

CULTURAL APOLOGETIC SERIES



Pornography: the Deconstruction of Human Society

By S. Michael Craven

Pornography: the Deconstruction of Human Sexuality

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This is the fifth booklet in the Cultural Apologetics Series.
Others include:

- *Where the Battle Rages: The Sexualizing of America*
- *Why Is Marriage Important? The Reasonable Defense of Marriage*
- *Thinking Critically, Acting Compassionately: A Christian Perspective on Homosexuality*
- *Modern Sex Education: The Indoctrination of a Generation*

Pornography

Robert George, the Princeton Law Professor pointed out in his book, *The Clash of Orthodoxies* that, "...legal prohibition of anything works well only when supported by a widespread recognition of the evil of the thing prohibited." This it seems is our first challenge when addressing the issue of pornography and the proposed restriction thereof in a society that seems to no longer hold to the 'widespread recognition of the evil' that pornography represents.

As a result of the proliferation of pornography, there are many today that have removed pornography from any moral category altogether and simply regard this as a First Amendment issue. In fact, according to research by George Barna conducted in November 2003, 38 percent of American adults surveyed stated that pornography was morally acceptable.¹ This is the first supposition that we must address: is pornography morally acceptable or is it in fact immoral? And if we suppose it is immoral, on what basis do we make this distinction?

Regardless of one's religious beliefs, most rational people can agree that behavior that does harm could be categorized as immoral, evil or wrong. Therefore we can likely agree that we, as a society, have an interest in and responsibility to prohibit or restrain certain behavior in order to eliminate or minimize the harm to both individuals and society. This would be regarded as "public morality."

Robert George offers an excellent definition of public morality. “Public morality, like public health and safety, is a concern that goes beyond considerations of law and public policy. Public morals are affected, for good or ill, by the activities of private parties, and such parties have obligations with respect to them.”² Contrary to the assertion that the private exercise of behavior or in this case the private use of pornography is not the concern of anyone else—private behavior is of concern simply because it does in fact affect public morals and therefore does have public consequences. For example, even apart from laws prohibiting the creation of fire hazards, individuals have an obligation to avoid placing persons and property in jeopardy of fire.³ While this example addresses a health and safety issue it is nonetheless the same with respect to the moral obligations imposed by society upon private behaviors which produce public consequences.

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It is with this in mind that we examine the issue of pornography in an effort to first understand how this “private” behavior affects public morality and our society as a justification for governmental restriction and/or prohibition of pornographic materials.

So, we begin with the simple question: Does pornography cause harm? To adequately