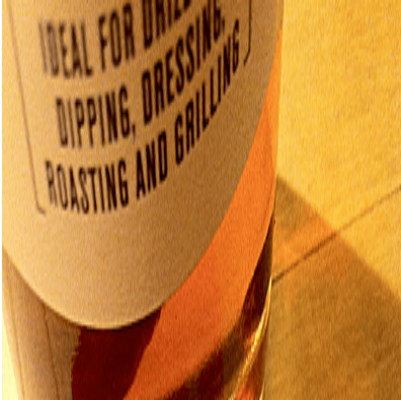




I'm in the mood for love

Description

I'm in the mood for love, sang Dean Martin and dozens of others. The path to seduction involves getting the other party in the mood. Author Robert Greene offers helpful advice in his book *The Art of Seduction*: "Human beings are immensely suggestible; their moods will easily spread to the people around them. In fact seduction depends on mimesis, on the conscious creation of a mood or feeling that is then produced by the other person" (65).



thought I ought to see what scholars have been saying about erotic

Faking it

According to Greene's formulation you can't fake it. Moods are contagious. So is awkwardness and hesitation, the enemies of seduction according to Greene. Perhaps that's how pornography seduces, when it does. It's anything but subtle. It's unashamed, brazen, confident, and seduces

the viewer into sharing the mood.

As it happens, the UK Children's Commissioner just published its report on pornography and young people, which bears the highly descriptive title: *Basically, porn is everywhere*. A *Rapid Evidence Assessment on the Effects that Access and Exposure to Pornography has on Children and Young People*. ([PDF](#))

They make the obvious case: pornography has been linked to unrealistic attitudes about sex; maladaptive attitudes about relationships; more sexually permissive attitudes; greater acceptance of casual sex; beliefs that women are sex objects; more frequent thoughts about sex; sexual uncertainty; and less progressive gender role attitudes (7). They also make the point that online pornography seems to fill a void left by a dearth of sex education in schools.

Wicked thoughts

Neuroscientists Ogi Ogas and Sai Gaddam published a book in 2011 with another descriptive title: *A Billion Wicked Thoughts: What the World's Largest Experiment Reveals about Human Desire*. They processed data about the million most visited websites, and discovered that 4% were dedicated to sexually explicit content. On their analysis of web searches, it appeared that 13% of all searches were for such content. In reviewing the research many commentators said they had expected the figures to be much higher (Forbes [article](#)).

Mood enters the arena again in an article about emotion and online pornography by media scholar Susanna Paasonen who observes that in some respects pornography is not so different to other entertainment genres. There's the obvious parallel with extreme dramatic forms such as horror, melodrama and comedy. Like these genres, pornography aims to evoke similar responses in their viewers as the ones they depict (46).

She makes the strong case that porn should not only be analysed as a pleasure phenomenon: Focus on pleasure easily frames pornography as automatically gratifying and arousing. Yet porn may just as well disgust, titillate, amuse, bore or alienate its viewers (50).

Not-for-profit

Cultural theorist and commentator Mark Dery thinks that the experimental not-for-profit phenomenon of *netporn* is a more interesting phenomenon than the commercial variety. He identifies niche material for aquaphiliacs who enjoy pictures of people fully clothed in swimming pools, medical neck-brace fetishists, people into extraterrestrials, and sites for vomit fetish and hiccup lovers. Outside of the orbit of commercial producers netporn provides humour, irony and a sense that there are communities out there able to socialize around such themes.

More importantly, netporn also becomes emblematic of taboo. It's there along with street protest, graffiti, underground movements and madness, providing a set of ideas and practices to recruit against the establishment, bourgeois values, and capitalism. Dery also thinks netporn provides a medium for those traditionally stigmatized as abnormal to express their identity, particularly for those ostracized on the basis of sexual preference. Once it was the case that people labeled as moral degenerates were stigmatized, criminalized, institutionalized. Now, It's the *Revenge of the Repressed* (130).

The quest for erotic gratification is of course just the flotsam on a current within the human psyche that Sigmund Freud identified as *eros*. *Eros* is the life instinct, the urge towards pleasure and self-preservation. Freud describes *eros*'s main purpose as "uniting and binding" (386). In combination with the "death instinct" it complicates life and preserves it.



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Notes

- Also see blog post [We are all entertainers](#).

- According to Paasonen, mass media content based on horror, melodrama, comedy and porn seek to produce significant effects in their audiences such as sweaty palms, tears, laughter and sexual arousal.



Category

1. Body

Tags

1. entertainment
2. mood
3. netporn
4. seduction

Date Created

June 1, 2013

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