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# Pornography and Postmodernism

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## Abstract:

*The purpose of this paper is to emphasize the fact that the consumption phenomenon constitutes a characteristic of postmodern culture, in this case played by the process of objectification of the body, under the auspices of pornography. The concept of 'cultural recycling' analyzed by Jean Baudrillard brings out not only the undermining of the values of cultural and historical tradition by postmodern culture, but also the establishment of reference systems built around simulation and simulacrum, making possible the capitalization of pornography in the name of advertising and sexual entertainment. With this process of body objectification, especially with the female gender body, pornography becomes the cultural fetish the mass culture needs. 'Sexual solipsism', analyzed by Rae Langton, within whose limits this objectification mechanism is being built, is helped by the shift in paradigm produced between soul and body, the body being the one taking the soul's place and governing the cultural-human existence, through a mechanical deconstruction of sexuality and a technological fetishism, as we see in J. Ballard's novel, Crash or in the homonymous film directed by David Cronenberg. The manipulative mechanism through which the pornographic device infiltrates mass culture environments makes it present in art, in the form of a presence, through absence for starters, given by what Brian McNair conceptually calls 'porno-chic'. And then, through 'pornographic imagination', analyzed by Susan Sontag, pornography enters postmodern culture and constituted a way of life for the contemporary individual.*

**Keywords:** *postmodernism, pornography, consumerism, fetishism, 'sexual solipsism', objectification, mass culture, 'hyperreality', 'pornographic imagination'.*

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## Introduction

The objective of this paper is to highlight the workings of postmodern culture regarding the field of pornographic content. In this direction, I am using Jean Baudrillard's postmodern theories, for whom this postmodern culture represents a mass culture, a culture aimed at the "cultural recycling" resulted from the individual's predisposition towards the phenomenon of consumption (Baudrillard, 2008 pp.126-133). This aspect makes the consumption and recycling mechanism to constitute the cultural implosion we find in the form of a model of simulating and inverting traditional signs and values. Within these parameters, sexuality takes the shape of a consumer good, where the main stake is the objectification of the body (especially the female body) and its submission to a process of continuous discipline and aestheticization, mechanism leading to the emergence of 'sexual solipsism', whose consequence is sexuality's transition to pornography.

The transition from sexuality to pornography is a consequence of the cultural and historical tradition where, according to feminist Rae Langton (2009), the dominated-dominant power relation between woman and man places the female gender under masculine dominance. This equation, also mentioned by Foucault (2004) in *The History of Sexuality*, is taken over by the postmodern pornographic device, where it finds its applicability in the consumption phenomenon that we were talking about before. Therefore, the objectification of the female gender in pornography results in her descent to the status of consumer object and to the elevation of consumer objects to the status of subjects.

This mechanism of role inversion makes pornography gain the dimension of a cultural fetish, because through it, sexuality takes on the dimension of the simulacra, driven by the body's reason of consumption. The process arises from the technologization of man's natural environment, by its manipulation by entertainment, publicity and advertising environments, which in consequence lead to what Brian McNair (2002) calls 'porno-chic'. It is the version the pornographic apparatus uses in postmodernism to penetrate more easily into the intimate sphere of the individual, because 'porno-chic', just like the advertising environment, seeks a reaffirmation of (sexual) values, around which human nature is trying to build.

## Consumerism and pornography

„Sexual autism” is a consequence of the bombastic consumerism characteristic for postmodernism. Power consumption has metamorphosed the concept of ‘Man’, in consumption material, in exploitable goods, exploited in the name of entertainment, advertising and show. The distinctive note postmodernism brings for the concept of ‘Man’ is represented by the well defined separation between the body/soul dichotomy, such as it produces the shift in paradigm between the two. This leads to a change of positions between the two, the body being the one replacing the soul, action that not only places the soul in the background, but also tries to dissipate its possible existence, supported until early modernity.

The postmodern liturgy (metaphorically speaking) is one of the salvations of the body through the body and of the death of the soul. Thereby, sexuality goes beyond the boundaries of the bedroom and the boundaries of the discourse and becomes, under the markings of pornography, a consumer good, where the body represents a prefabricated commodity, to be shaped and polished by the pornographic apparatus. Through the concept of “pornographic apparatus”, I am trying to name the entire pornographic system, comprising, starting with the pornographic industry of the 19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, characterized by – photographs, movies, magazines, video tapes or virtual pornography (videochat) – and ending with pornographic literature, together with paintings or sculptures belonging to this genre, characteristic for the 15<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and which all together create the pornographic tradition. Basically, the pornographic apparatus sums up the entire cultural, historical and revolutionary tradition this field has created, by founding new concepts on life and the transgression of interdicts. In this reference system, consumerism represents the exchange currency pornography offers to the mass culture in that which postmodernism, through Jean Baudrillard’s (2008), defines as a ‘cultural recycling’.

It is a metamorphosis completely different from the one of the “Human-machine”, specific to modernism, because the stakes in postmodernism are no longer to discipline the man in the name of production, but to discipline the body in the name of consumption (hence, the idea of soul falls into the background). The body is offered

for consumption before there is any real demand in this direction. The offer precedes the demand, and the demand does not precede the offer in this situation. The voracity to consume the body without seeing it as an alterity also dissolves intersubjectivity. Therefore, the majority of sexual aspects no longer involve 'the other'; they are built around an Ego and a fantasy projected by a consumer society driven by a pornographic apparatus which has now gained symbolic value. This aspect is produced against the background of mass culture and this phenomenon is trying to create a recycling of both values and the way of life and thought. This mass culture is nothing else but the abortion of traditional culture.

The entire process of civilization of human nature, produced within the limits of interdicts and organized labor, now encounters its executioner in the mirror of the parallel reality the mass culture generates and acquires precedence over the latter, just as the body acquires precedence over the soul. Within these parameters, sexuality is viewed as a power game, tracing the limits of consumption. From this point to the objectification of the body in the name of pornography, there is just one more step to take.

It is what Rae Langton (2009) calls 'sexual solipsism', in his paper, *Sexual Solipsism: Philosophical Essays on Pornography and Objectification*. His theory, for starters, is based on the general principle of solipsism, according to which the only person in existence is oneself (self-represented), the rest of the world being a mere creation of the subject, or, in better words, a projection of his imagination in his own conscience (Langton, 2009). This fundamental theory generates for Langton two situations. One where the solipsist treats people like objects, and another, where the solipsist treats objects like people. She then tries to apply these two cases to the phenomenon of pornography, stating that at its level, 'sexual solipsism' manifests itself by the fact that people are treated as consumer objects, and pornography as the sexual partner. Influenced by such feminist positions (radical feminism), which contravene to the pornographic field, Langton analyzes 'sexual solipsism', in the case of pornography, from the perspective of the "Woman-object", of which Baudrillard (2008, pp. 126) claims it is the *pièce de resistance* and the emblem of the consumer society.

But which ones are the elements supporting such a hypothesis? In a Kantian perspective, we could draw such a conclusion from the 'categorical imperative' of the human as 'purpose' and never 'means'

(hypothetical imperative), which is undermined in the case of pornography. In pornography, according to Langton (2009, pp. 311-357), the female gender is treated as a ‘means’, as an object, as an element of consumption for the male desire. It represents nothing more than a way for the male to prove its supremacy and its dominant capacity over the female. The fact that pornography makes a gender-based discrimination already contravenes to the ‘categorical imperative’, which supports equality between people and the elimination of differences in gender, skin color, social condition, etc. Thus, the purpose of pornography falls within the ‘hypothetical imperative’, because it uses human nature (especially the female gender) as a means, in achieving the goal of libidinal satisfaction (of the male gender). This first hypothesis is also based on the definition of pornography, which emphasizes the female gender under the guise of prostitutes, as well as on the theory of radical feminism – condemning the position of male supremacy in politics, economy or society, as we shall see in the following chapter.

However, another aspect not to be neglected in this context is the fact that pornography does not focus on reasoning, it does not seek the exaltation of intellectual faculties, but pursues the ones related to the body, to materiality, and which do not make the man an absolute value as ‘purpose in itself’, but a relative, ‘middle’ value, resulting in the human’s reduction to the state of ‘object’ in the case of this field. It is not only the Kantian morale, condemning the error of treating people as objects that we encounter in the land of pornography, but also the Humean position according to which human mind has the tendency to erroneously treat many subjective properties – such as color, causality and even identity – as objectives, given the projective tendency of human mind to spread on external objects.

The projection that Hume (1978, pp. 167) speaks about, according to Langton’s (2009) theory, is merely an illusion, as the tendency to project causal connections concerning the world is not something always determining causal connections to be real. These points of view rather related to illuminist and modern thinking, are interesting if we look at the issue from the perspective of ‘pornographic imagination’, specific to postmodernism. ‘Pornographic imagination’ is a concept used by Susan Sontag (2009), in her book, *Style of radical will*. According to her, ‘pornographic imagination’ results from pornographic works which distort reality and imagination through the manner in which

they are shown and through the fact that pornographic imagination prefers ready-mades, the convention of characters and action, which makes pornography not be a “theater” of persons (Sontag, 2009, pp. 35-74). The manner in which ‘pornographic imagination’ spreads in the woman’s world and in which it transforms the woman in a consumer object. Thus, the projection on sexual submission also results in the objectification of the woman. Treating certain properties from a sexual point of view can result in the objectification of those properties. The conclusion on pornography the feminist MacKinnon (1993) draws from this equation is that once sexual submission is projected on the woman, in an objective manner where the woman becomes submitted (objectified), is a manner to make the woman into an object.

Thus, another manifestation Langton (2009 pp. 325-346) emphasizes, influenced by feminist principles, is that in the case of pornography, the female gender is treated as an objects, and the object come to be treated as persons, making pornography characterized once more by this ‘sexual solipsism’. She makes the following statement, that when pornographic objects are treated as a female person, it automatically results in the fact that women are treated as objects (Langton, pp.241-267).

As pornography is mainly built on the presence of the female gender and uses her to subordinate her and to project on her a power ratio, which from the beginning does not start from the assumption of equality between protagonists, but creates an unilateral power ratio, where the female gender constitutes the dominated part, and the male gender represents the dominant part. Up to this point, the vision on pornography does not involve new elements. A shift in registry could appear when we try to penetrate this field and to classify the creations of this genre according to the prevalence of the specificities in the sexual act. This results in several pornographic categories that we can divide by the dominant activity they promote and by the erotic games they contain.

A rough division of genres will result in sadomasochistic (S&M) pornography, domination and submission (BDSM) pornography, bondage and discipline (BD) pornography, gay or lesbian pornography. A brief analysis leads us to observe that for most of these pornographic subgenres, the common and prevalent element is the suppression of the other (regardless of the gender). In the case of sadomasochism, there is an authority figure (the sadist) and a submissive party (the masochist).

Usually, in the sadomasochist ritual, the authority party, represented by the sadist, embodies the image of father, of the Subject signifying the “Law”. The submissive party, dominated by the sadomasochist ritual, is usually represented by the image of the mother, constituting the object of desire and representing the Object, and not the Subject, as in the case of the father.

In the passive-masochist state, the masochist takes the place of the mother, wants to be loved by the father, which means he transforms himself in a sexual object (position initially held by the mother, as object of the father’s desire). The power ratio is not calculated according to the classical formula, of the male gender as dominant part and the female gender as dominated part. In this situation, the position of the sadist can just as well be held by the female gender and the position of the masochist by the male gender, especially if we are to adopt a psychoanalytical position in this case. According to the psychoanalytical theory, this inversed power ratio is a consequence of the oedipian state and of the castration state, unsurpassed by the masochist.

According to Gilles Deleuze (1991) in his book *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty*, this phenomenon of masochism and sadism follows several steps.

In the first instance, the masochist wants to replace the father and to take his power, position in which the mother represents the object of desire. This stage is characterized in first instance by the sadistic attitude of the masochist (the statement is not exaggerated, as Freud himself stated that in every masochist there is a sadist).

After this first stage, the feeling of guilt sets in, together with the fear of castration, by the need to prove to the father that he is not the one who wants to take his place, that it really is the mother, because she is the one beating and hurting him. From this point on, the masochist however gives up the idea and tries to take the mother’s place, by seeking the love of the father (explaining the homosexual accent in masochism), from where he eventually replaces the feeling of love requested by the mother with the feeling of violence. Basically, in this long line of states, the masochist seeks to take the mother’s place and wishes to be loved by the father, meaning that he wants to have the status of object of desire.

In literature, we find the proof in the work of Leopold von Sacher–Masoch, *Venus in furs*. In the case of BDSM, as with S&M, the dominant gender is irrelevant (it can be both female and male), what is



important is the game of domination and submission that we also find in the S&M category. The same as in gay or lesbian pornographic creations.

The aim here is not the submission of a gender – moreover when the protagonists of these two cases are of the same gender – but the creation of a power ratio, where there is an authority and a subject. This is why the theory according to which pornography seeks to reduce the female gender to the level of a sexual object, a consumption object, is rather more a perspective pertaining to a position of radical feminism, than a ‘sexual solipsism’. It is true that such an attitude – reducing the female to an object and to raise the sexual object (toys, images or sexual fantasies) to the level of sexual partners fits the parameters of sexual solipsism – but it does not essentially constitute the basic formula of sexual solipsism, unless it is viewed from a feminist perspective. That which needs to be emphasized in the case of a sexual solipsism is the mechanism that transforms “the other” in an object (regardless the gender) and raises the object to the level of a person. The risk which occurs does not reside in the fact that objects are raised to the level of human beings, but in the fact that people are reduced to the level of objects. Through this attitude, the “other” is stripped of both the autonomy of his own body and the autonomy of his own person. He represents nothing more than a ‘means’ by which the pornographic apparatus offers mass culture the opportunity to use sexuality as a ‘purpose’, in the process of corporatization and objectification of human nature.

The idea Langton (2009) analyzes is taken from the book *Only words*, written by radical feminist Catharine MacKinnon (1993), for whom the use of pornography is nothing else than sex between people and things, human beings and pieces of paper, real men and unreal women (MacKinnon, 1993, pp. 103). Basically, it all comes down to the idea of consumption, whether we speak of human bodies, or if we speak of objects. Regardless of the fact that the status of consumption object switches places, passing from treating human nature as an object and objects as human nature, the idea is to find in anything and anyone the possibility to be consumed. Rae Langton’s (2009) theory goes in this exact direction. For her, pornography constituted the field where everything is built on consumption. However, the phenomenon of consumption also generates a series of traps. Thus, from the perspective of the speed with which offer and demand are circulated in the

pornographic space, the quality parameters are being burned. Once the quality parameters are eliminated, the tendency is to accumulate an excess quantity.

Nevertheless, the existent excess does not lead to satiation, as offers are always changing, even if we speak of a change in 'form' and not in 'substance'. The result leads to the formation of the obscene as a new form of manifestation of values with the purpose of undermining the ones already in existence and to bring forth an new system of values, where the appreciation comes from this direction if the ob-skene, with the possibility of becoming on-skene. Where nothing that used to be hidden from sight remains becomes the scene, but gets on the scene offered by the pornographic apparatus.

### **Postmodern culture and pornography as a cultural fetish**

This sexual marketing under the auspices of the pornographic industry transforms pornography in a cultural fetish, from the perspective of the technique of moral deconstruction of the body Baudrillard (2008) speaks about in *Simulacra and simulation*, in reference to the novel *Crash*, by J.G. Ballard (2007), where we are faced with a body without organs and without organ orgasms, as they are replaced with pornography as such (Baudrillard, 2008, pp. 83).

Pornography, as manifestation and way of life, as journalist Jeanette Kupfermann (1996) stated, for the manner in which it infiltrated mass culture, determines us to have difficulties in finding an image, entertainment, fashion or advertisement untouched by it. Postmodern culture – by privileging mass culture and by valorizing the multiplication of signs under the auspices of the seriation of works of art, of the objectification of the body and deconstruction of reality through technologization – makes pornography the cultural fetish the consumer public needs.

Pornography becomes the cultural environment of a mass of people for whom values are measured in the multitude of gadgets, of hallucinogenic substances, of virtual voyages and of reducing identity to a symbol, to a simulacrum the playful, ludic appearance offered by the internet is given under the guise of virtual advertising. Everything in pornography seeks to transform into a mass of entertainment that anyone can access at anytime, through a suggestion, through a demand or through plain and simple consumption. It is the reason for which a

division and a re-division, followed by a fragmentation up to the smallest particle of the pornographic industry results in a diverse and colored range of consumption materials the pornographic apparatus is currently offering us. Dividing pornography in genres and sub-genres in terms of consumer preferences, or producers or opponents preferences, has eventually led to its omnipresence.

This vicious triangle, created by producer-consumer-censorship descends pornography from behind the scene of the obscene and brings it into day-to-day life, by that which postmodernism calls 'porno-chic' (McNair, 2002). The expression is used by journalist Brian McNair (2002) in his book, *Striptease Culture. Sex, media and the democratization of desire*, to represent pornography in art, and non-pornographic culture through pastiche and parody, indicating the mechanism of postmodern transformation of the pornographic films into artifacts for the mass culture, for a variety of reasons, including, as we shall see, advertising. Basically, 'porno-chic' is rather a phantom of the pornographic apparatus, as it only simulates pornography and does not expose it in its entire fullness (McNair, 2002, pp. 61-87). It is a pornographic simulacrum in all these parameters, because the mechanism seeks, by absence, to mask the presence of an objective reality, which, regardless of how it is shown, is imprinted in the individual's primitive subconscious mind, from where, in the form of constrained libidinal impulses, it craves the symbolic world of signs given by consumer culture.

Sexual revolution also contributed to the expansion of pornography in mass culture, as it led to the sexual emancipation of the individual, by undermining taboos with the liberation of feminine sexuality, with the spread of contraceptive methods. The creation of the movies *Deep Throat*, *Behind the Green Door*, or of the *Emmanuelle* series in the 70's had a strong impact on the consumer public, especially on the female segment, who discovered behind their own person the desire to break the pattern of the moral, submitted and frigid woman, and to transform into a person with sexual desire and autonomy – manifestation that occurred at the same time as anti-pornography feminist movements.

The category of banned films is now beginning to make its presence felt in the conscience of the sexually mature and capable to transgress sexual interdicts individual. The result was the emergence of the video tapes with such materials in the 80's, and then, in the 90's, their

consumption became also possible on TV, *Basic Instinct*, as well as in the virtual space, by the end of 1990.

At the same time, along with the erotic delirium created by pornography, the delirium of repulsion towards it is inevitably born. But the important thing, in this blur of acceptance and rejection of the pornographic industry, is the subtle manner in which it managed to penetrate the conscience of the public. The initial ban on playing the movies *Deep Throat*, *Behind the Green Door*, or of the *Emmanuelle* series on both big screens and TV, later (occurred a few years after their appearance on the big screen) resulted in inciting the public to consume this genre of movies. The publicity around them constituted the launching pad of the pornographic industry, because the advertising environment plays the part of a reaffirmation of the general values around which human nature seeks to build. Besides, the temptation to undermine the sexual interdict has led to the use of sexuality in advertising environments.

Given the fact that this method creates a closed circuit, where everyone is sheltered by simulated needs, in a coercive space of consumption culture. Thereby, sexual allusions in publicity are no longer a novelty. However, for the 80's-90's, the commercials created by the famous designer Calvin Klein brought forth protests from the *American Family Association*. The apple of discord was represented by his use in commercials (both for promoting jeans and for promoting underwear), of young people of ages between 14-16 years old, generating a series of accusations concerning his promotion of child pornography. Even though the images did not have explicit sexual connotations, the accusations resulted from the phrases the young people spoke in the commercials.

Thereby, in 1980 he uses 15 year old Brooke Shields in a commercial shot and directed by Richard Avedon, where the young girl speaks the controversial words about nothing existing between her and the Calvin Klein jeans –“ You want to know what comes between me and my Calvins? Nothing.” Sexual connotation interpreted in her words resulted in the ban of this commercial on television. In this case, the communicational environment of advertising plays the role of the manipulating element between the two adverse parties (consumers and opponents of pornography), because the interpretation of the significant

and signified in this case are given by the symbols and precepts the advertising environment offers.

The manipulation of the significations at a subjective level of reality perception appoints the short story told by the commercial in that of a 'hyperreality', where the discourse behind the message is the diversion of the direction, for the purpose of consumption. That is exactly why, for the pioneers of the pornographic industry, these scandals represented a real path breaker. Even though the images or the words weren't even nearly pornographic (didn't fit these parameters), the simple fact that the scandal around it mentioned the utopian presence of this genre already turns on the consumer button. So, the die has been cast, masked manipulation has played its part, and the individual seeking to create his own convenient reality transgresses the interdict and lets himself get absorbed by the implosion created around pornography.

The conventions created by pornography, through genre iconography used in a satirized manner in various pictorials, together with "innocent" phrases put in the mouths of inexperienced youth, have finally made pornography into a cultural phenomenon, where the recycling of ideals and values constituted a purpose in itself. Postmodern pornography, unlike the pornography of the 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, constitutes not only a transgressive reality, but also a 'hyperreality' where the individual, liberated from the cultural-historical tradition, can consume and externalize his repressed libido, which has become for him the new existential matrix.

In other words, pornography has come to be a part of the individual's state of existence, as it offers him a state of things, in a relation of coordination with contingent reality, which for him substitutes the altered state of the spirit, producing a simulacrum. The implosion created at existential level has guided the individual of the mass culture to seek the easy, derisory and simulated happiness the consumer mechanism generates. In these parameters, it is easy to intuit that pornography is heading towards a technologization of the body, of the actions, of the genders (Baudrillard, 2008, pp. 84).

The metamorphosis is a consequence of the pornographic mechanism which places in the center of attention the female gender, as a penetrable object; receptacle of the numerous concupiscent possibilities of penetrations of natural and created orifices. We are not necessarily talking of a creation of sexually exploitable spaces on the

female body, but rather of the fabrication of pleasures, by mentally projecting desirable perversions on the wanted body.

They arise as seen in the novel *Crash*, on the background of technologization and surpassing contingent reality towards a 'hyperreality', as Baudrillard (2008) calls it – which, although obscene, is valued by the cultural fetishism pornography creates. And we are not talking about a contemplative look, but of a voyeuristic look given by the cinematographic method shot-reverse-shot. It plays a fundamental role in the postmodern structure of the movie *Crash*, by David Cronenberg. Here, the voyeurism is shown as a structure spun off pleasure and desire, in an environment frozen by a sexuality as symbolic environment, where the artificial transforms the protagonists (Catherine, Vaughan, James, Helen) in passive objects, pieces of meat, or psychedelic figures, lacking any emotional charge, expressiveness or sufferance (in the case of the events occurred after the car crashes). The couplings, the interpersonal relations and the accidents are played in an artificial manner, seeking to reach complete artistic perfection through the faces arranged, embellished and covered in make-up to the inch, the figures stacked neatly following the devastating accident, transforming the entire environment in one where the accident is not longer a bricolage, as with the road accident, but it is the one giving shape to life, altogether metamorphosing itself in the sex of life (Baudrillard, 2008, pp. 84). The accidental part in this case is represented by the fetish, or the fetishist environment, with which sexuality not only transgresses the interdict, but also deconstructs it, with the help of technologization and of the 'hyperreality' postmodern culture promotes.

And here we are not just talking of a fetishism that would involve a mass culture or a consumer culture. We are talking about a fetishism that comes from art as a form of manifestation for culture. In its entire 'cultural recycling', postmodernism is sometimes overzealous and seeks out elitist elements in the populist container it generated (Baudrillard, 2008). Susan Sontag (2009) makes here the distinction between bad pornography and good pornography.

Bad pornography is mass pornography, completely lacking aesthetic values, while good pornography, on the contrary, is endowed with such aesthetic values, allowing it the possibility to be considered art. Meaning that, in the parameters of bad pornography we can classify adult magazines, such as *Playboy* or *Penthouse*, because they are aimed for

mass, consumer culture, by satisfying sudden and ephemeral needs, which do not reach the consumer's conscience, but merely fly over this aspect through libidinal desire and sexual tension.

In the parameters of good pornography we can classify, according to Sontag literary works (*Story of O* - Pauline Réage, *Story of the Eye* - Georges Bataille, *Fanny Hill* - John Cleland, the works of Sade, Apollinaire, etc.). According to her, that is because this type of literary creation fits art's parameters, as it exhibits a creation rather involving the author's consciousness (and not the sexual obsession itself), which uses pornography to create a work of art, meant to arouse the person coming into contact with this type of book, to the same extent as the purpose of a religious book is to convert its reader (Sontag, 2009, pp. 47).

We can identify here a reminiscence of the spirit of value, specific to modernism, where the sexual element resulted from pornography acquires the size of a proselytizing postmodernism turns in its favor, by that which consumer culture and the culture of recycling fundamental values generates. But as pornography constitutes a fantastic environment, where reality blends with the virtual, 'hyperreality' with schizophrenia, we can adopt a Manichaean position and admit this pornographic duality.

It is again Susan Sontag (2009) that said that pornography represents a way of life, a new form of being for the contemporary man. That is because the contemporary individual tries to relate to pornography as to a new form of existence, without taking it as a simple model, but raising it to the level of fetish. This is why, for Umberto Eco (1994), one of the main characteristics of a pornographic film is, at first, the rendering of a bland everyday normality, and then the rendering of the scenes specific to the pornographic space. This is the reason why, in most pornographic films, before getting to transgress in front of the spectator all sexual interdicts, it must pass through a series of "wasted time". However, this "wasted time" does not coincide with a preamble of the film; it is merely represented by sequences usually unrelated with the action that follows.

These instances are composed of a series of sequences of a banal repetitiveness and normality, fact that categorizes these films as photographical. We find almost the same characteristics in pornographic literature, of which Adorno states that one of the specific lines of pornographic literature is that it lacks the well-known structure -

beginning, middle, end – in pornography we can only find the middle part of a literary structure; the beginning and the end are omitted. And the mechanism, in both film and literature, is not an accidental one.

Burning certain epic stages or exploiting some shots that create the state of downtime are essential in the pornographic structure. The reason is that if there would be an intrigue or more action in the pornographic environment, than the attention of the consumer would focus on this side, and not on the sexual one, and the above-mentioned proselytizing would disappear. And the aim of the pornographic apparatus is to alienate the individual in a single direction, whose well established target would not offer him a real possibility of manifestation, but a simulated one. The relation between consumer and pornography thus goes beyond this line of interrelationships and is transformed in a trans-relationship which homogenizes both the individual's conscience and the pornographic offer, transforming everything in a cultural phenomenon, and within its limits pornography manifests itself as a fetish, because the complicity between consumption and the moral deconstruction of the body fuels this stance.

### **Conclusions**

This rediscovery of the transgressive sexuality (through voyeuristic, fetishist or sadomasochist practices) which pornography, under the auspices of postmodernism, reveals to the individual, in the form of his consumerist manipulation and education, result in a division of pornography in two categories, a good one and a bad one, according to Susan Sontag (2009).

Therefore, the bad pornography category includes the 'porno-chic' phenomenon, as it lacks art's classical values (even though it tries to simulate art, it eliminates the sublime position of traditional artistic representations) and is covered in the postmodern values of parody, satire and pastiche mass culture has inspired, being, in consequence, an exclusively postmodern result that we find in advertising and entertainment.

On the other hand, good pornography includes literature, which maintains the old traditional values, the elitist principle of the creative act concerning this type of art. In the middle of this sexual transition, shaped by consumption – where pornography tries to constitute the environment for the sexual recycling of intimate values – the



technologization and re-technologization of the body make this power game a 'hyperreal' environment (Baudrillard, 2008), where, eventually, the fetish is not represented by the objectified body, but by pornography as cultural environment. Within these parameters, the obscene gains the symbolic value of a lifestyle, where pornography represents the reference code.

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