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→ Virtual Sex: Pornography, Immersion, and Erotic Environments

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"Io sono Valentina Nappi 3D." Personalization and Empathy in VR Pornography

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Abstract

This essay aims to investigate the relationship between the personalization of pornography and empathy in virtual reality pornography, with a focus on the figure and work of Valentina Nappi. The performer's body, conceived as a site of social, political, and economic tensions, will be examined within the framework of pornographic immersivity and the potential for heightened empathic engagement. By adopting a postfeminist lens and applying to Valentina Nappi's work an interpretative framework grounded in concepts such as choice, personal agency, and empowerment, the issue of empathy, and its deliberate absence, in VR pornography can be reinterpreted as a strategic, entrepreneurial, and provocative choice, consistent with both the professional trajectory and the public persona of the performer. The ability of VR to connect humans through immersive and networked virtual environments (Evans 2020, 2) takes on a unique significance when it comes to emotional connections with an audience accustomed to the online presence of Valentina Nappi, who combines the performance of pornographic corporeality with a distinctive social, cultural, and political persona. Her public identity is characterized by a layered and often unresolved interplay of seemingly contradictory attributes, which in turn contribute to shaping and diversifying her image as a porn performer. While the sensual grasp of the cinematic object of desire is only partially fulfilled, the immersivity of virtual reality introduces new possibilities for spectator participation and identification.

Keywords

Embodiment | Pornography | Virtual Reality
Body | Feminism

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Introduction

This essay aims to investigate the relationship between personalization of pornography and empathy in virtual reality pornography, with a focus on the figure and work of Valentina Nappi, one of the most prominent performers in both the Italian and international adult film industries. The performer's body, conceived as a site of social, political, and economic tensions, will be examined within the framework of pornographic immersivity and the potential for heightened empathic engagement. Pornography has historically played a pivotal role in shaping interactions with digital technology (Ortoleva 2009, 139), particularly through its influence on the development of new and emerging media (Evans 2020, 2). When discussing the interrelationship between VR pornography and the potential to experience sexual abandon, desire, pleasure, and authenticity through immersive, empathetic engagement, we are confronted with an epistemological conundrum. Empathy has increasingly come to be seen, both in historical and contemporary discourses surrounding virtual reality, as an idealized property of the medium. Standing to Leighton Evans (2020), the characterization of VR as an "empathy machine" has given rise to predictions that the medium will foster more empathetic relationships between viewers and pornography, as well as between pornographic performers and their audiences. The assumption is that creating a VR experience will inherently foster an empathetic response, due to the medium's immersive and embodied affordances (Evans 2020, 1). Nevertheless, the promise of VR as a medium capable of facilitating more empathetic relationships between pornography and the viewer, as well as between pornographic actors and viewers, is currently undermined by the dominance of the male point-of-view genre, which typically embodies the viewer in the position of a straight white male while a female performer submits to his desire, relegating the female performer to a secondary or subordinate role. What occurs when the decision to stage one's own objectification is framed as a postfeminist strategy of

empowerment and a challenge to the traditional notion of female passivity?

With more than four hundred performances for leading adult entertainment studios – including Brazzers, Dogfart, Elegant Angel, Evil Angel, Digital Playground, and Jules Jordan – Valentina Nappi has become one of the most prominent Italian porn stars. Her career began in 2011, when she was introduced to the industry by the iconic Rocco Siffredi, debuting in *Rocco's POV Volume 24* and soon after starring alongside him in *Rocco's Bitches in Uniform*.

By adopting a postfeminist lens and applying to Valentina Nappi's work an interpretative framework grounded in concepts such as choice, personal agency, and empowerment, the issue of empathy, and its deliberate absence, in VR pornography can be reinterpreted as a strategic, entrepreneurial, and provocative choice, consistent with both the professional trajectory and the public persona of the performer. Postfeminism suggests a more nuanced relationship between culture, politics, and feminism than the more conventional "backlash" paradigm allows (Tasker and Negra 2007, 4). Feminist activism has long encountered strategies of resistance, negotiation, and containment, processes that a backlash model, with its reactive and oppositional logic, tends to oversimplify. By combining Vivian Sobchack's phenomenological and interdisciplinary film theory, and particularly her embodied account of vision,[1] with analytical tools from postfeminist cultural studies, this essay seeks to investigate the effects of virtual technologies on post-pornographic aesthetics and to explore the increasingly blurred boundaries between so-called mainstream pornography and its alternative forms. The ability of VR to connect users through immersive and networked virtual environments (Evans 2020, 2) assumes a distinctive relevance in the context of affective relations with audiences already accustomed to Valentina Nappi's

1 Cfr. Sobchack, 2002, I. The major theme of *Carnal Thoughts* is the embodied and radically material nature of human existence and thus the lived body's essential implication in making "meaning" out of bodily "sense."

online presence, where pornographic corporeality intersects with the construction of a recognizable social, cultural, and political persona

Postfeminism and the Virtual Sexualization of Culture

According to feminist media scholars such as Yvonne Tasker (2007), Diane Negra (2007), Sue Jackson, and Tiina Vares (Jackson and Vares 2015), the "sexualisation of culture" (McNair 2002; Attwood 2006), and more specifically its articulation through postfeminist media (Tasker and Negra 2007; McRobbie 2009), constitutes a significant social context for the identity formation of women and girls in contemporary late capitalist societies. Post-feminist media are characterised by an intense focus on the female body, both as a site of agency and as an object of a scrutinising, harsh gaze (Gill 2007, McRobbie 2009, Tincknell 2011). Postfeminist culture functions to incorporate, normalize, or appropriate elements of feminism; crucially, it also commodifies feminism through the figure of the woman as an empowered consumer, placing emphasis on educational and professional opportunities for women and girls (Tasker & Negra, 2007, 6). Like postmodernism, postfeminism involves a particular relationship to late capitalist culture and the forms of work, leisure, and, crucially, consumption that thrive within that culture. From a postfeminist perspective grounded in the notion of empowerment, the inability – or impossibility – of reconciling desire with professional achievement is framed as a diminution of personal status. Within a constantly evolving social and media landscape, the representation of a connection between professional success and a fulfilling sexual life participates in a broader redefinition of female subjectivity and individuality. As Jane Juffer observes, women's entry into and access to a form of entertainment historically coded as masculine takes the form of a "domestication," whereby the construction of a new erotic subjectivity coincides with the woman's position as a potential consumer. Whereas traditionally the relation-

ship between women, entertainment, and desire has been articulated more in terms of erotica than pornography, feminist responses to anti-sex feminist critiques expose the argumentative fallacy of conceiving pornography solely as an expression of male and heterosexual power and desire. Studies of pornography have largely revolved around questions of cultural meaning on the one hand, and those of media effects on the other. The marker of porn has been identified as a symptom and symbol of patriarchal culture, of heterosexual masculinity in crisis and of cultural resistance alike, especially when it comes to feminist porn, which is thought to challenge and complicate dominant representations of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, age, and body type, exploring the concept of desire, power, beauty, and pleasure against the limitations of the gender hierarchy (Taormino et al. 2013, 9).[2] Often separated from the "mainstream" by cultural commentators, feminist pornography also defines itself as different, particularly in terms of politics (as centring female empowerment, non-normative and queer displays of sexual acts and desires), ethics (as being detached from the potentially oppressive working practices of the porn industry), and economics (as resisting the standardized commodity forms of the industry). As Paasonen states, the conventions and imagery of pornography have been extensively studied as representations that depict, shape, and influence social categories such as gender, race, and class (Paasonen 2014, 136) as well as the negotiation of diverse body types. If, traditionally, the materiality of the body has been closely associated with the idea of pleasure, the postfeminist conception of the body is instead tied to the notion of merit: only a particular kind of corporeal materiality, one that conforms to specific social standards and imperatives, is deemed worthy of aspiring to pleasure. In some contemporary pornographies, particularly within the realm of feminist and alternative pornography, the porn star's body has become a contested site of political and cultural significance, where dominant repre-

2 See Maina 2014, 182.

sentations of gender, sexuality, and identity are both challenged and rearticulated.[3] While the pornographic body is inextricably tied to the social and economic structures of the porn industry, it also brings into focus broader dynamics of cultural exploitation and labour precarity, dynamics that extend into the domain of VR pornography as well.

As Ashton, McDonald, and Kirkman (2019, 160) observe, drawing on Brophy (2010), virtual reality has the potential to transform and potentially enhance pornographic experience in several key ways: by increasing verisimilitude (making the experience appear lifelike to the user), deepening immersion (enabling the consumer to feel embedded within and integral to the scene), enabling interactivity (allowing the user's choices and actions to shape the narrative), and facilitating unbounded access (making available virtually any type of pornography, regardless of how niche, unconventional, or extreme it may be).

The emphasis on alternative pornographies and on the potential of VR as a transformative medium for adult content often sustains a belief in the promise of performer agency, understood here as a function of expanded technological possibilities in a networked culture, the multiplication of consumer choices, and the increasingly porous boundaries between production and consumption (Maddison 2013, 102). While it is true that the advent of the Internet has revolutionized pornography in terms of choice, accessibility, and ease of consumption, enabling instantaneous access both at home and in the workplace, and establishing it as a commodity largely unbound by legal, social, or geographical constraints, virtual reality technology advances this transformation even further by decoupling pornography from the scopophilic pleasure that has traditionally characterized it. In two-dimensional pornography,

3 For instance, feminist pornographer Erika Lust, when interviewed about her vision of pornography, advocates for a different perspective and a more realistic, enjoyable representation of sex from the female point of view. She emphasizes the need for women to actively participate in shaping new representations: "It's so important that women make films in general, and pornography in particular, because 95 percent of the films made are by men as producer, director and scriptwriter. When you analyse what is really going on in films, the woman is almost never the protagonist, but usually a vehicle for the man to get his pleasure." See: Thornton 2009, *Interview: Erika Lust*, https://www.barcelona-metropolitan.com/features/interview/.

the spectator's embodiment is characterized by the *cinematic visibility of the gaze* directed at the mise-en-scène of sex, and by what Sobchack, drawing on Martin Heidegger, defines as "the hazardous thrown-ness that informs human existence in both its objectivity and subjectivity" (2002, 87). In her analysis of the existential possibilities and contradictions that shape our "gaze" upon the world and others in the cinema of Krzysztof Kieslowski, Sobchack observes that the convergence and confusion of "logical contingence" and "emotional turbulence" (Sobchack 2000, 87) become palpably manifest. The author adopts a phenomenological perspective to examine the existential tensions in the cinema of Krzysztof Kieślowski, highlighting the conflict between rationality and affect, objectivity and subjectivity.[4] Through the notions of "logical contingence" and "emotional turbulence" (Sobchack 2000, 87) conceived as dual and opposing aspects of the irrational, Sobchack demonstrates how these dimensions emerge simultaneously and intertwine within the specificity of concrete human experience. Applying Sobchack's notions of logical contingence and emotional turbulence to VR pornography allows for an investigation into how this technology restructures the viewer's sensory and emotional experience, superimposing rationality and affectivity in radically new ways. From this perspective, VR is not merely a new form of sexual content, but a philosophical device that unsettles our relationship with the body, perception, and the very notion of intimacy, as it blurs the boundaries between logic and emotion, materiality and abstraction, presence and absence. As Vivian Sobchack observes, emotional turbulence denotes the unstable dimension of affectivity that arises from embodied subjectivity (2000, 87); from this perspective, although virtual reality pornography aspires to

4 See Sobchack 2002, 87. According to Sobchack, throughout his films Kieslowski exercises a form of doubled vision that articulates and dramatizes the uncanny way in which the dual and contrary aspects of the irrational arise together and are confused and synthesized in the specificity of human experience. Although logical contingence and emotional turbulence constitute entirely different methods of subverting the rational and making us aware of its (and our) "other," they are nonetheless systemically related. As Sobchack states, we are able to see how their actual convergence in concrete situations undermines the abstract distinctions we make between them–as well as between their oppositional corollaries, "chance" and "fate."

generate empathy through immersion and first-person perspective, the result is often a form of forced and asymmetrical intimacy, experienced by the viewer as unsettling or, as Leighton Evans writes, "uncanny"[5] (Evans 2020, 124). Following Sobchack, VR pornography is marked by the irruption of the elusive within the apparent familiarity of desire. As in Kieślowski's cinema (Sobchack 2000, 85), the everyday, understood here as the habitual consumption of pornography, is destabilized by elements that disrupt the sensory and narrative coherence of the experience. In VR pornography, the desiring body is no longer a passive spectator of a visible scene, but is instead co-implicated in an environment that simultaneously simulates and disembodies it. The materiality of the body and the reality of sex that define hardcore pornography give way to a technologically mediated sexual experience – one that is self-aware and destabilizing. In this context, to borrow Samantha Breslin's words, "bodies can break into pieces as quickly as desire can be transformed into revulsion."[6] As Leighton Evans writes, "VR does not necessarily create empathy at all but is creating a sense of altered and enforced intimacy" (2020, 87). What, then, are the implications of this sense of uncanniness when applied to a pornographic figure such as Valentina Nappi, who is also publicly recognized for her extra-pornographic qualities and intellectual persona? Valentina Nappi, who was introduced to pornography in 2011 by iconic Italian porn star Rocco Siffredi, is undoubtedly one of the most important Italian porn stars to date. Debuted with *Rocco's POV Volume 24* and then Siffredi's sparring partner in *Rocco's Bitches in Uniform,* Nappi has appeared in more than four hundred scenes produced by a range of prominent adult entertainment companies, including Brazzers, Dogfart, Elegant Angel, Evil Angel, Digital Playground, and Jules Jordan.

5 In this context, the title of Samantha Breslin's article on virtual reality, *Porn's Uncanny Valley*, is particularly significant, as it captures the disquieting tension inherent in VR pornography, between its promise of immersive intimacy and the affective estrangement often provoked by its simulated nature. See: https://www.theatlantic.com/amp/article/561521.

6 See https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2018/06/porns-uncanny-valley/561521/.

Valentina Nappi: A *Sui Generis* Pornographic and Political Embodiment

Described on BadoinkVR.com as "a bestseller both online and offline"[7] Nappi has appeared in more than four hundred scenes produced by a range of prominent adult entertainment companies, including Brazzers, Dogfart, Elegant Angel, Evil Angel, Digital Playground, and Jules Jordan. Her significance as a pornographic performer is also clearly reflected in her involvement in VR pornography, beginning with *Cumming Full Circle* (Badink 2015), followed by several titles including *American Daydreams 23595* (NaughtyAmerica 2017), *Avengers: A XXX Parody* (Badink 2017), *Becoming Italian* (Badink 2018), *Free Valentina Nappi* (Badink 2020), and *Best Anal Compilation* (VR-Bangers 2021).

Her celebrity extends beyond her pornographic career, positioning her within a distinct sphere of influence that intersects politics and legitimate culture, and speaks to a clearly defined target audience. Over the last decade, Nappi has also become a public figure of some relevance in Italian generalist media and popular culture, as evidenced by her feminist intellectual role in the Italian political, cultural, and philosophical magazine *MicroMega*, where she has been a columnist from 2014 to 2017. During this period, she contributed essays and blog posts that explored themes such as sexuality, feminism, and contemporary politics. Her writings often challenged conventional perspectives, advocating for concepts like sexual communism and critiquing social norms. Furthermore, her political positions openly contradict any paradigm traditionally associated with femininity and feminist advocacy. Valentina Nappi's star image within the public sphere reveals a multifaceted complexity that far exceeds her strictly pornographic persona. Her public identity is characterized by a layered and often unresolved interplay of seemingly contradictory attributes, which in turn contribute to shaping and diversifying her im-

7 See https://badoinkvr.com/vr-pornstar/valentinanappi/.

age as a porn performer. Her writings frequently challenged dominant narratives, advancing provocative notions such as “sexual communism” and offering incisive critiques of prevailing societal norms. This intellectual engagement earned her the moniker “intellectual pornstar,” a label that aptly captures her distinctive position at the intersection of adult entertainment and philosophical discourse. In addition to her written contributions, Nappi participated in public dialogues featured in *MicroMega*, notably in the 2014 issue entitled “Il corpo della donna tra libertà e sfruttamento” (“The Female Body Between Freedom and Exploitation”), where she engaged in critical discussions on prostitution, the commodification of the female body, and the nexus between youth and sexuality. Through her involvement with *MicroMega*, Nappi strategically leveraged her platform to mediate between the adult industry and intellectual debate, fostering discourse that confronted entrenched taboos and invited critical reassessment of dominant cultural frameworks. Her participation in prominent cultural events–most notably as a speaker at the 2018 TEDx conference in Bari – further consolidated her public persona, contributing to the construction of a cultural figure embedded within the broader Italian collective imagination, endowing her with a certain status of reality and material presence. As Maina and Zecca write, in the pornographic sphere Rocco Siffredi’s star image is based on the two discursive axes of sexual prowess and performative excess. identifies him as a star-as-performer whose image is inextricably linked to the categories of excess, perversion and extreme (Maina and Zecca 2024, 7). In Italy his figure has crossed the borders of the pornographic sphere and gained market visibility in the legitimate public sphere, a path strikingly similar to that followed by Valentina Nappi, whose positions openly contradicts any paradigm traditionally associated with femininity and feminist advocacy. Such a tension applies both to Nappi as a feminist porn performer – who chooses to work with major production companies such as Evil Angel or Brazzers and engages in practices widely regarded as objectifying or degrading (double anal, anal gaping, inter-

racial scenes, anal penetration) – and to Nappi as an intellectual and public thinker, who frequently adopts a counter-current stance in public discourse, as exemplified by her outspoken critiques of figures such as Rocco Siffredi.[8]

Valentina Nappi, prolific on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, is prolific in the production and dissemination of promotional and self-advertising content explicitly aimed at a young, heterosexual male audience with strong anti-feminist leanings. In this regard, it is emblematic that online communities with overtly misogynistic tendencies – such as *Il forum dei brutti*[9] – describe her as the most favoured porn star within the *manosphere*. Her Instagram videos often cater to the nerd community, referencing a shared cultural universe: examples include *reels* (short, rapidly edited clips) inspired by *Star Wars*, *Pokémon*, *Catwoman*, and *Aquaman*, in which Nappi appears in the dual role of fictional character and erotic subject. Nappi skilfully engages with the female stereotype of the "saviour woman," presenting herself both as a response to the laws of supply and demand governing the pornographic market and as an exception to the spectre of feminism: a woman capable of understanding and accepting men, to whom she playfully alludes through textual and paratextual references. If Nappi's pornography is situated within the framework of major corporate structures – also geographically, given that Evil Angel, the pornographic giant with which Nappi made her debut through *Rocco's POV Volume*, is based in Van Nuys, a district of Los Angeles – and features traditionally mainstream practices (anal sex, blowjobs, gangbangs), the need to produce effective and diversified communication across different media results in the adoption of strategies that "take into account changes in the demographics and consumption habits of pornographic audiences." These strategies simultaneously

8 See https://www.today.it/tv/news/valentina-nappi-difende-rocco-siffredi.html.

9 Opened in 2008, the "Ugly Men's Forum" has changed address several times and now contains around 300,000 messages, 10,000 discussions, and thousands of users. It is an online community with marked misogynistic tendencies, where discussions are organized into three main sections: one dedicated to physical appearance, one to social relationships, and a third that gathers everything else, from everyday experiences to the presentation of theories and opinions about society.

evoke a key prerogative of *alt porn*: the appeal to a community (Maina 2018; Smith 2007; Attwood 2011). Nappi openly declares herself staunchly anti-feminist – an ideological stance that strongly resonates with her target audience – and presents herself as willing to redress the "aesthetic injustice"[10] that, in her view, leads men to experience sexual frustration. Porn stars, who have become famous through their profession, must justify their work in order to appear in the public sphere, explaining its social meaning and collective usefulness, and shifting the communicative focus from pornography entertainment purpose to that of a presumed social utility.

Free Valentina Nappi 3D

The presence of a well-known performer within a VR pornographic environment[11] intensifies the uncanny nature of the experience. VR pornography, already marked by what Evans (2020) terms an "altered and enforced intimacy," positions the viewer within an immersive framework in which the boundary between reality and fiction becomes increasingly unstable. Within the mainstream cultural imaginary, reflected, for instance, in magazines and journalistic articles, where emerges a perceived incompatibility between the immersive qualities of VR pornography and the ontological status of reality traditionally associated with hardcore pornography. The latter is characterized by the staging of "real sex," understood both in terms of corporeal materiality and representational codes, which operate in tandem to convey the spectacle of sex in visual pornography (Maina

10 See, for instance, the "Forum dei Brutti" ("Ugly Men's Forum"), titled "Stufo! Una vita da brutto" ("Fed up! A life of ugliness"), features collections of aphorisms and slogans centered on presumed female frigidity, often expressed through vulgar language. It also includes numerous rankings of the physical appearance of actresses and porn performers, dissected and catalogued according to rigid and grotesquely Lombrosian standards, such as forehead height and nose shape. Valentina Nappi herself, although described as a "champion of incels," is accused of not being sufficiently attractive and of engaging in marketing strategies disguised as charitable acts –offering sexual acts in exchange for videos and expressions of gratitude, as part of a kind of customer loyalty scheme.

11 As Schöne et al. claim, The benchmark for assessing VR simulation quality can only be the user's phenomenal consciousness, i.e., the subjective experience of being aware of one's thoughts, feelings, and perceptions (2023).

2010, 197). For instance, on *The Atlantic,* Susannah Breslin (2018) contends that virtual reality pornography may, paradoxically, be more alienating and less sensually engaging than its conventional counterpart, owing to the uncanny nature of the VR experience and the diminished affective resonance of the first-person perspective it offers. As such, VR pornography may ultimately fail to generate the vicarious thrill traditionally associated with computer-mediated sexual content. What emerges from current analyses is that early consumer-grade VR systems fall short of fulfilling the more optimistic expectations projected onto the medium. Rather than fostering genuine empathy, these technologies may instead be engendering a form of artificially induced and constrained intimacy, thereby complicating rather than enhancing the affective dimensions of pornographic spectatorship. Might the construction of a virtual persona, at once political and cultural, yet primarily recognized for her role as a pornographic performer, entail a different mode of empathic engagement? Could Valentina Nappi's distinctive form of pornographic self-representation offer a meaningful challenge to the conventions of mainstream pornography? On Badoink site,[12] *Free Valentina Nappi* capitalizes on the performer's distinctive status by offering the following storyline as a point of appeal:

> Valentina Nappi has been shackled by the constrictions of the Stay At Home Order for weeks now. Not ideal in her line of work – being a high-end escort and all. Today, some restrictions have been lifted and you can finally free Valentina Nappi from her recent celibacy. So head over to her apartment and watch this full-bodied Italian brunette slowly strip for you. Admire those big tits and that perfect ass as she bends down to suck your dick. Get inside that pussy and listen to her moans as you bring her to climax. Freedom feels good, doesn't it? Grab your VR headset and get ready for 180 degrees of immersive VR porn with the one and only Valentina Nappi.

12 See https://badoinkvr.com/vr-pornstar/valentinanappi/.

In this context, the display of the performer's sexual appetite and uninhibitedness is framed as a response to the constrictions imposed by the Stay-at-Home Order. During the COVID-19 outbreak and the 2020 lockdown, the pornographic performer publicly emphasized the importance of ensuring both safety and professional continuity within the industry during the pandemic, a position she reiterated in 2021, when she declared on Twitter her intention to work exclusively on sets where all participants were vaccinated.[13] Her explicit engagement with public discourse and health politics further contributes to the complex cultural identity projected onto her persona, which in turn intensifies the uncanny dimension of her virtual representations. VR not only simulates the body but also simulates a relationship with a subject whom we know, in reality, to be something other. In this sense, the uncanny does not arise solely from the technology itself, but from the effect of duplication and alienation it exerts upon an image already shaped by layers of cultural meaning. In the case of Valentina Nappi, this social, political, and cultural stratification applies to a pornographic persona that exists through her very non-corporeality: her opinions, political positions, and ironic tone all contribute to shaping a figure whose pornographic modus operandi is grounded in the cultivation of an intimate connection with her target audience. Nappi's fans who witness the staging of the male POV are often aware of her positions regarding a feminist – or at least female pleasure-oriented – approach to pornographic performance, and are capable of decoding acts of empowerment and autonomous choice within her work. Her work, which merges explicit sexual performance with intellectual discourse, feminist critique, and political positioning, subverts conventional tropes of the genre. By doing so, she not only reclaims agency within a typically male-dominated industry but also invites her audience to

13 See, for instance, https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2020/04/08/coronavirus-valentina-nappi-la-mia-quarantena-non-metto-le-mutande-dal-13-marzo-faccio-selfie-dirette-e-sco-con-il-mio-ragazzo/5764426/ or https://www.open.online/2021/08/25/coronavirus-valentina-nappi-no-vax-salvini/.

engage with porn through a more nuanced, self-aware, and potentially critical lens. Her embodiment of a pornographic persona that is both sexual and socially conscious disrupts traditional binaries – such as performer/viewer or object/subject – and offers an alternative model that reconfigures desire, power, and representation.

Conclusions

As Sobchack observes, while the sensual apprehension of the cinematic object of desire is only ever partially fulfilled (2000, 90), the immersivity of virtual reality introduces new possibilities for spectator participation and identification, as well as novel modes of mediating sexuality and the structures of the pornographic industry. Paraphrasing Sobchack's notion that "documentary is less a thing than an experience" (1999, 241), the documentary nature of pornography can be understood not merely as a filmic object or product, but as a relational process involving the spectator, the author, and the represented world. In the case of Valentina Nappi, immersivity operates on a dual level: both as a technical mediation, in which the embodied gestures and movements of the participant must correspond to what is represented within the filmic environment, and as a lifestyle adherence, through which the performer's persona extends beyond the screen into a broader affective and ideological domain. Within this evolving technological and affective landscape, the star from Scafati emerges as a particularly significant figure, owing to the distinctive and multifaceted nature of her stardom. Her performative persona operates at the intersection of technological mediation and affective self-presentation, foregrounding how female sexual agency is both enacted and commodified within digital cultures. Drawing on Angela McRobbie's claim that postfeminism draws on and invokes feminism as something that can be taken into account (2004, 258), only to suggest that equality has been achieved and to install a whole repertoire of new meanings which emphasise that it is no longer needed, virtual reality, much like television in

the 2000s, participates in creating a key site for defining codes of sexual conduct. It casts judgment and establishes the rules of play.

Over the past decade, Nappi has increasingly established herself as a prominent presence within Italian mainstream media and popular culture. This is exemplified by her role as a feminist intellectual for *MicroMega*, a leading Italian journal of politics, culture, and philosophy. During this period, she authored numerous essays and blog posts addressing themes such as sexuality, feminism, and contemporary politics. The complexity of her celebrity status–which intertwines and negotiates elements tied to her career as a pornographic performer with peculiarities such as irony, tastes, and political opinions that often contradict both classical and feminist conceptions–contributes to layering the uncanniness of her representation in VR. Consequently, this renders her VR portrayal more than a mere technological variation of preexisting representations.

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