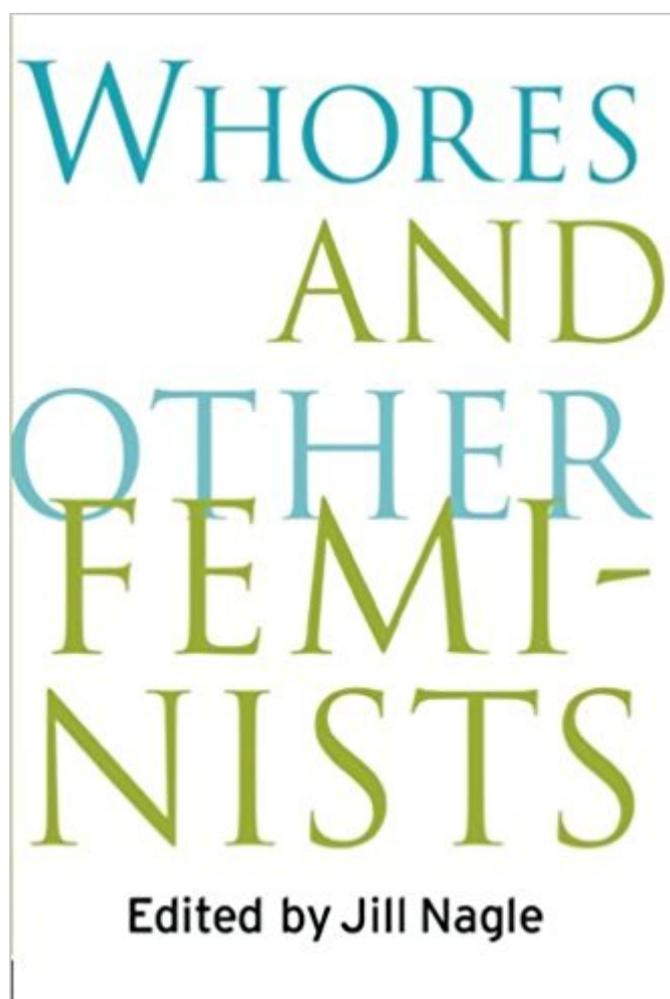


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Whores And Other Feminists



Synopsis

Whores and Other Feminists fleshes out feminist politics from the perspective of sex workers--strippers, prostitutes, porn writers, producers and performers, dominatrices--and their allies. Comprising a range of voices from both within and outside the academy, this collection draws from traditional feminisms, postmodern feminism, queer theory, and sex radicalism. It stretches the boundaries of contemporary feminism, holding accountable both traditional feminism for stigmatizing sex workers, and also the sex industry for its sexist practices.

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Customer Reviews

As a journalist from the San Francisco area who knows nearly half of this book's authors, as a lifelong feminist, and as a sexworker for over 20 years, my perspective is widely encompassing. This book expands the boundaries of feminism beyond the conservative boundaries of the women's movement of the Seventies. After decades of the bipolar assault on womens' sexuality, from Andrea Dworkin to Phyllis Schaffly -- two sides of the same conservative coin -- it is refreshing to see a new generation of women not only claiming their own bodies but also taking charge of them. This book helps give them a voice. Certainly, there are sad cases in the adult industry, and perhaps some of them do end up in sexwork because of a difficult past, yet to suggest there would be few sexworkers if every woman in America were happy and well-adjusted is a fallacy in logic. I have personally known many brilliant, self-actualized women who have done and continue to do sexwork. You'll find some of them in the pages of this book. I can easily understand the negative reviews,

however. Many Americans are so rooted in the Puritanical yet hedonist nature of our culture, there is a prevalent sexual ambivalence in our society: we're fascinated and titillated by sex, yet also afraid of it. We're simultaneously obsessed and fascinated with bodies (ours and others') yet also ashamed of them. Then there are the reviews clearly sent by female Rush Limbaugh "dittoheads" -- people who use the word "feminazi" with a straight face and secretly believe a woman is a second class citizen. Forgive them, Mother, they know not what they say. This is an excellent book on sexwork as the new radical, leading edge of feminism, and I highly recommend it to any woman (or man) with an open mind who isn't afraid to think for herself.

As a college student studying American cultural studies and emerging feminist discourses, I found this book to be an important and must read for any feminist regardless of their position on the issue of sex work and feminism. After reading this book, I am interested in learning more about feminist theory and how it relates to sex work. Jill Nagle compiles a various assortment of different kinds of sex work from stripping, to S&M, to phone sex operators. As a woman, as a feminist, as a man, as a critical reader, as a sexual being, please do read this book. highly recommended!

The contributors to this book are more than "feminists"; more specifically, these women are capable, intelligent, articulate feminists who have chosen the sex industry over all the other "legitimate" fields for which they are equally qualified. Who hasn't imagined, even once, that it might be interesting to be an expensive call girl, or a giver of healing erotic massage, or a sexy actor in porn movies? The women in this book have made these types of sex work (and many more) into careers, and it's fascinating to read their experienced take on the sex industry and on American cultural attitudes. If you've ever been curious about sex work and sex workers, Jill Nagle's book is for you.

What is most fascinating about the war for sexual equality is that sex itself is the principle battlefield. The average American male idolizes Hugh Hefner for having seven girl friends all one-third his age and enjoying a lavish life style that was paid for by the fleshy attributes, surgically enhanced and otherwise, of thousands of women. Yet if a woman claims to have had hundreds of sexual partners and profited from those ventures, she's a social outcast whose potential husbands or boyfriends are silently held to "you're not going to get serious about her, are you?" As far back as the middle 18th Century, the most lascivious of the mainstream women's rights campaigners, Wicked Victoria Woodhull, who coined the term Free Love, was written out of feminist history by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony as an embarrassment to the more serious elements of the struggle.

Jill Nagle's book challenges the debate on its most fundamental playing field: is sex part of sexual equality? Is profiting from and enjoying one's sexual skills and powers only a male option? This book is funny, entertaining, sexy, provocative, uncompromising and above all, marvelously intelligent and insightful. Yes, that woman in the Eros Guide ad has a master's degree and finds more freedom, fun, and financial gain in tying up and spanking the bank president than she once had fetching his coffee and dodging his ass-grabbing. Really, not all women who strut about in high heels and nothing else at the Mitchell Brothers theater are the victims of sexual abuse. And yes, if a woman has the right to say no, she has the right to say yes to whatever might feel good and look good and accept the array of consequences without selling out anyone else's political expectations. I loved this book: any man who feels threatened by smart, sexy, independent women has missed the best of them. Read and enjoy, and while you're at it, learn a few things. It will stay on my book shelf for a long time. James Dalessandro, author/screenwriter, *Bohemian Heart*, 1906

I am mystified by some of the negative customer reviews of this book. Jill Nagle's anthology of essays across the sex worker theme did nothing short of smash every stereotype I had ever held about prostitutes, exotic dancers and other sex workers. These stereotypes have undoubtedly been created by the alternate over-glamorous and sub-realist portrayals from Hollywood. While any critically thinking reader will understand that Nagle doesn't cover the seedy underbelly of child prostitution and harmful sex services, what she shows is voluntary sex work on an equal par with any other skilled profession, though with a healthy dose of self-reflection, feminism and personal growth on the part of the workers themselves. I probably bought five additional copies to send to friends. It's an eye-opener.

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