



Technologies of Sexiness: Sex, Identity, and Consumer Culture (Sexuality, Identity, and Society)

By Adrienne Evans, Sarah Riley

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Key cultural shifts have enabled a "new sexualization" of women. Neoliberal, consumerist, and postfeminist media culture have shaped ways of understanding female sexuality, embodied by the figure of the choosing, empowered, entrepreneurial consumer citizen-woman, whose economic capital determines feminine success (and failure). Informed by older constructs of privilege such as class, sexuality, race and (dis)ability, this version of sexiness also constrains by folding contemporary femininity back into previous panics about youth, excess, "bad" consumption, and appropriate feminine behavior

In *Technologies of Sexiness*, Adrienne Evans and Sarah Riley identify how current understandings of sexiness in public life and academic discourse have produced a "doubled stagnation," cycling around old debates without forward momentum. Developing a theoretical and methodological framework, they expand on the notion of a "technology of sexiness." They ask what happens and what is lost when people make sense of themselves within the complexities and contradictions of consumer-oriented constructs of sexiness. How do these discourses come to "transform the self"?

This book provides a framework for understanding how women make sense of their sexual identities in the context of a feminization of sexual consumerism. The authors analyze material collected with two groups of women: the "pleasure pursuers" and "functioning feminists," who broadly occupy positions across the pre- and post-Thatcher eras, and the changes brought about by the feminist movement. As one of the first book-length empirical studies to explore age-related femininities in the context of what "sexiness" means today, the authors develop a series of insights into various "technologies of the self" through analyses of space, nostalgia, and claims to authentic sexiness.



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Editorial Review

Review

"*Technologies of Sexiness* makes a very welcome and productive contribution to work in this area. There is so much repetition and 'stuckness' in contemporary academic writing about gender -- this was an absolute delight to read for its rejection of that and its determination to do something different." --Feona Attwood, Professor of Cultural Studies, Communication & Media, Middlesex University London

"*Technologies of Sexiness* locates the contemporary preoccupation with female sexual confidence and desirability within the growing dominance of consumerism, postfeminism, and neoliberalism. Evans and Riley have written an engaging and accessible book that will be essential reading for students interested in transformations of intimacy, changing gender relations, and debates about the sexualization of culture." --Rosalind Gill, Professor of Social and Cultural Analysis, School of Arts and Social Sciences, City University London

"This book offers an illuminating blend of social psychology, media studies and gender and sexuality theories to develop the innovative conceptual lens of technologies of feminine sexiness. Through detailed analysis of both contemporary postfeminist, sexualised media contexts and women's experiences, it demonstrates the psychosocial, performative play of a heterosexualized, otherizing gaze amongst women. This gives us a much needed insight into the psychology of new femininities through rich empirical research accounts, which are often missing from the abstract, theoretical or solely textual evocations of postfeminist media cultures. This book is a must-read for anyone interested in contemporary debates on postfeminism, femininity, heterosexuality and subjectivity." --Jessica Ringrose, Professor, Sociology of Gender and Education Institute of Education, University of London

"*Technologies of Sexiness: Sex, Identity, and Consumer Culture* offers two pieces to understanding women's sexuality in British (and by extension, Western) consumer cultures. First, Evans and Riley offer a brilliant analysis of how neoliberalism, postfeminism, and consumerism come together in young women's self-sexualization. The linkages of feminist thinking to neoliberalism have begun in other recent research (Fitz, Zucker, & Bay-Cheng, 2012), and the addition of consumerism is quite illuminating and worthy of the attention of feminist scholars. Second, they offer an intriguing qualitative analysis of two groups of women's thinking that [...] is worth researchers' attention and future work." --Janice D. Yoder, *PsycCRITIQUES*

About the Author

Adrienne Evans is a Senior Lecturer in Media at Coventry University. Her main research interest is in

exploring women's contemporary sexual identities. Her current work continues in contemporary gender relations and the use of creative methods in research and teaching. She has published this work in the *European Journal of Women's Studies*, *Journal of Gender Studies*, *Men and Masculinities*, *Teaching in Higher Education*, and *Feminism and Psychology*.

Sarah Riley is a Senior Lecturer in the Psychology Department at University College Wales, Aberystwyth. Her research takes a social constructionist approach to explore issues of identity in relation to gender, embodiment and youth culture. She has published widely in journals including *Feminism and Psychology*, *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *Sociology* and *Journal of Youth Studies*. She co-edited *Critical Bodies: Representations, Identities and Practices of Weight and Body Management* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), and *Doing a Qualitative Research Project* (Sage, 2011).

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