



9

LEGO Porn: Phallic Pleasure and Knowledge

Shannon Brownlee

In the canonical *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the “Frenzy of the Visible,”* Linda Williams (1989) argues that pornography does not simply give pleasure; it is a discourse of *knowledge* about pleasure. In particular, she sees porn as a predominantly patriarchal discourse that investigates the mysteries of the female body’s sexual experiences and pleasures. Pornographic moving images centered on LEGO, most of which are stop-motion animation featuring LEGO minifigs and other bricks, may seem too frivolous to convey or perpetuate knowledge, but we can learn a lot about both LEGO and pornography from them. However, this is not a pornography that is primarily concerned with the secrets of the female body. It is phallic and phallogocentric. Grounded in the direct analogy between sexual penetration and the penetration of one LEGO brick by another, LEGO porn uses metaphors, allusions and the technical specificities of bricks to explore this theme of penetration. The results are often funny, sometimes disturbing, and they distance us both from conventional live-action porn and from much animated porn in ways that are—sometimes—smart and illuminating.

S. Brownlee (✉)

Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS, Canada

e-mail: Shannon.Brownlee@Dal.Ca

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History and Definitions of Cinematic and LEGO Porn

Although animated porn is almost as old as live-action cinematic porn (Capino 2018), because the latter is so much better known and is clearly a crucial reference point for animated porn (Saunders 2019, p. 250), its story bears telling. From the 1910s through the 1960s, stag films were short, silent, usually black-and-white, sometimes narratively incoherent films made by men (and the women they hired) solely for men; they were mostly live-action, although some included cartoon sequences (Penley 2006, p. 106; Williams 1989, p. 70). They were almost exclusively aimed at a heterosexual male audience, although they often featured girl-on-girl action¹ for the purposes of male titillation and very occasionally showed sex acts between men presented “in the context of heterosexual hegemony” (Waugh 1996, p. 310). Nonetheless, Constance Penley (2006) notes that American stag films also often made jokes at the expense of the main male character (p. 103) and emphasized female agency (p. 105). A major shift in cinematic porn history came in the 1960s, when beaver films (in which female strippers displayed their genitalia) and feature-length exploitation films paved the way for the so-called Golden Age of porn that began with *Deep Throat* (Gerard Damiano 1972). *Deep Throat* integrated feature-length, coherent narrative with explicit sexual acts; it was shot with sound and color and was first screened in a legal cinema to heterosexual couples as well as men on their own. Higher budget, narrative porn subsequently dominated the 1970s and continued through the 1980s and beyond, although budgets started to decrease around 1982 when features changed over to video from celluloid (Alilunas 2016). Since then, home video and, later, Internet distribution slowly coincided with another radical change in porn form. Tristan Taormino (2013) maps out the typical heterosexual, single-couple format of today: “two minutes of fellatio, two minutes of cunnilingus (this is *optional*), two to three minutes of the first intercourse position, two to three minutes of the second position, two to three minutes of the third position, external cum shot” (p. 258, emphasis in original). There are variations. Feature-length porn

is still produced—"Feature" is a well-stocked category on adultvdempire.com—although it is the exception rather than the rule, and some narrative endures in shorter formats such as the PropertySex subgenre, in which randy real estate agents hearken back to the pizza delivery boys of yore. Overall, though, the narrative, feature-length porn of the 1970s and 1980s was "merely an entr'acte" (Schaefer 2002, p. 4) in the history of a cinematic form that is usually only minimally narrative and much shorter than feature length.

It is difficult to determine when LEGO porn entered the picture. Perhaps people built figures out of the first interlocking LEGO bricks and made them perform sex acts; perhaps the introduction of minifigures in 1978 inspired LEGO sex play; perhaps these experiments were filmed on 16 and 8 mm home movie cameras. We can only speculate that pornographic moving images featuring LEGO *proliferated* with the ubiquity of consumer-grade analogue and digital video production technologies. John Baichtal (2011) facetiously but maybe not inaccurately links the filming of LEGO sex play to online distribution: "Lego minifigs have been forced to hump one another by 8-year-old boys since day one, but with the wonders of the internet, these lewd fantasies have been turned into videos, web sites, and photos." The oldest LEGO-based pornographic moving images located during this research were posted to YouTube on December 26, 2006 (hellsvenom299 2006a, b), but the form may have existed before.

Although varied, LEGO porn is recognizable as an amateur genre that follows certain broad patterns. The vast majority of pornographic moving images featuring LEGO are stop-motion animation,² and most use minifigs as "porn stars." I have written elsewhere about the aesthetics of amateur stop-motion LEGO animation (Brownlee 2016), and LEGO porn conforms to general principles. Movement may be fairly sophisticated, though it is often extremely rudimentary, with frame rates of 1 or 2 per second. The professionalism of focus, lighting and camera mobility all vary from film to film. Sound often consists solely of a music track, which is simple to lay down once the images have been captured, but may be a more complicated composition of dialogue (and grunting and moaning), music and sometimes other sound effects. These more complicated soundtracks approximate the multi-track

design of professional narrative cinema, although they still usually sound amateur in their simplicity and/or relatively low-quality recording. Dialogue is perhaps more common in LEGO porn than in other forms of LEGO animation because the voice is so effective at communicating pleasure and arousal. None of these features, however, is unique to LEGO porn.

Like other genres of amateur filmmaking as well as pornographic film, LEGO porn is an extremely ephemeral kind of cinema. By far, the largest repository of LEGO-based pornographic moving images is on YouTube, but the site removes videos regularly for violating its Nudity and Sexual Content Policies (2018): During this research, several videos have become inaccessible. Several others, although not discernibly different in content, are age-restricted although, ironically, the voice acting of many LEGO porn films suggests they have been made by prepubescent children or teenagers. It is not clear how YouTube applies its sexual content policies to LEGO porn, but we can guess that removals and age restrictions result from user complaints and flags. While LEGO porn can be found on other sites such as Vimeo and Pornhub and does not appear to be subject to such censorship there, the vast majority of the form today is framed by YouTube's apparently fairly arbitrary application of policies and is thus an unstable archive.

Defining the form is a correspondingly debatable process. Pornography is notoriously difficult to define, and this chapter does not aim to get entangled in these debates. Williams (1989) defines hardcore cinematic porn pragmatically as "the visual (and sometimes aural) representation of living, moving bodies engaged in explicit, unusually unfaked, sexual acts with a primary intent of arousing viewers" (p. 30). This is broadly useful even though in animated porn the unreal bodies and frame-by-frame creation of movement undermine the "living" and "unfaked" nature of the acts. Nonetheless, Williams's (1989, p. 70) and Penley's (2006, p. 106) seamless integration of animated sequences in their discussions of predominantly live-action porn suggests that this liveliness and realness may not be so important after all. Furthermore, in some ways, animated porn simply takes the excess of live-action porn to its logical conclusion. As Capino (2018) states: "The sexual plenitude of live-action's pornotopia is surpassed by animation's superhuman

capacity for producing bodies, sexualities, and desires.” Although animated porn is “paradoxical” in its “lack of bodies and sexuality,” it is “real enough to become the subject of angry protests and serious lawsuits” (Capino 2018). As far as LEGO porn is concerned, the Urban Dictionary (2017) provides the only current definition, and a thin one at that: “Images of Lego minifigures engaging in sexual maneuvers and positions.” This is not entirely accurate: Video uploaders also apply tags and titles like “lego porn” to films that feature live-action humans or larger LEGO figures built of a range of bricks rather than minifig elements. In general, though, there is a pragmatic consensus that LEGO porn is the representation of sex acts involving LEGO, and it is not legally important or socially prominent enough to have come under scrutiny and for its definition to have been refined.

There is also a general consensus about the social value of LEGO porn in the discourse surrounding it: It is puzzling, perverse and troubling, but also fascinating and amusing. A post on Mommyish.com includes a series of standalone images and screen captures from higher-quality LEGO porn videos, and the introduction encapsulates a common attitude to LEGO porn:

I’ve started looking at Lego porn, and I am addicted. I may need to go to a meeting, perhaps a sub-chapter of Sex Addicts Anonymous. Once you delve into this amazing Lego porn, you’ll probably become an addict too. And then you’ll be looking at it all the time in the bathroom on your iPhone, and everyone will be ashamed of you, and you’ll probably lose your most important relationships.

So check out this Lego porn at your own risk. If you fall down a slippery shame spiral and become sexually attracted to Legos, that’s really not my problem because I told you not to. If you need help with your addiction, you’re going to have to seek out other Lego lovers that are into freaky freak plastic porn because they are the only people that can help you now. (Ramos 2017)

While titillation here is facetious rather than palpably authentic, usually it is more straightforwardly demonized. For example, user comments on the compilation video *Inside the world of Lego porn* (beautiful pics 2017) include “Uhhh I’m highly concerned for people who search

this stuff up.....” (TT theGE 2018) and “i regret searching this up” (Crappy Productions 2018). DeathLord402 (2016) comments in his reaction video that “I literally want to kill myself” after stumbling on LEGO porn and that “even sadder” is the fact that people probably think LEGO porn is hot. And YouTube vlogger AngryChimp (2016) states: “I don’t understand the point. Do people really get off on this stuff? Is there someone, some sad man wanking somewhere over some LEGO porn or some Minecraft porn? I’m guessing there must be.” But he also states (2017) that his first video about LEGO porn is the most popular on his channel; clearly LEGO porn fascinates, even if it is seen as a travesty.

The fan culture around LEGO porn, then, is ambivalent: Arousal is vilified and projected elsewhere, while disgust, outrage and amusement are avowed by the writer or speaker. The primary confessed intent of LEGO porn is also to amuse and/or disgust rather than to arouse, as LEGO pornographers most frequently categorize their videos on YouTube in the “Comedy” or “Entertainment” genres. However, while user comments sometimes confirm that the joke finds its audience, more frequently they proclaim outrage. Nonetheless, it seems hard to imagine that the responses of real, living people are not more ambivalent and complex than single-line comments or single-word tags suggest. It is important to see these tags and comments less as authentic and exhaustive testaments to the ways people really feel and more as performative moments in a discourse that surrounds images (and sounds) of LEGO sex. In this discourse, the configuration of emotions and responses is different from Williams’s “living, moving bodies” in “explicit, unusually unfaked, sexual acts with a primary intent of arousing viewers,” (p. 30) but arousal is still part of the discourse. It is simply disclaimed, perhaps disavowed, while what remains is an intensely emotional response of disgust or amusement or both.

This is reminiscent of the discomfort that more famously surrounds “cloppers,” a subset of adult male fans of the television show *My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic* (MLP). Cloppers create and/or consume erotica featuring the show’s equine characters and are commonly accused of pedophilia and “pornifying” (Jones 2015, p. 122) the series. Animated porn has recast children’s characters such as Snow White and Mickey

Mouse in sexual scenarios throughout its history (Capino 2018), but the clopper phenomenon is particularly revealing for its contemporaneity, similarities and differences from LEGO porn. First, although very few adult *MLP* fans engage with this erotica, many complain that “this marginal activity gets so much attention due to its distastefulness it becomes read as representative of all adult, male *MLP* fans” (Jones 2015, p. 122). LEGO porn is far more marginal to LEGO fandom than cloppers’ work is to the discourse around *MLP* fandom, so adult fans of LEGO (AFOLs) are not subject to the same accusations of perversion, and the more unilaterally horrified responses to cloppers contrast with common hilarity in response to LEGO porn. This difference may be due in part to a technical difference between the two forms. *My Little Pony* porn is often technically reminiscent of live-action porn insofar as the 2D animation allows pornographers to portray the characters in a range of sexual positions and to add sexualized attributes such as breasts to the ponies; it thus falls into a long line of animated porn that takes advantage of the malleability of cel animated shapes and movements (Capino 2018) and, more recently, of computer-generated animation (Saunders 2019, pp. 243–244). On the other hand, as we will see in the next section, LEGO porn is constrained by the materiality of bricks that were not designed for representing sexual acts. Indeed, the resistance and limitations of the LEGO medium are central to its pornographic applications. Nonetheless, responses to both *MLP* and LEGO porn attest to similar rather hysterical disgust with the juxtaposition of adult sexuality and a child’s toy.

LEGO Sex

Against this cultural backdrop, the texts of LEGO porn videos follow certain trends. LEGO porn contains many of the key features of its live-action cinematic counterparts such as money shots (shots of ejaculation) and porn sound conventions (moans, sex-oriented dialogue and porn groove music), but there are also idiosyncratic aspects of the subgenre, some of them related to but not determined by the shapes of LEGO bricks and minifigs. For example, money shots are common

in LEGO porn, as filmmakers use bricks, modeling clay, cotton balls and other props to represent semen; however, these shots are not nearly as ubiquitous as they are in live-action porn. I focus on a few particularities of LEGO porn. The first and most important is the direct sexual analogue to the fundamental principle of LEGO: the penetration of one brick by another. This analogy plays out in phallogocentric terms, which raises questions about heteronormativity and the places of gender and sexual diversity in LEGO porn and LEGO culture more broadly. In addition, minifigs' size, shape and stiffness—pun intended—seem to have an impact on the popularity of certain positions and sex acts over others as well as popular ways of photographing them, and the use of sound attests to a range of both sexual knowledge and nostalgia. Different LEGO pornographers relate to these topics in different ways, but these are the main forces that shape the subgenre of LEGO porn.

The video *(18+?)Lego porn* by Minifigure Torture (2018) encapsulates the analogy between the LEGO studs' penetration of grooves and the interpenetration of bodies during sex. It features LEGO Brick Suit Girl and LEGO Brick Suit Guy from Minifigure Series 18. Instead of the regular minifig body, the characters are "dressed" as upended 2×3 bricks, with studs on the front and grooves in the back. Minifigure Torture has stuck them together, male behind and female in front, and animated them so that Brick Guy's rocking motion pulls Brick Girl off her feet and then sets her down on the ground again. This explicit sex scene is intercut with live-action footage of two human hands putting together and taking apart, in the same rhythm, standard 2×4 bricks of the same colors as Brick Girl and Guy. The sound here is not the moans or porn groove music that dominates most LEGO porn soundtracks but the sound of bricks being pulled apart and put together, underscoring the materiality of LEGO rather than sexual acts. As the scene goes on, the smile on Brick Girl's face changes to a look of consternation, while Brick Guy continues to smile. Finally, Brick Girl falls face forward onto the ground, a tube of grey modelling clay stretching from Brick Guy's crotch area into Brick Girl's anal area, connecting them in what reads as a money shot. We then cut to the hands pulling apart the 2×4 bricks with a similar tube of modeling clay between them, and the video ends. This video maps LEGO onto sex more directly than others,

to the extent that the assembly of standard LEGO bricks produces ejaculate, but the metaphor is one of the foundational pleasures and jokes of LEGO porn.

When the analogy between brick and sexual penetration is less overt, the fundamental logic and irony of much LEGO sex come to the fore. LEGO sex scenes are very predominantly phallocentric, but penises are usually implicit. In their absence, penetration seldom actually takes place, and animated movement is the only visual sign of sex. Moaning, dialogue and other sounds can play a crucial role here in making the sexual content explicit, especially when the animation is rudimentary. In these cases, the lack of contact and penetration seems to concretize Jacques Lacan's (1999) famous claim that "there's no such thing as a sexual relationship" (p. 12), no immediate or natural sexual relationship, just signification and fantasy. We can only speculate that the ambivalent enjoyment of LEGO porn may be a space to acknowledge sexual alienation, safely disavowed through comedy. These videos, haunted by penetration but incapable of actualizing it, highlight both the absurdity of LEGO sex and potentially of sex more generally.

In about a quarter of LEGO porn videos, on the other hand, filmmakers work imaginatively—a Lacanian may say desperately—to overcome the absence of LEGO minifig penises and thus create work that is indubitably phallocentric. Sometimes filmmakers make penises out of modeling clay or some similar material; at other times, they use LEGO pieces such as antennae with rounded tops (part 3957³). Occasionally, builders are even more exacting. For example, in *LEGOPORNO*, John Carlsen (2018) takes the minifigs apart in order to make them more anatomically accurate, after a fashion. He sandwiches LEGO part 3700, a 1 × 2 brick with a hole in its face, between the male minifig's legs and torso; it holds a bar that protrudes out of his front and into the hole of LEGO part 2444, a 2 × 4 plate with a hole below it that is sandwiched between the female minifig's legs and torso. The holes and antenna disappear after sex. The irony here is that the insistence on anatomical completeness distorts the figures into inhuman shapes: Sex makes the human form grotesque, and normalcy is only restored afterward. Although John Carlsen's video is an extreme example, most videos clearly convey the idea that a penis on a minifig

is unnatural but important. If LEGO porn were entirely determined by the shape of LEGO minifigs rather than phallogentric logic, one could expect pornographers to use the convenient minifig hands as tools of penetration, but they almost never do. Nonetheless, LEGO porn phallicism is not that of po-faced patriarchy but of often puerile delight and hyperbole. The penis is privileged but bizarre: 75% of the time it is invisible, and when it is visible, it is potent but farcical.

Another grotesquerie in the interests of sexual precision is the way many LEGO pornographers use the top set of grooves in the backs of minifigs' legs as bodily orifices into which penises, tools and even light sabers (MiniHeroes182 2010) can be thrust. Although dialogue will occasionally indicate that the hole represents an anus (e.g., sick-mcc 2009; Тёмный свет 2017), it is usually not clear whether these grooves are anuses, vaginas (when the minifigs are female) or both—or some LEGO orifice that has no exact equivalent in human anatomy. Or, more precisely, the holes *both* represent human orifices *and* offer a fantastical, LEGO-specific plenitude of permeability: porn stars with *four* holes! LEGO is literally polymorphous, its shapes adaptable, and in a sexual context, this enables a kind of infantile polymorphous perversity that exceeds the phallicism of the subgenre without genuinely undermining it. All of these manipulations of the minifig, from the miming or building of penises to the use of grooves in the legs, attest on the one hand to a desire to present sex as anatomically accurately as possible, especially through the heteronormative synecdoches of male as penis and female as “hole,” and on the other hand to hyperbolize through the adaptability of LEGO. It attests to an anatomical curiosity explored through the distorting lens of LEGO and to a curiosity about the sexual and anatomical potential of LEGO itself.

Although minifig morphology does not dictate the sexual acts of LEGO porn, the convenient and visible orifices in the backs of minifig legs likely influence the fact that rear-entry sex is the most common sexual position in LEGO porn. About three-quarters of LEGO porn videos feature this position, while less than half feature the second most common position, fellatio. Another reason for its popularity is likely the fact that minifigs bend forward at the hips, while their legs do not spread laterally. Minifigs' “stiffness,” so different from the fluidity of cel

and computer-generated animated porn stars, thus provides an image of phallic rigidity while also limiting the acrobatics of sex acts. Animating rear-entry sex is also clear and simple: The figure in front, bent over to greater or lesser degrees, does not need to move (e.g., MADxMovies 2009). The effect is that rear-entry sex creates an impression of passivity in the figure in front, even of reluctance or lifelessness. The grimace on Brick Girl's face near the end of Minifigure Torture's (18+?) *Lego porn* is an explicit image of the power imbalance that is coded into many of the scenes. This power imbalance is also gendered: Cunnilingus, as Taormino notes about live-action porn, is optional—in LEGO porn, quite rare. LEGO porn thus shows a preoccupation with phallic pleasure and active penetration that is underpinned, though not determined, by the design of LEGO minifigs.

The other side of the phallic metaphor is that occasionally LEGO sex is represented as a destructive force. In such videos, the process of taking apart LEGO bricks after a build is parallel to the “petite mort” of orgasm. Narratives end in chaos; landscapes end in rubble; and sexuality is linked to the death drive, to the dissolution of the autonomous self through sex: Taking apart LEGO is a metaphor for sexual experience and a way of performing what is otherwise personal, internal and sometimes even invisible. Williams (1989) argues that the lack of visible evidence of *female* orgasm is the concern of much porn, but in LEGO sex, it is primarily male orgasm that elicits visual metaphor. At times, the destructive frenzy is concentrated in the minifig itself: In johannessmorra's *Lego Porn* (2009), for example, a threesome ends with a minifig's head popping off. In hazabaza96's *LEGO porn...* (2010), the male figure rides his female partner from the back too hard, punting her like a pool ball across the room and popping her head, torso and legs apart; her pathetic cries for help drive home the gendered violence. At other times, the violence exceeds the bodies and wracks the whole LEGO world (e.g., bmxassholes 2008; Satyramaniacal 2010). We could connect destructiveness to Leo Bersani's (1987) argument that sexuality is the movement “between a hyperbolic sense of self and a loss of all consciousness of self” (p. 218). However, the recurrence of gendered violence and lack of consent and the reinscription of male sexuality as stereotypically, inherently violent also bear out Bersani's crit-

icism of the heteronormative-patriarchal *devaluation* of sexual passivity (p. 217) and self-shattering. Ultimately, phallic violence in LEGO porn mostly affirms the integrity of the penis at the expense of the penetrated character or world.

The ubiquity of penetration and uncoupling, both literal and metaphorical, is patently phallocentric, but the gender landscape of LEGO porn is not simple. LEGO's own prioritization of male minifigs over female shapes this gender landscape, although the extent of the prioritization is debatable. We must usually determine LEGO minifigs' gender identities based on normative markers such as hairstyles, costume, makeup and, where applicable, identifiable character from a known story world such as *Harry Potter*. Relying on such markers is unsatisfying: A short-haired, cosmetics-free LEGO minifig could realistically be a cisgender woman, or a cisgender male could have long hair. In practice, though, gender markings are generally used and understood very normatively. To complicate matters, there is disagreement about whether minifigs without clear gendered features are gender neutral/fluid or simply unmarked males. In his impressive compendium of LEGO minifigs through the decades, Jesus Diaz (2013) reads the first minifigs, who lacked either long hair or facial hair, as male. On the other hand, Maia Weinstock (2012), David Pickett (2012) and Ramblingbrick (2016) have done meticulous studies of the gender breakdowns of LEGO minifigs, and all "gave TLG [The LEGO Group] the benefit of the doubt and counted as gender neutral any minifigs lacking definitely masculine (facial hair) or feminine (lipstick, eyelashes, cleavage) traits" (Pickett 2012). Despite this conservatism, all three find that LEGO has statistically favored male minifigs. Pickett finds that only 8.9% of minifigs released between 1989 and 1999 were definitively female while 33.4% were definitively male. Weinstock finds that 15% of minifig heads on BrickLink.com in 2012 were female while 57% were male. And Ramblingbrick's study of LEGO City shows that between 6 and 13% of minifigs released between 2011 and 2014 were female, while 23–47% were male. These findings reinforce Baichtal and Meno's (2011) more general claim that male minifigs outnumber female 18:1 (p. 57), presumably counting "neutral" minifigs as male. I myself read "neutral" minifigs as unmarked males, in part because the company

has clearly not earned the benefit of the doubt that Weinstock, Pickett and Ramblingbrick grant it. No doubt some individual LEGO fans do genuinely interpret the “neutral” figures as such—and even assign genders in contradiction to the normative markers of hair, makeup and costume. Nonetheless, the male bias in LEGO minifigs is indisputable even if it is not unvarying or uncomplicated.

This is no doubt a contributing factor of one of the more surprising and yet disregarded aspects of the subgenre: its representation of same-sex sex acts. Sex scenes with multiple female minifigs are extremely rare, even in threesomes with a male minifig involved. This is striking in light of the ubiquity of girl-on-girl scenes in live-action porn through the ages. I have located only a handful of LEGO pornographic moving images that feature sex between women, usually very briefly. Significantly, this rare form of LEGO sex appears in *gang bang lego loving sluts* (paulaskitchen 2008), the only LEGO porn video I have found whose authorship is explicitly coded female: Two female minifigs introduce themselves as “the only lesbians in the village” who are “not ashamed” and demonstrate their intimacy with pride. This video is unique on other counts, as a female minifig uses a strap-on to penetrate a male minifig, who seems to enjoy the experience, and a range of female sexual subjectivity (including enjoyment of heterosexual sex and bestiality) is explored. Although it is not always appropriate to connect filmmakers’ gender identities directly with the content they produce, in this case it is not too simplistic to say that the filmmakers, credited within the video as Paula Scott and Rebecca Shutt, represent lone female, feminist voices in a subgenre that is otherwise phallocentric and sometimes misogynist. That said, LEGO pornographers almost never fall into the porn cliché of girl-on-girl action aiming to titillate a heterosexual male viewer.

Almost a third of the videos sampled, however, included intercourse between what I read as two or more male-coded minifigs. About half of these are undeniably same-sex scenes, with two or more participants clearly marked as male through costuming, voices, titling, or because they involve identifiable characters such as Darth Maul; the other half involves “gender neutral” figures who can plausibly be interpreted as male. Still others (e.g., MegaBallsackface 2012) show heterosexual

minifig couples voiced by boys and thus come across as same-sex sex acts on the auditory level. None of this suggests that LEGO porn is an untapped gay cinema resource—far from it. First, just as we need to differentiate lesbian porn made by and for lesbians from girl-on-girl sex filmed for heterosexual male viewers, we also need to distinguish porn by and for gay men from merely fortuitous same-sex sex acts in LEGO porn. Even when the same-sex scenes are not unintentional or unremarked, some videos (e.g., sickmcc 2009) frame the same-sex sex acts as rape or punishment rather than a source of pleasure between consenting participants. Gay practices may also be framed as a joke: Half the videos that uploaders have categorized as “Comedy” contain same-sex sex acts, while other more neutral categories, such as “Film & Animation” and “People & Blogs,” feature less same-sex sex. The significance of this categorization can be overstated, since some of the videos categorized as comedies predominantly involve heterosexual sex, but there are a few, such as *Lego gay porn* (taking tolet 2015), whose categorization as a comedy is clearly homophobic. On the other hand, sex between male minifigs is usually presented without comment about the genders of the performers. It would be excessive to praise LEGO porn for the naturalization of gay sex, but this is one (presumably unintentional) result of the largely homosocial environment of the LEGO minifig world. One can only hope that a few gay viewers find pleasure and affirmation in such scenes.

The next major marker of LEGO porn relates to the small size of the LEGO minifig and has an impact on the kinds of knowledge that circulate in this subgenre. In live-action porn, the production of knowledge often takes the form of close-ups on faces in orgasm or organs in action. However, staging a close-up on a minifig is technically difficult, as it may require special equipment such as a macro lens. Only the highest quality LEGO animation of any genre features close-ups, and when it does, it is often prompted by specific, live-action visual reference. For example, high-quality animated LEGO remakes of live-action film material may feature close-ups, although even here, the camera often frames LEGO minifigs from a slightly greater distance than it frames their live-action counterparts (see 22 Bricks 2017; Toscano Bricks 2015; WideSquare Media 2018).

A less professional-looking LEGO remake such as Squash the Brickfilmer's version of the trailer for *The Force Awakens* (2014) demonstrates the difficulty of achieving crisp focus when a LEGO minifig is close to the camera. Consequently, LEGO porn is predominantly a pornography of full-body—and often fully clothed—sex acts. In the absence of the close-up, these full-body configurations speak more to sexual positions and broad trends than to the specifics of particular actions. This is part of the reason that sexual positions are so significant in this subgenre. While live-action porn often magnifies anatomical details, LEGO porn has the opposite effect, pulling the camera away from the action and satisfying a different kind of curiosity.

Another feature of LEGO porn is its self-reflexivity and nostalgia. LEGO porn sometimes features a porn shoot (e.g., DamDam Andros 2018; Satyramanical 2010), shows characters watching porn (e.g., ItalicSix 2013; Meush 2013) or includes parodies of adult content warnings (e.g., HenDeadly 2007; vincentino1977 2008). It may even be self-referential in ways that have nothing to do with porn; for example, minifig performers may bow to the camera as if they were in a stage play (e.g., johannessmorra 2009; vincentino1977 2008). Second, the prevalent use of porn groove music, associated primarily with Golden Age porn, distances LEGO porn from contemporary conventions while nostalgically referencing the 1970s. This nostalgia is reinforced by the fact that LEGO porn is so often funny. Nina K. Martin (2006) notes that the porn of the 1970s often integrated comedy; however, as narrative has dwindled in porn, so has comedy. Instead, porn is now “deeply invested in seriousness, and much of porn’s lack of humor relates to cultural understandings of patriarchal power, a power that is rigorously maintained by equating the sight/site of the penis with awe. Porn conventions emphasize not only the size of the penis, but its requisite, and often perpetual hardness” (Martin 2006, p. 193). Comedy has not entirely disappeared from porn: The Adult Video News Awards or “porn Oscars” include categories such as Best Parody and Best Comedy, but these are often associated with nostalgia and an older audience (Meikle 2015, p. 128). However, while humor is not as ubiquitous as it was in the 1970s, LEGO porn keeps the tradition alive. Although it is deeply invested in patriarchal power and the supremacy of the penis—and

no man is harder than a LEGO man—it is a subgenre that giggles knowingly. And it knows not only contemporary online porn, with its ubiquitous money shots and lack of narrative structure, but also the humor and music of the 1970s.

All of these issues, from phallocentrism and violence to the difficulties of the close-up, the distorting lens through which LEGO can represent sexuality, and the currency of 1970s porn come together in Satyramaniacal's exceptionally elaborate, 5-and-a-half-minute *Lego Porno* (2010). This video highlights trends in LEGO porn by conforming to some and departing from others. Its animation is minimal, moving at about 1 frame per second, but the set builds are large and detailed. The video begins self-reflexively with the filming of an infomercial for sexual lubricant in the factory that makes the product. A group of partygoers outside the factory finds their way inside; two heterosexual couples pair off to have sex although, unusually, later the two women have sex with each other. While one of the couples has sex, we cut to what appears to be a close-up. Overcoming the technical limitations of the minifig, here a large, disembodied female genital area is constructed of red LEGO plates inside and yellow plates outside with green tree limb elements for pubic hair (the visual pun on "bush" worthy of Radley Metzger's 1976 *The Opening of Misty Beethoven*). It is penetrated by a large yellow LEGO penis which, after a few thrusts, spews cotton ball ejaculate. This money shot exploits the potential of the LEGO medium to exceed what live-action porn can do: Because the LEGO vagina stays open, the LEGO penis can move in and out of it while ejaculating, circumventing live-action's need for external ejaculation as "proof" of male pleasure. The sequence is also carnivalesque, as an octopus, a horse and several minifigs emerge from the vagina before the camera dollies in on it to end the shot. These carnivalesque elements demonstrate how LEGO sex exceeds the sex acts of live bodies and also works metaphorically to represent pleasure—here, atypically, female pleasure as well as male—as the images of fireworks and bells ringing do in *Deep Throat*. We cut back to the couple having sex, implying that, although they are fully clothed, the close-up in some way represented their experience.

When the gigantic genitals make a reappearance in the climax of the video, however, they are not implicitly connected to any minifig

performer but rather disembodied, almost godlike forces. In the final sequence, a robot arm runs amuck, first raping the female couple having sex and then destroying the factory set. Washed out of the factory on a sea of cling film lubricant and cotton ball semen, the robot penetrates the leg grooves of various minifigs, accompanied by the sounds of Grieg's "In the Hall of the Mountain King." The gigantic penis then stabs downward from the sky, creating further chaos and destruction and spewing more ejaculate. This stabbing motion is live-action rather than animated: We even see a hand holding its base. When the shaft breaks, the hand picks up the diminished head and continues to stab the LEGO scene below. The sequence ends with the hand throwing down the gigantic LEGO "balls" followed by a bottle of Jack Daniels (still quite full). If the gigantic penis was a close-up before, here it is a monstrous, independent element. This is confirmed when we cut to the male minifig whose penis the "close-up" appeared at first to show: The gigantic vagina appears at the window and draws all the furniture up into itself with a sucking sound. With a male voice, the vagina announces itself as "Vaginator" and promises to "get" the minifig. As it consumes chairs, factory equipment and another minifig on a motorcycle, the camera shakes to heighten the effect. Finally, the male minifig is sucked into its opening, and the film ends with his gurgling the words, "Please, mother, noooooooooo." The close-up is turned inside out; the sexual organs overwhelm and consume the bodies of which they seemed at first to be only a part.

The Oedipal implications of gigantic, vengeful male and female genitals are not subtle, but they do capture the hyperbolic approach to sex common in much LEGO porn. This video is out of the ordinary for its inclusion of girl-on-girl action and a metaphorical representation of female pleasure. Its use of Grieg rather than porn groove music is also unusual, while the inclusion of rape is less unusual but still not absolutely typical. Most curiously, the ventriloquism of the giant vagina perfectly captures the impetus that Williams (1989) sees to be central to so much porn: the patriarchal will-to-knowledge that urges the female body "speak" its pleasures to male spectators. Here, that speech is literal, comic, threatening and overtly a product of *male* authorship. At the same time, the video's exploration of the destructive power of sexuality

and the varied and creative uses of LEGO as a medium of sexual representation are all exemplary of LEGO porn. The brutality of both the rapist robot arm and the deadly gigantic penis reflects the main preoccupation of LEGO porn—phallic power—while also proclaiming this power to be ludicrous.

Conclusion

One question perpetually asked of porn concerns its social value. LEGO porn does not offer the utopian model of healthy, varied, steamy, consensual performed sex for which feminist pornographers such as Tristan Taormino and Courtney Trouble are justifiably praised. Nonetheless, it is useful for its unreality, its self-referentiality and its excesses. Rebecca Saunders (2019), writing about amateur, computer-generated pornography, argues that the technical imperfections of the form “open up a space for critique” (p. 247) of mainstream, live-action pornography. In LEGO porn, it is specifically the technical limitations imposed by the bricks that, at times, distance us from its own naked phallicism. This phallicism is not specific to this subgenre, nor is it entirely determined by LEGO’s sexually analogous studs and grooves. In LEGO porn, we see the influence of a live-action industry still predominantly bankrolled by and created for heterosexual men in which the pleasures and subjectivity of women are often secondary and/or presented for the scrutiny of a heterosexual male spectator. But we also see the performative nature of porn, the unreality of porn bodies, the sometimes-puerile nature of phallic obsession and the way a homosocial world (in this case, the world of LEGO) contributes to imbalances of power and pleasure. Although I doubt most consumers of LEGO porn think deeply and critically about it, as it is framed as a perverse but throwaway form, the mixed outrage, amusement and fervent denial of arousal in their reactions suggest that it does, at least, provoke conflicting and intense emotions. And perhaps reflection can begin with ambivalence, especially when wrapped up in an entertaining package such as LEGO porn that, as Bethany Ramos writes, is curiously addictive.

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Notes

1. I distinguish between girl-on-girl action primarily intended for the pleasure of a heterosexual male viewer and lesbian porn usually made by and for lesbians which “directly address[es]” lesbians and “solicit[s] lesbian identifications” (Henderson 1992, p. 175).
2. Pornographic *still* images featuring LEGO are more diverse. Many are photographs of LEGO minifigs that could be stop-motion film stills. However, there are also many photos of naked humans surrounded by LEGO and drawings featuring figures that look more or less like LEGO minifigs. Although these are predominantly amateur productions, professional artists have also entered the fray, both intentionally and unintentionally (see made by virgins 2009; Miranda 2011; Summer 2014).
3. For the sake of precision, where possible I refer to LEGO design or element numbers to identify specific bricks. These numbers allow LEGO users to identify individual bricks both in LEGO’s official shop and on third-party sites such as BrickLink.com.

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