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Catherine MacKinnon's Views

Acts of sex-based discrimination have progressively undermined the attempts to establish sex equality in the contemporary society. Pornography, for example, is one of the intermittent lapses, which flank between responsiveness and freedom. Pornography has always had support of some human rights activists who claim that it is a means of exercising freedom. At the same time, it has been criticized with a nearly equal measure. According to Catherine Mackinnon, pornography is an indication of male dominance over their female counterparts. On the other hand, the author associates obscenity policies with ethics from the male community's view, and censure of pornography with politics from the female fraternity's standpoint. In this context, ethics relates to the sense of goodness, while politics refers to the element of power. In other words, Catherine Mackinnon views obscenity as an ethical concept and pornography as a political exercise. This paper will keenly look at MacKinnon's views on pornography.

As Catherine MacKinnon asserts in her articles, pornography is concrete while obscenity is non-concrete. In addition, the two words are believed to symbolize two exclusively distinct concepts. For example, nakedness, voyeurism, excitement, and stimulation are often associated with obscenity, especially when it portrays sex. Besides, birth control and abortion attempts are also believed to breach obscenity laws. On the other hand, pornography relates to the actual act of forcing sex on real women and selling them to make profits. In this view, women's bodies are

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often mutilated, strung, and turned into sexual objects. Consequently, the prevalence of pornography bothers most feminists and liberals. Moreover, one can note that obscenity cause relatively less harm on women than pornography does. In fact, the latter stimulates attitudes of hatred and violence directed toward the female fraternity thus defining how the society treats them.

Catherine MacKinnon, together with her co-feminist Andrea Dworkin came up with an anti-pornography Act in 1993 following a request by the Minneapolis Assembly. About a year later, Indianapolis City Assembly approved a similar Act. Catherine MacKinnon and her colleague believed that illegalizing the creation, exposure, and consumption of pornographic materials would be less effective in eliminating the harm caused by pornography to the female fraternity. Instead, they preferred to embrace civil movements that would help liberate the women who are habitually harmed in the process of producing the materials or even because of their consumption. A heated debate arose on whether the law proposed by MacKinnon and her friend would result into censorship, since it did not try to place any ban on the production, exposure, and consumption of pornographic materials.

MacKinnon and Dworkin's Act has been the topic of an extremely intense argument among liberalists and feminists for a number of years. Most of these liberalists and feminists have always been outstandingly unsure about the criticality of the role played by pornography and obscenity in the supremacy of men over their female counterparts. Nonetheless, the Act has always been remembered and appreciated as being one of the major strongholds behind the contemporary growth and power of gender-based civil rights movements. Besides, it also gave viable definitions of both obscenity and pornography that have since been employed in numerous feminist debates. According to MacKinnon and Dworkin, pornography refers to a civil rights

desecration against women based on the sexual discernment. They also assert that sex-based materials that treat children and men in sexually discriminating ways can also be considered as pornographic materials.

In the past several decades, most liberals strongly shielded the adults who published or consumed pornographic materials from religious and ethical extremists who were determined to see pornography forbidden. According to the revolutionaries, pornography wielded corrupting influences on its consumers and caused scarring consequences on religious morals and traditional family values. However, recently associated activities have seen the pornography argument take a fresh and more amazing shape. Today, most human rights advocates are constantly calling on their respective governments to help control pornographic activities. Nonetheless, the key focus of most female anti-pornography crusaders is always on the harm that the pornography may cause to women and children instead of the obscenity of the act's sexually clear content. For instance, a number of pro-ban advocates always argue that the harm caused by humiliating and violent pornographic acts could be significantly solemn to justify the prohibition of pornography on substantial grounds.

On the other hand, many feminists and liberals remain skeptical whether pornography fuels male superiority over women or whether the disloyal tool of the law is the most suitable solution for pornography problems. Consequently, it keeps Catherine MacKinnon's argument about pornography and obscenity alive in the society until today. It is at times supposed that pornography is only published and used by a small and sidelined minority group. However, the actual estimates of the acceptance and usage of pornography in the global trade market varies. In reality, it is an accepted fact that the pornography industry is an extremely large global enterprise

with an outstandingly high rate of turnover. As a result, anti-pornography crusaders must not undermine the size of the monster when coming up with strategies to counter it.

As detailed by Catherine MacKinnon in her articles, pornography actually undermines the state of women in the society. According to the feminist, Pornography is an exercise of sexual politics and a keystone for gender disparity. As a result, it is imperative to note that pornography is not as an inoffensive practice and a tangled misunderstanding of a healthy sexual orientation as others have always claimed. Taking into consideration the rampant occurrence of prostitution and rape, which always accompany pornographic exercises, the act actually encourages the establishment of male dominance in the society. In real sense, most men treat their women just in the way they perceive them. Pornography, on the other hand, shapes that perception.

Pornography is, consequently, a monster that ought to be entirely eliminated from the modern society. So, Catherine MacKinnon's anti-pornography campaign is worth the course. In most pornographic scenes, the female community is often depicted to desire brutality. In fact, men are always allowed to put words in women's mouths and establish prospects in which women frantically demand to be bound, assaulted, and embarrassed. In other words, pornography supports the notion that men have the right to dishonor and possess women both in the real world and on the screen for the viewers. As a result, pornography is a sexually clear material that causes undesirable disrespect to the women fraternity. However, not only do women often feel the grave impacts of pornographic materials in the society, but also pornography affects its consumers by demeaning their morals and behaviors and making them appear to be less likely to establish long lasting sexual relationships. Child pornography, for instance, is a subset of

pornographic materials that involves the portrayal of real children taking part in forced sexual exercises.

Catherine MacKinnon believes that the exertion of restrictions on the public exhibition of pornography would help reduce its spread among adults and children. However, to counter this perception, some liberal protectors of pornography have always argued that when executing such restrictions on pornography, the intentional individual consumption of the materials should not be considered harmful. As a result, the comprehensive restrictions on the publication of pornography may not be justified. However, the public airing of the same may wield a violent irritation to non-complying adults who might be exposed to it involuntarily. Consequently, defenders of pornography must accept the justification of restrictions on the public display of pornography. However, the intentional secretive consumption may only be prohibited, if it is likely to cause considerable harm to other members of the society as well.

Many defendants of pornography, on the other hand, have technical disquiets about how the proposed restriction policies might work in actuality. For example, most of them often point out to the actual costs along with other associated dangers of exerting restrictions. In this perspective, they always tend to assert that the risks associated with censorship are greater than the harms caused directly by pornography. This implies that the execution of censorship policies could cause more harm to the society than pornography itself does. In addition, they also point out to the challenges involved in articulating a globally acceptable definition of pornography to be used to help eliminate the chances of restriction laws causing harm to the target groups.

Exerting restrictions on pornographic materials might lead to further restriction of other related materials consequently making people unwilling to publish articles or books that could be potentially interpreted as pornographic materials and because of which they could become

convicts. From the few examples indicated above, it can be concluded that restrictions on pornographic materials may also pose severe risks to the society. It is necessary to consider all associated dangers when weighing the benefits and costs of pornography restriction as a reliable solution to eliminate the harm caused by pornographic materials on both consumers and producers, especially the female producers.

Concurrently, it is important to observe additionally that most of the aforementioned dangers are already inherent in other existing policies and have never been considered as real threats to making fair decisions in court settings. As a result, not all risks associated with censorship must be considered.

For many years, heated debates have always come up on what should be considered as pornography and obscenity, and whether or not it is necessary to censor pornographic materials. In 1993, Catherine MacKinnon, together with her co-feminist Andrea Dworkin, proposed an anti-pornography policy. According to their initiative, criminalizing the creation, exposure, and consumption of pornographic materials would be less effective in eliminating pornographic impacts on women. Instead, they believed that civil movements were the best tool to help liberate the female fraternity from such discriminative acts. Since then, a frenzied argument has always existed on whether the policy would result in censorship or not. Most anti-pornography crusaders believe it cannot be effective, since it does not place any ban on pornographic materials.

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