

A Mirror in Hand

I would like to make one thing clear: this article is dedicated to women as an appeal for the appropriation of our bodies, our fantasies, and our sexuality. It is not meant to be moralizing or therapeutic.

Julie Gagnon

2013

Taboo, smelly, hidden, shameful, unsightly. Women's sex has been described historically in these terms without explaining precisely why it qualifies as such. At the beginning of the 1960s, mores became less rigid and what was then labeled the Sexual Revolution commenced. But as many women authors have noted, this progress didn't reduce the gap between the pleasure that men and women experience sexually.

This disparity was noted as long ago as the 1976 Hite Report on female sexuality and much has been written about this since. What blocks the liberation of our mentalities from reaching a truly intimate connection with ourselves? After having conquered a sizable part of the labor force and educational institutions, how can we as women declare ourselves free when so many among us are still incapable of confronting what happens in our own beds?

Let's fold back the sheets so we can face our bodies.

Whenever one examines female sexuality, it is evident how few women really know their body and how it functions. But, this article isn't a biology lesson—there are many good books that provide this information. Sitting down with a mirror and looking at one's vagina to see how it is shaped, the form of the lips, and where the clitoris is situated, is a first step towards claiming one's intimacy.

Women still carry the weight of thousands of years of our sexuality being destroyed and women's bodies considered sinful. And while most sexual education programs condone masturbation, it is, in reality, denied to women. So we have to deconstruct our sexual education in order to reconstruct a liberating one that is open to feminine pleasure in all its forms.

Consider sexual pleasure in and of itself. Statistics show that about one third of women indicate they often or always have orgasms. Quite a low percentage, but this is even more striking when it is compared to men's responses which register a yes to the question 90 to 95 percent of the time!

This difference—this chasm—reflects the diverse problems a great many women experience; abandonment, stress, worries about performance, insecurity, uncomfortableness about their body, past and present violence, etc. The causes, individual and social, are as diverse as the number of unsatisfied women.

That this phenomenon continues is quite alarming. But the fact that we discuss it so infrequently again demonstrates the inequality between men and women. Just think of all the publicity about Viagra so that men can continue sexual activity. While sexual fulfillment is a fundamental element in our search for liberty and equality, the problems women face are rarely considered.

I wrote this article on March 8, International Women's Day, because I believe that our struggle has to take place in all spheres, and even (and especially) in our beds. This is an appeal for us to be open and to love and accept ourselves, our bodies, our fantasies and desires.

We need to free ourselves from the pornographic codes that still invade our sexual imagination. These patriarchal, oppressive sexual paradigms demonstrate that domination in the realm of our sexual pleasure still exists and blocks our sexual fulfillment.

While many pertinent books about female sexuality have appeared about our struggle, very few after the Hite Report have contained a variety of women's explicit testimonies about their sexuality in order to determine the benefits of the sexual revolution.

Now is the time to take control of our sexuality, to shape it in our own image because sex has the power to free us.

Translated and adapted from an article that appeared in *Cause Commune*, no. 34, hiver 2013 / **causecommune.net**.

fifth Estate

Julie Gagnon
A Mirror in Hand

I would like to make one thing clear: this article is dedicated to women as an appeal for the appropriation of our bodies, our fantasies, and our sexuality. It is not meant to be moralizing or therapeutic.

2013

<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/389-summer-2013/mirror-hand>
Fifth Estate #389, Summer, 2013

fifthestate.anarchistlibraries.net