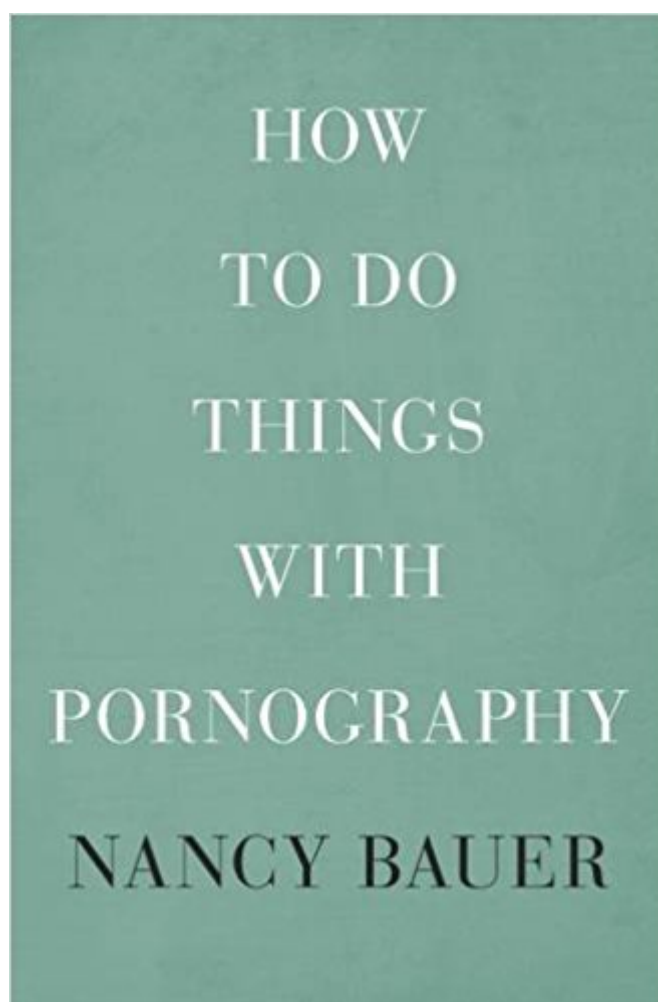


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How To Do Things With Pornography



Synopsis

Feminist philosophers have made important strides in altering the overwhelmingly male-centric discipline of philosophy. Yet, in Nancy Bauer's view, most are still content to work within theoretical frameworks that are fundamentally false to human beings' everyday experiences. This is particularly intolerable for a species of philosophy whose central aspiration is to make the world a less sexist place. *How to Do Things with Pornography* models a new way to write philosophically about pornography, women's self-objectification, hook-up culture, and other contemporary phenomena. Unafraid to ask what philosophy contributes to our lives, Bauer argues that the profession's lack of interest in this question threatens to make its enterprise irrelevant. Bauer criticizes two paradigmatic models of Western philosophizing: the Great Man model, according to which philosophy is the product of rare genius; and the scientific model, according to which a community of researchers works together to discover once-and-for-all truths. The philosopher's job is neither to perpetuate the inevitably sexist trope of the philosopher-genius nor to "get things right." Rather, it is to compete with the Zeitgeist and attract people to the endeavor of reflecting on their settled ways of perceiving and understanding the world. *How to Do Things with Pornography* boldly enlists J. L. Austin's *How to Do Things with Words*, showing that it should be read not as a theory of speech acts but as a revolutionary conception of what philosophers can do in the world with their words.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The author does a good job pointing to the phenomenon of "Lady power" and its multiple aspects. She also made a good point of asking philosophers or whoever is concerned to look at pornography not through a distanced, analytical looking glass, but as more immediate experience. However this book contains many grandiose claims that are poorly supported. Lots of "I'm not saying A, B, or C. What I'm really trying to say is this grand, big, good, wonderful thing D, which I will not go on to explain." For example, in Chapter 7 she writes: "...[W]hat makes men accept this norm? Given that sexual norms are not institutionalized in the way that tennis rules are, why would a man adopt a norm such as this instead of, say, 'Rape is absolutely unacceptable'? Why would any man bestow authority on pornography? Once again, I submit, no amount of empirical investigation will yield a definitive answer to this question. Notice that I'm not saying that empirical investigation might not lead to some drug that prevents men from, for example, raping women. (Not that I'm holding my breath here.) What I'm saying is that to the extent that we view the issue in terms of bestowing authority, as Langton insists we must, no set of experiments is going to do the job. What is needed is a vision of how things are with the world that gives us to understand the sway certain people allow pornography or, for that matter, any entity not invested with institutionalized power philosophy, perhaps? to hold over their conduct." But then after, she fails to explain how "a vision of how things are with the world" can be achieved.

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