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From reality to fantasy: celebrity, reality TV and pornography

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Steven Daigle occupies a unique position in celebrity discourse in that he has made the successful transition from a reality TV star on series 10 of American *Big Brother* (CBS) to a career in hard-core gay pornography. It is the aim of the essay to examine this shift by considering the representation of Daigle in *Big Brother* and his debut porn feature *Steven Daigle XXXPosed* (2010). It also focuses on the paradoxes and connections between celebrity, reality TV and pornographic representation. More specifically, it will consider the rhetorical construction of reality and fantasy and how other factors such as the relationship between the ordinary and extraordinary, the seen and unseen and public and private domains, contribute to an understanding of sexual identity. The article will also suggest that when some of the techniques and features used in reality TV and pornography intersect they have the potential to transform how we understand reality TV and porn-stars and the discourses associated with them.

Keywords: reality; fantasy; celebrity; pornography; sexuality; representation; identity; Steven Daigle

Introduction

In 2008 Steven Daigle entered series 10 of American *Big Brother* (CBS), identifying himself as both a bull-rider rodeo competitor from Texas and the ‘gay cowboy’. Daigle used his all-American good looks and sculpted body to express and locate his sexual identity in the house and his behaviour was stereotypically provocative and playful. Less than two years later, in a two-minute trailer for his first porn movie *Steven Daigle XXXPosed* (Chi Chi LaRue 2010) the eponymous porn star was filmed in sexual scenarios which traded on his prior identity as a reality-TV star. In the trailer, a range of narcissistic and voyeuristic camera shots incorporated technical and visual devices used in the reality-TV genre to remind the audience of Daigle’s former status as a reality-TV celebrity in order to reposition his new identity as a reality porn star. This worked to shift the aesthetic of reality TV into what I am describing here as reality pornography. Here the mixture of intimacy, liveness, extreme close-up, amateur and hand-held camera work, and surveillance imagery associated with the visual rhetoric of both reality TV and pornography were reworked and repositioned as dual markers of both reality and fantasy.

In an interview for *Queerchannel.com*, (Queer Channel: Kameron Scott with Steven Daigle., 2012) interviewer Kameron Scott asked Daigle to discuss his new sense of celebrity post reality TV. In response he mentioned the variety of opportunities available to him in porn as well as identifying the industry cross-overs both from his own

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perspective and from fans who are interested in the Daigle from *Big Brother* and the Daigle in pornography. He also revealed the stigma of moving from reality TV into porn, as well as the guidance he has received from within the industry, and particularly from LaRue. Daigle's commentary on his celebrity career makes it apparent that he sees his identity as a reality-TV star as the catalyst to a profession in pornography and the realisation of his ambition to become a porn star. In the trailer for the movie, his celebrity identity is knowingly exploited and represented, drawing on discourses of both reality (in the sense of the structured reality of *Big Brother*) and the mediated fantasy of pornography. The attempt to capture a particular way of articulating desires that are simultaneously real and fantastical in this specific text is also a central feature of the ways in which Daigle has been subsequently represented as the gay cowboy or as the porn star in other appearances on websites such as *UKnakedmen.com* and *MenatPlay.com* (particularly in the *Record and Play* and *Sextortion* scenarios). All of these representations manipulate and syndicate the identities of reality-TV star and porn star to reposition Daigle as a combination of both.

This essay will examine how Daigle, as an object of gay sexual desire, is represented by addressing the intersections between his celebrity identity on reality TV and in pornography, and how the illusion of 'live' and 'real' sexual intimacy can be understood through his initial identity as a reality-TV star. I will also use the example of Daigle to suggest how ordinary social reality and extraordinary sexual fantasy may intersect and potentially reposition established meanings and interpretations of celebrity in each. Discussing what Simon Hardy sees as 'the pornography of reality' (2008, p. 60) and by referring to the ways in which porn has moved 'towards greater realism' (2008, p. 61), this essay attributes the new realism in porn, and more broadly in celebrity culture, to the 'rise of such overlapping variants as gonzo, amateur and cyberporn' (2008, p. 60), as well as 'the advance of new media technologies' (2008, p. 61) in contemporary culture. Alongside these developments, reality TV and pornography have also started to blur the distinctions between 'the experience of a lived sexual interaction not only in terms of the sexual action itself but also in terms of its context or framing' (2008, p. 61). By offering representations of sex which strive to appear as real as possible, both genres may also have the potential to present a new sense of how celebrity, fame and sexual fantasy connect and can be articulated.

Gay identity and representation

Several of the points I have raised in the introduction are also linked to broader concerns surrounding gay male celebrity and the attendant dichotomies of public and private lives, sexual exposure and revelation, as well as debates around the construction of reality and fantasy in TV and film discourse. These tensions have held particular importance in the fields of star and celebrity studies which identify how the systematic hierarchies, structures and categories of fame and celebrity are constructed (Dyer 1998, DeCordova 2001). Some of the meanings and interpretations of stardom are summarised in Richard Dyer's claim that we see both 'stars-as-ordinary' and 'stars-as-special' (1998, p. 43). This ordinary/special binary is also aligned to what Dyer, who has also written extensively about gay representations in the media, sees as 'a near necessity for the representation of gayness' (2002b, p. 19) and how 'the signs of gayness' as 'a repertoire of gestures, expressions, stances, clothing and even environments' constitute a 'gay male typicality' (2002b, p. 19). Star studies as an earlier field of enquiry into the study of fame positioned the film star as an identity which other types of celebrity were measured against (Dyer 1998). The film and its star, through critical practice, have often been constructed as texts that remain ideologically distant, mythical and subject to voyeuristic interpretation. By contrast, the

TV star (and especially the reality-TV star) has been understood through discourses of familiarity, and figured through 'proximate access' and 'intimate revelation' (Biressi and Nunn 2005, p. 112); this characterisation also reflects the nature of television as a medium as a marker of reality, authenticity and the cult of the TV personality (Ellis 1992, Holmes 2004). As Holmes observes, the specificity of an authentic representation on the TV or film screen is shaped by how the 'ordinary/extraordinary' paradox is constructed. Whilst the distancing rhetoric of the movie screen has conventionally 'been seen to differentiate film stardom "proper" from televisual fame' (Ellis 1992, p. 106, in Holmes 2004, p. 117), it has also offered a way to read the TV star through film stardom. The contrast between the way in which stardom is constructed on TV and in film also indicates the relationship between stardom and celebrity and the specifics of a given medium. Similarly, both porn and reality-TV stardom have been characterised as 'a particularly self-conscious and complex parody of the ordinary and extraordinary' (Holmes 2004, p. 117). This may offer some indication of how complex and contradictory Steven Daigle's gay-porn stardom can be seen to be when considered alongside the construction and representation of Daigle on reality TV as well as online and through social-media networks.

As my consideration of Daigle as a gay-porn performer aims to demonstrate, it is through the combination and use of what might be regarded as stereotypically gay traits and characteristics and their 'social, political, practical and textual determinations' (Dyer 2002b, p. 19) that reality, celebrity and pornography paradoxically intersect. Daigle's image in both porn and *Big Brother* draws on the signifiers of a gay macho persona and how this stylistically exaggerates and eroticises conventional signs of straight masculinity (2002b, p. 40). For example, his identity as the gay cowboy employs an 'exaggeratedly masculine style' whilst it also expressed what Dyer defines as a 'camp attitude' (2002b, p. 42). This consequently works as a camp signification of masculinity because it 'implies an ironic stance towards official or mainstream images or representation' as well as articulating and drawing attention to 'the artifices attendant on the construction of images of what is natural' (2002b, p. 42). In this way Daigle's gay-cowboy identity, which precedes his porn stardom, manages to tap into the self-conscious and constructed nature of a gay identity and situates it within the generic conventions of reality TV and pornography, which are both at points presented as mediated reconstructions of reality and truth.

Conceptualising Steven Daigle: inter-textuality and homographesis

Steven Daigle's celebrity identity also begins to problematise some of the established orthodoxies of gay media representation by repositioning pornography and reality-TV celebrity as interdependent discourses of reality and fantasy, both on and off screen. For example, his public and private personae and instances of his ordinary (and extraordinary) behaviour are documented through various online social networks and gossip blogs. Since he became a porn star in 2010, there have also been alleged blackmail and sex-tape scandals, his arrest for beating up his boyfriend in a nightclub and the personal statements and photographs which are posted by himself and his followers online via his *Twitter* profile (StevenFromBB10). The particular mixture of banality, speculation, scandal and gossip that are recurrent features of a social-media platform like *Twitter* are also typical of the ways in which celebrity, porn and reality media are constructed and read. The social-media platform, then, becomes a key mechanism for both the construction and communication of Daigle's celebrity persona. Daigle's profile presents a series of seemingly 'ordinary' self-representations which complicate his signification in reality TV and porn. There is an eclectic range of imagery, ranging from photographs he has taken of himself

giving a blow-job in a gay porn magazine to pictures of his dog, the DVD cover of *Steel Magnolias*, various meals he has been served in restaurants, his young cousin, images of him with friends (and fellow porn stars), waiting in airport lounges, at the dentist, and at an ice-hockey match. Whilst this bricolage of images is a common feature of most *Twitter* profiles, what makes Daigle's significant in this context is the clear intention to fuse the private and public representations of his sexual and social life. Here the identity of the porn star, reality-TV contestant and gay man are assembled in ways which allow private sexual fantasies and public personas to simultaneously connect with each other. Examples which represent Daigle in this way can be found on his website *StevenExposed.com* and more tellingly in footage which has been posted by Daigle on websites such as *YouTube.com*. One clip he has tagged as *Runyon Rednecks*¹ features Daigle and fellow porn star Brandon Lewis filming one another as they are exercising in Runyon Canyon Park in Los Angeles. As Daigle and Lewis are joking and fooling around, Daigle comments to Lewis, 'Maybe you can film some of my sex scenes', and Lewis responds, 'Hey, don't doubt me.' Both stars use the camera and refer to sex throughout the video, turning the lens either on to themselves or one another as they eroticise the process of exercising together. As they run through the park, they reveal their chests and backsides and discuss in detail how many porn movies they have made. In background shots we also see several members of the public exercising, unaware of the identities of the two porn stars and the fact that this footage is eventually intended to be part of the content on Daigle's own sexually explicit website.

In Daigle's case, the representations which combine elements of the sensational and the ordinary are often posted and viewed via online and social media. This practice could be regarded as inter-textual (Klinger 1989, Holmes 2004), in particular his initial fame on reality TV and subsequently in hard-core gay pornography can be aligned with Su Holmes' use of the term in her reading of *Big Brother* (2004). Daigle's identity in the show, in porn and on social-media sites 'is produced from a range of different media sources, including the Internet, the popular press, celebrity magazine, [and] radio and television's own discourse on the series' (Holmes 2004, p. 121) to constitute an inter-textuality formed through 'the discursive construction of [. . .] relations in inter-textual circulation' (Holmes 2004, p. 119). His position as a former contestant on the show and a porn star may be understood as an inter-textual realisation of how these discourses influence, transform and frame one another. His transition from reality TV to porn also seems to depend on the circulation of his image as both televisual and pornographic. On his *Twitter* profile, where images of everyday life are assembled alongside those from his celebrity, reality-TV and pornographic careers, a single coherent celebrity identity becomes difficult to establish. This combination of Daigle's ordinary and commonplace reality re-emphasises the fragmentary nature of contemporary celebrity and the construction of fantasy in the sexually explicit imagery. I am suggesting that this happens because *Twitter* allows Daigle to post mundane images which situate him in an everyday reality his audience may well be familiar with. It similarly enables him to post images associated with sexual fantasies and desires his audience may be aware of but may not have encountered in their own reality. This is something which, in fact, both reality TV and pornography do; that is, simultaneously construct and blur the lines between private and public presentations of sex.

The combination of images from everyday life, reality TV, porn and celebrity that Daigle presents also seem to produce a fault line between the ways in which sexual fantasies and realities are constructed and read. In so doing they locate representations of Daigle in an 'inter-textual zone' (Klinger 1989, p. 10) where desires associated with reality and fantasy 'constitute a tenacious [. . .] network of relations' (1989, p. 9). This also allows for particular significations of the real and the fantastical expressed in both reality TV and pornography to overlap and influence one another in ways which disrupt and undermine

their intended meanings. There are a variety of examples featuring Daigle in situations where these overlaps occur but one of the most pertinent is in the *Sextortion* series on *MenatPlay.com*. In this sequence of three pornographic scenes starring Daigle, entitled *The Denial*, *The Trap* and *The Evidence*, we are presented with some abstruse approaches to the questions of pornographic authenticity and fantasy. Daigle plays a supposedly famous yet corrupt star/businessman who is blackmailed and forced into sex with various other men as part of a plan to cover up sexually explicit images of him which have been exposed in the media. Here some of the concerns associated with public and private sex, celebrity identity and exposure are performed by Daigle in a role which aligns itself with the excessive plots of gay and straight pornographic fantasy. In all three instances, he is seemingly coerced and then coerces the other men he encounters through the blackmail into sexual exchanges. In *The Denial* he fucks the fictional talk-show host Neil Stevens, in *The Trap* he seduces and fucks another businessman played by Carl Wilde, and in *The Evidence* he acts out a similar scenario with his business associate played by Pablo Nunez. This is all framed and presented on *MenatPlay.com*, referring to the tropes of reality TV and genres such as gonzo and amateur porn. In all three scenes the hidden camera or surveillance footage is spliced into slicker high-definition shots. Daigle often looks directly, even on one occasion winks, into the hidden camera to acknowledge that he is aware, just as he was in *Big Brother*, of the surveillance presence. He is also filmed having hard-core penetrative sex – filmed through the crack in a door – and in several instances the grainy black and white footage of an older-style video camera is used with the red ‘record’ symbol (‘REC’) visible in the top left-hand corner to convey a sense of immediacy and veracity. All of this works towards a realisation of fantasy that generic conventions encourage us to read as reality.

Lee Edelman’s concept of homographesis may be useful when examining the complexity of some of these issues and the specifics of their relationship to gay male representation. In *Homographesis: Essays in Gay Literary and Cultural Theory* (1994), he refers to the ways in which both oppressive and resistant practices have shaped the social and textual representations associated with gay male sexuality. Edelman is ‘committed to examining how conditions of representation have constructed gay male identity as one onto which “sexuality” is always already inscribed’ (Edelman 1994, p. 8). Often, when a gay identity is represented, it is visualised and written in relation to the gay male body already having a previous point of social and sexual identification associated with particularly marginalised public stereotypes and private sexual practices. In Daigle’s case, we can see that rather than producing either a specific celebrity or pornographic identity, there is a more complex and provisional rhetoric at work. On the one hand, Daigle is recognisable as both a gay reality-TV and porn star through ‘a normalising practice of cultural discrimination’ (Edelman 1994, p. 8). On the other, we see that our perception of him is complicated by how his identity is continuously constructed through a series of inconsistent and sometimes contradictory sexual and non-sexual representations. *Twitter* and its hybridised range of text and imagery serves to emphasise this ambivalence of ‘private space in a public environment’ (Patterson 2004, p. 120) and the transformation of what the viewer and user can and cannot see. It presents us with representations that we perceive as real, whilst also drawing us into a false sense of reality which is ‘always already impacted by the structuring of [the televisual, online, or pornographic] mediation’ (2004, p. 116).

Reality, celebrity and pornography

If, as is sometimes claimed, reality TV deals in an economy of images that seem to express the “‘reality’ behind the reality’ (Holmes 2004, p. 122), I would argue that the genre also demonstrates that this ambiguous reality is always subject to strategic construction and

manipulation. The trailer for Daigle's movie sexualises aspects of the *mise en scène* of *Big Brother* familiar to TV viewers in an attempt to produce a fantasy version of reality TV as pornography. It does so by mimicking voyeuristic camera footage from the show, which allows LaRue as director to shift the rhetoric and associated discourses of reality TV into the realm of pornography almost effortlessly. The movie itself also provides more traditional modes of pornographic representation, similar to those that John Mercer identifies in his essay 'In the Slammer: The Myth of the Prison in American Gay Pornographic Video' (2004) as the 'idealised spaces for the acts of pornography' (2004, p. 152). In the movie LaRue uses the vernacular of reality TV, and Daigle as its star, to play to a range of sexual scenarios. By using settings which are linked to discourses of homosociality, heterosexuality, the gay urban lifestyle and sadomasochism, the movie 'posits a range of fantastic and subversive tableaux' (2004, p. 155). Here the construction of sexual fantasy relies on Daigle's persona in reality TV and this is used to 'construct a fantasy of what a gay world should (or could) be like' (2004, p. 155). Whilst we see Daigle engaging in hardcore gay sex in the movie, we are also encouraged to recall his prior identity as a reality-TV star. This deliberately draws attention to how reality TV and elements of celebrity representation are connected and embedded in pornographic fantasies of imagined proximity and intimacy with the star. It could also be seen as an attempt to both appropriate and articulate, through the tropes of both reality TV and pornography, what Mark Andrejevic suggests constituted 'the promise of the real in reality TV' (2002, p. 265). In this instance the 'real' promise is sex and the prospect of seeing a reality-TV star having sex on screen goes some way to fulfilling the fantasies around what we do (and do not) get to see on reality TV. Whilst contestants on reality TV may well have sex, it is tactically edited for a TV audience. In pornography, and in Daigle's case when the reality-TV star can now be seen having sex in an intentionally explicit way, we get to see through pornography what we imagine and perhaps fantasise real sex on reality TV may well look like.

When reality TV and pornography are considered in this way they also manage to offer the audience 'a certain guarantee of authenticity, [so] that this authenticity becomes a process of self-expression, self-realisation, and self-validation' (Andrejevic 2002, p. 265) for both participants and viewers. Laura Grindstaff (2002) claims that ordinary people appearing on TV talk shows, or within reality-TV discourse more generally, 'are expected to deliver [. . .] borrowing from film pornography "the money-shot"' (2002, p. 19). This refers to a way of providing the audience with symbolic elements of revelation, exaggeration and immediacy often seen in pornography, and its aim to present 'like the orgasmic cum-shot [. . .] the precise moment of letting go, of losing control, of surrendering to the body' (2002, p. 20). Just as gonzo and amateur pornography have facilitated a way to redefine the 'money-shot' from the point of view and participation of the amateur, for Daigle especially, his new identity as a gay sexual fantasy figure is now defined through an equivalent, though qualitatively different, 'money-shot' or 'aesthetic of 'the real' (Palmer 2004, p. 183) defined by reality TV. In the pornographic sphere, this potentially makes him even more 'available for encounter' (Patterson 2004, p. 115) because of his time as a reality TV star on *Big Brother*. This occurs because the audience are actively encouraged to see the Daigle from reality TV in a range of sexually explicit situations and through a rhetoric that Linda Williams defined as being determined by 'the principle of maximum visibility' (1989, p. 48). I think it is also possible to suggest that when a porn star such as Daigle, who is inevitably read through his reality-TV celebrity becomes involved in pornography, his performances draw attention to the ways in which the discourses of reality TV may be bound to the conceptual thrust of the pornographic and its tendency to actively encourage orgasmic or voyeuristic ways of seeing sex.

Recent work dealing with pornography has addressed both the sexualisation and pornographication of contemporary culture (Esch 2007, Nikunen *et al.* 2008, Smith 2010) and the implications that this has for the representation of sex in the media. More specifically, scholars working at the intersection of porn and celebrity studies have attempted to examine these issues through an analysis of a range of media forms including reality TV.² In this essay, I am attempting to connect some of these broader issues to a more specific and ‘paradoxical state of affairs’ summed up by the term ‘on/scenity’ (Williams 2004, p. 3). This refers to the ways in which shifts in public and private realms of representation are now subject to ‘organs, acts, bodies and pleasures that have heretofore been designated ob/scene and kept literally off-scene’ (Williams 2004, p. 3) and subsequently off-screen. The elision of reality TV and pornography that I am observing here serves to illustrate this state of affairs. Shows like *Big Brother*, as well as more recent and intentionally lewd output such as *Geordie Shore* and *The Valleys* (MTV), demonstrate that reality TV, like porn, both triggers and facilitates a process of sexual curiosity. By representing sex and sexual desire as a central part of reality TV, shows like this also allow the audience to see sexual identities and practices that had previously been unavailable on TV.

If ‘obscurity’ designates a private model of sex and sexual desire, then ‘on/scenity’ deems it public and available. Mark Andrejevic suggests that this sort of relationship between what is seen and unseen on reality TV and in pornography is ‘not an incidental one’, but rather one that uses the appeal of voyeurism strategically and ‘lends [. . .] a distinct erotic charge’ (2004, p. 87) to the footage. On shows such as *Big Brother*, when contestants are, for example, filmed having surreptitious sexual encounters under the bed covers, or just out of view of the camera, viewers are drawn into what Misha Kavka and Amy West term the ‘zone of immediacy’ (2004, p. 141). Here the imminent chance of witnessing sexual intimacy or the titillating spectacle of a sexually aroused housemate seems all the more tangible because these very private moments have been filmed, edited and selected with the reality TV viewer in mind. Deborah Jermyn’s notion of ‘the spectacle of actuality’ (2004, p. 72) identifies how both surveillance imagery and the reality-TV genre ‘explore and exploit’ these moments of real experience ‘with a renewed enthusiasm’ (2004, p. 72). When we see a housemate with an early-morning erection or night-vision footage of a someone giving a blow-job, it seems to make the fantasy of seeing them naked, aroused or having sex more than real because they embody ‘an indexical reproduction of the real world’ (Dovey 2000, p. 55 in Jermyn 2004, p. 73) we are already familiar with. Steven Daigle’s celebrity image, exploited by the porn industry, then, is part of a complex dynamic predicated on his recognisability because of his prior image as a reality-TV contestant, and that is then inflected and redefined by a fantasy performance in porn.

The ‘reality-TV porn star’

Whereas most celebrities tend to distance themselves from an industry like pornography, and indeed regard porn stardom as an illegitimate type of fame, Daigle seems to celebrate and revel in it, aligning it to his private life as a gay man and his identity as a reality-TV contestant. However, his is not the only story of a transition from reality TV to porn or vice versa. Another example of the ways in which reality TV and porn intersect is offered by Dustin Zito’s career, which has been articulated in markedly different terms to Daigle’s. Zito (who self-identifies as heterosexual) has described the appearances he made in gay porn before his involvement in reality TV as both problematic and negative. In Zito’s case, a much more recognisably conventional narrative is constructed around the perils of

involvement in the world of pornography and the unwelcome (and ultimately inauthentic) fame that it brings. The scandalous revelations around Zito's involvement with gay pornography have consequently worked to both locate and undermine his fame on *The Real World Las Vegas 2011* (MTV), as well as his own sexual identity as a straight man. Whilst Zito was on *The Real World*, he revealed to his housemates that in 2006 he had been paid to participate in the pornographic websites *Fratmen* ('erotic nude jackoff porn') and *FratPad* ('straight frat boys in sizzling hot chat and webcam shows').³ These sites deliberately draw on and subvert the heterosexually identified, all-male environments of a fraternity house as a site of homoerotic fantasy, and thereby reposition 'the reflexive reality environment' (Pullen 2004, p. 227) found in a show such as *The Real World*. During his gay-porn career, Zito was part of a group of young, muscular jocks who took part in webcam performances, hazing rituals and group-sex scenes for money. His participation in 'gay-for-pay' pornography illustrates Jeffrey Escoffier's suggestion that gay male porn of this sort is bound to evoke a paradoxical 'hetero/masculinist effect' (2003, p. 537). In what seems to be an attempt to convey carefree and effortless expressions of homosexual desire and masculine bonding, the scenes from *Fratmen* and *Fratpad* show Zito engaging in shower-sex, masturbating with other housemates and walking naked around the house. He was also filmed by low-resolution cameras with other equally self-assured housemates conjuring up the spontaneity and sexual frisson of reality TV. Here, both the sexual acts and the way they are represented seem to be designed to convince the viewer into thinking that Zito may well be gay, and that the scenarios and the sex acts represented are real. In such a case, the construction of sexual fantasy is simultaneously shrewd and ambivalent because it is so knowingly presented as an illusion of reality. Zito purports to be straight and the gay sex acts that are being filmed are often with other supposedly straight men for money in a simulated and constructed reality environment. The pornography in which Zito has performed for *Fratmen* and *Fratpad* adopts a realist aesthetic that can be understood with the context of 'a broad postmodern taste for "authenticity"' (Attwood 2007 p. 448) across culture. Additionally, stylistic elements such as the use of surveillance footage and the processes by which porn performers are hailed as 'amateurs' rather than professionals connect this particular style of porn to aspects of reality TV. Consequently pornography of this kind, like reality TV, seems to be tethered to new displays of 'the ordinary' (Barcan, in Attwood 2007, p. 448), which have the potential to displace conventional notions of behaviour, beauty and sexuality, and their relationship to celebrity.

Whilst Daigle can be understood through the systematically edited footage of banality on *Big Brother* or the sexual spectacle in *Steven Daigle XXXPosed*, his image is intertextually inflected with meanings from a range of other media platforms. For instance the live-cam website *StevenExposed.com* goes even further towards conflating his current celebrity identity with his sexual identity, personal life and pornographic performance through ordinary and extraordinary tensions. This site specifically allows for moments of intense sexual intimacy when, for example, the viewer is permitted to watch him masturbate and listen to him 'talk dirty'. Here the sexual fantasy that Daigle personifies seems all the more potent and extraordinarily 'real' due to its mode of address and also because it has been filtered through the referential contexts of the more 'ordinary' Daigle on reality TV and on *Twitter*.

Whilst Daigle did not take part in any sexual activities on reality TV, he trades on his time in *Big Brother* so that his sexual exploits as a porn performer are presented and consumed via his reality-TV fame. Returning to the trailer for *Steven Daigle XXXPosed* discussed at the start of this essay, we might note that it informs the viewer that Daigle is now a star of the 'The most daring moment in porn' and his preceding identities as Steven Daigle 'Cowboy', 'Bull-Rider', and 'Reality-TV Star' position him in ways which

allow several levels of identification to occur. The cowboy and bull-rider allude to Daigle's identities before he was a reality-TV star; next his transition into 'gay cowboy'/'reality TV' moves us closer to this ultimate identity as a porn star. As a visual document of both his sexual and his celebrity selves, a combination of types and identities manage to position him through cultural signifiers which are associated with the 'pornography of male masculinity' (Rambuss 2010, p. 202). This is also a feature of the various scenarios that Mercer discusses (2004) and the mechanisms through which pornography constructs a conventional 'mythology of homosexual desire' (2004, p. 156) based on the subversion and assimilation of heterosexual and hyper-masculine sexual stereotypes. Here the muscular Texan bull-rider, the gay cowboy and now the reality-TV star are all intensified through the visual language of gay pornography, and Daigle manages to embody them all.

Conclusion

It has been the aim of this essay to consider the intersections between reality TV and pornography, and more specifically, how they relate to the construction of a notional 'reality' and 'fantasy' in both genres. When porn and reality TV collide, they seem to reveal new links between what I regard as the established boundaries of gay signification as well as some of the conventions of stardom and celebrity. By investigating some of the aspects of the construction of Daigle's image across social media, reality TV and pornography, I have attempted to illustrate how all of these paradigms can offer mutable, conditional and ambiguous representations of sex and sexuality. As images of Daigle are circulated and consumed, a fixed relationship between reality TV as a genre or porn star as an identity seems to be displaced and reworked. The fragmented array of representations we can see through his *Twitter* profile indicate that Daigle's image is constructed through a combination of a career in reality TV and porn, and what might be described as his own intuitive subjectivity. As a result, he can be positioned and understood through these representations, which seem to indicate that as public image and private life intersect, they produce a complicated picture of a sexual identity dependent on the language of both porn and reality TV. In this case, Holmes' claims associated with the ordinariness and authenticities of reality TV stardom on *Big Brother* (2004) are now interconnected with porn through a combination of online media. I am suggesting that this creates a sense that the normality of an 'ordinary' Daigle can only be read through the represented sexual desires of an 'extraordinary' Daigle both on- and offline.

Just as pornography seeks to satisfy the desire to witness and 'to show and see what cannot be shown and seen' (Dyer 2002a, p. 191), many of the rhetorical and discursive features of contemporary reality-TV celebrity encapsulated by Daigle (and to an extent by Zito) also illustrate this. The connections and disjunctures between the ways in which a sexual 'reality' is presented and then negated as sexual fantasy also begin to expose how celebrities attempt to control (and resist) public access by the media and audiences alike who constantly seek a degree of intimacy. Whether it is from a porn trailer, an interview, a tweet or an episode of a reality-TV show, it seems that we have come to identify with the gay-porn and reality-TV star through a combination of visual and rhetorical devices which we simultaneously interpret and misinterpret as our own reality.

Notes

1. Please see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hOqFo25gm98> for the full clip.
2. For further reading on porn and celebrity studies, see O'Toole 1998, Mercer 2004, Escoffier 2003, 2009, Williams 2004, Holmes and Redmond 2006, Esch 2007, Attwood, 2007, 2009, 2010, Boyle 2010.

3. These are the strapline promotional copy for both the websites that Zito appeared on. For an extended discussion of Zito and his career in gay porn see Andy Dehnart's online article: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2011/04/27/the-real-worlds-dustin-zito-on-his-gay-porn-past.html>

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