

underdeveloped countries. Although over the last few years its international legal protection increased, the phenomenon keeps rising due to globalization, poverty distribution, infant labour, and organized crime. Professor Erick Gómez Tagle López, current investigator of the National Institute of Penal Sciences, presents his two years of work around this theme through an interdisciplinary and exceptional focus dealing with the study of the conceptual framework, the psychoanalytical and psychological explanations of the possible causes of sexual pathological behaviours. He examines the international treaties adopted in the past two centuries, a comparative penal law study related to the eradication of the problem, as well as the analysis of the criminal as a social actor and his relationship with globalization and organized crime.

The author approaches the special victimization of under age girls that characterizes this felony due to their inferior power status inside their families and society. Trying to understand the reasons of the inefficiency of the international treaties on commercial sexual exploitation of children, he studies the causes explaining its subsistence to conclude that an offer exists whenever a demand for a certain service is externalized.

I strongly recommend this inquiry as it provides a comprehensive perspective of commercial sexual exploitation of children, not only for its unique content but also for the fluidity and clarity that characterize it.

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'The English title is "The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Girls, Boys and Teenagers. A Sociological Approach."

WOMEN'S HEALTH COLLECTION #11: YOUR BODY, YOUR HEALTH, YOUR CHOICE

Latin American and Caribbean Women's Health Network
Santiago, Chile: LAWHN, 2006

REVIEWED BY MAY BLETZ

The Latin American and Caribbean Women's Health Network (LAWHN) was created in 1984 during the First Regional Women and Health Meeting held in Tenza, Colombia. At this event, over 60 women from 13 countries throughout Latin America and the Caribbean gathered to propose a new vision of women's health based on their different realities and experiences.¹

The collective publish the *Women's Health Collection* and the 2006 issue is subtitled *Your Body, Your Life, Your Choice*. Sadly enough, journals like this are more necessary than ever since women worldwide are still "disputed territories" who are not allowed to make the transformation from being "body for others" to being a "body for themselves," as the editors put it.

Your Body, Your Life, Your Choice contains accessible yet informative articles and fragments of articles, many translated into English for the first time. The journal contains useful information helpful for policymakers, people who educate women about their health issues and sexual and reproductive rights,

as well as for academics and students of women's studies. The first part contains excerpts of bills of rights on for instance contraception, abortion, and homosexuality as well as a fact sheet of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on violence against women and girls. Throughout the volume we find brief testimonies of women's personal experiences with losing their virginity, rape, prostitution, and domestic abuse, among others, forcing us to remember that behind each statistic there is a human being with an individual story to tell.

The selected readings in the second part of the volume are more academic in nature. For instance, "Lesbians in Latin America: From Inexistence to Visibility," by Alejandra Sardá, Rosa María Posa Guinea, and Verónica Villalba Morales is a much needed English language review of lesbian activism in Latin America that many scholars will find useful, and Ester Moncarz's "A Stranger Among Us" is a thoughtful mediation on women, aging, and social and economic consequences. A concise bibliography with works in Spanish and English at the end provides useful information for the reader who wants more information.

The appendix that accompanies this issue contains articles from the declaration and programmes for action from the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993), the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994) and the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), as well as the complete texts of the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women.

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¹“Our History.” Latin American and Caribbean Women’s Health Network. 03 March 2009 <<http://www.reddesalud.org/English/>>.

KILLING WOMEN: THE VISUAL CULTURE OF GENDER AND VIOLENCE

Annette Burfoot and Susan Lord,
Eds.
Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University
Press, 2006

REVIEWED BY KATHRYN TRAVIS

Killing Women: The Visual Culture of Gender and Violence explores the myriad of ways that visual culture(s) represents, identifies and attempts to understand the relationships, connections, and tensions between gender and violence. Annette Burfoot and Susan Lord bring together a wide array of community activists, artists, and academics in order to continue the oftentimes quiet dialogue on women, gender, and violence. Focusing their attention on the visual, through fiction and non-fiction films, museums, art, archives, and the news media, Burfoot and Lord create a space where a critical visual vocabulary on gendered violence, gender and violence, and gender as violence are fused together. The presence of this compilation further demonstrates how the distinct paths of art, activism, and community intersect to challenge the boundaries of academic theory and practice.

The role that the body plays is significant within each of these articles. Broken into three distinct sections, this compilation of essays demonstrates the degree to which gendered representations of violence can and must be articulated. Through the various academic lenses of media

and communications, film studies and sociology, the hegemony of any one understanding of gender/violence/woman is dispelled by using many representational frameworks. The section “History, Memory and Mediations of Murder” necessarily considers the silences and gaps that exist within feminist theory and practice. Rosenberg’s article on the Montreal Massacre and O’Shea’s piece on Karla Homolka identify the ways in which specific feminisms do not take up difficult representations of femininity, evading critical discussions on women, gender, and violence. For instance, female sadists and masochists exemplify not just the inability of mainstream society to deal with women who are violent, but how feminist discourse has failed to adequately explore these identities. Through the language of domesticity, protective motherhood, victimization, and feminine transformation, western patriarchal imaginaries fail to make space for the actions of violent women. Discourse as violence is both figuratively and literally pressed into the bodies of women and left draped, as inescapable feminine identities and codes of conduct, around their shoulders.

In “Techniques and Technologies of Representing Violence,” the tone shifts from the exploration of feminine identities in relation to violence to one which focuses on how violence is represented in relation to female bodies. The medical dissection of the female body epitomizes the objectification of the female form. Burfoot’s female wax models at La Specola are sexualized as superficially beautiful, yet brutally fragmented into vagina, uterus, and pregnant womb. Just as patriarchal rationality fails to permit the female masochist/sadist to exist within western cultural understandings of the ‘feminine woman’, the medicalization of the female body is achieved through scientific rationality. In her article “I Am Awake in the Place Where Women Die,” Lisa Coulthard explores the notion of women as absence through the work

of feminist artists who use symbols of rape, murder, pain, and fear to expose the violence of being a ‘woman’.

Lastly, “National Trouble: Gendered Violence” shifts the gaze from a dominant Euro-North American western context. At a point in the book when to this reader all seems lost for women caught within the web of western patriarchal gender roles, Suzie Young’s gender defying heroines complicate the narration of predominantly western European analyses of gender identities. Overall, forms of visual media, museum/art installation, and film demonstrate how “representation functions as a materialization of violence.” “Feminist counter-violence” is necessary to challenge the epistemic violence saturating linguistic, legal, and media spaces which make up the everyday. These discussions are explicitly clear not to obscure the reality of murdered women or women murderers. Certain mediums of representation, such as the art work of Abigail Lane, Jenny Holzer, and the installation “No Humans Involved,” more aptly articulate a project of feminist counter-violence.

While some chapters explore better than others the gendered analysis of violence, examining the connection between female bodies or identities and the (patriarchal) social ideologies which define them, they all attempt to unsettle mainstream interpretations of gendered violence. One must be cognizant of how “agency” is situated within these works. Agency very much demands that readers and viewers question how their own gaze is implicated within realities of gendered violence. It is interesting to note the lack of any formal concluding piece within this volume. However, this omission can be interpreted as a political stance, as the editors’ statement that the work on gender and violence is far from complete.

Kathryn Travis is currently completing her Master’s degree in the graduate Women’s Studies program at York University. Her research interests