

**Dr. Shere Hite**

## **FEMINIST THEORY**

Most people probably know me as the author/researcher of a series of famous books



known as 'The Hite Reports', the first being on the subject of female sexuality. It is the first book to state unequivocally that based on my rather extensive research most women orgasm regularly and rather easily from clitoral stimulation, though not usually by a partner via coitus -- and that this is not a 'dysfunction' or a 'problem', nor is it a sign that women should change. It is not women who have a 'problem' and should change, but the definition of sex that should change. In other words, traditional sex discriminates against women. [This book was published as a 'bestseller' in 19 languages and is still in print in many parts of the world.]

To fill you in on my more recent labors, during 2000-2001 I published a book called *Sex and Business: Ethics at Work* (Financial Times - Pearson Education) that has now come out in 35 countries (18 languages). It includes topics like sexual harassment, relationships between women at work, the glass ceiling, new types of relationships between women and men at work, interviews with ten of the world's top c.e.o.'s who discuss with me why there are no women on their boards of directors, etc. This book also contains some of my more recent theories that seem to break ground on these issues.

This book just came out in Japanese. I was in Japan (where I also teach, I have a chair in gender and culture in the department of international relations, Nihon University). While there, I met with two of the five women members of the Diet (parliament), who sponsored the new 'equality law' passed in 1999. In short, I travel to many countries in the course of my work and try to remain well-informed, as well as playing an activist part in international feminism. In other countries I remain involved by writing regularly in high-profile publications; for example, I write a weekly full-page column in the major newspaper in Spain, and also one in Italy. I write a page every month in Germany, and sporadically elsewhere. I live a large part of the time in Paris (since 1989) and know many of the participants in the debate over 'parite', which as you know was passed last year (as Anselma dell'Olio mentions); I have been on French television many times (yes I speak French), and so on.

I am considered a global activist, very active in many places, and would like to hear from others who are similarly involved. I am a valuable resource for international news about women's rights, as well as for cutting-edge theory on sexual and other matters.

I had to leave the U.S. after some of the media frightened publishers off publishing me in the U.S. in the late eighties. At that time (1987), a group of famous feminist writers

(who I consider my best friends) including Barbara Seaman, Gloria Steinem, Phyllis Chesler, Andrea Dworkin, Ti-Grace Atkinson and Ruby Rohrlich among others defended me with a press conference, but -- though Liz Smith reported on the conference, no other media did, preferring instead to call me a 'charlatan' (especially the Washington Post). Susan Faludi defended me against this charge in her brilliant book Backlash. Since that time, I have been living in Europe. Why did all this happen? I often wonder if the attack on me and my work came at the end of the eighties (when I published the third Hite Report; Knopf 1987, Women and Love) because it was a time of rising 'fundamentalist' right-wing activism against feminism or because the subject of the book (have women been brainwashed to serve men via the ideology of 'love', or is 'love' real -- and if so, what kinds of love do women say make them happy?) was too controversial for some. Of course, the media didn't discuss the idea of a re-evaluation of love by women, it said instead that my 'research methodology' was 'bad'. (In fact, I am quite proud of my research methods, my conclusions have stood the test of time, and many including Dale Spender and Barbara Ehrenreich have praised my research methods.)

Since moving to Europe I have published a fourth Hite Report (that was featured on the cover of MS. Magazine in 1995): The Hite Report on the Family, as well as four additional books (see below). I have never ceased being active in feminist causes around the world, indeed I am more active than I ever was. I do miss the closer contact I had with feminist friends when I lived in New York, but living internationally has its rewards too.

Here is a list of my books published to date:

- Sex and Business: Ethics at Work (Financial Times - Pearson 2000)
- The Hite Report on Hite: Voice of a Daughter in Exile (Arcadia Books 2000)
- Women with Women: Is There a Hidden Taboo on Public Alliances? (not published in English; published in ten languages, for example Mujeres y Mujeres, El Pais, Spain)
- The Hite Report on the Family (Bloomsbury 1995)
- Women as Revolutionary Agents of Change (U. of Wisconsin Press, 1996)
- Women and Love: A Cultural Revolution in Progress (Knopf, 1987)
- The Hite Report on Male Sexuality (Knopf, 1981)
- The Hite Report: A Nationwide Study of Female Sexuality (MacMillan 1976)
- Almost all of these books are published in many international editions (French, German, Italian, Japanese, Chinese, Spanish and many other languages; see my website for listing).