

# The Porn Debate

The debate over the rightness or wrongness of pornography has arisen again with the news about Josh Duggar's infidelities, which he in part attributes to [an addiction to internet pornography](#).

When it comes to the morality of pornography, it seems there are two main competing views today.

One view holds that looking at pornography is always wrong: that it fundamentally conflicts with the purpose of sex, the dignity of human beings, and that it negatively impacts human relationships.

Another view holds that pornography is permissible as long as one uses it temperately. This appears to be the view promoted by a somewhat clumsy article (not calling the view clumsy) in Slate yesterday which claimed in the title that ["No, Porn Addiction is Not Really a Thing,"](#) only to conclude "There are certainly men out there who use porn so much it interferes with the rest of their life, which means they need help."

From a philosophical standpoint, the following seems to be the case:

For those who believe pornography is intrinsically evil, the onus is on them to explain how its use does not accord with the proper *telos*, or goal, of human sexual activity.

For those who believe pornography is a matter of temperance, the onus is on them to explain how its use can correspond to the proper *telos* of human sexual activity, for (in the tradition of Aristotle) temperance involves a right use of pleasurable activities that are good.

And if you think that there is no proper *telos* to sex, I suppose there's no point in having the debate at all.