus overcoming the false dichotomy of the artificial and the authentic.

Against commercial indie porn we demand a truly independent, open source pornography. Pornography should be made by all: a radically populist pornography of collectively produced, purely formal codes. This pornography will reconcile rationality and instinct and overcome alienation because the codes will have to be reconstituted into sexual imaginations by the right side of brain. Software, reconceived as a dirty code cross-bred of formalism and subjectivity, will be the paradigm of this pornography, a code that sets processes into motion.⁶

This paper was first given at Crash Conference, 11 February 2005, and is reproduced here with the permission of the authors.

NOTES

- 1 by the ASCII Art Ensemble around Vuc Cosic and Luka Frelj.
- 2 Richard Kern interviewed by Daniel Robert Epstein, <http://suicidegirls.com/words/Richard+Kern/>
- 3 <http://www.nerve.com> is a highbrow forerunner of these sites, creating “sophisticated” porn for an intellectual audience.
- 4 The sites www.ishotmyself.com and www.beautifulagony.com, straightforwardly translate avant-garde art concepts into porn business models; the former features models who take pictures of themselves, the latter plagiarises Andy Warhol’s film *Blow Job* by merely showing faces of persons who have an orgasm.
- 5 Richard Kern says about mainstream porn magazines in the same interview: “I shoot for them only occasionally now because that business isn’t what it used to be. [...] A lot of the point mags are going out of business. They dropped the pay tremendously and it’s all because of the Internet. I used to go out once a month to LA and shoot for one week. I’d make a ton of money then come back to New York and do whatever I wanted.”
- 6 A rare example of such dirty porn code are the writings of the Australian codework artist mez.



Figure 4. An open source porn coder

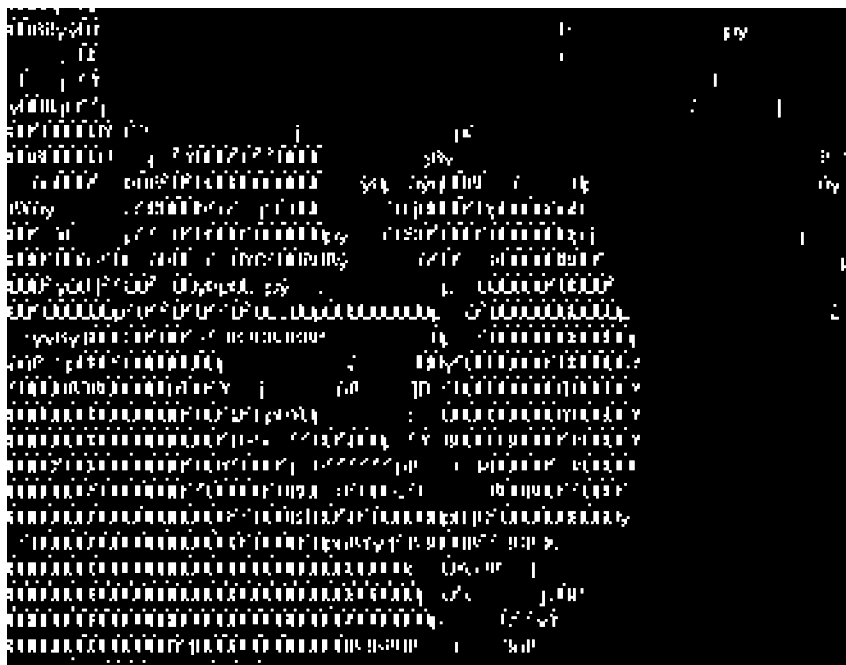


Figure 5. Turning her image into code increases its shamanistic pornographic quality

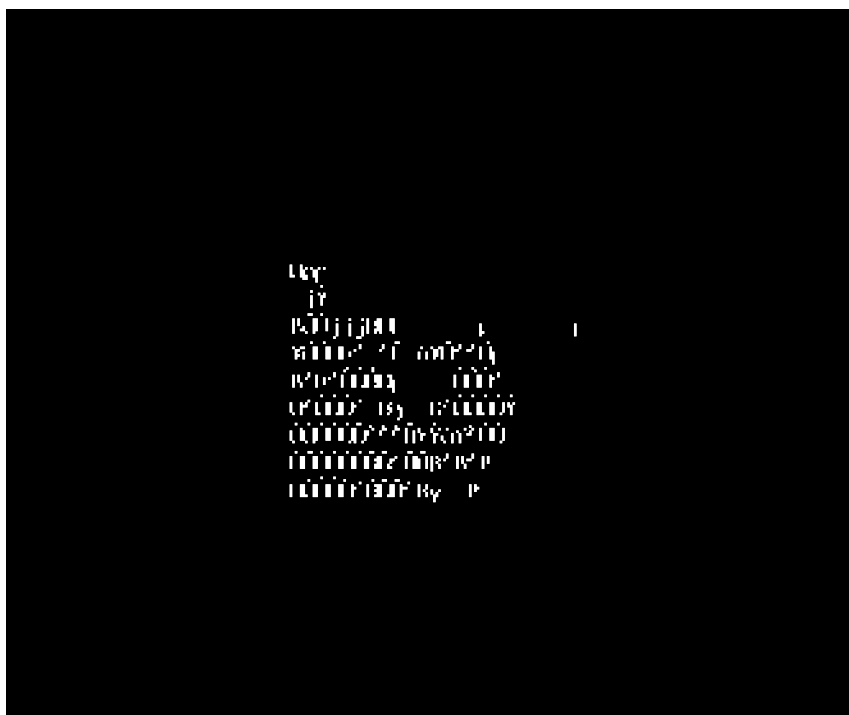


Figure 6. Further pornographic enhancement

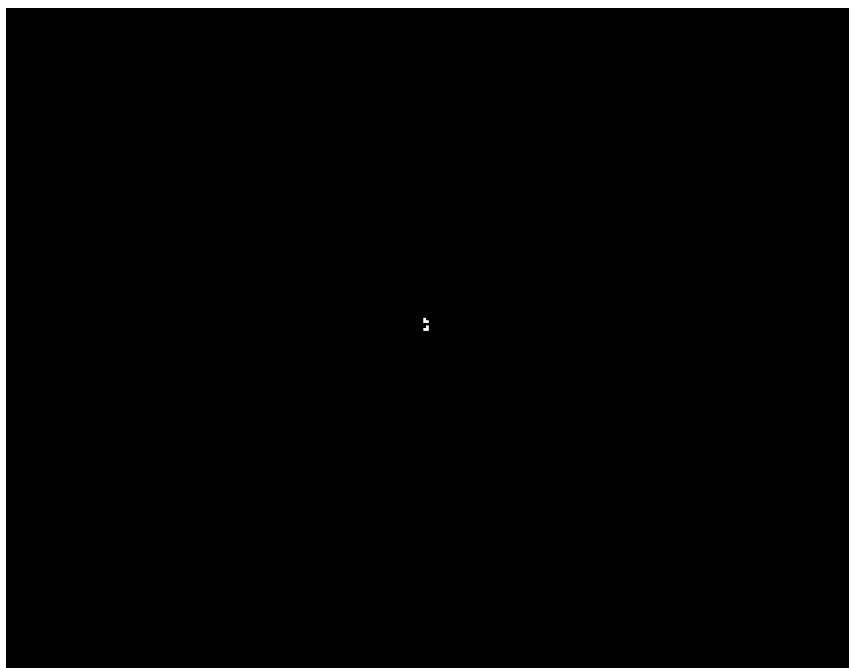


Figure 7. Pornographic perfection

