

Performing Sex: The Making and Unmaking of Women's Erotic Lives

Breanne Fahs

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Performing Sex: The Making and Unmaking of Women's Erotic Lives Breanne Fahs A candid and provocative critique of women's sexual liberation in America.

Although conventional wisdom holds that women in the United States today are more sexually liberated than ever before, a number of startling statistics call into question this perceived victory: over half of all women report having faked orgasms; 45 percent of women find rape fantasies erotic; a growing number of women perform same-sex eroticism for the viewing benefit of men; and recent clinical studies label 40 percent of women as "sexually dysfunctional." Caught between postsexual revolution celebrations of progress and alarmingly regressive new modes of disempowerment, the forty women interviewed in Performing Sex offer a candid and provocative portrait of "liberated" sex in America. Through this nuanced and complex study, Breanne Fahs demonstrates that despite the constant cooptation of the terms of sexual freedom, women's sexual subjectivities—and the ways they continually grapple with shifting definitions of liberation—represent provocative spaces for critical inquiry and personal discovery, ultimately generating novel ways of imagining and reimagining power, pleasure, and resistance.

"Fahs has the opportunity here to shape what should become a burgeoning subfield in gender and sexuality studies—the study of sexual subjectivities. This straddles social psychology, women's studies, and sociology and explores the concept that social influences and forces effect how people come to understand themselves on an individual or psychological level." — Rebecca F. Plante, coeditor of *Doing Gender Diversity:* Readings in Theory and Real-World Experience



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