

# 1 Introduction

Pornography is a highly expedient, effective as well as affecting, cultural genre to consider the phenomena of post-national identities in Europe today. Its position outside the high art and culture (with its often-colonial implications) or mainstream media makes pornography more accessible to marginalized and underrepresented groups, both as producers and consumers. Yet, porn's critical potential remains largely underestimated. What further sets pornography apart from other genres of representation is its almost visceral appeal to the spectator's body as it elicits immediate somatic responses. In "Body Genres," Linda Williams evaluates pornography along with horror and melodrama, because what these three genres have in common, according to Williams, is the immediate excess they elicit in their audiences.<sup>1</sup> Like horror, pornography is not recognized by our intellect alone but perceived – at least partly – through bodily or emotional responses. Pornographic images are therefore not only a visual representation of sexuality, but are effectively part of the sexual activity itself. Ironically, although pornography is ever more accessible and omnipresent in our digital day and age, the stigma over its immorality and harmful societal effects persists since the earliest days of pornographic productions – and across various political affiliations or ideologies as well. Because of its long and continuous history, and despite it not being generally considered a respectable field of study, pornography has a vital role in generating an archive of both a nation's shifting cultural environments and the operations of coloniality, gender, and sexuality within them.

## 1.1 Orientalism and Gay Pornographic Film

This triangulation between coloniality, gender, and sexuality was vital to the exhibition "The soft g-queer forms migrate," which I had co-curated for Schwules Museum, Berlin, in 2017.<sup>2</sup> As a side event of the exhibition on May 14, 2017, I presented German-Turkish gay porn films produced in Turkey to explicate certain power relations that form through desire between the two countries and are historically connected based on labor migration. A week later, the director of Zip Production, Ben Tamam, who visited me at the museum after my presentation, invited me to visit his archive, which was filled with physical materials, including VHS tapes, photographs, media coverage, letters from the audience, promotional materials, and a soundtrack cassette. While studying the archival material, I wondered how this archive can contribute to the discourse of ethnic representation in gay pornography and to the prior academic litera-

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1 Williams, Linda. "Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess." *Film quarterly* 44, no. 4, 1991, 2 and 3.

2 See: <https://www.schwulesmuseum.de/ausstellung/g-queere-formen-migrieren/> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

ture that has largely focused on the examples from the U.S. and France. I decided to trace similarities and differences between the material in the archive and those productions from France and the United States and analyze what has been missing in the literature to expand the current discourse based on the physical archival legacy in my possession.

One of the merits of this study is that it focuses on the studio tradition of pornographic film production, which presents the audience with audiovisual signature style and directorial positions and production statuses rather than self-distributed/subscription-based web pornography, which mostly lacks corresponding production conditions. Studio tradition in gay pornography introduces the status of the directors/producers more elaborately compared to the self-distributed ones. Self-produced/distributed pornography often doesn't require a production team since most of these films are produced with a smartphone and a tripod. By discussing studio tradition in gay pornography, this book also allows for a future discussion of the production status of pornographic films throughout the progress of digital technology.

During the review process of the archival material, I realized that these films provide knowledge on sex, which is hard to access in mainstream culture because of prevailing censorship and cultural elitism. While discussions around Orientalism and colonialism do include considerations about sexualities, these discussions often ignore talking about sex. Stuart Hall characterizes Orientalism as the cognitive disposition to perceive the Orient as a complementary entity to the Occident, as termed by him "The West and the rest." This perspective envisions the Orient as static, lacking historical development, and serving as a canvas onto which Western fantasies of an idealized 'Other' are projected.<sup>3</sup> The concept of 'Orientalist' was first articulated by Edward Said, who defines it as:

Anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient – and this applies whether the person is an anthropologist, sociologist, historian, or philologist – either in its specific or its general aspects, is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism.<sup>4</sup>

The work of Said, though, especially his book *Orientalism*, deals with sexuality, has been criticized for its reproduction of the binary opposition of East and West. José Esteban Muñoz, for example, warns of "the totalizing implications of Said's theory."<sup>5</sup> However, Said and his contemporaries did not analyze pornography, although it is one of the most available – and I would say obvious – pieces of content to depict sexuality in colonial and post-colonial settings. A significant portion of literary texts concerned

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<sup>3</sup> Hall, Stuart A. *The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power*. In *Essential Essays, Volume 2: Identity and Diaspora*, edited by David Morley, Durham: Duke University Press, 1992, 205.

<sup>4</sup> Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Random House, 1979, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Muñoz, José Esteban. *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*. Cultural Studies of the Americas. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999, 89.

with Orientalism that followed Said's work failed to examine the products of gay pornography, especially the persistent use of ethnic actors and themes in the market of commercial pornography in Europe, which points to the interaction of broader issues of 'racial' difference and racialization within the intimate social spaces of sexuality.

As a relatively common phenomenon in European representations of gay sexuality, ethnic pornography has been a growing trend in the porn film industry over the past 40 years. When talking about gay ethnic pornography, this follows the minimal characterization by Maxime Cervulle and Nick Rees-Roberts, who described it as a "term widely used in French gay sexual culture to designate the particular genre of porn involving non-white men."<sup>6</sup> Prior to their co-authored monograph *Homo Exoticus: Race, Classe et Critique Queer* (2010), Cervulle presented a paper on French gay ethnic pornography with an emphasis on the intersections of 'race,' class, and sexuality at the 2006 *Post Porn Politics* symposium, which had been organized by the late Tim Stüttgen at Volksbühne theater in Berlin.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, scholars such as Royce Mahawatte, Joseph Allen Boone, Tan Hoang Nguyen, and Evangelos Tziallas have since studied the various representations of ethnicity based on gay pornographic cinema in the U.S.-American and European (but mainly French) contexts. The initial concentration of European gay ethnic pornography production in France has shifted in recent years, as the French industry has since inspired other filmmakers and producers based in Germany, Sweden, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Hungary. However, the critical evaluation of these productions outside of France remains sparse, especially considering the ever-evolving history and popularity of gay ethnic pornography throughout Europe.

While ethnic pornography serves as a focal point, it is not merely an isolated subject of inquiry. Rather, it functions as a portal through which to interrogate broader cultural and historical dynamics. By probing pornography's cultural significance within the context of colonialism, this work endeavors to unveil the complex interplay of power, representation, and identity. Hence, while pornography serves as a central example its analysis is intrinsically linked to broader discussions surrounding colonial legacies and their enduring impact on contemporary society.

Furthermore, the relationship between gay ethnic pornography and Orientalism, which is, in my opinion, not limited to the East, remains under examined. Following the release of Said's previously mentioned book, the term 'Orientalism' refers to the predominately Eurocentric view of the Orient and its orchestration in producing

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<sup>6</sup> Cervulle, Maxime, and Nick Rees-Roberts. *Homo Exoticus: Race, Classe Et Critique Queer*. MéDiAcultures. Paris: Armand Colin: INA éditions, 2010, 60 and 61.

<sup>7</sup> Cervulle, Maxime. "Erotic/Exotic. Race and Class in French Gay 'Ethnic' Pornography". In *Post/Porn/Politics: Symposium/Reader: Queer-Feminist Perspective on the Politics of Porn Performance and Sex-Work as Culture Production*, edited by Tim Stüttgen, Berlin: B-Books, 2009, 180–193.

knowledge about it.<sup>8</sup> The process of Orientalization – of applying this Orientalist gaze – is thus a strategy to continue dominating and controlling certain things, such as the supremacy of Western culture. This then resulted in the East having unequal and unfavorable interactions with the West. In fact, according to Said, the East was losing its subjectivity and self-representation and becoming subordinate to the European discourse about it.<sup>9</sup> Pornography and ethnography together help to analyze how Orientalism facilitates such unequal interaction with the West, as Said has pointed out. Ethnography itself provides a framework for understanding and interpreting cultural phenomena, including how individuals and societies construct and perceive sexuality. Combining theoretical considerations pornography and ethnography here points out that the pornographic and ethnographic gaze operate in a structurally analogous manner; they interact in film images based on similar documentative aspects.

## 1.2 To Gaze and To Desire: Issues of Ethnicity and Gay Pornography

The typical porn movie, at least in the hard-core category, is constituted by an endless series of people fucking. However, as Richard Dyer claims,

as long as there is consciousness-raising, there is narrative. Even if all that is involved is sex between two men, the following narrative elements are present: the arrival at the scene of sexual intercourse, establishing contact, undressing, exploring various parts of the body, coming, parting.<sup>10</sup>

Pornography and ethnography point to a broad discussion of pleasure and knowledge that are heavily linked to social practices. Although the limit of pornographic knowledge is carnal, ethnographic knowledge, by addressing cultural structures, extends beyond that. Since the ethnography presented in pornographic films contains documentary elements of making sexual knowledge accessible while domesticating the Other through the gaze, it also allows for the creation of a network to analyze what it means. What Miller-Young argues while discussing the presence of the black woman in photography can also be applied to the narrative of gay ethnic pornography. Miller-Young points out that:

Ethnography offers a lens, a conceptual apparatus, and a method to think about the relationality and economy of images, techniques, discourses, bodies, subjectivities, desires, and state logics

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<sup>8</sup> Lau, Lisa, and Ana Cristina Mendes. *Re-Orientalism and South Asian Identity Politics: The Oriental Other Within*. Routledge Contemporary South Asia Series. London; New York: Routledge, 2011, 1.

<sup>9</sup> Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. 1st Vintage Books ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1994, 1.

<sup>10</sup> Dyer, Richard. "Male Gay Porn: Coming to Terms." *Jump Cut*, no. 30, March 1985, 27.

that brought the colonized under view in the domain of empire. Pornography did not arise on the margins of the empire but was at its core.<sup>11</sup>

Therefore, the relationship between ethnography and pornography is interconnected, even though it remains under examined. However, gay ethnic pornography, as a sub-genre, helps reveal the societal and historical discourse of male-to-male sexualities.

Although the discourse in heteronormative and homosexual systems differs in many ways, ethnography provides a methodology that can unpack the commonalities of these power dynamics. In his book *Colonial Harem* (1986), Malek Alloula analyzes a postcard that was produced in France depicting Algerian women, and asks: “What does it matter if the colonized Orient, the Algeria of the turn of the century, gives more than a glimpse of the other side of its scenery, as long as the phantasm of the harem persists, especially since it has become profitable?”<sup>12</sup> For example, in the context of gay ethnic pornography, the profitable phantasm moved from the Harem to the temporary houses of migrant workers, which have also been used as porno film sets. While this particular genre shows how gaze relations and aesthetics have changed over time, it also provides knowledge through its unintended documentary approach. It is a domain of knowledge production because it is about gay pornography, and this book operates between multilayered gaze relations. Discussing the work of the writer Richard Fung, José Esteban Muñoz points out:

Fung’s disidentification with the generic and racially inflected protocols of porn opens up a space that breaks down the coherence of white domination in the gay male erotic imagery. This disidentification access possibilities, through the unlikely vehicle of Orientalized body that are ultimately sex-positive, but nonetheless struggle to free up the ethnocentric conceit that dominates the category of the erotic in the pornographic imaginary.<sup>13</sup>

Gay ethnic pornography contributes to the breakdown that Muñoz proposed, and it broadens the ‘ethnocentric conceit’ by using gaze relations and objectification. For example, Russian masculinities could be exoticized, too, and gay ethnic pornography enables such content.

The inclusion of gay sex tourism, especially within ethnic pornography, offers a perspective on the intersections of sexuality, ethnicity (racialized identities), and commodification. Since sex tourism has deeply imbued implications on the history of colonialism, sex tourism provides a ground for practicing power relations. Por-

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<sup>11</sup> Miller-Young, Mireille. “Exotic/Erotic/Ethnopornographic: Black Women, Desire, and Labor in the Photographic Archive.” In *Ethnopornography: Sexuality, Colonialism, and Archival Knowledge*, edited by Pete Sigal, Zeb Tortorici, and Neil L. Whitehead, 39–66: Duke University Press, 2020, 43.

<sup>12</sup> Alloula, Malek. *Colonial Harem*. Trans. by Myrna Godzich and Wlad Godzich. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986, 3.

<sup>13</sup> Muñoz, José Esteban. *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*. Cultural Studies of the Americas. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999, 87.

nographic films with the sex tourism narrative facilitate such a colonial power dynamic through societal norms. Additionally, gay sex tourism in pornography offers a lens to understand the performative aspects of the racialized masculinities and femininities as part of labor, as Gregory Mitchell calls commissioned performances.<sup>14</sup> In particular, the analysis of gay ethnic porn within the context of sex tourism underscores the commodification and fetishization of ethnicity and sexuality in contemporary media, and sex tourism as an often applied narrative element provides the historical context of such power relations.

Previous studies have often emphasized financial power as the primary motivation behind Orientalist gay sex tourism while ignoring the reasons to seek such 'adventure.' Additionally, the common mistake in analyzing gay sex tourism in North Africa and Eastern Europe is assuming that it shares a similar history and motivation as heterosexual sex tourism. However, the distinction between heterosexual versus homosexual sex tourism points out an essential aspect of history: since acceptance of homosexuality is part of progressive politics of today, suppressed homosexuality can, by contrast, help us analyze societies historically. Moreover, the concept of gay sex tourism reflects these progressive policies in the West, as it is also part of the phenomenon wherein images of gay-friendliness have become an advertising tool by holiday agencies in the West. All the same, 18th-century England, for instance, considered homosexuality as a disorder, and this was part of the motivation that created discreet homosexual sex tourism in the East by the 19th century.<sup>15</sup> Due to colonialism, such discourse has since shifted, whereas this posture of discretion was later replaced with a more open adventure for the white middle-class man. Therefore, the historical aspect of gay sex tourism provides a deeper insight into colonialism and post-colonialism. For example, Bunzl also argues that:

The tropes of availability, passion, and pansexuality ultimately congeal into a topography of embodied Otherness. Constructed on the neocolonial terms of a Western gay male subject seeking adventure in an exoticized East, they delineate a socio-sexual field structured by an economy of Eastern supplies for Western demands.<sup>16</sup>

Although Bunzl pointed out that the dynamics of the socio-sexual field of sex tourism are structured by financial power, gay pornography reveals that such financial power cannot be the only dynamic that lays behind the motivation for seeking sexual

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<sup>14</sup> Mitchell, Gregory. *Tourist Attractions: Performing Race and Masculinity in Brazil's Sexual Economy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015, 36.

<sup>15</sup> Ewing, Boal Christopher. *Toward a Better World for Gays: Race, Tourism, and the Internationalization of the West German Gay Rights Movement, 1969–1983*. *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* 61, 2017, 109–134.

<sup>16</sup> Bunzl, Matti. "The Prague Experience: Gay Male Sex Tourism and the Neocolonial Invention of an Embodied Border." In *Altering States: Ethnographies of Transition in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, edited by D. Berdahl, M. Bunzl, and M. Lampland. University of Michigan Press, 2000, 86.

pleasure in the East. Homosexuality was classified as a ‘disorder’ in 19th century England and the association of such ‘perversions’ with Ancient Greece, and the ability of colonial subjects to experience liberty in the Orient through anonymity, availability, and displacement as well as power through colonial access, centered Orientalism as a negotiator in the context of gay pornography. Therefore, Orientalism also functions as a negotiation between heteronormative and homoerotic biases. This book aims to investigate how the international circulation of ethnic porn facilitates Orientalism as a way for viewers in the West to negotiate their own oppressed homosexuality.

Studying pornography can provide a tool to examine the ways in which the dynamics of Orientalism function through the expression of different sexual orientations. The discussion about power dynamics in both straight and gay pornography contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the position of gay ethnic pornography and can help explain how these power dynamics are deeply attached to colonialism and Orientalism. In most straight interracial porn movies, ‘big black cock’ is marketed as a merit to which hypersexual masculine black men often ‘conform’ to, whereas in interracial gay pornography and gay ethnic pornography being top, bottom, or versatile often changes within the conventions of gay porn. While black men are racialized and often compelled to perform hypersexualized masculinity, they might be expected to comfort white tourists or white partners who benefit from the socio-economic privilege as their whiteness remains unmarked. Although this book does not aim to compare straight and gay pornography, it is crucial to include some critical points of straight or bisexual interracial pornography and its politics in order to provide a clearer understanding of the prevailing tropes of colonialism and Orientalism.

Pornography frequently adopts the same Orientalist tropes that are often critiqued as furthering racism. In doing so, it enables a working through hostility and explores the ambiguity of power relations at the core of desire. For example, in Chris Ward’s film *Raiders of The Lost Arse: The Mummy’s Hand* (2002), the so-called American Institution of Advanced Studies of Archeology Expedition, which searches for the Tomb of Sethmosis the Great (1736 BC), consists predominantly of white American porn actors, who then end up having group sex in the desert. Two members of the archeology institution, who are played by Jeremy Tucker and Jeff Allen, had an interracial sex scene in the tomb, which leads to the conjuring of Sethmosis himself, played by Bryce Pierce (a white American porn actor). Sethmosis forcefully coerces Jeff Allen to have sex with Jeremy Tucker, leading to an interracial threesome with a mummified white American Pharaoh. Chris Ward, the director of the film, continues the tradition of portraying black characters as non-American (in this case, Egyptian) in his films *Arabesque* (2005) and *Tales of Arabian Nights I, II, and III* (2010), followed by another series by U.S.-based gay porn filmmaker, Collin O’Neal’s, *World of Men* (2006–2009). This book relies on comparisons with examples from the United States that often reproduce clichés rooted in traditional Hollywood cinema, which, too, influenced the earliest gay ethnic pornography in France, such as the films by Jean-Daniel

Cadinot. For example, on the screens of both mainstream and porn theaters, white actors have represented Arab men, as seen in *The Message* (1976) or *The Sheik* (1921). Hansen, Nichols and Needham point out that ‘the Other’ in the discourse of Orientalism is

pure representation and it is the representation of non-white, non-male, non-heterosexual, non-Western, non-capitalist as everything we, who are everything the Other cannot be, need. The Other is also a representation of power, of that which power cannot admit to in its own quest for legitimacy.<sup>17</sup>

However, these inauthentic depictions, ‘failing’ to accurately or authentically represent non-white people, eliminated the potential power that Hansen, Nichols, and Needham mentioned both in mainstream cinema and gay pornography. The concept of authenticity within the realm of pornographic film production is indeed multifaceted and subject to continual interrogation. Initially introduced as a critical tool, authenticity serves as a lens through which to examine the production conditions and socio-cultural contexts that shape these films. Particularly noteworthy is the significance of authenticity in capturing the lived experiences and environments of the actors, many of whom participate in filming within the intimate confines of their own homes. This aspect inadvertently documents not only the performances but also the habitats and social spaces of the actors, adding layers of depth and realism to the narratives portrayed on screen. However, the notion of authenticity in pornographic cinema is inherently fraught with contradictions. While the production conditions may lend a sense of genuineness to portraying certain aspects of the actors’ lives, the genre often operates within a realm of fantasy and illusion. Pornography, by its very nature, plays with the boundaries of reality and fiction, leveraging the cinematic medium to create heightened and exaggerated representations of sexual desire and pleasure. For instance, the delivery guy in the porn movies doesn’t necessarily have to be a delivery guy, but the sex is real. In this context, authenticity becomes malleable as the phantasm of porn that blurs the lines between reality and fantasy, challenging traditional notions of what is deemed authentic within the genre. As such, while authenticity may hold significance within the production process, particularly in documenting the environments and experiences of the actors, its relevance ultimately becomes subsumed by the overarching fantasy that pornographic cinema seeks to construct. Rather than serving as a fixed and immutable concept, authenticity within pornography is continually negotiated and redefined, reflecting the dynamic interplay between reality and illusion inherent to the genre. To quote Laura Helen Marks, “Authenticity in pornography is always partial and contingent; it emerges through a negotiation between the viewer’s belief and disbelief, and the performer’s identity and fan-

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<sup>17</sup> Hansen, Christian, “Skin Flicks: Pornography, Ethnography, and the Discourses of Power.” *Discourse* 11, no. 2, 1989, 65.



tasy persona.”<sup>18</sup> Thus, while authenticity may retain importance within certain aspects of pornographic film production, its ultimate significance is tempered by the fantastical and temporary nature of the medium itself.

While these productions strategically instrumentalize racialized characters to access a foreign culture, these ‘inauthentic’ performances deconstruct what they tried to achieve on a textual level. Here, the aim is to clarify what it means to be authentic and inauthentic in the context of ethnic porn, since most authenticity discussions around the theme of pornography shifts between the misconception of the ideal self and the ideal Other. The concept of authenticity in this case detaches itself from the idea of “developing a consciousness of gaining a recognition from the society or assuring a place in the society,” as Charles Taylor argues.<sup>19</sup> In pornographic acting or performance, the idea of authenticity is far from being an ‘ideal’ authentic individual; instead, it is a stereotype that is being constituted by meeting the clichés of what the majority expects from the performers to have pleasure. What makes pornographic films authentic is limited to the specific key frames, such as the appearance of the performers or filming of the performance of standardized sexual intimacy. Therefore, the documentary aspects of porn movies here rely on reflecting these stereotypes in the most cliché ways possible to make the audience believe what they see is authentic. As a result, they represent the reflections of social norms.

In this book, the concept of stereotype is based on the representational practice that highlights cultural and ethnic differentiations. Orientalist discourse has developed the Western ‘Self’ by creating the ‘Other’ through stereotyped and exaggerated representations of the Orient. Due to this binary opposition between Self and Other, Orientalism has reverted to crude preconceptions like the stereotypes of Arabs (depicting the men as discreet, masculine, macho, etc.), which also apply to Turks, Kurds, and, to some extent, Eastern Europeans. Such dynamics of othering influence pornography and the ‘authentic’ performance in the pornographic narrative as well, although the hard-core format and lack of a clear storyline in the repertoire of gay ethnic pornography, such as in the films of Jean-Noel René Clair or Ben Tamam, reveal the power dynamics of Orientalism.

Additionally, the authenticity in pornographic media heavily relies on the ‘satiety of the media,’ which is a psychological reassurance of the reality of the media that has been consumed.<sup>20</sup> Linda Williams also points out that “a desire to see and know more of the human body [...] underlies the very invention of cinema” and perhaps hard-core

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18 Marks, L. H. “Invisible: Gay Women in Southern California Pornography of the 1980s”. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, vol. 21, no.1, 2015, 121–148.

19 Taylor, Charles. *The Ethics of Authenticity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.

20 Bolter, Jay David, and Richard Grusin. *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. MIT Press, 1998, 53.

pornography is a way to expose the desire to understand one's own desires.<sup>21</sup> Williams argues that in terms of visibility and knowledge in hard-core pornography and gay ethnic pornography, such knowledge is directed at the bodies of the sexualized Other. On the one hand, gay ethnic pornography stands in the 'maximum visibility' that comes with hard-core pornography, which makes the audience believe what they see is an authentic performance. On the other hand, it detaches their representations from the sanctified heteronormative spaces and everyday homophobia, which defines the fantasy.<sup>22</sup> Orientalized and exoticized men filmed in porn are not given actual agency equal to others, meaning that they play roles but are not 'themselves' or, in a way, are made to ventriloquize their lives instead of be viewed as equal participants, in such a way that the ethnic viewer would not necessarily see themselves in these ethnic portrayals.

In this context, gay ethnic pornography can be considered, as Jeffrey Escoffier argues, to constitute a homo-realist porn genre. In his recent book *Sex, Society, and the Making of Pornography* (2021), he states that the "homo-realist porn film hews to a fine line between documentary and fantasy; it attempts to integrate both sexual fantasy and the actual world."<sup>23</sup> Considering the associated social and political conditions in gay ethnic pornography, detaching this kind of pornography from its documentary value is difficult. At the same time, it heavily relies on the imaginative work of fantasy. In the context of hard-core gay pornography, fantasy often distinguishes itself from the actual world by re-creating heterosexual spaces, such as a house of a guest worker as an overrunning gay sex paradise. Therefore, it separates the represented subjects from the real world while keeping some of the documentary aspects in an Orientalist fashion. The goal of this book is to demonstrate how these filmmakers and producers construct ethnic identity through different aspects of culture and aesthetics. How do they authenticate their ethnic subject in the European version of these films? Is there a fetishistic pursuit in presenting an authentically foreign body?

In the context of gay ethnic pornography, the term fetish plays a pivotal role in understanding how certain inequalities, including those related to ethnicity, become eroticized and marketed. The fetishization of ethnicity within this domain involves the commodification of difference, where power dynamics intersect with desires. Fetish, in this context, operates as a mechanism through which power inscribes itself onto bodies and identities, shaping the representation and consumption of sexually explicit/erotic content. The term fetishization in gay pornography reflects broader

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21 Williams, Linda. *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the "Frenzy of the Visible"*. University of California Press, 1989, 36.

22 Bronski, Michael. *Culture Clash: The Making of Gay Sensibility*. Boston, Mass: South End Press, 1984, 161.

23 Escoffier, Jeffrey. *Sex, Society, and the Making of Pornography: The Pornographic Object of Knowledge*. Ithaca, NY: Rutgers University Press, 2021, 62.

societal power structures and hierarchies, emphasizing the need for critical inquiry into the intersection of sexuality, ethnicity, and power dynamics. In the narrative of gay ethnic pornography, fetishization is built through not only ethnic differences but also norms, financial inequalities, and class differences. The often-used sex tourism and generational migration-related themes blur the distinction between identity and identification to facilitate the fetishistic faculty of the Western gaze. Deborah Cameron and Don Kulick argue that “identification is a psychoanalytic concept concerned with the operations through which a subject is constituted. Identifications are processes through which individuals assimilate an aspect or property of an other and are, in that process, transformed.”<sup>24</sup> Gregory Mitchell argues the process of “racialization” through performance and performativity is similar to the comparison that Cameron and Kulick have elaborated through the interconnection between identity and identification.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, arguing the fetishization of ethnic identity or ethnic performance helps unpack how it reflects the identification and the performativity of ethnicities.

This book also explicates the ways in which the genre of gay pornography has differentiated itself from those phantasies that are perpetuated by Hollywood cinema and found its own way of narrating the power and desire between Western Europe and the East (and its peripheries). Frantz Fanon points out that “canters of rest and relaxation and pleasure resorts [were developed] to meet the wishes of the Western bourgeoisie [...] these are the stigmas of this depravation of the national middle class [...] [who] will have nothing better to do than to take on the role of manager for Western enterprise, and it will in practice set up its country as the brothel of Europe.”<sup>26</sup> However, the division of East and West becomes conventional in the context of gay ethnic pornography through sex tourism. The definition of East occasionally changes in gay pornography: sometimes East refers to Eastern Europe, and other times it designates the South West Asian/North African (S.W.A.N.A.) regions.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, the motives for sex tourism to Maghreb or Prague could occur by similar Orientalist dynamics. These dynamics not only continue to inspire sex tourism, but also pornography. In the Eastern European context, dynamics of Orientalism become more apparent through

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<sup>24</sup> Cameron, D., and D. Kulick. *Language and Sexuality*. Cambridge University Press, 2003, 139.

<sup>25</sup> Mitchell, Gregory. *Tourist Attractions: Performing Race and Masculinity in Brazil's Sexual Economy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015, 37.

<sup>26</sup> Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth / Frantz Fanon. With Commentary by Jean-Paul Sartre and Homi K. Bhabha*. New York: Grove Press, 2004, 154. See also: Fairchild, Halford H. “Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* in Contemporary Perspective.” *Journal of Black Studies*, vol. 25, no. 2, 1994, 196.

<sup>27</sup> S.W.A.N.A. is a decolonial word that designates the Southwest Asian/North African region. It replaces characterizations such as Middle Eastern, Near Eastern, Arab World or Islamic World that have colonial, Eurocentric, and Orientalist origins and were created to conflate, contain, and dehumanize our people. I use S.W.A.N.A. to speak to the diversity of our communities and to forward the most vulnerable in our liberation.

See: <https://S.W.A.N.A.alliance.com/about> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

sex work and financial crisis than through ethnic and cultural differences, which are the main aspect of S.W.A.N.A.-focused gay porn.

The frame of sex tourism, sex tourists, and mobility issues, catalyze the legacies of Orientalism and colonialism in the context of gay pornography that puts ethnography at its center. This book employs the suggestion of Ryan and Hall to define the notion of sex tourism, yet it does not endorse an oversimplified meaning of it or an artificial clarity of the term. Davidson articulated the idea of sex tourism while describing sex tourists as individuals who “use their economic power to attain powers of sexual command over local women, men, or children while traveling.”<sup>28</sup> The concept of sex tourism, specifically the interaction between men, is not just based on the demonstration of economic privileges or the idea of a new experience. For example, the DVD jacket of *Nomads* articulates the economic power disparity between local populations and sex tourists:

In the spirit of the North-South exchanges, Europe sends its young to work in North Africa with the goal of transforming a riad into a multi-ethnic arts center; a kind of rural lodge where many students live together. Lucas, a young Frenchman, sets off from Marseilles to spend his holidays in the country of a Thousand and One Night. Without much money, he travels in last class. On the boat he meets Karim, a young traveler returning home, who owns a little hotel close to the soul in the capital's Medina. He offers to let Lucas stay in his luxurious cabin introducing him [to] Arab hospitality and local customs. Twenty years after Harem, 17 actors show us the modern Maghreb where friendship and sensuality are one and the same thing.<sup>29</sup>

Jean-Daniel Cadinot is farming something about power as actually being multi-ethnic and thereby egalitarian. Significantly in the context of Europe, sex tourism has transformed drastically throughout time, considering the involvement of cheap plane travel and the migration waves in Europe and its peripheries as a result of wars and socio-economic crises. How the transformation of sex tourism is reflected through the evolving history of gay pornography in Europe, and how this transformation contrasts or overlaps with the legacies of Orientalism and colonialism, is something this book seeks to answer.

This literary work focuses in particular on France, Germany, and Eastern Europe, given that a comparison of those regions will reveal a complex structure of desire, gender, and ethnic representations. While this book contributes to the discussions about post-coloniality in Europe through the ethnicization of sexualities, it also contributes to the discussions of sexuality and social class by focusing on the ethnic subjects marginalized by European hegemonic social structures.

This book also enables a comparison of different conceptualizations between the ‘West’ and the ‘East’ as both Germany and France have had, for different reasons, an

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<sup>28</sup> O’Connel Davidson, Julia. *Prostitution, Power and Freedom*. Cambridge (U.K.): Polity Press, 1998, 75.

<sup>29</sup> See: DVD jacket of *Nomades* directed by Janel-Daniel Cadinot, 2005. See also: <https://www.gay-dvd-shop.com/cadinot/nomades-gay-dvd.htm> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

influx of migrants since the 1950s. As shown in the first chapter, French examples of gay ethnic pornography followed the sex tourism narrative with the movies by Jean-Daniel Cadinot (Cadinot Films) who produced his movies in Maghreb. Later on, other studios like those of Jean-Noël René Clair (JNRC Films) and Stéphane Chibikh (Citébeur) moved production to the banlieues of Paris. This rotation of settings allows a demonstration of the issues of both sex tourism and migration through an Orientalist perspective.

German examples of gay ethnic pornography portray, as discussed in the second chapter of this, two different stereotypes of Turkish men. On the one hand, these films are low budget productions that depict more masculine, hairy men. On the other hand, they accommodate a narration of more mainstream role-play scenarios that mainly include a cast of young, waxed, and not necessarily masculine men. My selection of German examples of gay ethnic pornography will contribute to the discourse of 're-Orientalizing the Oriental' – that is to say, by supplanting the imagined Oriental with the actually existing East while reflecting the issues of trans-nationalism, migration, and labor. This argumentation will support similar objectives addressed in the French-Maghrebi context of gay ethnic pornography while at the same time enriching the tension of this context by adding current perspectives.

Based on the methodology and the research objectives outlined above, the critical engagement with my research material will contribute to ongoing debates concerning Orientalism as well as colonialism and contribute to the growing field of pornography studies. In addition to pornographic films, this book includes media archives and interviews, which expand the methodology of pornography studies by broadening the textual context around which they have traditionally been centered. Nevertheless, these studies are of great importance since, up until now, most discussions around pornography were not considered to be part of an academic endeavor. Additionally, Maxime Cervulle, Nick Rees-Roberts, Royce Mahawatte and Evangelos Tziallas' works not only consider the relation between U.S.-American mainstream gay pornography and its racial and ethnic representations, but they also, for the first time, discuss examples from Europe (mainly France). However, no historical study has yet bridged the gap between earlier European gay ethnic pornography and its current, specifically German-Turkish, examples.

Shifting away from the German-Turkish context, the third chapter will focus on examples of gay ethnic pornography produced in Eastern Europe. Eastern European productions expand the discussions of Orientalism and colonialism outside the S.W.A. N.A. regions and explore the gay Other outside Europe's Anglo-Saxon, French, or Germanic peripherals. The third chapter analyzes male erotica produced in Russia, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Hungary. While the examples discussed in the third chapter point to a broader area, this chapter will also provide a detailed chronology of sociopolitical and economic events through the porn movies that will be introduced. Eastern European examples of gay ethnic pornography additionally invite the discourse of the white Other and what it means in male-to-male erotic narratives.

Dividing this book into three main chapters, each segment allows me to focus on the major objectives of this book from a different angle by asking (and answering) some questions:

- How do pornographic films authenticate their ethnic subject in different European countries and how can the fetishism of presenting an authentically foreign body be best approached?
- How is it that the concept of Orientalism continues to inspire contemporary gay pornography in a supposedly post-colonial context?
- Is the transformation of sex tourism, which affects countries differently, reflected through the ever-evolving history of gay pornography in Europe? And how does this transformation contrast or overlap with the legacies of Orientalism and colonialism?

Since ethnography and pornography try to assure their audiences that what they witness is reality itself, I will seek to answer, throughout each chapter, both what this ‘reality’ tells us in the context of gay pornography as it relates to each societal context, and what we can learn about desire and the gaze, while addressing the motives that result from the power and desire in gay ethnic pornography in Europe. Furthermore, this book aims to analyze how different aspects of the production – financing, selection of cast and location, acting, payment, camera work – contribute to an overall narrative effect that articulates social norms. For example, the shooting locations of these films were mainly happening in either the houses of these men or two-star hotels, which helped produce alterity. In the following chapters, the book will discuss the temporary nature of these spaces among men who often live in households that include families and women, thereby expanding the discussion to include thoughts about the nature of guest workers and their homes as being liminal, temporary, and threatening to native workforces. Since ethnography and pornography try to assure their audience that what they have seen is the reality itself, I will try to answer throughout this book what this ‘reality’ tells us in the context of gay pornography within each societal context.

### 1.3 Critical Review of Existing Literature

Most of the recent studies concerning gay ethnic pornography have focused on examples from France, ranging from the early films by Cadinot until the very recent Citébeur Films. While scholars like Jaap Koojiman discuss the Maghreb from the canon of Cadinot as a pornographic utopia, Cervulle, Rees-Roberts, and Mack demonstrate how gay ethnic pornography repeats itself by exploiting poverty in the ghettos of Paris because of the re-location of the sub-genre from the Maghreb to the banlieues of Paris. To analyze gay ethnic pornography, this book also reviews these texts, which

provide archival information, and discusses the gay rights movement and the ‘issue’ of ethnic identity in France.

Todd Shepard’s work provides detailed historic information on how social movements and the vocalization towards Maghrebi men have overlapped.<sup>30</sup> Shepard provides a historic background of ethnic and racial representation within the gay rights movements of the 1970s, such as *The Front Homosexuel d’Action Révolutionnaire* (*Homosexual Front for Revolutionary Action-FHAR*) and resources like *Trois Milliards de Pervers: Grande Encyclopédie des Homosexualités* (*Three Billion Perverts: The Big Encyclopedia of Homosexualities*), which contains contributions from Michel Foucault, Félix Guattari, Jean Genet, Guy Hocquenghem, and many other intellectuals and activists of that time. FHAR’s manifesto on sexual desire toward Arab men in France and the opening chapter of *Three Billion Perverts*, “The Arabs and us,” spoke about sexuality and North Africa, specifically Arab men, but without the active participation of Arab men themselves.<sup>31</sup> Shepard’s work is concerned with the period between the late 1960s and late 1970s, a time when the gay rights movement in France became more visible and the sexual desire towards Maghrebi men more clearly articulated. However, the voices of Maghrebi men about their *own* sexual desire remained silent for the most part – until recently.

The work of Denis M. Provencher investigates the stories of queer Maghrebi and French-Maghrebi men who were either born in France or had the migration experience of moving to France.<sup>32</sup> Provencher’s work allows the reader to understand the contemporary testimonies that contribute to the history that Shepard provided earlier while also filling the gaps in the more recent history. Although Provencher’s work is highly influential in the field of gay pornography, the actual viewpoints of the subjects his films portray are mainly ignored. By interviewing directors and actors who produced gay ethnic pornography in France and Germany, the book provides a now-written oral history of their past experiences and their recollections of the productions (and their reception), thus adding to some of the shortcomings of Provencher’s research.

The works of Maxime Cervulle and Nick Rees-Roberts demonstrated the rich potential of examining Orientalism and post-coloniality through French pornographic cinema, without accounting for the potentially empowering effects they may have for non-white bodies. As Cervulle mentions: “There is no room for queers of color as

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<sup>30</sup> Shepard, Todd. *Sex, France, and Arab Men, 1962–1979*. Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2017.

<sup>31</sup> Guattari, Felix. *A Guattari Reader*, edited by Gary Genosko. Blackwell Readers. Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell Publishers, 1996, 187. This version appeared in French in Guattari’s *La révolution moléculaire*, Fontenay-sous-Bois: Encres/Recherches, 1977.

<sup>32</sup> Provencher, Denis M. *Queer Maghrebi French: Language, Temporalities, Transfiliations*. Contemporary French and Francophone Cultures. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017.

speaking subjects; rather, they appear as erotic bodies in ethnic porn, in productions by the Dargos, Replay, and Jean-Noël René Clair studios, or else as suffering bodies called on to confess all on the set of the gay channel Pink TV.”<sup>33</sup> Even if in his examples from France Cervulle highlights the compulsory political censorship toward the voices of queers of color, I do not believe pornography necessarily has to have the responsibility to please underrepresented communities. What interests me here is how this blatant political position of those productions invalidated the clichés by overperforming them – almost as a caricature. Cervulle and Rees-Roberts have discussed, individually as well as together, that these films can be called both ethnic and post-colonial but, at the same time, neither of the terms provides a precise description, due to the ways in which these films can either overlap or be divergent from each other on different occasions. Although, as an umbrella term, gay ethnic pornography works to convey the theme of interracial pornography, it is still intersecting based on tropes of colonialism that are not simply represented through ethnic differences. However, both gay ethnic pornography and post-colonial gay pornography are sufficient in this context due to the overlapping issues of ethnicity and post-colonialism.

Cervulle and Rees-Roberts have also pointed out that both definitions of this sub-genre are problematic with regard to the sustainability of the colonial order and the Eurocentric gay male identity that masks the issues of ethnicity.<sup>34</sup> Although the ‘issue’ of ethnicity seems to be masked in gay pornography, it is still hard to assume that a Western audience is the only one who consumes these films. The post-colonial mobilities and migration, as well as technological developments, diversify the audiences of these films: they help unpack these issues through their gaze and participation in consuming for pleasure. As Evangelos Tziallas states, “there is a discursive shift from Orientalist representation and perception to contemporary ones, brought about by continual migration and the dissolution of distance.”<sup>35</sup> Up until Jean-Noël René Clair’s (JNRC) work as a director of gay pornography, films were usually limited to the trope of sex tourism, in which middle-class white European or North American tourists left their home countries to seek exotic, sexual encounters in ‘the Orient.’ Jean-Noël René Clair changed this narrative and put the male bodies of immigrants in France in front of his lens. JNRC’s ‘rerouting’ in gay ethnic pornography articulated the narrative of sex tourism in gay pornography and diversified the record by pointing to the general trends in West Europe, such as generational migration and desire towards migrant men.

Following Cervulle and Rees-Roberts, Royce Mahawatte brings forth a similar argumentation, supporting the reproduction of racial exoticization that these films

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33 Cervulle, Maxime. “French Homonormativity and the Commodification of the Arab Body.” *Radical History Review* 100, 2008, 177.

34 Cervulle, Maxime, and Nick Rees-Roberts, 2010, 63.

35 Tziallas, Evangelos. “The New ‘Porn Wars’: Representing Gay Male Sexuality in the Middle East.” *Psychology and Sexuality* 6, no. 1, 2014, 96.



have created.<sup>36</sup> Challenging these arguments, Mohamed Amadeus Mack recently called Citébeur rather innovative with regard to Linda Williams' take on maximum visibility.<sup>37</sup> The creative approach that Amadeus Mack emphasizes here is the anonymity of Citébeur characters, who conceal themselves by either using instruments such as balaclavas and sunglasses or by choosing shooting locations such as basements, construction-areas, underground tunnels, etc. Citébeur is also representing a unique position by providing examples from contemporary French culture, considering that ethnic pornography is not always on demand. Mack also included the position of porn stars and their engagement to the genre by including Francois Sagat and his first appearance on Citébeur representing Maghrebi men under the name and character of Azzedine. Mack's analysis of Azzedine helps to broaden the means of porn stardom in European gay pornography and bridges the genre while comparing similar experiences between West European and the U.S. mainstream gay pornography.

My book will further address a certain blind-spot in the works by Linda Williams, Tan Hoang Nguyen, Richard Fung, and Constance Penley, who discuss pornography in connection to race and class but, nevertheless, focus mainly on examples from North America. Most of their arguments evolve around the racial stereotypes of the West and the position of non-white men within this configuration. Fung, for instance, argued that "the vast majority of North American (pornographic) tapes featuring Asians [...] privilege the (white) penis while assigning the Asian the role of the bottom; Asian and anus are conflated."<sup>38</sup> Fung's argument corresponds vividly with contemporary representation of these bodies in the visual sphere. However, these arguments are of great importance since most of the literature fails to account for the issue of 'race' during the rise of gay and lesbian studies in the 1990s. For instance, David Halperin argued that

the focus on gay subjectivity is sharpest in the case of white, socially privileged gay men, whose agency and autonomy are not likely to have been compromised by political oppression or external constraint and whose behavior cannot be explained by other social facts: that is why much of what I will say here will refer to them.<sup>39</sup>

Overall, the omission or neglect of race, ethnicity, and class creates a gap that prevents gender, feminism, and pornography studies to further evolve. However, pornography

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<sup>36</sup> Mahawatte, Royce. "Loving the Other: Arab-Male Fetish Pornography and the Dark Continent of Masculinity." In *More Dirty Looks: Gender Pornography and Power*, edited by Pamela Church Gibson. London: Cromwell Press, 2004, 127–36.

<sup>37</sup> Mack, Mehammed Amadeus. *Sexagon: Muslims, France, and the Sexualization of National Culture*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2017, 241.

<sup>38</sup> Fung, Richard. "Looking for My Penis: The Eroticized Asian in Gay Video Porn." In *A Companion to Asian American Studies*, edited by Kent A. Ono. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2008, 240.

<sup>39</sup> Halperin, David M. *What Do Gay Men Want? an Essay on Sex, Risk, and Subjectivity*. University of Michigan Press, 2007, 23.

studies acknowledge the importance of research that accounts for the intersectionality of race, ethnicity, and class in its relationship to pornography. Pornography studies, as an academic field, have the ability and potential to respond to what this knowledge means.

While there has been much research that is concerned with Maghrebi men in French gay ethnic pornography, other ethnic representations within pornography have often been ignored. For example, Jean-Noël Réne Clair paid specific attention to Eastern Europe, and the collapse of Yugoslavia and Soviet Russia. In 1995, Jean-Noël Réne Clair directed *Zone Interdite I* and *II* and one year later he added two other porn films, *USSR (the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)* (1996) and *СССР (the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in Russian)* (1996), appropriating the Soviet aesthetics for his porn movies. The following year, Jean-Noël Réne Clair capitalized on the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia. The two movies were *Milices Para-Militaires* and *Outrage*, one of which also included the storyline of French and German military members servicing in the barracks of NATO. In addition to centering on the Soviet Union and NATO's bombing of Yugoslavia, Jean-Noël Réne Clair also perpetuated narratives that were highly inspired by the stigmatization of Roma people and Turks, as evident in *Balkan Connections/Men of Balkans* and *Les Turcs* in 1997. Five years later, he returned to the same topic with a movie called *Gypsy Sex*. The last production of Jean-Noël Réne Clair was *JNRC Bulgarian Casting Call* (2009), a compilation of Bulgarian men who are willing to take part in his movies.

Throughout the literature, an involvement with the multifaceted relations between Germany and Turkey in gay ethnic pornography are rare and insignificant, although these examples act as a bridge that connects the chronology of European gay ethnic pornography. Joseph Allen Boone, who provides a detailed history on the tropes of Orientalism and colonialism in relation to homoeroticism, briefly mentions French and German-Turkish examples of gay ethnic pornography as being those “filled with a politically freighted history of accrued meaning.”<sup>40</sup> Historically, there has been a great deal of confusion in the literature regarding the examples from Turkey. Tziallas and Boone both mentioned Zip Production as a preliminary example of Turkish gay ethnic pornography, however, Trimax Films has been ignored in the literature even though they produced their films in the same era as Zip Production. Additionally, both Zip Production and Trimax Films were based in Germany, and traveled to Turkey to produce their films, which were mainly sold in Germany. While Zip Production and Trimax Films produced their films in Turkey, there have been other European porn film production houses that have specific focus on Turkey, such as Jean-Noël Réne Clair, and GayHeim. This book will address the lack of research by providing archival information as well as an analysis of those examples that are produced outside of

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<sup>40</sup> Boone, Joseph Allen. *The Homoerotics of Orientalism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014, 408.

Turkey. Moreover, my study of recent studios like GayHeim will also contribute to discourse on mobility issues of non-European men while demonstrating how these new productions can be refugee – or migrant – positive while, simultaneously, perpetuating Orientalism.

Following the Cold War and the Velvet Revolution, the Czech Republic garnered significant attention as a focal point of post-communist transition and European integration efforts. Meanwhile, the collapse of Yugoslavia and ensuing conflicts in the Balkans reshaped regional dynamics, contributing to a complex landscape of cultural exchange and identity formation across Eastern Europe. Despite these shared historical trajectories, studies on Eastern European pornography often adopt a narrow lens, focusing primarily on country-specific case studies without acknowledging the broader patterns of re-orientalization and exoticization that permeate the region. While scholars have extensively analyzed productions from industry giants like Bigstr Network and BelAmi Online, scant attention has been paid to earlier examples that explicitly engage with themes of war and trauma, such as Potro Videos and JNRC Films. By overlooking these nuanced narratives, our understanding of Eastern European gay ethnic pornography remains fragmented, obscuring the interconnectedness of socio-political forces and cultural representations within the region.

Thematically, the Eastern European examples of gay ethnic pornography can be divided into two main storylines: socio-economic anxieties and sex tourism. Additionally, different from the Maghrebi-French or Turkish-German examples, the context of Eastern Europe links and showcases the complex social structures created by recent political history. Several authors have recognized the social dilemmas and the issues of post-war ethnic identity in Eastern European gay porn films, such as Dan Healey or Joseph Brennan. Both authors contributed detailed analyses on Czech examples, with the special focus on the movies of Bigstr Network, which I address in the third chapter.<sup>41</sup> The movies of Bigstr network take their motivation from the gay-for-pay genre that came as a result of fear from AIDS in the mid 1980s. Kevin Bozelka argues that “AIDS influenced the creation of a gay-for-pay superstar persona in the mid-1980s-alooof, never to be anally penetrated, usually avoiding intimacy.”<sup>42</sup> However, in the Eastern European context, the motivation of gay-for-pay derives from the financial anxieties of Eastern Europeans, which are furthermore impacted by recent political developments and warfare. The gay-for-pay theme of Czech porn films differentiate itself from the social anxieties of HIV while neglecting the gay-for-pay theme through

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<sup>41</sup> Healey, Dan. “Active, Passive, and Russian: The National Idea in Gay Men’s Pornography.” *The Russian Review* 69, no. 2, 2010, 210–30. See also: Brennan, Joseph. “Exploitation in All-Male Pornography Set in the Czech Republic.” *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 22, no. 1, 2019, 18–36.

<sup>42</sup> Bozelka, Kevin John, “The gay-for-pay gaze in gay male pornography,” *Jump Cut* 55, fall 2013. See: <https://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/jc55.2013/BozelkaGayForPay/text.html>. (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

the Eastern European culture, presenting gay sex as the last financial resort to survive. While gay-for-pay or gay baiting as a result of financial anxieties dominates the narrative structure of half of Czech gay ethnic pornography, the other half focuses on re-branding the Czech identity of young men by representing them in rather utopian scenarios. BelAmi traced the strategies of mainstream U.S. gay pornography while positioning men of BelAmi as upper-middle-class. These young travelers seek pleasure in popular gay holiday destinations, not only in the Oriental East but also in South Africa.

A considerable body of literature does exist on the movies of BelAmi Online. BelAmi videos have been analyzed from various aspects that contribute to the overall discourse. For instance, Joseph Brennan argues how BelAmi has both attempted to change the perception of Eastern European gay fantasy while also providing an oral history from the producer Georges Duroy.<sup>43</sup> Although most of the literature discusses the restructuring of Eastern European ethnic identity, only a few scholarly works examine how BelAmi responds to the tropes of Orientalism and colonialism. Additionally, until BelAmi, Eastern Europe has been portrayed as a land of sex tourism for men from Western Europe or the U.S. However, in the videos of BelAmi such narratives change and BelAmi's characters become tourists themselves who are seeking for sex in South Africa or in Greece. The Orientalizing position of BelAmi is quite vague and kind of 'inauthentic' when compared to the evident realities between the East and the West, as Said has demonstrated. BelAmi's performative Orientalism contributes to Said's argumentation by comparing the history and knowledge of gay pornography and sexualities in the Czech Republic as well as Slovakia to the ways in which the mainstream porn industry, such as U.S.-based gay porn companies, perform Orientalism in their films. Considering this contribution, the third chapter lays the groundwork for further research about the adaptation of Orientalism as a marketing strategy and its consequences for contemporary pornography.

The context of Eastern Europe also benefits my study by bringing a discussion on antagonizing the sexual Other. The narrative of sex tourism that is often used in the films of gay ethnic pornography helps to understand how such a power relationship has been established. Eastern Europe's colonization by the powers of the West constructed the Oriental East. However, the focus of Orientalism usually lies on the East of Eastern Europe. Although there have been studies that are concerned with the Orientalization of Eastern Europe by cultural actors in both France and Germany, most of these studies ignore the aspect of sex and pornography.<sup>44</sup> I consider Eastern Europe to be a popular destination of sex tourism, which has been also marketed as an asset in

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<sup>43</sup> Brennan, 2019, 22.

<sup>44</sup> Hodkinson, James R, John Walker, Shaswati Mazumdar, and Johannes Feichtinger. *Deploying Orientalism in Culture and History: From Germany to Central and Eastern Europe*. Rochester: Boydell & Brewer, 2013.

the narrative of the gay porn films. Furthermore, by addressing an Eastern European concept of sex tourism, I emphasize an antagonizing perspective on the sexual Other.

## 1.4 Methodological Statement

For all their differences, producers and consumers in the aforementioned European countries have had a comparable way of interacting with gay ethnic pornography, and each nation shares similarities about how this phenomenon went through social changes. Considering films from specific nations in the form of singular case studies, my book will enable a discussion that aims to analyze gay ethnic pornography as a transnational product of both a European pornographic film industry and its consumer networks, and further locate these practices of production and consumption within post-colonial, historical, and psychosocial contexts of cultural production. Combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches, this book attempts to formulate analyses of: (1) the historical shift (media and cultural) of this phenomenon within both Europe and the S.W.A.N.A. regions; (2) the structuring gaze of the white, middle-class gay consumer as constitutive of gay ethnic pornography's representational system; and (3) the cross-cultural shift from an ethnic gay identity as the 'other' to the production of ethnic gay identity as the agent of 'othering.' The perspective of this study differs from the approach of cultural anthropology as it focuses primarily on media cultures and the ways in which they align with ideologies and consequently (re-)produce meanings about sexuality, gender, race, nationality, and class. This study will adopt a mixed-method approach that analyzes discourses, representations, and experiences articulated across a different range of media and data collection, including digital and analog material, interviews with filmmakers, and letters from the audience which are all considered to be manifestations of social anxieties regarding gay sexualities throughout Europe.

To test my research objectives, this book evaluates the content of European examples of gay ethnic pornography by drawing on the methodology of cultural materialism. Doing so, I will demonstrate how the cross-cultural exchange during the last 40 years has shaped the representation of non-white gay identity in gay ethnic pornography and revealed its political and ideological underpinnings. My methodology draws on Robert Aldrich's *Colonialism and Homosexuality* (2003), Edward Said's legacy of 'Orientalizing the Oriental' as formulated in his critical 1978's work *Orientalism*, and Linda William's concept of 'hard-core utopia.' I aim to utilize this specific combination of different theoretical frameworks to explore the new frame of exoticization and eroticization of poverty, labor, as well as relocation. What can ethnic differences tell us about the desiring gaze while addressing the motives that result from the power and desire in the gay ethnic pornography in Europe?

I employ three major geographical contexts – French, German, and Eastern European – in their distinctiveness to challenge the interconnected and overlapped struc-

ture of pornography as a field of study that necessitates the critical engagement with politics, culture, arts, and media. The interconnectedness of porn productions in different European national contexts enriches not only the analysis of each specific example's content, but it also substantiates my argumentation of how these productions gained visibility in each of the national porn sectors. On the one hand, this study wants to address an under-examined area of academic research within the field of pornography studies and beyond. These three different geographical contexts explore the articulation of ethnicity and sexuality through the relocation of cultures rooted in socio-economic crisis. Structuring this study into three corresponding main chapters, each of which is dedicated to a particular geographical context, enables an analysis of sexual desire and cultural antagonism through pornographic content. On the other hand, this book suggests that my methodological approach constitutes an original intervention, the comparative, trans-regional framework with the theory production of porn studies.

Additionally, the media archive of Zip Production presented in the appendices of the second chapter, helps bridge how gay ethnic pornography represented in the printed media. The critical approach to these movies is constituted by a visual-content analysis of the post-colonial middle-class gaze relations in mainstream pornography. During my research for this, I engaged in a systematic literature review while comparing the examples of gay ethnic pornography in Europe systematically to understand the power dynamics through the porn industry, including casting and staging. While doing so, I interviewed the owner of Zip Production to analyze his observations and the cultural shift through the observer and observed to test my research questions. Thus, in focusing on various representations shaped by ethnicization and sexualization, my research enables the analysis of an understudied area affected by post-colonialism and Orientalism in Europe. This book reveals where the dynamics of ethnicization and sexualization can overlap and be separated through similarities and differences. These outlined nuances provide a more detailed understanding of how the hegemonic male body is historically structured and performatively enacted. Although my case studies differ geographically and contextually, they converge in their discussions about the commonalities of post-coloniality and Orientalism as well as their developments regarding the sociopolitical events that also facilitate pleasure. In addition to the case studies, this book is also linked to the issue of archiving sex, as most of the examples I bring to light are largely inaccessible or hidden in archives.

The conditions of accessing archival pornographic material have become a significant topic in arts, culture, academia, and politics today. Although there has been no systematic initiative toward preserving pornographic media, a few (and mostly private) institutions have been collecting pornographic printed media for their libraries and archives, such as the *Mémoire des Sexualités* in Marseille, *Canadian Gay and Lesbian Archives* in Toronto, *Leather Archives Museum*, in Chicago, *the Erotic Art Museum* in Hamburg, *the Erotic Museum*, in Amsterdam, and *Schwules Museum\**, in Berlin. David Squires points that

These institutions do, however, ground the changing ideological terms in a material practice of collection and dissemination that demonstrates the limited efficacy of society's attempts to representing itself to itself.<sup>45</sup>

However, it remains difficult to access archival material of pornography, although it needs, in my opinion, to be preserved and accessible at an institutional level. The reluctance to properly preserve pornographic material stems, in part, from skeptical discussions and perceptions of pornographic media in the mainstream, and from the constant backlash against pornography by a conservative and elitist rhetoric. At the same time, academia, arts, and culture often demean pornographic productions while at the same time arguing for its important contribution to cultural and sociological research and beyond. The pornographic theaters' challenge, however, is not only the political backlash against their existence and the production of pornographic content, but the technological evolution that has since taken place as well as the recognition of the apparent democratization of the internet as a public space.

The far-reaching electronic distribution of pornography throughout the recent decade allows for various new data sources to measure the use of pornography more objectively. Like pornography in general, gay ethnic pornography shows significant technological developments during the approximately 30 years of its recorded history. Early examples of gay ethnic pornography have been marketed in the video home system (VHS) format, which complicated a socio-economical approach, since they have been sold in either adult video stores or sex shops and thus hinder the accessibility to this material. This assessment is based on two reasons: for one, not everyone is able to afford VHS tapes for their temporary pleasure. And secondly, being a customer or showing physical presence in a so-called adult film store was widely considered taboo. Such issues about access to pornographic material have obviously changed once pornography became widely available on countless online platforms. While access to the internet requires certain financial expenses, too, it is eventually more affordable than buying a single VHS tape. However, free access to the internet and regulations on media content as well as censorship became the issue of this new, contemporary online era. Especially the latter has profoundly adverse effects on academic or cultural work on pornography, considering that most accessible, free 'archives' are online porn streaming platforms, blogs that publish archival pornographic media, and forum sites. These websites can neither be taken for granted nor do they constitute reliable, permanent archives since such pages are regularly shut down, modified by

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45 Shanley, Caitlin. "APPENDIX Clandestine Catalogs: A Bibliography of Porn Research Collections". In *Porn Archives*, edited by Tim Dean, Steven Ruszczycky, and David Squires. New York, USA: Duke University Press, 2014, 441.

the uploader, or censored by legal authorities because of political regulations on the circulation of pornographic content.<sup>46</sup>

More recent examples of gay ethnic pornography, which are the subject of this study, are available as Digital Video Discs (DVD) and sold online by filmmakers and the production houses themselves. During my research, I downloaded or purchased most of my material on websites such as Citébeur.com, JNRC.fr, gayshop.com, or BelAmiOnline.com. However, most of the films produced between 1990 and 2005 are not available for download or purchase on either VHS or DVD. Especially the movies of Zip Production and Trimax Films are only available online on porn film blogs or porn film streaming platforms like PornHub, Xhamster, Xtube, or RedTube.<sup>47</sup> The accessibility of such (in most cases illicitly) user-uploaded content is contingent upon the decision of the users to keep these movies online, a choice that might also be determined by external factors such as copyright infringement claims or censorship. Additionally, most of these streaming platforms are operated by the MindGeek company, which has been accused of tolerating (or even profiting from) sex trafficking, child abuse, and revenge porn. My intention in mentioning these platforms is not to justify their importance but to underline that they were, in most cases, the only access to my research material. I certainly agree with Peter Alilunas, who demonstrated that the repudiation of pornography by second-wave feminists was, partly, initiated by MindGeek:

The consequences of this acceptance go far beyond MindGeek's massive, privacy eroding data collection schemes; rather, it directly influences the collective set of cultural beliefs about pleasure itself and whether or not it should be accepted in a healthy, open manner or rigidly regulated and demarcated into separate spaces.<sup>48</sup>

Alilunas was further concerned with the disappearance of video rental stores and its after-effects on the perception of pornography within the realm of new technologies and ever-evolving IT monopolies. The after-effects, in his view, are not just about the viewer experience, they furthermore determine the production and preservation of pornographic material.

The movies that I discuss at the beginning of the first chapter can be considered a fitting example for this debate. *Mektoub: Fantasia Arabe* (ca. 1920), which, as Joseph Allen Boone has argued, constitutes one of the first depictions of the colonial sexual history between the Maghreb and France, is today only available on Xhamster and has

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<sup>46</sup> Bronstein, Carolyn. "Pornography, Trans Visibility, and the Demise of Tumblr." *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 7, no. 2, 2020, 251.

<sup>47</sup> In 2021, during the research phase of this book, the porn streaming platform Xtube was shut down as a result of sex trafficking accusations. See: <https://www.out.com/news/2021/7/06/xtube-popular-adult-website-shutting-down>. (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

<sup>48</sup> Alilunas, Peter. "Contemporaneous Mundanity and Pornography Regulation by Indifference." *Porn Studies* 9, no. 1, 2022, 13.



been uploaded by an anonymous user.<sup>49</sup> However, should this user decide to delete the video from their channel, the availability of *Mektoub: Fantasia Arabe* will depend on the initiative of its copyright holder, who is not identifiable as of today.<sup>50</sup> But even if the video remains online, a user from a location where pornographic content is restricted cannot access this file. Additionally, retrieving these platforms can cause security concerns, as access to those sites is indictable in some countries. These conditions of research proved challenging for the data collection for this book, which was ultimately contingent upon the availability of alternative – that is, alternative to mainstream – porn film production. In addition to researching content online, I reached out to producers and directors of Zip Production and Trimax Films, who made a significant contribution to this project. Furthermore, these contacts helped clarify some of the misinformation regarding the aforementioned production houses and their histories, since some of the productions I mention lack first-hand information in the literature. Another challenge to my study was the fact that a significant percentage of pornography studies-related works are being challenged by legal restrictions, and that these ramifications as well as the secrecy surrounding pornography contribute to its low brow status within academia and beyond.

## 1.5 Chapter Outline

**The first chapter** will discuss French examples of gay ethnic pornography, charting from the vocalization of desire towards Arab men in 1970s France and the first examples of Jean-Daniel Cadinot, who put the Maghreb and the Maghrebi men at the center of his porn films. Moving on from Cadinot's Maghreb, the first chapter will continue with an in-depth analysis of the films of Jean-Noel René Clair, who changed the direction of gay ethnic pornography in France by relocating the desire towards Arab men in the Maghreb to that in the banlieues of French cities. Jean-Noel René Clair secures a critical spot in the history of gay ethnic pornography, given that his interest in fetishizing ethnic minorities within Europe is not limited to the Maghrebi men. He also produced examples with a specific focus on Turks, Russians, and the Romani people that inspired other production companies to create similar examples, as I discuss in the following chapters. While demonstrating how Jean-Noel René Clair has changed the narrative of earlier gay ethnic pornography, I further analyze the ways in which these films negotiate the discourse of Orientalism and post-colonialism in Europe through gay sexuality. Following my analysis of Jean-Noel René Clair's movies and the means of his productions, I conclude with the Paris-based porn studio

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<sup>49</sup> Boone, 2014, XVII.

<sup>50</sup> Incidentally, this is a frequent problem since online porn film streaming platforms often do not contain the accurate credit information of these films and thus cause misinformation by default.

Citébeur and its Maghrebi-French actors, which has been founded by Stéphane Chibikh. Other than Jean-Daniel Cadinot and Jean-Noël René Clair, Citébeur plays with the clichés and stereotypes of migrant men while re-Orientalizing the desire for Arab men. While discussing these three production houses individually, I furthermore address the history of French gay ethnic pornography and its impact on gay audiences.

**The second chapter** focuses on German-Turkish productions of gay ethnic pornography filmed in Turkey: Zip Production and Trimax Films. The latter entered the ethnic pornography market in Europe with a unique aesthetic and narrative style. Their productions are of critical importance, especially since the public perception of gay culture is more and more liberal in Europe and the Turkish migrant community appears to be irreversibly embedded into German culture. The chapter will present a detailed analysis of both Zip Production and Trimax Films that has been missing in the discourse of gay ethnic pornography. In addition to the films produced in Turkey, this chapter also highlights examples that focus on Turkish men based in Germany. Director Marcel Bruckmann produced the *Turkish Cum Guns* series between 2003–2008 for the Street Boys company. The *Turkish Cum Guns* series provides a base for comparison with the examples that have been produced in Turkey, and, at the same time, they provide knowledge on how generational migration and Turkishness have been handled by the means of gay pornography. By doing so, these productions allow comparisons with Citébeur, which shares similarities considering the stereotypes and stigmatizations of second and third-generation migrant men in Europe. When compared to the previous examples produced in Turkey, the inclusion of the *Turkish Cum Guns* in this chapter helps to better analyze how the issues of ethnicity and Orientalism are nuanced through labor migration and social issues. Besides focusing on these examples, the appendices of this chapter, which consists of the media archive of Zip Production, will contribute to the discussion of how these production houses have been represented in the German printed media. Additionally, I interviewed the director and the producer of Zip Production, Ben Tamam. His perspective will enrich the methodological approach to their films.

**The third chapter** focuses on Eastern European examples of gay ethnic pornography, produced both inside and outside Eastern European countries. Besides Czech and Slovak studios such as BelAmiOnline and sub-production houses of Bigstr Network (Czech Hunter, Debt Dandy, Dirty Scout), the Swedish studio Potro Videos, the French Jean-Noël René Clair, and the German Zip Production studio (which changed its name to BUM Videos for Eastern Europe to act as a new production company) produced examples that have a specific focus on Eastern Europe. Although BelAmi Online and Bigstr Network appear utterly divorced from the production houses, their approach to exploitation and re-Orientalization makes them comparable with the productions from abroad. Historically, I begin the chapter with examples from Sweden and France and consider how these films built fascination towards Eastern Europe through social and financial traumas, which will be re-branded by the Czech examples later on. While Czech examples of gay ethnic pornography have only been

produced in the Czech Republic (unlike the other European models), no other nation or ethnicity has been included in the narrative, which will be addressed later in the third chapter through a discussion on self-exoticization in porn. Yet, these Czech examples attract many international porn fans and followers. Thus, the book will discuss these examples to respond to the question of what the mobility/immobility of such productions would mean.

After almost 40 years of production, these productions deciphered a network of fascination and antagonism through their pleasurable material. The focus of the first two chapters is to discuss the specific concept that exploits the colonial legacies and Orientalized sexual commodification of non-white men. The third chapter of this book provides an alternative approach that is missing in the prevalent argumentation concerning ethnic and racial representation of the Eastern European men in gay pornography. It provides an insight into ethnic and racial positionality through social class and war trauma within Europe.

**In conclusion**, this book provides an in-depth study of the political and ideological meanings of gay ethnic pornography that have been shaped over the last 40 years. While demonstrating how this study and its archival practice can expand the discipline of cultural studies and, more specifically, pornography studies, it offers an innovative research method to respond to the questions raised as well. In conclusion, my book also elucidates how gay ethnic pornography in Europe has shifted from the porn film production companies to the public personas of the porn stars, who self-distribute their works through the technologically evolving sphere of the internet. I believe this volume, through its deliberate inclusion of media archives, testimonies, letters from the audience, and interviews with the directors of the films, will expand the text – and representation – centered on contributions made to the field of pornography studies.