

5-1-1970

The Understandings of Pornography in the Behavioral Sciences and the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod

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THE UNDERSTANDINGS OF PORNOGRAPHY IN THE
BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES AND THE LUTHERAN
CHURCH--MISSOURI SYNOD

A Research Paper Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for elective
P-199

by

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May 1970

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY ISSUES

This examination of pornography has a twofold thrust. I have reviewed both the literature of the behavioral sciences and the publications of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod to determine what their approaches and attitudes to the phenomenon of pornography are. I have tried to isolate what seem to be the major factors and conceptual framework of each discipline.

I have done this in order to have some tangible means of evaluating what is known about pornography. It is my particular hope that a comparison of approaches and attitudes in the behavioral sciences and the Missouri Synod will indicate the relative strengths and weaknesses each possess and lead to eventual enrichment of both. A study of this type can also, I think, hope to separate the known from the unknown, the myths from the reality.

Theologically it is important to do this. The pastoral care task of the Church requires that our care of people grow out of a context of understanding and awareness. To do this fully, we seek to learn from others who can contribute to our understanding of man. In my research, I have attempted to learn from the behavioral science what seem to be the important approaches leading to an understanding of the motivations and functions of pornography. By looking beyond the mere existence of pornographic material to see why it exists and what needs it fulfills, the Church can approach with less fear and more empathy. It can then deal with the real issues and lay

aside the hysterics which at times have characterized the Church's approach.

Some further comments about the intent of this study should help clarify what I am attempting to do. I do not plan to develop a universally valid definition of pornography. My research has led me to see definition itself as one of the issues! In Chapter II where I have presented my findings from the behavioral sciences, I have indicated the attempts of various studies to develop just such a definition. Their variety and differing emphases show that one of the difficulties of dealing adequately with the phenomenon of pornography is determining what qualifies or does not qualify for that designation. The complexity, then, of isolating the causes and effects of a phenomenon that resists clear definition is evident.

Though I cannot present a definition to introduce this study, I do believe it possible to adopt a statement which characterizes pornography in a sufficiently clear manner:

It is generally agreed that the essential characteristic of pornography is its sexuality. Therefore, in order to come within the category of pornography, the writing or picture or sculpture must have the power or be intended to act as an aphrodisiac--that is, to excite sexual passions or desires. Strictly speaking, this includes any description or pictorial representation of the human body which indicates those parts which are normally kept covered, and which--in theory at best--is capable of stimulating an erotic response.¹

This characterization provides enough direction to give some content to the concept of pornography. Pornography deals with sexuality. It is the peculiar manner in which it does handle sexuality that becomes the measure of its healthiness and influence.

The matter of definition, further, raises the issue of the distinction and relationship between indecency, obscenity, and

pornography. This, too, will not concern us directly, though the resolution of these distinctions is undoubtedly necessary for a complete understanding. I have felt it necessary to exclude an extended discussion of this issue since it would detract attention from our prime interest of uncovering what is known about the functions of pornography. If we attempted to deal with these distinctions it would be necessary to also consider the related legal questions, thus moving into the issue of censorship. That actually begins to shape a topic for another paper and will not be dealt with directly here.

In attempting to understand what the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod is saying about pornography, I found it impossible to determine what one might call the "position" of the Church on this matter. I think it is more accurate to speak of the attitudes that are evident and given expression in various church publications. By considering these attitudes of our church in a study which also considers the approaches of the behavioral sciences, I hope to be able to sort out what have been the major issues for us as well as to indicate where we might benefit from additional insight.

FOOTNOTES

¹Harford M. Hyde, A History of Pornography (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Biroux, 1965), p. 1.

CHAPTER II

UNDERSTANDINGS AND APPROACHES IN THE BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

Alfred C. Kinsey

Alfred C. Kinsey provides us with a starting point for considering the approaches of the behavioral sciences to the phenomenon of pornography. His work with the Institute for Sex Research at Indiana University forms a major contribution to an understanding of human sexual behavior. His published data have been gathered by him and other research associates from case histories secured in personal interviews with "more than 16,000 persons who represent a diverse sample of many different groups."¹

Only a portion of the Kinsey report is applicable to our study of pornography. His study, considering all aspects of human sexuality, gave consideration to the anatomy, physiology, and psychology of sexuality. Only the psychologic factors bear on the issue of pornography.

In considering pornography, or "erotic materials" in his terminology, under the category of psychologic factors Kinsey does not wish to make a rigid division from anatomic and physiologic considerations. He fears this would create a false or mystical separation which would view the psychologic factors as the basic or human aspects of behavior in distinction from the crass physical aspects of sexuality. Yet even with this warning to view the three aspects of human sexuality holistically, Kinsey recognizes that psychologic factors do

help explain and understand human sexuality.

This [the danger of rigid divisions], however, will not prevent us from recognizing the existence of many phenomena, such as the processes of learning and conditioning, the development of preferences in the choice of sex objects, and the development of whole patterns of behavior, which cannot yet be explained in terms of the physics and chemistry which may be involved.²

Psychologic factors, then, form the framework in which Kinsey approaches and understands the phenomenon of pornography. As will be seen below when we consider some of the specific data of his study he is primarily interested in comparing the erotic response of males and females to pornographic material. Briefly summarized, he finds that males are considerably more responsive to erotic materials than females. It is the psychologic development of this response which we want to consider at this point since, in Kinsey's approach, it accounts actually for the existence and appeal of pornography.

Kinsey's thesis is that the sexual capacities with which an individual is born are "nothing more than the necessary anatomy and the physiologic capacity to respond to a sufficient physical or psychologic stimulus."³ All other aspects of sexual behavior are the product of learning and conditioning, the capacity to be modified by experience. This process of learning and conditioning begins at birth; the accumulated experiences begin to form a pattern of preference. This pattern leads a person to respond positively or negatively to certain kinds of stimuli. "Other things being equal, the first experiences, the most intense experiences, and the latest experiences may have the maximum effect on an individual's subsequent behavior."⁴

In addition to personal experience, Kinsey notes other factors which contribute to this process of learning and conditioning. One

of them is the human ability to vicariously share in another's experience.

A fair amount of the conditioning...depends upon the fact that the human animal, with its extraordinary capacity for communication through verbal interchange, through the printed word and pictorial material, and through other modern devices, may vicariously share the sexual experience of many other persons. Learning of their satisfactions or difficulties in particular types of sexual activity may influence one's own decision to engage or not to engage in similar types of activity.⁵

Communication is a means by which a person may substitute another's experience for his own. This concept of "vicarious sharing" provides Kinsey with a rationale for understanding the appeal of pornography. It appeals to a person because he is able to share the experience described or pictured. This seems to be the same quality others have referred to as the fantasy element of pornography.⁶

Kinsey's development recognizes that the ability to vicariously share affects the process of conditioning. Though his point is that an individual's sexual behavior can be conditioned without any actual experience, one cannot avoid the conclusion that pornography, therefore, can alter and influence behavior. It should be noted that this is one of the clearest statements about the possible behavior effects of pornography. Equally worthy of emphasis is the recognition that this influence moves in two possible directions; encouraging or discouraging a particular type of sexual activity.

Another factor which contributes to the process of learning and conditioning is the sympathetic response evoked in an individual observing others in sexual activity. This seems to be closely related to the ability of vicariously sharing another's experience; the difference is that Kinsey is here referring to the observance of

actual sexual activity. He explains the reaction this way.

These are, technically speaking, sympathetic responses. The one animal feels or reacts (pathos) with (sym) the other. Of all the situations to which an animal may become conditioned, none is as likely to evoke sexual responses as sexual activity itself.

It is this response, Kinsey feels, which is responsible for the societal restrictions on public sexual activity rather than moral considerations. These restrictions prevent the inevitable sympathetic responses of those who would observe such public sexual activity.

This completes the review of Kinsey's understanding of how psychologic factors which influence sexual behavior are developed through the process of learning and conditioning. Experience, patterns of preference, vicarious sharing, and sympathetic responses all contribute to the conditioning process. As was noted earlier, Kinsey's interest is in comparing these psychologic factors as they effect the human male and female's erotic responses. Below some of the specific data are selected and reviewed. They indicate the difference in male and female erotic response to what may be considered pornographic materials.

Table 1 indicates that fifty-four percent of the male sample reported an erotic response from seeing photographs, drawings, or paintings of nude females. The general lack of erotic response among females from viewing nude males figure is evident in the twelve percent figure.

One of the rare exceptions to the female pattern of response to psychologic stimulation is indicated in Table 2. Kinsey theorizes

this may be the result of the romantic and emotional atmosphere created by the picture as a whole rather than an explicit or obviously erotic element.⁸

In Table 3 the erotic response elicited by photographs, moving pictures, and drawings of explicit sexual activity is demonstrated. Here again a significantly higher percentage of males were erotically aroused by this type of material. Kinsey notes that females, because this material does not appeal to them and at times are antagonistic to it, are often thought to thereby show a greater sense of propriety. He feels, however, that "it seems more likely that most females are indifferent or antagonistic to the existence of such material because it means nothing to them erotically."⁹

The erotic responses from literary materials are considered in Tables 4 and 5. The difference between them is that in Table 5 Kinsey considers literary materials which deliberately intend to be erotically stimulating, while Table 4 refers to literary materials less explicitly sexual in orientation. It can be seen from these data that males appear to experience an erotic response to pornographic materials much more frequently than females. Kinsey concludes on the basis of these data that the conditioning process and, hence, psychologic factors, have more significance for the male than for the female.

While there is great individual variation in this respect... there is considerable evidence that the sexual responses and behavior of the average male are, on the whole, more often determined by the male's previous experience...by his vicarious sharing of another individual's sexual experience, and by his sympathetic reactions to the sexual responses of other individuals. The average female is less often affected by such psychologic factors. It is highly significant to find that there are

TABLE 1

OBSERVING PORTRAYALS OF NUDE FIGURES*

*Alfred C. Kinsey and Others, Sexual Behavior in the Human Female (New York: Pocket Books, 1967), p. 652.

| <u>Erotic Response</u> | <u>By Females</u> | <u>By Males</u> |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| | % | % |
| Definite and/or frequent | 3 | 18 |
| Some response | 9 | 36 |
| Never | 88 | 46 |
| <hr/> | | |
| Number of cases | 5698 | 4191 |

TABLE 2

OBSERVING MOVING PICTURES*

*Ibid., p. 659.

| <u>Erotic Response</u> | <u>By Females</u> | <u>By Males</u> |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| | % | % |
| Definite and/or frequent | 9 | 6 |
| Some response | 39 | 30 |
| Never | 52 | 64 |
| <hr/> | | |
| Number of cases | 5411 | 3231 |

TABLE 3

OBSERVING PORTRAYALS OF SEXUAL ACTION*

*Ibid., p. 662.

| <u>Erotic Response</u> | <u>By Females</u> | <u>By Males</u> |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| | % | % |
| Definite and/or frequent | 14 | 42 |
| Some response | 18 | 35 |
| Never | 68 | 23 |
| <hr/> | | |
| Number of cases | 2242 | 3868 |

TABLE 4

READING LITERARY MATERIALS*
 *Ibid., p. 670

| <u>Erotic Response</u> | <u>By Females</u> | <u>By Males</u> |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| | % | % |
| Definite and/or frequent | 16 | 21 |
| Some Response | 44 | 38 |
| Never | 40 | 41 |
| <hr/> | | |
| Number of cases | 5699 | 3952 |

TABLE 5

STIMULATION BY EROTIC STORIES*
 *Ibid., p. 671.

| <u>Erotic Response</u> | <u>By Females</u> | <u>By Males</u> |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| | % | % |
| Definite and/or frequent | 2 | 16 |
| Some response | 12 | 31 |
| Never | 86 | 53 |
| <hr/> | | |
| Number of cases | 5523 | 4202 |

evidences of such difference between the females and males of infra-human mammalian species, as well as between human females and males.¹⁰

This differing response to psychologic stimuli aids in explaining two things for Kinsey. First it explains some of the differences his research noted in the "incidences and frequencies and the patterns of sexual behavior among females and males."¹¹ These behavior differences exist inspite of similar anatomic and physiologic phenomena because of the differing response to psychologic stimulation.

It also explains why pornographic material is only very rarely produced by females. Though it often pretends to be written by females, Kinsey notes that the internal content of such work will generally expose a male author.

A great deal of the pornographic literature turns around detailed descriptions of genital activity, and descriptions of male genital performance. These are elements in which females, according to our data, are not ordinarily interested. The females in such literature extol the male's genital and copulatory capacity, and there is considerable emphasis on the intensity of the female's response and the insatiability of her sexual desires. All of these represent the kind of female which most males wish all females to be.¹²

With this description of the characteristics of pornographic literature we will leave Kinsey's work and turn to Phyllis and Eberhard Kronhausen who develop these characteristics more fully. Summarizing Kinsey's approach and understanding it can be seen that he considers pornography as capable of providing a psychological stimulus to erotic response. This ability to be aroused by psychologic factors is not innate, but the result of the process of learning and conditioning. He concludes further, that the sexual behavior of the male is considerably more affected by the psychologic process of conditioning. Hence, the male, more often than the

female, experiences an erotic response to pornographic material.

Eberhard and Phyllis Kronhausen

Three broad characteristics of the Kronhausen's approach to the phenomenon of pornography may be distinguished. They treat writings and pictorial art separately, they consider intent and content normative for identifying material as pornographic, and they discuss the psychological effects of these materials. For purposes of clarity these three features of their approach will be considered separately.

The first keynote of their approach is to consider erotic writings and erotic pictorial art separately. As they point out "pornography" is an emotional rather than a scientifically descriptive word.¹³ By separating literary and pictorial material they are able to develop more specific definitions, at least in regard to literary material. They are unable to make clear distinctions between pornographic and nonpornographic pictorial art, and consequently concentrate on writings, because of the theoretical difficulties in determining the intent, quality, and reality of pictorial representations of erotic scenes. These criteria, all of which prove in some degree helpful in considering erotic literature, do not readily separate out the pornographic from the nonpornographic in pictorial art. The determining factor in their inability to do so is that "there is no apparent way of ascertaining sufficient convincing evidence with regard to the motivation or intent of the artist...."¹⁴ The intent, then, or purpose of erotic material helps to determine its pornographic

quality. This leads to the second characteristic of their approach.

The Kronhausens develop a distinction between pornographic literature and all other literature with erotic elements on the basis of its intent and content. The two are closely related; it is because of its particular intent that pornographic literature follows a general outline of organization and content.

Terminologically, the Kronhausens refer to nonpornographic writings with erotic content by the term "erotic realism."¹⁵ Literature in this category can be fiction or nonfiction; their linking characteristic is that both intend to handle erotic material in the context of reality. This is true even of fictional literature since the erotic content forms part of the author's attempt to present intrapsychic or social processes realistically in relation to the fictional situation he is describing.¹⁶

Writings which are pornographic do not attempt to deal with reality. Their intent is completely opposite that of erotic realism.

Pornography is not concerned with reality at all, but sets aside all considerations of reality in favor of the wish-fulfilling phantasies of its (predominantly male) authors and the anticipated reactions of a predominantly male readership.¹⁷

Because they do not intend to deal with reality at all, pornographic writings have a unique purpose:

The aim of pornographic writings is to evoke erotic imagery in the reader in order to bring about sexual arousal. In other words, pornographic writings are 'meant' to function as psychological aphrodisiacs and are successful only to the extent that they accomplish this particular purpose.¹⁸

The determinative factor then in distinguishing pornographic writings is their intent to sexually arouse the reader. It is important to underscore this since that effect of arousal may also be

experienced from erotic realism. However,

the technique and the aim of pornography...are diametrically opposed to those of erotic realism, and even when...the effects are at times identical, it is well to deep in mind that the overall intent is very different.¹⁹

In contrast to pornography, erotic realism's goal is to depict the basic realities of life, including man's biologic needs, even if that description entails an anti-erotic effect.

The distinction between erotic realism and pornography is further developed by the Kronhausens on the basis of content. Actually, they have arrived at their position on the intent of pornography through the deductive process of examining the content of hundreds of pornographic books. Their analysis of content reveals three principles common to pornographic writings. First, their structure or organization is characterized by a "buildup of erotic excitement in the course of the text." There is a massive, consistent, and progressive build-up of sexual stimulation, thus meeting its aim as a psychological aphrodisiac. They are secondarily characterized by an emphasis "on the physiological sex response, in order to provide maximum erotic stimulation for the reader by appealing to his voyeurism."²⁰ This emphasis on the physiological sex response results in a de-emphasis or avoidance of any reality elements which may disturb the process of stimulation. Thus pornography rarely refers to the realities of pregnancy, abortion, and venereal disease.

The third principle of content consists of a number of sub-themes which seem to be constantly present in pornographic writings. The Kronhausens consider the presence or absence of these themes as a group, together with the structure and emphasis of the writing, to be also determinative in identifying a writing as pornographic.²¹

There are eleven of these themes to which we will now give our attention. The list is not exhaustive; it contains only the most common and easily recognizable sub-themes. They are: seduction, defloration, incest, the permissive-seductive parent figure, profanation of the sacred, sexual vernacular, supersexed males, nymphomaniac females, Negroes, Asiatics, and "low-caste individuals" as sex symbols, homosexuality, and flagellation.

Seduction scenes in pornographic literature are characterized by their brevity and by the fact that the victim is very frequently a willing collaborator. Seduction is easily accomplished and often initiated by females.²²

Defloration is often synonymous with rape in this literature. The Kronhausens have observed a fusion of erotic and sadistic impulses in these themes. Also significant is that though this theme considers the violation of virginity the victim rarely expresses regret and there is the implication that "there is no need for actual rape, since the women in these wish-fulfilling pornographic phantasies are pictured as highly sexed, fiercely passionate creatures...."²³

Pornographic literature is further characterized by open and frank incestuous relationships. The Kronhausens feel that clinical experience indicates most people have latent incestuous leanings; the social taboo which inhibits their overt expression acts, however, as a mental stimulant and permits pornography to capture man's fascination with this taboo relationship.²⁴

The parent figure in pornography frequently participates in the sexual activity of the child, at times introducing or seducing the

child into certain sexual practices. The Kronhausens see two psychological mechanisms at work in this theme. It involves the Oedipal attraction of child for parent and parent for child, and also may meet the childish phantasy of a parent figure who will completely accept the child's sexual and scatological interests.²⁵

The mixture of the sacred--either sacred surroundings or people--with the profane results in a heightening of erotic tensions. This common theme of pornography operates on the principle that for many people in our society sex is associated with sin. By mixing that which is holy with sexual behavior one is able to create the ultimate blasphemy. This enables sexual behavior

to take on a special meaning as expressions of one's need to rebel, not only against social and religious institutions, but ultimately against those cultural inhibitions which have become part and parcel of one's own character structure.²⁶

The use of sexual vernacular, or taboo words, has an attraction similar to that of profaning the sacred. It, too, serves as a rebellion against the inhibitions of the superego and social conventions. Though taboo words appear also in erotically realistic literature they appear with considerably greater frequency in pornographic literature.²⁷

This literature also places exaggerated emphasis on male potency and anatomy. In typically unrealistic fashion, males appear to have no limit to their sex drive and possess sex organs of immense and exaggerated size. This theme builds on man's pride in the penis and the exaggeration which attends it may be the result of latent anxiety over potency.²⁸

While the male characters derive from the unrealistic nature of

pornographic literature, the female characters are the result of the wish-fulfillment which also characterizes the literature. The women "are just as most men would wish women to be: passionate, sensuous, sexually highly responsive creatures."²⁹ There is little recognition of the realities of modesty or anxiety.

Another theme of pornography is the employment of sex symbols in the form of characters from other racial or social groups. Hence, Negro males appear who possess larger genitals than Caucasians, and Oriental females who have special sexual charms and qualities.³⁰

Homosexual elements and acts are present in nearly all pornographic literature. The Kronhausens note that most of these references are to female homosexuality. This predominance of lesbian activities occurs because the male author or reader can more easily place himself through phantasy into the scene since he visualizes it as essentially heterosexual. He could not do this in regard to male homosexuality "without the arousal of anxiety over his own possible latent homosexual impulses."³¹

Finally, the sub-theme of flagellation is frequently found in pornographic literature. This theme appeals to those whose sexual behavior is dominated by sado-masochistic impulses. The Kronhausens indicate that interest in flagellation appears to increase in times of sexual repression, though it is not restricted to those times.³²

Before moving on to the third characteristic a brief summary of their approach may be helpful. Their division between writings and pictorial art and their reasons for being unable to deal in depth with pictorial art were noted first. Then their analysis of erotic

writings led them to distinguish between pornographic and erotically realistic literature. Pornography, in contrast to erotic realism, has as its sole aim sexual arousal; it intends to function as a psychological aphrodisiac; it puts aside all considerations of reality. Pornography is further characterized by its structure, emphasis, and common sub-themes. It emphasizes the physiological sex response in a structure which progressively builds in erotic stimulation. The sub-themes considered above complete this structure and emphasis.

The third feature of the Kronhausens' approach is their discussion of the psychological effects of erotic literature. Seven points of their discussion may be isolated. Their discussion is somewhat problematic because it is not always clear whether they are referring specifically to erotically realistic or pornographic literature, or perhaps to both. In a sense this is a reflection on the fact that the study of pornography has not progressed to a point where such distinctions may be easily made or kept.

The first effect of pornographic writings is that they erotically stimulate the reader. From both subjective experience and a small sample of interviews the Kronhausens report that such literature nearly always fulfills its primary purpose of sexual arousal. Again reporting from subjective experience, they note that this "aphrodisiacal effect of 'obscene' books seems to follow the law of diminishing returns...."³³ with a noticeable, but not complete, immunity developing from constant exposure.

The next three effects considered are data which have come from the Kinsey studies. First there is the "differential response to eroticism on the part of males and females."³⁴ We have noted above

the interpretation Kinsey made of this fact. The Kronhausens, however, indicate that there may be a cultural and psychological basis to this differential response. They feel that the male interest in erotica may be due to the specific nature of his potency, which is dependent on his ability to achieve an erection. Thus the male need for psychological stimuli "is greater...than that of the female, who is able to initiate intercourse without the necessity of prior excitation."³⁵ Furthermore, females may show less response to pornography since culturally they have had less accessibility and familiarity with it. In addition, females traditionally receive a "more severe childhood training with regard to modesty and learn... to conceal their sexual responses."³⁶

The other two effects of pornography are observed in the differential response "on the part of males from the lower social and educational levels as compared to those on the upper level..." and the "difference in the type of erotica which upper and lower level males prefer." Here the Kronhausens accept the interpretation of Kinsey that upper level males have a greater responsiveness to pornography because they often are unable to satisfy their socio-sexual desires and because of their greater capacity to visualize the literary descriptions. This greater intellectual capacity leads them to prefer pornographic writings "which show considerable imagination, fluency of style," and an intellectually acceptable plot.³⁷

Does pornography affect behavior in such a way that it leads to sexual crimes and violence? The Kronhausens seem to be "inclined to believe that pornography is not a direct contributory cause of sex

offenses."³⁸ A number of factors lead them to this position. They believe that though pornography may supply a potential delinquent with information on how to perform a certain anti-social act, the delinquent would "not be able to acquire the tendency or inclination to commit antisocial acts in this manner."³⁹ This is because individuals tend to react to such stimuli according to a preconditioned pattern of behavior. The Kronhausens doubt that

even continued exposure to specific pornographic stimuli will result in behavioral changes, unless they are accompanied by actual contacts with individuals who are so predisposed.⁴⁰

Furthermore, clinical experience indicates that "attitudes, sexual and otherwise, are established early in life, and once incorporated are not easily altered"⁴¹ This tends to minimize any behavioral effects from reading material.

The Kronhausens' point is that the causative factors in sexual criminality go far deeper than reading. Criminality is the manifestation of cultural frustrations which make it impossible to satisfy basic biologic and emotional needs.⁴² Society blames and censors reading material, though, because it is

much easier and socially much more comfortable...than to explore the poisoned family dynamics which are much more closely related to his criminal or otherwise disturbed behavior.⁴³

They offer further evidence for this position by reviewing five separate studies,⁴⁴ all of which seem to indicate that pornographic literature only slightly, if at all, influences behavior.

Rather than contributing to criminality, the Kronhausens understand pornography to have a beneficial effect by functioning therapeutically as a safety valve, allowing for the expression of

antisocial impulses through phantasy rather than action.⁴⁵ This effect is based on the clinical practice of catharsis by which strong emotions are purged through expression in a socially acceptable manner. Quoting Dr. Benjamin Karpman they note people who read pornographic material "are less likely to become sexual offenders...for the reason that such reading often neutralizes what aberrant sexual interests they may have."⁴⁶

The seventh and final effect to which the Kronhausens refer is also a beneficial one. But here they seem to have in mind erotically realistic rather than pornographic literature. Simply stated, it is that erotic realism can serve beneficially in sex education.⁴⁷ This literature, they believe, can complete the sex education commonly given in the schools, which deals primarily with the biological aspects of sex, because it considers the emotional and pleasurable aspects of sexuality.

The Kronhausens conclude their discussion of psychological effects with a comment not about the effects but the quality of erotic literature. Much of it, they feel, is artistically poor and aesthetically offensive because of the suppressive atmosphere that attends American sexual attitudes.⁴⁸ We have poor pornography because we have poor sexual attitudes which will not accept or reward legitimate artistic expression of the erotic.

Social and Cultural Considerations

Thus far the contributions of Alfred C. Kinsey and the Kronhausens have been considered separately. This has been done since

their approaches to the phenomenon of pornography represent attempts at rather full explanations. This unit will consider collectively the contributions of several people in the behavioral sciences who approach pornography from a more limited and specifically cultural-social viewpoint. The approaches reviewed here deal with pornography as it relates to the social structure and its significance in sex crimes and the criminal culture.

Ned Polsky has contributed an essay⁴⁹ which attempts to answer two specific sociological questions about the phenomenon of pornography: what is the nature of the social structure which both produces and condemns pornographic material, and what is the function of this material in such a system? He concludes from his analysis that pornography functions as a "safety valve" for the expression of anti-social and perverse sexuality in a society which restricts such expression by moral and legal codes.

Polsky develops his analysis by following and then expanding the reasoning of an essay on prostitution by Kingsley Davis.⁵⁰ He follows Davis in recognizing that man's sexual behavior goals are not inherently social but in fact, often anti-social, seeking expression in impersonal, transitory, and non-familial coitus. Society, therefore, in order to limit sexuality to the social ends of bearing and raising children limits sexual expression by moral and legal codes to the institution of the family. The conflict which results from the contrary goals of sexual inclination and social requirement is resolved through prostitution or, for Polsky, through pornography, the functional alternative to prostitution.

Pornography, as a functional alternative to prostitution, allows for a similar expression of anti-social sexual inclinations but through "masturbatory, imagined intercourse with a fantasy object."⁵¹ Polsky does not evaluate whether the alternative of pornography is preferable to prostitution in maintaining the social ends of society. He seems to nearly approach that, however, in stating that pornography does not only facilitate masturbation but may also provide sexual instruction or stimulate real intercourse.⁵²

Polsky expands Davis' reasoning further by noting an additional societal restriction on sexual expression and a consequent additional function of pornography. Society has not only limited sexual expression to the institution of marriage but also limited sexual behavior within marriage to a specified few of the possible sex acts. Both pornography and prostitution then, according to Polsky, allow for the expression of those sex acts which are so "highly stigmatized as to be labeled deviant even within the intimacy of marriage...."⁵³ Thus pornography functions as a safety valve in the second sense of permitting the expression of perverse or deviant behavior as well as anti-social behavior.

A third function of pornography emerges from the fact that the society which produces it and permits it to exist also condemns it. Society does both at once because the condemnation provides one of the main sources of information about the sexual norms of society. "Hence, one of the functions of pornography is precisely that it is condemned."⁵⁴ In this sense, Polsky seems to see pornography functioning as a negative reinforcement of society's moral and legal restrictions on sexual behavior. Society evidently could abolish pornography but does

not because it helps define and reinforce the limits of legitimate sexual behavior.

Summarizing, Polsky has viewed the social structure which produces and permits pornography as one which limits anti-social and perverse sexual inclinations by linking sexual behavior morally and legally to social ends. Pornography functions in that structure as a safety valve for the expression of those sexual inclinations and also as a reinforcement of society's limits.

A similar interest in a sociological analysis of pornography is found in an essay, "A Cultural Theory of Obscenity," by J. J. Honigmann. He employs data from cultural anthropology in order to develop the cultural principles which, in part at least, serve to determine what our society considers obscene. Though he deals with the larger issues of both genital and sexual obscenity, including exhibitionistic behavior, we are interested only in his analysis of the factors related to pornography.

Honigmann employs two categories to understand the appeal of pornography. They are the "cultural concomitants of pornography" and the "individual personality motivations."⁵⁵

Culturally, our society regards "the public expression of behaviors, terms, or images pertaining to autoeroticism or sexual interaction... as obscene in particular contexts or situations."⁵⁶ What modifies their expression are the social situation, the intention, and the ethos, or emotional quality, which accompanies them. In other words, under certain circumstances references can be made to sexual interaction without being considered obscene, but these circumstances are rigidly controlled.

The result of this is "a society which taboos all mention of sexual interaction in everyday life."⁵⁷ Information about and references to the processes of sexual interaction are concealed. It is this cultural setting, Honigmann feels, which generates the appeal of pornography.

The details of sexual interaction are obscured; in such a condition strong interest into the processes of sexual interaction as it obtains among other individuals is generated; various factors then determine whether the euphemism of the novel, the titillation of the erotic poem, or the direct appeal of the pornographic novelette will satisfy this interest.⁵⁸

In contrast, Honigmann predicts that pornography could not have such an appeal to the Lepcha of India, since for this people sexual interaction is openly observed from childhood.⁵⁹ It is the American emotional overtones of shame and fear in regard to sexual processes which causes such references to be concealed and thereby heighten interest in their expression through pornography.

With regard to the individual personality motivation which may be responsible for deriving satisfaction from producing pornography, Honigmann mentions two possibilities. One is that an inhibited individual may find "vicarious emotional satisfaction through creating sexual situations on paper in which he could never participate in real life."⁶⁰ The second motivation is that pornography provides a means of attaining tumescence. He does not claim that these provide a full explanation of motivation but offers them as beginning possibilities.

His conclusion provides a good summary of his distinct approach and understanding of the phenomenon of pornography.

The suggestion is that, culturally, pornography is correlated with attitudes which tend to conceal information pertaining

to sexual interaction and to taboo reference to such interaction from everyday conversation.⁶¹

One of the important questions concerning pornography's relationship to and role in the social structure is its effect on behavior. Does it encourage and lead to sexual criminality?

This issue arose previously in the discussion of the Kronhausen's approach to pornography. They gave a rather specific answer to this controversial question, indicating on the basis of their study that pornography does not encourage sexual criminality but actually seems to deter such behavior by functioning as a safety valve.

In the following pages some other studies which also contribute answers to this question will be reviewed. At the outset a statement by Herbert B. Warburton, a former General Council of the United States Post Office, may be noted.

It must be baldly stated that there appears to have been no basic sociological or psychiatric research done upon the question of whether exposure to obscene, or otherwise objectionable, material leads to misbehavior.⁶²

While his position may be extreme, it does seem to be true that no conclusive research has been done. The following studies should be read with the understanding that fully adequate research still needs to be done.

Ernest van den Haag, a psychiatrist at New York University, has argued that pornography inevitably leads to sadistic and criminal behavior since, by its de-individualizing and dehumanizing characterization, it eliminates the empathy between people which would otherwise restrain them from such behavior.⁶³ He does not offer any research evidence to support this thesis; presumably it is based on his clinical experience. This function of pornography is

further defined in van den Haag's observation that while society cannot prevent the sadistic wishes and fantasies of people it can control them by "censoring the literature that, by offering models and rationalizations, fosters their growth and precipitates them into action."⁶⁴

Thus the link between sexual criminality and pornography for him is clear. Pornography provides an example and a rationalization or excuse for such behavior.

A similar understanding of pornography's effect on behavior is presented in a paper by Hilde L. Mosse on the influence of mass media on teenage sex problems.⁶⁵ While it is not exclusively concerned with pornography, the paper does consider pornography, along with comic books and television, as the mass media particularly influential among teenagers.

Mosse notes three areas of sexual conflict for teenagers: (1) what kinds of sex activity are permitted; (2) masturbation conflict; and (3) questions of normalcy. The teenager finds it difficult to resolve these conflicts because the mass media which influence him provide only distortions and misinformation about sex.

The particular progression of this influence is outlined in a series of seven statements which indicate the kind of effect pornography has upon teenagers: (1) creates an atmosphere of cruelty and deceit; (2) creates a readiness of temptation; (3) stimulates unwholesome fantasies; (4) suggests criminal or sexually abnormal ideas; (5) furnishes rationalization for these; (6) suggests the form an impulse may take and provide details of technique; (7) it may tip the scales toward maladjustment or delinquency.⁶⁶

As can be observed, this more elaborate listing indicates the same essential influence noted by van den Haag, namely that pornography supplies a model and rationalization for sexually criminal behavior. Again it should be noted that no research is offered to confirm these observations.

One more study will be reviewed which takes the position that there is a definite link between pornography and crime. It was written by William H. Haines, an associate of the Behavior Clinic of the Criminal Court of Cook County, Chicago. He also is not exclusively concerned with pornography but does offer some opinions on the phenomenon.

This article is problematic because Haines' conclusions do not seem to follow from his data which are based on a small sample of interviews with juvenile inmates. He begins with this presupposition: "As for sex crimes, it is our opinion that pornography...plays a greater role in contributing to juvenile delinquency than violence programs on television."⁶⁷ He then offers from his interviews the data that those who claimed to be sexually excited from viewing pornographic booklets "sought sexual relief on the streets, through their girl friends or by masturbation." And further, "none of the inmates being held on sex charges attributed his sexual drive to the booklets."⁶⁸

This is all the evidence he presents relating to pornography. He concludes:

The results of our study brings us to the conclusion that television, pornography and movies play a distinct role in the creation of anti-social behavior in susceptible teen-agers.⁶⁹

The only conclusion that seems evident is that Haines must be operating with a distinction between anti-social behavior and sexual criminality which is not explicitly brought out in the text. The testimony of those specifically held on sex charges does not seem to support the conclusion that pornography has a "distinct role" in anti-social behavior unless this is to be distinguished from specifically sexual crimes.

The study of sex offenders headed by Paul H. Gebhard for the Institute for Sex Research at Indiana University indicates a minimal link between crime and pornography. This study presents quantified data from personal interviews with over fifteen-hundred men convicted for a variety of sex offenses. As in the Kinsey report, the material which concerns us falls under the category of psychological stimuli.

The sample of case histories is broken into six major types of sexual offense. The first four are heterosexual offenders, heterosexual aggressors, incest offenders, and homosexual offenders. The term aggressors distinguishes those sexual activities in which force or threat were involved. Each of these four are further subdivided on the basis of whether the object of the offense was a child, minor, or adult. The remaining two types of offense are peeping and exhibitionist behavior. In total then, including the subdivision of the first four types according to object, there are fourteen categories of sexual offense sorted out in this study.⁷⁰

All these groups were questioned whether they had experienced sexual arousal from pornographic photographs or drawings and the further question whether they had owned pornography or had only been exposed to it briefly. Without developing great detail the

significant data and their interpretation may be noted.

The groups reporting the least response to such stimuli were the incest offenders versus adults, the heterosexual offenders versus adults, the heterosexual offenders versus minors, and the incest offenders versus minors. Those reporting the most response were the homosexual offenders versus adults, the heterosexual aggressors versus minors, and the control group of the experiment.⁷¹

On the basis of other aspects of this study in which characteristics of each offender group are developed, Gebhard is able to make some interpretations of these data. His essential point seems to be that arousal from pornography is related to education and that, since sex offenders are generally not well educated, they are less aroused and influenced by pornography. He states it this way:

strong response to pornography is associated with imaginativeness, ability to project, and sensitivity, all of which generally increase as education increases, and with youthfulness....Since the majority of sex offenders are not well educated nor particularly youthful, their responsiveness to pornography is correspondingly less and cannot be a consequential factor in their sex offenses unless one is prepared to argue that the inability to respond to erotica in general precludes gaining some vicarious stimulation and satisfaction and thereby causes the individual to behave overtly which, in turn, renders him more liable to arrest and conviction.⁷²

A minimal role for pornography in the life of sex offenders is also supported by a comparison of the response to pornography and the response to the sight and thought of females. In all but one of the offender groups "more males responded to the sight or thought of females than responded to pornography."⁷³

These groups were further questioned about possession of pornography in order to see if possession was related to sexual crim-

inality or was it general in the population as a whole. Again without great detail, it can be simply said that no significant clusterings of ownership among the samples was found. It appears

that the possession of pornography does not differentiate sex offenders from nonsex offenders. Even the combination of ownership plus strong sexual arousal from the material does not segregate the sex offender from other men of a comparable social level.⁷⁴

This complete the review of cultural-social viewpoints on pornography. The sociological and cultural function of pornography and its relationship to criminality have been the primary concerns. Interpretations of pornography's function in society have been offered by Ned Polsky and J.J. Honigmann and a number of authors have been reviewed who offer viewpoints on the relationship between crime and pornography.

Additional Psychiatric Viewpoints

Wladimir G. Eliasberg in an appendix to his volume Psychotherapy and Society makes the following comment:

Psychopathology and psychology of obscenity can be furthered only through clinical observations, guided by psychoanalytic insight and knowledge of the standards, esthetic and ethical ones of the particular society.⁷⁵

In this unit some further literature of the behavioral sciences will be considered which offer this kind of psychological insight. In addition, some clinical studies which have begun to gather precise data relating to pornography will be reviewed.

Eliasberg himself has written a number of articles which indicate certain understandings of the phenomenon of pornography. He has isolated two basic positions on the effect of such material. The

training theory refers to a pattern of imitation; an individual constantly exposed to unacceptable material will learn to accept it and even to imitate it. He notes, however, that this theory does not explain why such exposure would not lead to rejection, or why, out of innumerable possibilities, one would imitate the unacceptable.⁷⁶

The second theory of effect, the abreaction theory, essentially revolves around the concept of the safety value which has been discussed above.

Here we are told that to see evil, to stage it, to do it in little steps...compares to vaccination, by which we go through a milder degree of the illness. Having gone through the illness, we eliminate the evil from our system without harm and in this very process acquire immunity.⁷⁷

Eliasberg does not take a clear position advocating either theory, though his criticism of the training theory may be construed to indicate he favors the abreaction theory.

His work has also lead him to develop what he considers an objective criterion of pornography. The list of criteria is meant only to clarify the definition of pornography, not to make value judgments. The many points of similarity in these criteria to those isolated by the Kronhausens may be noted.

Table of Factors in Pornography⁷⁸

1. Asexual sexuality (the sexuality is vague and indefinite as to the sex of addressee and sender)
2. Emphasis on the erogenic zones of the body
3. Monotony and infantilism in the emotions
4. Emphasis on parts rather than the whole
5. Stereotyped repetition
6. Adjectives and attributes without substance
7. Sequences of cruelties and suffering (physical and moral)
8. Absence of true narrative (plot), let alone dramatic progress
9. Absence of contact between the personalities of the onlooker, reader, or listener on the one hand, and the writer, artist,

composer on the other; often artistic worthlessness as stated by the artist.

This table of factors is modified by several considerations. First, each factor is not equal in determining pornography; the first four are considered direct signs whereas the others are only indirect signs. Further, Eliasberg recognizes that these factors are also modified by the social background of the work and the personality type of the reader or viewer.

He has done some study on the relation of personality type to the perception of pornography. Subjects in this study viewed a series of pictures and also took a modified California Authoritarian Scale test. The results indicate that authoritarianism and rigidity are related to the perception of pornography. "As the number of pictures considered pornographic increased, so did the scores indicating agreement with authoritarian statements."⁷⁹ Though Eliasberg feels that this relationship between personality type and perception is established, he does not permit the conclusion that pornography does not therefore objectively exist. He wishes to maintain both that pornography can be objectively recognized and that its perception is related to authoritarianism.

An essentially Freudian understanding of pornography is offered by London and Caprio in their study of deviant sexuality. They do not give any extended treatment to the phenomenon but do make some comments which we will look at briefly. "Pornography holds an attraction for many persons because it gratifies the residual of the polymorphous perverse sexuality in every human being."⁸⁰

Polymorphous perverse sexuality is a disposition Freud observed

in children which permits them to be led into all types of sexual irregularities since they are not yet restrained by shame and guilt. London and Caprio understand pornography to appeal to this same disposition which continues to exist in the adult. This particularly Freudian analysis is not very prominent in the literature.⁸¹

Albert Ellis, the proponent of rational psychology, has approached the phenomenon of pornography in a number of his writings. Two concerns seem most prominent in his thought. One is that pornography is the product of a sexually repressive society and secondly, that censorship of sex is harmful. In an essay analyzing the meaning of sex in relation to art he has indicated the relationship of pornography and repression.

It would appear that pornography can normally only exist when sexual mores are to a degree prohibitive and where pornographic productions can therefore be mores-destroying.... In a perfectly mature and permissive society pornography probably cannot exist.⁸²

The harm of censorship is that it is aimed at the sexual obsessions which have grown out of repression. More repression, then, in the form of censorship will only increase the obsessiveness.⁸³

Some beginning thoughts about the voyeuristic and exhibitionistic elements involved in pornography are offered by Leonard Blank. His survey of several studies indicates that there appears to be a relationship between curiosity and forbiddenness: "voyeuristic conflict and pathology are mediated by mystery and forbiddenness which promote compulsive looking."⁸⁴ If forbiddenness does promote compulsive looking then Albert Ellis' critique of censorship seems to be supported, and there may be harm in it. This view is shared by Blank in his conclusion.

Inhibitions to looking--both a stimulus for curiosity and a source of frustration when repressed--may result in conflicts, neurotic behavior and distorted body image. Reaction against such repression, because it is rebellious, may prove more threatening than liberating to precariously balanced sex controls.⁸⁵

The sexual repression which is so often a motivation in censorship has previously also limited the possibility of doing research in this area. Two studies are available, however, which report the results of actual research into the phenomenon of pornography. Because these studies have broken out of the previous limitations, the research models which they suggest may be as important as their results. They are the only studies which seem to attempt a precise research measurement of erotic visual stimuli. They set a precedent which needs to be followed in order to gain enough data to separate fact from opinion in regard to pornography.

E. E. Levitt and R. K. Hinesley published the results of an investigation which was conducted to test the hypotheses that erotic photographs of nudes are more sexually stimulating than photographs which picture identical activity but with the subjects minimally unclothed, and that erotic photographs are more stimulating than comparable erotic drawings.⁸⁶

The sample for this investigation was a group of seventy-four male graduate students all at least twenty-one years of age. The stimuli were presented by means of an opaque projector and each participant rated the sexual stimulation of the photographs and drawings on a five point scale.

The results of the investigation support both hypotheses. The data indicate that the "erotic valence of photographs was signif-

icantly higher than that of drawings, and the valence of nude photographs was significantly higher than that of clothed photographs"⁸⁷

In discussing these results Levitt and Hinesly note these data do not explain why nudity is of such significance in an object which is otherwise intrinsically sexually stimulating. Their data only indicates that the relationship between nudity and sexual stimulation exists; it does not offer an explanation of cause. They explain the higher stimulation of photographs over drawings in terms of the realism of the photographs.

J. W. Higgins and M. B. Katzmann have followed a similar methodology in investigating some of the factors involved in the judgment of obscenity. They tested the following hypotheses:

- 1) there is a significant variation among items in their adjudged obscenity; 2) there is a significant variation among individuals in their tendency to rate items as obscene; and 3) there is a significant positive relationship between the qualities of sexual stimulation and obscenity.⁸⁸

The investigation used ninety photographs of individual females which ranged from not obscene to extremely obscene in the judgment of the investigators. The subjects were vocational groups of policeman, physicians, lawyers, teachers, businessmen, laborers, and a group of women.

The complete data are rather involved and complex and only the major conclusions need to be highlighted here. The data indicate that there is a moderately strong tendency for men to associate obscenity ratings with sexual stimulation ratings. The correlation for women in this respect was not significant.

The characteristics of the material being viewed seems also to

be related to obscenity ratings. Material of good quality, artistic merit, and attractiveness received low obscenity ratings while poor material received significantly higher obscenity ratings. The characteristics of the viewer, such as sex, occupation, and educational level, also affect obscenity ratings. Clusters of occupational groups show tendencies to make similar judgments about the obscenity level of the material being viewed.

The authors conclude that their study has implications for the legal definition of obscenity since legal decisions are made on the basis of individual or group judgments of obscenity. This study indicates that characteristics of the material and the person judging rather directly affect that judgment.

From our study it is apparent that several factors influence the individual's tendency to rate an item as obscene and that there are definite and presumably predictable variations, not only in judge and item factors, but also in the interrelationships between the two.⁸⁹

This completes the review of the literature of the behavioral sciences. The literature offers varied understandings and approaches to the phenomenon of pornography. In the following chapter the attitudes and understandings of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod will be considered.

FOOTNOTES

¹Alfred C. Kinsey and Others, Sexual Behavior in the Human Female (New York: Pocket Books, 1967), p. 7.

²Ibid., p. 643.

³Ibid., p. 644.

⁴Ibid., p. 643.

⁵Ibid., p. 646.

⁶Infra, p. 14.

⁷Kinsey, p. 649.

⁸Ibid., p. 660.

⁹Ibid., p. 662.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 649-650.

¹¹Ibid., p. 650.

¹²Ibid., p. 672.

¹³Eberhard and Phyllis Kronhausen, "The Psychology of Pornography," The Encyclopedia of Sexual Behavior, edited by Albert Ellis and Albert Abarbanel (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1961), II, 848.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 855.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 848.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 849.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Eberhard and Phyllis Kronhausen, Pornography and the Law (New York: Ballantine Books, 1959), p. 18.

²⁰Kronhausen, Psychology, p. 849.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., p. 850.

²³Ibid.

- ²⁴Ibid.
- ²⁵Ibid., pp. 850-851.
- ²⁶Ibid., p. 851.
- ²⁷Ibid., pp. 851-852.
- ²⁸Ibid., p. 852.
- ²⁹Ibid.
- ³⁰Ibid., pp. 852-853.
- ³¹Ibid., p. 853.
- ³²Ibid.
- ³³Kronhausen, Pornography and Law, p. 263.
- ³⁴Kronhausen, Psychology, p. 856.
- ³⁵Ibid.
- ³⁶Ibid., p. 857.
- ³⁷Ibid.
- ³⁸Ibid.
- ³⁹Ibid.
- ⁴⁰Ibid., p. 858.
- ⁴¹Kronhausen, Pornography and Law, p. 269.
- ⁴²Ibid.
- ⁴³Ibid., p. 272.
- ⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 276-280.
- ⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 273-274.
- ⁴⁶Ibid., p. 274.
- ⁴⁷Ibid., p. 281.
- ⁴⁸Ibid., p. 285.
- ⁴⁹Ned Polsky, "Pornography," Problems of Sex Behavior, edited by Edward Sagarin and Donal E.F. MacNamara (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1968), pp. 268-284.

⁵⁰Kingsley Davis, "Prostitution," Contemporary Social Problems, edited by Robert Merton and Robert Nisbet (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1961), pp. 262-288.

⁵¹Polsky, p. 270.

⁵²Ibid., p. 272.

⁵³Ibid., p. 274.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 271.

⁵⁵J.J. Honigmann, "A Cultural Theory of Obscenity," Journal of Criminal Psychopathology, 5 (1944), 726.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 718.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 726.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 727.

⁶²Herbert B. Warburton, "Pornography and Youth," Values and Ideals of American Youth, edited by Eli Ginzburg (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 166.

⁶³Ernest van den Haag, "Is Pornography a Cause of Crime?," Encounter, 29 (December 1967), 52.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 54.

⁶⁵Hilde L. Mosse, "The Influence of Mass Media on the Sex Problems of Teenagers," Journal of Sex Research, 2 (April 1966), 27-35.

⁶⁶Ibid., pp. 31-32.

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- 78 Ibid., pp. 478-479.
- 79 Ibid., p. 480.
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CHAPTER III

MISSOURI SYNDO ATTITUDES AND UNDERSTANDINGS

Board of Parish Education

In order to research the attitudes and understandings of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod overagainst pornography a number of different church publications have been reviewed. While these publications may not be construed to present an official position, as one might find in matters relating to doctrine, they do allow the attitudes and approaches of the church to the phenomenon of pornography to be highlighted.

The Board of Parish Education of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod has published a small booklet which considers the problem of pornographic themes in print and on the screen and suggests avenues of action.

Several attitudes towards the content and effect of pornography emerge in this booklet. The content of pornographic material--its attitudes toward life and its standard of conduct--is thought to "reflect a moral depravity."¹ A number of these recurring themes are noted. Among them are: (1) a glorification of infidelity; (2) sex is for personal enjoyment, a biological necessity; (3) basic moral principles are ridiculed; (4) sexual characteristics are exaggerated; (5) anti-religious attitudes are expressed. That such themes can so predominate and find an audience is considered a commentary "on the moral mediocrity, the mental slothfulness, the sexual illiteracy, and the emotional immaturity of millions of American people."²

The effects of this material are recognized in the following way: "Such themes repeatedly restated must inevitably affect the attitudes of readers and viewers."³ Though not explicitly stated, it is implied that these themes affect the reader and viewer in such a way that he develops a similar pattern of attitudes and standards.

Particular mention is made of the dangers pornography presents to youth. It is easily available to youth, at times invading privacy by being mailed directly to them at home. These materials "tempt the normal curiosity and drives of youth."⁴

The major portion of this booklet concerns itself with suggesting avenues of action, both individual and community oriented. Among the possible courses of action mentioned are: (1) refraining from purchases; (2) vocally expressing opinions while being careful not to create publicity which will serve as free advertisement; (3) using existing laws effectively; (4) enlisting cooperative efforts of the entire community; and (5) providing wholesome alternatives to such material.⁵

Long term educational programs are also suggested as a viable means of meeting the problems of pornographic material. Particular importance is placed on the need to "provide children and youth with a sound, sensible education in sex." To compliment this, educational programs should also aid in developing self-understanding and acceptance, a sense of responsibility, and higher tastes and values.⁶

In formulating possibilities for the church's role in action against pornography the booklet notes that the church's scriptural perspective enables it to take "a realistic and understanding view of the appeal" which these materials have for people. A number of

personal and social factors also provide further explanations of their appeal: loneliness, emotional immaturity and instability, lack of opportunity and incentive to appreciate higher values and better quality materials, revolt against repressive teachings, failure to receive wholesome spiritual and sexual attitudes, frequent sexual stimuli, and unwholesome social, economic, and leisure conditions. These contributory factors need to be considered as the church develops its programs of preaching, teaching, and counseling.⁷

The Lutheran Witness

Further attitudes to the phenomenon of pornography in the Missouri Synod can be found in a number of articles on the subject that have appeared in The Lutheran Witness. Many of these approach the phenomenon under the theme of censorship but what they say in that regard does indicate some attitudes towards pornography.

Oscar E. Feucht contributed an article which in many ways resembles the booklet discussed above, in that it is action oriented. Since his specific proposals for avenues of action are nearly identical they will not be reviewed here.

This article accepts pornography and obscenity as synonymous words and adopts the Supreme Court definition of obscenity: "A thing is obscene if, considered as whole, its predominant appeal is to prurient interests...." It also comments on the content and effect of such material. The content presents "a caricature and perversion of sex. Its whole tone and spirit is salacious; it parades illicit sex...and glamorizes immorality." Because this material disregards divine law and social codes "it undermines the moral and social

health of the community...mars the wholesome regard for persons of the other sex and the Christian approach to love and marriage."⁹ Thus pornography is understood to function as a threat to moral standards.

A different action program is advocated in an article by C.E. Huber. He appears to minimize the importance of legal community censorship in indicating that the burden of censorship is on the individual alone. "Christians should gladly accept the burden as a part of their willing service to God and man and thereby also avoid the abuses of public censorship." As an alternative or supplement to condemnation of pornographic material he advocates that the church "create competitors with technical excellence" and enter the marketplace to supply good material.¹⁰

Frederick Nohl's article attempts to characterize and isolate the effects of pornographic material, as well as suggest programs of action. Rather than employ the common terminology he adopts the term "cesspool publications" from Operation Yorkville, a New York City interfaith movement to prevent such literature. A cesspool publication is defined as:

one that is foul, that looks on lust as love; it isolates sexual experience from the sphere of personality....It attacks the permanence of marriage...makes pleasure the primary goal of life...concentrating attention on selfish pleasure even at the expense of an innocent victim....¹¹

In regard to the question of effects, Nohl makes two cautionary remarks. One is that cause and effect should not be confused; he does not, however, discuss what causes may be involved. And secondly, he cautions that it is not the single but the steady exposure to such material that damages.

Three effects are identified. First, these publications weaken the national and community moral fiber. Though seldom the only cause, they secondly incite the susceptible to sex offenses by weakening restraints and supplying explicit directions for such action. Thirdly, these materials encourage viewing people as things rather than humans bearing the image of God.¹²

In what he terms his "battle for elemental standards of decency and morality" Nohl suggests that censorship usually carries the seeds of its own destruction and recommends instead a program of education and persuasive community action.¹³

An editorial in The Lutheran Witness has offered some opinions on how a Christian should react to the exposure of sex in the mass media. It advises that the problem should not be oversimplified into the observance of rules. Further, a Christian should find a meaning in sex which is consistent with his relationship to Jesus Christ and the Scriptural attitudes towards interpersonal relationships. And finally, it urges that the church reach out to those "caught by circumstances, by weaknesses, or by a perverted will in habits and associations that shut them off from the majority of mankind...." It recognizes that this is never easy or popular but, even as our Lord, we must seek and save the lost.¹⁴

This is the only instance in the literature of the Missouri Synod where there is such a specific awareness and concern for those whose lives are deeply involved with pornography. Most of the literature is interested only in countering the dangerous effects by eliminating pornography through some kind of censorship.

Robert E. Wiltenburg, a Missouri Synod clergyman, is one of

the co-founders of Operation Yorkville mentioned above. The burden of his article is a warning against the dangers of pornography. He does not always make clear distinctions between content and effect of these materials but appears to see them rather closely related. He offers the opinion that these materials are designed to seduce. He recognizes as their content a stress on and glamorization of perversion and unnatural practices, with the result that they "incite and invite to lust, perversity, and violence." These materials are further understood to be a "concerted attack...against our accepted moral standards...."¹⁵

In an article which does not deal with pornography in general but more specifically with Playboy Magazine, Duane Mehl has offered a further reason for aversion to pornography. He presents the position that because, as men, we have fallen from God we have a basis for judging this type of material.

We reject it not because we believe ourselves too good for it but because--among other reasons--we find ourselves not 'good' enough for it. We are not good enough to manage all the nudity, that talk of sexual freedom....¹⁶

A final article in The Lutheran Witness which deals with our subject matter attempts to present an alternative to censorship. John Corbin, the author, offers responsible parenthood as the alternative to the dangers which censorship presents to a free society. He makes several points which will be reviewed. He recognizes that these materials appeal to the natural sexual curiosities of adolescents. There is also an awareness that a book "which deals with sex, or even has sex as a dominant theme, is not obscene per se."¹⁷ He seems to suggest that other factors would determine the obscenity of a book, though he does not develop these. Corbin also makes

the statement in regard to the effects of these types of material that "there is no scientific evidence which links pornography to juvenile delinquency or sex deviation, in spite of all of the non-scientific claims to the contrary...."¹⁸ He suggests that responsible parenthood means finding out what the effect of these materials on one's own children is.

The Lutheran Witness Reporter

Though there are not any articles in the Lutheran Witness Reporter which deal directly with pornography it may be beneficial to look at the movie reviews offered by Omar Stuenkel. They reveal some attitudes about sexuality, nudity, and verbal obscenity which can be understood to reflect some of the approaches of the Missouri Synod to such matters.

The basic criteria which is used in these reviews to evaluate such subject matter in this media is its necessity and purpose in relation to the entire film. There is recognition of the need to deal with sexual themes but it is always questioned whether it is necessary to deal with it in an explicitly visual manner.

Thus in reviewing The Graduate Stuenkel notes "the seduction scenes in the hotel, though done to perfection by Anne Bancroft in every line and gesture, are more explicit than necessary in revealing flesh...."¹⁹ In discussing the nude scene in Rosemary's Baby he comments "the shot may still be offensive to some, and its necessity will appear debatable to them. I surely wouldn't argue that artistic requirements alone determined its inclusion."²⁰

In a more extended comment in a review of Goodbye, Columbus

Stuenkel discusses sexuality along with the difficulties of censorship.

One other serious fault, so often repeated today that one gets tired of voicing the criticism, is that Neil and Brenda's bedmaking-love becomes too explicit and prying. It is not so much decency that is offended as privacy.

For my part I even get a little tired of the prolonged closeups of lovers exploring and almost devouring one another's lips. I would think it can't be too much fun for the actors. Can't lovemaking techniques be suggested instead of pounded into us for a while? I'm getting bored.

Not that I recommend government or community censorship! I'm sure the cure would be worse than the disease. But unless producers and directors learn to discipline themselves, I'm certain that is the direction we are heading for.²¹

In an article which develops some of his opinions and approaches to sexuality on the screen Stuenkel discusses the effects of this media. He takes the position that "the screen's power to influence its audience is admittedly great...movies involve viewers deeply by transferring them to a vicarious world...." Therefore scenes which are obscene and pornographic are "not only inexcusable but positively dangerous."²²

In this same article he clearly states his criteria of judgment. "To say that sex and violence are part of reality and therefore must be part of movies is not enough, true as it is. One must also ask to what purpose are sex and violence being portrayed."²³

Thus it would seem that here the literature of the Missouri Synod is reflecting an attitude which accepts a realistic consideration of sex in the cinema but rejects unnecessarily explicit preoccupation with sex. In the same manner, this criterion could be applied to literature which preoccupies itself with explicit descriptions of

sexuality.

Alfred P. Klausler

As part of the Christian Encounter Series of Concordia Publishing House, Alfred P. Klausler has written a book which presents some of the issues involved in censorship and obscenity. Again this writing does not deal directly with our subject since its focus seems to be on the legal questions of censorship. However, Klausler does tangentially offer some viewpoints on pornography.

He presents a definition of pornography which includes both content and effect: "pornography includes writing or pictorial presentation which excites sexual passions or desires. There is an erotic response to pornography."²⁴ He notes, however, that the application of this definition entails difficulty and ultimately must be a personal value judgment. The bulk of the book rehearses much of the history of attempts to apply this and other definitions.

Common to many of the articles in the literature of the Missouri Synod, Klausler suggests a number of possibilities for a Christian response to this type of literature. First, the church can take a "major role in developing positive attitudes toward sex through a widely variegated educational program."²⁵ He observes that individuals often turn to sexual aberrations as a revolt against repressive attitudes toward sexuality in the church and home. The church can best repent of this past failure by "initiating positive programs of understanding and help."²⁶ The Christian home is also singled out as a place where major sexual education can take place.

As part of his suggestions for action Klausler reviews the booklet of the Board of Parish Education mentioned above. He notes, too, that "Christians should support local government agencies in dealing with pornography and obscenity."²⁷

The publications and authors which have been reviewed in this chapter have indicated the attitudes towards and understandings of pornography in the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. The conclusion of this study will attempt to evaluate these materials and relate them to the understandings and approaches of the behavioral sciences.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Carl F. Reuss, The Church Looks at Immorality in Print and on Screen, published under the auspices of the Board of Parish Education, The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, n.d.), p. 4.

²Ibid., p. 5.

³Ibid., p. 4.

⁴Ibid., p. 5.

⁵Ibid., pp. 6-9.

⁶Ibid., pp. 9-10.

⁷Ibid., pp. 12-13.

⁸Oscar E. Feucht, "You Can Do Something About Obsenity," The Lutheran Witness, 79 (July 26, 1960), 374.

⁹Ibid., p. 375.

¹⁰C.E. Huber, "Books Are Not For Burning," The Lutheran Witness, 82 (June 25, 1963), 300.

¹¹Frederick Nohl, "Sordid Sex: For Sale Cheap," The Lutheran Witness, 83 (February 4, 1964), 70.

¹²Ibid., pp. 70-71.

¹³Ibid., p. 71.

¹⁴"Sex Trouble," The Lutheran Witness, 84 (February 16, 1965), 75-76.

¹⁵Robert E. Wiltenburg, "Miseducation Through Pornography," The Lutheran Witness, 84 (July 1965), 284.

¹⁶Duane Mehl, "Paradise Lost Again," The Lutheran Witness, 85 (February 1966), 42.

¹⁷John Corbin, "An Alternative To Censorship," The Lutheran Witness, 85 (October 1966), 23.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Omar Stuenkel, "Flick Chart," The Lutheran Witness Reporter, 4 (March 3, 1968), 5.

²⁰-----, "Flick Chart," The Lutheran Witness Reporter, 4 (August 4, 1968), 5.

21-----, "Flick Chart," The Lutheran Witness Reporter,
5 (July 6, 1969), 11.

22-----, "Flick Chart," The Lutheran Witness Reporter,
5 (November 2, 1969), 10.

23Ibid.

24Alfred P. Klausler, Censorship, Obscenity, and Sex (St. Louis:
Concordia Publishing House, 1967), p. 31.

25Ibid., p. 93.

26Ibid., pp. 92-93.

27Ibid., p. 93.

CHAPTER IV.

CONCLUSIONS

The great diversity of material does not lend itself to a simple or evident conclusion. Many approaches and understandings of the phenomenon of pornography have been seen in both the behavioral sciences and the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. To deal with this material the conclusion will consider each of these disciplines separately and then offer general conclusions.

Behavioral Sciences

What is most striking in the literature of the behavioral sciences is the lack of a consistent and unanimous understanding of what pornography is, why it exists, and what effect it has on behavior. Instead, there are widely divergent views. This is especially evident in regard to the behavioral effects of pornography. Wladimir G. Eliasberg noted the two basic theories which attempt to describe in quite opposite ways pornography's behavioral effects.¹ The training theory argues that exposure to pornography will lead to imitation of the behavior and values depicted while the abreaction theory contends that exposure prevents imitation. Similarly divergent views were evident in the discussion of the relationship of pornography and crime.²

Much of the reason for this continuing diversity of opinion may be traced to the lack of precise and objective data. Only a small portion of the literature reviewed supported its findings with substantial research data. In fact, very little basic re-

search into the phenomenon of pornography is presently available.

This situation, however, appears to be changing. It has been reported that the President's Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, formed by Congress in 1967, is due to release its findings in July 1970.

Letting 40 research contracts to universities and other institutions, mainly in social science, it is spending about half of its budget (under \$2 million) to build the first solid data base on the effects of pornography and/or censorship.³

When and if basic research of this kind continues, the behavioral sciences will be able to offer more complete and reliable understandings of pornography. Until substantial data are available conclusions will need to be largely held in reservation.

The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod

With the exception of the article by John Corbin⁴ the literature of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod seems to assume that pornography does have a negative and morally threatening effect on behavior. Since the imitation theory of effect is assumed much of the literature centers on a concern for action programs to limit the distribution of pornography.

There is surprisingly little pastoral concern for the persons who do produce and purchase pornography. An analogy may help explain this clearly: it is as if the literature is very concerned about eliminating a disease but shows little concern and interest in caring for those afflicted with the disease. This interest is not entirely missing from the literature;⁵ it is, however, clearly subordinate to the concern for eliminating pornography.

Though the attitudes reflected in the literature are strong and judgmental in regard to pornography the proposed action programs are very cautious about advocating censorship. Educational programs, private censorship, and other alternatives to public censorship are suggested. There is a clear recognition of the dangers and abuse which censorship in the public sector may bring.

There is a wide understanding of the sociological and personality factors which contribute to the appeal of pornographic materials, including the normal human curiosity about the sexual processes. The literature also recognizes the validity of sexual themes in literature and dramatic arts.

General

The behavioral effects of pornography cannot be conclusively stated at the present time. The literature of the behavioral sciences are divided on this point, and while the literature of the Missouri Synod assumes a negative effect it does so without sufficient evidence. Both disciplines will need to be more cautious in attributing effects to pornography.

The study of pornography is essentially at a neophyte stage. Censorship and narrow sexual attitudes have prevented thorough investigation and research of the phenomenon. Among the many questions which need to be answered are the following: (1) does pornography form or reflect sexual standards and behavior?; (2) who purchases pornographic materials and for what reasons?; (3) what is the function of fantasy in human sexuality?; (4) is the appeal of pornography related to the fact that it is censored?; (5) what has been

the experience in countries which permit complete freedom in regard to pornographic materials?

More analysis of pornographic material itself needs to be done. The Kronhausens have provided a good model in their treatment of literary pornography. A similar model needs to be developed for dealing with pictorial pornography.

As research reveals more about the phenomenon of pornography both science and the Church will be able to form more adequate responses. A realistic understanding and approach to pornography can only be developed on the basis of more knowledge.

FOOTNOTES

¹Supra, pp. 32-33.

²Supra, pp. 27-32.

³"Tie Line: Pornography on the Road," Psychology Today,
3 (May 1970), 12.

⁴Supra, p. 49.

⁵Supra, p. 47.

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