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Pornography: Group Pressures and Individual Rights

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Pornography: Group Pressures and Individual Rights

in their challenge, Iheduru posits, the NIMO might have replaced today's liberal shipping order. The next few chapters consider the destructive impact of the decline of the shipping conference system, the growing threats from independent shipping operators and the hobbling nature of intraregional maritime competition. It is in this section that the author notes the African states' catch-22: remaining united in their struggle against foreign shipping lines while independently pursuing nationalist shipping policies and objectives. Finally, the book focuses on the timeliness of the issues of maritime order and international inequality, as they coincide with current political economy scholarship.

Through the course of the past century, economic inequality has come to gain status as an inevitable given in the international arena. Iheduru's book approaches this issue through the global shipping industry and its all too often over-looked, ultra-competitive nature. To the South, it is a very serious issue; one upon which the importation of food, clothing and other essential goods relies. In his work, the author effectively highlights a problem whose waters, without full international attention, will only get rougher before they calm.

David J. Katalinas

HUGH POTTER, *PORNOGRAPHY: GROUP PRESSURES AND INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS*, The Federation Press, New South Wales, Australia (1996); ISBN 1-86287-215-5; 180 pp. (paperback).

Contrary to its title, this book is not an in depth analysis of what "pornography" means or a straight-forward answer as to whether it is a good or bad thing. Rather, the author, Dr. Hugh Potter, chooses to examine the variety of definitions different social groups choose to attach. For some groups, pornography may mean any depiction of non-marital sexual relations, while other groups may see it as depictions as violent non-consensual sex. The book is not about individuals and their relationship to pornography, but rather how the issue of pornography is used as a tool to promote self-interest.

The author's analysis throughout concentrates on an organizational level. References to the works of individual writers are used, but only in the context of various group perspectives on pornography. Potter uses the case of Australia and the X-rated video industry, consumers and regulators as his starting point which to compare the various positions of argument. Throughout the text, Potter uses data from surveys of Australian X-rated video purchasers and those who regulate the industry as further foundation into these perspectives.

In the early chapters of the text, Potter outlines the Functionalist and Conflict approaches to the study of deviant behavior and social problems. In examining the Functionalist approach, Potter examines the Christian Critique of pornography. As an example of the Conflict approach, Potter analyzes the radical Feminist case against pornogra-

phy. The author concludes that while the two positions are related in some ways, they both express different ideas about the moral world which should exist upon the elimination of pornography.

With the theoretical frameworks explored, Potter presents a brief history of Australian pornography chapter five. Potter focuses on the Australian video and magazine classification scheme to define exactly what an X-rated video is and how the classification came into being. From a legal standpoint, prior to 1945, there was no legislative concern about pornography due to general censorship legislation which essentially covered all media. In a legal sense, the word pornography did not and still does not exist in the Federal legislation. What currently does exist is an X-rating for video products which was developed in 1994 which "officially" makes such videos unavailable in Australia.

However, as Potter explains, the presence of "video nasties" in the country is recognized. The availability of print and video pornography in Australia is quite open. Potter takes the opportunity in chapter six to examine the conduct as opposed to the content of this industry.

Chapters seven through nine are data-related chapters which take a look at the individual. While choosing to focus on a "structural" rather than "individual" approach, the author submits statistical data to support his conceptual hypothesis. Potter feels strongly about structural approaches to the study of social behavior because "in the end, however, the individuals do not matter, only the social structure."

Potter's concluding remarks assert that neither pornography nor sexuality is the issue asserted. Rather, the real issue is the need for social groups to separate themselves from each other. It comes down to the various social groups' inability to believe in their own "moral superiority" that leads to heated battles on issues of pornography. Stereotyping, a necessary human activity, is eventually what this book is about. The author is interested in how groups of individuals proclaim their positions on issues such as pornography, homosexuality, gun control, pedophilia, abortion, or any other issue of social contention and then seek to have others accept that group's position as the best position.

Overall, the author provides an interesting viewpoint on how social groups use various controversial issues (in this case pornography) as a major symbol to try and impose their version of proper morals on others. The examination of the Australian system of dealing with pornography issues is interesting in providing a framework for Potter's "bigger picture" regarding the true issues involved.

Jeffrey N. Holappa

SEAN D. MURPHY, HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION: THE UNITED NATIONS IN AN EVOLVING WORLD ORDER, University of Pennsylvania Press; Philadelphia (1996); ISBN 0-