



Pornography Embodied: From Speech to Sexual Practice (Feminist Constructions)

Joan Mason-Grant

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What does it mean to conceptualize pornography as a material practice rather than as speech? Mason-Grant argues that this idea, fundamental to the work of Andrea Dworkin and Catharine MacKinnon, has been obscured in legal wrangling and political polarization over their civil ordinance. Within the arena of legal argument, where the principle of free speech holds sway for progressive thinkers, their analysis of pornography is rendered, at worse, an apology for censorship and, at best, an argument about the social force of speech, rather than recognized as a fundamental challenge to the very idea of pornography as speech. In this book, Mason-Grant first shows how the persistent 'speech paradigm' inevitably obscures the innovative core of the Dworkin-MacKinnon critique of mainstream pornography. She then develops an alternative 'practice paradigm' that critically engages their analysis, capturing and extending its core insights about the role of pornography in sexual practice. Drawing on phenomenology of the lived body, this alternative paradigm provides a way of re-thinking how the pervasive use of mass-market heterosexual pornography contributes to the cultivation of an embodied and tacit sexual know-how that is subordinating, and raises important questions about alternative materials produced and used by sexual minorities. In her conclusion, Mason-Grant considers the implications of her analysis not for law, but for a critical pedagogy in youth sexuality education.

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