

Sex and pleasure in western culture

Gail Hawkes; Polity Press, Cambridge, 2004, 324p., ISBN 0-7456-1670-4 £30 (Hbk); ISBN 0-7456-1671-2 £15.99 (Pbk)

In *Sex and Pleasure in Western Culture*, Gail Hawkes gives a useful 'broad sweep' (p. 2) overview of ideas about sex and pleasure through Western culture – a task that has hitherto been attempted surprisingly rarely. This is the book's primary strength.

Hawkes' sociological background is clear throughout the text. Hawkes demonstrates the socially constructed nature of ideas about sexuality: how sexual beliefs both vary over time and endure in varied and remoulded forms. One of her core aims is to point out, in a broadly Foucauldian vein, that social order is connected to sexual order: the sexual body is brought into line through discourses about sexuality that arise from the priorities and beliefs of different historical periods. A history of sexuality is a brave topic for a sociologist to attempt, and Hawkes is alert to the potential danger of taking historical evidence and interpreting it out of its context. She appears to write for social scientists more than for historians, hoping to convince the former that 'the past can contribute much to an understanding of the present' (p. 2).

She begins with what she calls 'the sexual landscape of the new millennium'. Because this section draws so specifically from the late 1990s up to 2002 this risks dating the book and might be better left to the end. The text then turns to classical antiquity and progresses through early Christianity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance before moving to modernity and the 20th 'sexual century'. Her periodization might be judged overly simplistic, but it is a likely consequence – some might argue necessity – of attempting such an ambitious project.

Achieving a fruitful balance between specific detail and general observation is a priority for an author of such a text. For the most part, Hawkes does this well. For example, in the chapter 'Guilty Sex, Courtly Love and the Unruly Body: Medieval Themes and Practices' she identifies both a general tension 'between irrational pleasure and rational control' (pp. 82–83) and provides interesting detail on how medieval medical tracts and theologians sought to approve sexual pleasure but regulate it in highly specific ways. And while she details early Christianity's condemnations of 'sinful sex' she is sufficiently attuned to the complexity of Christianity's presentation of sexuality to identify these prohibitions as not so much theological as historically contextual.

Understandably, given the priority given to heterosexuality in Western culture, the book concentrates more on heterosexuality than on other sexualities. Yet Hawkes does not ignore sexual diversity. She covers, for example, the way the classical

Sex Pleasure In Western Culture

Richard Bernstein



Sex Pleasure In Western Culture:

Sex and Pleasure in Western Culture Gail Hawkes, 2004-07-16 *Sex and Pleasure in Western Culture* provides the first comprehensive overview of desire and pleasure in western sexual culture. It argues that both have always been seen as socially disruptive and morally dangerous and offers an entertaining account of the methods by which these attributes of sex were managed across the centuries from Classical Antiquity to the present day. The book develops the hypothesis that while expressed in very different social contexts sexual pleasure has evoked very similar anxieties. The text draws on historical cultural sociological and contemporary sources and is easily accessible for both the general reader and students of gender and sexual culture. In addition to telling a story of its own *Sex and Pleasure in Western Culture* examines lesser known aspects of sexual history that invite further exploration by the interested reader. These range from sexual aestheticism in the 4th century AD and the sexual meaning of medieval church gargoyles through to sexual training in the 1950s and 21st century sex holidays. The book will provide a compelling read for both students of sexuality and lay readers who find the complexities of human sexuality a source of fascination.

The Evolution of Human Pair-Bonding, Friendship, and Sexual Attraction Michael R. Kauth, 2020-11-29 *The Evolution of Human Pair Bonding Friendship and Sexual Attraction* presents an evolutionary history of romantic love male female pair bonding same sex friendship and sexual attraction drawing on sexuality research gay and lesbian studies history literature anthropology and evolutionary science. Employing evolutionary theory as a framework close same sex friendship is examined as an adaptive trait that has harnessed love affection and sexual pleasure to navigate same sex environments for both men and women ultimately benefiting their reproductive success and promoting the inheritance of traits for friendship. Chapters consider the desire to form close same sex friendships and ask if this is embedded in our biology concluding that most humans have the capacity to form loving meaningful and sexual relationships with men and women. This book takes on a unique interdisciplinary approach and is essential reading for those studying and working in sexuality research anthropology sociology evolutionary psychology and gay and lesbian studies. It will also be of interest to marriage and family therapists as well as sex therapists.

Sexual Nature/Sexual Culture Paul R. Abramson, Steven D. Pinkerton, 1995-07 In this multidisciplinary study of human sexuality an international team of scholars looks at the influences of nature and nurture biology and culture and sex and gender in the sexual experiences of humans and other primates. Using as its center the idea that sexual pleasure is the primary motivational force behind human sexuality and that reproduction is simply a byproduct of the pleasurability of sex this book examines sexuality at the individual societal and cultural levels. Beginning with a look at the evolution of sexuality in humans and other primates the essays in the first section examine the sexual ingenuity of primates the dominant theories of sexual behavior the differences in male and female sexual interest and behavior and the role of physical attractiveness in mate selection. The focus then shifts to biological approaches to sexuality especially the genetic and hormonal origins of sexual orientation gender and pleasure. The essays go

on to look at the role of pleasure in different cultures Included are essays on love among the tribespeople of the Brazilian rain forest and the regulation of adolescent sexuality in India Finally several contributors look at the methodological issues in the study of human sexuality paying particular attention to the problems with research that relies on people's memories of their sexual experiences The contributors are Angela Pattatucci Dean Hamer David Greenberg Frans de Waal Mary McDonald Pavelka Kim Wallen Donald Symons Heino Meyer Bahlburg Jean D Wilson Donald Tuzin Lawrence Cohen Thomas Gregor Lenore Manderson Robert C Bailey Alice Schlegel Edward H Kaplan Richard Berk Paul R Abramson Paul Okami and Stephen D Pinkerton Spanning the chasm of the nature versus nurture debate *Sexual Nature Sexual Culture* is a look at human sexuality as a complex interaction of genetic potentials and cultural influences This book will be of interest to a wide range of readers from scholars and students in psychology anthropology sociology and history to clinicians researchers and others seeking to understand the many dimensions of sexuality If we ever expect to solve the sexually based problems that modern societies face we must encourage investigations of human sexual behavior Moreover those investigations should employ a broad range of disciplines looking at sex from all angles which is precisely what *Sexual Nature Sexual Culture* does Mike May American Scientist This timely and relevant book reminds us that we cannot rely on simple solutions to complex problems It represents a transdisciplinary approach integrating knowledge from diverse fields and provides the reader with a challenging and rewarding experience Especially for those who are involved in teaching human sexuality to medical students and other health care professionals this book is highly recommended Gerald Wiviott M D Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease In short this volume contains much to stimulate inform and amuse in varying proportions What more can one ask Pierre L van den Berghe Journal of the History of Sexuality the book succeeds in bring together some of the sharpest thinkers in the field of human sexuality and goes a long way toward clarifying the diverse perspectives that currently exist David M Buss and Todd K Shackelford Quarterly Review of Biology *With Pleasure* Paul R. Abramson, Steven D. Pinkerton, 2002-10-17 Challenging everything from the mandates of the Catholic Church to the hotly debated ethics of pornography and from the controversy surrounding gay rights to issues of gender and feminism *With Pleasure* explores a new theory of human sexuality that ignites every hot topic in the public domain What role authors Paul Abramson and Steven Pinkerton ask does sexual pleasure play in our lives Is the pursuit of sexual enjoyment in our blood Our brains Our very nature Regardless of the source it can be agreed that the joys of sex are widely appreciated Why then is pleasure so often overlooked in discussions of sexual behaviour and why do cultural historical and religious treatises so often fail to emphasise or outright ignore this obvious aspect of human sexuality Responding to these and many other questions about our most private affairs *With Pleasure* provides a profoundly original challenge to the cherished truisms of human sexuality Abramson and Pinkerton proclaim the paramount importance of pleasure while at the same time overthrowing traditional ideas about gender pornography contraception homosexuality abortion and much more Supported by rigorous research and co written by

one of the foremost authorities on sex With *Pleasure* argues that human sexuality cannot be understood if its significance is limited to reproduction alone The authors posit that in humans reproduction itself occurs as a byproduct of pleasure not the other way around and that it is the strong drive for pleasure that makes people overcome many obstacles and even life threatening dangers such as AIDS to have sex Ranging from discussions about the church to current debates about pornography and from evolutionary theory to questions about the future of sex and pleasure Abramson and Pinkerton argue persuasively that the pleasurable of sex cannot be restricted to purely reproductive behaviour With *Pleasure* advances a startling and original new theory about human sexuality one which the authors believe will replace all existing notions about sex The book standing in direct and deliberate opposition to traditions that try to confine sexuality to procreation is sure to ignite a firestorm of controversy

Death, Desire and Loss in Western Culture Jonathan Dollimore, 2013-07-04 *Death Desire and Loss in Western Culture* is a rich testament to our ubiquitous preoccupation with the tangled web of death and desire In these pages we find nuanced analysis that blends Plato with Shelley Hlderlin with Foucault Dollimore a gifted thinker is not content to summarize these texts from afar instead he weaves a thread through each to tell the magnificent story of the making of the modern individual

The East, the West, and Sex Richard Bernstein, 2010-07-27 In this wide ranging history Richard Bernstein explores the connection between sex and power as it has played out between Eastern cultures and the Western explorers merchants and conquerors who have visited them This illuminating book describes the historical and ongoing encounter between these travelers and the morally ambiguous opportunities they found in foreign lands Bernstein s narrative teems with real figures from Marco Polo and his investigation into the harem of Kublai Khan the nineteenth century American missionary Isabella Thoburn and her efforts to stamp out the sinfulness of the Mughal culture of India Gustave Flaubert and his dalliances with Egyptian prostitutes to modern day sex tourists in Southeast Asia as well as the women that they both exploit and enrich Provocative and insightful *The East The West and Sex* is a lucid look at a pervasive and yet mostly ignored subject

Understanding and Addressing Adult Sexual Attraction to Children Sarah Goode, 2009-07-07 The groundbreaking book explores the subject of paedophilia seeking a new understanding of it in order to better prevent child sexual abuse and making use of case studies and primary interview data

Erotic Attunement Cristina L. H. Traina, 2011-06-15 Heightened awareness of the problem of sexual abuse has led to deep anxiety over adults touching children in nearly any context This book probes the disquieting issue of how we can draw a clear line between natural affection towards children and perverse exploitation of them

Jewish Philosophy and Western Culture Victor J. Seidler, 2007-11-28 This is one of the first textbooks to try to set the entire discipline of Jewish philosophy in its proper cultural and historical contexts In so doing it introduces the vibrant Jewish philosophical tradition to students while also making a significant contribution to inter religious dialogue Victor J Seidler argues that the dominant Platonic tradition in the West has led to a form of cultural ethics which asserts false superiority in its relationships with others He offers a critical

reappraisal of the philosophical underpinnings of this western Christian culture which for so long has viewed Judaism with hostility Examining the work of seminal Jewish thinkers such as Philo Buber Mendelsohn Herman Cohen Leo Baeck Levinas Rosenzweig and others the author argues for a code of ethics which prioritises particular and personal moral responsibility rather than the impersonal and universal emphases of the Greek tradition His provocative and original overview of Jewish philosophy uncovers a vital and neglected tradition of thought which works against the likelihood of a Holocaust recurring

Just Sex? Nicola Gavey, 2005 This is a valuable contribution to feminist and social constructionist work on rape that will be of interest to those studying psychology gender studies cultural studies and sociology

Romantic Love in Cultural Contexts Victor Karandashev, 2016-12-24 This volume presents a conceptual historical anthropological and sociological review of how culture affects our experience and expression of romantic love What is romantic love and how is it different from and similar to other kinds of love How is romantic love related to sex and marriage in human history and across contemporary cultures What cultural factors mediate attraction in love These are some of the questions the volume explores through its interdisciplinary yet focused lens Much of the current research evidence suggests that love is a universal emotion experienced by a majority of people in various historical eras and in all the world's cultures Yet love displays in different ways because culture has an impact on people's conceptions of love and the ways they feel think and behave in romantic relationships This volume summarizes classical knowledge on love and culture while at the same time focusing sharply on recent studies and cutting edge research that has advanced the field Divided into three parts the volume begins by defining and analyzing the concept of romantic love and interdisciplinary approach to its study in cultural context Part II traces the origin and evolution of romantic love both in various places throughout the world and various time periods throughout history Part III presents the revolutionary expansion of romantic love ideas and practices in the late 20th and early 21st centuries in various parts of the world focusing particularly on the development of romantic love as a cultural ideal of the modern cultures Finally the book concludes by summarizing the major achievements in this field of study and predicts future development A timely and thoughtful addition to the literature *Romantic Love in Cultural Contexts* delivers thought provoking insights to researchers in relationship scholarship sociology anthropology and cultural studies and all those interested in the universal human concept of love Overall I find Dr Victor Karandashev is an excellent and fine scholar who has a firm grasp of both the fundamental principles of cross cultural research and of anthropology In our increasingly connected world *Romantic Love in Cultural Contexts* updates and adds to the descriptions and explanations of similarities and differences in romantic love across generations and cultures Romantic love encompasses the life span rather than being a phenomenon largely confined to youthful years The topic of this project concerns the deepest of our sentiments and pervades life from birth to death This book contributes to better knowledge of this phenomenon across generations

Felix Neto
Professor of Psychology Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação Universidade do Porto Portugal

Same Sex,

Different Cultures Gilbert H Herdt, 2018-05-15 Because homoerotic relations can be found in so many cultures Gilbert Herdt argues that we should think of these relations as part of the human condition This new cross cultural study of gays lesbians and bisexuals around the world Same Sex Different Cultures provides a unique perspective on maturing and living within societies both historical and contemporary that not only acknowledge but also incorporate same gender desires and relations Examining what it means to organize sex in a society that lacks a category for sex or to love someone of the same gender when society does not have a homosexual or gay lesbian role Herdt provides provocative new insights in our understanding of gay and lesbians lives Accurate in both its scientific conceptions and wealth of cultural and historical material examples range from the ancient Greeks and feudal China and Japan to the developing countries of Africa India Mexico Brazil and Thailand from a New Guinea society to contemporary U S culture including Native Americans For all of these peoples homoerotic relations emerge as part of culture and not separate from history or society In many of these groups loving or engaging in sexual relations is found to be the very basis of the local cultural theory of human nature and the mythological basis for the cosmos and the creation of society The mistake of modern Western culture Gilbert contends is to continue the legalization of prejudice against lesbians and gays In this light the book addresses the issue of universal versus particular practices and reveals positive role models that embrace all aspects of human sexuality Finally it offers knowledge of the existence of persons who have loved and have been intimate sexually and romantically with the same gender in other lands through divergent cultural practices and social roles The most important lesson to learn from this cross cultural and historical study of homosexuality is that there is room for many at the table of humankind

Catholic Sexual Theology and Adolescent Girls Doris M. Kieser, 2015-06-18 This book explores the intersection in contemporary Western culture of Catholic sexual theology and adolescent female developmental and sexual experiences The voices of adolescent females so long silent in sexual theologies are given privilege here in the articulation of a normative theology Applying a feminist natural law framework the book engages both theoretical scholarship and practical evidence from psychological and other social sciences to inform sexual theology in the Catholic tradition Attending to gendered developmental and social contexts Doris Kieser explores adolescent females experiences of puberty menarche various sexual activities communities of support sexual desire and the pleasure and danger these realities reap She critically explores historical and traditional sexual theologies and prevailing social patriarchal and androcentric sexual attitudes through a feminist lens The author's attention to the voices of girls and women and her aim to see their sexual flourishing in particular and diverse social contexts yields a theology mindful of the rich complexities of female sexual desire pleasure and well being The result is an integrated sexual theology that grapples with the Catholic theological tradition feminist theory and theology and the embodied experiences of females For anyone who is invested in the lives and well being of adolescent females this work uncovers both barriers and boons to their sexual flourishing

The Philosophy of Sex Alan Soble, Nicholas P. Power, Raja Halwani, 2008 Thirty

contemporary essays that explore philosophically conceptually and theologically the nature social meanings and morality of contemporary sexual phenomena From publisher description

Best Practices in Sexual Offender Assessment and Management Ruth J. Tully,Greg Bohall,David S. Prescott,2025-05-14 This book provides a critical examination of assessment and treatment approaches for sexual offending presenting cutting edge insights from leading experts in evidence based management of sexual deviance It offers a systematic overview of the empirical literature and multifaceted research into clinical and criminal aspects addressing gaps and advancements in public health and policy responses The volume explores sex offender classification systems risk assessment for recidivism psychotherapeutic and pharmacological interventions and the clinical and criminal correlates of common paraphilias Special focus is given to best practices tailored for unique populations making this an essential reference for clinical psychologists correctional professionals and students and researchers of sexual offenses

Development with a Body Andrea Cornwall,Sonia Correa,Susie Jolly,2013-07-04 We used to talk about development with a human face We should be talking about development with a body Arit Oku Egbas African Regional Sexuality Resource Centre Nigeria Sex and sexuality have always had a place at the heart of the development agenda from concerns regarding population and environment to practices in education and efforts for protecting reproductive health and rights Yet this agenda has largely focused on negative dimensions of sexuality disease risk violation rather than positive aspects including rights to sexual fulfillment wellbeing and pleasure The shift towards a rights based approach to development has brought the human rights dimensions of sexuality into clearer view and consequently the need to address discriminatory laws and violations of the human rights of those whose sexual identity and practices diverge from dominant sexual orders norms This book offers compelling insights into contemporary challenges and transformative possibilities of the struggle for sexual rights It combines the conceptual with the political and offering inspiring examples of practical interventions and campaigns that emphasize the positive dimensions of sexuality It brings together reflections and experiences of researchers activists and practitioners from Brazil India Nigeria Peru Serbia South Africa Turkey the UK and Zambia From political discourse on sex and masculinity to sex work and trafficking from HIV and sexuality to struggles for legal reform and citizenship the authors explore the gains of creating stronger linkages between sexuality human rights and development

Studying Sexualities Niall Richardson,Clarissa Smith,Angela Werndly,2013-05-31 Sexuality is an integral part of our lives and our identities But how do we study it Written in a lively and accessible style Studying Sexualities aims to introduce students to the critical study of sexuality taking a look at the major theories media representations and cultural practices After having carefully explained the key theoretical and empirical debates on the subject outlining Foucauldian Constructionism Psychoanalysis and Queer Theory the authors draw on their own original research to address timely topics related to gender sexuality and popular culture Contemporary examples used within the book include discussions of sex shops cybersex and sex toys the TV series Sex and the City Will and Grace and The

L Word and the immensely popular Twilight books Studying Sexualities is essential reading for undergraduate and postgraduate students on Cultural Media Film or visual Studies or Sociology and Sexuality courses who are interested in researching the fascinating complexities of sexuality today NIALl RICHARDSON is a lecturer at the University of Sussex and CLARISSA SMITH and ANGELA WERNDLy are lecturers at the University of Sunderland UK This book is the culmination of their considerable teaching and writing experience within the field of sexualities Their specific research interests include feminism and popular culture queer theory the body and consumption *Herstories on Screen* Kathleen Cummins, 2020-05-19 From the late 1970s into the early 1990s a generation of female filmmakers took aim at their home countries popular myths of the frontier Deeply influenced by second wave feminism and supported by hard won access to governmental and institutional funding and training their trailblazing films challenged traditionally male genres like the Western Instead of reinforcing the myths of nationhood often portrayed in such films invariably featuring a lone white male hero pitted against the savage and uncivilized native terrain these filmmakers constructed counternarratives centering on women and marginalized communities In place of rugged cowboys violently removing indigenous peoples to make the frontier safe for their virtuous wives and daughters these filmmakers told the stories of colonial and postcolonial societies from a female and or subaltern point of view *Herstories on Screen* is a transnational study of feature narrative films from Australia Canada the United States and New Zealand Aotearoa that deconstruct settler colonial myths Kathleen Cummins offers in depth readings of ten works by a diverse range of women filmmakers including Jane Campion Julie Dash Merata Mita Tracey Moffatt and Anne Wheeler She reveals how they skillfully deploy genre tropes and popular storytelling conventions in order to critique master narratives of feminine domesticity and purity and depict women and subaltern people performing acts of agency and resistance Cummins details the ways in which second wave feminist theory and aesthetics informed these filmmakers efforts to debunk idealized Anglo Saxon femininity and motherhood and lay bare gendered and sexual violence and colonial oppression *When Art Therapy Meets Sex Therapy* Einat S. Metzl, 2016-08-25 Appropriate for both sex therapists and art therapists *When Art Therapy Meets Sex Therapy* explores sexuality and gender through the use of art making connecting relevant theories and research from both fields It begins with a historical review of how explorations of anatomy physiology and sexual identity manifested in art making in different cultures and discusses why a clinician must take these spiritual medical and socioeconomic factors in account to offer effective and culturally competent therapy The second part of the book discusses clinically effective treatments in art and sex therapy and contains numerous case illustrations Included are interventions for important issues in therapy such as exploring gender identity sexual health and shame processing sexual abuse couples intimacy parenting concerns regarding their children s sexuality and treating sex addiction **Sex in a Broken World** Paul David Tripp, 2018-01-16 We live in a deeply broken world but there is hope Sexuality is a fundamental part of what it means to be human part of God s beautiful design when he created all things And

yet sex in our world today looks nothing like the way that God intended it to be Sexual brokenness surrounds us and in one way or another affects us all This sexual brokenness reveals our deep need for redemption something quick fixes mere behavior modification or a set of rules can t provide Honest and direct yet kind and caring this book points us to the only place we can find help for sexual brokenness the transforming grace of Jesus Christ Only this grace offers hope for a life of freedom purity and joy as God intended

The Enigmatic Realm of **Sex Pleasure In Western Culture**: Unleashing the Language is Inner Magic

In a fast-paced digital era where connections and knowledge intertwine, the enigmatic realm of language reveals its inherent magic. Its capacity to stir emotions, ignite contemplation, and catalyze profound transformations is nothing short of extraordinary. Within the captivating pages of **Sex Pleasure In Western Culture** a literary masterpiece penned by a renowned author, readers attempt a transformative journey, unlocking the secrets and untapped potential embedded within each word. In this evaluation, we shall explore the book's core themes, assess its distinct writing style, and delve into its lasting effect on the hearts and minds of those who partake in its reading experience.

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