

Letters

Various Authors

2020

Send letters to fe AT fifthestate DOT org or Fifth Estate, POB 201016, Ferndale MI 48220
All formats accepted including typescript & handwritten. Letters may be edited for length.

YES TO PORN

In the

[[<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/404-summer-2019/letters/>][Summer 2019 Fifth Estate]], a comrade wrote that he uses pornography to satisfy his sexual desires being unable to find a female partner. I do as well—very often—and enjoy sexual stimulation in watching porn. Although I don't share with this writer never having had a sexual relationship, I've experienced prolonged periods of celibacy.

I've been an outcast for much of my adulthood, partly by choice. I never go out to clubs or bars and enjoy marijuana more than alcohol. Also, I am a schizophrenic, if you consider such psychiatric labels legitimate. I became very introverted at the age of twenty-two and sank deep into studying. I read way more books over those next four years, but later found that this deep introversion became a sexual demarcation against me.

As anarchists we must not accept that sexuality be normalized in any way. Sexual divergences of any form are the alternative to chauvinistic tendencies of dominant males. The writer whose letter addressed this issue is a commendable anarchist and comrade.

We can learn from him to be more accepting of the challenges facing many people who struggle with their sexual identity—whether defined as fat, introverted, transgender, gay, straight edge, introverted or otherwise. Chauvinism creates sexual repression and we can all undue this repression by being more open minded to a broader range of people's sexual identities.

Free love!

Matti Salminen

Milton, Vermont

Fifth Estate reply: Whatever one thinks about pornography, it is an immense industry. If you Google "free porn," endless links to web sites appear. There are three in the top most visited sites in North America.

The most prominent one, Porn Hub, boasts having over nine million videos on their site although looking at an entry for it on Wikipedia shows there have been incidents of malvertising on their site placing malware on users' computer, so visiting is at the visitor's risk.

However, it doesn't scare off the more than 60 million visitors a day to their site. It is so corporate that the Montreal-based company now has offices and servers in San Francisco, Houston, New Orleans and London.

It's hard to gauge the cultural and interpersonal effect the proliferation of pornography has on the issues of sexuality and patriarchy we grapple with. As the letter writer above states, agreeing with original message, sexualized media provides a short-term solution to their lack of fulfillment. However, there is the question of content. Does pornography bolster the patriarchy or simply reflect the patriarchal dominance of everyday life?

As boundaries of what can be shown have disappeared, pornography has become mainstream and less an area of hidden shame. PornHub recently announced that Bella Thorne, a former Disney child star, will direct a porn film as part of the company's Visionaries Director's Series, featuring "debut films by unexpected guest directors to diversify porn production and help create more varied content with multiple types of viewers in mind."

Concern about the pornography is nothing new, but its ubiquitous availability and mainstream acceptance is. In 19th century Victorian England, authorities exerted a great amount of police effort in the suppression of pornography which was extremely widespread.

Then, it was often considered rebellion against the stultifying and repressive sexuality demanded by the ruling cultural order. Now, is it Marcuse's repressive desublimation, an ally of patriarchy and the objectification of women, or a harmless outlet for those denied direct expression of sexuality?

Perhaps all.

NO FE ON MY PHONE

I recently read FE #402, Winter 2019 edition cover to cover. Excellent work!

I read in your reply to a letter writer that you are committed to continuing publishing a print edition. As an avowed atheist, I say, God bless you!

I don't want to read the FE on my phone or a computer screen. I don't own a computer and don't want one. I read real books, magazines, and newspapers.

I don't know where I stand with my subscription, but extend it for two years and accept a small donation to the cause.

A reader

FE reply: Thank you for your support and appreciation. It is only through subscriptions and donations such as yours that this publication has lasted 55 years. We have an online presence where, most importantly, our archive of back articles appear, and where people in various parts of the world who do not have access to the print version can read the FE, but always our major focus will be on our print edition.

The letter was handwritten.

CELL PHONES FOR CUBA?

With Cuba now offering 3G mobile Internet service to their citizens, this creates an opportunity. In the U.S., the major mobile companies are either planning to turn off their 3G networks or else have already turned them off in favor of 4G service.

This means that older smart phones such as iPhone 4s, as well as early Androids, will no longer work in the U.S.

Put out the word that instead of throwing these phones out, donate them to the Fifth Estate, and you'll get them into the hands of Cuban citizens.

The more that Cuban citizens are able to interact with the Internet the way we can, the faster the revolution against the current regime and change in general will come.

Walt Thiessen

FE Reply: Forgetting about the logistics involved in doing this, wouldn't this amount to leaving one tyranny for another? And, acceleration of the revolution? Is it cynical to think that the major use of Cubans with cell phones will be little different than it is here, i.e., Snap-chat, Twitter, and Face book?

Somehow, the great social movements of the past, such as the labor and civil rights movements, were able to take on mass proportions without cell-phones or the Internet. They're often handy for keeping in communication during actions, but aren't a necessary component of rebellion.

IDEOLOGICAL JOURNEY

I would like to write to you about the immense influence that FE has had on my ideological journey. The radicalism and artistic thought in the publication has been unmatched since its inception, so I'm happy to see that it has survived this long.

I am a student in New York who has gone down the path of radical decentralization and free expression, my generation thirsts for an alternative to the full spectacle of everyday life.

I wish that this line of thinking was more prevalent, it could've saved countless in my age bracket from descending into the likes of the Alt-Right.

JK

New York City

Correction

In our article "Evoking Spirit: The Anarchist Art of Robert Henri," FE #404, Summer 2019, Henri's sister-in-law, Violet Organ, was misidentified under a graphic as the artist's wife. Marjorie Organ was Henri's wife.

Violet became the heir to his paintings following the deaths of the artist and his wife. It was she who destroyed the Emma Goldman portraits.

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