



The Invention of Pornography, 1500-1800: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity

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In America today the intense and controversial debate over the censorship of pornography continues to call into question the values of a modern, democratic culture. This ground-breaking collection of ten critical essays traces the history and various uses of pornography in early modern Europe, offering the historical perspective crucial to understanding current issues of artistic censorship.

The essays, by historians and literary theorists, examine how pornography emerged between 1500 and 1800 as a literary practice and a category of knowledge intimately linked to the formative moments of Western modernity and the democratization of culture. They reveal that the first modern writers and engravers of pornography were part of the *demimonde* of heretics, freethinkers, and libertines who constituted the dark underside of the Renaissance, the Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment, and the French Revolution. From the beginning, early modern European pornography used the shock of sex to test the boundaries and regulation of decent and obscene behavior and expression in the public and private spheres, criticizing and even subverting religious and political authorities as well social and sexual norms.

Contents: Introduction, *Lynn Hunt*. Humanism, Politics, and Pornography in Renaissance Italy, *Paula Findlen*. The Politics of Pornography: L'Ecole des filles, *Joan Dejean*. Sometimes a Sceptre is only a Sceptre: Pornography and Politics in Restoration England, *Rachel Weil*. The Materialist World of Pornography, *Margaret C. Jacob*. Truth and the Obscene Word in Eighteenth-Century French Pornography, *Lucienne Frappier-Mazur*. The Pornographic Whore: Prostitution in French Pornography from Margot to Juliette, *Kathryn Norberg*. Erotic Fantasy and the Libertine Dispensation in Eighteenth-Century England, *Randolph Trumbach*. Politics and Pornography in the Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Dutch Republic, *Wijnand W. Mijnhardt*. Pornography and the French Revolution, *Lynn Hunt*.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

This book, whose contents were presented at a conference at the University of Pennsylvania in 1991, provides insight into social and political history not often examined by the historian. The reader is offered nine essays, an introduction, an extensive bibliography, and notes dealing with the source materials. The essays, which trace the evolution of pornography from 1500 to 1800--that is, from its infancy through the French Revolution--reinforce the thesis that pornography evolved as a political tool. The book is replete with drawings representing the originals found in the press of the period under discussion and supporting the narratives. The work is too specialized for general library collections but nonetheless serves a valuable service for scholars.

- *Arthur K. Steinberg, Livingstone Coll., Salisbury, N.C.*

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Review

Fascinating...a fiercely intelligent and provocative collection that provides new insights into both the origins of modern pornography and the dynamics of cultural modernity.

(**Michiko Kakutani** *New York Times*)

From the Back Cover

In this groundbreaking collection of essays, historians and literary theorists examine how, between 1500 and 1800, pornography emerged as a literary practice and a category of knowledge intimately linked to the formative moments of Western modernity and the democratization of culture. The first modern writers and engravers of pornography were part of the demimonde of heretics, freethinkers and libertines who constituted the dark underside of the Renaissance, the Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. From the start, early modern European pornography used the shock of sex to test the boundaries and regulation of obscene behavior and expression in the public and private sphere. As such, pornography criticized and even subverted political authorities as well as social and sexual relations.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Doris Anderson:

Reading a reserve tends to be new life style within this era globalization. With examining you can get a lot of information that will give you benefit in your life. Using book everyone in this world could share their idea. Guides can also inspire a lot of people. Many author can inspire their very own reader with their story or their experience. Not only the storyplot that share in the books. But also they write about the data about something that you need illustration. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach your kids, there are many kinds of book which exist now. The authors these days always try to improve their skill in writing, they also doing some study before they write to their book. One of them is this The Invention of Pornography, 1500-1800: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity.

Curtis Wilson:

People live in this new day time of lifestyle always make an effort to and must have the spare time or they will get great deal of stress from both lifestyle and work. So , whenever we ask do people have time, we will say absolutely indeed. People is human not just a robot. Then we inquire again, what kind of activity have you got when the spare time coming to you of course your answer will probably unlimited right. Then do you ever try this one, reading guides. It can be your alternative within spending your spare time, the book you have read is The Invention of Pornography, 1500-1800: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity.

Dawn Dustin:

Reading can called thoughts hangout, why? Because if you find yourself reading a book specially book entitled The Invention of Pornography, 1500-1800: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity your head will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in each and every aspect that maybe not known for but surely will end up your mind friends. Imaging every single word written in a book then become one contact form conclusion and explanation that maybe you never get before. The The Invention of Pornography, 1500-1800: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity giving you yet another experience more than blown away your head but also giving you useful info for your better life on this era. So now let us teach you the relaxing pattern the following is your body and mind will likely be pleased when you are finished looking at it, like winning a casino game. Do you want to try this extraordinary spending spare time activity?

Joseph Langley:

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