More than Pleasure: The Pornographic Novel in Eighteenth-Century France

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Abstract:

Despite strong attempts at censorship, the volume of literary pornography produced in France hugely expanded during the course of the eighteenth century. As one of the most popular literary genres, authors such as Pierre Choderlos de Laclos, Restif de la Bretonne, and the Marquis de Sade were able to sell thousands of copies and publish multiple editions of their works.

Pornographic novels were often layered with political or theological criticisms, demonstrating that the authors were concerned with more than just producing smut. The criticisms present in the pornography of the eighteenth century differentiate it from modern pornography; however, those political and theological criticisms are gone by the nineteenth century because of changes in accepted morality, which changed the standards of censorship and obscenity and targeted pornography anew. This work will examine the development of pornography and the literary characteristics of pornographic novels in eighteenth-century France, as well as the publication, sales, and censorship thereof.

Introduction

Moral villains or champions of vice, the authors of erotic literature throughout history have generally been publicly condemned and privately loved, none more so than those of eighteenth-century France. While the Marquis de Sade is one of the most thoroughly researched and well known historical figures from France, his works are the last in a trend of pornographic novels that constitute more than pornography by today's standards. Philosophic and moral reasoning existed in the pornographic novels of the eighteenth century, including commentary on a variety of topics such as gender, religion, and the soul. The accessibility of new journals and newspapers meant that the people reading pornography were up to date on the important issues of their time, making them uniquely capable of discerning the philosophies present in pornography.¹ The inclusion of philosophic arguments in erotic novels spread the topics of the enlightenment to readers who normally may not have been exposed to the discourse of the philosophes. I will use Kathryn Norberg's definition of pornography as that which is "fictional, sexually explicit, and contemptuous of sexual taboos" in addition to only examining novels, in order to set the range for this paper because France experienced an explosion in the publication of literature containing sexual references, yet not all of the publications constitute pornography.² Medical and moral tracts could contain sexual references but because they did not intend to provide any pleasure, they cannot be considered pornography. Also, political publications and prints often used sexuality to add shock value to their arguments, but because their intent is non-pornographic they cannot be considered pornography in the context of this study.

The rise of erotic literature was inherently tied to that of the novel, necessitating a discussion of the rise of the novel and how it contributed to the development and reception of pornography. I will then detail the emergence of pornography as an independent genre;

particularly, why it was different from other literature in the eighteenth century as well as what differentiates it from pornography today. Next, I will describe the role of narration in erotic literature as well as examples of different narrator types from the texts themselves. The primary texts used in this paper are *Le Paysan pervers* by Restif de la Bretonne, *Justine* and *Juliette* by the Marquis de Sade, *Thérèse Philosophe* by the Marquis d'Argens, *Les Bijoux Indiscrets* by Denis Diderot, and *Le Sofa* by Crébillon fils. Following the narrator types, I will discuss the philosophic arguments present in the erotic novels, including materialism, pleasure, and anticlericalism. Lastly, I will examine the effects of censorship on the publication and sales of erotic literature. This paper seeks to provide an account of the development, literary features, and distribution of pornography in eighteenth-century France in support of the claim that it was more than a source of pleasure.

Emergence of the Pornographic Novel

The influx of pornography during the eighteenth century occurred just after the development of the novel, and the majority of pornographic texts are written in novel form. Strong association with women, lack of a classical pedigree, and the belief that novels were more true than other genres of fiction combined to increase the subversive powers that the novel was thought to possess.³ Debate over the novel raged throughout the eighteenth century, particularly concerning female readers. It was thought by much of society, including the learned, that reading novels induced an almost pathological emotion, as well as physical symptoms like shortness of breath, languor, insomnia, or nervous agitation, which were all condemned by the medical community.⁴ The prevailing attitude of the eighteenth century held that women were naturally weaker than men, with softer brains which made them more susceptible to the effects of reading.⁵ The novel also presented challenges to the scientific belief in the senses because

reading was able to stimulate real feelings even though the novels themselves were fictional. It was also widely believed during the eighteenth century that the novel had the ability to feminize its readers, thus reducing the moral fiber of a society. Fears surrounding the novel, particularly the erotic novel, and the damaging effects that the reading of novels were believed to have on readers were part of the motivation for the shift to moral censorship in literature at the close of the eighteenth century.⁶

In spite of these fears, the novel swiftly became one of the most popular literary genres. Works that are central to the history of pornography such as *L'Ecole des Filles* (1655), *L'Académie des Dames* (1680), and *Venus dans le Cloître* (1682) were also important to the development of the novel as a literary genre.⁷ As it became an established form of literature, the novel began to divide into subgenres like narratives, epistolary novels, and memoirs. Eighteenth-century novels attained previously unheard of sales for published materials and authors of best sellers became celebrities. The ability of novels to provoke emotion and create bonds between reader and character satisfied the enlightenment desire for believability more so than any other genre, and readers felt as if they genuinely knew the characters and authors of their favorite texts.⁸ Authors and publishers capitalized on the popularity of the novel by producing sequels and reprints or new editions of previous works. Record sales generated by novels made the industry appear more lucrative, and in-demand authors could make a fortune selling their works. The rise of the novel enabled many authors to escape the patronage system and support themselves through their writing and in the process legitimizing novel-writing as a viable writing career. Circulating libraries and book rentals also developed during this period, a further testament to the popularity of novels as well as the trend toward increased literacy.⁹

Despite immense popularity, a distinct category or standardized name attributed exclusively to erotic works of literature had not yet developed during the eighteenth century. Instead they often travelled alongside other censored publications under the umbrella term “*livres philosophiques*.”¹⁰ The word “pornographe” first appeared the 1769 publication, *Le Pornographe* by Restif de la Bretonne, a non-pornographic text that advocates a state-run system of legal prostitution. The word pornography did not exist as a term for erotic literature until the nineteenth century, and did not appear in the *Oxford English Dictionary* until 1857.¹¹ The modern definition of pornography as “The explicit description or exhibition of sexual subjects or activity in literature, painting, films, etc., in a manner intended to stimulate erotic rather than aesthetic feeling” fails to provide an accurate definition of erotic literature as it exist in the eighteenth century because it does not account for the philosophic aspects contained within such novels.¹² Authors used their pornographic novels as a tool for the examination of theological and philosophic ideas, which gave them a purpose beyond the stimulation of erotic feeling, as well as denoting the possible philosophic standings of the authors of the period. The eighteenth-century pornographer almost constitutes an erotic *philosophe* because the criticisms and advice present in pornography concerned many of the same topics found in the Enlightenment.

Pornography slowly emerged as an individual literary genre as authors, readers, and censorship authorities continuously interacted with each other to shape the standards of decency and obscenity.¹³ Government and religious authorities actively policed the book industry because of fears of the subversive power of literature as it grew more accessible. The readers’ desire to procure erotic literature, despite the efforts of religious and political authorities at censorship, denotes the popularity of the genre and explains the development of an intricate underground book trade. Prohibition may have heightened readers’ desire for pornographic books, but

prohibition alone cannot account for the sheer popularity of some erotic novels.¹⁴ For example, *Histoire de Dom Bougre, Portier des Chartreux* (1741) went through at least nineteen editions between 1745 and 1789.¹⁵ The increasing popularity of erotic literature caused more authors to produce it, despite the possibility of fines or imprisonment, in effect commercializing the industry. Pornography, as we understand it today, did not come into being until the nineteenth century when the texts no longer contained more than erotic stimulation, and industrialization transformed the genre from an art into a mass-produced business.¹⁶

One of the most influential authors in the development of pornography was Pietro Aretino, a sixteenth-century Italian writer. His *Ragionamenti* (1534-36) developed the use of dialogues between an experienced and inexperienced woman, a form that was still used more than two centuries later in *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir* (1795) by the Marquis de Sade.¹⁷ Aretino also composed the *Sonetti Lussuriosi*, a set of sixteen sonnets to accompany a series of erotic engravings which described lovemaking positions. The engravings, as well as their imitators, soon became known as “Aretino’s postures.” Aretino is seen as the father of modern pornography because his writings contain the first depictions of sexual activity combined with dialogue between women, discussion of prostitutes, and a challenge to moral conventions.¹⁸ Another influential work on the development of French pornography was the English novel *Fanny Hill, Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1748), or *La Fille de Joie*, by John Cleland, which was the first prostitute confessional.¹⁹ The prostitute confessional form garnered immediate success, inspiring imitations such as *Margot la Ravadeuse*, *La Cauchoise*, and *Juliette* throughout the rest of the eighteenth century.

Literary Features

Pornographic literature provided a sanctuary for pleasure as well as a means of achieving it. The intimate nature of reading combined with sexually charged content made the pornographic novel an ideal source of private pleasure. The act of reading pornography was capable of stimulating arousal despite the fact that the stimulus was a work of fiction. The physical arousal stimulated by erotic literature constitutes a transgression of literature into the real world, distinguishing pornography as the only genre capable of altering the physical reality of a reader.²⁰ The reader is able to simultaneously experience the novel through the eyes of the narrator, and as a voyeur, increasing the amount of pleasure derived from an erotic novel. Also, pornographic literature labeled sexuality and pleasure as a positive, necessary good, which presented an immediate challenge to contemporary notions of acceptability and morality.²¹ The love of pleasure found in erotic novels heavily contributed to the censorship of pornography, particularly as morality became the censor's focus at the end of the eighteenth century.

Alongside the credo of pleasure, erotic literature contained philosophic discourse, particularly that of materialism. Materialism formed the philosophical core of much eighteenth-century pornography because it was used to describe, support, and spread libertine ethics. Natural philosophers attempted to Christianize materialist doctrines rather than taking the arguments to their extremes because of pious fears over how far new science would go.²² Pornographers seized the mechanization of nature and the complete sufficiency of bodies in motion presented by natural philosophers and used logic to legitimize the assertions made against conventional society. Materialism united the body and spirit, rendering the clergy useless and paving the way for anticlericalism and the use of sex as a religious experience within pornography. Modern sources such as Hobbes and Descartes influenced the development of the concept of people as animate bodies in motion, driven by the search for pleasure.²³ The idea of

man as driven by the search for pleasure legitimized the sheer quantity of sexual encounters that took place within a single text.

Anticlericalism was another prominent topic in pornographic literature, as sodomite priests and whorish nuns appeared in the majority of erotic novels from the eighteenth century, such as *Histoire de Dom Bougre* (1741), *La Religieuse*, and *Le Catéchisme Libertine* (1791). However, erotic novels typically affirmed the social necessity of religion, as the authors of these novels only took issue with the rampant corruption within the church.²⁴ For example, in *Thérèse Philosophe*, a priest called Abbé T deconstructs the Catholic doctrine as nothing more than priestcraft. Despite philosophic railing against religion, and Catholicism in particular, Abbé T does defend the social functions that religion fulfils. Abbé T makes use of Voltaire's argument that only the elite needed to know the anti-Christian truth because if the masses knew it, they would become uncontrollable.²⁵

The majority of pornographic novels produced during the eighteenth century were narratives, allowing readers to almost live the story with the characters. The narrative form added a voyeuristic element to pornography, even if the voyeurism only existed in the reader's imagination.²⁶ Narratives also allowed the reader to observe the most intimate events of the characters, as an outsider, without the characters realizing it, allowing the reader to avoid feeling implicated in the story. The reader alone cannot be seen, allowing him or her to derive pleasure from pornography without feeling guilt or shame.²⁷ The physical realization of the erotic stimulation created by pornographic novels made them feel more powerful to readers, and consequently more dangerous than other genres of fiction. The narrators of erotic literature tended to be young because of an increased interest in adolescence during the Enlightenment, particularly after Rousseau began publishing his works. Seventeen was seen as the ideal age

because it was the age when one discovered pleasure and entered the adult world during the eighteenth century. However, vast differences in the ages of protagonists still occurred. For example in *Justine* by the Marquis de Sade, Justine is only twelve at the beginning of her story, and in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* by Choderlos de Laclos, the Comte de Gercourt is already thirty-six.²⁸ Narrators could also be male or female, but female narrators gained more popularity during the course of the eighteenth century as a result of the whore confessional novel.²⁹ Pornographers used female narrators to increase the power of their works because the female voice was thought to be naturally more erotic than that of a male. Also, blending philosophy and femininity refuted the idea that each gender possessed different mental capabilities. The use of female narrators shows a respect and desire for female sexuality and a lack of the gender bias already present in eighteenth century sexual politics.³⁰

This is not to imply that all gender differences were denied by pornographers; anatomical differences are celebrated by the amount of description male and female anatomy received. Praise was lavished equally on the anatomy of each sex, implying the belief that both sexes are necessary to achieve perfect satisfaction.³¹ However, anatomical lines could be blurred either by the introduction of sexual toys or the qualities of the sexual partners. The use of dildos or other equipment allowed the female to assume the dominant or masculine role because she was in charge of penetration. Descriptions of male characters as having white skin and beautiful buttocks also blur gender lines because the aforementioned traits are often attributed to females. Yet anatomical differences do not hinder either participant from achieving satisfaction in the same manner; reaching delirious orgasm followed by discharge is both male and female.³²

The prostitute was one of the most common characters in pornography and very often represents the heroine of the novel. Able to be almost anything, the prostitute's versatility is

exemplified by the two very different roles she came to fulfill, the virtuous courtesan and the libertine whore.³³ The virtuous courtesan was by far the least common of the two, idealized as fundamentally good because she has been tricked or forced into a life of debauchery, rather than willingly pursuing a life of vice. Retaining her virtue only because she did not choose vice, the virtuous courtesan is still subject to a miserable existence, often including disease and poverty.³⁴ Her main champion was Restif de la Bretonne, although other authors portrayed virtuous courtesans in their works as well. The prostitutes in Bretonne's works are all innocent victims who have been forced into the trade. An extreme example of the idea that femininity and innocence should characterize all women, Zéphire of *Le Paysan perversi* (1776) was seduced and abandoned in Paris, then forced into prostitution, and yet she managed to stay childlike and good. Although she was not corrupted by her lifestyle, Zéphire received further poor treatment instead of a reward. Also by Bretonne, *Le Palais Royal* (1790) is filled with prostitutes who have retained their virginity despite working in the Palais-Royal, a well-known sex market. Bretonne subscribed to the belief that women were asexual, modest, and pure, and that no woman would willingly choose prostitution. It follows that, according to Bretonne, all prostitutes were victims. The concept of the virtuous courtesan reinforces the notion that all women would remain virtuous in any setting as long as they had not chosen their fates.³⁵ Novels involving virtuous courtesans ended tragically for the prostitute, typically beginning with illness and culminating in a painful death.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, the libertine whore took center stage as an unapologetic, adventurous woman who also happened to be a prostitute. *Margot la Ravdeuse*, *Mademoiselle Javotte*, *La Sainte Nitouche*, *La Cauchoise*, and many other eighteenth-century texts featured a libertine whore as the female protagonist. Libertine whores were not victims in

any way; they chose lives of vice and relish the sexual experiences they gain as prostitutes. Any physical pain experienced by the libertine whores, such as the loss of their “second virginities,” did not cause lasting suffering, but instead created a taste for more varied pleasures.³⁶ Being oversexed is the only malady that concerns the libertine whore, although she takes pleasure in that as well. For instance, in *Margot la Ravadeuse*, at Madame Florence’s bordello, Margot services thirty men in the space of two hours. Margot then resolves to leave the bordello out of the fear of another incident, yet she also confesses to enjoying the assault.³⁷ These whores also tended to be well-read and well-mannered, making them more appealing to readers and more believable in discussions of philosophy. Despite starting out in the working class, the libertine whore typically transforms into a wealthy, kept woman as a result of her wellborn clients such as clergymen and financiers.³⁸ For libertine whores, it was understood that virginity would bring poverty, while libertinage would bring prosperity. The libertine whore is ultimately a refutation of the new ideas of womanhood and modesty, instead acting as a paragon of pleasure, libertinage, and materialism.³⁹

Justine, ou les Malheurs de la Vertu and *Juliette, ou les Prospérités de la Vice* by the Marquis de Sade emphasize the differences between the virtuous courtesan and the libertine whore. In *Justine*, a young woman, referred to as Thérèse, recounts the series of misfortunes that have befallen her as she is on her way to punishment and death. Despite remaining virtuous throughout her ordeals, Thérèse was pushed further into vice than many who willingly pursue it and she was also subject to far worse punishments, eventually culminating in her death. Sade uses the virtuous courtesan to support his anti-virtue philosophy because he sees the suffering of the virtuous courtesan as further support for the true propriety of vice. In *Juliette*, Sade writes Juliette as an amoral, libertine whore who achieves success and happiness through a life of vice.

The juxtaposition of Justine, a virtuous woman rewarded with despair and death, and Juliette, a wanton woman rewarded with pleasure and success, provide evidence for the Marquis de Sade's views on the idea of virtuous women. Sade's writings contain support for the idea of vice as a method of attaining success and increasing happiness within a society.⁴⁰

Prostitution was not the only role for female narrators in eighteenth century pornography. *Thérèse philosophe* by the Marquis d'Argens, is narrated by a woman; however, she is no prostitute. Thérèse possesses the title of philosophe, creating the image of woman standing for the Enlightenment.⁴¹ *Thérèse Philosophe* was published in 1748, around the same time as the first publications of the Enlightenment philosophes. *De L'Esprit des Lois* by Montesquieu, *L'Homme-machine* by La Mettrie, and *Les Moeurs* by Toussaint were all also published in 1748. *Thérèse Philosophe* is a part of both the development of enlightenment literature as well as the development of pornography because philosophy and sex were merged to create a true libertine text. Free living and free thinking were combined in the pages of *Thérèse Philosophe* in order to challenge religious doctrine as well as sexual mores.⁴² The structure of *Thérèse Philosophe* is similar to that of other classic pornographic texts in that it is essentially a series of orgies; however, in this novel, the orgies are linked together by metaphysical discussions, molding Thérèse into a perfect female philosophe.⁴³ The novel follows the course of Thérèse's sexual and philosophic education from her youth through the full development of her sexuality and philosophy. As a child, Thérèse discovers sexuality and philosophy through voyeurism when she observes Father Dirrag (a Catholic priest) and Mlle Eradice engage in "spiritual exercises" designed to free the spirit. Dirrag accompanied the exercises with a lecture in radical Cartesianism designed to support the tenet that everything was matter in motion, in addition to passing off copulation as a means to religious ecstasy.⁴⁴ Next, Thérèse perfects her masturbation

techniques and spies on others, learning about their techniques, as well as being introduced to the concept of pleasure as the highest good. Thérèse retained her virginity for the majority of the novel due to an intense fear of pregnancy; however, upon the loss of a wager with the Count, she engages in sexual intercourse with him. By withdrawing prior to ejaculation, the Count and Thérèse avoid pregnancy and are free to engage in continuous intercourse. *Coitus interruptus* is proven to be superior to masturbation. Copulation with the Count was her final lesson on the path to becoming a true philosopher.⁴⁵ In addition to championing pleasure, Thérèse *philosophe* also contains a defense of conventional values such as virginity and matrimony, as well as a reasonable view of religion that allowed for a supreme being through the arguments of Abbé T while he acts as Thérèse's confessor. Yet the normative arguments of the Abbé are essentially nullified when he departs in order to masturbate with his philosophic mistress.⁴⁶ The philosophic hedonism purported by *Thérèse Philosophe* draws on a variety of sources including Descartes, Hobbes, Malebranche, and Lucretius. The continuous reduction of reality to tiny particles capable of acting on the senses form the basis of a machine-like man driven by the uncontrollable drive to pleasure.⁴⁷ Throughout *Thérèse Philosophe*, all ideas are scrutinized according to reason, embedding the principles of the Enlightenment in an erotic novel.

Not all pornographic novels were narrated from the human perspective; some featured inhuman narrators. For example, *Les Bijoux Indiscrets* (1748) by Denis Diderot details thirty-one sexual encounters of an African sultan who possesses a ring with the ability to make female genitalia speak.⁴⁸ Despite the obscenity present in this work, Diderot examines many of the prominent philosophical questions of the eighteenth century including that of the soul and its location in the body. In the chapter titled "Métaphysique de Mirzoza," Diderot presents an alternative explanation of the location of the soul in the body by reducing people to the part of

the body that is the most important to them.⁴⁹ Through Mirzoza, he asserts that the soul of the dancer would be in the feet, just as the soul of the singer would be in the throat. Diderot's commentary on the nature and location of the soul in *Les Bijoux indiscrets* places one of the most fundamental debates of the enlightenment within reach of every day readers.⁵⁰ The inclusion of philosophy within pornographic novels spread the dissemination of new ideas beyond the realm of those directly involved in the Enlightenment. Another example of a novel without a female narrator is *Le Sofa* (1740) by Crébillon fils, which is narrated by the soul of an Indian Brahmin who was reincarnated as a sofa due to his licentious behavior. The novel recounts the adventures of the Brahmin as a sofa until his curse is broken by two lovers losing their virginity on him.⁵¹ Associations with intimacy and eroticism allow the sofa to act as the best witness to affairs that are normally kept private, increasing the voyeuristic appeal. The sofa-narrator can also only detail things experienced through the senses or learned through observation, a key argument in enlightenment philosophy.⁵²

Censorship and Sales

Prior to the revolution in 1789, France was ruled by the Bourbon dynasty under an absolute monarchy known as the Ancien Régime.⁵³ During this period, the government regulated most aspects of life, including the publication and sales of literature. The Book Trade Department and the police were responsible for supervising the book trade and censoring any book or other work of literature that was seen as a threat to the Church, the State, or conventional morality.⁵⁴ The magistrates of the book trade had the ability to approve or censor any work that an author tried to have legally published in France. If a book was deemed unfit for publication, it could be confiscated, burned, or returned to the author. Although burning a book was a legal option for the magistrates, it was rarely used in order to police the book trade without creating

more interest in the public. Even in cases where books were condemned to be burned, copies would usually be burned instead of the actual books because the authorities did not want to create any more of a scandal than necessary.⁵⁵ Impounding books and imprisoning or disbaring booksellers were the preferred methods of punishment. Authors could also be jailed for publishing their works, for instance Voltaire, Mirabeau, Diderot, and the Marquis de Sade spent time in the Chateau de Vincennes, and in the nineteenth century, the Marquis de Sade died in prison after being arrested on the orders of Napoleon I. Smugglers and peddlers caught with forbidden books could be branded and sentenced to life as a galley slave.⁵⁶

In the first half of the eighteenth century, council decrees and declarations increased the powers of the censors; however, after 1744 few new measures were enacted. The lack of new measures did not benefit pornographic literature; instead, it made the genre a more important target for the censors.⁵⁷ Before the rise of erotic literature, the primary concern of censorship authorities was policing socially and theologically subversive texts. As the eighteenth century came to a close, the focus shifted to works which were morally degrading, specifically erotic literature. The fact that much of the erotic literature published also contained social and religious criticisms made it appear more dangerous than any other genre that crossed the censor's desk. Pornographic works were treated much the same as any other censored work at the beginning of the eighteenth century because they were used as a vehicle for political, theological, and social criticism.⁵⁸ The perceived threat to the state and to the church that pornography posed in the eighteenth century was the original motive for censorship; however, as new ideas of morality and domesticity became prominent, pornography became a moral blight in need of eradication. By the late 1790s, the French police had a Morals Division with one of its duties being the discovery and confiscation of pornographic texts.⁵⁹

The censorship laws of the Ancien Régime led to the development of an extensive, underground literary network for the publication and distribution of forbidden books. Often referred to as “*livres philosophiques*,” or philosophical books, these texts were bought and sold under the table in order to avoid detection by the authorities.⁶⁰ Many works forbidden by the French government were published outside of France and then smuggled in. Book publishers and sellers would coordinate the smuggling operation to minimize risk due to the severity of the punishments associated with forbidden literature. The Dutch Republic was the favored publishing destination because the Dutch had less rigid publication standards than France.⁶¹ Book dealers would circulate catalogues of the books they were able to provide and retailers would order from catalogues. Typically, retailers would only order texts that they were positive that they would be able to sell, and many retailers would arrange book sales with customers prior to placing an order with a book dealer. Orders would generally include a number of different works, but only a few copies of each text would be requested in order to maximize variety and minimize the risk of being caught by the authorities.⁶² From retailers, customers were able to discretely purchase books, thus completing the final step of the underground book trade.

Conclusion

Throughout the course of the eighteenth century, pornography and philosophy were joined at the spine, the spine of the novels in which they were blended together to create a unique literary experience capable of more than the two genres were individually. Pure pornography, as we understand it today, did not come into being until the nineteenth century after philosophy was no longer present in pornographic literature. Shifts in accepted morality combined with the commercial appeal of pornography forced the philosophic out of erotic literature in favor of more licentious, intellectually-lacking novels designed to be sold for a profit rather than impart any

wisdom.⁶³ During their time, texts such as *Thérèse Philosophe*, *Dom Bougre*, *Les Bijoux Indiscrets*, and *Juliette* spread philosophy beyond the academic community, making it accessible to those of all backgrounds. The extreme censorship, which only increased in the eighteenth century, that erotic works were subjected to is further evidence of the power that pornography was believed to possess. It is odd to think of pornography as a philosophic genre when we imagine modern pornographic products, but for the people of the eighteenth century, there was much more than pleasure to be found in the pages of erotic novels.

Endnotes

- ¹ Robert Darnton, *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995), 93.
- Lucienne Frappier-Mazur, "Truth and the Obscene Word in Eighteenth-Century French Pornography," *The Invention of Pornography*, ed. by Lynn Hunt (New York: Zone Books, 1993), 160-1.
- ² Kathryn Norberg, "The Libertine Whore: Prostitution in French Pornography from Margot to Juliette," *The Invention of Pornography*, ed. Lynn Hunt (New York: Zone Books, 1993) 226-7.
- ³ Jean Marie Goulemot, *Forbidden Texts: Erotic Literature and its Readers in Eighteenth-Century France* (New Cultural Studies, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 51-53.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, 56.
- ⁵ Suellen Diaconoff, *Through the Reading Glass: Women, Books, and Sex in the French Enlightenment* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 11.
- ⁶ Goulemot, *Forbidden Texts*, 5-7.
- ⁷ Darnton, *Forbidden Best Sellers*, 86.
- ⁸ Catherine Cusset, *No Tomorrow: The Ethics of Pleasure in the French Enlightenment* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), 89-91.
- ⁹ Robert Darnton, *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982) 177-9.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 122-23.
- ¹¹ Lynn Hunt, Introduction to *The Invention of Pornography: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity, 1500-1800*, Ed. Lynn Hunt (New York: Zone Books, 1993), 13.
- ¹² Oxford English Dictionary.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 19.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ Robert Darnton, *The Corpus of Clandestine Literature in France, 1769-1789* (1st ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 1995), 192.
- ¹⁶ Hunt, Introduction, 42.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 24-5.
- ¹⁸ Darnton, *Forbidden Best Sellers*, 86.
- ¹⁹ Norberg, "Libertine Whore", 229.
- ²⁰ Frappier-Mazur, "Truth and the Obscene World" 206-8.
- ²¹ Cusset, *No Tomorrow* 170-2.
- ²² Margaret Jacob, "The Materialist World of Pornography." in *The Invention of Pornography: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity, 1500-1800*, ed. Lynn Hunt (New York: Zone Books, 1993), 161.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 164.
- ²⁴ Goulemot, *Forbidden Texts*, 90.
- ²⁵ Darnton, *Forbidden Best Sellers*, 94.
- ²⁶ Cusset, *No Tomorrow*, 6.
- ²⁷ Darnton, 104. Comment: Needs to say which Darnton reference
- ²⁸ Cusset, *No Tomorrow*, 6.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.
- ³⁰ Hunt, Introduction, 44.
- ³¹ Norberg, "Libertine Whore" 239.
- ³² *Ibid.*
- ³³ It is important to note that the virtuous courtesan character type has no similarities with the class of prostitutes known as courtesans, or kept mistresses. Also, both the virtuous courtesan and the libertine whore are fictional depictions with no basis in the realities of prostitution during the eighteenth century.
- Norberg, "Libertine Whore" 225-6.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 227.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, 228.
- ³⁶ "Second virginities" denotes the first time a prostitute engages in anal sex.
- Ibid.*, 231.
- ³⁷ Norberg, "Libertine Whore" 231.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 236-7.

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- ³⁹ Ibid., 240.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid., 245-9.
- ⁴¹ Darnton, *Forbidden Best Sellers*, 89.
- ⁴² Cusset, *No Tomorrow*, 99-101.
- ⁴³ Darnton, *Forbidden Best Sellers*, 91.
- ⁴⁴ Cusset, *No Tomorrow*, 111-13.
- ⁴⁵ Darnton, *Forbidden Best Sellers* 98-9.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid., 94.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., 100.
- ⁴⁸ Aurora Wolfgang, *Gender and Voice in the French Novel, 1730-1782*, Aldershot, Hants, England; Burlington, VT, USA: Ashgate, 2004), 143.
- ⁴⁹ James Fowler, "Diderot's Family Romance: 'Les Bijoux Indiscrets' Reappraised." *The Romanic Review* 88 (01; 2013/4, 1997), 89+.Needs ending page number.... Source not found online
- ⁵⁰ Ibid., 89+.
- ⁵¹ Peter Shoemaker, "The Furniture of Narrative in Crebillon's *Le Sopha* and Laclos's *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*" *The Romanic Review* 101 (11; 2013/4, 2010), 689+.ending page ?
- ⁵² Ibid., 689+.
- ⁵³ Darnton, *Forbidden Best Sellers*, 88.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid., xx.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid., 3.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid., 6.
- ⁵⁷ Goulemot, *Forbidden Texts*, 1.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid., 51-3.
- ⁵⁹ Hunt, Introduction 19.
- ⁶⁰ Darnton, *Forbidden Best Sellers*, 12-14.
- ⁶¹ Hunt, Introduction 32-33.
- ⁶² Darnton, *Forbidden Best Sellers*, 56.
- ⁶³ Hunt, Introduction 42-5.

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