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Mid-Term

INTRODUCTION

Virtual morality will be a hot button issue in the coming years or decades. Advances in full immersion 3D technology have taken video games and other full sensory experiences to the next level of interaction. The Imagineers at Disneyworld created Soarin' Around the World, which is "a scenic aerial tour of the globe" that visits some of Earth's greatest treasures such as the Swiss Alps, an experience sailing in Sidney Harbor, gliding over the Great Wall of China, and also over the Taj Mahal in India. This 3D ride opened in 2016. The (Salvador) Dali Museum in St. Petersburg, FL also uses 3D technology in one of its attractions using Oculus Rift to bring to life one of Dali's landscapes with a house against mountains. I have personally been through both of these attractions, and they are nothing short of already incredible.

3D technology will continue advancing to the point of making warfare be true to life in virtual reality ("VR"), or true to life working for a kingpin in games like Grand Theft Auto. In Grand Theft Auto, exotic dancers are paid for services, drugs are consumed, and rape is an element. The ethical challenge of unleashing real 3D in a Z-Axis rape or ingestion of intravenous heroin is whether to keep the regulatory schematic strictly libertarian or to impose governmental restrictions. Children do access these adult games. Some parents keep them from them. What is and is not proper is supposed to be the latter's decision, but does that work in practice?

In a game where tightrope walking between skyscrapers was analyzed, the reaction of the subject in a virtual reality environment was found to be about the same as the actual tightrope walker in real life. (West) This portends that participants to role-play-rape in 3D may rewire arousal patterns to prefer sexual violence if they brutalize a victim in “play”. In psychology, sex offenders are treated, at least in part, with an effort to rewire their arousal patterns, or at least their response to impulses to act out perversely.

The Indecent

The Free Speech Coalition, backed by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), holds the 1st Amendment precedent setting forth that lewd depictions of children, such as are made in Adobe’s Photoshop, which do not actually harm a child, are legal (Ashcroft v Free Speech Coalition). It is conceivable that either video game creators or a designing person will create a 3D game depicting sexual activity with minors to satisfy pedophiles which will further perpetuate the problem posed by an unregulated, libertarian market. It is believed by this author that the experience of 3D perversions will be too much to pass up once true-to-life VR is achieved. In this theoretical 3D game, no child would be hurt and the winning “virtual child porn defense” would govern.

Ingestion of drugs in a 3D environment also needs regulated. It is conceivable people will snort a line of cocaine, inject heroin, or smoke methamphetamine or marijuana in a 3D game such as Grand Theft Auto, and these graphic depictions are like actual drug ingestion itself harmful to society. These depictions trigger intense urges, and desensitize naïve users to the images and rituals associated with using. To ingest drugs in a 3D environment ought to rightly be the same as taking the real thing in real life, because it’s no different than readying for the real thing in real life where both the paraphernalia and use are outlawed.

Sexual violence is likewise currently only an acceptable indecency in VR. In a Z-axis rape, where the perversion extends to viewing the insertive partner penetrating another, people desensitize themselves to the most heinous, obscene sorts of behavior. Zero-tolerance for sexual brutalization is the call of the day in the #MeToo era. It should never be okay to actively participate in aggravated sexual abuse. Forcible, compelled sexual activity is always wrong.

Lastly, it's a safe belief Larry Flynt's Hustler is going to remain on the cutting edge of marketing pornographic material to adults. It would not shock this author in the slightest if Mr. Flynt were already invested in immersive lap dances to be played for consumers on a device like the Oculus Rift or later generation 3D technology. Mr. Flynt is a respectable purveyor of smut. With VR, there would be the rebirth of the porn star by age-verifying any model appearing partially or fully nude (thus linking the 3D caricature to a true 18+ fee-for-hire porn star and removing any threat minors would be caricatured).

REGULATING THE INDECENT AS OBSCENE

The best solution seems to regulate the content and not just the end user. The libertarian philosophy of individually regulated access to mature content should still prevail. Content rating systems are a bulwark of protection of society from offensive content. Content rating systems and end-user password protections are directly analogous to use of a computer with which a minor may access online pornography, even without a password and without parental oversight, much as they might use any video game within reach. Passwords are a tried and true method of keeping children out of adult content.

Obscenity laws in the United States currently make it illegal to market abortion in any public way. It is no stretch to conclude that with the coming era of VR that lewd depictions of children in either animation or made in any way with a graphic design program (even in which no child is harmed) must be

criminalized as obscene, along with engagement in sexual violence, and engaging in any drug abuse in VR. Like abortion, these will be made intolerable for engagement in, even as a role-play, to a sane society. They are per-se obscene and offensive to ordered liberty. Also, all models exposing full or partial nudity in any VR environment which is defined as indecent consistent with societal standards would be required to be age-verified depictions of actual adults. This would ensure the rebirth of the porn-star by licensing actual likeness through (our example) Hustler for use in its “Lounge” who could each receive a payment for every unit sold, while the content creator and purveyor, Hustler, markets its models.

CONCLUSION

This author suggests that there is a pornography crisis, or perhaps better stated an indecency crisis in the United States, but what can be effectively regulated vis-à-vis the 1st Amendment is currently highly debatable in the schema of ordered liberty.

There are competing conclusions about what is and is not best for society based in these legitimate concerns over what should be allowed for adult consumers. It is clear to this author that the evolving standards of a decent society require updates to the obscenity laws to keep up with the mores of the day. Changes to them consistent with the foregoing are the best proposed solution.

Works Cited

Ashcroft v Free Speech Coalition. No. 535 U.S. 234. U.S. Supreme Court. 2002.

West, Darrell M. *TECHTANK*. 18 April 2016.

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