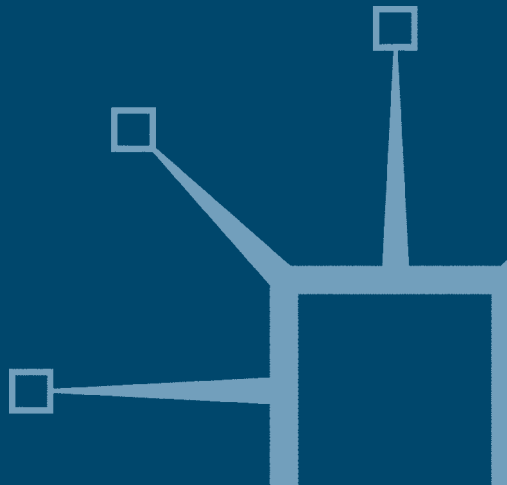


Mighty Lewd Books

The Development of Pornography
in Eighteenth-Century England

Julie Peakman



Mighty Lewd Books

... reading a little of L'Escole des Filles, which is a mighty lewd book, but yet not amiss for a sober man once to read over to inform himself in the villainy of the world.

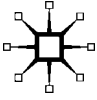
Samuel Pepys' diary entry 9 February 1668

Mighty Lewd Books

The Development of Pornography in Eighteenth-Century England

Julie Peakman

palgrave
macmillan



© Julie Peakman 2003

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

No paragraph of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, or under the terms of any licence permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, 90 Tottenham Court Road, London W1T 4LP.

Any person who does any unauthorized act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

The author has asserted her right to be identified as the author of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

First published 2003 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN
Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS and
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010
Companies and representatives throughout the world.

PALGRAVE MACMILLAN is the global academic imprint of the Palgrave Macmillan division of St Martin's Press, LLC and of Palgrave Macmillan Ltd. Macmillan® is a registered trademark in the United States, United Kingdom and other countries. Palgrave is a registered trademark in the European Union and other countries.

ISBN 1-4039-1500-8

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Peakman, Julie, 1957-

Mighty lewd books : the development of pornography in eighteenth-century England / Julie Peakman.

p. cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 1-4039-1500-8

1. Erotic literature, English--History and criticism. 2. English literature--18th century--History and criticism. 3. Pornography--England--History--18th century. 4. Erotica--England--History--18th century. I. Title.

PR448.E75P43 2003

820.9'3538'09033--dc21

2003043142

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
12 11 10 09 08 07 06 05 04 03

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
Antony Rowe Ltd, Chippenham and Eastbourne

For Jad

This page intentionally left blank

Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	ix
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xi
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xii
Introduction	1
1 Erotica or Pornography?	5
Developments in pornography	7
The history of sexuality	10
2 The Erotic Book Trade	12
Foreign Influences	15
Publishers, printers and sellers	22
Readers and writers	27
Censorship	39
Conclusion	44
3 Bodily Fluids	45
The humoral body	46
Eroticised blood	47
Genitals and their fluids	54
Sexual secretions in erotica	58
Conclusion	64
4 Erotica and Science	67
Scientific developments	68
The botanical metaphor	71
The tree of life	74
Flowering shrubs	76
Erotica and reproduction	78
The electrical metaphor	86
Conclusion	91
5 Sexual Utopias in Erotica	93
The eighteenth-century landscape	95
Sexual landscapes	97
The agricultural landscape	97
The topographical landscape	101
The nautical landscape	103
The classical landscape	105
The erotic garden	116
Conclusion	123

6 Anti-Catholic Erotica	126
English attitudes towards Catholics	128
Anti-Papist propaganda	132
A genuine case of seduction	132
Calls for castration	134
Exposés of Catholic clergy	135
Religious flagellation	137
French priests' trials	141
The convent	146
Spatial confinement	146
Fictional nunnery tales	148
French anti-clerical pornographic novels	152
Conclusion	158
7 Flagellation	161
Flogging in the household	166
Flogging as a school discipline	168
The curative powers of flagellation	169
Flagellation as a sexual activity	170
Flagellation pornography	172
Themes in flagellation fiction	176
Blood	177
Governesses and boarding schools	178
Incestuous mothers and stepmothers	180
Dress	182
Gloves	182
Nosegays	183
Conclusion	185
8 Conclusion	187
Cultural influences	188
Perceptions of female and male sexuality	189
Female sexuality	189
Male sexuality	190
The main themes of sexuality	190
The development of English pornography	191
Location	191
The diversification of sexual interests	192
Radicalism versus conservatism	193
<i>Appendix: A Note on Sources</i>	195
<i>Notes</i>	197
<i>Bibliography</i>	233
<i>Index</i>	252

List of Illustrations

1. William Hogarth, <i>Before and After</i> , 1736.	13
2. James Gillray, <i>A Sale of English Beauties in the East Indies</i> , 1786.	14
3. Agostino Carracci, <i>L'Arétin de A. Carracci</i> , 1798.	16
4. <i>L'Escole des Filles OÙ La Philosophe des Dames</i> , '1668'. False imprint.	18
5. <i>L'Academie des Dames</i> , 1680.	19
6. <i>Venus dans le Cloître</i> , 1683.	20
7. The Beggar's Benison Test Platter.	30
8. M. D. T. Bienville, <i>Nymphomania or a Dissertation Concerning the Furor Uterinus</i> , 1775.	57
9. <i>Arbor Vitae, Or the Natural History of the Tree of Life</i> , 1741.	72
10. 'Adam Strong' (James Perry), <i>The Electrical Eel, Or Gymnotus Electricus and The Torpedo</i> , 1777.	90
11. <i>A New Description of Merryland</i> , 1741.	98
12. <i>A Voyage to Lethe</i> , 1741.	104
13. Ibid.	106
14. 'Captain Sam Cock', <i>ibid.</i>	107
15. <i>Le Cabinet D'Amour</i> , '1700'. False imprint.	108
16. <i>Ex: Voti of Wax presented in the Church at Istermia 1780</i> in Richard Payne Knight, <i>An Account of the Remains of the Worship of Priapus</i> , 1786.	112
17. Emma as Circe, by Romney.	113
18. <i>Emma Lady Hamilton as the Comic Muse</i> , an engraving after the portrait painted by Angelica Kauffman R, 1791.	114
19. Thomas Rowlandson, <i>Lady Hxxxxxxx Attitudes</i> .	115
20. The Virgin Mary as 'a garden close-locked' inside 'a garden close-locked'. From <i>Livres Chants Royaux</i> , fifteenth century.	117
21. <i>The Fruit-Shop, A Tale</i> , 1765.	119
22. Laurence Sterne, <i>The Life of Tristram Shandy</i> , 1771.	120
23. Ibid.	120
24. Anon, <i>The Cloisters Laid Open</i> , c. 1750-1800.	138
25. Abbé Boileau, <i>Historia flagellantum, de recto et perverso flagrorum usu apud Christianos</i> , 1700; translated as <i>History of the Flagellants, and of the Correct and perverse Use of Rods Among the Christians</i> , 1780.	139
26. Anon, <i>The Case of Seduction Being an Account of the late Proceedings at Paris, as well Ecclesiastical; as Civil Against the Reverent Abbé Claudius Nicholas des Rues for committing rapes on 133 Virgins</i> , 1726.	142

27. Anon, <i>The Nun; Or Memoirs Of Angelique: An Interesting Tale</i> (London, Tegg and Castleman, 1803).	148
28. <i>Dom Bougre ou Le Portier des Chartreux</i> , 1741.	153
29. Ibid.	154
30. Anon, <i>Thérèse Philosophe</i> , 1785.	155
31. Ibid.	156
32. Ibid.	157
33. John Cleland, <i>Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure</i> , 1766.	162
34. John Cleland, <i>Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure</i> , 1776.	163
35. Anon, <i>Thérèse Philosophe</i> , 1785.	164
36. Ibid.	165
37. Anon, <i>The World Turned Upside Down, or the Folly Of Man</i> , 1647.	167
38. <i>Exhibition of Female Flagellants the Modest and Incontinent World</i> , c. 1840.	174
39. James Gillray, <i>Lady Termagant Flaybum</i> , 1786.	175

List of Abbreviations

Ashbee, Vol. I	Fraxi, Pisanus [Henry Spencer Ashbee], <i>Index Librorum Prohibitorum</i>
Ashbee, Vol. II	Fraxi, Pisanus [Henry Spencer Ashbee], <i>Centuria Librorum Absconditorum</i>
Ashbee, Vol. III	Fraxi, Pisanus [Henry Spencer Ashbee], <i>Catena Librorum Tacendorum</i> (London, privately printed, 1877)
All reprinted as <i>Bibliography of Forbidden Books</i> (New York, Jack Brussel, 1962).	
BL	British Library
DNB	Dictionary of National Biography
KB	King's Bench Records
MS	Manuscripts
PRO	Public Records Office
SP	Session Papers

Acknowledgements

My thanks are extended to the various librarians who have helped me, at the British Library, London; The Wellcome Library, London; The Huntingdon Library, San Marino; Sylvia Merian at the Pierpoint Morgan Library, New York; Dr. Norman H. Reid at the University of St. Andrew's University Library; and to Jilly Boid at the Artefact Museum of St. Andrew's University, for their assistance in providing me with the manuscripts and artefacts for viewing. Many thanks to the Isobel Thornley Bequest Fund for their kind financial assistance.

Thanks to my friends and colleagues at the Wellcome Institute who have made me feel 'at home', Sally Bragg, Alan Shiel, Kristina Alvarez, Natsu Hattori and Lesley Hall who have shown much kind attention and encouragement, as have visiting colleagues Helen King and Marie Mulvey Roberts.

I particularly want to thank seven women with whom I banded together on the Women's History MA and still meet for regular mutual support and discussions on our various theses/work/life: Sara Bailey, Meg Irving, Linda Massie, Diana Pechsier, Deirdre Palk, Stephanie Spencer and Cally Ward. Also, thanks to Jess Mookherjee for her encouragement and enthusiasm, and again, for reading my work; thanks too to Jean Kysow for kindly proof-reading it.

I would like to thank my family: Paul Peakman has, in the past, helped financially with my studies in earlier days; both he and his wife, Karen Peakman, have been a great source of emotional support. Thanks to my parents, Leslie and Maureen Peakman, both now dead, who inspired and encouraged me in everything I wanted to do.

My greatest gratitude is reserved for two people: The ebullient Roy Porter saw me through the ups and downs of writing this book, ever-supportive and inspiring me with his confidence. His premature death was a personal tragedy as well as a great loss for scholarship. He supplied me with countless references, jolly japes and hours of thoughtful discussion. His tireless efforts in reading countless rewrites were sterling. Any scrap of professionalism I owe to him. Without his continual unflagging support and many helpful suggestions, this would have been a much lesser work. And finally, to the indomitable Jad Adams, without whom I probably would not have undertaken the task at all. He has remained a constant companion in times of difficulty and provided many transports and joys. He talked with me through many a sexual topic from anal sex to auto-asphyxiation and helped me find the wonderful world of Henry Spencer Ashbee and eighteenth-century erotica.

Introduction

This is a book about the development of pornographic literature and an exploration of a great diversity of other sexually-oriented printed matter, which circulated in eighteenth-century Britain. Some erotica revelled in innuendoes and allusive terminology as a means of continuing a discourse on and around sex, particularly in the public arena. Other, more explicit material was directed at the private consumer; this would be the beginnings of what we would now recognise as 'pornography'. I have looked at both ends of the spectrum and have concentrated on its progress, its major elements, and how both this amatory material and 'mighty lewde' works fitted into a broader scheme of the world. I have also looked more specifically at the themes that would be taken up in this material and the sources of these themes.

Ribald poems, salacious prints, sensational trial reports, medical advice manuals, religious attacks, scandal sheets, racy memoirs and obscene fictional tales were printed and dispersed through booksellers and hawkers throughout the main towns and cities. This material ranged from light-hearted lascivious humour to hard-core graphic descriptions of sexual activities, but, more importantly, it carried contemporary attitudes to certain subjects, such as science and religion.

The eighteenth-century world was one of rapid change. Ancient views were being questioned and new ideas taking their place. Science was developing in leaps and bounds. Advances in natural philosophy, medical experiments and exploration of foreign continents all led to an expansion of the world-view, the scientific revolution having a profound effect on how people saw themselves and life around them. Certain new findings were pivotal in their influence on bawdy material, which took up new scientific terminology and satirised recent experiments. However, within erotica, a process of assimilation and elimination of particular issues was evident. Ideas were either incorporated or rejected within the context of erotic material against a backdrop of contemporary beliefs and practices, as seen in oral traditions, folklore and everyday activities. Rather than accept new promulgations often perceived as far-fetched, frequently erotica retained ancient beliefs.

The external world had an impact on the sexual language, rhetoric, activities and didactics within lascivious material, many of the ideas and beliefs springing

from occurrences and attitudes in general culture. Political, social and ideological forces all had an obvious influence. Thus, erotica did not merely deal with sex but was highly influenced by popular contemporary topics circulating in the public domain, frequently acting as a conduit for debate on various subjects, ranging from generation and the workings of bodies, to botany, electricity and anti-Catholicism. Moreover, erotica often ratified contemporary notions about socio-sexual relations between the sexes, depicting men and women in 'normal' sexual hierarchical roles, highlighting the extreme characters of the passive female on the one hand, and the uncontrolled lascivious female on the other, both images prevalent in the real world.

The examination of the erotic book trade (chapter 2) is an attempt to understand how and why the erotic book developed when and where it did. Since little evidence has so far been unearthed on the circulation of the erotic book and its various formats, publication details of the books under survey have been scrutinised to see what they reveal regarding not only when and where the material was produced, but also class and gender issues. Were both men and women involved in erotic book production? How much did the material cost? In other words, did erotica reach across the class divide? Were only men reading erotica? Was it only élite men? Or did women and labourers have access to the material? My findings have been placed within the context of other evidence on the history of more general printed material in an attempt to provide an overall probable pattern of production and circulation of erotica, and of its readers and writers. In the section on censorship, the trial accounts of prosecutions have been examined to see which books were considered obscene and why. This sheds light on the changing attitudes towards certain material and, in some cases, a continued confusion as to the definition of obscenity.

Procreation, disease and degeneration are all topical subjects reiterated in erotica, highlighting the very real fear of poverty and ill health, which permeated eighteenth-century society. Yet descriptions of the erotic body and its fluids (chapter 3), while often subversive, nevertheless retained surprisingly conventional views. Although historians have highlighted the radical nature of pornographic material,¹ the conservative element in erotica is an issue which has not previously been examined. This analysis therefore raises unasked questions about the nature of taboo in pornography. Is pornography always radical or subversive? If not, when not? Which traditional components are maintained and why? Images in erotica, although radical in some respects, continued to retain dominant contemporary attitudes towards men's and women's bodies, particularly in respect to genitalia and bodily fluids. This affected the way in which bodies were depicted, the display of fluids within any particular body depending on their sex. Essentially, this exhibition of bodily fluids unleashed the 'uncivilised' erotic body.

New scientific developments arose specifically around discussions about botany, reproduction and electricity (chapter 4). Terminology from the new sciences was used to discuss sexual organs, scandals and sexual activities within the boundaries of metaphor, whilst simultaneously ridiculing new scientific propos-

als. Travel, explorations and discoveries of new lands (chapter 5) would also affect erotic writing and its interpretations of the world and the body.

But it was religion, or more specifically anti-Catholicism, which would serve to provide the overriding themes in the emergence of a more graphic sexual material (chapter 6), most notably its harnessing of flagellation as a sexual theme. Anti-religious erotica and identifiable themes in early pornography related tales of debauched monks and nuns, seducing priests and their corrupted penitents. The culmination of these ideas can be seen in the emergence of a new pornographic world of flagellatory fiction (chapter 7).

This book came out of many ideas which the material itself proffered. Because of its great wealth as a source, this work can look at only some of the aspects which were presented by the material. I have attempted to pull together prominent themes in erotica, current in culture, science and religion. I am particularly concerned with the emergence of pornographic strands which emerged amidst a plethora of other erotica. I also attempt to draw out the main contemporary notions of female and male sexuality and identify the multifaceted images which were prominent.

I have chosen to concentrate on heterosexual sex, since much of the fictional pornography was aimed at heterosexual readers. Although I mention homosexuality and tribadism, it is only in so far as it is mentioned within the material examined. Unless other material is uncovered, as far as we can tell with current available sources, fictionalised pornography directed at homosexual readers did not emerge until the nineteenth century. However, certain erotica was in evidence which reported homosexual activities, usually in factual or semi-factual reports of trials. But this appears to be related merely for newsworthy titillation rather than having any immediate and profound effect on the development of pornographic fiction at the end of the eighteenth century. The case is the same for British anti-aristocratic erotica and pornographic political attacks, which were produced more for entertainment value and as scandalous gossip than to help formulate themes in new forms of pornographic fiction (although this was not necessarily true in France).² All these subjects warrant fuller arguments of their own, but this book is not the place. The subject of erotica as a literary genre, although touched on, will not be examined in detail as this, again, is another book.

Two historians, Roy Porter and Robert Darnton, have particularly influenced my work on eighteenth-century erotic material. Roy Porter has been instrumental in devising ways of investigating sex and society. In his section in *The Facts of Life*,³ he explores the 'creation of sexual knowledge in Britain' during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries through an examination of sexual advice literature. In this investigation, he has shown how certain literature can be used as a way of understanding sexual knowledge in eighteenth-century society.⁴ In his book *The Great Cat Massacre*, Robert Darnton attempts to understand what he calls 'l'histoire des mentalités', which incorporates cultural history and the history of ideas. He aptly points out that cultural history has previously been directed at 'high' or 'intellectual' culture with the exploration of 'low' culture as

still unmapped territory. Where Darnton succeeded with story tales and fables in unravelling complex threads of cultural history, this book will attempt to do the same in relation to sex in cultural history.

Erotica was very much part of eighteenth-century culture, ideas within it being influenced by external events and attitudes. When reading this erotica, it became evident that it was not part of a separate fantasy world devoid of any stimulus from reality, but played a major role in the construction of gender identity. Hierarchical patterns emerged in erotica which commented on the dominant ideology. Erotica sometimes accepted the 'norm' and followed the path of accepted gender ideals elsewhere, but it would just as easily invert or reject them altogether.

1

Erotica or Pornography?

One person's smut is another person's sensuality. Similarly, distinguishing between erotica and pornography has been a topic of great debate among historians of sexuality. Problems with defining the material, to a large extent, result from attempts to fit the material into a cultural and sociological pigeonhole which did not exist when it was written. Erotica has been seen to be written as 'a matter of intent in that the authors and publishers had in mind to provide the reader of their wares with sexual stimulations of one sort or another'. Pornography has been described as that which is prohibited, 'the written or visual representation in a realistic form of any general or sexual behaviour with a deliberate violation of existing and widely accepted moral and social taboos'; 'the explicit depiction of sexual organs and sexual practices with the aim of arousing sexual feeling'. The terms for erotica and pornography have even been used interchangeably, which denies the differentiation between graphic descriptions of sexual acts and suggestive innuendo or sexual parodies. This corpus of work has also been described as 'sexual fiction'.¹ Yet not all pornographic descriptions can be described as fiction, as we can see by trial reports.

Definitions of erotica and pornography within this body of writing have proved problematic, and many of the arguments are not always helpful. They confuse the issues which are important by continually querying characterisation. Certainly, the eighteenth-century reader did not use the same categorising faculty that we use today. No boundary was made between pornographic, erotic, libertine, gallant or licentious images, or differentiation from other forms, such as philosophical, political or moral genres.² Writings of a sexual nature have been labelled somewhat indiscriminately as pornography, erotica, smut, obscenity, clandestine or forbidden texts, sexual fiction and libertine literature – different terms often applied to the same works. To add to the confusion, many of the arguments have been applied within the conceptual framework of the twentieth century, which blurs the real issues that were important in the erotic writings of the eighteenth century. Furthermore, French and English erotic writings have frequently been lumped together, ignoring the important distinctions which need to be made between the two sets of material. An artificial delineation between mainstream literature and erotica has been made in today's world which

simply did not exist at the time it was published and first being read. This 'low-life literature' therefore needs to be fitted into a broader, wider cultural context.³ Our notion of pornography existing as a separate entity is fairly specific to the last 150 years.

If the word 'pornography' did not exist, should we use it to describe material in the eighteenth century? Assertions have been made that 'pornography' cannot be used on the grounds that it would be anachronistic, the term being first mentioned in the *Oxford English Dictionary* only in 1857. It has also been argued that the use of *erotique* in the context of 'sexual' rather than 'amorous' emerged in France only in 1825,⁴ so, if we reject 'pornography' as a term, we would be obliged to reject 'erotica' for the same reasons. Furthermore, similar terminology was circulating in ancient Greece, so it would be erroneous to dismiss the terms on the basis of anachronism. Plato's *The Symposium* refers to 'erotic' in the sense of both love and sex. Eighteenth-century writers frequently alluded to Greek and Roman references and often used the same connotations, writing about love and sex as synonymous, and they frequently equate sex, lust and love with being 'amorous'. In *Deipnosophistae*, Athenaeus mentions *πορνηγράφος* (pornography), referring to one who writes about harlots.⁵ Therefore, since Grub Street writers also wrote about prostitutes, why not call their work pornography? But the term 'pornography' no longer alludes only to writings of or about harlots. More recently it has been imbued with political meaning, certainly not the intention in this book.⁶ We do need, however, some sort of definition of the material to assist the modern reader.

A set of works called 'pornography' can be traced as a specific chronological and geographical development from sixteenth-century Italy and seventeenth-century France.⁷ Certainly, we can trace a definite development of English material in the eighteenth century which includes graphic descriptions of sexual activities – what we could call 'pornography' in the modern sense of the word. For clarity, my definition of 'pornography' is material that contains graphic description of sexual organs and/or action (for example, detailed descriptions of masturbation, or anal, oral and penetrative sex) written with the prime intention of sexually exciting the reader. Pornography is not merely a series of repetitive scenarios, but a particular way of writing to fulfil a particular function, to create the desired effect of physical pleasure.⁸ But it was specifically seventeenth-century France which first developed a more graphic style, English 'pornographic' work becoming 'an aim in itself'⁹ (for the main purpose of sexual excitement) only from the middle of the eighteenth century. There was a traceable crucial period in the development of more pornographic English-grown material (as opposed to translations of foreign work) which would take off from the 1770s onwards (with the notable exception of *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, 1749). Stylistically improved in order to render a sexual reaction from its readership, the fictional scenarios became more imaginative. New narratives emerged combining the techniques of the novel with explicit sexual scenarios to form an authentic pornographic voice. Although elements of this were evident in earlier works, they would fuse only in the late eighteenth century.

For the purposes of this book, I place pornography as one genre within a superfluity of other types of erotica, erotica being used as an overarching description for all books on sex. On a general level, bibliographers of erotica include the same books, and I adhere to their precedent.¹⁰ All the material I have included comes from one bibliography of erotica or another and shall therefore be referred to as 'erotica' as an all-encompassing term to depict material pertaining to the bawdy, amorous or sexual, including pornography.¹¹ A distinction needs to be made here between the noun 'erotica' (the bulk of the material) and the adjectives 'erotic' and 'pornographic' when describing it. A consensus exists that 'erotic' material pertains to sexual matters, either overtly or in a 'hidden' form; for example, through metaphor, innuendo or implication. Eroticism is usually recognised by implication of the sexual rather than its explicitness, through the use of euphemism or innuendo. Erotic (rather than erotica) material can therefore be defined as that which is descriptive of amatory or sexual desire made through insinuation. This is generally written to amuse rather than sexually stimulate, unlike pornographic material which is more explicit and carries that intention. Certain types of specifically English erotic material were circulating during the early eighteenth century (and would continue through the nineteenth century), running parallel to the development of pornographic works. In his study of pornographic, obscene and bawdy works of the seventeenth century, Roger Thompson uses the definition 'bawdy' as meaning to provoke amusement; and the definition 'obscene' (as a general rather than legal term) as 'intended to shock or disgust'. Both terms fit aptly for other texts dealing with sex or desire.¹²

The only hard-and-fast definition which can be easily identified is the legal term 'obscenity', as applied to books in cases which saw successful prosecutions against the publishers of certain types of material.¹³ Those British pioneers who have traced the publication and censorship of books generally regard the writers and publishers of such material as a vanguard of resistance to authority. Erotica identified as obscene can be defined as writings about sex which officials or dominant groups have suppressed on the grounds that they are morally corrupting or degrading.¹⁴ It therefore follows that if writing about sex is a revolt against authority, that authority is likely to react, usually through censorship of the material.¹⁵ Obscene books, in this context, play the role of opposition, a balancing force within society, and cannot be seen as separate from it, but merely a resistant force within it.

Developments in pornography

Both the emergence of the novel and the growth of the urban world had a major impact on the development of pornography. English erotic writing saw stylistic developments in the language. Earlier themes of 'gallantry' or 'amatory' were maximised into full-blown sexual avarice or lust, although systematic cursing and abusive terminology was not to develop until the nineteenth century.¹⁶ Furthermore, substitution of the metaphor with sexually explicit Anglo-Saxon terminology allowed for the replacement of the suggestive for the graphic

description of sexual organs or activities, although euphemistic material would continue to be popular.

A further development can be seen in the relocation of the settings in the pornographic scenarios; these will become evident in this book. Throughout the eighteenth century, in the creation of the British pornographic world, the setting became increasingly 'hidden' or 'secret', often introducing a more claustrophobic atmosphere than encountered in earlier erotica, although this was a gradual and uneven process. The draped, voluptuous boudoir and the airy open pastoral scenarios of erotica gave way to secluded, middle-class, family parlours and the enclosed convent cells of pornographic works.

All forms of sexual activities abound. Straight, missionary position sex was still evident, but there was an increase in other forms of carnal activities, and this development is significant. Some pornography shows female demands for increased foreplay and less penetrative sex.¹⁷ Surprisingly, flagellation pornography did not always mention penetration, and in some erotic books men do not figure at all. Penetration was therefore not always the ultimate aim in pornography. Although there was an increased concern about masturbation during the eighteenth century, to a large extent, this was connected with the medical assertions that excess loss of sperm affected a man's health.¹⁸

The increase of the portrayal of sexual activity of any kind is a result, if anything, of new developments in printing and mass production. Sex was increasingly being written about, therefore sexual intercourse was more 'on show' in textual form, pornography increasingly willing to pander to different tastes. A growing interest can be identified not just with vaginas and penises, but with forearms, thighs, breasts and buttocks. This would indicate that there was not merely a concentration on genitalia as desirable sexual parts of the body, but an exploration of other potentially erogenous zones, at least in print.

In erotica, prostitution was seen as necessary, despite the serious concerns about venereal disease. Men are shown as being in constant fear of cuckoldry, this connected to anxieties about female sexual desire. Often women were seen as powerful and sexually threatening. Yet women were also sometimes portrayed as victims. Positive attitudes towards romance did not grow only towards the end of the century, as Lawrence Stone argues (see below), but were present in early erotica. Also, we can see through pornographic material that, from the mid-seventeenth century, imagery of sex between women was prevalent, at least in the mentality of the reading public. However, this was a positive image and, as yet, still connected to women who also liked sex with men.

This exploration, though, is not without its difficulties. Erotic and pornographic works can add to our understanding of people's sexual knowledge and beliefs and, in a psychosexual dimension, disclose personal desires. But erotica does not necessarily tell us about people's actual sexual experiences. Some of the more explicit material is fantastical; how far these fantasies were indulged in reality is difficult to determine. What we can see from some of the sources is that some fantasies *were* played out in reality – flagellation, for example. Furthermore, sexual meaning and debates were frequently buried under layers of obfuscatory

language, sometimes culminating in complicated forms of metalepsis, layer upon layer of figurative terms (particularly metaphors) distancing the real subject (sex) under discussion. Decoding disguised messages, which would have been easily accessible to the eighteenth-century reader, reveals both the continuity and changes in notions about sexual behaviour. It also reveals the multiplicity of images and understandings of men's and women's bodies which were current, many of them conflicting, some of them constant. Close scrutiny of the sexual texts uncovers a real concern with social and intellectual authority, with many of the writings questioning dominant scientific or cultural viewpoints.

Finally, whims or desires were replaced by fetishes, degeneration or 'unnatural' sexual acts. Again, this was a gradual and sporadic process in English pornographic fiction, and most recognisable from the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Why there was such hiatus between this fictional work and those that followed is an interesting, if probably unanswerable, question.¹⁹ It might simply mean that the material is no longer extant, although popular pieces would see many editions, which made survival more probable.

Although I have pointed to the differences between certain alleged sexual practices and their reflection in erotica, care must be taken in using erotica to demonstrate actual sexual behaviour. Various other sources exist, such as court and police records, hospital records, newspapers and journals, letters, diaries and memoirs, which, while containing particular biases, can help to verify sexual practice. Some of the behaviour described in erotica, if not necessarily widely practised, was certainly widely written and read about in other printed matter. For example, popular magazines printed letters on flagellation, and significant quantities of pamphlets were based on real trials of debauched clergymen, sodomites and criminal conversation. Other pieces of erotica would appear to be directed at a select few, with debaucheries crossing the line of 'normal' behaviour, or even inverting it, thereby representing not a popular trend but a deviation from the acceptable (for example, the work of de Sade). Some lascivious scenarios went out of their way *not* to represent the normal.

Most importantly, both satire and writings of graphic sexual fantasies frequently invert and subvert dominant ideology. Some satire has been misinterpreted and a straightforward reading of the material has completely reversed comprehension of its true intent. For example, the humour of Juvenalian satire can sometimes be overlooked because of its self-consciously and seriously moral tone. Furthermore, because pornography transgresses taboos, it crosses cultural boundaries, taking the reader into the world of the 'hidden' and forbidden. This leads to potential pitfalls of inverted realities, subversion of 'truths' from a governing external discourse, or submerged meanings within a text. Conversely, it has been argued that when sexual repression occurs in a society, sex becomes the primary focus of discussion. Michel Foucault has stated:

Rather than the uniform concern to hide sex, rather than a general prudishness of language, what distinguishes these last three centuries is the variety, the wide dispersion of devices that were invented for speaking about it, for

having it be spoken about, for inducing it to speak for itself, for listening, recording, transcribing, and redistributing what is said about it: around sex, a whole network of varying, specific, and coercive transpositions into discourse.²⁰

The history of sexuality

The history of erotica and the development of pornography are essentially part of a wider history of sexuality and gender. The history of sexuality involves differentiating between sexual *mentalities* (thought, knowledge and opinions) and sexual *realities* (experience, actions and what actually happened), the history of erotica being substantially about the former, a history of ideas. Meanwhile, the history of gender has provoked questions about oppression, submission, passivity, assertion and, most importantly, discussions around public versus private spheres which need to be incorporated into the study of erotica.

Within the history of sexuality, there has been a trend towards depicting broad shifts in sexual behaviour. In *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500–1800*, Stone asserts that a new mentality arose during the eighteenth century whereby shows of affection were more commonplace, as was an increased desire for sexual pleasure and privacy. This was accompanied by the weakening of the extended family network and support systems, and the isolation of the nuclear family.²¹ Problems with such sweeping teleologies became evident with the publication of essay collections which have had a major impact in questioning entrenched historical views about the eighteenth century. These books have assisted us by adding more cultural layers to previous all-encompassing paradigms on repression and libertarianism and have demonstrated how the eighteenth century was a highly diverse society.²²

Since the 1970s, women's history has provided new theories, which have helped to expand our understanding of women's roles and status in society while shedding new light on the history of sexuality.²³ Yet debates have raged between feminist historians in the race to construct new sexual paradigms.²⁴ First, gender was described as a social construction, a useful category of historical analysis, whereby both men and women can be studied.²⁵ This, in turn, was criticised in that gender as a category is an illusion; it does not exist as a distinct and separate classification and cannot be divorced from other historical variables such as region, economics, ethnicity and class.²⁶ A reassessment has been deemed necessary whereby relationships between men and women should be seen not as one overriding, entrenched stance, but as mutable, effecting both long- and short-term transformations.²⁷

However, women's history has been guilty of applying its own restrictive frameworks, as shown in the 'separate spheres' framework which divides society into private and public spaces.²⁸ In this depiction, men dominated the public arena, whereas women were relegated to the private sphere. Enslaved in a life of domesticity, the woman became a prisoner in her own home, an 'angel in the house'. The 'ideal' woman was chaste, or at least sexually passive. Furthermore,

this history, in which feminist historians have pinpointed increasing restrictions on women's behaviour, does not necessarily mesh with the impressions of other historians, who point to an openness of sexuality during the eighteenth century. While much work has been undertaken on middle-class women, the straightforward utilisation of public/private divisions simply does not work when applied to other classes, as can be seen in the case of rural plebeians²⁹ and the gentry.³⁰ Recent work suggests that women's public role in the eighteenth century was not as restricted as first thought, and women continued to play a prominent social role in the public domain.

None of the feminist frameworks works when attempting to place women in one of two opposing roles; either as victims, or as active agents of their own history. A multiplicity of images can be found exemplifying both, but these polarities are too melodramatic. Both representations can be found, but so can a plethora of other images ranging between the two extremes. Straight rendering of dichotomies has to give way to investigations of multi-layered facets allowing for more complex visions.³¹ What is needed is an analysis of cultural influences and social incorporation in a more pluralistic approach.

The argument around men, women and sexual licence, and submissiveness or assertiveness, has seethed with suggestions of revolutions and crises with every new study. There have been suggestions of a 'sexual revolution' for women, in which they actively pursued sexual pleasure;³² a prevalence of sexual unconventionality among wealthy female plebeians which brought with it vulnerability, culminating in a sexual 'crisis' around 1780–1820;³³ a sexual revolution where a heterosexual phallogentric sexual culture reigned;³⁴ and another occurring in London around 1700 wherein sexual relationships were redefined as a result of the emergence of a third gender, this being the adult effeminate sodomite or homosexual.³⁵ All these studies have attempted to shed light on the shifting sexual cultures of the eighteenth century. However, 'revolution' is too strong a word to use in defining new emerging patterns in erotica. What can be seen is a definite development in erotica which led to the major new English pornography. This is most evident in the depiction of the up-and-coming middle-class domestic household in flagellation material, a striking example of English writers of erotica creating a new private sphere as a setting for sex.

sample content of Mighty Lewd Books: The Development of Pornography in Eighteenth-Century England

- [download online Trouble Is My Business pdf, azw \(kindle\), epub](#)
- [Language Testing in Practice: Designing and Developing Useful Language Tests \(Oxford Applied Linguistics\) pdf, azw \(kindle\), epub](#)
- [download online V Is for Vegan: The ABCs of Being Kind for free](#)
- [Fallout \(Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell, Book 4\) pdf](#)
- [click Nier Signature Series Guide \(Bradygames Signature Guides\)](#)

- <http://honareavalmusic.com/?books/Trouble-Is-My-Business.pdf>
- <http://drmurphreesnewsletters.com/library/An-Introduction-to-Language--10th-Edition-.pdf>
- <http://drmurphreesnewsletters.com/library/V-Is-for-Vegan--The-ABCs-of-Being-Kind.pdf>
- <http://metromekanik.com/ebooks/King-John.pdf>
- <http://www.rap-wallpapers.com/?library/Nier-Signature-Series-Guide--Bradygames-Signature-Guides-.pdf>