why women have sex

Understanding sexual motivations—from adventure to revenge
(and everything in between)

The Psychology of Sex in Women's Own Voices

CINDY M. MESTON, PH.D., AND DAVID M. BUSS, PH.D.
It began with an amazing revelation: Not a single legal prostitute in Nevada has contracted HIV since testing began in 1986. Why? Harvard medical student Alexa Albert traveled to Nevada in search of answers. Gaining unprecedented access to the infamous and notoriously secretive Mustang Ranch, Albert reveals a fascinatingly insular world where the women share their experiences with unexpected candor. There’s Dinah, Mustang’s oldest prostitute, who turned her first trick years ago at age fifty-one. And Savannah, a woman who views her work as a “healing” social service for needy men.

Nevada’s legal brothels are an incredibly rich environment for examining some of this nation’s thorniest social issues. From problems of class and race to the meaning of family, honor, and justice—all are found within this complex and singular microcosm. And in a country where prejudice is a dirty word—but not as dirty as booker—these social issues are compounded and deepened by the stifling stigma that has always plagued the profession. But in the end, all of Mustang’s working girls are just women trying to earn their way to happiness.

Brothel is a landmark work that probes beyond the veil of desire and fantasy in which the sex trade shrugs itself—and uncovers the naked humanity at its core.

"REVEALING, SYMPATHETIC, AND COMPELLING . . .
Albert offers deft and unforgettable portraits of not only the working women at Mustang Ranch, but also an entire community that has developed around them. . . . Fascinating, gripping."
—Las Vegas Weekly

"[AN] EVERYTHING-YOU-WANTED-TO-KNOW LOOK INTO LEGALIZED PROSTITUTION."
—Providence Journal

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A BALLANTINE BOOKS TRADE PAPERBACK
At the heart of *Stripping, Sex, and Popular Culture* lies a very personal story, of author Catherine Roach's response to the decision of her life-long best friend to become an exotic dancer. Catherine and Marie grew up together in Canada and moved to the USA to enroll in PhD programs at prestigious universities. For various reasons, Marie left her program and instead chose to work as a stripper.

The author, at first troubled and yet fascinated by her friend's decision, follows Marie's journey into the world of stripping as an observer and analyst. She finds that this world raises complex questions about gender, sexuality, fantasy, feminism, and even spirituality.

Moving from first hand interviews with dancers and others, the book broadens into a provocative and accessible examination of the current popularity of "strip tease culture," with sex-saturated media imagery, thongs gone mainstream, and stripper aerobics at your local gym. *Stripping, Sex, and Popular Culture* scrutinizes the naked truth of a lucrative industry whose norms are increasingly at the center of contemporary society.

**Catherine M. Roach** is Associate Professor of New College, and Affiliated Faculty in Religious Studies and Women's Studies, at The University of Alabama, USA. She received her PhD from Harvard University in 1998 and is also the author of *Mother / Nature: Popular Culture and Environmental Ethics* (Indiana University Press, 2003).
“Fascinating, insightful, and wonderfully balanced. This book will take you way beyond Hollywood’s clichés and into the realities of stripping, and you’ll emerge with a deeper understanding of the pleasures and the costs of being the object of male fantasies.”
—Susan Bordo, author of *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*

“A terrific read! Stripped is the best kind of feminist work: original, honest, and deeply engaging. Barton’s remarkable insights into the work and private lives of exotic dancers move far beyond notions of strippers as exploited or empowered to uncover more hidden aspects of this world—its burdens of emotional labor, social stigma, exhaustion, and boredom as well as experiences of athleticism, ego-gratification, intimacy, and even spirituality.”
—Kathleen M. Blee, author of *Inside Organized Racism: Women in the Hate Movement*

“With Stripped, Barton makes an important contribution to the ongoing conversation about the effects of stripping on the women who actually take their clothes off. The polarized nature of the debates sometimes makes it difficult to say anything complicated about sex work—it is either said to be empowering for women or degrading to them. Yet, of course, things are never that simple—and Barton’s arguments provide a significant alternative to such binary thinking.”
—Katherine Frank, author of *G-Strings and Sympathy: Strip Club Regulars and Male Desire*

What kind of woman dances naked for money? Bernadette Barton takes us inside countless strip bars and clubs, from upscale to back road as well as those that specialize in lapdancing, table dancing, topless only, or peep shows, to reveal the startling lives of exotic dancers.

Based on over five years of research and from visiting clubs around the country, particularly in San Francisco, Hawaii, and Kentucky, *Stripped* offers a rare portrait of not just how dancers get into the business but what it’s like for those who choose to strip year after year. Through captivating interviews and first-hand observation, Barton recounts why these women began stripping, the initial excitement and financial rewards from the work, the dangers of the life—namely, drugs and prostitution—and the difficulties in staying in the business over time, especially for their sexuality and self-esteem.

*Stripped* provides fresh insight into the complex work and personal experiences of exotic dancers, going beyond the “sex wars” debate to offer an important new understanding of sex work.

**BERNADETTE BARTON** is Assistant Professor of Sociology and Women’s Studies at Morehead State University in Morehead, Kentucky.
DANCE LIKE No One IS WATCHING
...When I was an Exotic Dancer
ERICA L. FISHER
Erica Fisher taught Sunday school to six-year-olds. She had a son at 17, was divorced at 20, owned forty acres of real estate at 23, and received a masters' degree at 27. Her story indulges the seemingly obvious contradictions of a lifestyle shared with stripping while showing a determination to not only find herself in her own life but also in others'. This book encourages others to reflect on their own judgments and conceptions of those around them. It's about integrity, a sense of self and true family love and understanding. Erica's life in these pages explores uncertainties and also a hope that compassion can be found in acceptance.

**Erica Fisher** left the world of exotic dancing in 2002, after stripping for almost four years. Since then she has received a Masters' Degree in Alternative Education and continues to help coach her son's Little League team. She enjoys writing and this is her first published book. She and Michael are still together. The three of them live together in Pennsylvania.
SECRET
SEX
LIVES

A Year on the Fringes of American Sexuality

Suzy Spencer

New York Times Bestselling Author
Sex as an Approach-Avoidance Conflict
By Daniel R. Grangaard on October 17, 2012

Format: Paperback

This book has merit, not as a study of secret sex lives, but as a refreshingly brave, transparent autobiographical analysis of the author's personal struggle of integrating naturally motivated drives with her religious beliefs. It is of utmost value to the never ending debate whether individuals are more the product of nature or nurture.

As a sex study, the book has methodology flaws which negate generalization to the American population. The author makes no attempt at random sampling, instead choosing to interview people via Internet inquiries on places like Craig's List and Adult Friend Finder. There are better examples of interviewing and participant observational type studies in human sexuality published by other researchers (e.g., Stripping, Sex, and Popular Culture by Catharine Roach; Brothel: Mustang Ranch and Its Women by Alexa Albert). Nothing new is offered into the sex lives of Americans that has not already been researched and reported in textbooks (e.g., middle-age swingers are politically conservative, highly educated professionals, with a religious upbringing but typically no longer attend church).

Throughout the book, the author confesses a healthy curiosity that one could contend many individuals with her convictions secretly explore but not dare openly share for fear of being judged albeit by individuals who likely entertain the same thoughts but will never openly admit. Consequently, she seeks out individuals who will validate and even challenge her own struggles with sexuality. While many people will risk their careers and relationships with significant others over sexual interests that are secretly held, the author courageously shares her desires and bares her soul in an attempt to tackle an approach-avoidance conflict that has consumed her thoughts for decades.