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NOTES

1. Previous books published on women and architecture are: Torre S. et al (eds.) *Women in American Architecture: A Historic and Contemporary Perspective*, Watson Gupull: New York, 1977; and Cole D. *From Tipi to Skyscraper: a history of women in architecture*, George Braziller: New York, 1978.
2. For example, Hayden D. *The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighbourhoods, and Cities*. MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1981; Ardener S. (ed.) *Women and Space: Ground Rules and Social Maps*, Croom Helm London, 1981; Brion M. and Tinker A. *Women and Housing: Access and Influence* The Housing Centre Trust, London, 1981.

Take Back the Night. Laura Lederer. ed. *Toronto: Bantam Books, 1982. Pp.366.*
Pornography and Silence. Susan Griffen. *New York: Harper & Row, 1981. Pp.277.*

The topic of pornography has become a major focus in recent feminist research and writing. Like rape and domestic violence, pornography epitomizes women's powerlessness in western society. And like rape, which has only recently been defined in terms of power rather than sexuality, newer notions on pornography have begun to approach it in a similar vein. Pornography, it is being argued, is not about sex, it is about submission. Kate Millet, among others, asserts this in *Not a Love Story* when she claims that the problem with pornography is that it isn't sexy. Of course, the problem is that for many people, men in particular, but unfortunately for many women as well, pornography *is* sexy. This is why the whole issue has become so central to feminist research. The significance of pornography in society lies far beyond its immediate sexual context. It is inextricably tied to the history of male/female relationships and the study of gender power. Thus, it is a topic for serious investigation and analysis.

Two of the most popular recent additions to this burgeoning interest area are Laura Lederer's *Take Back the Night* and Susan Griffen's *Pornography and Silence*. While I was asked to focus my remarks on the latter, it is rather interesting to compare the two works because they are so antithetical in substance and style. I should also like to add that I get the distinct impression that the latter book, i.e. Griffen's, has become the darling of the feminist movement. This is a fact I find difficult to understand since it is the former book by Lederer which is infinitely more thought provoking and useful.

Take Back the Night is an excellent selection of readings on the topic of pornography arranged systematically around various basic issues, for example, what is pornography, who is hurt, who benefits. The articles are concise and articulate, and they are written by a variety of people including, for example, an interview with a former pornography model. More importantly, it wastes no time in coming to grips with the really important issues in the field such as the distinction between erotica and pornography. In a brief but concise article by Gloria Steinem that argument is presented in a nutshell:

(...its message is violence, dominance, and conquest. It is sex being used to reinforce some inequality, or to create one, or to tell us that pain and humiliation (ours or someone else's) are really the same as pleasure. Perhaps one could simply say that erotica is about sexuality, but pornography is about power and sex-as-weapon in the same way we have come to understand that rape is about violence, and not really about sexuality at all. (p.23-24)

While there are a couple of articles that pertain specifically to the American legal scene, for the most part the readings are not local in nature. In summarizing this text, it is efficient to quote Adrienne Rich's afterword:

It is a gathering of testimonies very different from each other in focus and style; a collection of position papers, analyses, meditations, critiques, journalism, narratives both personal and collective, exhortations, research studies, documentary and oral history, programs for action. (p.315)

In addition to covering a wide range of issues and perspectives, it includes an extensive bibliography which reaffirms its primacy as the major work in the field. *Take Back the Night* will probably remain the classic text in the field for some time to come.

While in some ways it is unfair to compare the Griffen book to the Lederer reader (they are like apples and oranges), it may be important to do so from a teaching perspective. In fact, as a symbolic interactionist myself, I had imagined that I would be partial to the Griffen text since it appears to be a more philosophical analysis of symbolic images and their meanings. I was disappointed to find, however, that it was unnecessarily long-winded and pedantic, even pompous at times. (Readers may recognize Griffen from several appearances in *Not a Love Story*, if they are not familiar with her previous work *Woman and Nature; The Roaring Inside Her*.)

The Griffen book fails largely because it does not deliver what it claims to. Griffen never delves very deeply into the symbolic images of pornography. Although her book does examine some pornographic literature directly, it is largely an anecdotal, unsystematic account of such imagery which leaves one feeling rather ephemeral about the whole issue. Yet, she would be the first to argue that there is nothing ephemeral about pornography! While Griffen sometimes raises some very interesting questions, she also fails to answer them. For example:

Let us remember that the central experience of sadomasochism is humiliation. The actual images of pornography degrade

women. This degradation is the essential experience of pornography. It can be argued that for a woman to be disrobed in public at all, given the values of this culture, is a degradation. And yet such a nakedness could be defiance.

Unfortunately, Griffen never attempts to delineate the criteria by which one could make such an assessment. In lieu of systematic analysis of pornography Griffen offers us some outdated, feminist rhetoric about the oppression of women. And while such rhetoric might have been appropriate for the burgeoning feminist literature of the 60's and 70's, it does not suffice in the 80's.

Neither is there anything particularly distinctive about Griffen's thesis. In her words:

These pages will argue that pornography is an expression not of human erotic feeling and desire, and not of love of the life of the body, but of a fear of bodily knowledge, and a desire to silence eros.

But we have heard these words before from others, although Griffen does not acknowledge their existence. She adds in pompous fashion, "This is a notion foreign to a mind trained in this culture," and continues throughout with rhetoric and hyperbole:

Above all, we must look into the mind that I will call "the chauvinist mind." (p. 2) For the pornographic mind is the mind of our culture. (p.3)

If Griffen's book is essentially one long extended metaphor, it comes to a head in a chapter called *The Sacrificial Lamb*. In this chapter she compares pornography to the holocaust and Nazi Germany.

Pornography is a mass delusion and so is racism. (p. 156) ...if we look closely at the portrait which the racist draws of a man or

a woman of color, or that the anti-semite draws of the Jew, or that the pornographer draws of figures resemble one another. For they are the creations of one mind. This is the chauvinist mind, a mind which projects all it fears in itself onto another: a mind which defines itself by what it hates. (p. 60)

While it is commonplace in feminist literature to compare sexism and racism, one can readily see the sloppiness of her thinking when she compares the hate literature of pornography to the mass genocide of Jews. As a Jew and a woman, I can only be offended by such a flip-pant comparison. (But then again she may want to claim poetic license, a point I will come to in a minute).

On the few occasions when Griffen does attempt to address existing sociological data she is a dismal failure. For example, she uncritically quotes a study in San Francisco in which:

Women were asked if they had ever been upset by someone trying to force or persuade them "to do what they'd seen in pornographic pictures, movies or books." Ten percent of the women answered yes to the question. (p.104)

Is this supposed to be supportive sociological research? She tells us little more about it. Mainly Griffen avoids dealing with existing research, preferring to spend her time weaving long-winded metaphors around the dichotomy of eros and pornography. Like a poet, she uses literary license in an attempt to get our attention. She speaks in fragmented phrases and sometimes uses grammatically incorrect sentences.

Our silence. The silence and the silencing of women. The creation of authority in the image of the male, of god in the image of the male. Rape. The burning of witches. Wife-beating, (etc. etc.) (p.201)

But all the dramatics and repetitiveness merely insult the seriousness of her subject matter, rather than highlight it. The issue of pornography is too important and complex to warrant just another gloom and doom polemical tirade. While it is hard to take issue with any of the substance of Griffen's text, it is difficult to understand why it was necessary for her to belabour her point for some 265 pages. Incidentally, the Lederer reader includes an excerpt from Griffen that makes her point quite adequately.

In conclusion, I would not want to suggest that Griffen's book is useless. It is clearly an important contemporary statement on pornography. Rather, my disappointment comes from the fact that it is not grand or profound as it promises to be. It suffers from too much righteousness. Lederer's book on the other hand is terrific. It covers all the ground effortlessly. It refrains from preaching and tiresome feminist rhetoric. More importantly, it is far more informative.

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Women on the Job: The Attitudes of Women to Their Work. Judith Buber Agassi. *Toronto: Lexington Books, 1979. Pp. 208.*

An international study of women's work attitudes and their structural correlates has all the potential of a first class contribution to both economics and sociology. This book, however, falls seriously short of its potential. The study in the field of motivation and job satisfaction, which is plagued with conceptual and operational problems aims to test the validity of "current" theories on "attitudes to work" (employment). The review of the literature is scanty, dated and inadequate. Even three highly pertinent books in the area published between 1973 and 1978 by the same publisher are not referred to. As a result, the theoretical significance is