

Overall, this study makes a major contribution to the field of early Christian asceticism in several ways. The texts are read with a scholarly historical eye but also a freshness derived from Burrus's quixotic use of highly personal material. The intertwining of literary and social theorists gives an edge to her findings and opens up discussion that goes far beyond a religious or historical perspective; the hermeneutic is appropriately "slippery," to use her term, and unwilling to be pigeonholed. The sources Burrus chooses are major contenders for examination; they are not obscure and are juxtaposed with some degree of comfort. A new reading of such familiar characters as Paul, Martin, and Macrina is surely welcome, given the originality of the thesis and methodology. Burrus allows these ancient texts to speak for themselves, yet her own voice is distinctive, too. She writes persuasively, avoiding a restatement of hackneyed responses to the ambiguity of a sexual aspect to asceticism. For students of the history of sexuality there is a wealth of primary source material here, dating from a time when the dominant religious culture was wrestling with dualism and unease about the role of bodies, which is explored from the perspective of a modern historian and theoretician. Although I hesitated at some points over her style and details of the thesis (as suggested above), I found this an engrossing, thought-provoking, and thoroughly enjoyable read. A more profound understanding of some of the theorists whose ideas she explores would have enabled me to dig further into this mine of sparkly ideas and provocative suggestions.

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Libertine Enlightenment: Sex, Liberty, and License in the Eighteenth Century. Edited by PETER CRYLE and LISA O'CONNELL. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. Pp. xii + 256. \$65.00 (cloth).

This must have been a marvelous conference at the University of Queensland back in 2001, with French and Australian eighteenth-century experts gathering to discuss "sex, liberty, and license." Of the three entities triangulated in the subtitle, whose triadic relation actually *constitutes* libertinism or libertinage, sex gets the least attention in *Libertine Enlightenment*, which consists of thirteen essays based on papers given at that conference. (Hogarth's caricature of John Wilkes leers at us from under a Liberty bonnet on the dust jacket, but Wilkes's obscene *Essay on Woman* plays a fairly small part in the analysis [23–25].) It is a star-studded collection in the sense that it provides small but intense points of light, case studies rather than large definitions or broad syntheses. This review cannot do justice to all these fascinating and densely documented essays but will concentrate on some points that directly concern readers of this journal.

Peter Otto, for example, offers a sympathetic account of the sex therapist James Graham, already well known as “Exhibit A” in Roy Porter’s case for the sex-positive English Enlightenment. (That should read “British,” since Graham was a Scot, like other uninhibited writers about sex in English.) Otto pulls out all the stops when describing Graham’s stupendous electromagnetic Celestial Bed with pipe organ, Cupids, and mirror ceiling, which for £50 per session revived many respectable Londoners, including the Duchess of Devonshire and Catherine Macauley, but which went out of fashion and had to be sold off within a few years: I hope Liberace is now enjoying it in Heaven. Otto pursues interesting connections between Graham’s rapturous sexology and the sublime—but, as often in this book, does so in isolation from previous accounts of the “libertine sublime” in Restoration and eighteenth-century writing. (Nor does the Orientalism of Graham’s decor [209] inspire any comment.) Otto’s term for Graham, “Spiritual Libertine,” has a long history dating back to Calvin (quoted by Patrick Wald Lasowski on p. 237), but you would not gather this from his chapter, absorbing as it is.

One might say that the entire collection is limited by its concentration on a narrow chronological band and (in some cases) by narrow disciplinary specialization. *Dix-huitièmistes* seem unaware of seventeenth-century precedents, experts in France and Britain seem unfamiliar with each other’s realm, and as a result, starting with the editors’ overview in the introduction, claims are made for the emergence, freshness, or uniqueness of phenomena that have been thoroughly studied by scholars in adjacent fields (including, I must admit, myself). Thus the introduction calls James Graham “unfamiliar” (6), Mary de la Rivière Manley’s scandal-novel *Secret Memoirs and Manners of Several Persons of Quality of both Sexes, from the New Atalantis* (1709) “neglect[ed]” (8), and accusations of sexual excess against free-thinkers “unexpected” (5); when the editors do reach back in time, they tell us that Théophile de Viau was “burnt at the stake for being libertine” (7). The new radical sexual philosophy of the 1790s is illustrated by a quotation that actually goes back to Rochester in the 1670s (195). Both in the introduction and in his essay on Casanova Peter Cryle introduces as something new the concept of “high libertinism” and its relationship to the bawdy underworld of popular print (3, 49). Cryle’s book *Geometry in the Boudoir* dealt with sex writing from Aretino onward, often brilliantly, but his chronological grasp was sometimes shaky. His observations on Casanova and Crébillon are sharp, but there is no need to treat as a discovery of the mid-eighteenth century (for example) that the signs of arousal and ardor may be faked or mediated by fashion (52–53); this was exactly the dilemma dramatized by William Wycherley in *The Country-Wife* (1675). The only contribution with a properly dazzling historical range, in fact, is the flighty tail-piece by Patrick Wald Lasowski, author of the deeply suggestive 1980 book *Libertines* (which should have been titled *Libertins*).

My prize for least expected sexologue goes to Immanuel Kant. Alan Corkhill responds to Lacan’s provocative (and preposterous) joining of

“Kant with Sade” by spelling out the massive (and unsurprising) differences between the two. Yet Kant does have something to say about sex: incest between siblings is not such a problem, but ejaculation and homosexual intercourse “run counter to the end of humanity” and speed up the aging process. “Every lost drop of bodily juice, he maintained, was detrimental to health,” letting the life force leak away; “kissing should be avoided at all costs, to obviate the unnecessary discharge of saliva” (69–70).

The main focus of many essays here is not sexuality but *sexualization*—a kind of automatic assumption that any free-thinker or skeptic must be wildly experimental in sexual matters. Marc Serge Rivière asks why Voltaire, whom he defines as quite moderate in his sexual life, should be accused of being “expert in all forms of lasciviousness . . . panting from the most shameful orgies” (77). (The list of those branded in this fashion includes Hobbes, ludicrously.) Conservative sexualization of free-thinkers (familiar at least since Père Garasse’s foaming attack on the *libertins* in 1623) was matched by the more radical habit of slurring authority figures by projecting shameful and spectacular sexual deviance onto them. Again, this has a long history prior to the eighteenth century: as I show in *Libertines and Radicals* (Cambridge, 2001), this “low-libertine” stratagem of shaming or abjection already played a role in opposition to Stuart rule in England—not to mention in Tacitus, Suetonius, and anyone who needed to discredit the previous emperor. The use of smut to “eroticize and feminize the aristocratic public sphere” was hardly “begun” under Louis XV (112). The lethal pornographization of Marie-Antoinette is a crucial case (and heavily studied) but comes toward the end of a long process. Iain McCalman retells one oft-told story that played a major part in this contamination of the queen, the Affair of the Diamond Necklace (which also features briefly, though without cross-reference, in a later study of Goethe by Christa Knellwolf that feels somewhat out of place in this book [226]). McCalman does this with verve, making it more thrilling than the movie (despite the best efforts of Hilary Swank), and his point is to bring out the brilliance of the amoral confidence-trickster and survivor Jeanne de La Motte (a kind of *femme forte libertine*?). But how does this extend our understanding of the sex-liberty-license triad? Sexual “favors” obviously facilitated her social climbing, but conspiratorial bonds seem stronger. Her fabrications of a liaison with Marie-Antoinette were certainly made easier by the sex story already in place, the *presupposition*, in the dupe, of a queen outwardly respectable but secretly voracious of lovers.

Several contributors study a milder, British form of sexualization, the scandalous memoir of upper-class life. Nicola Parsons assumes a somewhat limited audience for her study of Manley’s *Atalantis* (she needs to explain who Francis Bacon was) and misses some opportunities to connect to a deeper history of delegitimizing sexual scandal (e.g., the origin of the Duchy of Marlborough in John Churchill’s stud service to Barbara Villiers, Duchess of Cleveland [155], appeared in London lampoons already in the 1670s). Chapters on the autobiographies of well-known demimondaines

like Teresia Constantia Phillips (by Kathleen Wilson) and Harriette Wilson (by coeditor Lisa O'Connell) extend the work of Felicity Nussbaum and Terry Castle on these "heteroclitic" women memoirists. O'Connell raises the intriguing possibility that the esprit de corps of Wellington's officers came more from sharing Harriette Wilson than from facing death together at Waterloo (163), yet most of her essay focuses less on sexuality than on fashion, print, and publicity. She writes perceptively about Wilson's famous first sentence ("I shall not say why and how I became, at the age of fifteen, the mistress of the Earl of Craven") that it represents "a writerly form of the more physical flaunting that formed part of the prostitute's trade" yet paradoxically departs from the whore's story by refusing to divulge sexual details (172–73). Despite the cartoon (fig. 5) showing one of Wilson's hands writing and the other laid close to her genitals, her expressive freedom seems inversely related to her sex. As I wrote years ago, Wilson "is exercising the right *not* to treat an illicit liaison as a sexual experience," thus canceling out "the 'woman of pleasure' conjured up by libertine fiction"; the true scandal is that "the avoidance of *ennui* was more important than financial security or sexual satisfaction: 'Craven was a dead bore'" (*Review* 11 (1989): 157). Jonathan Mee, in his evocatively titled "Libertines and Radicals in the 1790s," explores a male upper-class scandal monger who exposed the decadence of his own group, the Jockey Club, apparently as an act of revolutionary "transparency." Once again, however, sex *per se* only plays a small part in this exposition (such as double entendres about Lady Archer's dexterous "manual operations" at the card-table [191]). Coleridge, surprisingly enough, put sexuality back into the campaign for liberty: one of his criteria for detecting the radicals he increasingly despised was whether he would trust his wife with them (188).

Chantal Thomas, whose meditation on Casanova largely derives from her earlier book, shares the fantasy of writing while being "caressed," fusing together the refinements of style and sex, punctuation and penetration: "After hesitating at length over a semi-colon, I'd open my thighs" (39). This self-consciously "French" performance of textual pleasure acts out the semantic doubleness of the word "libertine," which (as any historical dictionary tells us) refers to a free-and-easy, improvisational writing style. As I showed years ago in the context of Richardson's Lovelace (and as Wald Lasowski reiterates here [237]), the great exploiter of this "libertine stylistics" is Mme de Sévigné. I would add Laurence Sterne to this category, though Simon During does not make this stylistic connection in his attempt to define Sterne/Yorick/Tristram as a "weak libertine" because of his flirtations and naughty phallic jokes (18, 30).

The book is readable and well produced, apart from the weird habit of setting longer quotes in italics and a few local errors of allusion or translation. (Voltaire was surely accused of lust, not "luxuriousness" [77]; the sickly, sensitive author given to asterisks should be Sternean, not "Richardsonian" [198]; Pierre Bayle felt nothing in 1610 [7]; and Carlyle was

not writing about the diamond necklace in 1897 [134].) Though I have some reservations, as explained above, *Libertine Enlightenment* makes a real contribution to eighteenth-century social history and should be in every research library.

Rather than killing off the concept of Enlightenment or reproducing its smugness, these essays bring Enlightenment to life as a complicated phenomenon, contradictory, even slovenly, but still vital. I find this timely. Critics of Enlightenment should spend some time in a culture that rejects it and enjoy a few honor killings of sexual dissidents, adulterers, and abortion doctors.

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Gay Male Pornography: An Issue of Sex Discrimination. By CHRISTOPHER N. KENDALL. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004. Pp. 270. \$85.00 (cloth).

The characterization of pornography as sex discrimination has come to the fore of academic and policy debate due largely to the writings and activism of Andrea Dworkin and Catherine MacKinnon. Yet for many gay and lesbian activists who support the suppression of heterosexual pornography, the differences between heterosexual and homosexual sex justify viewing gay and lesbian pornography as not only harmless but equality affirming and, indeed, necessary to gay and lesbian freedom. In *Gay Male Pornography: An Issue of Sex Discrimination* Christopher Kendall, dean of law at Murdoch University in Perth, Western Australia, argues forcefully against that view. To Dean Kendall, gay and lesbian pornography (to be distinguished from nonharmful erotica) presents, as his title implies, an issue of sex discrimination every bit as serious as that presented by the heterosexual variety. Based on that conclusion, Dean Kendall argues for legal restrictions on gay and lesbian pornography (again, as implied by his title, focusing his attention on gay male pornography) not only as harmful sex discrimination but as inimical to the very goal of gay equality.

The main thrust of Kendall's argument begins by confronting the most obvious argument in defense of gay male pornography, namely, that it does not present an issue of sex discrimination because it portrays only men. He rejects this argument as resting on a biological essentialism that conflates anatomical maleness with socially constructed ideas of masculinity. To Kendall, the fact that only men appear in gay male pornography misses the point that it, just like its heterosexual counterpart, portrays socially constructed maleness as dominant and the only valuable quality and socially constructed femaleness (in gay pornography the recipient in insertive intercourse and in