



celine parreñas shimizu

the hypersexuality of **race**

performing Asian/American women on screen and scene

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for DAN PARREÑAS SHIMIZU with passion

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QUEENS OF ANAL, DOUBLE, TRIPLE, AND THE

GANGBANG ❖ Producing Asian/American Feminism in

Pornography, 1940s–1990s

Asian/American women comprise their own special genre in American pornography. In many video stores, the porn shelves are organized by race under the categories of Asian, black, and multicultural. As such, Asian/American women's sexual subjectivity, practices, and roles in pornography are prominently categorized by race as their foremost signifier. As I show in the previous chapter, pornography is important for understanding racialization as a sexual process. It is a process that continues in later stag films and golden age pornography, wherein we see the visual composition of racial difference. In the recent scene, the Asian/American women porn stars Asia Carrera and Annabel Chong use their sexuality in pornography to comment on the profound complexity of their racialization and use their racialization to comment on the bottomless fluidity of their sexuality. As such, it is not enough to say that we need to study porn to understand Asian/American women's racial formation. The study of porn is also crucial in helping us to recognize the ways in which porn recasts pain, pleasure, power, and the political. It does so through a reminder of the unreliability and unknowability of the experiences of race, sexuality, and representation. To keep open the complexity of images as well as the

experience of their production and consumption helps me to formulate a theory of "race-positive sexuality" that takes seriously the challenge of defining sexuality in terms of Asian/American feminist women's practices in pornography. Through the enactment of yellowface, a form of Asian minstrelsy, by "real" Asian women in the 1950s and the performance of polymorphous perversity on the Internet and in video by contemporary pornography's megastars, I show the ways in which pornography helps us to see how race and sex provide the terms for Asian/American women's prioritization of their subjectivities.

RACE AND PORNOGRAPHY

The modern feminist debates on pornography continue from the wars between anti-porn and anti-censorship feminists in the 1980s. Andrea Dworkin and Catherine MacKinnon offered a feminist theory of pornography consisting primarily of a harms-based evaluation wherein pornography enacts violence upon women.¹ Primarily understood as the ultimate objectification of women, pornography is framed as the monster-arm of sexism and patriarchy as exemplified by the popular adage by Robin Morgan that "pornography is the theory and rape the practice."² Such rigid analysis that prioritizes victimization in its understanding of the power of both sexuality and representation does not accommodate pleasure, performance, and fantasy beyond accusations of false consciousness. The derivation of anything but pain and oppression from pornography leads to a diagnosis of perversity and pathology inappropriate to the social problems of gender. The derivation of pleasure supposedly results in an agreement to one's own death—as if that experience of having to enjoy one's symbolic death does not in itself indicate women's marginalization as spectators.

In reading pornography differently, sex-positive feminists emphasize a disjuncture between fantasy and reality. Lynne Segal writes, "For pornographic fantasy has no straightforward connection with what may be its 'real-life' enactment, unless it's a stylized 'enactment' (as in consensual s/m) under the fantasizer's own control."³ Fantasy, as a force, can find politically productive expression, such as in the ways gay men use pornography to seek sexual legacy, redress, and education. Crude definitions of fantasy in anti-pornography feminist platforms do not account for such a productive use.⁴ Similarly, feminist film scholars require the watching of

pornographic films closely as socially relevant texts and especially as a genre worth studying, rather than a social problem in need of annihilation. For example, through an evaluation of the money shot, or the visible proof of ejaculation that is key to contemporary pornography, Linda Williams identified the problem of visualizing women's sexuality as important to the language and project of pornography.⁵ Laura Kipnis encourages the study of porn and its ability to tell us a great deal about power dynamics in society.⁶ Furthermore, Susie Bright, Constance Penley, and Naomi Wolf more specifically problematize women's identities and desires in pornography.⁷ For example, women desire. Women express different kinds of sexuality. Women participate willingly in perverse practices. Male consumption defies what Wolf describes as Andrea Dworkin's prediction that the proliferation of pornography would lead men to do violence to women. The opposite occurred; pornography instead killed male libido for "real women."⁸

Located between the anti-pornography and sex-positive camps, racialized sexuality in porn remains a problem that needs more serious and more direct address. In the scene of racialized analyses of porn, the simplifications of sexuality, production, consumption, and fantasy and the rhetoric of gender victimization register within the context of the lives of women of color. As Trinh T. Minh-ha argues, women of color live at the intersection of multiple oppressions as they experience racism, gender discrimination, and sexual harassment.⁹ For example, the history of racialized sexuality in slavery grounds black feminist responses to pornography.¹⁰ Proponents of sex-positive versions of pornography must not belittle the power of the ongoing legacy of sexual slavery in regard to race. Too easily, racial discourses of pornography are seen as a regressive victimology in an anti-sexuality platform rather as a discourse within history that needs confrontation.¹¹ This insensitivity to race transpires in rather subtle ways, according to critics such as Susie Bright who comment on how whiteness remains unmarked in discussions of sexuality.¹² Magdalena Barrera proves this when she identifies the exclusion of race in many analyses of sexuality, ranging from popular discourses around Jennifer Lopez's butt to Laura Kipnis's analysis of *Hustler*.¹³ Laura Kipnis says porn "does exist, and it's not going to go away. Why it exists, what it has to say and who porn thinks it's talking to, are more interesting than all those doomed dreary attempts to debate it, regulate it and protest it."¹⁴ While Kipnis argues against the likes of Catherine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin, we must take care not to conflate anti-racist critique that may

look like what she describes as "debate . . . and protest" with anti-sex critique.¹⁵ Sex-positive discourse, proposed by sex workers and cultural critics such as Carol Queen and Annie Sprinkle, is not mutually exclusive from race-positive sexuality as I will discuss later.¹⁶

Black feminist theories regarding pornography use race and the identification of racism in pornography as the primary lens of analysis. For Tracey A. Gardner, pornography capitalizes on the underlying history of carnal, diabolic, and evil myths constituting the lives of people of color in the United States, such as the myth of the black rapist and the always already consenting black woman. For Gardner, pornography operates a technology of racism, an arm of the monster.¹⁷ Luisah Teish describes pornography as undermining of the black power movement for it aims to pull back advancements gained by the civil rights movement in order to return blacks to non-human ontology.¹⁸ If white women function as objects in pornography, Alice Walker's essay "Coming Apart" identifies a racial grid within pornography that sees black women as animalistic and as less than excrement in the context of white female objectification.¹⁹ She says black women in pornography qualify as less than objects when signifying the scatological. The diagnosis of porn as negative continues in another Walker essay, "Porn," in which the love between a black man and woman becomes undercut by the presence of pornography—so that what empowers black men in the objectification of white women simultaneously disables black female sexual pleasure.²⁰ Within this work, fantasy proceeds as nothing more than a specter of racism and a distortion of masculinity for taking pleasure and power from female objectification.

Similar to that of black women, Asian/American women's hypersexuality, as "naturally" excessive and extreme against a white female norm, directly attaches to a specific race and gender ontology. At the same time the master narratives that hold for African American women, such as the centrality of slavery, may not necessarily apply to Asian/American women who contend with hypersexual attribution emerging from different colonial histories. While the figure of the black woman in porn as animalistic and intrinsically available lashes out from the historical debasement of black women in slavery, the Asian woman, presented as culturally prone to sexual adventure and exotic difference, emerges from the colonial encounter of war. Like black women, Asian/American women cannot flee from the racial categorization that Alice Walker, Luisah Teish, and Tracey A. Gardner describe in their essays on pornography.

Indeed all women demonstrate sexuality in pornography, but the hyper-

sexuality of women of color knots itself to racial identity and history. Asian/American women's sexuality subsists in history; this history embeds in the sexuality we see on pornographic screens. It is important to recall the historical context of sexuality inscribing the immigration of Asian women into the United States as it significantly informs my exploration of alternative responses to sexuality in the presence of Asian American women in pornography. The historical facts I describe in the introduction warrant repetition in the context of evaluating Asian/American women's formulation of feminist practice vis-à-vis hard-core pornography. Figures of Chinese women prostitutes occupied a prominent place in popular culture to the extent that this imagined threat shaped immigration, resulting in the Page Law of 1870, which curbed their population. At the turn of the century, Chinese women prostitutes were routinely harassed on the streets. Japanese women entered the United States as "picture brides" at the beginning of the twentieth century and as "war brides" after World War II. In Filipino American history, a woman was stoned to death for her adultery, which was considered a gender and racial traitorship.²¹ Korean "war brides" arrived in the United States with their American GI husbands after the Korean War. Catalogues introduce mail-order or pen-pal brides from the Philippines today. Specifically because their legal status exists conditionally as part of their marriage to a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, mail-order brides are especially vulnerable regardless of their experiences of domestic violence. And Asian sex workers travel to the United States as transnational sex workers. The process of racialization includes the sexuality of Asian/American women centrally as a subjugating force in ways that can better inform our approaches to race and pornography.

At the same time that we acknowledge the sexuality of women of color in history, and black feminist theory regarding the dangers of pornography, cultural producers who are women of color advocate for "race-positive sexuality," which resonates with the work of women of color in pornography. A formulation that brings together the concerns of black feminist theory regarding pornography and sex-positive discourse, "race-positive sexuality" emerges from the literature of Chrystos, Cherríe Moraga, Audre Lorde, and others who present pleasure, pain, and trauma simultaneously in ways that embrace the liberating possibilities of sexuality while also acknowledging the risks of reifying perversity and pathology traditionally ascribed to women of color in popular culture.²² The need to

talk about pornography from the pain of a particular psychic legacy requires emphasis and the continuity of white indifference to the different racial context for discourses of sexuality needs to be acknowledged.

Race-positive sexuality connects gender and sexuality in pornography to slavery and colonial history while keeping open its anti-racist and sex-positive potentialities. If Lauren Berlant correctly poses the white girl's role in national fantasy as the figure of innocence that must be protected,²³ the Asian girl's extreme perversity occurs in porn as a quality attributed to her ethnic culture and race. Thus, the role of the Asian girl in national fantasy remains that of one who goes without protection. Acknowledging the tradition of cultural producers and critics who are women of color and who present sexuality as constitutive of their racial histories and subjectivities, "race-positive sexuality" argues for the need to acknowledge how sexuality can be pleasurable, powerful, and painful simultaneously. Rather than authorize critics to decide what good and bad sexualities look like for whatever racial agenda, we need to account for the specific ways sexuality works as described by Asian/American women's practices. Rather than advocate for a particular sexuality and representation, I prefer to keep our definitions open so as to make space for those who experience sexual subjugation and are too frequently silenced and those who practice sexual perversity and are too easily dismissed as dangerous bad subjects who damage agendas of racial decency. I propose to listen to the terms posited by Asian/American women working in pornography rather than attend to the fear of ascribing traditional, fixed, and monolithic hypersexuality to racialized images.

In "Race, Gender, and the Law," Kandice Chuh argues that because Asian/American women are produced as always already consenting, they cannot be raped in the eyes of the law. Such a legacy amplifies the stakes for Asian/American women in pornography. If the actual rape of third world women and women of color finds explanation not in terms of white male power but in a natural female propensity for hypersexuality, Asian women's hypersexual ontology becomes described as essential.²⁴ Thus, to shift the traditional understanding of sexuality and visibility as dangerous and damaging to race and the racialized experience is understandably met with skepticism. What risks emerge in allowing for the possibility that sexuality may be liberating beyond the role of Asian women in national fantasy as aberrant and perverse, which is equated with disempowerment and damage?

Though Earl Jackson warns that pornography "cannot be satisfactorily summarized in any unitary fashion,"²⁵ race persistently defines the appearance of Asian/American women. Both Asian American and black feminist readings of sexuality must avoid falling into the trap of vilifying race and sexuality, especially in moving images. Chuck Kleinhans says that "fear of images erupts in even the most nominally progressive circles when it comes to sexual representations."²⁶ Instead, we need to take heed of Laura Kipnis's argument about the value of looking at porn. We must allow the complexities of sex and visibility to surface as part of formulating feminist and anti-racist politics. Asian/American women within pornography experience race as visible and sexual.

Looking at pornography helps us to understand the fantasies and fetishisms regarding Asian/American women's presence in popular culture. Fantasies do not merely unleash domination upon people of color. Fantasies can project desire, open the psyche, and work as technologies of imagination for authors, spectators, and critics of color. As Cynthia Liu and Tasha Oren argue in different contexts, representation should not simply reflect reality but create alternatives as well as compel imaginative interpretation by viewers.²⁷ Indeed, we should keep open the possibility of redeploying fantasy in the service of making space for those who need to articulate different deviancies and perversities, in the broadest sense of political and social inclusion. Freudian understanding of fantasy emphasizes an alternative different from and at times defiant of reality. Crucial to the formation of subjectivity, fantasy forms the terms with which one relates to the world.²⁸ If we examine fantasy as part of the racial experience in terms of the perceptions, imaginations, illusions, and consciousness of one's self and others, agency expands as do new levels of analyses regarding racialized sexuality. As Slavoj Žižek evaluates in "The Sexual Act in the Cinema," the articulation of fantasy by the powerful can be seen and evaluated in the sex acts represented.²⁹ Yet fantasy does not belong to the powerful alone but may be manipulated to express dissatisfaction and other critique. Fantasy, and its expression in pornography, functions importantly in the study of the politics of race, especially as a venue for Asian/American women to redefine the tradition of their hypersexual production in moving images.

In *The Secret Museum* Walter Kendrick asks: What enables pornography in the twentieth century?³⁰ He describes a shift in sexuality as an analytic subject "in its own right, sorting it out from the moral, legal and religious

contexts in which it had hitherto been embedded. Not until very late in the 19th century would the shifting be completed leaving us today with a notion of sex as something like advanced calisthenics."³¹ Within this definition, what do we make of "Asian" becoming synonymous with anal sex and other extreme sexual activities, such as the special acrobatics of double and triple penetration and gangbangs in contemporary pornography? While keeping the door open to fantasy and the power of performance in redeploying their meaning, we need to understand the way Asian/American women are sexualized over time in pornography.

A SOCIAL HISTORY OF ASIAN/AMERICAN WOMEN'S IMAGES IN PORNOGRAPHY

In the previous chapter, I assess the discourse of Asian women in stag films, which are short, illegally made 8mm and 16mm pornographic films in circulation during the first half of the twentieth century in America and Europe. Here, I study later stag films that require "real" Asian/American women, as opposed to white women in yellowface, to perform the fantasy of Asian women. The Golden Age of porn describes an era wherein high production values reigned, such as the use of film rather than video from the 1960s to the 1980s. In addition, many films of the Golden Age, such as *Deep Throat* (1972), *Behind the Green Door* (1972), and *The Devil in Miss Jones* (1973), made huge profits as couples began to attend screenings in movie theaters together. In this chapter, I link the representation of Asian/American women in the Orientalism of the "genital show," or the showing of genitalia in the stag film, rather than the contemporary money shot, as an adequate goal in early pornography from the beginning of the twentieth century to its continuing use in the production of "yellowface" in the golden age of pornography. In my discussion of later stag films, I describe the enduring role of Orientalism in the production design of the "genital show" as it is shaped by the new historical context of the Second World War. Then I scrutinize what we can claim for Asian/American women in looking at the legacy of these images. In films of the golden age featuring the earliest Asian/American porn stars, I interpret the occurrence of yellowface as a political act. By donning yellowface makeup and costume, applying linguistic approaches such as accents and manner of speech, and enacting peculiar bodily movements, racial difference may seem to establish itself as reliably visible. Within such a problematic for-

mation, however, the juxtaposition of the stereotyped role and the Asian/American woman porn star's body and psyche captures a terrible collision that ruptures the fantasy.

Early pornography problematized racial visibility in its grammar. Since the facticity of racial difference may not register as visibly reliable, pornography finds ways to establish its titillation through production design and narrativization, such as in its intertitle texts or dialogue. These elements work to establish racial difference as the erotic meat of pornography in early stag film. Later, the presence of Asian women defies the fantasy and the stereotype as a prelude to the ways in which Asian women porn stars use pornography to comment on their racialization through sex and their sexualization through race.

As I previously discussed in the genital show of early stag films, Asian women's skin color difference may not appear visibly in black and white depictions of racialized bodies. Thus, accoutrements act as visible evidence of race for the Asian/American woman in stag films, emphasizing her particular difference versus that of other women of color. The sex act in early stag films problematizes the visibility of race as unreliable for Asian/American women. Stag films' use of Oriental objects to establish racial difference helps me to define my concept of the "seeing of race as the seeing of sex." Specifically, these films aim to show us the sexuality of the Asian woman, even though she may be a white woman in yellowface, so as to say something about her race and gender interiority as a being who exists for the white male actor and spectator.

POST-1950S STAG FILMS

The era following World War II witnessed the explosion of pornography out of the stag arena and into mainstream venues. In the 1950s, anti-miscegenation laws started crumbling in the United States just as American military men brought home war brides from Asia. The military rest and recreation industry in Southeast Asia began transforming into a commercial industry that saw great global libidinal transactions in its economy. Hollywood produced movies problematizing the interracial love affair. They included popular leading men paired with beautiful Asian women in love stories bound for marriage: *Sayonara* (1957) featuring Marlon Brando, *The World of Suzie Wong* (1960) featuring William Holden, and *Walk Like a Dragon* (1960) featuring Jack Lord.³² Within this context, the elimination

of anti-miscegenation laws and the gradual rejection of the Hollywood Production Code witnessed a new kind of stag pornography from the 1940s to the 1960s. Stag films began to feature "real" Asian women and less white women in yellowface. Two particular trends in the portrayal of Asian women on screen, regardless of their race on scene (such as white women in yellowface), are apparent. First, extraordinary focus on extreme close-ups of her genitalia anticipated the question of the genital "slant" mimicking her eyes, which was presented as the ultimate manifestation of her racial difference. Second, the eroticization of the white male-Asian female marriage became more prevalent in society at the time. The stag film evolved to feature "real" Asian women who must nonetheless traffic in yellowface in order to sell racial visibility that would not otherwise seem apparent. How does yellowface function in these films? When we see Asian/American women putting on the fantasy of Asian women a disjuncture opens. It necessitates a re-evaluation of the reliability of the filmic medium as well as its possibilities for political critique by Asian actresses.

Moreover, we can further see how pornography occurs as a process of racial formation³³ when we examine how Asian/American women present yellowface sexuality in the context of a more dramatic change occurring in stag films from the 1950s. While the technique of illustrating racial difference persists in earlier stag films until the 1950s, the sudden appearance of Asian/American women playing Asian women, especially within the domestic intimacy of the Asian female-white male couple and the absence of Oriental accoutrements on the female body, appears to be significant in the 1960s. In the film *Date Night* (1961),³⁴ the erotics produce Asian female-white male domesticity. The shift becomes comprehensible if we take account of the historical changes occurring at this time. The white man no longer knocks on the door to encounter the Asian woman because she acts as his wife or girlfriend. Here, the sex scene's lack of Oriental objects in the "genital show" finds revision. While we no longer see Oriental objects decorating the sex scene, the new objects domesticate women who are visibly Asian/American in films with racially unmarked titles such as *Date Night*.

The title of the film confuses at first: *Date Night* hints at a night on the town and the need to prepare oneself by dressing up not down. When the Asian/American woman prepares for a date, she undresses from her day clothes and gets ready to wind down. Unlike earlier stag films where the man, a talent agent, plumber, or external figure, enters from outside the

home, the man in *Date Night* enters the home as her husband or boyfriend. We no longer see her opening the door; he simply comes in as if coming home from a long day at work. When he comes in, she does not stand at all, but warmly welcomes him with a smile, without stopping the filing of her nails. The premise of the narrative has completely changed from earlier films where the encounter between the Asian woman and white men transpired within an outsider-insider relation, not only in terms of domesticity but in terms of national belonging as foreigner or citizen.

In earlier narratives of films such as *China* and *Geisha*, the man, usually a stranger from outside the home, encounters an Asian woman, her body racially marked by costume in her racially marked home. She is not American and not normal. In *Date Night*, the woman possesses no racially visible markers on her body or in her home setting. The economy of the couple's physical relationship differs in the intimacy of their greeting—he whispers in her ear and clutches at her robe as she leans in to embrace and kiss him. The genital shot differs the most, however. Instead of Oriental accoutrements, we see a wedding ring, a diamond placed in the depths of the genital show. This very different sort of object present in the sexual relations of the white man and the Asian woman suggests a rewriting of Asian female presence in the later stag film that shows a link to historical events such as the entry of war brides into the United States. As such, history and the unfinished legacies it leaves compel fantasy in pornography.

The sex scene engages the question of racial difference within the couple's interracial domesticity. Significantly different through the increased number of kisses and the genital show, the film establishes a marital sort of relation not present in earlier films while it similarly repeats the display of the Asian woman's genitals again and again as if to anticipate the demand for the visible evidence of her racial difference. The demand, established in earlier stag films through intertitle texts, labels the vagina as slanted and installs anticipation for it herein as part of the erotic language of the shot sequence. The repetition of the genital shot in these later stag films argues that no visible biological difference can be found in the Asian woman's vagina. The racialization that occurs here differs significantly from earlier stags that required the reminder of racial difference. Unlike earlier stag films such as *Menage Moderne du Madame Butterfly* (1921–30), where the intertitles insisted upon a biological difference for



The white man comes home to domestic intimacy, placing his hands on the Asian woman's shoulders as she sits at the dresser in *Oriental Girlfriend*.



The genital shot in *Date Night* features an Asian woman with a wedding ring.

Asian women, the stag films of the 1960s worked to establish the lack of it in extreme close-ups, such as the man opening the woman's genitals with his fingers in *Date Night*.

In *Oriental Girlfriend*, the latest among the stag films I study, the white man enters the scene as the woman sits in front of her dresser. His arrival immediately initiates a sex scene peppered with conversation we cannot hear. If we did not account for the historical changes occurring at the time, the reason why this film bears the title *Oriental Girlfriend* would remain a mystery. No racial décor marks the genital show as in earlier stag films, even if Oriental objects adorn the apartment. The sex scenes seem largely reciprocal: they take turns doing the same things to each other in a now rather subdued scene stripped of the garish racial circus of Oriental objects. They register as a couple accustomed to their sexual ritual, and here they keep intent on completing it together. While familiar domesticity frames the couple, fetishization emerges in the interracial sexual coupling itself.

In this section, I have described how the later stag films present sex acts that place Asian/American women within domestic intimacy, in conjunction with the historical development of Asian women marrying American men. That is, in later stag films, a dynamic relationship ties history to the contents of the narrative, or historical phenomena and movements inform and shape pornography featuring racial subjects. The presence of Asian/American women as non-normative wives in contemporaneous history was turned into eroticized relations in pornography. History in the form of Asian and American relations vis-à-vis war, the place of Chinatown in the popular imaginary, and the specialized roles of Asian/American women continue to play in the emergence of Asian women in post-1950s pornography. The depiction of Asian/American women as wives is unlike early stag films' defiance of yellow peril ideology through fantasy or the presentation of racial difference as a sexual treat. In both early and later stag films, however, the Asian/American woman's racial difference makes her more visible and more sexual. Race determines the erotic currency of the films in ways that continue in later pornography. Within this context, racial visibility as crucial to the sexual economy persists in golden age pornography in which Asian women continue a form of "yellowface" initiated by white women in early stag films. The collision of Asian/American women's bodies and the fantasies they embody disrupts the illusion of Asian/American racial visibility in the sex act and the fantasy established in the stag film.

Linda Wong, Mai Lin, and Kristara Barrington appeared in hundreds of pornographic films in the 1970s and early 1980s. Linda Wong worked from 1976 to 1987 in 46 films, Mai Lin worked from 1976 to 1999 in 157 films, and Kristara Barrington worked from 1983 to 1999 in 220 films.³⁵ Through the production of yellowface in the golden age of pornography, we see the disjuncture between fantasies and the "real" Asian women acting these roles. When pornography attempts to correspond humorously with mainstream films such as *The Deer Hunter* (1978) and *Apocalypse Now* (1979), we can see how both symbolic arenas cohere to establish in the popular imagination perceptions of Asian women as hypersexual. Popular representation, of which pornography is part, helps us to understand racial formation.

The grammar of Orientalism in pornography reinserts itself in the 1970s through the very bodies of Asian/American women who now play these fantasy roles. Relying on Oriental accoutrements, titles, and content, Asian/American women themselves fulfill yellowface scripts. The racialized bodies of Asians are symbolized through Oriental objects such as the jade pussycat and the green lingam. Objects, spaces, and racialized bodies construct the erotics of interracial pornography. Throughout the films, the Asian/American women are referred to by their race. Their sexual acts, practices, and identities are also organized by racial categorization. Race defines Asian/American women in pornography. As such, Asian women porn stars use their racial sexualization in pornography to rewrite their subjectivities. Bound by sex, they use it to open up possibilities for theorizing how they negotiated their roles, stardom, and positions as Asian/American women.

In this section, I survey the various yellowface stagings by each actress. By studying how each fulfilled different yellowface stereotypes, we can see the production of race across time. Along the way, such a collection of scenes demonstrates the Asian/American woman behind the roles in a triangulation: actress, role, and character. As such, porn actresses work to produce characters and fantasies. Such a formulation encourages a theory of representation that should also extend to our spectatorship: we consume roles, characters, and fantasies, not necessarily "real" Asian women. Pornography demands study precisely for the actresses' authorship and performance as exchanges of power and deployments of resistance.

The first Asian American porn star, Linda Wong, starred as a dragon lady in films such as *Oriental Babysitter* (1976), *The Jade Pussycat* (1977), *China Lust* (1976), *China De Sade* (1980), and *The Erotic World of Linda Wong* (1985). These films mimic and parody Hollywood movies such as the James Bond series as well as *The World of Suzie Wong*. Within these films, Linda Wong's race becomes classified as Oriental not only in her personal description as a star but in the language of the film and its erotics. Race determines her sexuality and her role within the films, in which she established a reputation for welcoming all sorts of sex acts. This brand of sexuality makes up the erotic thrust of her sexual relations compared to other women in that race defines the roles she plays: the innocent "Oriental" babysitter, the Chinatown sex expert, the dominatrix, the spoil of war, the dragon lady, and the spy. In each, she represents the ultimate deviant. Racialized not only within her roles but by the narrative, props, costume, makeup, and the racial intensification of the genital show and the money shot, she also occupies the role of an exceptional Asian who meets white normative standards of beauty.

In one of her most popular films, *Oriental Babysitter*, Linda Wong plays a teenager whose babysitting jobs lead to sex with her white male and female employers. The film opens with an introduction by Wong, who looks directly at the camera and narrates her escapades from the position of a sexually insatiable, but otherwise innocent young woman. "When I was younger, [I had] many fantasies . . ." she says as we see her caught in the middle of a fight between a white husband and wife. The man "looks towards me at any chance." He comes home early to find Wong sleeping on the sofa and gently seduces her into sex by telling her to be "quiet . . . [I won't] hurt you, [I want to] hold your body . . . for an Oriental girl [you've got] large breasts." She retroactively narrates the scene with pleasure. While her face expresses surprise and a little fear, her voice emphasizes the willingness and desire awakened in her. "The gentleman of the house . . . fondling my breasts," she describes it, while his hand covers her mouth. She feels sorry for him for being drunk, "poor man." Constructed as a scene of coercion, she responds to him with a kind of recalcitrant passion, gyrating and welcoming him while saying, "Don't please . . . stop, please." The sex scene supposedly turns consensual during cunnilingus, while at the same time the shot emphasizes her youth: her smiling face in pleasure as ribbons in her hair unravel. He comes on her belly. She then describes how the man apologizes for taking advantage of her—which she



Linda Wong smiles as ribbons unravel from her hair during cunnilingus in *Oriental Babysitter*.

counters in the voiceover as actually the fulfillment of her desires. She "really lived out one of [her] fantasies."

Linda Wong delivers her narration in a soft-spoken, sexually inflected tone without an Oriental accent. She delivers the following line adorned with jewelry and big coiffure rather than racialized adornments: "After a few more babysitting jobs, I thought I learned a lot. I would suck a man's penis with dignity and total love." The title *Oriental Babysitter* racially classifies her so that nymphomania, a common ascription in pornography, links to her racialization throughout the film. The racialization continues from the title to her lovers' responses to the emphasis on her Asian face as the punctuation to every sex scene in an intensification of the money shot. In the 1970s, the face becomes necessary to the porn convention of the money shot, or the proof of the man's ejaculation on the woman's face as it expresses her pleasure. When accompanied by the discourse of the Asian face as the "zone" of contact by David Palumbo-Liu,³⁶ the money shot has racial implications. The proof of the man's pleasure on the woman's face, as the vehicle of her sexual expression, serves as evidence of both the man's and woman's collective pleasure. For the ejaculate occurring on the Asian face, as the terrain where racial interiority manifests externally, mobilizes the language of racial difference to infuse the proof of pleasure with racial eroticism.

In *The Jade Pussycat*, Linda Wong plays a traitor to her white male lover who secures a long-lost cultural treasure, the aptly named Oriental object, the "jade pussycat." We first see Linda Wong doing fellatio for an extraordinarily long amount of time, with special emphasis on her face through-

out the sex scene. Her face expresses ecstasy with her eyes closed and mouth open during intercourse. Her face is framed by her thick, long black mane and her fingers with long nails press against the man's arms. She supposedly achieves pleasure before her lover ejaculates all over her belly. As they linger together in bed, Linda's comrades, a pair of Chinese men, arrive on the scene, revealing her traitorship. Like in the James Bond films, where the sexual encounter leads to a betrayal, so does the sexual encounter between Linda Wong's femme fatale character Jasmine and her lover in this Johnny Wadd, private detective series. Her lover finds out about her traitorship too late and she remains suspect throughout the story in terms of her allegiances. So the first Asian American porn megastar plays a dragon lady in the sense of being untrustworthy and villainous in a continuation of Anna May Wong's roles from earlier in the century.

In a later scene, a German dominatrix played by the porn star Georgina Spelvin "requires" Linda Wong's presence. The diminutive Spelvin commands the larger-bodied Wong: "Little Chinese girl with the name of a flower, undress and show me your body." Wong's Jasmine willingly and enthusiastically complies in a conflation of Asian women's essential servitude and dragon lady treachery. Cunnilingus ensues. Spreading apart Linda's legs, Spelvin asks a question perennially rehearsed in porn, "Is it true what they say about Chinese girls?" "Take a look," responds Jasmine as we see a close-up of her genitals. The racialization of acts and genitalia extends to identities. Within the film, Johnny Wadd refers to Jasmine as the "Oriental chick." The Asian characters ultimately remain supplementary to the film's conclusion of white sex remaining the norm as Asians are discarded. Similar to their plight in Hollywood movies, the "sneaky little Chinaman" plays a rapist and the dragon lady fails in her goal to undermine the white hero. White order restores a narrative of racial adventure in pornography. Racial identification overdetermines Wong's sexuality in conjunction with other problematic themes, such as the production of her otherness as perversity: dragon lady, lotus blossom, or racial traitor.

The Asian/American woman represents the ultimate perversity for other deviant sexualities. In *China Lust*, another Oriental object, a "green lingam" actually symbolizes the sexual nature of the Orient and its "ancient sexual rites." Set in San Francisco's Chinatown, *China Lust* features a gang of hustlers seeking the lingam for its powerful magic. It brings the "good-hearted joy" and makes "the bad-hearted miserable." Within the



Linda Wong's face in ecstasy before she betrays her lover in *The Jade Pussycat*.



The Asian woman and the green lingam are surrounded by Oriental décor in *China Lust*.

film, hustlers, lesbians, and a plethora of diverse characters use it in order to access the sexual power of the female Asian, who comes to represent a transcendent hypersexuality desirable to others. The sexually fueled search for the green lingam in the narrative concludes with a sex scene between a black man and an Asian woman, their racial visibilities fueling the eroticism of their climactic encounter. The closing scene locates Linda Wong's character within an enclosed space filled with Oriental objects such as plants with long, thin, cascading leaves, long scrolls with calligraphy hanging on the bamboo walls, large wooden cherry framed photographs of jade elephants, and a bed covered in silk sheets. Within this space, she wears a short, tight cheong-sam. The black man enters this room and finds her as a kind of prize. In a film that features a racial and sexual mix of characters, the two extremely perverse hypersexual beings fulfill each

other. The pairing of two taboo subjects who are also racialized sex objects conveys racial fetishism. The racialized nature of the taboo coming together to join forces arranges the erotic power of the film's culmination.

The eroticization of racialized and cultural historical events such as the Vietnam War and the poverty of the third world provide erotic fodder for Linda Wong's other films, such as *China De Sade*. Set "somewhere in Southeast Asia" during the Vietnam War, the scenery of riverboats, thatched roof huts on stilts, and coconut and palm trees organizes a tropical setting for erotic interracial relations. The music is similarly primitive, drums evoking the grand scenes of *Apocalypse Now* and the crew's journey on the river. The sex scene set in an unspecified Southeast Asia features a blonde white woman threatening a white man with a gun; she forces him down as Linda Wong performs fellatio on him. A knife is pulled out and the white man is bleeding everywhere—blood drips all over the white man and the Asian woman's hands. The Asian woman massages the blood all over her body as she stretches her neck back. The white woman joins in the sex and we see a knife cutting a slit across the man's arms. This sex scene enables me to show how the Golden Age of pornography is a moment in the making of porn where acting, directing, design, and filmic craft took priority in the making of sexually explicit material. The high production qualities come together to establish the Asian women's perversity through her racial difference.

Colonial history informs the sexualization of race and the racialization of sex for erotic aims. Within *China De Sade*, the poetic use of blood explains the history of colonialism and war framing interracial Asian-white relations. *China De Sade* is about a veteran lieutenant seeking his long-lost Asian female lover, Ming Lee. It seems to be inspired by war films such as *The Deer Hunter* and more closely *Apocalypse Now*. *China De Sade's* villain, Captain Krieg, evokes Marlon Brando's general in *Apocalypse Now* in the performance of a sadist who surrounds himself with multiracial others. Here, they become sex slaves and masters. A black male guard with a gun rapes the captain's daughter in a scene later revealed as sex play between lovers. Ming Lee works as the captain's dominatrix, commanding others to have sex while serving him sexually as well. The lieutenant reunites with Ming Lee and they have sex in a cage while he is bound. The captain captures Ming Lee and the lieutenant and forces them to have sex while the daughter whips both of them. In these scenes, the lieutenant asks "Why do I love seeing her [Ming Lee] in pain?" as he



The Asian woman massages blood all over her breasts in the opening scene of *China De Sade*.

extracts sexual enjoyment from her physical suffering during sex. The pain on her face, as legacy of colonial war history enacted on her body, seems to be part of Ming Lee's attractiveness to the white male lead. The sex performed is directly tied to colonial relations where the Asian woman is both dominant and dominated.

The Erotic World of Linda Wong, completed before her death reputedly from a drug overdose, features her long awaited comeback as the first full-fledged Asian American porn star. Older, she continued to act while speaking without an Oriental accent, wearing her black hair extremely long and holding on to her extraordinary beauty. Gorgeous, tall, and long, she was an unusually good-looking woman not only in comparison to Asian women but to other women with whom she engaged in sex. Wong's beauty, however, while clearly of an Asian woman, was not typical of an Asian woman or any other woman. Instead, she was an exceptional figure whose stardom capitalized on her visible Asian-ness, noting that her extreme beauty turns her simultaneously hypervisible and invisible in terms of her race. In comparison to other Asian women such as Mai Lin and Kristara Barrington, both Linda Wong and Asia Carrera are the bigger stars. Wong and Carrera are also closest to meeting the white ideal of beauty. More clearly, they look whiter, whether in stature or in features, and thus their stardom speaks of the marginalization of Asian women in porn who must meet impossible standards of beauty.

Porn stars like Mai Lin did not fulfill more typical standards of white beauty. In her use of Oriental accoutrements, Mai Lin asserted a different form of racialized beauty and sexuality. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, a

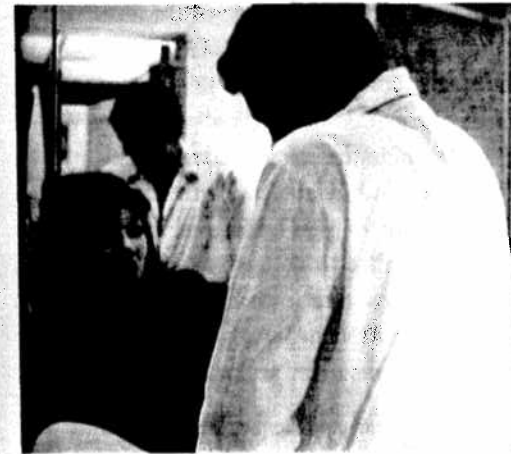
set of films starring Mai Lin continued themes from the Vietnam War and other scenes of inequality wherein race comprises part of the sexual enjoyment. Mai Lin, also known as Maile and Miki Moto, started her career in the mid-1970s and frequently featured extra long dagger-like nails in the style of Anna May Wong, who was said to bear the “longest nails in Hollywood.” Having starred in over one hundred movies, Mai Lin deployed Oriental self-decoration in a form of racialized sexuality. Her roles as the maid, the prostitute with a heart of gold, the sex expert, the mysterious, forever foreign Chinatown girl, the masseuse, and the dragon lady in a Bond girl type of situation are all racialized as different from white sexuality.

Excalibur Films describes Mai Lin as insatiable, frequently having sex even when the cameras are off. “She’s a woman who revels in raunchy, raw sex and she’ll happily participate in group scenes, back porch, kinky sex, double penetrations—you name it, and Mai Lin’s done it many times.”³⁷ Well known for experimenting with the widest range of acts with great enthusiasm, Mai Lin plays a maid seduced by her master in *Sexcapades* (1983). While pornography regularly rehearses the maid and master trope, race shapes the power dynamics represented. As the maid, Mai Lin’s racial difference plays a role in her sexual response and her desirability. Dressed in a black cheong-sam underneath a white apron and shifting her long hair, Mai Lin responds to his question about “his cock”: “Yes, it is very big . . . I am scared.” She bows with servility and inquires if there is anything she can do for him. While she looks at him directly, her face is full of deference, waiting for his command. She emphasizes her smallness in contrast to his much bigger size. Her response also gauges the dynamics of power fueling the sexual encounter. Her innocent pleas “not to get in trouble” with the mistress for messing around with the master thrill him. He fetishizes not only her employment status but also her racialized body parts, wondering how she cleans with her long, long nails and stiletto heels. She resists his overtures by deferring his proposal.

He directs her to carry out various acts. “Touch yourself,” he commands. She responds with a mix of resistance and compliance. She says, “I don’t want to make any trouble . . .” and then asks for clarification regarding his directions, as she touches herself. “Here?” she asks coyly, skillfully negotiating her clitoris. In these scenes, race and class difference are thrilling factors in the sexual act for they inform her inflections of servility, as evident in her lines, pose, and expressions, all of which seem to anticipate



Mai Lin wears a maid’s apron over her cheong-sam dress in *Sexcapades*.



The apron comes off and hair comes down during sex with the master, who says, “Come, Mai Ting,” in *Sexcapades*.

her intent to fulfill whatever his commands may be. The master eroticizes her exotic name when he asks where he should fuck her and all the while narrates his actions by uttering her name, “I am fucking you, Mai Ting . . . Come, Mai Ting.” In these scenes, her visual presence, decorated with the Oriental symbols of long black hair and long nails are designed to signify erotic meaning. They racialize her sexuality. Racial difference counts significantly in the sexual eroticism presented in the film.

Mai Lin seduces a tourist with the lures of Chinatown and the attribution of sexuality particular to Chinese culture in *Rated Sex* (1986).³⁸ She delivers lines like “What do you expect—this is Chinatown!” Her racial identity provides erotic power to the sex scene through its difference from typical white sex. The tourist says, “I’ve never had an Oriental girl

before . . . never seen one . . . just in the movies . . . Suzie Wong” as Mai Lin glides her long nails along his body. She gives him “a nice Chinese massage” and then reverts to the dragon lady persona when she leaves him all tied up. In these porn titles, different fantasy scenarios are enacted and Asian women are merely part of the various special options available. Racial difference relegates Asian female presence in the Golden Age of pornography to the realm of “special” desires, practices, and identities. Unlike the norm in porn where white women don various costumes, Asian women must always wear their race in terms of sexuality.

In the early 1980s, the mixed race Asian American porn star Kristara Barrington, also known as China Lee, played roles both marked and unmarked by race in over 150 films.³⁹ Born in 1965, she supposedly retired in 1987 but continued to make films somehow until 1999.⁴⁰ In films such as *Oriental Jade* (1987), *China and Silk* (1984), *Samurai Dick* (1984), and *One Night in Bangkok* (1985), she stages the Asian prostitute, or spoil of war, entangled with Americans during wartime relations in ways wherein her costumes and the settings contributed to the erotic grammar of the scenes. *Oriental Jade* opens like *China Lust*, on a boat along a river of Southeast Asia. We see a white man and an Asian woman having sex in the open air as the boat glides along the river in a direct reference to *Apocalypse Now*, even in the style of the voiceover. The narration we hear contextualizes the scene as a memory and describes the hypersexual ontology of the Asian woman.

I met her in the last months of the war years ago. Sex was the only commodity cheaper than human life . . . for a few . . . you can fuck anything you want . . . she was something different. Jade was a whore all right, what else was there to be, but she had this real special quality with me like she was really getting off and somehow it wasn't an act. At least that's what she made you believe. I think back on how much I hated that hell and then I remember her. Shit, maybe I wasn't in love but I was sure as shit hell in lust.

The narration emphasizes her enjoyment of sex as natural. The boat stops as they have sex and we hear sounds of monkeys, roosters, and other animals. The setting and the sound design contribute to narrating a particular sexuality for the Asian woman assigned as natural to her biology and her geography. Like Linda Wong, Kristara Barrington's roles as a spoil of war argues for Asian women as the ultimate female deviant whose sexuality connects to the black man, who is also marked as racially Other through sex.

Barrington also acts as a madame of a San Francisco bordello. The history of Asian prostitution in San Francisco during the late nineteenth century plays into the scenario of *Yankee Seduction* (1985), a film set in the South after the Civil War in which a Chinese prostitute takes over a brothel in a racially harmonious conclusion to a film set in an intensely tense racial scene. Barrington orders a black man to strip so that she may fellate him. He speaks to her with deference. He asks: “May I fuck you Miss Lee?” Race once again operates as a sexual treat for spectators who consume two hypersexual beings. She also fights with a white woman who calls her a “San Francisco reject, traitor, criminal” and a (former) bordello whore before they engage in lesbian sex themselves. In the context of the Vietnam War and the history of Asian female prostitution, the sexuality of race limits Asian/American women in porn. Race operates as a titillating force in the cross-racial sexual encounter.

Race supersedes any other identification even for biracial Asian/American women in pornography. Kristara Barrington's films included her racialization as Asian as part of their erotic offerings. While race may seem indeterminate for her as a biracial woman, race inevitably determines Asian/American women in porn. Barrington played roles marked as Asian biologically as well as historically. While Asian women grew visible in pornography, they did so as Asian/American women. Distinct because of race, Asian women are forever foreign against American men, black or white. They play roles that seem like one-dimensional fantasies such as dragon ladies and spoils of war. They possess cultural traits in their sexual skills. Decorated with Oriental accoutrements, they are fetishized for their visibility as Asian women who are exceptional to their race. Myths of servility imbricate their sexuality in ways the women contradict or fulfill but must nonetheless engage.

Race binds Asian/American female sexuality in pornography. Asian/American women cannot flee its hailing. By studying Asian/American women in pornography, we reveal the connections between history and fantasy. Within history and fantasy, Asian women must answer the call to race, as imagined within their racial identity as a special category. Within these roles, they must carve unique presences. They cannot but work against or within the parameters of the maid, the innocent lotus blossom, the servile wife/maid (the latest incarnation of these two roles), and the dragon lady that describe their legibility. What political lessons can we draw from this bind?

Josephine Lee argues in the context of enacting stereotypes that the

Asian American actresses' bodies exceed the stereotype and reveal its construction.⁴¹ The achievement of stereotypic yellowface sexuality in pornography reveals the fantasy of Asian women as different from Asian/American women. While we see each actress donning the stereotype of the Asian woman in different films, her Asian/American body shows the construction of fantasy. This production of sexuality by porn stars developed in the contemporary scene wherein porn stars enjoy celebrity status in multimedia form. In contemporary pornography, two megastars show different ways of working within such racial legacy, using a multiplicity of media, toward political ends.

CONTEMPORARY ASIAN/AMERICAN WOMEN IN PORNOGRAPHY

Within contemporary pornography, race continues to organize Asian female sexual acts, practices, and identities. Two Asian female porn megastars from the 1990s defy this cacophony of racial fantasy and fetishism in rewriting themselves through the Internet and in rewriting sexuality through self-authored pornography. Through their self-authorships, I argue for reclaiming racialized sexuality in ways that prioritize Asian American feminist expression in pornography. Asia Carrera, who also worked under the names Jessica Bennett and Asia, acted in 369 films from 1993 to 2005 while Annabel Chong acted in 51 films from 1994 to 2003. While acting in significantly less films, Annabel Chong established a notorious career that shot her into prominence not only in popular culture beyond pornography but also in academic circles. Unlike previous Asian American porn stars, both women are also listed in the Internet Adult Film Database as directors: Asia Carrera directed two films in 1997 and Annabel Chong directed two films in 1998 and 2000.

The Internet becomes a new technology in these women's authorships. Whether as writing, directing, or creating new genres, Asia Carrera uses the Internet to create a unique brand of racialized sexuality. By redefining sexual normativity through a program of embracing polymorphous perversity, she fulfills Katrien Jacobs's argument that politics finds expression in porn if female porn stars create new public spaces for sexual expression and for redefining sexuality.⁴² In the 1990s, Annabel Chong initiated the program of the gangbang, taking the hypersexuality of Asian women to the extreme by embracing whoredom as a feminist practice rooted in her particular racial and cultural situation. She relinquished control of her

commodification in favor of forwarding what I call a theory of unknowable subjectivity and unreliable representation. Using a term deployed by Katrien Jacobs in her analysis of lesbian sadomasochism, I show Annabel Chong's self-presentation as a "monstrous revolt" that diagnoses the results of the hypersexual tradition of Asian/American women in moving image representation and offers a new theory of sex that can better accommodate the politically productive perversity of her role as a feminist porn star and an avatar online. Unlike white feminist pornographers such as Nina Hartley and Candida Royalle, who make works that aim to create a different and new sexual economy for women's pleasure, Carrera and Chong do not shy away from images that seem to reinscribe the tradition of hypersexuality as essential to race. Rather than creating images that are simply opposite to traditional representations, Carrera and Chong present existing fantasies of Asian women as crucial to their self-perception and social legibility. Precisely because they teeter on the edge of the acceptable, in varying degrees, they offer truly new forms of sexuality as Asian American feminists working in pornography.

The term "Asian" holds particular significance as part of a racially based organization of sexuality in contemporary pornography. Based on a study of *Adult Video News* reviews and Internet pornography database searches of "Asian," the most common current themes of Asian and Asian American women emerge and reflect a relationship to contemporaneous history and globalization: girls from the Orient, young girls (uniformed school girls or poor enslaved girls forced to sell their bodies), the fetishized racial difference in interracial sex, spoils of war, prostitutes, anal sex, and the discourse of stereotypes such as the model minority, the good student, and the small servile body as a pre-feminist haven.⁴³ While these images are occupied with different kinds of presence, one generalization emerges: race takes precedence over any category of identification organizing the appearances of Asian women in pornography.

Within this limited gamut that includes the work of popular porn stars such as Mimi Miyagi and Kobe Tai, the porn star Asia Carrera appeared in hundreds of films.⁴⁴ She has also written and directed at least two films, *Apassionata* and *Last Little Whorehouse*.⁴⁵ Biracial like Kristara Barrington, Asia Carrera's appearance resonates with Linda Wong's, for they possess extraordinary forms of Asian beauty and exceptionally beautiful bodies that adhere to white idealized standards compared to their white and nonwhite female counterparts. Like Linda Wong, Asia Carrera presents a

racially different body that nonetheless fulfills normative standards of beauty. She chronicles the production of beauty through plastic surgery on her website, presenting the aesthetically pleasing body as part of her profession.

Like Linda Wong, Carrera's face plays an important role in the money shot in terms of emphasizing the racial difference at the moment of providing proof of pleasure. While the money shot typical in feature pornography indeed relies on the woman's face, Asia Carrera functions doubly in order to provide evidence of racial difference and her particularity as an Asian sexual presence. The camera returns to find in it a particularly coy and innocent expression: eyes wide open and framed by false eyelashes as semen ejaculates all over her face. Close-ups on her whole face show her tonguing the semen as a form of beauty shot. Her face occupies the central object of vision. Linda Williams argues that the money shot offers a solution to the problem of visualizing female pleasure. That is, pornography problematizes the difficulty of representing proof of women's pleasure, as exemplified in the search for clitoral visibility in films such as *Deep Throat* (1972).⁴⁶ The proof of ejaculation occurs on the woman's face as she expresses pleasure. Asia Carrera's visible expression of pleasure while maintaining perfect makeup extends this shot to the realm of glamour and beauty extraordinary to pornography. Her beautiful stardom also capitalizes on her reputed brilliance, "her good head."⁴⁷ Hers is an identifiable face loaded with meaning: model minority, exceptional beauty, dirty pictures. Together, these three characteristics help to constitute the erotic power of her stardom.

In *Phantasm* (1995), Asia Carrera co-stars with one of the most popular (white) porn stars ever, Jenna Jameson, also a "Vivid" girl. Vivid girls represent the famed high-end production company, and the women present a new breed of porn star: they do not look like typical down-on-their-luck porn stars but rather Hollywood movie stars in full glamour. This difference is brazenly advertised in billboards all over Los Angeles; this was especially the case around the mid-1990s. When porn came to be very widely acknowledged as entering mainstream acceptance, Vivid girls came to exemplify this crossover. In the video directed by Bud Lee, Asia appears in money shots that simultaneously foreground her beautiful face in a merging of the conventions of romantic comedy and pornography in terms of porn featuring particular stars with their trademark looks. In a racially unmarked role, the narrative line focuses on her production as a

sex machine. She comes to possess intrinsic qualities for achieving and generating great sexual pleasure.

In the film, couples enter a sex club and join a contest for individually demonstrating the best sexual abilities in a variety of scenarios. Asia is presented as an unwitting character who is not as excited to join the sex club as her eager boyfriend. Soon enough, she awakens to the passions of multiple sexual encounters. Possessing innate abilities for achieving pleasure, Asia Carrera's character wins. Throughout the film, her vanilla quality, or her seeming innocence within the culture of her sexual adventure, is highlighted. Her fabulous face, glamorously made up, expresses joy in the sexual scene as if her own sexuality surprises her. Her big hair with bangs, her wide-eyed look, and her enormous smile provide a contrast to her leather bondage gear and generate great appeal. In one shot, she turns toward the camera, and so her clear-eyed and smooth-complexioned look of innocence and wonder is particularly amplified. Her boyfriend does not do so well until the end, when they both combine forces to give pleasure to the madame-dominatrix played by Jenna Jameson. Both Jenna Jameson and Asia Carrera are presented as the exceptional beauties of the film. The other characters do not meet the traditional standards of beauty in mainstream popular culture and are presented as secondary characters. Carrera and Jameson, in contrast, exceed the normal expectations for beauty and are shot accordingly. Asia Carrera, beautiful like Jenna Jameson, displays particular talents for moving her body well into the shots. They both traffic in the currency of porn in terms of possessing beauty both typical and excessive of their racial group, such as their black or blonde long hair and their exceptionally tall and seemingly surgically altered bodies. In another shot, Asia is surrounded by attractive women who worship her from below so that she towers over them and seems superior in beauty and power.

Thematizing gender and sexuality, Asia Carrera also directs and writes her own films with her now ex-husband Bud Lee, credited at times as Bud Carrera. The wife-and-husband team of Asia and Bud Carrera directed *A Is for Asia* (1996) and *Apassionata* (1998). Both films purport to present autobiographical themes. For example, *Apassionata* showcases her talents as a pianist while telling the story of a runaway that is very similar to that published on her website. *A Is for Asia* presents a narrative about "Asia's First Anal" while presenting the very act itself, several times. In the opening shot, we follow a woman's legs outfitted in white stilettos as they walk



Asia Carrera's wholesome face contrasts with the leather bondage wear to comprise her appeal in *Phantasm*.



Three attractive women surround Asia Carrera's naked figure in a tribute to her exceptional beauty and sexual prowess in *Phantasm*.

along a dingy alleyway. Revealed as Asia Carrera, the woman approaches two men, presumably drug addicts, as one lays on the ground while the other rummages through a dumpster. We hear "Cut!" and Bud Lee enters the scene to give Asia further direction. The title sequence then shows the behind-the-scenes processes and equipment required in making the film. We see a white male crewmember's hands in very dirty gloves collecting cable, setting up c-stands and lights, and handling a Makita drill. The credits show us that the film is written, directed, and produced by Asia and Bud as he enters her dressing room to give specific prompts about her craft as an actress. He says, "Your man tells you 'You're not cool enough to be with his friends and family.'" So dressed in white stilettos, fishnets, and a dress, she flees her fiancé to have sex "with guys like these . . . [with

whom I] know what I'm getting." The scene continues with the same opening shot of stilettos until she has sex with both of the men from various angles and positions. The clever behind-the-scenes approach allows for the crew's inclusion in the shooting of the sex scene. We see camera operators maneuvering intricately and acrobatically in order to illuminate the particular angles we subsequently see.

Throughout this scene, as she supposedly plays herself, Asia Carrera acts with a kind of bright, cheerful wholesomeness constituted by her enthusiasm, energy, and great flexibility. In every moment, she actively engages her partners and directs the action. She summons one to carry out an act while she positions herself to involve the other. She actively initiates and composes actions in the sex scene. In this scene, Asia's work shows how women as stars have a role in the authorship of their pornography. The choreography of sex needs full coverage in terms of shooting from a variety of camera angles. The film highlights quite centrally the sexual partnership between actors working together to do what feels right while selling the work of sex. Orgasm also requires her craft. The sex scene ends with Asia Carrera's flawlessly and heavily made-up face as she licks semen while looking very happy, open, and flirtatious. The bright lighting emphasizes her wholesomeness, and her freshness seems to authenticate her enjoyment not only of sex but of porn stardom.

Afterward, she and Bud discuss what happened. She explains her creative choice in acting and the direction she pursues as an actress: "I thought you wanted a nasty finish. You didn't like it?" He concurs, "You're right." She responds, "You're not pissed at me . . . [I followed] the heat of the moment . . . fans will love it!" In this discussion, Asia and Bud establish the collaborative and creative process in the production of pornography. Asia Carrera authors sex scenes herself in an explicit demonstration of agency and authorship of her sexuality as well as an engagement of the question regarding the primacy of the actress or the framing of the director and writer. As such, writing and directing a film about the making of the film demonstrates a conscious acknowledgment and engagement of the power dynamics in pornography. Bud Lee suggests the idea of "being in this business two years now . . . doing something outside yourself . . . [a real] attention getter." Asia responds "no" immediately, indicating the difficulty in deciding how far one goes with one's stardom. The film subsequently follows the process of her first anal scenes accompanied by a shooting style that "exposes" the processes of porn stardom.



The money shot featuring Asia Carrera's cheerful and smiling face in *A Is for Asia*.

In the next scene, Asia defends her choice of shooting her first facial cum shot as “know[ing] what sells!” in order to present her self-authorship within pornography. A discussion about the anal sex scene shows her fictional husband’s inappropriate possessiveness. Demonstrating savvy business practice regarding self-reinvention, she says, “I want to give my name some lift as an adult film star.” Jonathan Morgan, who plays her husband, belittles her by saying, “Knowing Bud [the actual director/husband who plays the fictional director/non-husband], it’ll probably be a DP [double penetration].” Asia asserts her power to shape her own career by responding to his sexism and using it as an opportunity to forward a non-moralistic and feminist definition of sexuality: “If I want to do an anal scene, [for] a broader fan base [I will].” Her fictional husband describes the anal act as “the only thing I have with you.” Her response vacates her sexualized area of any such investment. Asia asserts, “Let’s not equate my love for you with my asshole. It’s more than any sex act. I love you with all my heart and not my ass, okay? You’ve got the best parts of Asia Carrera.” She convinces him to agree. The film presents the anal sex scene as a revelation of a private Asia executing a brand new, never-before-seen or done sex act in her home space. This enables the shooting of two anal scenes as Asia’s first time. Moreover, her wholesome persona seemingly so antithetical to porn fuels the erotic nature of the scene. The porn star is a wife and a woman who thinks through her career in strategic and careful ways. Her expression is serious, strong, and vulnerable when she engages her husband in the movie.

The movie ends with Asia’s anal with the porn star Tom Byron and double penetration with two dildos as her fictional husband watches. Framed within her autobiography, the reconciliation scene demonstrates what her actual husband and co-director Bud (Lee) Carrera declares on camera as the end credits scroll: “Another happy ending to another movie in Carrera-ville!” Through this scene, we learn about Asia’s engagement of gender in pornotopia. In the postmodern presentation of film within a film, the play between Asia Carrera’s porn life and true life provides erotic fodder. Bud’s taking on of Asia’s name also signifies an acknowledgment of her star power and the gender power dynamics raised in their working relationship as husband and wife.

The commodification of her autobiography also informs the next film she wrote and directed. Co-directed, written, produced, and composed by Asia Carrera, *Apassionata* follows the life of a runaway homeless girl and her fantasy life as a racially unmarked princess in the time of Mozart. Produced with high production values, the period piece begins with Asia dressed in a white wig and ball gown in a scene that establishes her as royal princess under the tutelage of Mozart, with whom she has a torrid affair. In this role, Asia Carrera shows off her abilities as a pianist. We realize these period scenes are fantasies for they are intercut with the stories of a runaway, living in a van or a campground while hitching rides on the highway with a face brazenly full of hope. Shamelessly imagining a future away from home, she trades her musical talent for food. Dressed in combat boots and overalls, rather than Oriental accoutrements, Carrera stands out as racially distinct among the cast. She also stands out on the roadside as a frontier she intends to conquer. Moreover, this shot illustrates her personal narrative of being a teen runaway, an experience described in her website bio.⁴⁸

Asia Carrera’s star persona as a model minority—she is a member of Mensa (the high IQ club recently acknowledged her membership) and a piano prodigy—inserts itself into the language of porn. Indeed, part of her popularity comes from her racialized history: she played piano at Carnegie Hall in her early teens and taught English as a teenager in Japan—all details inserted into her porn-star biography. Through these details, she continues to appear in the exceptional vein, whether as an extraordinary beauty strikingly non-typical as Asian or as someone typically Asian in her background. These biographical details highlight her exceptionality: What is such a good Asian girl doing in porn? Her racialization occurs



Asia discusses her first anal scene with Jonathan Morgan, who plays her husband in *A Is for Asia*.



Dressed in a wig and a Victorian gown, Asia Carrera plays the piano in *Apassionata*.



Asia Carrera hitchhikes with a hopeful face in *Apassionata*.

differently. It plays into the marketing of her stardom in pornography in a commingling of the intimate and the Other. The image of the girl-next-door combines with the image of the model minority in ways that further indicate her success as a celebrity.

Asia Carrera chose to retire from porn stardom in 2005. She runs an extremely popular website and blog where she sells videos and other products as well as propagates a sexual polymorphous perversity critical of heteronormativity. She aims to control her own commodification by presenting testaments regarding her sexuality and lays bare anxieties about her career decisions: Should she return to porn?, for example. Her blog includes seemingly frank sexual self-presentations. For example, she describes her “luck” in being vaginally orgasmic. Her published wedding vows, humorous and irreverent as well as serious, reflect sexuality far from puritanical norms. Unapologetic about her profession, she rejects moralism blatantly in an embrace of seemingly contradictory identities that I describe as polymorphous. She embraces and finds no contradiction in her positions as mother, wife, porn star, exhibitionist, and Internet entrepreneur.

Between 1996 and late 2006, Asia Carrera’s website received 23 million hits. Characterizing herself as a self-taught nerd, she proudly designs her own website, which she markets as the primary mechanism for getting to know her outside her films. It features her wedding vows with her new husband, Don Lemmon, a description of her creative process as a co-director with Bud Lee (she handles the “creative” work and “motivating crew” while he handles the technical aspects of the work), recent pictures in Hawaii after she gained twenty pounds in her post-retirement transition, a humorously written blog that chronicles her weight gain during her pregnancy, a chat room (without private chats available), frequently asked questions, and a biography that lists her membership in Mensa. The site details her National Merit finalist award and full scholarship to Rutgers University, a confession of her plastic surgery exploits, and a testimony on “Why I Do Porn Even Though I’m Very Bright and Could Have Done Whatever I Wanted.”⁴⁹ There are numerous photographs available for free or for pay. We see her working on her computer and posing in the nude. She sometimes brings the two images together: porn star geek. In all, she presents a critique against moralistic approaches to sexuality and commodification of her racialized identity.

In my analysis, I acknowledge how web-based self-representations work

like self-publishing. They tend to present more idealized and edited versions of the self. Asia Carrera's website testimony focuses on a racialized childhood that leads to sexual freedom. She describes a struggle similar to Evelyn Lau, the award-winning writer of *Runaway: Diary of a Streetkid*. Both Asia and Evelyn describe strict Asian American/Canadian households. Due to the demands of her parents, Asia ran away from her strict upbringing as a "model minority" Asian American child. Asia shows her response to such conditions to be an American one and in the process she positions herself as part of and surviving an Asian American interpellation:

I was grounded for every "B" I got, and beaten for getting anything lower than that. I was not allowed to socialize at all, or go to parties, because they said there'd be time for that after I got into a good college. Well, I did what any red-blooded American kid would do, I'd sneak out. And get caught. And get beaten. And get grounded again. Without launching into too much detail, let's just say I was unhappy. (I tried to kill myself a lot) (Asian kids everywhere have e-mailed me to verify that this is standard practice in Asian households—what a relief to find out I'm normal, huh!) . . . Sometimes I fucked people I didn't want to, so I could have a place to sleep, or a good meal. I gritted my teeth a lot, and did what I had to, rather than crawl back home and grovel for my folks' forgiveness.⁵⁰

In the passage above, she identifies with other Asian Americans, especially youth, almost like a role model. The experiences she details are not only racial and cultural but also gendered. Both rebelling against her parents' policing of space and coping with her dire situation as a runaway through sex describe a gendered experience. She battles moralistic judgment of her choices and her situation by highlighting her financial autonomy, her eye for the future, and her "love for life."⁵¹

Such testimony in Asia Carrera's very personal website attests to the particular stardom she occupies, one not present for other Asian women in pornography. While Asian/American women constitute a huge special genre in pornography, racial fetishism confines their appearance unless they are exceptional like Asia Carrera, who asserts her personal history in her authorship, directing, and acting. Asia Carrera celebrates race-positive living, an intelligent analysis of racial subjection, and a critique of moralism regarding the experiences of sexuality and race. On her website, we also see a successful entrepreneur negotiating her commodification in a form of feminist power.

Through her initiating the massive gangbang in the porn industry, the Asian/American porn star Annabel Chong shot to the attention of popular culture critics and scholars. She appeared on *The Jerry Springer Show* and occupied the focus of a documentary premiering at Sundance. Today, hundreds of essays on her work are available on line from academic journals to film reviews to newspapers to blogs. Chong achieved fame particularly for her affinity for doing perverse acts while proclaiming herself a feminist. Like Asia Carrera, she receives regard as a "thinking" porn star in a kind of eroticization of the model minority stereotype—especially since she worked in porn while an undergraduate at the University of Southern California. Unlike Carrera, who enjoys recognition as having a "good head on her shoulders," Chong encounters a more questionable reception, for both anti-pornography and sex-positive feminists may claim her. In her most famous film, *The World's Biggest Gang Bang* (1999), the expressive contortions of her face and body demonstrate the unreliability of representation in terms of making distinct the appearance of pain or pleasure. In various publications, she resists commodification by forwarding a deeply contradictory identity that negotiates not only the binds of pain and pleasure but good and bad. She also does so in nicely spoken ways that seem to counter well her affinity for nasty sexual practices. As such, she receives more of a contested response for pushing the buttons of acceptable sexuality even within pornography.

In "The Child Defiled: The Annabel Chong Story," an article by Gary Morris in the *Bright Lights Film Journal*, the tag line to the article reads, "Liberated Porn Queen or Psychological Wreck?"⁵² Annabel Chong's record of putting on extreme acts can be assessed in her well-known films such as *I Can't Believe I Did the Whole Team!* (1994). Having acted in over fifty porn films, Chong established her fame in *The World's Biggest Gangbang*, in which she set the first world record for the most sexual partners for a single woman in one sitting (251 men). When the "intense, disturbing"⁵³ documentary about her experiences entitled *Sex: The Annabel Chong Story*,⁵⁴ premiered at Sundance, it sealed her stardom outside of pornography. The caliber of Annabel Chong's stardom, parallel to that of Linda Wong and Asia Carrera, secured itself on different grounds. Unlike Wong and Carrera, who fulfill white standards of beauty in porn, the smaller, shorter, and darker (more visibly Asian and less racially ambiguous)



In *The World's Biggest Gangbang*, Annabel Chong's face contorts in pleasure or pain during sex.

Chong fulfills the extremely perverse expectations for racialized sexuality in order to offer a radical critique of commodification and stardom.

The World's Biggest Gangbang touts itself as an unique project and no less than a historic event establishing a world record number of sex partners (soon broken by others if not immediately). It begins as the director and crew prepare for the shoot scheduled for the next day. The director explains that the gangbang is Annabel Chong's idea. Chong explains the project's aim quite succinctly: to prove women can work as "studs" not "sluts." Accordingly, the set celebrates the extreme athleticism in her claim to power and evokes Greece and the Olympics with its white pillars and statues. We meet Annabel Chong, who seems an alert, aware, and self-possessed young woman as she surveys the scene of her dressing room and her set. Dressed in a suit and speaking loudly in a British accent of sorts, she walks confidently through the sound stage. Later we see her emerge into the gangbang lifting her arms up, smiling in her luminous gold lamé dress, and we hear her speak of her goals for the project and her life as a student. Her navigation of contradictory words and worlds—wholesome, intelligent student speaking in a certain educated manner coexisting with porn stardom and the specificity of her fame as based on extreme perversity—combine to contribute to her recognizability.

"The industry's attraction to Grace Quek (Annabel Chong's real name) is clear—she's very pretty, naïve-looking, agreeable, a kind of Asian child bride—and the lure of defiling this image is clearly the driving force."⁵⁵ Chong's voice and appearance stand out not only in person but also



Annabel Chong enters the arena of *The World's Biggest Gangbang*.

within the industry. The writer Kimberly Chun explains: "Whatever her motivation, an ad for nude models in the *L.A. Weekly* led to meetings with directors such as Ed Powers, director of *Dirty Debutantes* and John Bowen, the director of *World's Biggest*, who talks about taking 'this girl with an Asian look and an English accent' and making her into the nastiest porn star ever, who stages particularly extreme acts."⁵⁶ Her director, in the passage above, measures the performance of perversity by Chong within fetishistic and patriarchal logic. That is, he finds worth in her ability to complete men's sexual aims based on her looks and abilities for particular acts. An Internet porn star biographer lists Annabel Chong as "the one porno starlet who it can be said specializes in gang bangs, having appeared in lots of kinky group gropes for Bone [director John Bowen]. . . . She is a kinky, crazy sexual dynamo who is one of the most popular Asian porno stars ever."⁵⁷ This perception both confirms and differs from her platform as a feminist who works in pornography, according to her interviews, so as to say something about moralism, sex, power, and gender. In one of many interviews, she offers the following critique: "I really believe that when you talk about banning porn because it's exploitative of women or because it's obscene, then it's terribly fascist."⁵⁸ While delivering such critique, she also delivers what may seem a contradictory statement. A CNN.COM article states, "Quek . . . says she likes being treated 'like a piece of meat.'"⁵⁹

Chong aims to confront the myth of the "passive female"⁶⁰ in a critique

of gendered and racialized expectations for women's sexuality. In doing so, she also offers a more egalitarian, "multicultural equal opportunity" approach to the porn process. In *The World's Biggest Gangbang*, she proves the sexual abilities of women like herself with a multitude of partners. Claiming to have mastered "triple penetration," an act involving vaginal, anal, and oral sex, Chong occupies a new face of feminism, worlds apart from the anti-pornography feminists Dworkin and MacKinnon and the black feminists Walker, Garner, and Teish.

A wide range of interpretations from enslavement to empowerment surround the presence of feminism in the commodification of Annabel Chong. In *The World's Biggest Gangbang*, the director lauds her entry: the beautiful Annabel Chong! In other scenes, she seems ridiculed by other individuals.

Scenes [of] her sidling up to [porn star Ron] Jeremy [emcee of the gangbang] and others in the porn industry as if they cared about her are undercut by interviews [in *Sex: The Annabel Chong Story*] in which it's clear that she's been totally commodified in their minds—Bowen doesn't even pay her for the gangbang video that he himself calls the best-selling video in porn history. Once her record of 251 guys is eclipsed, she's dismissed as "all washed up," and ends up gagging with second-rate pornmeisters over a few hundred bucks.⁶¹

The World's Biggest Gangbang's most noticeable and enduring image must indeed be her contorted face, expressing what most certainly looks like pain, with enough ambiguity, however, so that it may also turn out to be pleasure. Her facial expression of pain cannot serve as factual evidence of her oppression when the facial expression of pleasure looks similar. The picture of her face presents much more complexity. She demands for the men to fuck her or summons them to her. Her commanding power in inciting the men to give it to her competes against the extreme close-up shots of her face in pain (or pleasure). Since we cannot read pleasure or pain, we must keep in mind the possibilities her critique offers, no matter how contradictory. Rather than follow the pornographers who dismiss her feminism in service of her commodification, I acknowledge the powerful way Chong brings to light the hypersexuality of Asian women within her career experience. In this film, Chong seems to successfully appropriate technologies of the camera and the contest for perversity in porn in order to diagnose conventional understanding of female sexuality

as bound and limited. She presents herself as an unreliable subject. So if anti-pornography feminists claim her as a victim, she counters their appropriation by offering a more contradictory subjectivity: a porn star who enjoys seeing herself sexually represented as a feminist claim to power.

Critics call the documentary about Grace Quek, aka Annabel Chong, entitled *Sex: The Annabel Chong Story* "difficult to watch and utterly compelling" within the same breath that questions the subject's reliability: "feminism's heroine or patriarchy's victim?"⁶² The film documents her experience of filming the gangbang and follows her for the next two years. Directed by her then-boyfriend, the documentary shows Annabel Chong being jeered by the audiences of *The Jerry Springer Show*. When she is asked why she has sex with so many men, she answers "why not" matter-of-factly. The film recollects the shooting of *The World's Biggest Gangbang* and her declarations of reclaiming promiscuity for women and relinquishing the classification of "slut" in order to claim "stud."⁶³ A set of interviews on campus and in her home, a motel room apartment of sorts, allows us to hear Chong speak further on her feminist platform. We also hear from her classmates and a professor. In contrast, we see porn producers with incredible valley views from their homes as they comment on Chong. The disenfranchisement between actress and producer becomes particularly revealing when we discover that she never received payment for her work in the gangbang. We then follow Chong as she returns to England, where she was raised and also, significantly, gang raped, and then to Singapore to "come out" to her parents as a porn star. Chong herself understands the film as a somewhat "fair" but skewed image. Indeed, the discourses around the film center on her victimization and feminism.

Critics note that Annabel Chong's contradictory "double life" as a porn star and an academic needs to be appreciated in the study of the film. In her *Asian Week* article, Kimberly Chun asks: "How does this woman reconcile her third-wave feminist studies with the objectification of porn; her Christian upbringing as a Chinese girl in Singapore with her toils as sex worker in the raw, Gen-X gonzo porn genre; and her speeches about sexual freedom as female empowerment by the adult industry's overwhelmingly male producers and directors?"⁶⁴ She reconciles those contradictions with what Chun describes as hints of substance abuse. Critics admire the quality of her openly sexual personality as well as her assertion of female "love for sex and control of her life" as a critique of "puritanical" ideas about sexuality.⁶⁵ Regarded as suspect, others describe her affect as

“both unsure of herself and in total control at the same time.”⁶⁶ Critics ask if the producers of *The World's Biggest Gangbang* duped and used her: two years after the gangbang, she still had not received payment for her work. Chun illustrates Chong as far away from her spunky self at the end of the film: she seems “ready to be directed” rather than commandeer her life.⁶⁷ Moreover, the film culminates in a dramatic revisiting of the site of the gang rape. By concluding the film with Chong’s return to her past, the filmmaker connects the gang rape with the gangbang and constructs the gangbang as Chong’s reenactment of a character-defining act of serial violence. Perhaps this construction of Chong’s character in the film produces a victimized subject that denies her power.

In Annabel Chong’s work, an important critique of pornography and documentary presenting the regime of truth of Asian/American women as a “special genre” emerges. Chong offers a feminist platform that prioritizes sexuality as a critical analysis against the victimizing discourses that tend to dismiss her critique. The prioritization of sexuality and her voice within the film both argue for a new subject of feminism: the Asian female sexual pervert. Her figure presents perversity as a feminist position. She “defies the lure”—to borrow Morris’s description, of Asian/American women as passive victims by becoming the active participant in sex.⁶⁸ In this, the difficulty in assessing the pleasure or pain of her expression becomes politically productive practice in terms of our interpretation. Precisely because of the difficulty in assessing her facial expression, we should not forget that the encounter between others across difference cannot be assumed. Especially as Chong’s iconicity remains rife in debate as monstrous or feminist, we must keep her meanings loaded with possibility.

Where this engagement leads needs further examination. In *Sex*, Chong confirms that she felt presented in a limited way. Later, we find out from other sources such as Morris and Chun that Chong was sleeping with the film director Gough Lewis during some of the making of the film. Chong says this film should more appropriately use the title *Sex: The Gough Lewis Story* as told through her body and life.⁶⁹ If a racialized porn star can remain spoken over in documentary, what happens in porn that she neither directs nor owns? Annabel Chong understands the importance of performance. She presents Grace Quek, documentary subject, and Annabel Chong, porn star. This occupation of an unstable subjectivity that shuttles from one position to another needs serious study for its political possibility. Rather than remaining stalled within the shocking nature of

the sex acts, we can see the dynamic process of producing and creating them. Her voice remains strangely perplexing, however. As an unreliable subject, seemingly affected by drugs and alcohol, she makes the question of her agency difficult to answer. Why do we need to find her agency, or political possibility, as a sex worker or a porn star?

Through the force of unreliability, Chong rewrites racialized sexuality beyond victimization in favor of achieving an elusive and out-of-grasp subjectivity. It turns out to be too tempting to relegate Annabel Chong to victimhood: to frame her gangbang with the gang rape highlighted in *Sex: The Annabel Chong Story* and to say she did not succeed in turning the slut into a stud, especially since she did not get paid, and the violence continues to overdetermine her identity. In her own words, she dispels the appropriation of her position as raped and victimized in *The World's Biggest Gangbang*. Because she is someone in front of the porn and documentary cameras, her economic exploitation silences her powerful intellectual and anti-commercial critique. Like the actresses on Broadway, the Hollywood Asian American femme fatales, and the porn stars preceding her, Annabel Chong is bound by the processes of race, sex, and representation as well as money. From this position, she directly provides an intellectual, social, and philosophical critique of these technologies and categorizations. Hypersexuality accompanies her powerful critique, developing it as an unstable and contradictory position that attests to the complexity and ambiguity of sex, race, and representation.

Chong’s interviews offer a nuanced critique of the filmmaker of *Sex: The Annabel Chong Story* as well as the porn industry and restrictive Asian cultural values. Not only does she want to critique gender limits for her own sexuality and for sexual roles for women, she presents a major race-sex-and-gender critique: “‘Don’t you think,’ she says, ‘that by putting women on this terrible pedestal, where they’re all pure and perfect, is kind of terribly constraining on women? It really puts this terrible limit on what they can do in life. It’s just another way of controlling—limiting the avenues of exploration that women are allowed to do.’”⁷⁰ In this statement, Annabel Chong, porn star and social critic, provides an explanation for why she tests the bounds of hypersexuality. In claiming hypersexuality as political and personal critique, she is rendered unacceptable. It makes sense that since then Annabel Chong no longer makes herself available and instead presents another persona entirely. The writing on her website offers an even more effective refusal of the question of her resistance.

Annabel Chong's own words and own voice reject further inquiry regarding her character Annabel Chong. Like that of Asia Carrera, Annabel Chong's website has represented her voice in cyberspace since her retirement in 2003. I quote most of the very brief site here in order to give an indication of Annabel Chong's complex understanding of her self-formation, especially as an avatar, announcing "game over" to those pursuing her further. She chooses a new anonymity in cyberspace.

Whatever happened to Annabel Chong?

Annabel is dead, and is now replaced full time by her Evil Doppelganger, who is incredibly bored with the entire concept of Annabel, and would prefer to do something different for a change. From her shallow grave, Annabel would like to thank her fans for all their love and support all these years, and to let them know that she will never forget them.

In that case, what is this Evil Doppelganger up to nowadays?

The ED is a diabolical yuppie who is working as a web developer and consultant. She specializes in ASP and .NET with C#, Database Development and also does web design. While the divine Ms Chong was busy doing her Annabel thang, the ED was surreptitiously going to computer boot camp to pick up some skills, so that she can permanently kill off Annabel Chong and begin her new life of peace and relative obscurity. Now she is making a pretty decent living being a horrible geek and all that, proving that there *are* second chapters in American life, to hell with F Scott Fitzgerald.⁷¹

In the above short passages, Annabel presents multiple subjectivities within the same racialized and sexualized Asian/American female body. She seems to confirm her unreliability as well as the political power of her position as a bound subject. In direct contrast to Asia Carrera, Annabel Chong's refusal to traffic further in self-commodification speaks to her particular significance in pornography.

Katrien Jacobs uses the term "monstrous revolt" to describe the work of the sadomasochistic lesbian performance artist Maria Beatty.⁷² The monstrous "assume[s] that women are urged through false consciousness to act out and improve their fantasies in relation to the 'original' heterosexual act." Instead Jacobs "show[s] how Maria Beatty commands complex processes of desire, bodily exchange, how she fictionalizes and aestheticizes her sex life in order to reinvent definitions of female sexuality which can be stimulating and negotiable for women." Monstrous revolt may not be appropriate to use for the life and work of Annabel Chong. Chong does,

however, more than any other figure I study, teeter on the edge of the real and the imagined. As unreliable, she rewrites sexuality outside of race as simply victimizing. As monstrous and outside legibility, however, her meaning registers as primarily bad, undesirable, and powerless.

Where deviancy and hypersexuality stand as the norm in porn, race provides the difference. Through their racialization, we see that Asian American female porn stars craft their own personas, direct their own videos, and insert Asian American female priorities in pornography and their websites as feminist and anti-racist critique. Through mainstream pornography, we can ultimately see that the vocabulary of pleasure does not exceed politics. Asia Carrera and Annabel Chong show us how the embrace of bad womanhood does not occur uniformly in its political critique. By studying their work, however, the dynamics of fantasy, fetishism, money, power, and history in pornography can point to how we may expand Asian women's roles in the national imaginaries to include their work of redefining race and sex in pornography. As feminist practices, they expand our understanding of how sexuality helps to define race and how pornography opens up space for the study of Asian/American women's power.

To reiterate the terms I prioritize in my study, what if we study Asian/American women's representations by centering sexuality as their own, even if that sexuality looks different from what typically constitutes the normal and the acceptable? Within racialized communities, acknowledging perverse pleasures and enjoyment in sex as well as in viewing, performing, and criticizing offers a more viable politics of recognition. At the same time, the experience of pain and the fear of reinscribing images through the power of cinema must remain part of our analyses. When we see the production of fantasy for Asian women in early stag films, the production of yellowface in Golden Age pornography, and the performance of perversity by Asian/American porn megastars, we recognize an intensely racialized formation of sexuality in representation. Asia Carrera and Annabel Chong emerge from this hypersexual legacy in order to provide two different political engagements with pornography. Annabel Chong especially challenges acceptable forms of politics and power: she insists on the unreliability of representation and the unknowability of the race, class, gender, and sexual experience. She shows this complexity by exposing her vulnerability as difficult to pin down. Then, she runs away. I surmise that her flight is an attempt to flee the oppressive power of classification and to

keep the debates about her power or powerlessness open. Along the way, she opens space for the formulation of race-positive sexuality that attests to the need for us to maintain the complexity of representation.

To center the sexuality of Asian/American women in pornography as a feminist critique of racial and sexual representation rightly and more accurately complicates the process of viewing as simply an act of violence upon the viewer. We can acknowledge images of Asian women as perversely and pathologically sexual in the Western cinema industry and from there argue that the condemnation of non-normative sexuality and the simplification of the process of viewing a film do not sufficiently illustrate the political possibilities raised in watching race and sex on screen. The space between bondage and freedom in defining racialized sexuality proves vast, ambiguous, and complex, in ways we need to sustain as ever mysterious and surprising in terms of its political possibilities.

6 *

**“LITTLE BROWN FUCKING MACHINES
POWERED BY RICE” OR SEX TOURISTS WITH
MOVIE CAMERAS AND PROSTITUTES WITHOUT
MOVIE CAMERAS** * Politicizing the Bottom in

Southeast Asian Sex Tourist Movies

Watch what happens when she gets a complete load of my cock . . . as big as her arm.—101 *Asian Debutantes: Volume 1* (1995)

You can't beat the attitude of these girls. There's no girl in the world that will give you a shower, give you a blowjob, fuck your brains out, and fold your clothes with a smile on her face. Dammit, nowhere!—An American john in *The Good Woman of Bangkok* (1991)

Describing popular perceptions of Southeast Asian women as small, sexual, and servile, the quotes opening this chapter resonate with the U.S. military adage that Asian women are “little brown fucking machines powered by rice,” a saying popularized as various Southeast Asian countries came to be sites for international sex tourism.¹ In rest and recreation spots such as Angeles, Olongapo, and other U.S. military bases scattered all over Southeast Asia, street vendors display hats and t-shirts emblazoned with