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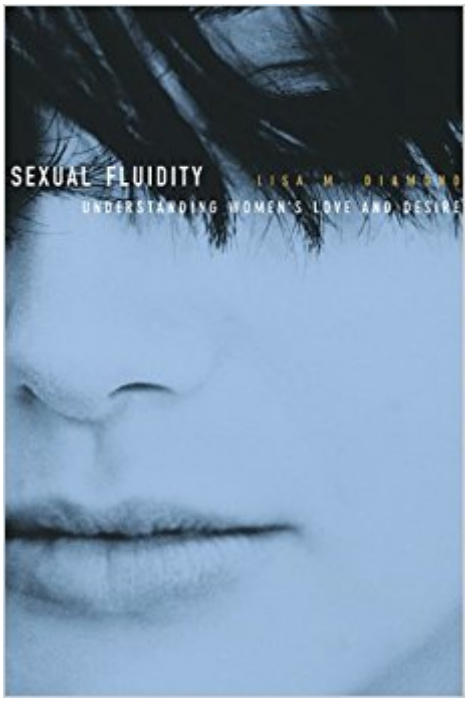
Sexual Fluidity: Understanding Women's Love And Desire



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Synopsis

Is love â œblindâ • when it comes to gender? For women, it just might be. This unsettling and original book offers a radical new understanding of the context-dependent nature of female sexuality. Lisa M. Diamond argues that for some women, love and desire are not rigidly heterosexual or homosexual but fluid, changing as women move through the stages of life, various social groups, and, most important, different love relationships. This perspective clashes with traditional views of sexual orientation as a stable and fixed trait. But that view is based on research conducted almost entirely on men. Diamond is the first to study a large group of women over time. She has tracked one hundred women for more than ten years as they have emerged from adolescence into adulthood. She summarizes their experiences and reviews research ranging from the psychology of love to the biology of sex differences. Sexual Fluidity offers moving first-person accounts of women falling in and out of love with men or women at different times in their lives. For some, gender becomes irrelevant: â œI fall in love with the person, not the gender,â • say some respondents. Sexual Fluidity offers a new understanding of womenâ ™s sexualityâ •and of the central importance of love.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Starting in the mid-1990s, Diamond, a professor of Psychology and Gender Studies at the University of Utah, conducted a longitudinal study that tracked sexual attitudes among a cohort of non-heterosexual identified women from their late teens into their early thirties. From this work Diamond concluded that while a model of sexual orientation in which a person is unswervingly

straight or gay may be appropriate for men, it is too rigid for women. Over the course of a few years, a typical woman in Diamond's study might move from being attracted to other women to being attracted to men, or vice versa, with the nature of the attraction dependent on an individual's circumstances and partner in ways that often rendered simple straight/lesiban/bisexual categorizations too coarse to be informative. This fluidity is not a matter of dilettantish sexual experimentation or repressed lesbianism in the face of homophobia. (Nor, contrary to the wishes of religious traditionalists, does it mean that sexuality is a conscious lifestyle choice that can be reset by bullying therapy.) Instead, Diamond contends, it is a natural course of many women's development which has been overlooked by both the general public and researchers into human sexuality."Sexual Fluidity" mixes a discussion of Diamond's statistical results and anecdotes about the women she studied, along with theoretical taxonomies of female attraction styles and speculation on why women would be more fluid than men. It is academically rigorous but still pitched at a lay audience. It's a credit to her work that you come away wishing that Diamond could broaden her research to older women, straight-identified women, and men. The only shortcoming is that the book only presents quantitative data in prose, which can be difficult to follow.

Dr. Lisa Diamond has a fairly simple thesis: male homosexuality is different from female homosexuality. In short, homosexual males are born not made and the opposite is true for lesbians. There is evidence to support this. The study Diamond refers to is the Blanchard et. al. "fraternal birth order effect" studies which reported that the likelihood of male homosexuality increases when a woman gives birth to successive males. No similar correlation can be found for lesbians.If lesbians are not formed at birth then it seems likely that they become so later in life. But, as Diamond points out, what often gets a lot of press are the lesbians who become straight later in life: Anne Heche, Holly Near. Diamond has other anecdotal evidence that comes from one rather non-random sample: the students in a women's studies class. Diamond conducted interviews with many women from this class who answered her request to talk with women who are gay or bisexual or any other alternative status.Diamond does not consider the evolutionary basis of homosexuality until page 223. Even the few scant paragraphs spent on evolution sound off base. Terry Coyne's book "Why Evolution is True" says that evolution is only interested in characteristics that improve the ability to survive and to spread one's genes. So the evolutionary case for homosexuality must improve a group's ability to survive. That case can be made in a better fashion. Obviously, if there are too many males the often tragic competition for females can be reduced if some of the males are matching up themselves. Considering that males are preferentially conceived (Y sperm can swim faster than X sperm) the

possibility of too many males is a real possibility.

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