



Lets Talk about Sex: Histories of Sexuality in Australia from Federation to the Pill

Lisa Featherstone

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From the start of the new Australian nation in 1901, to the use of the female contraceptive pill in 1961, Let s Talk About Sex explores the ways sexuality has been constructed, understood and experienced in Australia. Far from being something hidden and private, this work brings sexuality out into the open, and explains why sex is of social, cultural, political and economic importance. Let s Talk About Sex is an inclusive history, surveying multiple and interwoven forms of sexuality, desire, pleasure, regulation and resistance. It begins with the long Victorian period: the hidden desires of women and the 'hydraulic' sexual needs of men, both in the cities and on the frontier. It moves across the decades, considering heterosexuality, homosexuality, lesbians and nascent ideas about queer and sexual difference. Lisa Featherstone highlights the tensions of the ages: venereal disease, homophobia, birth control, rape and child sexual assault. She analyses the ways non-normative sexuality was constructed as evil and perverse, but also how men and women responded to this pathologising of their desires. Let s Talk About Sex provides a fascinating account of sex, gender, age and race, across the formative years of Australian society.

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