



# Sexual Solipsism: Philosophical Essays on Pornography and Objectification

By Rae Langton

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Rae Langton here draws together her ground-breaking work on pornography and objectification. On pornography she argues from uncontroversial liberal premises to the controversial feminist conclusions that pornography subordinates and silences women, and that women have rights against pornography. On objectification she begins with the traditional idea that objectification involves treating a person as a thing, but then shows that it is through a kind of *self-fulfilling projection* of beliefs and perceptions of women as subordinate that women are made subordinate and treated as things. These controversial essays in feminist philosophy will be stimulating reading for anyone interested in the status of women in society.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"Langton's work on objectification and sexual solipsism presents less of a challenge and more of an enticement to enter into the debate, since while this is an area that has already been explored by many other philosophers, it is central to any philosophical discussion of sexuality, and it is no simple task to discover the best analysis of objectification. Langton's work will surely stimulate further important research on this topic." --*Philosophy in Review*

"This collection brings together in one handy volume all of her important work in this area.... Langton's crisp, clear, and careful argumentation proves that philosophy has much to offer the socially, politically and even legally charged issues addressed here. This book will not disappoint. In sum, the book is superb.... This is feminist scholarship at its very best. It's first-rate philosophy."--Mary Kate McGowan, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*

"The essays in *Sexual Solipsism* confront some of the most highly charged questions that arise in relations between the sexes. What happens when one person objectifies another? What makes it possible for some to be silenced by others, notwithstanding their freedom to speak? How can injustice, or even the adoption of an epistemic or practical standpoint, undermine the possibility of intimacy? Rae Langton's insightful answers to these questions display a heady mix of clarity, rigor, passion and wit. Rarely have I enjoyed or profited from reading a collection more."--Michael Smith, Princeton University

"Some feminists are drawn to Audre Lorde's remark that, 'The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.' The best refutation of that pessimism is Rae Langton's *Sexual Solipsism*. These fine essays chisel away at patriarchal thought, especially its sometimes lazy defenses of free speech and shallow notions of autonomy. But they do so by wielding the sharpest tools in the kit of modern philosophy. Langton's conclusions challenge many liberals; her methods challenge many feminists. This is feminist philosophy at its best."--Leslie Green, University of Oxford

"Rae Langton's *Sexual Solipsism* is a superb example of feminist philosophy. Crisp, lucid, analytically adept, passionately engaged, imaginatively resourceful, it goes to the heart of issues concerning pornography and the 'objectification' of women like nothing else in the literature, showing how good philosophy can give us resources to confront some of the world's worst evils. A must-read for all who care about social justice."--Martha Nussbaum, University of Chicago

## About the Author

**Rae Langton** is Professor of Philosophy at MIT. She has been affiliated with Monash University, the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University, Sheffield University, and the University of Edinburgh.

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