

General Editor's Introduction

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During a recent family visit, I mentioned to a precocious teenage lesbian relative that the next issue of *TSQ* would be a special issue on porn. Without batting an eyelash, she said, “You should check out ‘trans bee pops shy cherry blossom’ on Pornhub.” Intrigued, I did.

Entering those terms into the search field on Pornhub’s front page took me to a fifty-one-second video clip of a bee hovering in midair near a flower. A deep masculine-sounding voice representing the flower says to the bee, “Hey, what’s that bulge you got there?” to which the bee replies, in a giggly feminine-sounding voice, “Just a little something extra between the legs. You want to see how it works?” The flower says, “You know I’m always open to try new things.” “Well, you better be,” the bee says, “because I’m coming at you with a big surprise!” The bee lands on the flower, and we hear grunting and groaning sounds that suggest that the flower is being pleurably penetrated by the bee’s extra little something. As the image fades to black, text appears on-screen that reads: “Without bees, nature can’t get it on. For every view on Beesexual, Pornhub will donate to bee saving charities. Find out more at Beesexual.com.”

Visitors to that site learn that Beesexual.com is indeed a clever funding mechanism that mobilizes porn viewing in support of environmental causes, particularly the health of the at-risk pollinators on whom so much of our food supply depends. Pornhub’s Beesexual channel is devoted to “a whole new genre of porn especially dedicated to saving bees,” which turns “short videos of foraging bees into what they really are: nature porn,” overdubbed with the voices of some of Pornhub’s star performers. Reminiscent of an X-rated version of Isabella Rosellini’s PG-13 *Green Porno* shorts on the Sundance Channel, which explored the wide range of nonhuman reproductive practices, each tongue-in-cheek Beesexual clip playfully satirizes a particular porn genre—threesomes, interracial sex, uniform fetishes—including the one once known vulgarly as “shemale” porn. Like legendary hardcore star Annie Sprinkle and art professor Beth Stephens’s

Ecosexual conceptual/performance art series (which asks us to get dirty in our love for Mother Earth), the Beesexual videos link erotic desire to political action. They invite us to *get off* in the name of ecological repair, and in doing so highlight the manner in which porn permeates contemporary culture in sometimes unexpected ways. Who would have imagined that trans porn could be part of saving the planet?

Given its prominence in the sexual practices of so many people who view it, how lucrative it can be for those who produce it, how simultaneously exploitative and validating it can be for those who perform it, pornography is a drastically understudied topic—trans pornography even more so. This is especially unfortunate in light of how central a role commercial porn has played in the political economy of contemporary transgender populations, particularly trans women who are excluded from other employment because of transphobic discrimination, as well as how important DIY, community-based porn making has been for promulgating alternative and affirmative visions of trans sexualities and embodiments.

Although the call for papers for this special issue on trans pornography was intentionally broad, and sought to highlight scholarship across a variety of mediums, the articles collected here largely reflect moving-image pornography—not for a lack of effort on the part of guest editors Sophie Pezzutto and Lynn Comella to expand discussions about trans pornography beyond film and video, but for the lack of available research and submissions that addressed other media and cultural forms. Thus, while this special “Trans Pornography” issue of *TSQ* goes a long way toward plugging a large hole in the existing body of trans studies literature, there is more work that needs to be done, especially regarding pornographic photography, erotic literature, and graphic arts and texts, which we hope this issue will inspire.

This issue is, as far as any of us know, the most extensive collection of trans porn scholarship ever set to page. In addition to the excellent overview of the topic Pezzutto and Comella offer in their introduction and the account they give of how trans porn is helping to reshape the industry as a whole, the issue features a short history of the genre by Whitney Strub, an article by Matt Richardson that recovers the lost history of pioneering Black trans woman porn actor Ajita Wilson, a piece by RL Goldberg that explores trans masculine porn as a form of embodied pedagogy, and Aster Gilbert’s fascinating exploration of user-generated porn remixes. The issue is rounded out by first-person accounts by trans porn workers and the transamorous men who desire them and a report on a trans porn exhibit in Toronto curated by film studies scholar Laura Horak. These assembled works, along with the voluminous sources and secondary literature cited in their

bibliographies, lay an important foundation for the future study of trans pornography. So: learn, enjoy, and, if you feel like it, be trans sexual; the world will thank you.

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