

and, in particular, to demonstrate the importance of the interdisciplinary perspective in women's studies. The task of editing conference proceedings is an extraordinarily difficult one, and Peta Tancred-Sheriff must be commended on a job well done.

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Pornography and the Sex Crisis. Susan G. Cole, *Toronto: Amanita Enterprises, 1989, Pp. 182 paperback.*

Susan Cole, a journalist, researcher and teacher, has made a substantial contribution to the literature on pornography in her book *Pornography and the Sex Crisis*. From an "anti-pornography feminist" perspective, she identifies a "sex crisis" and calls for a radical restructuring of sexuality in our society. Unlike *Women Against Censorship*, edited by Varda Burstyn, which made her hear the laughter of pornographers in her head (her review of the book is reproduced as an appendix to her book), this book will not be so welcome by those who traffic in pornography.

Chapter 1, "Pornography," calls for us to hear and believe the voices of women affected by pornography, an approach which uses "a radical research methodology" (p. 6). In order for this to happen, we must see pornography for what it is: not images or pictures of women, but a practice; a practice which eroticizes inequality and extols the dominance of men and the submissiveness of women. Women against censorship view pornography as speech. According to Susan Cole, pornography is not speech but the institutionalized practice of subordination. It is the practice of subordinating (abusing) women both in its production and its use. She provides explicit examples of how this is done and how viewers are lead to believe there is consent when in fact there is not.

Pornography is a "powerful force for maintaining inequality" (p. 51). It is not a moral issue but a political issue. Herein lies the difference between right-wing feminists and radical feminists. Right-wing feminists view pornography as immoral and destructive to the family unit. Radical feminists view the traditional family and pornography as mutually supportive in their efforts to maintain the dominance/submissive relationship between men and women. According to Susan Cole, laws regarding pornography have the same moralistic approach as right-wing feminism.

Chapter 2, "The Law," sets out the limitations of the law as it presently exists and elaborates on seven criteria which might improve the legal approach taken to pornography. The present law keeps the victims and the hurt they experience invisible and compensates the government, through fines, if the laws are enforced. Censorship boards, customs officials and the police do not address the practice of pornography, the use and trafficking of women involved in the production of pornography, the effect it has on women who are forced to engage in activities which men learn from pornography, and the effect the institutionalized subordination of women has on all aspects of our lives.

What is needed is a law that will empower women and advance gender equality. Susan Cole suggests two possibilities. First, a civil remedy which would allow the victims of pornography to sue the pornographer for the harm caused to them. Recognizing the cost of such actions for those with no money and no power, she suggests that LEAF or other women's organizations might assist these women in their court actions.

Her second suggestion is to draft laws so that pornography is a form of sex discrimination. The law may already exist for such an action. The Supreme Court of Canada, on May 4, 1989, decided that sexual harassment was discrimination on the basis of sex (*Janzen and Govereau v. Platy Enterprises Ltd. et al.*, [1989] 4 W.W.R. 39). In reaching this decision, the Court relied heavily on descriptions of how sexual harassment affected the physical and mental well-being of women. The Supreme Court of Canada used a definition of discrimination from the Abella Report, *Equality in Employment*. "Discrimination ... means practices or attitudes that have, whether by design or impact, the effect of limiting an individual's or a group's right to the opportunities generally available because of attributed rather than actual characteristics."

Susan Cole has laid some of the necessary groundwork for presenting an argument that the practice of pornography is a form of discrimination based on sex. But she needs to go one step further in her presentation so that the voices of women involved in and affected by pornography might have a greater impact in court. A suggested model might be the approach taken by Constance Backhouse and Leah Cohen in their book, *The Secret Oppression: Sexual Harassment of Working Women*, which was referred to and quoted from by the Supreme Court of Canada in *Janzen*. The authors present seven case studies which describe, in the voices of women, the effect which sexual harassment had on them. While Susan Cole has intro-

duced a number of unpublished reports throughout her book and discussed their findings, what is needed now is to publish the voices of these women, so that they may be listened to by judges who have in the past been making decisions without the benefit of those voices. Susan Cole believes they may listen. "[T]he increased consciousness of judges evidenced in the changing face of obscenity law is a sign that the courts can learn..." (p. 105).

Chapter 3, "The Sex Crisis," is really the key to eliminating pornography or, at least, the beginning of its end. Sexual roles, not just sex roles, are socially constructed. What turns us on, our sexuality, is socially constructed. And, it is socially constructed in the interests of maintaining men's dominance over women. This will be the most difficult aspect of her theory for men and some women to accept and will create "something of a panic" for them (p. 109). "Over the centuries, the constant display and objectification of women's bodies has made it seem that it is men's natural privilege to leer at women.... The male gaze becomes an active position of dominance..." (p. 112). This dominance results in sexual inequality and justifies violence against women who do not perform in conformity to male expectations. She raises some interesting questions which perhaps only men can answer: "Why does an erection unsatisfied so often translate into male anger? Why is it so easy for people to say that if a woman gets a man aroused, she deserves to be raped?" (p. 114) Why is a rape for a tease viewed as an eye for an eye?

An equal exchange would have him writhing on the sand in a skimpy bikini, not letting her near him. He rapes her instead. She teases, he rapes. ... In the context, it was barely noticed by viewers [of *Swept Away*] that a rape for a tease is an exchange of opposites, not of likes. Yet, his rape of her is utterly sensible within the paradigm of male dominance and female submission, so sensible that he can argue that it constitutes real sexual equality and the filmgoers would agree. (p. 113)

Susan Cole is not anti-sex (though she views celibacy as one means of dealing with sexual oppression); she is anti-pornography. She is against the practice of subordinating women to men. She asks, "How would the world look, how would it feel if as much time, money and creativity as are spent on eroticizing power, hierarchy, violence, male dominance and female submission were spent on a truly transformative project like eroticizing equality?" (pp. 142-43) She discusses several attempts by women to engage in the production of erotica or eroticizing equality. Given that "any time a person gets turned on by somebody doing something he would never do himself, there is subordination taking place" (p. 138), these women were left with

performing in their own productions. All went well, until they were faced with the prospect of showing their productions to others, of being watched. One might ask, can sexually explicit material be anything but pornography when it is watched by others? Does the very act of watching someone, other than oneself, engage in sexual activities involve an act of objectification, of dominance/submission? I am left with the impression that Susan Cole has not completely unravelled all that is involved in our socially constructed sexuality.

She does, however, present an alternative continuum to those who view sex on a continuum from sex/violence to celibacy, with the moral, intolerant majority falling in the middle. Rather, sex can be viewed on a continuum from dominance/submission to equality; most of us fall on the dominance/submission end of the continuum, the product of our socialization. The task is to move to the other end of the continuum so that women and men may be equal in their sexuality and their lives, in general.

What was disturbing in Chapter 3 was the discussion on the attitudes and behaviours of high school students towards violence and sex. Boys are prepared to dish it out, girls are prepared to accommodate it. What was very refreshing was Susan Cole's discussion of the work which she has conducted with high school students in terms of exposing them to the social construction of sexuality. She provides references to resource material which can be used with students to expose them to the stereotypes and misconceptions of sexuality portrayed in the media. For example, when presented with an advertisement in which a man passes a woman on an escalator, smells her perfume, buys flowers and chases after her, the male students were surprised that women would not be flattered by such activity but would be frightened. After all, if the roles were reversed, they would be flattered.

It is perhaps only when women's voices are heard from the beginning of life that equality stands a chance. Susan Cole is of the view that the "pinkification" of girls, the imposition of fashion which leaves women easy prey, and the reduction of women to "tits and ass" to make them more like a "woman," will have to be eliminated before women will find equality in the world. The practice of sexually submitting women to men is a major hurdle on that road to equality.

Susan Cole discusses these issues and many more. While there is some unnecessary repetition and sections which are not as clearly organized as one might like, these are minor distractions from a powerful message. I would

highly recommend her book, both its reading and its application, to those engaged in the debates over pornography and to those of us who have largely ignored the debates up until now.

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Women in the Administrative Revolution. Graham S. Lowe, *University of Toronto Press, 1987.*

Graham Lowe's book *Women and the Administrative Revolution* provides a comprehensive examination of the forces which converged during the early 1900s to change clerical work from a predominately male to a predominately female vocation. Through a detailed analysis of historical events and contextual factors, Lowe sheds new light on our understanding of the emergence of female job ghettos.

The strength of this publication lies in the breadth of theoretical and empirical discussion. Because there is no implicit or explicit mandate to fit all findings into a predetermined thesis, the author is able to uncover many important and interesting insights which had hitherto been brushed over by other scholars. Unfortunately, this same thoroughness often makes Lowe's arguments difficult to follow. For this reason, *Women and the Administrative Revolution* is not suitable as an introductory text for those who have no previous exposure to the basic historical developments in women's work.

Pertinent theoretical perspectives are combined with empirical information from census statistics and firm records to examine the feminization of clerical work in Canada. Discussions of historical events, unique firm characteristics, and international comparisons with the United States and Britain, are used to better understand the emergence of clerical work as "women's work." The influences of four main forces can be followed throughout the book:

- the development of large-scale centralized bureaucracies;
- the drive for mechanization, rationalization, and control in the office;
- wartime labour shortages; and
- patriarchal attitudes.

The Development of Large-Scale Centralized Bureaucracies

The appearance of Corporate Capitalism forms the underlying impetus for all Lowe's arguments. Following the lead of C. Wright Mills, Lowe explores the increasing ratio of administrative to production workers which occurred in Canada between the turn of the century and the start of the depression. The shift from small autonomous firms to large-scale bureaucracies was accompanied by an increased demand for office workers to assist in the regulation and control of the expanding workforces.

The Drive for Mechanization, Rationalization, and Control in the Office

As the office wage bill consumed greater and greater proportions of operating expenditures, cost savings were sought through measures aimed at enhancing the productivity of clerical staff. As a carry-over from the factory floor, scientific management principles were used to analyze and fragment clerical tasks. The male generalist of the 1800s became the female specialist of the 1900s.

Although Lowe is careful to point out the drudgery experienced by some nineteenth-century clerks and the more positive working conditions of twentieth-century clerks, his basic thesis is that clerical work in general became less interesting and rewarding precisely when women were welcomed into the field. Scientific management was used to control and strive for maximum productivity from each individual worker. While a few women became personal secretaries and were assigned a variety of job duties, most of the new female clerical workers performed monotonous tasks which were subject to precise output measurements.

Unlike other authors who have taken a narrow deterministic view of technological change, Lowe places the introduction of office equipment, such as typewriters and adding machines, in the context of other managerial initiatives. Mechanization was used in conjunction with scientific management principles to create specialized jobs which could be easily monitored and controlled.

By the 1920s it was rare to find a large office without mechanized systems of accounting and recordkeeping. The most striking changes often occurred in the centralized accounting departments. It was here that rows of routine clerks mechanically transformed mountains of statistics into concise measures of productivity, costs and profits. (p. 127)