

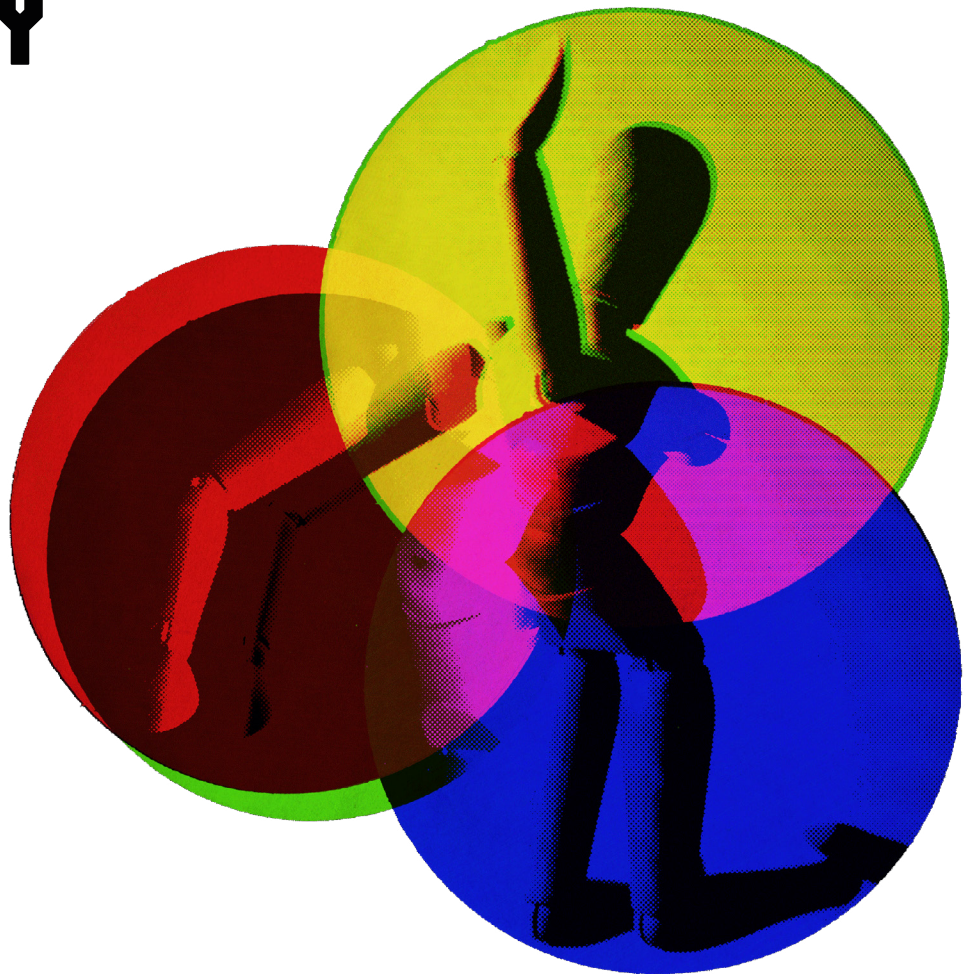


NO MORE THAN SOME OF HER PARTS: HOW SEXUAL OBJECTIFICATION DIMINISHES HUMANITY

DR ELLY HANSON

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This essay is the second in a three-part series for Fully Human. Their themes are the normalisation of commodified sex; sexual objectification; and the limits of consent.

Many societal ills thought to be on the wane seem to be springing back with particular power and catching us unawares. Too often the forces at play are working behind the closed doors (and screens) of the attention economy, so by the time their presence is visible in everyday life they have already gathered powerful momentum online. We are in a time of the uncanny in which things are both everywhere (if you're in their algorithmic orbit) and nowhere (if you're not). This is no truer than when it comes to the sexual objectification of girls and women.

Sexual objectification is when someone is valued primarily for their physical sexual appeal (or this is the focus),⁰¹ and it has been a prevalent way for women to be portrayed in mainstream media and entertainment for decades. In recent years however, this has declined in the UK –thanks to tireless campaigning, there are no longer topless women in tabloid papers, and it appears TV shows contain both **less sexual objectification as well as less gender stereotyping**. But alongside this shift there has been a surge of sexual objectification online, particularly targeted towards young people. Whilst it's almost tautological to say pornography contains objectifying content, it's not confined to porn – social media platforms are awash with it.

Internal research at X in 2022 estimated that **13% of its content is pornography** and that this is on the rise. Research at Instagram meanwhile found that over the course of a week, nearly 20% of 13-15 year olds see unwanted nudity or sexual images on the platform and 13% receive unwanted sexual advances.⁰² This aligns with an investigation by the Wall Street Journal which found that 'adult sex-content creators' begin appearing in the feeds of 13-year-olds' accounts within half an hour of them being set up, and they quickly become dominated by this content if it is engaged with.⁰³ Similarly, a recent large UK survey found that a quarter of 11-14 year old boys see sexual content within 10 minutes of going online.⁰⁴ Much of this seems driven by the online sex industry, as objectifying social media posts serve as a powerful form of advertising.

But if we put to one side for a moment the direct risks and harms of this industry, should sexual objectification in and of itself worry us? What does it mean for it be part of the tapestry of young people's lives? How does it impact girls and women, boys and men, and their relationships with one another? Thankfully a rich research literature has arisen to help answer these and related questions. Its findings are sobering and have profound implications for us all, personally, socially and politically.

01: Note that it is different from appreciating someone's appearance, or finding them physically attractive – the key is that appearance and physical sex appeal are given undue attention or value in contrast to the person's inner self. Sexual objectification reduces sexual attraction to the purely physical (whilst sometimes adding a sexual 'persona'), rather than this attraction being more holistic. One facet or indicator of objectification is 'fungibility' – the perception that someone can be exchanged with a similar other with little or no consequence. Nussbaum, M. C. (1999). *Sex and social justice*. Oxford University Press

02: Instagram Signals and Insights Platform, Meta (2021) *Bad Experiences and Encounters Framework (BEEF) survey*.

03: The introduction of Instagram's new specific 'teen accounts' might reduce the degree of sexual content and solicitation adolescents experience on the platform – at the time of writing it remains too early to tell. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2024/sep/23/meta-instagram-teen-account-rules>

04: This was a survey in January 2024 of 500 boys aged between 11-14 year olds conducted by Opinium on behalf of Global Action Plan and funded by Vodafone. I was a consultant on this project. More information and headline findings can be found at: <https://www.vodafone.co.uk/newscentre/press-release/ai-aggro-rhythms/>

SEEING PEOPLE AS HALF-HUMAN

We need to begin with what sexual objectification actually involves – how does it affect our perception of others? An intriguing set of studies has shed light on this question by presenting people with photos of individuals that vary in how sexualised they are (sometimes alongside stories – which can be used to reduce objectification), and then asking them to rate these individuals on various qualities. What they find is that people generally perceive the more sexually objectified as being significantly less warm, competent, intelligent and moral than others, as well as having less of a mind and free will. Of further concern, they see them as less deserving of moral treatment and less capable of feeling pain.⁰⁵ Not only are women more sexually objectified in our culture than men, but when they are, they tend to be more subjected to these belittling perceptions.⁰⁶ Many of these things are core parts of what it means to be human, so when we fail to see them in another, we are failing to see them as fully human.⁰⁷

Indeed, parallel research investigating subconscious processes suggests that the term 'objectification' is more than a metaphor. Typically, when we see a person, this triggers mental processes in the realms of early visual perception, attention and memory, that are based on recognising them as another person, not an object. Yet when we see a sexualised women, this person-object processing divide fades – neural workings shift towards processing them as an object. And this has been found in a diverse set of studies using a variety of methods.⁰⁸ In one for example, people were asked to use a computer mouse to categorise various pictures as 'human' or 'object'.⁰⁹ The pictures were of either sexualised or non-sexualised men, women, or doll-like objects. Measuring the movement of the computer mice, the researchers found that people experienced a particular 'categorisation conflict' when attempting to

05: For example: Bernard, P., Content, J., Servais, L., Wollast, R., & Gervais, S. (2020). An initial test of the cosmetics dehumanization hypothesis: Heavy makeup diminishes attributions of humanness-related traits to women. *Sex Roles, 83*, 315-327

Heflick, N. A., & Goldenberg, J. L. (2009). Objectifying Sarah Palin: Evidence that objectification causes women to be perceived as less competent and less fully human. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 45*(3), 598-601

Loughnan, S., Haslam, N., Murnane, T., Vaes, J., Reynolds, C., & Suitner, C. (2010). Objectification leads to depersonalization: The denial of mind and moral concern to objectified others. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 40*(5), 709-717

Vaes, J., Paladino, P., & Puvia, E. (2011). Are sexualized women complete human beings? Why men and women dehumanize sexually objectified women. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 41*(6), 774-785

Wollast, R., Puvia, E., Bernard, P., Tevichapong, P., & Klein, O. (2018). How sexual objectification generates dehumanization in Western and Eastern cultures. *Swiss Journal of Psychology, 77* (2), 69-82

06: Heflick, N. A., Goldenberg, J. L., Cooper, D. P., & Puvia, E. (2011). From women to objects: Appearance focus, target gender, and perceptions of warmth, morality and competence. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 47*(3), 572-581

Kellie, D. J., Blake, K. R., & Brooks, R. C. (2019). What drives female objectification? An investigation of appearance-based interpersonal perceptions and the objectification of women. *PloS One, 14*(8), e0221388

07: Note that the effect of viewing a discrete sexually objectifying film or set of photos is likely to be relatively small and fleeting – the issue is the accumulation of impacts over time (and how they can interact with pre-existing beliefs and traits).

08: Bernard, P., Content, J., Deltenre, P., & Colin, C. (2018). When the body becomes no more than the sum of its parts: the neural correlates of scrambled versus intact sexualized bodies. *NeuroReport, 29*(1), 48-53

Bernard, P., Gervais, S. J., & Klein, O. (2018). Objectifying objectification: When and why people are cognitively reduced to their parts akin to objects. *European Review of Social Psychology, 29*(1), 82-121

09: Vaes, J., Cogoni, C., & Calcagni, A. (2020). Resolving the human-object divide in sexual objectification: How we settle the categorization conflict when categorizing objectified and nonobjectified human targets. *Social Psychological and Personality Science, 11*(4), 560-569

class the sexualised women as human or object. In another,¹⁰ people's neural activity was measured whilst they looked at various pictures of men and women. Every now and again a doll-like object was instead presented which should trigger a specific neural response reflective of something novel being spotted (termed 'the oddball effect'). Yet when the doll was presented during a sequence of objectified women, this neural response was muted, indicating that it wasn't seen as that novel – rather it was processed as an object amongst others. And the extent to which someone implicitly processes sexualised women differently is linked to how sexist they are and their tendency to engage in objectifying behaviour.¹¹

It's not hard to see how reducing people in this way could lead to them being treated unfavourably. Returning to those qualities the sexually objectified are viewed as deficient in: if someone is seen as less competent, they are less likely to be given positions of responsibility and power; if someone is seen as less warm, they may be less likely to attract friends; if someone is seen as less moral, they are less likely to be trusted, and on it goes. Perhaps most sinister of all is the feeling that sexually objectified females are less deserving of moral treatment (plausibly related to the perception that they feel less pain) and research has found that this judgement is directly linked to a reduced willingness to help objectified victims.¹² Furthermore, experiments in which people can administer pain to others (through deciding how long someone keeps their hand in ice water, or how loud they hear a burst of white noise) find that people hurt women more when they are objectified.¹³

It's not only those directly sexualised who are affected here, as research further finds that exposure to sexualised images of women leads to other females being similarly subjected to this dehumanisation. This, alongside the reduction in empathy and increased belief in negative gender norms that this content also provokes, appear to lead to greater perpetration of sexual harassment, greater tolerance of it from bystanders, and less resistance to it from victims (the latter explored further below)¹⁴

All this helps to answer otherwise puzzling questions – why are victims of sexual harassment and violence so often treated as if 'they were asking for it'? Why do women and girls in the sex industry not merit our compassionate curiosity about their inner experience, instead of the simplistic 'choice' mantra that justifies our blindness?¹⁵ And similarly, why is verbal and physical violence in pornography tolerated in a way that it would not be in any other sphere of society? In short, because the humans involved are seen as half-human.

10: Vaes, J., Cristoforetti, G., Ruzzante, D., Cogoni, C., & Mazza, V. (2019). Assessing neural responses towards objectified human targets and objects to identify processes of sexual objectification that go beyond the metaphor. *Scientific Reports*, 9(1), 6699

11: Bernard, P., De Laet, M., & Gervais, S. J. (2021). Is body inversion effect a valid measure of women's objectification? Yes, it is!. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 175, 110708

12: Pacilli, M. G., Pagliaro, S., Loughnan, S., Gramazio, S., Spaccatini, F., & Baldry, A. C. (2017). Sexualization reduces helping intentions towards female victims of intimate partner violence through mediation of moral patency. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 56(2), 293-313

13: Vasquez, E. A., Ball, L., Loughnan, S., & Pina, A. (2018). The object of my aggression: Sexual objectification increases physical aggression toward women. *Aggressive Behavior*, 44(1), 5-17

Blake, K. R., Bastian, B., & Denson, T. F. (2018). Heightened male aggression toward sexualized women following romantic rejection: The mediating role of sex goal activation. *Aggressive Behavior*, 44(1), 40-49

14: Galdi, S., & Guizzo, F. (2021). Media-induced sexual harassment: The routes from sexually objectifying media to sexual harassment. *Sex Roles*, 84(11-12), 645-669

15: See the [first essay](#) in this series.

BELITTLED

Some people are more likely to sexually objectify women than others, and one group especially prone to are men who subscribe to a worldview in which men have higher status than women and are entitled to dominate them. One fascinating study found that men with this stance reacted to having to work under a female boss by sexually objectifying women more (compared to when they worked under a male one), seemingly in an attempt to put women 'back in their place'.¹⁶ In contrast, women, including those who sought dominance, did not respond to working under a male boss with the sexual objectification of men. Approaching women as sex objects is an effective means of asserting dominance over them because it affirms the gender hierarchy in a way that sexualising men does not. And as the authors of the study point out, objectification may be a particularly effective means of doing so because it hides the dominance motive behind a sexual one, necessary in modern societies where to openly own it would risk censure and judgement. In contrast, our culture makes it easy to narrate sexual objectification as the simple enjoyment of 'sex positive' freedoms.

So at the heart of what we are calling objectification is women and girls being judged as lesser. This is true in two senses of the word – first they are seen as having less of lots of the stuff that is integral to being human (such as agency and a range of emotions) and that people generally value and aspire to (such as intelligence and a moral compass). And, connected to all this, they are judged as of lesser status and worth – inferior to men and for their instrumental use.

The philosopher Kate Manne persuasively argues that misogyny is best thought of as the set of practices that enforce a patriarchal social order: the various ways and means that girls and women are demoted and held down (compared to their male counterparts, all else being equal).¹⁷ By this reading, objectification is one of various tools used on females to police and entrench this hierarchy; others include 'moralizing, blaming, punishing, silencing, lampooning... caricaturizing, exploiting, erasing and evincing pointed indifference'.¹⁸

As is implicit in this list, girls and women can be downgraded by many and varied depictions of them, and upon closer viewing these become dizzying in their contradictions. Females are both missing emotions (in objectification) whilst being full of them (for example, hysterical in contrast with more rational men). They are both not very bright (see above), as well as devious and scheming (when portrayed as goldiggers for example). They both don't need protecting (also see above), and are in particular need of it (to showcase a powerfully protective male). Misogynistic thinking and practice puts

16: Bareket, O., & Shnabel, N. (2020). Domination and objectification: Men's motivation for dominance over women affects their tendency to sexually objectify women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 44(1), 28-49

17: Manne, K (2018). *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*. Penguin Random House.

Note that boys and men may be subjected to other social forces that work against them, and that the rigid, traditional notions of masculinity that interweave with patriarchy can profoundly harm them – see for example: Mahalik, J. R., Levi-Minzi, M., & Walker, G. (2007). Masculinity and health behaviors in Australian men. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, 8(4), 240-249

Rogers, A. A., DeLay, D., & Martin, C. L. (2017). Traditional masculinity during the middle school transition: Associations with depressive symptoms and academic engagement. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 46, 709-724

18: Manne, K (2018). *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*. Penguin Random House, p. 30

All this is not to say that the sexual objectification of females is always employed with misogynistic intentions – indeed there can be many other motivations at play (including the simply sexual), and even when there is an underlying dominance motivation, it may well not be conscious. However, even in these cases, the objectification may still work to confirm and entrench a gender hierarchy.

these and other negative notions of females to use as and when needed – the fact that they contradict each other is ignored in light of their utility.¹⁹

Central to the downgrading of fellow human beings is the 'moral silencing' that it involves.²⁰ This term has been coined to capture the crux of dehumanisation in which people are placed outside the bounds of an everyday social contract that can be loosely summed up by the principle 'do as you would be done by'. They are deprived of the right to be treated as an equal with dignity and respect. And when people try to step back into that zone (or ask that others are admitted), it can feel like they're hitting their head against a brick wall. As one girl said of her male peers in an interview with me: "They're seeing women as not people... you can't even say this stuff to them because they're not that mature yet... they won't understand. They'll just laugh at you. You can't be like, oh, I'm not an object, I'm literally a human being. And they don't see you. They don't see you as one. I think that's the same with a lot of boys, even boys that haven't done bad things, just all of the boys that I know in my school!". This has echoes of journalist Hugo Rifkind's experience of talking with Andrew Tate: "The misogyny... gets frustrating. You'd think you could argue about it but you cannot, because when a man fundamentally doesn't recognise a woman as being the same sort of thing as he is, there's actually nowhere to go".²¹ These experiences are points on a continuum of moral silencing, which may often manifest in more subtle ways.

SEEING ONESELF AS AN OBJECT

So far we've just thought about how sexual objectification affects how people see and treat others, but a diverse set of studies show that just as pernicious is its impact on women's and girls²² view of themselves.²³ When women and adolescent girls are directly subjected to sexual objectification (say through comments by a partner, a gaze from a male stranger, or social media commentary persistently focussed on their appearance) or when they are exposed to it more generally (such as through pornography, social media photos, TV adverts, or sexualised video games), many subconsciously respond by self-objectifying.²⁴

19: In keeping with the view that these otherwise disparate representations of women in fact come from a similar underlying place, research finds that they correlate with one another. For example, one study found that the more adolescent boys dehumanised their girlfriends, the more evil they thought they were, and this in turn was linked to them treating their girlfriends violently. Morera, M. D., Quiles, M. N., & Gonzalez-Mendez, R. (2022). Integrating dehumanization and attachment in the prediction of teen dating violence perpetration. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 37(3-4), NP1939-NP1962

20: De Ruiter, A. D. (2019). *Dehumanisation and moral silencing: a normative account with illustrations from the refugee crisis* (Doctoral dissertation, European University Institute).

21: <https://www.thetimes.com/business-money/technology/article/at-home-with-andrew-tate-the-face-of-toxic-masculinity-37ndjdm5k>

22: Given the ubiquitous nature of female sexual objectification, this has been the focus of research, so we know far less about its impact on the boys and men who experience it. Some studies that have included males have only found impacts on females (such as sexual objectification's impact on maths performance, see below). Studies looking at other forms of objectification (such as being treated just as a means to an end in the workplace) find similar impacts on men and women. Gervais, S. J., Vescio, T. K., & Allen, J. (2011). When what you see is what you get: The consequences of the objectifying gaze for women and men. *Psychology of women quarterly*, 35(1), 5-17

23: It is also important to note that sexual objectification can shape people's feelings, thoughts and actions beyond its ability to induce self-objectification, my focus in this section.

24: Karsay, K., Knoll, J., & Matthes, J. (2018). Sexualizing media use and self-objectification: A meta-analysis. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 42(1), 9-28

This is the tendency to place undue value on your appearance and physical sexual appeal in contrast to other core aspects of yourself – your mind, values, soul. And it particularly manifests in a pervasive, heightened attention to how you look in the eyes of others, which can compromise other thoughts and feelings.²⁵ And the focus on their body's appearance can detract from awareness of its function and feeling – for example, studies find that when women and girls self-objectify they are less able to tune into their heartbeat or feel the cold.²⁶

The negative repercussions of this self-perception on how people then think, feel and act are disquieting. Self-objectification is linked to increased depression, anxiety, self-blame, embarrassment and guilt, as well as disordered eating, reduced cognitive performance, low self-esteem, negative body image, and decreased agency in a variety of situations, including sexual.²⁷ It is also associated with increased tendencies to dehumanize other women and to tolerate both them and oneself being treated badly.²⁸ Importantly, experimental studies have increased our confidence that it is self-objectification which is causing this, rather than all these things making self-objectification more likely.

Romantic relationships are a particular sphere in which self-objectification can take hold – research indicates that if a man sexually objectifies his female partner, she may well develop this perception of herself, and the two then work together to compromise their relationship and sexual satisfaction.²⁹

In many ways it makes sense for our perception of ourselves to shift to align with that of others, and most of the time this will be happening subconsciously. We are profoundly social creatures and depend on the acceptance and approval of those around us. The message of sexual objectification is that women and girls will be valued and embraced on the basis of their body, and so when living under

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- 25: Baldissarri, C., Andrighetto, L., Gabbiadini, A., Valtorta, R. R., Sacino, A., & Volpato, C. (2019). Do self-objectified women believe themselves to be free? Sexual objectification and belief in personal free will. *Frontiers in Psychology, 10*, 1867
- Cheng, L., Li, Z., Hao, M., Zhu, X., & Wang, F. (2022). Objectification limits authenticity: Exploring the relations between objectification, perceived authenticity, and subjective well being. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 61*(2), 622-643
- Loughnan, S., Baldissarri, C., Spaccatini, F., & Elder, L. (2017). Internalizing objectification: Objectified individuals see themselves as less warm, competent, moral, and human. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 56*(2), 217-232
- 26: Ainley, V., & Tsakiris, M. (2013). Body conscious? Interoceptive awareness, measured by heartbeat perception, is negatively correlated with self-objectification. *PloS one, 8*(2), e55568
- Felig, R. N., Jordan, J. A., Shepard, S. L., Courtney, E. P., Goldenberg, J. L., & Roberts, T. A. (2022). When looking 'hot' means not feeling cold: Evidence that self objectification inhibits feelings of being cold. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 61*(2), 455-470
- 27: For a summary of the studies demonstrating these effects see: Ward, L. M., Daniels, E. A., Zurbriggen, E. L., & Rosencruggs, D. (2023). The sources and consequences of sexual objectification. *Nature Reviews Psychology, 1-18*
- 28: For a summary of some studies showing these effects see Galdi, S., & Guizzo, F. (2021). Media-induced sexual harassment: The routes from sexually objectifying media to sexual harassment. *Sex Roles, 84*(11-12), 645-669
- 29: For example see Sáez, G., Riemer, A. R., Brock, R. L., & Gervais, S. J. (2019). Objectification in heterosexual romantic relationships: Examining relationship satisfaction of female objectification recipients and male objectifying perpetrators. *Sex Roles, 81*, 370-384

this cultural norm (shaped by the forces of patriarchy, neoliberalism and capitalism),³⁰ focussing on this as your locus of worth and site of 'self-improvement' could have adaptive value. Indeed, many women feel a boost of self-confidence when regularly complimented or treated well on the basis of their appearance. And it may lead to opportunities, earnings and, in some cases, fame. However, as the research mentioned above implies, there is an underlying ambivalence here, because fundamentally, the promise of sexual objectification is a false one. If you're treated as an expensive object, you might find yourself feeling both dazzled by being deemed expensive, whilst in parallel, disaffected by being deemed an object. And while bending yourself to societal norms usually leads to social acceptance, the notion that you are having to bend yourself fundamentally entails your rejection. Sexual objectification is at its heart a rejection of core parts of who you are, with this rejection enacted through their disregard. An interesting study has found that objectifying experiences do indeed lead women to feel ostracized, in turn lowering self-esteem and their feelings of belonging, control and meaning.³¹

'Taught from infancy that beauty is a woman's sceptre, the mind shapes itself to the body, and roaming around its gilt cage, only seeks to adorn its prison'. These chilling words were written by the pioneering feminist Mary Wollstonecraft over 200 years ago, yet sadly they remain as true as ever, with research just illuminating the bars of the prison.

SPIRALS AND IRONY

As is apparent from some of the previous discussion, sexual objectification is frustratingly a problem that works to perpetuate itself. For example, when people predominantly focus on someone's body or appearance, they will be less enquiring of their views and feelings, and without this knowledge of the person, their objectifying stance is sustained. Similarly, when people (subconsciously) conform to objectification, we get to see, hear and feel less of who they are, which in turn confirms its central deceit – that there was less of them in the first place.

All of this is profoundly disempowering. Sexual objectification leads to girls and women narrowing their social presence,³² struggling with their mental health, operating with less initiative and confidence (for example, finding it harder to negotiate their wages),³³ having less satisfaction in their relationships and sex, and being treated badly and with less recourse to justice.

Yet what other source of suffering and disenfranchisement is so unacknowledged as such? In fact

30: See the first essay in this series for a discussion of neoliberalism's view of what it is to be human and how this has shaped some sexual norms. Western cultures seem particularly prone to sexual objectification (see below), although it is also important to note that communist regimes have reduced people to work objects, and this form of objectification is also highly harmful.

Loughnan 1, S., Fernandez-Campos 2, S., Vaes 3, J., Anjum 4, G., Aziz 5, M., Harada 6, C., ... & Tsuchiya 10, K. (2015). Exploring the role of culture in sexual objectification: A seven nations study. *Revue Internationale de Psychologie Sociale*, 28(1), 125-152

31: Dvir, M., Kelly, J. R., Tyler, J. M., & Williams, K. D. (2021). I'm up here! Sexual objectification leads to feeling ostracized. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 121(2), 332-353

32: Saguy, T., Quinn, D. M., Dovidio, J. F., & Pratto, F. (2010). Interacting like a body: Objectification can lead women to narrow their presence in social interactions. *Psychological Science*, 21(2), 178-182

33: Guizzo, F., Di Michele, D., & Cadinu, M. (2024). From sexualized media consumption to salary negotiation: The relation between chronic self-objectification processes and women's negotiation intentions. *Media Psychology*, 1-28

sexual objectification is typically badged as its opposite – a source of empowerment. 'Girl power' so often seems to mean the power to take your clothes off for a sexualised gaze, and if concerns are raised, these are dismissed as attempts to hold back female freedom, and so they retreat into silence and shame. This often leaves women and girls with an inchoate sense that something is wrong, but nowhere to go to verbalise or make sense of it.

WAYS FORWARD

I have found it unsettling researching this topic and uncovering this reality of objectification's nature and impacts. It seems we have a stepford wives' dystopia operating under our noses, hidden by gaslighting and ignorance. Taken together, the vast research on this topic indicates that sexual objectification is a critical driver of various contemporary societal afflictions including the epidemic of sexual harassment and abuse, the mental health crisis facing adolescent girls,³⁴ and the persistence of gender inequality across diverse spheres of life, despite all the laudable attempts to tackle it.

The good news is that understanding and naming the problem is powerful. Studies find that education about female objectification lowers sexism and harassment in men, and increases women's proclivity to take collective action to combat it.³⁵ This education engenders anger at the injustices at play here, and is all the more powerful for it.³⁶

As online platforms have continued to evolve in the service of corporate profit, sexual objectification, in particular of girls and women, has ramped up. This is cause for neither celebration nor indifference, given that what we find is at stake is the ability to see and be seen as fully human, and all the riches that that entails.

34: Haidt, J (2024) *The Anxious Generation: How the great rewiring of childhood is causing an epidemic of mental illness*. Penguin.

35: Guizzo, F., & Cadinu, M. (2021). Women, not objects: Testing a sensitizing web campaign against female sexual objectification to temper sexual harassment and hostile sexism. *Media Psychology, 24*(4), 509-537.

Guizzo, F., Cadinu, M., Galdi, S., Maass, A., & Latrofa, M. (2017). Objecting to objectification: Women's collective action against sexual objectification on television. *Sex Roles, 77*(5), 352-365

36: Ibid.