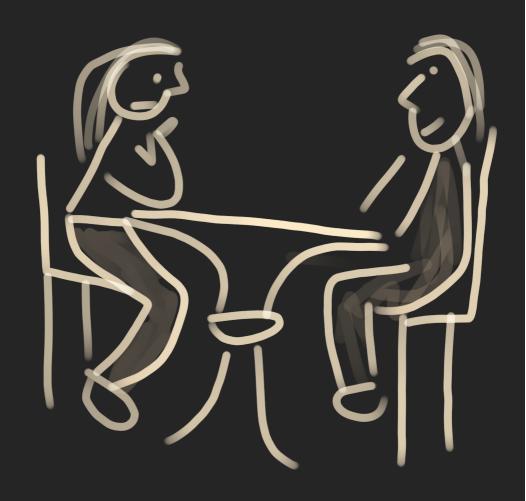
the Christian Christian ideology of mainstream PORM

I'm desperately lonely and Eva
Estrada-Campos is sitting across from
me, but I don't know her name yet. All
I know is that we go to the same
college and I've seen her around
before and she has black hair and
pretty eyes and exchanged some words
in Spanish with one of the cafeteria
workers. This is the second time we've
ever talked and I know she told me her
name the first time, but I've
forgotten it, which is okay because
she forgot mine. My name is Owen Earl
and her name is Eva Estrada-Campos.

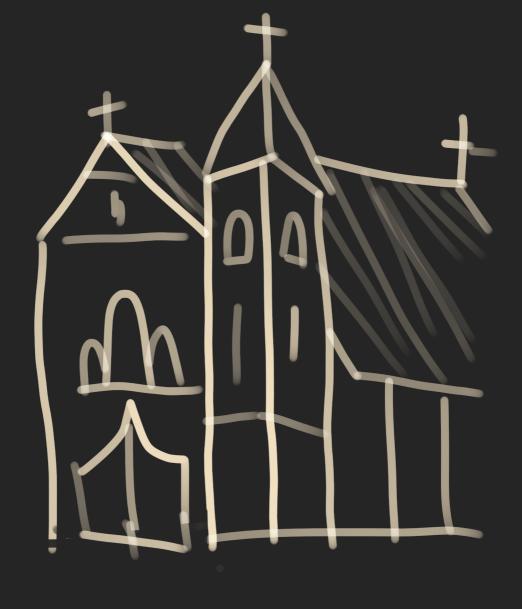
She tells me she'd have sex with me, in a heartbeat. I've never even kissed anyone before. I want to have sex with her, but it feels like I'm not ready for that yet. It feels like there's steps to becoming sexually active and I'm not sure what all the steps are but I'm pretty sure kissing someone is one of them and maybe I'll figure out step two once I've done step one. And maybe I'll do step one and two with Eva because she's quite attractive and she says she'd have sex with me.



Estrada-Campos is sitting across from me, but I don't know her name yet.

We go on a date and I have my first ever kiss in front of the Catholic church my great-grandmother's funeral was at. Her name was Lucille and she was a very committed Catholic and she lived long enough that I got to meet her, but I was young and she was old, so I'm not sure I got to know her. She got divorced before it was cool and because she was a Catholic she never remarried because that's against the rules.

Eva takes me into the Church despite my protests. I don't know much about sex and I know even less about the Catholics but I'm pretty sure the two don't mix and I'm still feeling turned on from my first kiss and I'm not kinky enough to feel good about processing my horniness in the Church my great-grandmother's funeral was at. But it's Sunday and Eva's in the church and we're on a date and so I'm in the church too and it's one of only two times I've ever attended a Catholic mass.



I have my first ever kiss in front of the Catholic church my greatgrandmother's funeral was at. Eva is pretty sure there is no step two. Step one is kiss and step two is have sex and she wants to have sex before my roommate Dylan Olson comes back. It's a Thursday night, we kissed on Sunday so it's already been four days and if we go in the bathroom we can lock the door. I really want to have sex with her. I am very turned on and I want to be a sexually active person and I don't know why I'm saying "no" but I know it's an honest answer and for me there is a step two.

Back then I was attending a Christian church. It was nondenominational and after the 2016 election of Donald Trump I needed answers and for some reason I went to church and the Holy Ghost told me to keep going so I did even though I couldn't tell you why. I told the pastors I wasn't Christian and they seemed to like me anyway and I liked what they had to say even though Tyler Gorsline's pop-culture references were a bit cringey at times. I think Tim Gaydos, one of the pastors, was hoping I would help bring in more people from my college; I



don't think he realized how unpopular I was.

The church was having a weekend retreat in the beach-town of Seabrook. For \$100 you could come along and chill out and pray to Jesus and get away from the hustle-bustle of Seattle and that seemed like a good deal to me. I needed some time away from the big city to pray to Jesus because I wanted to ask Him why I was struggling to have sex with Eva Estrada-Campos.

The first night I was there I ended up talking to this guy Carlos about my struggles. I had never seen him at church before and I never saw him after that, but that weekend he was my best friend. Everyone else seemed to know someone else and I didn't know anyone. Even though I went to Church regularly I never went to Bible study because I had enough homework as it was, but that's where you made friends.

Carlos was old-school. The kind of guy who was saving himself for marriage.



But he was kind and I didn't feel judged by him. I didn't grow up Christian so I didn't know Christian doctrine as well as he did. He told me sex was sacred. He didn't have much else to say about my situation but to him sex was sacred and it was to be treated as such.

I prayed to God and he told me the same thing: sex is sacred and sex is beautiful. He told me not to fear sex, but also to respect its great power. All people are made in God's image, and all people are different and beautiful. Each person's sexuality is different and beautiful too. God calls upon us to express our sexualities authentically, fearlessly, and honestly. Our sexualities are divinely made, and so to share our sex with the world is to share something divine. This is what makes sex sacred.

I knew, through my prayer, that I wanted to honor the sacredness and beauty of sex and my passage into this new chapter of my life through ceremony. I wanted to plan for sex,



All people are made in God's image, and all people are different and beautiful.

perhaps get a hotel room, or go out for a fancy dinner. I wanted it to feel intentional and thoughtful and special. And I was grateful to think that I would return home from church camp with the answers I was seeking: I could tell Eva what step two was, and we could have the sex we both wanted.

My trip to Seabrook was eight years ago. Since then I've spent a lot of time thinking about and exploring sex and God and their relationship to each other. My feelings on both are more developed and robust these days, but the core idea of sex being divine and sacred remains true to me.

It was also on that trip to Seabrook that I started to learn more about how mainstream Christianity views sex and God and their relationship to each other. Back then some of the things people said gave me pause, but I didn't have enough context to understand how truly harmful the ideas mainstream Christianity promotes about sex are.



Christians will say "sex is sacred" but they don't treat it like other sacred things. They think the Bible is sacred and they stand on street corners handing out Bibles and they attend Bible study clubs. Why aren't they handing out free condoms and encouraging people to go to sex clubs? Christians can understand that God inspires us to create music and art and they sing about Jesus in the Church. But that same Church will tell the women in their congregation to not show too much skin because it might inspire lustful thoughts in the men. If sex is sacred and created by God then why are we trying to repress it? Why are we hiding it away and discouraging it? Why aren't we celebrating it the way we celebrate music and art?

Personally, I experience anything that is creative as sacred because it brings us closer to God. When we make art or cook food or write stories we are collaborating with God, the creator of everything. We are honoring the part of ourselves that is made in



they stand on street corners handing out Bibles His image, and we are sharing our knowledge of God with others.

A stand-up comic will go on stage and tell a funny story and he creates laughter and this is a sacred thing. A stand-up comedian can tell a story about a frustrating experience at the airport and make me laugh about the absurdity of it all, and later when I'm at the airport, I remember his words and I appreciate the humor of an experience I once dreaded. Laughter is such a beautiful and joyful and pure thing. It is an expression of love for the world, a love of life. The airport always had the ability to be funny, but the stand-up comedian helped me see something I couldn't on my own.

This is part of what makes the act of creation so sacred. When the stand-up comedian creates laughter, he brings joy and a love of life into a once joyless place. Comics can make us laugh about the ugliest things, and to laugh is to see God. Our appreciation of God grows richer and deeper because



A stand-up comic will go on stage and tell a funny story

our apperception of the world grows richer and deeper.

The fact that we each have a unique experience and perspective is by design. God is infinite, and He expresses himself differently in each person. Each time we come to know and love someone new we also come to know and love a different face of God.

We have a duty to honor our differences. It is precisely because the stand-up comedian has a different perspective and experience of the world that he can show me God in a place I hadn't seen Him previously. If we limit human expression we also limit our knowledge of God.

And to me this is the most blasphemous thing of all. When we create, we express ourselves. If I cook a hamburger at home my process is guided by my own personal taste, perspective, and identity. Perhaps I salt the beef because my grandfather told me to. Perhaps I put grilled onions on it because my favorite greasy diner does



Perhaps I salt the beef because my grand-father told me to

that. Maybe I don't put cheese on it because the God of the Old Testament forbids mixing beef and milk. The hamburger becomes a physical embodiment of my values and identity.

But a man forced to make hamburgers at a McDonald's cannot express himself through the process of creation. His decisions aren't guided by his values and identity, they're guided by the McDonald's corporation. When we are forced to participate in the process of creation but are stripped of all agency it is blasphemous. It perverts our God-given gift of creation. It alienates us from ourselves and it alienates us from God.

Sex is a fundamentally creative act. When a stand-up comic tells a funny stories he creates laughter, and when we have sex we create eroticism. Like all creative acts it is sacred, and we must honor it's sacredness by encouraging people to express their sexuality in a way that is honest and authentic.



The hamburger becomes a physical embodiment of my values and identity.

But mainstream Christianity teaches us a very perverted version of sexuality. It tells us that God only approves of sex between monogamous heterosexual married couples. It tells us that sex outside of marriage is sinful and wrong, and we shouldn't do it. Many Christians are discouraged from having sex that isn't intercourse, like oral sex.

Christians tell people how to have sex like how McDonald's tells people how to make hamburgers, and the people who are beholden to their doctrine are alienated from their own sexuality. But God created our sexuality, so by limiting people's ability to express themselves sexually we are also limiting our ability to know God.

Most Christians fear God. He is all-knowing and all-loving and all-forgiving and all-good, but most Christians fear him anyway. They fear honest and authentic and diverse sex because they fear God and God expresses Himself in the sex. Christians have invented all sorts of



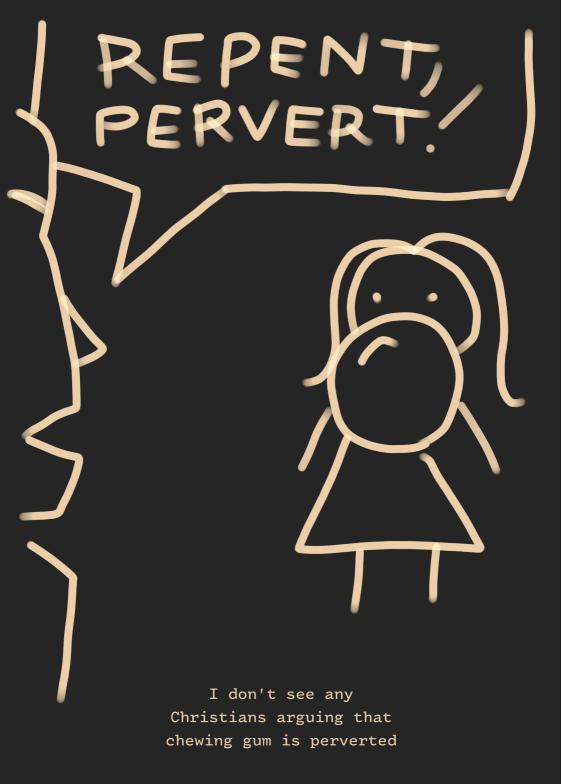


God only approves of sex between monogamous heterosexual married couples

reasons why you shouldn't have gay sex or premarital sex or watch pornography, but these explanations are all self-evidently ridiculous adhoc retroactive justifications for a belief they already held.

Christians will tell you that God created sex for the purpose of childrearing and that sex which doesn't have the potential to produce children is perverted. But God also gave us taste-buds for the purpose of eating food and I don't see any Christians arguing that chewing gum is perverted. Is exercising on a treadmill perverted because God gave us legs so we could travel distances? Should Christians condemn married women who have sex with their husband after menopause because they can't get pregnant?

Christians will tell women in particular that their sexuality is a limited resource, better not use it all up before they get married or they'll have none left for their husband! But anyone who's actually had sex will know it's a skill that you



get better at with practice. We don't discourage women from cooking or babysitting before marriage. Why is sex different? The idea that sex is less special because you've had it with more than one person is as silly to me as suggesting a deep conversation with someone is less special because you've had conversations with other people in the past. The content of the conversation is as unique as the people having them, and the same is true of sex.

I am disturbed by how mainstream Christianity views sex. They make people feel ashamed of things they shouldn't be ashamed of. They teach people to fear sex. They make people very ignorant of how beautiful and diverse sex can be.

But what especially disturbs me is how influential Christian thinking is in our sex culture. The country is growing less and less Christian and yet Christian ideas about sex are more prominent than ever.



We don't discourage women from cooking

This shows up in many ways, but one area where it is especially visible is pornography. Most adults watch porn, and porn not only reflects mainstream sex culture back to us, but also teaches us how to view and engage with sex. And these days the lesson that mainstream porn teaches us is that sex is sinful in a very Christian sense.

Pornography is obsessed with the idea of taboo and violation. It often includes plots where people are tricked or coerced into sex, it often includes plots involving transgressive sex, and in many cases it includes both.

For example, the porn video titled "Step Brother Fucks Step Sis Right
Next To!" features both transgressive and violating sex. It has over 100 million views on Pornhub, which means it's been seen by roughly one in twenty Americans, so I feel like it's a good example of mainstream porn.1

¹ This is also a very rough estimate. I'm assuming the graph Pornhub released in their 2024 year in review (https://www.pornhub.com/insights/2024-year-in-review) showing the top twenty countries by traffic

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it's been seen by roughly one in twenty Americans

The plot of the video involves a convoluted scheme where a guy named Alex tricks his step sister into touching his penis by sticking it into a hollowed out pumpkin and presenting it to her. The step sister gets turned on by this even though she calls him "disgusting." He wants to have sex with her and she says that it's not okay because they're step-siblings, but the two end up having sex anyway. They do this in the same room as their mom but she doesn't realize what they're up to because they're hiding behind a couch. The original video title was "Step Brother Fucks Step Sis Right Next To Mom!" but the word "mom" got deleted for some reason.

is both accurate and linear. I estimate that the US makes up 20% of the traffic of the top 20 countries (634px wide bar out of 3100px all bars added together) which would mean it's 16% of total traffic (20% of the 79.2% top 20 countries). 16% of the 104 million views gives me a figure of 16.8 million American views, which doesn't account for repeat viewers, but I imagine the audience for this video skews American (and also this video is on other sites so this isn't total views) and with no way to estimate repeat viewers or the American skew I'm just assuming they cancel out.



sticking it into a hollowed out pumpkin and presenting it to her

Hearing me describe the plot of this video, or if you're one of the sixteen million Americans who has seen it, it's probably a bit counterintuitive for me to describe it as "containing Christian ideology." After all, stepsiblings having premarital sex in front of their mom sounds like the kind of thing Christians would frown upon.

But the reason I find the video very Christian is because the video also frowns upon what they're doing. The mom character calls Alex's pumpkin antics "sick" and the step-sister, who's named Audrey, repeatedly calls him "disgusting." Nobody at any point talks about the sex as if it's a morally acceptable thing to do, they just say this is wrong, it's disgusting, we shouldn't do it, but it's pleasurable so we're doing it anyway.

And a video that depicts people doing stuff that Christians would call sinful while constantly pointing to what they're doing and saying "this is



step-siblings having premarital sex in front of their mom

wrong, it's sick, it's disgusting" kind of agrees with the Christians.

And for the record, I also agree that the sex they have is morally wrong, because the whole encounter started with Alex tricking Audrey into touching his penis, which is a form of sexual assault. I think it's morally wrong to sexually assault people and I also think it's wrong to have sex in the same room as your mom without asking her permission first. At no point in watching this video do I feel good or comfortable with the sex that's happening in it.

But, also, it's a made up story, and the people making the porn could have just as easily had the characters say and do things differently. If they wanted to, they could have had Alex and Audrey leave the living-room and have sex in a bedroom with the door closed. If they wanted to they could have had the step-siblings talk about how there's a lot of cultural shame and taboo surrounding step-siblings having sex, but they aren't



they could have had Alex and Audrey leave the living-room and have sex in a bedroom biologically related and maybe their parents only recently got married so they never knew each other before they both reached sexual maturity, so really it would be okay if they both explored the mutual sexual attraction they feel, despite the cultural baggage of doing that given the context.

But obviously that's not the story the porn makers wanted to tell. They very clearly wanted to tell a story about people doing dirty wrong sinful sex. That's why they made the two main characters step-siblings in the first place.

And if you've watched any amount of mainstream porn you'll know this video's fixation on taboo and degradation is the rule, not the exception. People in porn are constantly being tricked and coerced into having dirty sex. People are always getting caught in compromising situations, name-called and spit on and slapped. And characters are constantly saying "this is so wrong"



their parents only recently got married

and "we shouldn't be doing this" just so we, the audience, understand how dirty and wrong it all is.

If you are beholden to mainstream Christian sexual ethics, than it's impossible for porn to ever be morally acceptable. Sex is something that's only supposed to happen in the context of a monogamous marriage and watching someone who is not your wife get it on with a man who is probably not her husband is a form of a adultery, or at a minimum it's a form of coveting your neighbor's wife, which God was pretty clear about not being okay. If you are someone who subscribes to Christian ideology than it's impossible to watch porn without feeling some guilt and shame over defying God.

But I wasn't raised Christian and I still felt tremendously guilty about watching porn. I genuinely worried that if my parents ever discovered the tasteful Playboy-style nudes I had downloaded on my computer when I was fourteen that they would kick me to the streets, and I practically had a



the tasteful Playboystyle nudes I had downloaded on my computer heart-attack when the hard-drive failed because I was sure the computer repair guy was going to find the nudes and snitch on me.

I wasn't raised going to church or praying to Jesus, but culturally speaking, and especially when it comes to sex, we're all raised a bit Christian in this country. Watching porn makes me feel like a sick perverted freak and on some level you just have to say to yourself "I'm a sicko for watching this but it turns me on so I'm doing it anyway." And having the step-siblings in my porn loudly proclaiming that what they're doing is sick and wrong and they will be in so much trouble if mom ever finds out is nothing if not relatable.

But Christians are wrong about sex. They'll tell you it's wrong to have gay sex or premarital sex or sex with a condom and they're just wrong about that stuff.

Plenty of things the Christian God forbids He's right about. God says



I wasn't raised going to church or praying to Jesus

it's wrong to murder or steal or bare false witness against your neighbor and those are all obviously wrong and harmful things to do, but then God also tells us to cut the tip of newborn boy's penises off and, I don't know, it raises some questions for me.

If I bare false witness against my neighbor or commit adultery or murder someone those are all activities with very clear victims. It's not hard for me to understand why they're wrong because my neighbor's a cool guy and he doesn't deserve to have me say fake things about him and damage his reputation or murder him.

But according to the Christians, God says we shouldn't have premarital sex, and there is no obvious victim to this activity. Instead of admitting that maybe it's not such a bad thing to do, they will invent people for you to feel bad about. They'll tell you to think about how disrespectful you're being to your future husband, and how sad it makes Jesus. There's no proof that either of those guys exist, and



there's especially no proof that either of them are unhappy with the sex I'm having, but Christians tell you to feel guilty towards them anyway.

Christians claim that their morals are unchanging and defined by God, and they'll argue that because God is perfect, all His rules must be correct even if they make no sense. And if God did really come down from the heavens and proclaim that gay sex is sinful than I guess they'd be right about that. But God hasn't done that, and when I prey to Him He tells me gay sex is cool. And a couple hundred years ago Christians were running around owning slaves and claiming God told them that's okay, so it kind of seems like God's eternal rules are subject to the whims of culture.

God doesn't think it's wrong to have premarital sex. It's only Christians who think that.

But if you're really embedded in Christian ideology it's hard to tell



when I prey to Him He tells me gay sex is cool. the difference between morally heinous crimes like murder and socially stigmatized arbitrary taboos like gay sex, because the people around you will tell you that the reason both of them are wrong is because God said so. If you ask too many questions you're starting to imply that you doubt God's authority, which is about the most blasphemous thing you can do.

And all of this brings me back to the porno video I watched where the stepsiblings have sex. It's not just Christian because they label their sex "disgusting" and "sick" and the Christians would agree with them. It's Christian because they make no distinction between the moral transgression of sexual assault and the social taboo of step-siblings having sex. It's Christian because they don't question why the rules exist, or if they should exist at all. It's Christian because Aubrey tells Alex that if mom ever finds out she'll ground them for "the rest of [their] lives," and something about an omnipresent authority figure who will



eternally punish them for their sinful sex feels very Christian. It's Christian because they give in to their sinful lust, and we are all sinners in the Christian world-view.

Mainstream porn almost always presents sex as involving some moral or social transgression. What that transgression is can be anything from rape and assault to interracial sex or adultery. In some porno films it's more pronounced and in others it's more subtle, but if you look for it it's almost always there.

And personally, watching a lot of porn has taught me a rather strange and unfortunate lesson about sex: that something dirty or wrong happening is compulsory. It's not even that porn taught me that sex which is dirty or wrong is better or hotter than other forms of sex, it's that I walked away being unable to even conceptualize sex without it being in some way taboo. School taught me that to make a fire you must first have oxygen, and porn



School taught me that to make a fire you must first have oxygen taught me that to have sex you must first have sin.

And that put me in a weird position because if and when I ever found myself sexually attracted to people I knew, I felt like I was, by definition, desiring to do something wrong to them. I felt guilty about feeling sexual attraction to people who were nice to me and I found it easier to feel sexual attraction towards people who bullied me. Because they were mean to me first so I felt less guilt about being mean in response to them.

And I don't think I'm alone in learning this weird lesson from porn, that sex always requires some kind of taboo. It seems like recently there's a cultural desire to search for and tabooify sex.

In the past five years more and more people purport to have a "breeding" fetish which consists of wanting to have heterosexual intercourse where the man ejaculates into the woman's



I found it easier to feel sexual attraction towards people who bullied me

vagina. Presumably this is to impregnate her. But a lot of people who practice this fetish don't actually want to get pregnant.

A journalist at Vice reached out to a popular breeding fetishist online and he told her that he has this kind of sex "as much as [he] can -with consent of course" but then went on to say that he only has sex with women who are on birth control, "so maybe the breeding aspect isn't the focus in real life."²

And a while back a woman on Reddit asked for help with "breeding kink dirty talk," because she apparently doesn't want to say anything "to the effect of 'put a baby in me' because [she's] afraid it'll jinx the birth control" and another woman responded to her by saying she has the same problem. "I don't want to talk about or think about having babies while I'm fucking" she writes.³

² https://www.vice.com/en/article/what-is-a-breedingkink/

³ https://www.reddit.com/r/BDSMcommunity/comments/ ovxig5/breeding_kink_dirty_talk/



I don't want to talk about or think about having babies And I'm not going to argue that these people don't have a fetish, because "breeding" is what we do to animals, and regardless of the sex act itself it is a very degrading way of conceptualizing sex.

But it does feel worth pointing out that having heterosexual intercourse without a condom for the purpose of getting pregnant is literally the kind of sex the Pope would approve of.

These people have figured out a way to turn sex that is so vanilla and boring that it wouldn't even make a nun blush into something kinky and dirty and degrading.

And I can't help but wonder if maybe some of these guys, like myself, have watched so much porn that they've internalized the notion that sex always requires taboo and now they are manufacturing taboo for the purposes of having sex.

The real pity in all this is that none of this has to be the case. Our Christian culture teaches us that



basically all sexual desire is sinful, and porn, in theory, could be a great medium to explore alternative visions of what sex can look like and what sex can mean. The Christian view of sex is limiting and oppressive and causes us to feel shame about something that is, in my opinion, really quite a beautiful thing. If, when I had started watching porn it had presented sex as divine and beautiful and elevated and shameless I think it really could have helped me deconstruct and unlearn some of this Christian ideology. But instead our porn culture is just reinforcing it.

The good news here is that not all porn is like this. There is some really good porn out there, and in the past year or so I've become more intentional about the kinds of porn I watch, and it's had a really noticeable and positive effect on my feelings about sex in general.

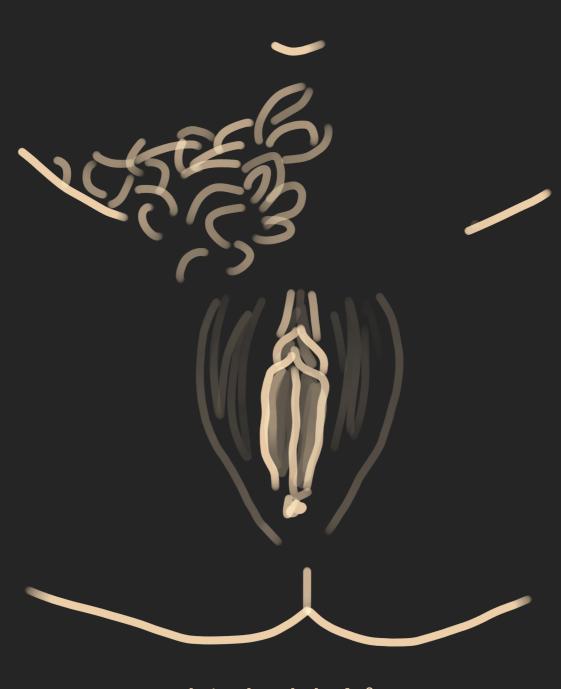
I plan on writing more about different kinds of porn in the future, but I want to end this video with a couple



helped me deconstruct and unlearn some of this Christian ideology.

suggestions for porn that's worth watching.

A contemporary studio that's making porn with an alternative vision of sex is the European studio Ersties. Ersties is a female-run company and their videos center the sexuality of the women featured. It's not just that the women featured have orgasms or an enjoyable sexual experience, it's that they're given a lot of agency over what their sexuality looks like in the videos. Almost all of them do interviews where they talk about their relationship to sex which really makes the them feel like real people, and they often make videos masturbating in a way that feels really personal. For example, Aurora A explains her philosophy surrounding why she feels sex on her period is empowering and feminist, and then masturbates while on her period and gets blood all over her hands, and Luca shows off how she's shaved the left side of her vagina but kept the right side hairy which is a style I've never seen anyone else sporting. Ersties shows



she's shaved the left side of her vagina but kept the right side hairy sex in a way that feels joyful and light-hearted and comfortable and playful and empowering and more than anything authentic, and it's an especially good studio to watch if your uncomfortable with sex that's at all violent or coercive. It's not perfect, but it's radically different from mainstream porn.

And personally I've been getting very into porn that was made in the seventies and eighties. A lot of porn back then was made with big budgets and they could afford costumes and set design and there's a sense of filmmaking that you just don't see anymore. The film Barbara Broadcast completely changed the way I think about porn, because part of what makes that film so erotic is the colors and the sets and the sound design. I used to think the reason porn was sexy was because it documented people having sex and sex is sexy, but Barbara Broadcast is sexy because of the language of film itself. It's sexy in a way that can only exist in a movie. Watching regular porn I think to

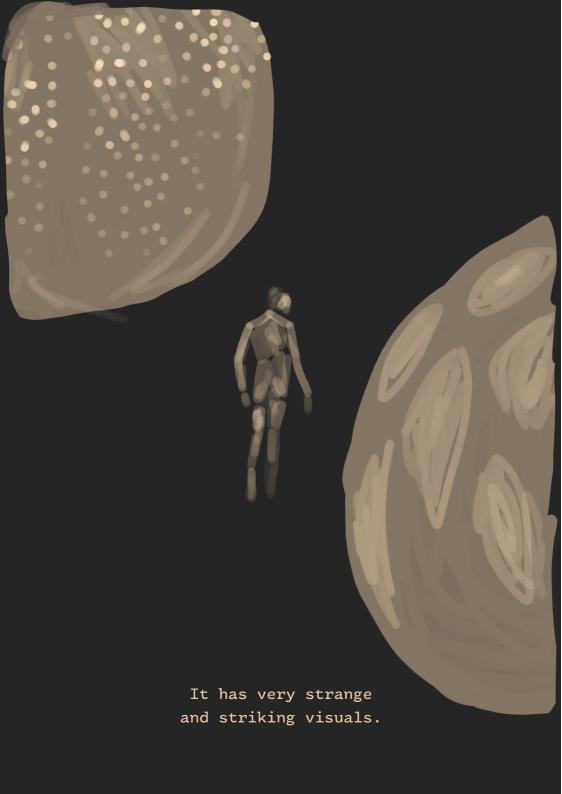


costumes and set design

myself "this is nice, as a substitute for the real thing" but watching Barbara Broadcast I think, "this is the real thing."

And another movie from the seventies I'd recommend is the gay film Bijou directed by Wakefield Poole. Similar to Barbara Broadcast it's sexy in a way that's only accomplishable through the language of cinema. It has very strange and striking visuals. I would recommend watching this even if you're a straight man because I think it's important to be able to see your own body as sexy and desirable and Bijou is a film that really explores how erotic the male body can be.

Porn movies from the seventies were made to be watched in movie theaters, and so there's much more consideration around making something visually pleasing to look at, and also making something you watch all the way through. I would highly recommend watching both of these films, but I would especially recommended getting a high quality copy and watching on a

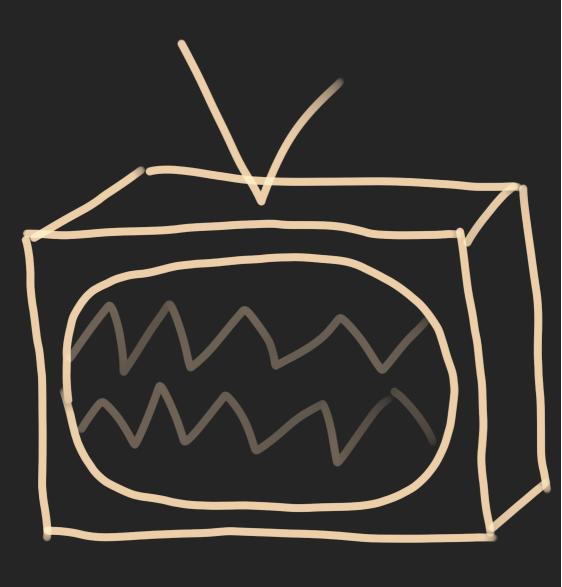


television and not a phone screen. It's a kind of eroticism that's more slow-paced and meditative and it can feel difficult to know how to engage with if you're used to contemporary porn, but that's also part of what I like about it.

I will leave instructions for how to watch these movies in the description.

It's not that I think porn from the seventies is perfect or that Ersties is perfect or that modern mainstream porn isn't fun and sexy sometimes, but I worry with how limiting modern porn's view of sex can be and I'd rather have it exist as only a point in a broad and beautiful spectrum than be the only thing that is.

I believe sex is sacred. I believe our sexualities are created by God and through exploring our sexuality we come to better know God. And I believe that porn can be a powerful tool for learning about and expressing our sexuality. We deserve to have porn that is as diverse and expressive as



television and not a phone screen.

the food we eat and the music we listen to. We deserve to have porn that is beautiful and sexy and thoughtful and imaginative and challenging and above all honoring the part of God that lives within our sexuality.



the food we eat and the music we listen to.