

the transition from feudal to capitalist relations of production. In the feudal period, the authors argue, women had power within familial, economic and religious spheres. Aristocratic women assumed managerial roles "especially in their husband's absence," nuns managed production units, single women supported themselves and the married worked along side their husbands. With the evolution of wage-labour, however, women were displaced from their feudal role. The rise of capitalism and its concomitant, the bourgeois family, meant that women were isolated within the home, non-persons in the eyes of society and the state, while men gained the credentials for full entry into the politics of liberal democracies. For males, capitalist social relations meant an emphasis on individualism and civil rights, particularly the right to private property. These, in turn, eventually accorded them political rights to participate in government. In contrast, capitalism subsumed women under the male head of the household. Women were not "full members of the community." Thus, Stacey and Price interpret the post-feudal history of women as a struggle to achieve some independence as women and to exercise some power as individuals in their own right. Women's advancement to this end in the last two hundred years is the basis for the authors' optimism about women's progress in politics.

Few can deny that the isolation of women in the private sphere has and continues to be a major impediment to their full integration into the politics of capitalism. Nevertheless, in reading this book, one constantly is confused by what the authors exactly mean by the term "power", whether the distinctions between the feudal and capitalist periods are as pronounced as the authors suggest and ultimately, the relationship between gender and politics. One suspects that Stacey and Price exaggerate women's power in the feudal order. Granted women were not isolated in the private sphere as prescribed by the ideology of the bourgeois

family. They maintained their own and contributed to the household's management and subsistence. But does this constitute power? The fact that wife-beating was sanctioned by canon-law and that women exercised virtually no political power would seem to refute this notion. If not, what does power mean? Moreover, if power simply means participation in the economic life of a period, surely a great many women under capitalism have "power".

The recurring question arising from this analysis is whether it is necessary to place so much emphasis on the consequences for women of the transition from feudalism to capitalism. Doing so implies that the gender biases in the distribution of political power can be reduced to modes of economic organization. Another interpretation is that each mode of organization has placed women in different, but, nonetheless, politically subordinate roles. In fact, the evidence compiled in this book could equally support the argument that gender is one basis for political power which cross-cuts both time and space. From this perspective, one is tempted to respond to Stacey and Price with an equally rhetorical question: Is the glass half-full or half-empty?

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Female Power and Male Dominance: On the Origins of Sexual Inequality. Peggy Reeves Sanday. *Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981. Pp. 295.*

We are currently riding on the crest of a breaking wave of materials about women in other cultures, a wave swollen by the work of anthropologists and other scholars interested in redressing the gender balance of cultural

knowledge. Over the past year the primary focus of materials published has changed slightly, however, and, I might add, for the better. For example, two recent readers (*Nature, Culture and Gender* ed. MacCormack and Strathern, and *Sexual Meaning: The Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality* ed. Ortner and Whitehead) and the book under review, all from Cambridge University Press, are concerned not with presenting cross-cultural material on women alone, but rather with the understanding of the *relationships* between women and men, albeit from quite different points of view: this is the 'new wave'. Whether approached from an interest in questions of cultural meaning and interpretation (as do the readers) or in questions of origin and cause (as does Sanday), the new interest is in constructing theoretical/interpretive schemes that will guide further inquiry and frame our understanding of the basis of culture and society.

In *Female Power and Male Dominance*, a book "intended for an interdisciplinary audience interested in a global view of female power and male dominance in tribal societies" (pp. 1-2), Peggy Sanday constructs a sketch of her understanding of the range of cultural gender templates in nearly 150 recorded societies in varying environments and with varying histories, from an unstable liberal blend of material and symbolic interpretations framed in statistical tables. The resultant picture is a noble, if at times unconvincing, attempt. The integration of material and semiotic explanations is difficult enough without addressing the question of 'origins' of particular phenomena as well. Underlying the entire book, however, there seems to be the tacit assumption that the environment (and cultural adaptation to it) motivates culture, whether the cultural consideration is of the content of the symbolic system, the sexual division of labour, or the distribution of power and social control. The argument, presented verbally through case studies and hypotheses and statistically

through a series of bivariate tables, treats environment and its exploitation as primary and the causal chain, ultimately, as lineal. Attached to this, necessarily, is the assumption that cultural evolution exists and is grounded in changing ecologies.

In the five parts of the book, Sanday outlines the interrelationships of origin myths, sex-role plans of identities, labour and sexuality, female power in changing historical circumstances and the dynamics of male dominance. The book begins by examining six geographically and culturally distinct scripts for female power and four distinct scripts for male dominance. It is the author's intent to classify the range of variation in the symbolic distribution of power between men and women. The classification identifies cultures that nearly ignore sexual differences as in the "uni-sex" Balinese, to cultures that exaggerate sexual differences as in the Mundurucu. Sanday concludes part one with the assertion that creation symbolism and sex-role plans are related; female power is related to a nurturant mother or couple in cooperation, and male dominance is related to couples in tension or migrating out-marrying males in competition and conflict. The question these cases raise is what are the motivating forces and contexts for these scripts.

The book goes on to isolate the role of environment, the role of the sexual division of labour, and the cultural assumptions of biology in these scripts. Here Sanday asserts "that gender symbolism in origin stories is a *projection* of a people's perception of the phenomenon of human birth and of their experience with their environment" (p. 56, emphasis on directionality is mine). She makes a distinction here that is carried throughout the rest of the book between the *inner* orientation of women and the *outer* orientation of men in power scripts. After looking at the division of labour, either integrating or separating the sexes, as related to

these scripts and to the environmental exploitation of primarily either plants (inner/women) or animals (outer/men), the question of cultural biological male fears is broached. The conclusion to this section is that "sexual segregation or integration is tied to environmental circumstances or to fear," leaving the reader with the impression that motivating forces for cultural ordering lie outside the culture or inside the heads of men (women seem irrelevant to the scheme).

Having introduced male dominance as a theme, Sanday explores its universality. Again taking the interaction with the environment as primary, she finds that in societies based primarily in foraging, women are both economically and politically powerful and in gathering and fishing societies women tend to demonstrate secular power. Complex societies with increasingly dominant technological bases see the power of women undermined, as does the colonial context (most often male-dominated). Taking a cue from Susan Rogers, she distinguishes between 'mythical' male dominance and 'real' male dominance and she does so by looking at the interrelationship of two factors specifically; 1) the presence or absence of women in economic and political decision-making, and 2) the presence or absence of male aggression toward women, corporal and metaphoric. Sanday outlines the cultural stresses and disruptions which lead to what appears to be almost universal male dominance of one or another kind.

In the end Sanday is still left with the question of why women are the objects of aggression during times of cultural stress such as forced migration or colonialism. She inconclusively concludes by asserting that sexual inequality is the *response* to outside factors whether they are environmental, technological or colonial. Culture, however, is not just a response; people create it. Where is the room for internal cultural dynamics and creativity;

people are 'actors' (both men and women), not just 'reactors'. I feel we are left not with an answer from all her statistical manipulations, but with a near shrug of the shoulders and the question "But What's a Mother to Do?"

The book is filled with interesting hypotheses and assertions, yet one is left with the uneasy feeling, even with case studies and the statistical tabling of up to approximately 150 societies on many of the variables, that the 'global' statistical approach is superficial. Symbolic and non-symbolic variables are, ultimately, treated the same, quantitatively, although they certainly must differ qualitatively. If we were to attempt to replicate her analysis, using her variables, it would not be possible since, as she explains in the appendices, there is ambiguity in the accounts from which she has drawn her material and a full list of societies is not presented. These criticisms notwithstanding, the book is provocative and stimulating. I have thought about the relationships between women and men, queried our cultural and disciplinary assumptions, and felt for the many cultural contradictions in our and other societies more with this book than others I have recently read in conjunction with teaching about these issues.

Her concluding words could well have been the opening, words with which most of us can find empathy:

As a young feminist said to me, we are experiencing a backlash from nature. Pollution and the depletion of natural resources, together with the knowledge that the technology of male dominance has given us the wherewithal to destroy all life on earth, have created a different kind of stress. The ethic that sanctions control and dominion is now the problem, not the solution. Our hopes for social survival no longer rest on domination but on harmonizing competing forces. (p. 231)

The achievement of this harmony also lies in examining why we assume that attempts at a synthetic approach ought to come closer to the truth; why a statistical presentation assumes more believability; why more is considered better or why quantities overpower qualities. A review this short cannot critically discuss, giving academic justice to the argument, a book of this nature. There are many more points in the book which are worth lauding and criticising. I can only encourage others to read it so that the same ground need not be covered again.

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Women, Men, and the Psychology of Power.
 Hilary M. Lips. *Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., (A Spectrum Book), 1981. Pp. 238.*

As the author, Hilary Lips, points out in the preface to *Women, Men, and the Psychology of Power*, it has become popular to write books for women on how to get and keep power, but few people have attempted to think systematically about the reasons for power discrepancies between the sexes. In addition, little research has been carried out to examine the various factors predictive of power differences. To rectify this lack of a comprehensive, scholarly approach to power relationships between men and women, and to address critics like Millett who have

stated that psychology has little to offer in the analysis of such relationships, Lips has chosen to discuss power from a perspective which is both feminist and social psychological.

This strategy is an appealing one. Many discussions of power differences between men and women engender frustration and anger or guilt. We are reminded, if female, that control over one's life is difficult to achieve and maintain unless one is willing to behave in a stereotypically feminine fashion: that is, to use manipulation and seduction. On the other hand, if we are male, we are reminded of our primary responsibility for these inequities, but reminded as well that it is considered unmanly to relinquish power. A social psychological approach to these issues seems ideal because it provides a framework for the analysis of power relations and, more importantly, because its contextual approach assumes that inequities are created or exaggerated by socio-cultural forces. While such forces may be difficult to overcome fully, they are at least identifiable and somewhat malleable. Presumably they could be altered by aware and determined individuals. As Lips points out, "Armed with a basic knowledge of interpersonal power, people are less likely to be victimized in their relationships." It is the advancement of such knowledge that raises this work far above the popular "how to" books—books which leave women with an arsenal of weapons to combat power inequities, but with no knowledge about the sources of these problems, and no awareness of how to prevent problems from occurring.

Lips points out that two assumptions guide the arguments contained in *Women, Men, and the Psychology of Power*: a feminist assumption that women have less access to power, thus creating sex differences in individual efficacy, and a social psychological view that both parties in a power relationship, the powerful and the relatively powerless, are responsible for its