

# Lesson 11

## Sex in Society: Pornography

### Reading 1

Arguments from ACLU president, Nadine Strossen, against censorship of pornography, from [“Nadine Strossen: ‘I find the pro-censorship feminists politically naïve.’”](#)

Q: So you oppose the antipornography feminists tactically and substantively?

Strossen: Right. And more than that, I do not see all pornography as conveying unmitigatedly misogynistic messages.

Q: You look at it yourself sometimes?

Strossen: I do. I find some of it physically beautiful, the way one might find paintings of nudes physically beautiful.

You know, what you see in a particular image is so subjective. Take the kind of image that feminists might find objectionable - an image that might convey a woman being raped, a woman not involved in voluntary sexual activity. If you read Nancy Friday's books of sexual fantasies reported by thousands of women, she says a significant theme is women being turned on by images of rape-not real rapes, of course. The way she explains it is that in a society where many women still believe it is bad for them to voluntarily want sex, these images are acceptable to them.

Obviously, I'm not going to defend the actual rape of a real woman for the purpose of creating a pornographic picture. But many supporters of MacKinnon and Dworkin do not just say that pornography causes rape, but that it is rape.

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Q: The antipornography feminists would say that your ideas on sexual literature are the end product of your oppression as a woman.

Strossen: I find that deeply insulting. That, to me, is degrading and dehumanizing. It's saying, "You are less than a human being. Your feelings are not really your own, your ideas are not really your own-and your body is not really your own." Well, what's left?