



If you look at it long enough... (Metaflux // Incandescent Bodies)

Paul Hallam

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Originally written for an academic journal, *If you look at it long enough...* is primarily a personal account of Paul Hallam's recollections of "self-abuse" through the consumption of porn over several decades. Challenging the familiar form of an "academic essay," this autobiographical narrative raises several questions in relation to our contemporary morals related to sex in general, and more specifically, to gay pornography. Unapologetic about the author's fascination with porn, and the intimate pleasures attained therefrom, *If you look at it long enough...* cuts through the veneer of social hypocrisy by indirectly, but insistently, reminding us that conventional models of happiness are to be challenged without fear, both in our personal lives and in the world-at-large.

Now edited for the first time as a book with an introduction by Gary Wickham and a new short essay by the author, reflecting his shifting feelings on pornography since its original publication, this often witty, moving, and profound essay should now reach a wider readership.

"Hallam's almost Proustian account of the role of pornography in stimulating personal and historical memory is an important and original perspective." — Jeffrey Escoffier, Author of *American Homo: Community and Perversity*; Editor of *Sexual Revolution*

The essay is a frank and serious, but seriously witty, description of a lifetime as a consumer of (mainly gay) pornography. Although dispassionate, Hallam's narrative of "self-abuse", as he calls it, is not detached; and although, as viewer, he is physically and temporally detached from the actors he is watching, the experience is not lacking in passion. Nor is his account of it. He identifies and evaluates crucial aspects of the relationship between the pleasures of masturbation and broader aspects of his development as an artist and as an individual. Even if nostalgia is one of the motivating factors he names, the fact that he is both a filmmaker and a writer makes this project much more than a mere indulgence in nostalgia for porn perdu. He is thinking about the ways in which we make mental visuals and narratives of intimacy to enhance our humanity. Perhaps intimacy is itself our most reassuring fetish. - Gregory Woods Author of *Homintern: How Gay Culture Liberated the Modern World*; *A History of Gay Literature: The Male Tradition*; and *Articulate Flesh: Male Homo-Eroticism and Modern Poetry*.

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