

Introduction

Rethinking the Pornographic in Premodern and Early Modern Spanish Cultural Production

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In their depictions of sex, late medieval Iberian and early modern Spanish cultural artifacts can be downright scandalous. The archives that we study, the texts that we teach, are wily, transgressing the imaginary barriers that might otherwise keep safe, aestheticized visions of desire from spilling over into something overtly raw and dangerous. Our work presents us again and again with a literal and metaphoric corpus that is, quite simply, not respectable. It is raunchy. It makes our students shift in their seats. It has made some of our own teachers blush. We might be mortified to discuss it with our grandparents. This is a literary and cultural imaginary that revels in the unruly, perverse, titillating, visceral stirrings of the body.

In their comings and goings, such textual phenomena challenge us to confront some very fundamental questions. For example, how do we—as students, as teachers, as scholars—respond to the flesh that such texts render visible (or audible, palpable, smellable, tasteable)? What labels do we use to refer to the artifacts that archive the body in this way, wantonly unveiling or interpellating the desired or desiring body in action? How should we understand the processes of circulation and consumption that frame such modes of exploiting or policing sex? As a related question, how and where do we locate and catalogue such explosive (anti)canons of carnality? What relationship does such a corpus bear to history, to the lived, embodied experiences of real people? And, most crucially of all, what ethical and political commitments do we recognize through the choices that we make in responding to such questions? Where are *we* in all of this?

Pornographic Sensibilities: Imagining Sex and the Visceral in Premodern and Early Modern Spanish Cultural Production invites us to take such questions seriously by staging a critical conversation between two fields—Medieval/Early Modern Hispanic Studies and Porn Studies—that traditionally have had little to say to each other. This unfortunate disconnect is the product of a long-held scholarly rejection of treating the “pornographic” register in Premodern and Early Modern Hispanic Studies as critically valuable, or even possible. Before addressing what might

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be gained by reconsidering the pornographic as a critical possibility, it is worth reflecting briefly on why Porn has hitherto been largely rejected or ignored as a valid category of analysis.

On the one hand, the very foundations of our field in nineteenth-century Hispanic Philology reveal deep commitments to a series of ideological, cultural, literary, and moral posturings that are, at the same time, methodological, and whose lingering resonance continues to be felt even today.¹ From this vantage, the provocative body of works alluded to here needs to be handled with kid gloves because its salacious content places it in conflict with reactionary ideas about what literature itself should look like, or perhaps what the nation—or that handmaiden of the nation, philology—must aspire to be or to do. This august, doily-trimmed, patriotic posture disposes the field against the sort of critical work that the present volume embraces because such work demands that we name the unnamable, respectability be damned. It goes without saying that Menéndez Pelayo and his intellectual inheritors would not be on board with a book entitled *Pornographic Sensibilities* in which figures like Garcilaso de la Vega and Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra play any sort of role.²

On the other hand, in recent decades scholars have made up for lost time, leaving behind prudish handwringing or moralizing pontification to plumb the archives and squeeze the canon in order to categorize and analyze a vast and ever-growing obscene corpus. The transgressive and diverse sexualities centered in such scholarship are both tangible and vitally essential on their own terms.³ While being explicitly less conservative in its *modi operandi*, this last scholarly approach, however, can sometimes be equally indisposed to embracing the “pornographic” as a valid critical category on grounds that are ostensibly more historicist than ideological. This latter approach might prefer to label the phenomena under survey here as “erotic” or “obscene”—or perhaps even euphemistically as “amorous”—but far less commonly as “pornographic.” Pornography, we are reminded, is fundamentally an historical by-product of Enlightenment sensibilities. Modernity herself gives birth to the pornographic. To assign such a label to premodern or early modern phenomena, then, is to do violence to the historical and cultural specificity of the pre-Enlightenment moments we study.⁴ It is to engage in critically unnuanced anachronism or even brutalist, theory-driven presentism.

From this last perspective, the very suggestion of “pornography” as a legitimate term of inquiry might be read as a violent provocation, serving as a token of the very ideological and methodological divisions that continue to fracture the field of Hispanism itself. And in a sense, it is.⁵ We insist that *Pornographic Sensibilities* leaves space both for rigorous historicizations of pre- and early modern culture, and for playful engagement with a form of “presentism” that knowingly applies a term that scholars associate with modernity to pre- and early modern culture. For reasons that we address later, we are confident that such an approach ultimately

helps us undress the hidden assumptions of both past *and* present in ways that are critically and historically responsible. In making such a claim, we also have in mind scholarly calls to embrace “strategic diachronicity,”⁶ “strategic re-historization,”⁷ or “willful ahistoricism”⁸ as modes of productively rethinking both our historically remote fields of study and our own positionality as scholars operating in the world today.⁹ By embracing a reconsideration of the standard periodization of pornography—and especially by challenging its exclusivist linkages to the sexual, social, and political regimes of modernity—we are further mindful of the important work that scholars like Dipesh Chakrabarty and Kathleen Davis have done in highlighting periodization itself as an always problematic political operation.¹⁰ From this angle, we offer that the periodizing of pornography deserves to be rethought as part of broader critiques of the ideological armature of modernity itself, and of the politics of time upon which modernity as a category depends.¹¹

That said, it bears stating very clearly at the outset that we do not intend in this volume to make the predictable argument that “pornography” is a more apt label than “eroticism” for referring to our object of study, even if such an argument might be made compellingly.¹² Such a terminological debate is tired after decades of interventions on the subject, and our impression is that we are further unlikely to persuade hardline skeptics within the entrenched methodological battlefield that is contemporary global Hispanic Studies.¹³ Our own intervention moves instead in a different direction. Rather than consider the “pornographic” in this volume to be a more or less appropriate descriptor of specific forms, conventions, or qualities—which are, in any event, notoriously slippery to pin down—we advocate instead for a turn to the “pornographic” as a field of study in its own right, a politically and ethically engaged disciplinary space of possibilities.

The present volume’s contributors have been prompted by the primary charge of Porn Studies: to place the category of obscenely fleshed iconography at the center of inquiry and to provide answers to how “pornography,” as a mode both of representation and of critique, affects and has been affected by various social, political, and cultural institutions.¹⁴ In light of such a charge, we argue broadly for the recognition and embrace of “Pornographic Sensibilities,” both in what we study and in how we study it. Through this term, we refer, on the one hand, to a freshly reconsidered premodern and early modern canon of the obscene, the erotic, and the visceral and, on the other, to the very critical practice through which that same archive is rendered legible. Through this term—specifically as against the equally capacious but perhaps more generic category of the “erotic”—we aim to intentionally highlight politically and ethically minded critiques that look at the complex polysystem of which erotic textualities form a core part, foregrounding concerns that are especially central to Porn Studies, including problems of power and

agency, censorship and expression, craft and form, psychology and ethics, violence and freedom, class and economy, institutional mediation and the technologies of consumption, and the key role of gender and sexual identity, race, age, ability, and performance—among other categories—in the representation and consumption of graphic sexualities. This is *not* to suggest in any way that scholarly approaches committed to the study of the “erotic” or the “obscene” cannot be equally committed to studying these very same topics.¹⁵ It is, however, to recognize that the entire field of Porn Studies is already devoted to scrutinizing such questions. The cross-pollination of Premodern and Early Modern Hispanic Studies with Porn Studies thus serves as an explicit, mindful way of clarifying our methodological principles, above all by openly foregrounding the erotic as indissociable from the material and the political.

When we think about using the word “pornography,” even as we train our gaze on fleshly spectacle—or rather, precisely because we are training our gaze in this way—our very embrace of Porn Studies ironically demands that we shift the *locus* of attention away from our objects of study to our own selves as disciplinary practitioners. Indeed, Porn Studies privileges the critique of power dynamics from an ethically minded place of disciplinary self-awareness; we are thus advocating for the broader adoption of such a posture as a methodical way of newly approaching the erotic and the obscene from within the specific historical and cultural coordinates of Medieval and Early Modern Hispanic Studies. The bulk of the present book is focused on literary and cultural studies approaches to the pornographic in this context. But given the ever-growing body of scholarship that examines eroticism and sex in the pre- and early modern eras, we further contemplate the contours of such conscious engagement with “Pornographic Sensibilities” as a productive way to frame broader conversations in the future across and between disparate approaches and diverse subfields: art and art history, literary and cultural studies, anthropology and sociology, religious studies, critical race and ethnicity studies, gender and sexuality studies, history.

Pornography serves as a roomy category within which to support such interdisciplinary work, especially if we embrace a flexible understanding of what “it” is. From the perspective we espouse in this volume, the principle problem with Potter Stewart’s famous definition of the pornographic—“I know it when I see it”—is its very focus on trying to pin down the pornographic itself.¹⁶ What Potter highlights is the power of subjective evaluation in determining whether or not a given expressive manifestation deserves the label “pornography,” and the formulation itself emerges from a recognition of the difficulties in delineating porn from non-porn in a legal context. We would suggest that similar methodological challenges likely underwrite some scholars’ discomfort with embracing the term: “Is this medieval or early modern poem *really* pornography, or are there more contextually appropriate names to describe

what this is?” The question is certainly valid, but we are not interested in offering answers to it in this book. From the perspective we are promoting here, the problem with such a question is its singular focus on the production and consumption of “things” out there—texts, artifacts, words, images, movements, sounds—rather than on the “arguments” that we as readers and critics choose to highlight about those very “things.” To borrow loosely from Walter Kendrick, for us, “‘pornography’ names an argument, not a thing.”¹⁷ To put this another way, we might rework an essential insight that Thauvette articulates in her vindication of pornography as a productive term for approaching early modern English cultural production:

To make the term pornography useful in a sixteenth- and seventeenth-century context, therefore, we might best conceive of it as a reading process, not a genre, where pornography refers to an interaction between reader and text, not to text or to authorial intent alone.¹⁸

For our purposes here, this statement should be expanded to include among those “readers and texts” not only historically situated producers and consumers of both medieval and early modern obscenity but also the contemporary “readers and texts” that make up the very disciplinary space of academic work that we as scholars occupy.

While it is true that for us the Stewart question is fundamentally the wrong question to be asking, we should also recognize that there may well be many late medieval and early modern texts that the Justice himself would have ruled as scandalously “pornographic.” To offer just one notable example, most of the poems in Alzieu, Jammes, and Lissourges’ groundbreaking anthology of *Poesía erótica del siglo de oro* (1984) are the kind of texts that, in yesteryear, one might have needed to keep hidden under one’s mattress, out of view of one’s mother.¹⁹ These are the kind of texts that place visceral carnality at the fore and open imaginaries of obscenity that invite pearl-clutching. If we had our druthers, we would not feel too anxious about renaming that influential collection *Poesía pornográfica*. At the same time, it is also undeniable that in a rigorously etymological sense, vast swaths of late medieval and early modern cultural production in Iberia are, as a point of fact, objectively “pornographic” in so far as they revolve around “whore-writing,” centering the figures, spaces, and bodies of prostitution and brothels.²⁰

Several of the contributors to the present volume respond overtly to both of these sorts of pornography, while others focus more on one or another of these definitions. Be that as it may, our aim in this volume is not to simply convince you to start calling certain kinds of texts “pornographic.” Indeed, some of the contributors to *Pornographic Sensibilities* steer clear of using the term *pornography* in their work, even when they

are engaging in the study of more literalist forms of “whore-writing.” Our goal here is, again, not tied to Porn as “content” but rather as “argument.” Our simple call is to enlist the strategies, methodologies, and insights of Porn Studies in the service of Medieval/Early Modern Hispanic Studies (and vice versa). We are confident that in doing so—by exposing erotic texts to fresh scrutiny under the particular lens of “pornography” as a field—productive new critical possibilities emerge.

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The chapters in this volume represent a series of innovative reconsiderations of pornography as a critical category, mode of expression, and sensorial style/sensibility. The 14 studies of *Pornographic Sensibilities: Imagining Sex and the Visceral in Premodern and Early Modern Spanish Cultural Production*²¹ are divided into three sections that reflect three significant areas of investigation that elaborate upon our ideation of the culture of sex and the visceral in premodern and early modern Spanish cultural production. Over its three sections and 14 chapters, *Pornographic Sensibilities* offers innovative approaches to the study of gendered and sexualized bodies in premodern and early modern Spanish textual production, including literary and artistic works, and historical documents.

The five chapters of the volume’s opening section, “Pornographic Hispanism: Canon Formation, Erotic Concepts,” serve to place in tension, and perhaps suspension, the scholarly dialogue of the collection, representing as they do distinct theoretical approaches that nonetheless all reveal the confluence of discourses of pornography and the culture of sex. Moving in loosely chronological fashion from the fourteenth to the eighteenth century, these contributions interrogate the location of the archives we study, they wrangle with the terminology we have outlined here, and they reflect on our disciplinary practice more broadly.

To begin the volume, Ross Karlan considers one of the more explicitly sexual moments in the short fabliau-esque parable known as the “Enxienplo de lo que conteció a don Pitas Payas pintor de Bretaña” from Juan Ruiz, the Archpriest of Hita’s *Libro de buen amor*. Pushing back on claims of the “pornographic” as anachronistic in the context of medieval Iberia, Karlan contends that the story of Pitas Payas literalizes the image of “whore-painting.” In his close readings, Karlan urges us to consider the scene’s strong sexual content, its erotic wordplay, and creative allusions to sexual acts and genitalia as illustrations of the text’s intersection between whore-painting and erotic obscenities that link the story’s plot, sexual tone, and reception for fourteenth-century audiences.

Emily C. Francomano asks why Fernando de Rojas’ act of pornography (writing about prostitutes) has occupied such a place of precedence in Spanish Studies. She asserts that knowing *Celestina* intimately makes us, as Hispanists, experts entrusted with handing down knowledge to the next generation, knowledge that features knowing *Celestina* inside and out. As

disciplinary practitioners who obsessively focus on writing and teaching about the old whore, however, Francomano grapples with the ways in which our disciplinary heritage renders us, as scholars, pornographers. Francomano's chapter thus considers *Celestina* as a productive vehicle for exploring key connections between prostitution and canonicity, between representations of the commoditized body and the cultural capital of the field, in order to reconsider the ethics of our disciplinary labor.

Building upon the problem of canonicity, Casey R. Eriksen's intervention on Garcilaso de la Vega's "Ode ad florem Gnidi" examines the poem's register through the lens of sixteenth-century erotica. Through the methodology of close reading, Eriksen's chapter reveals that risqué ambiguities permeate the poem's verses, transacting meaning via euphemism and double-entendre. For Garcilaso's contemporaries in Renaissance Spain, even seemingly innocent words routinely served to communicate what can be productively framed as pornographic double meanings. In the "Ode ad florem Gnidi," as examined by Eriksen, the poetic voice evokes a lovesick prisoner, a galley slave whose tortuous plight is cast in terms rife with sexually explicit imagery. By revisiting the graphically sexual language found in Garcilaso's poetic corpus, this study foregrounds new possibilities for interpretation, rooted in the transparent ambiguities of humanist Iberian spheres.

J. Ignacio Díez, for his part, contributes to further expanding the pornographic-poetic canon by mapping the salacious epigrams of sixteenth-century figure Baltasar del Alcázar. Díez gestures to the clandestine manuscript circulation of Alcázar's openly scandalous poems, while also considering the canonization of some of those same works in print, offering a broad outline of both the diverse ways in which the poet exploits language, humor, and wit to evoke wanton scenes of carnality and comicity, and the ways in which those same scenes were circulated and consumed in sixteenth-century Seville.

Turning to Cervantine Studies, Sherry Velasco examines how Miguel de Cervantes used code-switching, translation, and etymology in *Don Quixote de la Mancha* (1605/1615) to explore sexuality's relationship to language and storytelling. Her chapter uncovers how Cervantes disguises pornographic language and images and explains why the author implicates sexual desire in his theories and practices of translation, adaptation, and sequels. Via her analysis of translation "workshops" that appear on the surface to engage a serious cultural-linguistic task of rendering words or concepts from one language to another, Velasco's chapter explores Cervantes' interest in code-switching, translation, and etymologies as strategies for interrogating how language is necessarily implicated in all erotic undertakings—ultimately revealing the linguistic nature of sexuality as well as the sexual nature of language.

This last meditation on the power of language is, in many ways, central to observations that cut across the entire volume. Indeed, the

pornographic throughout this book exists in and around the slippages that words invite. Part One of the volume concludes, to wit, with Elena Deanda-Camacho's wide-ranging chapter on how the linguistic devices of dysphemism and euphemism can help us understand the registers of the erotic and the pornographic. Deanda-Camacho identifies the operation of such allusive strategies especially in the scandalous underground poetry luminaries of the Spanish Enlightenment: Nicolás Fernández de Moratín, his son Leandro, Tomás de Iriarte, and Juan Meléndez Valdés. This chapter also gestures to broader genealogies of the pornographic, stretching from the early modern period up to the Enlightenment. In addition, this chapter serves to both instantiate and problematize the periodization of pornography outlined here, while also highlighting essential modes of thinking through the pornographic that are applicable to the field as a whole.

Part Two of the volume, "On the Visceral and Its (Dis)Contents," further complicates the theoretical, historical, methodological, and disciplinary issues addressed in Part I in a variety of ways. Alani Hicks-Barlett's chapter argues that early modern erotic and pornographic poems frequently dramatize ocular-centric poet-lovers' attempts to control visual stimuli. Hicks-Barlett traces the scopophilic struggle to exercise power over the beloved's "body" in Garcilaso's "Con ansia extrema de mirar" and the anonymous "Mudo despertador del apetito," poems which she contends offer dramatic descriptions of the barriers and thresholds that distinguish the malleable forms the lovers desire from the impervious materials they cannot govern.

Enriqueta Zafra explores the 1982 Spanish TV adaptations of three of the most well-known examples of the female picaresque: *La lozana andaluza* (1528), *La pícaro Justina* (1605), and *La hija de Celestina* (1612). Zafra reaches across time to draw attention to the commonalities that mark how female sexuality is packaged and consumed by male creators and audiences in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and twentieth centuries. In doing so, her contribution considers *destape* films that center on the figure of classic *pícaras*, thus opening the canons of both 1980s Spanish film and early modern picaresque to mutually enriching new readings. According to Zafra, both genres' male-derived and male-focused gazes overtly appeal to an exploitative patriarchal sensibility that is rigorously pornographic in its attention to exposing the bodies of prostitutes for pleasurable consumption. Her contribution also reflects on the cultural work performed by an erotics of the canon in which classics of Spain's famed "Golden Age" become sites for a visceral celebration of the national past.

Returning to a concern with describing and recovering archives of the visceral, this time from the particular vantage of medicine, disease, social stigma, and moral condemnation, Adrián J. Sáez maps the poetics of syphilitic infection specifically within the work of Spanish Baroque

satirist Francisco de Quevedo. Taking a step back from traditionalist interpretations of Quevedo's poetic rendering of syphilis, which focus on autobiographic readings and the operation of the figure's notoriously pyrotechnic poetics of *ingenio*, Sáez recovers the pictorial aspects of Quevedo's corporeal representations of contagious, oozing syphilitic bodies. Exposed and diseased, rendered ekphrastically in detail as a visual object to contemplate, Sáez elaborates on how such bodies operate doubly as sources of graphic sexual fixation and as vehicles for poetic slippages. Reading Quevedo's syphilitic body furthermore in intertextual dialogue with the work of Aretino, Sáez maps moral cautions over the dark side of carnal love as overlapping with the suggestive—hence pornographic—evocation of that same carnality in visually heightened ways.

Margaret Boyle rounds out Part Two by challenging us to re-consider María de Zayas y Sotomayor's 1647 collection of novellas *Los desengaños amorosos* as a voyeuristic entrance into the world of violence against women, one of the most graphic early modern accounts of rape, torture, and self-harm. Boyle situates Zayas under the framework of the pornographic, thus allowing us to examine the intersections between a number of interrelated theoretical categories: judicial and political witnessing, performative spectatorship, and the marketing and moralizing of sexual pleasure. Drawing our attention to the two novellas *La esclava de su amante* and *La inocencia castigada*, Boyle concentrates on the architecture of domestic enclosures (bedrooms, chimneys) and their impact on corporeal punishment and spectacular display, thereby revealing the ties between transformative dress, religious practice, and change in status (e.g., Christian women dressing as Muslim; aristocratic women becoming slaves). Also provocative is how these novellas play with truth and fiction in ways that enhance their illicit eroticism: Zayas situates autobiography within the context of the fictional setting of a *sarao* [soirée], where the threshold of *desengaño* [deceit; disillusionment] also represents a fraught genre with its dual mandate to entertain and educate.

The book's third section, "Haptic Arousals, Titillating the Senses," highlights the centrality of touch, sound, and sight as loci for imagining and experiencing wanton desires and visceral carnality. Theorizing onanism in early modern Spanish poetry, Álvaro Piquero opens and frames Part Three by centering the sense of touch, drawing on a broad range of late medieval and early modern poetic evocations of masturbation. Piquero's study begins by tracing the graphic representation of masturbation—along with the objects associated with it, such as dildos—in its civil, religious, and social contexts. The chapter then moves through close readings of the obscene poeticization of masturbation in a range of texts in both Castilian and Galician-Portuguese. Piquero concludes that the powerful bodily affect of solitary sex mobilizes itself in ways that are highly gendered and ultimately contradictory for wedding moral condemnation with voyeuristic titillation.

While Piquero exposes us to textual linkages between touch and pornography, Víctor Sierra Matute does so with sound. In his chapter, “Humors and Rumors: Sonic Viscerality in Juan Pérez de Montalbán’s *La mayor confusión*,” Sierra Matute highlights the auditory and vocal implications of the title’s “confusión,” a term whose etymology in contemporary sources defines it as a “fusion of liquids or sounds.”

Yang Xiao’s chapter, for its part, highlights the power both of sound and touch as vehicles for the expression and experience of desire, considering particularly how sexually explicit encounters are transacted through material objects. Approaching the erotic from a broadly comparative global perspective by contrasting the love objects that appear in Fernando de Rojas’ *Celestina* and Chinese author Wang Shifu’s *The Story of the Western Wing* (西廂記), Yang Xiao traces telling resonances between both works in their literary materialization of physical longing and in the pornographic suggestions of possession, stroking, and play inherent in the objects used to embody longing. This comparative approach similarly opens the canons both of Spanish and Chinese literature to fresh critical possibilities.

The volume concludes *Pornographic Sensibilities* with historian Nicole von Germeten’s chapter, which takes us to the era of Bourbon reforms in eighteenth-century New Spain (Mexico). Focusing especially on the sense of sight and on the voyeuristic desire of *guardafaroleros* [police men and trash collectors], von Germeten studies archival sources from the 1700s that empower her to posit two nodes of disguised expressions and verbalizations of sexual desire: 1) *guardafaroleros*’ own voyeuristic desire to observe scatological street activities coupled with their sadistic responses to them and 2) the telling and recording of explicit sex acts as a form of pornography. As with Deanda-Camacho’s chapter, von Germeten’s work pushes the temporal boundaries of the volume. It also gestures to the global geographies of Spain’s colonial-imperial machine, where pornographic sensibilities are equally operative, and it furthermore calls our attention to a broader, novel archive of pornographic methods and materials that push the canon of the erotic, the obscene, and the visceral in new directions.

In concluding, we offer the 14 chapters that make up *Pornographic Sensibilities* as a sampling of just some of the critical possibilities that the pornographic offers to the field of premodern and early modern Hispanism. We are hopeful that future work in the field will continue to build upon the critical promise of the pornographic.

Notes

1. On the complicated origins and lingering connections of contemporary Hispanism as practiced in the United States to traditional nineteenth-century Spanish philology, see Altschul, *Geographies*; Altschul and Nelson, “Transatlantic Discordances”; and the articles in Epps and Fernández Cifuentes, *Spain Beyond Spain*.

2. Emily Francomano's chapter in the present volume begins precisely by considering Menéndez Pidal's tortured position as an (un)witting pornographer in his writing on *Celestina*.
3. The bibliography is frankly immense. We are especially indebted here to Blackmore and Hutcheson's *Queer Iberia*, and, in many regards, we hope that the present book serves as a complementary volume to that pioneering work. *Queer Iberia* aimed—and we would add, was successful—at breaking new ground by showcasing “the complex range of contentious and revealing intersections among culture, sexuality, and history that not only confound a tradition of normative readings, but confront the geopolitical and chronological biases by which scholarship continues to relegate medieval and early-modern Iberia to the critical closet,” 5. For a broad sampling of scholarship on both sides of the Atlantic that has gainfully embraced the study of gender, sexuality, eroticism, and obscenity within literary and cultural studies, see Alatorre, *El sueño erótico*; Alzieu, Jammes, and Lissourges, *Poesía erótica*; Behrend-Martínez, “Making Sense of the History of Sex”; Berco, *Sexual Hierarchies*; Binotti, “Visual Eroticism”; Blasco Pascual, *Lasciva*; Boyle, *Unruly Women*; Claminson and Vázquez García, *Sex*; Díez, *La poesía*; Díez and Martín, *Venus venerada* and *Venus venerada, II*; Díez and Cortijo Ocaña, “Erotismo”; Fernández Rodríguez, *Eros*; Juárez-Almendros, *Disabled Bodies*; Kallendorf, *Sins of the Fathers*; Laguna and Beusterien, *Goodbye Eros*; Marín Cepeda, *En la concha de venus*; Profeti, “Lo erótico”; Tortorici, *Sins Against Nature*; Volendorf, “Good Sex, Bad Sex”; Soyer, *Ambiguous Gender*; Velasco, *Lesbians and Male Delivery*; von Germeten, *Profit and Passion and Violent Delights*; and Zafra, *Prostituidas*. Among these authors, the present volume includes chapters from Boyle, Díez, Velasco, von Germeten, and Zafra.
4. In line with such standard periodizations, Kendrick, *The Secret Museum*, for example, dedicates a chapter to “The Pre-Pornographic Era.” Moulton's eloquently titled *Before Pornography*, 3, is paradigmatic on this front: “‘pornography’ is too historically and generically specific a term to be much use in a discussion of the early modern period, for the erotic writing of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries—whatever its explicitness—is different in both form and content from the genres of pornography as they developed in later periods.” For similar arguments in the context of Hispanism, see Díez, *La poesía erótica*, 13–62, as well as the opening pages of Díez's contribution to the present volume. In the introduction to her significant edited collection *The Invention of Pornography*, Hunt lays out the standard claim that “pornography came into existence both as a literary and visual practice and as a category of understanding at the same time as—and concomitantly with—the long-term emergence of Western modernity,” 10.
5. Contemporary Hispanism remains a field riven by the opposing tugs of Philology and Cultural Studies, pitting historicism against theory, and *siglodoristas* against Early Modernists. While the field in recent years may have settled into a “‘quiet’ consensus” (Castillo and Egginton, “Hispanism,” 86) or “tregua [truce]” (Cortijo Ocaña and Layna Ranz, “¿Qué hay de nuevo, viejo,” i) that is characterized on some fronts by pluralist acceptance of disciplinary differences (Schwartz, “La cultura,” 21–2), it seems clear to us that politically charged terms like “pornography,” “race,” “postcolonialism,” or “relevance” unavoidably put the finger right in the proverbial *llaga* [wound]. For a sampling of diverse, sometimes quite opposing perspectives on such disciplinary divisions, see Altschul and Nelson, “Transatlantic Discordances”; Aurell, “Antiquarianism Over Presentism”; Cabo Aseguinolaza, “Los lugares”; Cortijo Ocaña and Layna Ranz, “¿Qué hay . . .?”; Cruz, “Golden Age Studies”; Fuchs, “Golden Ages”; Greer, “Thine and Mine”;

Heller, “The New Geography”; Labrador Méndez, “New Directions”; Oleza, “Multiculturalismo”; Pontón, “Notas”; Schwartz, “De hispanismos” and “La cultura”; Trigo, “Los estudios”; and Weber, “*Golden Age*.” In the present volume, we have endeavored to assemble scholars from both sides of the Atlantic who represent diverse methodological approaches to the visceral and the obscene. In this sense, we offer the present volume as a snapshot of the field as it stands today, and as a way of fostering critical dialogue across the fractured landscape outlined here.

6. Heng, “Holy War,” 428.
7. Castillo, “The Literary Classics,” 26.
8. Egginton, “The Trap,” 224.
9. Cohen, “Introduction,” 4–6, similarly calls for us to recognize the “intimate alterity” of the past. While premodern and postmodern pornographies may not look quite the same, the rejection of possible resonances across time is no less problematic, and the critical labor of deconstructing such continuities and disjunctures is, itself, productive.
10. Chakrabarty, *Habitations*, xix–xx asks, “Can the designation of something or some group as *non-* or *premodern* ever be anything but a gesture of the powerful?” For Davis, *Periodization* and “Theory,” the construction of a secular, rational “modernity” as against an atemporal, religious, feudal “medieval” enables the manufacture of sovereignty itself: periodization “does not refer to a mere back-description that divides history into segments, but to a fundamental political technique—a way to moderate, divide, and regulate—always rendering its services *now*,” *Periodization*, 5.
11. For a critique of the politics of periodization specifically within the field of Hispanic Studies, see Fuch’s essential “1492.”
12. Thauvette, “Defining Early Modern Pornography” and Toulalan, *Imagining Sex*, for example, have made very persuasive cases for the context of early modern England.
13. See, for example, the remarks on this topic within the context of Hispanic Studies included as early as 1967 in Zavala, Moix, and Pellegrini, *Lo erótico* or also Díez Borque’s 1977 anthology, *Poesía erótica*, 9–10 and 43–5. More recently, Díez, *La poesía erótica*, 13–62, and Díez and Cotijo Ocaña, “Erotismo.” For one example of an approach committed to the pornographic label within early modern Hispanism, see Binotti, “Visual Eroticism.”
14. Williams’ foundational *Hard Core* (1989) followed by *Porn Studies* (2004) in many ways inaugurated the field as such. Reflecting its institutionalization as a cohesive discipline, the journal *Porn Studies*, www.tandfonline.com/loi/rprn20, has published four issues a year since 2014. Recent work that is deeply engaged with the politically forward and interdisciplinary intellectual project of the field that we consider to be a model include Gregory, *Indigeneity*; Miller-Young, *Brown Sugar*; and Sigal, Tortorici, and Whitehead, *Ethnopornography*.
15. See, for example, Martin, *An Erotic Philology*.
16. See Williams, *Hard Core*, 6. This is an anxiety manifested regularly in scholarship on pornography. Moulton, *Before Pornography*, 3, for example, states that “‘Pornography’ is a word notoriously difficult to define, and it is in part because of its amorphous nature that makes it problematic as an analytical term.”
17. Kendrick, *The Secret Museum*, 31. Kendrick in fact is suggesting here that there is something qualitatively different and historically specific about the sort of “argument” that pornography presents, as against more generic, atemporal expressions of “obscurity.” We consider pornography rather as an

- argument in a more meta-disciplinary sense, by insisting that the term compels us to respond to the visceral and the obscene in the critically engaged ways that the field of Porn Studies promotes.
18. Thauvette, "Defining," 46.
 19. See Álvaro Piquero's contribution to the present volume, which includes close readings of several poems from the anthology that graphically depict female masturbation in shockingly explicit terms.
 20. The term derives from the Greek πόρνη, *pornē*, "prostitute" and γράφειν, *graphein*, "to write or record." For a survey of this etymology, see Kendrick, *The Secret Museum*, chapter 1.
 21. In deploying the concept of viscosity in the title of this volume, we especially have in mind Holland, Ochoa, and Tompkins' theorization of the term in their introduction to two special issues of the journal *GLQ* "On the visceral": "We see viscosity as a phenomenological index for the logics of desire, consumption, disgust, health, disease, belonging, and displacement that are implicit in colonial and postcolonial relations. Emerging from the carnal language of (colonial) excess, viscosity registers those systems of meaning that have lodged in the gut, signifying to the incursion of violent intentionality into the rhythms of everyday life," 395.

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