

the real. Benjamin is interested in exploring sexuality, and she investigates the role of death and violence in the creation of sexual excitement. Freud's portrayal of the battle between Eros and Thanatos is recast intersubjectively, that is, in terms of the recognition and destruction of the (m)other. If a Freudian intrapsychic view explains sadism as the outward discharge of aggression, then an intersubjective view posits sadism as a failure to successfully differentiate between self and other. The shared experience of two separate subjects allows erotic sexuality; pornography creates excitement by suggesting the survival of destruction.

Benjamin raises interesting theoretical issues such as the question of the exploration of the difference between "reality" and "representation" according to object relations theory. Her application of both Winnicott's theoretical framework and Stern's understanding of infant development to the "rapprochement" stage of Mahler's separation-individuation theory offers a new perspective. She argues for recognition of the mother as a separate subject, a perspective often neglected in infant development theory.

It is disappointing that the author's arguments stop short of fully demonstrating their conclusions. For the most part, they proceed without the empirical evidence that would tend to support her claims. A reader might wish for further elucidation of the theorists that Benjamin merely cites. Without critical discussion of their work, her claims run the danger of dissolving into mere speculation about the nature of the mind. Similarly, without any explanation of how to apply Benjamin's theory, her claims remain unconvincing. How does the theory work in a clinical setting? A reader would welcome further discussion of how she translates her theory into practice.

In summary, Benjamin's attempt to provide discourse between various schools of psychoanalysis and feminist theory is an important and ambi-

tious endeavor. The question of whether she can successfully integrate such conflicting theories reflects a continuing controversy in psychoanalysis in general—namely, how many theories or models of the

mind we can use and still maintain a coherent core.

Reference

1. Benjamin J: *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination*. New York, Pantheon, 1988

Representations of Women

XXX: A Woman's Right to Pornography by Wendy McElroy; New York City, St. Martin's Press, 1995, 243 pages, \$21.95

Model: The Ugly Business of Beautiful Women by Michael Gross; New York City, William Morrow & Company, 1995, 524 pages, \$25

Off With Her Head! The Denial of Women's Identity in Myth, Religion, and Culture edited by Howard Eilberg-Schwartz and Wendy Doniger; Berkeley, University of California Press, 1995, 226 pages, \$15.95 softcover

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How women are portrayed and what women have come to symbolize for commercial and traditional reasons are examined in these three books. Each one offers a different perspective on this issue: sometimes fascinating, sometimes chilling, always provocative.

Wendy McElroy, the author of *XXX: A Woman's Right to Pornography*, makes her biases and assumptions very clear, as one only has to look at the title to tell. Ms. McElroy gathers notebook in hand, takes a deep breath, and plunges head-first into the intricate underpinnings of the world of pornography. Specifically, she is interested in understanding how women fare in this male-dominated industry.

McElroy begins by tackling the assumption, made most vociferously by anti-porn feminists Catharine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin, that the women in pornography are the products of abusive and tormented childhoods who are currently abused, financially and emotionally, by the men in the pornography business. Her exposé is a deliberate attempt to do what she believes many

have not done: provide the facts surrounding women in porn. She argues strongly that only with these facts in hand can pornography be defended or destroyed.

The main arguments McElroy espouses center on the effects of pornography on both its participants and its consumers. She believes that not only should pornography be defended but that it actually serves a useful societal function. It allows consenting adults to explore fantasies in the privacy and safety of their homes and gives them complete control to continue or stop. She suggests that pornography is not about rape, domination, and violence against women, but that rather it is one part sex education and one part explicit art. Finally, McElroy maintains that her right to pornography should be as respected just like another's right to not view it. It shouldn't be labeled as dangerous to one's health and therefore restricted for everyone.

The picture becomes quite a bit uglier in Michael Gross' *Model*. While McElroy portrays women as strong, capable, and in charge, Gross weaves a more pessimistic tapestry of the more-than-70-year history of high-fashion modeling. In his book, Gross details sexual harassment and the abuse of teenage girls entering

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and trying to make it in this business, and he takes the reader into the cut-throat world of international fashion modeling from an insider's perspective.

The author's chronicle of modeling, 500-plus pages long, is more historical analysis than steamy reading, which seems appropriate. This lack of glitter is exactly Gross' thesis: the underside of modeling is not nearly as pretty nor as perfect as it looks. Gross goes on to expose this side, with intricate details, offering the reader insight into how the industry uses young girls as well as the constant hazards they face once they make it. It is an extremely disturbing look.

It is hard to argue with Gross' book. To be sure, he makes very strong statements, but he backs them up with great detail, detail that at times can be more distracting than informative. One of his main theses is that Western culture has created a modeling monster: we adore and glamorize beautiful women, projecting a collective fantasy onto them, but in doing so we ultimately destroy them.

Unlike the books by McElroy and Gross, *Off With Her Head!* tries to understand femininity by ignoring the body altogether. Editors Howard Eilberg-Schwartz and Wendy Doniger present an interesting collection of essays that analyze the significance attached to a woman's head—largely seen as the center of a woman's voice and identity—by various cultural, mythological, and religious belief systems and traditions. The contributors consider how representations of the head as erotic, decapitated, covered, or enhanced have shaped our collective understanding of femininity and gender. They turn their attention to such aspects as the beheading of mythological women, Buddhist attitudes toward hair and sexuality, and the meanings of hair in Turkish society.

What the chapters have in common is how different ways of symbolizing and treating the female head have contributed to woman's loss of subjective identity. The essays are a

fascinating journey that provides the essential cultural and mythological context with which to understand this issue at a deeper level. The book is particularly exciting reading for anyone with an interest in mythology, cultural tradition, history, and psychoanalysis.

The themes common to these three books are women's power, iden-

tity, ownership, and autonomy. The strength of the books is the unique perspectives taken by the authors. They find their own ways to shed new light on issues of how women are portrayed and valued or devalued. All three books provide fascinating reading for anyone interested in gender, women's issues, and cultural differences.

Feminist Perspectives on Family Care: Policies for Gender Justice

by Nancy R. Hooyman and Judith Gonyea; Thousand Oaks, California, Sage Publications, 1995, 418 pages, \$55 hardcover, \$25.95 softcover

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Having spent years involved in feminist organizing, I was pleased to receive Hooyman and Gonyea's book for review. It offers a respectfully documented and logically presented critique of gender bias within the mental health profession. The authors, who hold doctoral degrees in social work, pose the question, Who is responsible for caregiving in our society? They explore the answer through an analysis of three psychiatric populations: adults with mental retardation and other related developmental disabilities, adults with chronic mental illness, and the frail elderly.

The book references more than 800 studies, many of which clearly support the authors' assertion that caregiving in our society reflects biased gender assumptions. Their data substantiate that both families and governmental agencies expect women to be primarily responsible for caregiving of the three identified populations, with little recognition or remuneration. Although they offer many reasons for why these assumptions are made, their most galvanizing argument focuses on remunera-

tion and what it—or the lack of it—reflects about society's view of caregiving.

The data affirm that caregiving is both a profound personal experience and an oppressive social institution that can interfere with women's economic independence, options, and sense of competence. The book challenges readers to support community and governmental solutions that would enhance more ethical caregiving on all levels. Such change, the authors suggest, would hasten the inevitable crumbling of patriarchal dominance and create space for a new model based on greater social justice.

Hooyman and Gonyea's book is a much-needed contribution within the psychiatric field. A brief search at a major medical library revealed that although some journal articles and book chapters have been written on this subject, nothing has provided an in-depth study to equal the scope of this book. Through their analysis, the authors identify the problems inherent in a system of psychiatric caregiving that emerges from commonly held societal assumptions: the values of individualism and private responsibility; a view of issues as individual rather than societal; and the myth of the nuclear family, which they call the "ideology of familism."

The authors propose a move beyond this outdated ethical base to-

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