

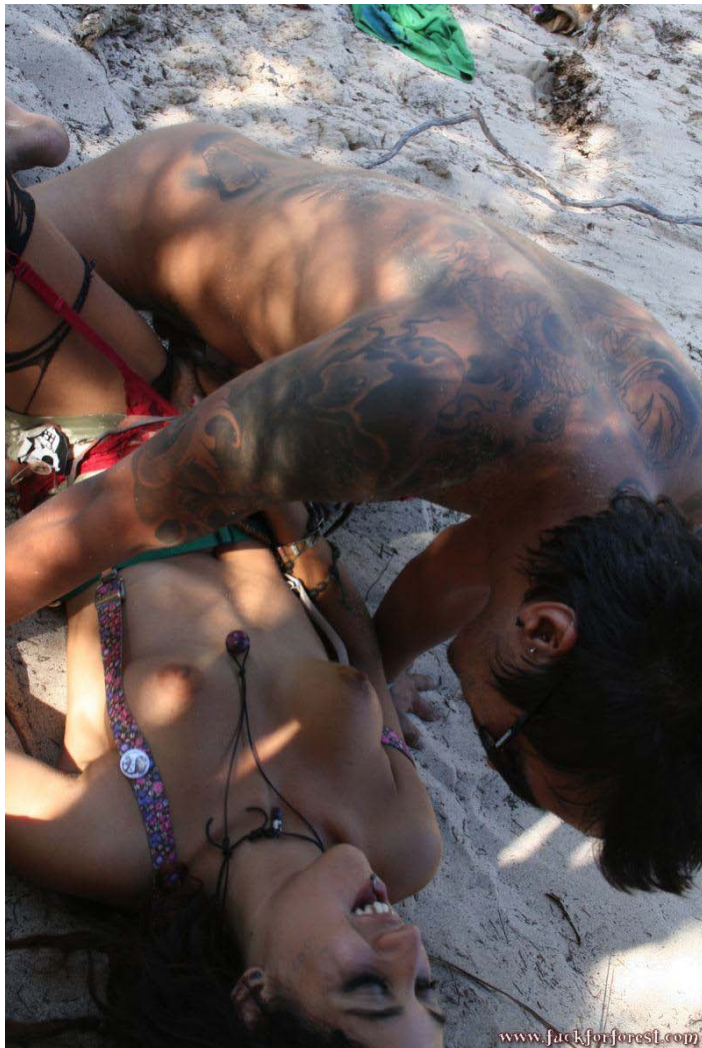
The Stimulus Plan Needs To Get Laid: Eco-Pornography and the Alt-Economy

Now that the economy has crashed, it might be a good time to rethink our nesting instinct, our relationship to the environment and our dependency on technologies to incite sexual desires. A recent article in the Economist confirmed that online dating sites are on the rise. Greg Waldorf of eHarmony.com reported a steep increase in membership on days that the Dow Jones Industrial Average had fallen by more than 100 points.ⁱ He believes that in these times of crisis we are simply falling back on our need for love and relationships, or expressing a desire to get carried away into mind-blowing sex affairs. Lucy Kellaway documented her own sexual escape in the *Financial Times* after she used an upmarket site for adultery, <http://www.illicitencounter.com>. She managed to have sex with 247 men, many of whom who had been hit by the crisis and suddenly had more time to play around—hedge fund managers, corporate lawyers, bankers and barristers. The London' site's membership from the financial sector had recently risen by 300 percent, and casual sex became a "hot recessionary activity." According to one analyst, this rise in membership means that the financial sector is suffering from risk-deficit and exploring an alternative domain for risk-tasking.ⁱⁱ

Perhaps we will now see that online sex and alternative or DIY pornography will peek in the era of economic downturn. Of course, a good section of the mainstream Porn industry (with capital P) has been hurt, as Larry Flynt of *Hustler* and Joe Francis of *Girls Gone Wild* pointed out by asking US Congress for a \$5 billion bailout. Even if Obama and his economic stimulus managers did reject this request, there is a desire from the new US executive branch for smaller organizations to engage in environmental thinking and to invest money in alternative-energy products. For sex activists, the recession could be a good time to push for a greening of the existing adult industries. Of course, many traditional leftists or activist would decline the offer to involve themselves in environmentally friendly sex activism. For example, the well-known left-wing radical Noam Chomsky has made a generic politically correct statement against pornography in response to being misrepresented in *Hustler* magazine. In the film *The Price of Pleasure: Pornography, Sexuality & Relationships*, which is directed by well-known anti-pornography scholar Chyng Sun, Chomsky makes clear through his statement that he knows very little about contemporary or alternative forms pornography nor the debates that surround them.ⁱⁱⁱ Unfortunately, his youtube presence may have a lot of sway in radical circles, even though his sparkling critical intellect seems to have been blind-sided in this instance.

But despite continuing pressure from the prurient left and right, the era of Obama has inspired entrepreneurs and alternative organizations alike to propose a sexual renewal and a use of the alt economy. Liz Langley wrote an inspiring article on Alternet.org in which she

listed the many sexual values and pornographic practices that are missing in Obama's green thinking. ^{iv} For instance, pornography on the Internet can be promoted as an eco-friendly industry since it has a minimal impact in terms of the paper used for film scripts, disposable sets and the environmental impact on locations. Small business ventures such as Dreamscape LLC, have begun recycling components of discarded sex toys, and Chicago's Antony Chicago's offers a 24-hour sex toy service delivered via bicycle courier. Traditional sexual products have been revamped for the "green economy": eco-friendly stimulants, phthalate and PVC-free dildos, solar vibrators, organic hemp ropes for bondage, fair trade aphrodisiacs, paddles made of glass or wood, organic soaps and lingerie, lubricants and vegan condoms are all now available. Eco-guidelines can of course be distraction rather than a stimulus to free sexual exploration, but overall we are witnessing a renewal of existing sex and porn industries.





A Dionysian proposal comes from the collective <http://fuckforforest.com> who want to use technology to produce a specific type of activist and open air “eco-pornography.” The site is run by a collective of three people whose base is Berlin, where the “inner circle” (Tommy, Natty & Leona) have created an open space for other FFF activists to visit and live for short periods. As Tommy and Feona explain: “We live in a technological society. To document your sexuality can be an exciting experiment and you can learn a lot from watching yourselves. It is also great to test out your borders and limits. Documenting sex for us is not

different than documenting any other experience. Many people like to film everything from weddings to funerals. We like to film sex.”

<http://fuckforforest.com> site is a pay porn site for people to learn about and support environmental activism and to access photos and videos of sex scenes in the outdoors. The collective solicits monthly membership fees, which are then redistributed to various environmental organizations. The site has more than a thousand supporters who pay USD 15 per month to gain access to the porn collection, or to become more actively involved. The site taps into the conventional genre of outdoors amateur pornography, but it differs from porn because it offers a politicized queer and women-friendly outlook. It has indeed attracted an eclectic demographic of browsers. As they explain: “There are many people visiting the FFF website and for many different reasons. Some people come because they want to see real natural people in a natural environment, but many members who support us fully because of the idea behind the project. We think most of the people who decide to stay as a regular supporter of FFF also are interested in nature and our expression. FFF tries to show a different side of sexuality than what is shown on normal erotic or pornographic websites and this also attracts different kind of people.”

The site explains that erotic/pornographic consciousness is a positive value in reclaiming our identities as harmonious to the natural environment, but this nature friendly consciousness is constantly under siege from Christian and conservative groups. Leona explains: “We have also bumped into some radical anti porn feminists who have had problems with FuckForForest because we make porn. We even had a bar fight with a group of crazy feudalistic anti-porn feminists. Or once I made a movie on the street with Tommy, for which he filmed me fingering myself and using a dildo. Three girls walked past and after a few minutes they got really angry. They told us that what we were doing was discrimination against women, as using a dildo symbolizes the penis of a man, and that can only mean that I as woman am depending on the man. But if I had just had used my fingers it would have been ok!”

Besides looking at snapshots of open air sex, we can read blogs about their visits to political activist conferences interlaced with reports of sex encounters with locals or other activists. The collective is unique in its open portrayal of daily desires and sex sessions, and that very force may be applauded as one of the hidden engines of cultural-economic renewal. There is a somewhat absurd or dream-like quality to the eco-pornographic mission: “Sometimes we think that it could have been a funny reality show. We end up in so many surreal and crazy situations with FFF trying to create a greener and sexier planet. It is definitely an adventure... But for some political left-wing people or even punks we are represent the evil force that misuses sex and people for the sake of money or pleasure.” Are they fucking for the converted only, or will they ultimately be able to seduce and convince the opponents, through a growing alt-porn framework?

ⁱ Connecting Up, March 26 2009, http://www.economist.com/business/displaystory.cfm?story_id=13381506

ⁱⁱ Lucy Kellaway, "When the going gets tough, the tough log in and play away",
Source Financial Times, december 8 2008, reposted <http://mail.kein.org/pipermail/nettime-l/2008-December/001070.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ Noam Chomsky on Pornography, The Price of Pleasure: Pornography, Sexuality & Relationships, Miguel Picker & Chyng Sun Associate
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNIRoaFTHuE>

^{iv} Liz Langley, 'Why using sex toys, watching porn and going green is an easy fit'
http://www.alternet.org/story/126664/why_using_sex_toys%2C_watching_porn%2C_and_going_green_is_an_easy_fit