Sexbook
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Sexbook is surprising. Pleasantly. From the [psychedelic?] cover and glancing at the illustrations, I first had the impression it involved a manual on sex positions and fetishes throughout history. However, it is an excellent review of history, art, literature, etc. from a sociological standpoint, specifically from the male/female (and other combinations thereof) standpoint, one of changing roles, inclinations, power within individual relationships, society-at-large, invading peoples/colonizers vs. victims/indigenous peoples, etc. The authors were well-prepared. Both authors majored in art history, Ms. Segarra further got a master's in feminist studies and a PhD in journalism. They provide an in-depth overview of sex through the ages, starting with antiquity in Europe and other parts of the world and then progressing by century, by decade or by year to the modern era. Early on, they draw on treatises, literature, particularly Greek, Roman, Egyptian and Asian. The book delves into what it meant to be female in a patriarchal society. It also delves into homosexuality in the Greek era, with the positions of dominance and subservience (social and sexual) between the players.

Procreation as a result of sex is focused on from the Christian era as the sole objective of sex, the role/responsibility of women in raising children thereby preventing them from entering the job market, the role of religion with regard to homosexuality and lesbianism.

Particularly eye-opening is all of the long-term consequences, reverberations of the periods of slavery and colonization from the standpoint of the authors chronicling the roles of the violators and the victims at the sexual level. All of which repercussions are little discussed in general history books. Violence and rape on the part of the white male slave-owners, colonizers the consequences of which are now part of our daily life.

And there are instances of humor on the part of the authors. At one point, in the section on masturbation, Rousseau is to have said that he learned to masturbate from a "moor bandit in Turin", and the authors write "like, really Rousseau?"; and the cult of the human [Aryan] white-male body during Nazism and the comment there is "we all know where this ended up…"

The book is a survey of sex by continent, by sexual identity, homosexuality, heterosexuality, lesbianism, the history of trans and cross-dressers, all on a broad basis, the resulting effects of society, politics and religion. It also focuses on trends, groups and individuals who had a local or wide-ranging effect on sexual identity, power balance, and scientific (psychological) interpretation of sexuality, satisfaction and procreation.

Events in history (the Spanish Inquisition, the Colonization of the Americas, Africa, the Renaissance, etc., etc.) are interpreted as to the causes, reasons, consequences and repercussions. All of these

events pay particular attention to the role, position, power or lack thereof of females, females vis-à-vis males of power, males of subservience, females of power, females of subservience; there are individual or group movements that attempt to change the balance of power (women's vote, sexual emancipation, women in the work force, etc.).

Marketability and broad interest of the book. While there are a number of histories and illustrated histories of sexuality (Michel Foucault, Sander Gilman) I think this one is unique due to its focus on female/male and the quest for equality throughout history and all of the forces at play. Interesting example of Joan of Arc, whom I first read about in an illustrated comic book. That book however didn't go into the court records of her ultimately being burned because of cross-dressing, and not being 'feminine' enough in the minds of her judges. I do believe that the book would gain broader readership with a change of title/subtitle and more emphasis on the history part, history of the sexes. And maybe more subdued cover, also with a focus on history of the sexes.