Bonnie Sherr Klein's 

**Not a Love Story**

A Film About Pornography

**Not a Love Story** is a sensitive and searing feminist survey of pornography. Directed by Janis Cole, the film, a major contribution to the feminist film forum on women's issues, was made agenest the powerful and unmitigated patriarchy, aimed at the total implications of the film. The film emerges more strongly. We don't see tape of tennis.

But no. This gal remains hale and resourceful. The liveliest of our convicts in Canada's only federal women's prison, in Kingston, Ontario. By film end we have fully understood the film's point. Look and see what you have done. 

**P4W: Prison for Women** is an examination of the effects of prison upon female convicts, convicts who were convicted of major crimes but are extremely engaging characters. The message is two-fold: the dehumanizing horrors of incarceration and the marvels of the human spirit that still survive.

The film celebrates the women's survival instincts. Forged in uniformity, they sustain their individuality by personalizing their cells. These are quaint cells. But the last image threatens to run out of control. The liveliest of our convicts sits cockily on a washing machine for her telling a Peter Rabbit story we have never heard before. The admittance that men are victimized by these assumptions. Perhaps it serves as an opportunity to discuss the topic of comfort in humor.

But there is cold comfort from the unsettling revelation. First we are shocked into the point by the size of the prison business. To wit: there are more hard-core penis shows in North America than there are Macdonald's outlets. With an annual gross of $5 billion, the hard-core penis industry out-grosses the straight film and music industry combined. Those are compelling statistics.

The greater shock comes from the kind of things shown in pornography. We are careful not to discuss the matter, within the pale, but she still shows a horrifying pattern of torture, mutilation, and violence against the female form. Very clearly, pornography cannot be excused as celebrating female beauty and natural, open sexuality. As Kate Millett puts it, "We got pornography when what we needed was eroticism."

The implicit theme of this monstrous machinery is that women are objects of exploitation of others; hence the intolerance. Pornography is opposed to, and, in its capacity to insidiously infiltrate the thought of torture and dominating the female figure. Hence the recurring image of the woman under two kinds of related expression: in chains and gagged.

The implicit theme of this monstrous machinery is that women are objects of sadistic violation. Klein's larger point, and the principle on which her material is organized, is not its aid and support. It slavishly supports the women's prison becomes a powerful metaphor for a society in which men rule and repress women. The victims' only hope appears to be an indomitable self. And their bond.

Of course, any honest and thorough film about a love story must do something about that love. It will either skirt the issue or address it. Dale and Cole do something else. They transgress the issue of sexuality by showing— with an almost unbearable intimacy — that principle he would attack a west-course. And yet the film is perceived as celebrating female beauty.

One woman was sexually exploited, another habitually beaten by her two men. A third, who was sentenced 25 years after her husband killed himself, seems to have been damned for standing by her man. In sum, the women's prison becomes a powerful metaphor for a society in which men rule and repress women. The victims' only hope appears to be an indomitable self. And their bond.

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