

**MORE GENDER, LESS PRESUMPTION  
CYBERSEX AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO  
A CULTURE OF VIOLENT SEXUALITY**

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**K I M S U R K A N**

In online genderqueer communities, there appears to be a degree of sensitivity to issues of sexual violence even as there is a strong commitment to maintaining freedom of speech and the right of all members to freely articulate their erotic fantasies in sex-positive spaces.

THE STUDENTS in my Introduction to Women's Studies class at a suburban community college are discussing an essay on adolescent female sexuality. Oddly enough, they don't have much to say. On sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace, they have plenty of thoughts; about fraternities and date rape, the conversation can barely be contained. But when the topic is sexuality, the room goes strangely quiet. They struggle for words; the culture, it seems, is saturated with images of sex, but it is surprisingly difficult to find a language for desire.

The experience gets me thinking. Most of the students in my classes were born in the 1980s; theirs is a generation steeped in the relentless stream of images and information emanating from an increasingly media- and consumer-focused society. The messages are conflicting and contradictory, from Nancy Reagan's Just Say No midleights antidrug campaign mantra to Dan Wieden's Just Do It ad slogan for Nike in 1988. There is no need to explain the virgin/whore conundrum to this audience; they've been peppered with it all their lives.

Underlying the just say no/just do it dichotomy is heterosexual presumption based on a static notion of gender identity. In this configuration, women are nothing more than the passive objects of male desire—their choices are to resist or respond to a man's advances. What's missing in this picture is what women themselves want, a sense of female desire independent of the well-worn scripts of conventional heterosexuality, which at best limit possibilities and at worst lead to sexual violence [see Kimmel, p. 139, and Miedzian, p. 159]. In order to truly transform the culture in which we live, we need radically new ways to think about and articulate desire. This isn't about male sensitivity or female assertiveness; it's a question of tearing apart the most basic assumptions about sex, gender, and sexuality.

We live in a society in which men are male, women are female, and everyone is presumed to be heterosexual based on those definitions—yet none of these "truths" are self-evident, and they drastically limit the possibilities for conceptualizing and articulating desire. Times, however, are changing. Over the last decade, a profound challenge to these assumptions has been made, giving a new face to sexual politics at the end of the twentieth century. Whereas lesbian feminists in the 1970s politicized sex by drawing a connection between compulsory heterosexuality and the patriarchal oppression of

women, today people calling themselves genderqueer are taking things a step further by refusing to be categorized as men and women in the first place. In so doing, they slam the door on the conventional understanding of sexuality, rendering the notions of hetero-, homo-, and bisexuality meaningless. Sexual power is being reconfigured in radically new terms, and much of it is happening online.

The challenge to binary thinking about sex, gender, and sexuality has coincided with the rise of the Internet as a popular means of communication. If discussions about sexual desire are not happening in the classroom, they *are* happening online—in chat rooms, on listserves, and in weblogs. In virtual spaces, Web users are finding the freedom to explore new sexual identities, desires, and practices in an uncensored way without inviting physical danger. In this sense, Internet technology has created a safe space in which gender roles can be critiqued and new dialogues about sexuality can (and do) take place. This essay considers several examples of genderqueer Web sites where these dialogues are taking place, evaluating the ways in which they are changing basic assumptions about sex and power that often foster sexual violence.

## CYBERSPACE AND THE FALSE PROMISE OF GENDER NEUTRALITY

During the 1990s, as the number of Internet users began to rise exponentially, cyberspace began to be touted as a utopian form of democracy, an environment in which users could be free of discrimination based on gender, race, age, or other visible markers of social identity. In interactive forums, the logic went, if people chose gender-neutral aliases or pseudonyms, there would be no way to tell what their sex was in real life. The promise was that cyberspace would revolutionize our social interactions by eradicating gender entirely. Online, gender would simply not matter. As it turned out, the result was quite the opposite: As more and more people began to log on and hang out in virtual spaces, it became apparent that users consciously gendered their online personas in chat rooms, MUDs (multiuser dimensions), listserves and bulletin boards. Whether or not each online persona matched up with the real-life gender identity of the person behind the keyboard, Internet researchers have observed that most people are no more comfortable with

gender neutrality in online conversations than they are with the ambiguously gendered in the real world.

As Lori Kendall observes in her essay on gender in MUD environments, characters who designate their gender as neutral are commonly understood as having neglected to describe themselves fully rather than having made a purposeful decision not to be categorized.<sup>1</sup> This reaction is encouraged by the convention of designating guest characters gender neutral by default when they log in. The expectation that everyone must be either male or female is carried over into online interactions, as Kendall points out: "No one encountering someone using the pronoun *e* is likely to believe that this expresses their 'true' gender, and is thus likely to treat the character's gender designation as a mere mask."<sup>2</sup> MUD users presenting gender-neutral characters are consequently often asked whether they are male or female in real life.

MUD environments in particular are highly social virtual locations in which people develop close relationships, both platonic and sexual, over time. Kendall's discovery, therefore, that great emphasis is placed on gender identity in these contexts is not as surprising as it is informative about how entrenched gender identity is in all social interaction, whether in real life or online:

Although individuals can choose their gender representation, that does not seem to be creating a context in which gender is more fluid. Rather, gender identities themselves become even more rigidly understood. . . .

. . . The online environment is not itself a solution. Understandings of gender and the hierarchical arrangements based on these understandings do not simply disappear in forums where we can't see each other. We carry these understandings with us and re-create them online.<sup>3</sup>

The revelation that gender neutrality in cyberspace was a false promise, then, is anchored in two observations: first, that users tend to recreate gender stereotypes as a shorthand way of making their characters socially intelligible (and in some cases sexually attractive) to others; and second, that even when consciously attempting to abandon gender, the online experience is always mediated through the knowledge of one's "real" (offline) gender identity.<sup>4</sup> Although technology's promise of a posthuman, nongendered virtual

existence is seductive in its offer of freedom from the limits of the body, Lisa Nakamura cautions that we must not abandon the specificity of lived bodies in imagining new cyberidentities:

This is the paradox: In order to think rigorously, humanely, and imaginatively about virtuality and the “posthuman,” it is absolutely necessary to ground critique in the lived realities of the human, in all their particularity and specificity. The nuanced realities of virtuality—racial, gendered, othered—live in the body, and though science is producing and encouraging different readings and revisions of the body, it is premature to throw it away just yet, particularly since so much postcolonial, political, and feminist critique stems from it.<sup>5</sup>

Rather than pinning our hopes on a false promise of gender neutrality associated with a theoretical posthuman virtuality, we should use the disembodied aspects of cyberspace to challenge ourselves to invent new and more specific language about gender, sexuality, and desire as they refer back to our lived experiences.

If totally eliminating gender is not an option, and if successfully performing male or female online means conforming to recognizable (and limiting) stereotypes of masculinity and femininity, how can we begin to think about new articulations of desire—either on or offline—that break away from the misogyny and sexism that so often lead to sexual violence? The answer coming from transgender activists and queer theorists is that we need to consciously identify and articulate more specific gender identities and sexual practices if we hope to have more freedom and autonomy in creating new mappings of desire.

## “MORE GENDER, MORE OF THE TIME”

Even within the field of queer studies, the understanding of desire has been limited by an insistent focus on categories of identity rather than sexual practice. As queer theorist Judith Halberstam puts it:

Surprisingly, we talk about sex—sexual practices and erotic variation—much less than we might imagine, and this is at

least partly because we talk a great deal about categories such as “lesbian” and “gay.” We almost seem to assume that particular practices attend particular sexual identities even as we object to the naturalization of the homosexual—heterosexual binary.<sup>6</sup>

The academic discussion of sexuality in terms of categories rather than practices limits the scope of sexual imagination and contributes to a political hierarchy of sexual behaviors from the sanctioned to the taboo. The inability to articulate desire outside of prescriptive definitions of lesbian, gay, and straight sex acts for fear of being deemed perverse or politically incorrect is disempowering and results in exactly the sort of silence that I encountered at the community college.

In contrast to the nonconversations happening in the classroom and in academic circles about desire and sexual practice, animated engagement with these topics is going on in certain segments of the queer community. By calling into question notions of appropriate sexual acts corresponding to conventional gender roles, such discussions enable new articulations of desire. As Halberstam notes:

The development of a new sexual vocabulary and a radical sexual discourse is happening already in transgender communities, in sexual subcultures, in clubs, in zines, in queer spaces everywhere. Female masculinity within queer sexual discourse allows for the disruption of even flows between gender and anatomy, sexuality and identity, sexual practice and performativity.<sup>7</sup>

Allowing for the possibility that gender expression does not necessarily have to map onto the biological sex of each person frees us from thinking of sex as merely gay or straight; instead, we can conceive of a range of practices that might be negotiated between people in a consensual relationship.

Transgender activist Dean Spade calls for “more gender, more of the time” in an essay that appeared in both the print zine *Cocksure* and on his Web site [makezine.org](http://makezine.org) in June 2002. Spade writes:

I don't see myself as falling into either of the imaginary two categories “man/woman,” and I don't approach the people I

want to fuck with those categories in mind. I am committed to an idea of gender that is about an ever-changing layering of gendered characteristics and perceptions, not at all about two poles, a continuum, or any boxes. Please don't understand me to be promoting "non-labeling." What I love is specific, detailed, stimulating, inventive uses of language to constantly re-inscribe and re-identify body and sex experiences, rather than simplistic terms that shut down conversations about how hot we all really are.<sup>8</sup>

Refusing to be shoehorned into a paradigm of four possible sexual identities (bi/straight/fag/dyke) based on two genders (man/woman), Spade also rejects the mythic promise of gender neutrality in his call for specificity. "If I'm chasing a scrawny, new-wave, eyeliner wearing faggotbutchswich lesbian, and a jocky-but-sensitive preppy trannyfag, and a tough-but-gentle punk activist translady top, how can that be made to fit me into one of four categories?" he asks. "Why would we want to do that?"<sup>9</sup>

Spade's position is fundamentally different from the gender-bending MUD player in that his gender fluidity is rooted in his own real-life transgender experience, rather than something he is performing solely in the context of a virtual environment in opposition to a "real" offline identity. The authenticity of Spade's transgender identity situates his comments within a genderqueer framework that enables a particular critical approach to questions of sexuality. The fact that Spade and other transgendered people are able to develop "a new sexual vocabulary and a radical sexual discourse" (in Halberstam's words) is greatly facilitated by the Internet, communication technology that enables conversation between people living at great distances from each other.

## SEX, PORN, AND CENSORSHIP

To date, feminists have been deeply divided on the implications of new digital communications technology; some arguing it is hindering rather than helping forge a more egalitarian sexual future for women by enabling the rapid distribution of pornographic images and promoting sex tourism, prostitution, and

trafficking in women and children. In fact, recent feminist debates over new media and Internet technology could be characterized as a revival of the sex wars of the 1970s and 1980s, in which antipornography activists like Andrea Dworkin and Catharine Mackinnon butted heads with sex radicals such as Susie Bright and Pat Califia. If anything, widespread use of the Internet has intensified arguments over freedom of speech and the censorship of sexually explicit materials, largely because of its contribution to the expansion of the porn industry [see Dines, p. 105].<sup>10</sup>

Attempts to regulate or censor sexually explicit material on the Internet have met with resistance from free speech activists, who argue that to do so is not only practically unfeasible but would also result in a colossal shutdown of valuable nonpornographic content as well.<sup>11</sup> The Hyde amendment to the telecommunications bill of 1995 (which was ultimately defeated) was one such example, a provision that Jonathan Wallace and Mark Mangan describe in *Sex, Laws, and Cyberspace* as "the worst nightmare of those committed to free speech on the Net." They argue that the amendment's treatment of cyberspace as a broadcast medium rather than a "constellation of printing presses and bookstores" would have disastrous consequences. "[The Hyde amendment] implemented a broadcast-style indecency standard, with no exceptions for material with scientific, literary, artistic, or political value. Therefore, it would ban serious discussion of rape, safe sex, or breast cancer on the Net."<sup>12</sup>

Although Wallace and Mangan do not dispute that there is some "very disturbing speech on the Internet," the solution they advocate is to "fight speech with speech" rather than censorship and implement client-side filters and controls rather than banning content from servers. The choice to access violent or sexually explicit text or images thus ultimately remains with the user; each individual can make his or her own decision about whether or not to see or read such content.

What we find in examining genderqueer and sex-positive Web sites is precisely this suggestion in action. Online communities of people interested in talking about nonnormative sexuality and desire are actively engaged in negotiating questions of censorship and freedom of speech issues in relationship to the content on the Web sites they visit. In an examination of conversations taking place on messageboards at Strap-on.org and in the LiveJournal

community from undressed, we can see how such communities make space for rape survivors, S/M sex radicals, and sex workers to respectfully and even playfully explore new articulations of desire.

## STRAP-ON.ORG

Strap-on.org is “a progressive, queer-centered, sex-positive, girl-friendly online community that started in November 2000,” according to the site’s mission statement. The central feature of the site is a massive messageboard, divided into sections called community, identity, body/mind/support, and diy (do it yourself) and media. Most of the site’s content is provided by community members, people who visit regularly and log in with a username of their choosing. An ezboard.com-hosted site, Strap-on.org has more than 3,800 registered members.<sup>13</sup> From the launch of the site in November 2000 through May 2003, more than 80,000 messages were posted. The site is expressly feminist, and it is managed by six administrators. On the About Us page, they describe the intent of the community and address the significance of its queer, sex-positive name:

Mostly, it’s a place for us to talk about personal, political, and other issues related to queer and feminist identities and ideas. and queer/punk music. or something. strap-on.org is a fun name and the domain was available.. it doesn’t mean we all necessarily like or use strap-ons. we come here to share and discuss and learn from each other. if you’re only here to solicit sex, look somewhere else.<sup>14</sup>

The primary purpose of the site is to foster discussion rather than to serve solely as a dating service or a source of online personal ads. The community section of the messageboard does include a forum called depictions and debauchery, however, which is denoted as the “official cruising section” and invites members to post pictures and declare and respond to crushes on each other. As is true on many bulletin boards and multuser journal sites, users may incorporate icons or thumbnail images of themselves in their signatures when posting. However, Strap-on.org has a policy against posting or

linking to nude images, which prevents the site from resembling the graphic online porn sites so prevalent on the Web. Other Strap-on.org policies establish ground rules for discussion that address issues of sexual harassment and other hate speech. The messageboard administrators reserve the right to ban users from the community if they do not comply with these policies, which are designed to make Strap-on.org a safe place in which to have discussions about sex, gender, and sexuality. They write:

strap-on.org is a girl-friendly and queer-positive (that means all queers) place for us to have fun, discuss stuff we care about, and support each other. disagreements, political debate, etc. are encouraged—but play fair. that means no sexism, racism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, classism, sizeism, ableism, etc.. it’s important to educate each other. but if you persistently post bigotry, you will be banned. if you post bigoted shit with the intent of humiliating or harassing other users, you will be banned. accounts that are created to make posts which look like they are from other users (imposters) will be banned. accounts that are created simply to harass other users will also be banned. these are very simple guidelines to follow and we hope you’ll understand that they are here for the safety, security, and general well-being of this space, not to stifle discussion.<sup>15</sup>

With this policy of discussion etiquette in place, the site has established an environment that enables frank and playful conversation among a wide range of people, many of whom would likely never encounter each other in real life.

Strap-on.org enables the sort of client-side selectivity that Wallace and Mangan advocate in lieu of censorship through clearly delineated, thematic message forums based on both identity and content. Visitors can choose which forums they want to read and respond to, and each forum includes specific guidelines for posting in that section. Some forums restrict posting to those belonging to specific groups, with the intent of offering members safe, exclusive spaces in which to discuss issues with others of similar backgrounds and identities. For example, separate forums exist for people of color, transgendered/transsexual/genderqueer people, fat people, working

class/poor people, gay/lesbian-identified people, femmes, people with mental illness, survivors of abuse, significant others, and sex workers. Although posting to identity-based forums is restricted to those who self-identify as members of those communities, the forums are not locked and may be read by anyone. Consequently, they serve not only as supportive spaces for people of particular identifications, but also as educational resources for others interested in those groups.

The surprising coexistence of explicit discussions of S/M sex practices in the let's talk about sex forum and threads on sexual abuse in the survivors forum suggests that Strap-on.org has succeeded in creating an inclusive space for radical sexual discourse. Undoubtedly, this is largely due to good moderation and the existence of the ground rules and guidelines established by the site administrators. The convention of adding the words "possibly triggering" to the subject line of a thread that might cause associations with prior sexual abuse is one example of accommodations that have been made on the site to enable users to avoid posts that might cause them distress. In several cases, requests for more careful labeling of potentially triggering posts initiated thoughtful dialogue about violence, erotica, and age-of-consent issues.

In the context of a site dedicated to the frank discussion of sexual practices that presumes nothing about its users' gender identities, participants often refer to each other solely by username and use gender-specific pronouns only when it is clear what gender expression is preferred by the individual in question. The prevalence of non-gender-specific usernames by many Strap-on.org members has the effect of separating sexual acts from the anatomical sex of the bodies performing them. The result is a practical example of the kind of reinscription of bodies and sexual practices Spade calls for in "More Gender, More of the Time."

The mediated discussion on the Strap-on.org messageboard is a good example of how open communication about sex on an online forum can be transformative, breaking down boundaries between people of different sexual orientations, gender identities, and race and class backgrounds. The frank and specific conversations occurring on the site document the positive potential of Internet technology to push the limits of our assumptions about sexual practice and gender identity that have until now left young women in particular caught in a polar virgin/whore sexual paradox. Such communities are

increasingly offering us new ways to think and talk about sexuality, which can only help in the quest to eradicate sexual violence.

## LIVE JOURNAL AND WEBLOGS

Another popular form of online dialogue can be found in online journals, sometimes also referred to as weblogs, or blogs. Like their bulletin board predecessors, they often are designed interactively to allow multiple users to respond to individual entries. Some of the most popular online journal communities geared toward sexuality and genderqueer populations today can be found on LiveJournal.com. LiveJournal was the accidental success story of University of Washington student Brad Fitzpatrick, who created the server software in March 1999 so that he and his friends could more efficiently post and respond to each other's online journal entries.

As word spread, more and more people opened online journals at LiveJournal.com. As of June 2003, more than one million accounts had been created and more than 400,000 users had updated their journals in the past thirty days. Of those reporting their gender, 62 percent say they are female, and most of them fall between the ages of fifteen and twenty-two.<sup>16</sup> LiveJournal hosts community discussion boards as well as individual journals, and the content on many of these boards resembles the frank discussion about sex and gender found on Strap-on.org.

The high numbers of teens and women actively posting on LiveJournal sites recalls Dale Spender's comparison of Internet technology with the telephone in her 1995 book *Nattering on the Net*. "The telephone is an integral part of the information infrastructure," she writes, "yet women's easy and ready use of this form of technology usually goes unnoticed."<sup>17</sup> Distressed by the technological gender gap that she found was limiting women's access to and use of computers, Spender argues that the history of the telephone as a key piece of communication technology is a good model for how women should view the Internet:

The telephone . . . has helped forge new networks and communities.

And this is how I would urge women to start seeing the

computer: as a means of communicating, of plugging into the biggest network to be devised, of making and maintaining friendships and contacts.

Computers are for nattering on the net.<sup>18</sup>

The friendships established online through LiveJournal sites do in fact carry over to real life; the sites are so popular in the queer and transgender communities that national activist conferences frequently designate social spaces for online friends to meet each other in person. Such real-life encounters establish a connection between the alternative virtual sexual and gender identities people construct online and the bodies that often perform them in the real world. The intersection of these cyber-identities with the actual embodiment of lived experience lends authenticity to the online conversations occurring on LiveJournal and other genderqueer Web sites.

Thousands of LiveJournal communities are devoted to a vast number of topics, ranging from music and other hobbies to sexual identities and support groups. Like Strap-on.org, LiveJournal community journal sites are moderated, and posting is often restricted to members who have joined specific communities based on a shared interest. Some individual journals are designated as closed forums and are restricted to viewers designated as the author's friends. The friends feature links individual users together, creating a massive web of journals on the LiveJournal site. Consequently, one is always just a click or two away from a radically different topic of conversation.

The decentralized aspect of Internet networks is illustrated in microcosm within the LiveJournal entries, as each individual may edit his or her own posts but not the posts of others. In May 2003, on a LiveJournal billed as *fm\_undressed*, a site dedicated to "tranny porn *fm style*," a controversy arose in response to one female-to-male transman's post of a piece of erotic fiction that several other users objected to on the grounds that it was a rape fantasy. They demanded that it be removed from the site. Although the author himself considered the story an example of "Domination by two Androgynous tops, on a femme female" rather than a rape narrative, he was flamed by a flurry of angry responses and the story was removed from the site. After more discussion, in which several community members defended his right to post the story on a journal site dedicated to transgender porn, the author restored the original fiction with a trigger warning at the beginning.<sup>19</sup>

What is most interesting about this incident is that it resulted in a change of policy on *fm\_undressed* regarding the format of all journal entries on the community board. Following the uproar, the moderators decided that all subsequent entries must include what is called an *lj-cut*. Each *lj-cut* creates a buffer between the reader and potentially offensive or traumatizing content by establishing a *hypertext skip* in the text from the initial introduction of an entry to its full posting on a second screen. In addition, a brief description of the content of the posting must accompany each *lj-cut* so "people can pick and choose what they would like to read and what they would not like to read." Like the trigger warnings implemented to enable survivors and others sensitive to sexual violence to avoid posts with S/M content on Strap-on.org, the *lj-cut* functions as an intervention between the reader and potentially triggering erotic stories. By mandating these *hypertext skips* for all posts on *fm\_undressed*, the moderators chose to enable client-side selectivity, as Wallace and Mangan suggest, rather than pursuing a strategy of outright censorship.

In online genderqueer communities, there appears to be a degree of sensitivity to issues of sexual violence even as there is a strong commitment to maintaining freedom of speech and the right of all members to freely articulate their erotic fantasies in sex-positive spaces. The peaceful coexistence of support groups, journals on gender identity, and discussions of sexuality and sexual practices within the LiveJournal domain points to a strong argument for moderation and negotiation of contentious entries through public discussion rather than censorship. Although some users will undoubtedly be alienated by what they see as political correctness on the part of their peers in determining what is and what is not appropriate, once again the decentralized nature of LiveJournal (and the Internet at large) always offers such people the option of moving to another interest community or starting their own on a topic of their choice.

## CONCLUSION

In thinking about the transformative implications of new technologies in relationship to sex, gender, and sexuality, it is important to make a distinction between the utopian promise of gender fluidity operating on a theoretical



level and the reality of how cyberspace is being used and by whom. Rather than focusing on an idealized notion of gender neutrality in cyberspace as the answer to discrimination and disempowerment, we should turn our attention to the specific diversity of alternatively gendered lives and their cyber-representations. As Web demographics continue to evolve, and a more and more diverse group of people begin to use the Internet on a regular basis, new conversations about gender and sexuality can be observed online. In many ways, this is less due to anything inherent in the technology itself than it is a byproduct of its function as a tool of communication.

Cyber-communities like Strap-on.org and LiveJournal's *fm\_undressed* are two examples of how genderqueer people online are profoundly stretching the limited discourse about sexuality and desire that has been available until now. Bringing like-minded people together electronically—people who might be geographically separated from each other but who are actually embodying and enacting alternative gender identities and sexual practices—the Internet accelerates dialogue and the development of new language, promoting new ways of thinking and writing about desire. By embracing Spender's notion of nattering on the net, Internet users of all genders and sexualities can capitalize on the opportunity this new technology presents to connect with and respond to others about potentially uncomfortable topics from a safe distance. In the end, I believe that it is precisely this sort of participation that we will find transformative in the ongoing quest to break the awkward silence around sexuality and establish a more creative, playful, and egalitarian language of desire.

## NOTES

1. Lori Kendall, "MUDder? I Hardly Know 'Er! Adventures of a Feminist MUDder," in *Wired Women: Gender and New Realities in Cyberspace*, edited by Lynn Cherry and Elizabeth Reba Weise (Seattle: Seal, 1996).
2. Kendall, "MUDder?," 217.
3. Kendall, "MUDder?," 221–222.
4. In a related argument, Lisa Nakamura has coined the term *cybertype* in order to discuss race in cyberspace. In her book *Cybertypes: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity on the Internet* (Routledge, 2002), she explains that the word describes "the distinctive ways that the Internet propagates, disseminates, and commodifies images of race and racism" (3). Cybertypes both reflect and produce identity stereotypes as they are collaboratively replicated again and again throughout the Internet.

5. Nakamura, *Cybertypes*, 7.
6. Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 113–114.
7. Halberstam, *Female Masculinity*, 139.
8. Dean Spade, Makezine.org, "More of the Time," accessed June 1, 2002, <http://makezine.org/ohi.html>.
9. Spade, Makezine.org.
10. Paul Keegan, "Prime-Time Porn," *Business 2.0*, June 2003, 97–103. In this story on Vivid Entertainment's CEO Steve Hirsch, a leader in the hard-core porn film and video industry, Keegan reported that "obscenity cases have proved increasingly difficult to prosecute . . . as digital technology and the pervasiveness of sexual imagery have weakened the Supreme Court's famous 1973 decision holding that 'community standards are the crucial factor'" (103). According to Keegan, Hirsch is hoping that widespread digital distribution of his porn videos will become a reality once broadband Internet TV is viable.
11. One famous example of such an argument was made by anticensorship feminist activists in the 1994 attempt by Carnegie Mellon University to ban many sex-related usenet groups from being accessed on campus. Donna M. Riley writes about the incident in greater detail in "Sex, Fear, and Condescension on Campus: Cybercensorship at Carnegie Mellon," in *Wired Women*, 158–168.
12. Jonathan Wallace and Mark Mangano, *Sex, Laws, and Cyberspace* (New York: Holt, 1996), 190.
13. Registration is free; visitors may establish either a local or global eboard account, which they can then use to log in and post messages. Although anyone hitting the site can read messages, registered members are only counted as belonging to the Strap-on.org community when they first post to the messageboard, so the number of members represents the total of those who have actually contributed to the conversation. One can surmise that a larger number of visitors read the board but do not log in or post responses.
14. Strap-on.org, "Frequently Asked Questions," accessed June 5, 2003, <http://www.strap-on.org/faq.html>.
15. Strap-on.org, "Messageboard Policy."
16. LiveJournal.com, "LiveJournal Statistics," accessed June 6, 2003, <http://www.livejournal.com/stats.html>.
17. Dale Spender, *Nattering on the Net: Women, Power, and Cyberspace* (North Melbourne: Spinifex, 1995), 191.
18. Spender, *Nattering*, 192.
19. LiveJournal.com, "fm\_undressed," accessed June 6, 2003, [http://www.livejournal.com/community/fm\\_undressed/](http://www.livejournal.com/community/fm_undressed/).

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## **ORGANIZATIONS TO CONTACT**

There are hundreds of organizations in the United States working on issues related to *Transforming a Rape Culture*. The following list includes just a few of the national organizations and resources, many of which have state or local chapters as well.

### **AN ABUSE, RAPE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AID AND RESOURCE COLLECTION (AARDVARG)**

606 Calibre Crest Parkway #103  
Altamonte Springs, FL 32714  
[www.aardvarc.org](http://www.aardvarc.org)

### **COALITION AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN (CATW)**

Dr. Janice Raymond  
University of Massachusetts  
P.O. Box 9338  
North Amherst, MA 01099  
(413) 367-9262  
[www.catwinternational.org](http://www.catwinternational.org)

### **COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN**

568 First Avenue S., Suite 600  
Seattle, WA 98104-2804  
(800) 634-4449  
[www.cfchildren.org](http://www.cfchildren.org)

### **FAITHTRUST INSTITUTE**

2400 N. 45th St., Suite 10  
Seattle, WA 98103  
(206) 634-1903  
[www.faithtrustinstitute.org](http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org)

**FAMILY VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT INSTITUTE**

6160 Cornerstone Court East  
San Diego, CA 92121  
(858) 623-2777 ext. 416  
[www.fvsai.org](http://www.fvsai.org)

**MALESURVIVOR**

PMB 103  
5505 Connecticut Ave. N.W.  
Washington, DC 20015-2601  
(800) 738-4181  
[www.malesurvivor.org](http://www.malesurvivor.org)

**MEN CAN STOP RAPE**

P.O. Box 57144  
Washington, DC 20037  
(202) 032-6530  
[www.mencanstoprape.org](http://www.mencanstoprape.org)

**MEN OVERCOMING VIOLENCE (MOVE)**

1385 Mission St., Suite 300  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
(415) 626-6683  
[www.menovercomingviolence.org](http://www.menovercomingviolence.org)

**NATIONAL CENTER FOR ASSAULT PREVENTION**

606 Delsea Dr.  
Sewell, NJ 08080  
(856) 582-7000  
[www.nccap.org](http://www.nccap.org)

**NATIONAL CENTER FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME**

2000 M St. N.W., Suite 480  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
(202) 467-8700  
[www.ncvc.org](http://www.ncvc.org)

**NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT INFORMATION**

330 C St., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20447  
(800) 394-3366 or (703) 385-7565  
<http://nccan.ch.acf.hhs.gov/>

**NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE ON MARITAL AND DATE RAPE**

2325 Oak Street  
Berkeley, CA 94708  
[www.members.aol.com/hcndtr](http://www.members.aol.com/hcndtr)

**NATIONAL COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

1532 16th Street N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
(202) 745-1211  
[www.ncadv.org](http://www.ncadv.org)

**NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE**

P.O. Box 161810  
Austin, TX 78716  
(800) 799-SAFE  
[www.ndvh.org](http://www.ndvh.org)

**NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MEN AGAINST SEXISM (NOMAS)**

P.O. Box 455  
Louisville, CO 80027-0455  
(303) 666-7043  
[www.nomas.org](http://www.nomas.org)

**NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN**

733 15th St. N.W., 2nd Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
(202) 628-8669  
[www.now.org](http://www.now.org)

**NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF MEN'S OUTREACH FOR RAPE EDUCATION (NOMORE)**

John D. Foubert  
William and Mary School of Education  
P.O. Box 8795  
Williamsburg, VA 23187-8795  
(757) 221-3322  
www.nomore Rape.org

**NATIONAL SEXUAL VIOLENCE RESOURCE CENTER**

123 North Enola Dr.  
Enola, PA 17025  
(877) 739-3895  
www.nsvrc.org

**OFFICE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

810 7th St. N.W.  
Washington, DC 20531  
(202) 307-6026  
www.ojp.usdoj.gov/vawo

**RAPE, ABUSE, AND INCEST NATIONAL NETWORK (RAINN)**

635-B Pennsylvania Ave. S.E.  
Washington, DC 20003  
(800) 656-HOPE  
www.rainn.org

**SPEAKING OUT AGAINST RAPE (SOAR)**

69 E. Pine St.  
Orlando, FL 32801  
(407) 836-9692  
www.soar99.org

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