

---

# Paraphilias in U.S. Pornography Titles: "Pornography Made Me Do It" (Ted Bundy)

Breck Lebeque, MD

In 1986, the U.S. Commission on pornography reviewed 3,050 separate magazine and book titles sold in "adults only" pornographic outlets randomly selected in Washington, DC; Baltimore, MD; Miami, FL; Philadelphia, PA; New York, NY; and Boston, MA. Of these, 746 titles could be assigned to a DSM III-R paraphilia category (513 titles if the category partialism is excluded). Incest was listed as a category separately from pedophilia. Thus, 16.8 percent of the titles could be assigned to a paraphilia category (24.4% of all titles, if partialism is included as a category). Paraphilia distribution is discussed. Sadomasochism was by far the most common paraphilia (49.9%) while incest titles comprised 21.4 percent of the perversions. The frequency distribution for the U.S. material is compared with titles reviewed by the Victoria (Australia) State Classification of Publications Board and previously reported by the author.

In the last 20 years there have been several extensive government reports on pornography. The 1970 U.S. Commission on Obscenity and Pornography<sup>1</sup> described the state of the problem in the United States; the report of the British Home Office Committee on Obscenity and Film Censorship reviewed English pornography in 1978<sup>2</sup>; the report of the Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution reviewed Canadian pornography in 1985,<sup>3</sup> and in 1986, the U.S. Department of Justice Attorney General's Commission on Pornography reported their findings.<sup>4</sup> There is an extensive series of legal cases, defining and

limiting what may be shown or sold to the public, which is beyond the scope of this article.

However, there have been surprisingly few studies in the psychiatric literature comparing what is legally defined as *pornographic*, with that which is clinically defined as a *paraphilia*. Dietz and Evans<sup>5</sup> reported in 1982 on the prevalence of paraphilia in pornographic cover imagery. Although they did not assign this imagery to specific DSM III paraphilia groups, they did find that, of the paraphilic acts portrayed in literature from 144 shops, bondage and domination was by far the most common (16.7% of all cover pictures). In fact, this was the only scientific article which attempted to categorize paraphilias that

---

Dr. Lebeque is affiliated with the Department of Psychiatry, University of Utah, 50 North Medical Drive, UT 84132.

was available to the 1986 U.S. Commission at the outset of its activities.

In the bibliography of the 1986 Commission report,<sup>4</sup> there is an excellent review of recent studies of the effect of pornography on the physiologic and social response of normal subjects, as well as on those with a history of paraphilia or sexual offenses. The commission studied the imagery found among magazines, books, and films in pornographic outlets in Washington, Baltimore, Miami, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston.

The selection procedures included selecting every magazine sold as new merchandise which had one or more photographs on the front cover, every fifth book going from left to right and from top to bottom which had one or more visual depictions on the front cover, and every fifth film with one or more photographs on the box front. Duplicate titles were eliminated so that a particular issue of a magazine was only coded once. A total of sixteen stores were surveyed; the survey resulted in the

total of 2,325 separate magazine titles, 725 book titles, and 2,370 film titles.<sup>4</sup>

## Method

I reviewed the magazine and book titles (N = 3,050) surveyed by the 1986 Attorney General's Commission on pornography and a determination was made if a recognized DSM III-R<sup>6</sup> act of paraphilia was described by the title. A paraphilia was identified only if the act described by the title clearly and explicitly correlated with the diagnostic criteria of DSM III-R. This was relatively easy for some titles, and difficult for others. A title was assigned to the paraphilia category *partialism* only if it referred to a sexual act with one part of the body of another person; titles listing more than one body part were excluded ("asses and ankles"), as were titles that simply named a single body part, ("big boobs"). References to school girls were

Table 1  
U.S. Titles Excluding Partialism

Paraphilia	No. of Titles	% of Paraphilia Titles	% of All Titles
Exhibitionism	1	0.2	0.03
Fetishism	38	7.4	1.24
Frotteurism	0	0.0	0.0
Pedophilia	25	4.9	0.81
Sadomasochism	256	49.9	8.39
Transvestism	55	10.7	1.8
Voyeurism	5	1.0	0.16
Telephone scatologia	0	0.0	0.0
Necrophilia	0	0.0	0.0
Zoophilia	17	3.3	0.56
Coprophilia	0	0.0	0.0
Klismaphilia	4	0.8	0.13
Urophilia	2	0.4	0.06
Total paraphilia titles	403	78.6%	13.18%
Incest	110	21.4%	3.6%
Total perversion titles	513	100.0%	16.78%

included in the pedophilia category, references to adolescent or "young" partners were excluded.

Because many titles included references to both sadism and masochism, they are assigned to a single category, sadomasochism. (It was impossible to distinguish from most of these titles whether the fantasied act described in the title was sadistic or masochistic). Titles which made reference to both a fetish and sadomasochistic activity were assigned to the sadomasochism category, as it appeared in these cases that the use of the object was for either sadistic or masochistic purposes. Titles referring to acts of submission were not included as a paraphilia. Titles referring to forced gang sex were included in the sadomasochistic category. Titles describing sexual activity with a daughter were not included in the pedophile category, unless the reference was additionally to

prepubertal age. These titles were assigned to a separate incest category, which is included as a perversion even though not listed as a DSM III-R paraphilia.

## Results

Table 1 presents the frequency distribution exclusive of partialism, a new and ill-defined paraphilic category. The most common paraphilia inherent in the titles reviewed by the commission was sadomasochism, comprising almost 50 percent of the paraphilic titles and 8.4 percent of all titles.

Incest, although not a DSM III-R paraphilia, was second in frequency with 21.4 percent of the perversion titles (3.6% of all titles). If combined with pedophilia, this category represents one-fourth of all paraphilia titles.

When partialism is included as a par-

**Table 2**  
**U.S. Titles Including Partialism**

Paraphilia	No. of Titles	% of Paraphilia Titles	% of All Titles
Exhibitionism	1	0.1	0.03
Fetishism	38	5.1	1.24
Frotteurism	0	0.0	0.0
Pedophilia	25	3.4	0.81
Sado-masochism	256	34.3	8.39
Transvestism	55	7.4	1.80
Voyeurism	5	0.6	0.16
Telephone scatologia	0	0.0	0
Necrophilia	0	0.0	0
Partialism	233	31.2	7.63
Zoophilia	17	2.3	0.56
Coprophilia	0	0.0	0
Klismaphilia	4	0.5	0.13
Urophilia	2	0.3	0.06
Total paraphilia titles	636	85.2%	20.81%
Incest	110	14.7%	3.60%
Total perversion titles	746	99.9%	24.41%

aphilia, it is found in 31.2 percent of all titles the Commission surveyed resulting in sadomasochism prevalence of 34.3 percent, and incest prevalence of 14.7 percent of perversion titles (Table 2). Although exhibitionism is thought to be a common paraphilic act, it was present in only a fraction of a percent of the titles reviewed. No references to frotteurism, telephone scatologia, necrophilia, or coprophilia were found in the titles reviewed by the 1986 U.S. Commission. References to klismaphilia (enemas) and urophilia represented only a fraction of a percent of paraphilia titles.

Table 3 shows the results of a similar study of 2,173 titles I reviewed in Melbourne, Australia, in 1984 using the 1980 DSM III categories of paraphilia. The prevalence of sadomasochism in the 1986 U.S. study was very similar to the Australian study, which found sadomasochism in 47.8 percent in the Paraphilia titles, and 12.4 percent of all titles reviewed.<sup>7</sup>

## Discussion

DSM III-R(6) characterizes a paraphilia as

arousal in response to sexual objects or situations that are not part of normative arousal/activity patterns, and that in varying degrees may interfere with the capacity for reciprocal affectionate sexual activity. The essential feature of disorders in this subclass is recurrent intense sexual urges and sexually arousing fantasies generally involving either (1) nonhuman objects, (2) the suffering or humiliation of one's self or one's partner, or (3) children or nonconsenting persons. The specific paraphilias described here are exhibitionism, fetishism, frotteurism, pedophilia, sexual masochism, sexual sadism, transvestic fetishism, and voyeurism.

The residual category, paraphilia NOS, contains acts that do not meet criteria for any of the specific categories, but are nevertheless included as paraphilias. All of the listed categories meet the stated definition of a paraphilia, except partialism, the exclusive focus on a part of the body. Given the high prevalence a focus on body parts in today's society, and the high prevalence (7.6%)

**Table 3**  
**Australian Titles—1984**

Paraphilia	No. of Titles	% of Paraphilia Titles	% of All Titles
Fetishism	50	8.9	2.3
Transvestism	157	27.9	7.2
Zoophilia	0	0	0
Pedophilia/incest	76	13.5	3.5
Exhibitionism	0	0	0
Voyeurism	7	1.2	0.4
Sadomasochism	269	47.8	12.4
Atypical	3	0.5	0.1
"Teen/young" sex	73	13.0	3.4
Total	635	112.8%*	29.3%

\* Some child titles had a sadistic theme as well.

of partialism inherent in the paraphilia titles reviewed, second only to sadomasochism, the inclusion of this category as a true paraphilia deserves critical review before inclusion in DSM IV.

It appears that the Commission fears regarding harm from pornography may have arisen from the fact that fully half of the paraphilia titles made reference to sadomasochistic activity. The Commission divided pornography into four categories: (1) sexually violent material; (2) sexual activity without violence but *with* degradation, submission, domination, or humiliation; (3) sexual activity without violence, and *without* degradation, submission, domination, or humiliation; (4) and nudity without force, coercion, sexual activity, or degradation. They analyzed each classification according to three tiers, or criteria: (a) the social science evidence, (b) the totality of the evidence, and (c) the moral, ethical, and cultural effects. The Commission concluded that negative effects and harm apparently resulted from pornography in the first two categories; and that the third category comprised "a very small percentage of the total universe of pornographic materials".

Finally, Dietz, Harry, and Hazelwood<sup>8</sup> have identified a form of pornography *not* studied by the commission: the detective magazine. Such magazines usually portray, in pictures and stories, the domination of women for purposes of exciting sexual arousal. Ressler *et al.*<sup>9</sup> at the behavioral division of the FBI have developed a profile of the sado-masochist from the study of 35 serial sex murderers. All of these men developed,

from an early age, a pattern of sexual pleasure dependent upon the fantasy, and later the act, of violent domination, humiliation, and even torture and death of male and female victims. Sadomasochistic pornography was used by most to reinforce their deviant fantasies.

## Conclusions

Studies in the U.S. and Australia document the high prevalence of sadomasochistic titles in readily available pornography. This particular paraphilia is present in most all serial sex murderers. Although the Commission argued for a ban on sexually violent and degrading or humiliating literature, at present, no conclusions can be drawn regarding the relationship between the high prevalence of sadomasochism depicted in pornography, and actual sexual violence. More study of the users of sadomasochistic pornography is needed to determine the actual effect of such material.

## References

1. United States Commission on Obscenity and Pornography: Report. Washington, DC, U.S. Dept. of Justice; Supt. of Docs. U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1970
2. Great Britain Home Office Committee on Obscenity and Film Censorship: Report of the Committee. London. H.M.S.O., 1978
3. Canada Special Committee on Obscenity and Prostitution: Pornography and Prostitution in Canada. Report of the Special Committee, in Report of the Special Committee. Ottawa, Ont., Communications and Public Affairs, Dept. of Justice, Canada, 1985
4. United States Attorney General's Commission on Pornography: Attorney General's Comm. on Pornography, final report. Wash-

- ington, DC; U.S. Dept. of Justice; Supt. of Docs., U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1986
5. Dietz, PE, Evans, G: Pornographic injury and prevalence of paraphilia. *Am J Psychiatry* 139:1493-5, 1982
  6. American Psychiatric Association: *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, (ed 3 rev) Washington DC, American Psychiatric Association, 1987
  7. Lebegue, BJ: Paraphilias in pornography: a study of perversions inherent in title. *Australian J Sex Marriage Fam* 6:133-6, 1985
  8. Dietz, PE, Harry, B, Hazelwood, RR: Detective magazines: pornography for the sexual sadist? *J Forensic Sci* 31:197-211, 1986
  9. Ressler, RK, Burgess, AW, Douglas, JE: *Sexual Homicide: Patterns and Motives*. Lexington, MA, Lexington Books, 1988