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READING, WRITING, AND PUBLISHING AN OBSCENE CANON



The Archival Logic of the Secret Museum, c. 1860–c. 1900

Sarah Bull

My conjectures as to the character of the contents of — — —'s cabinet were correct! For, my dear, I have found, secured, and appropriated that key. The long sought for, long talked of, is mine at last! And the cabinet has been explored! Oh, it is fearful. I didn't dream there were such books in the world. . . . You haven't any idea how perfectly awful they are. Why, it's enough to make the very paper they're on blush. . . . What would the handsome and unsuspecting — — — say, if only he knew of a certain young lady's discoveries, and the liberties taken with his treasures? He is still abroad, perhaps getting new rarities for his collection.¹

What “bad books” lie within the cabinet Lucille discovers in *The Story of a Dildoe* (1880)? Context implies its contents would include pornographic novels like the one in which it appears, but medical and scientific works, writings on ancient artefacts, translations of foreign literature, court reports, legal texts, religious tracts, Greek and Roman classics, and “gallant” novels are equally likely candidates. Works falling into each of these generic categories—and many more—were subject to accusations of obscenity in the nineteenth century, and discussed alongside pornographic fiction within public, governmental, and judicial debates about how to regulate the rapidly expanding print marketplace. At the same time, these diversely arrayed publications circulated alongside one another, forming a recognizable and evolving “canon” of works about, or associated with, sex displayed in museum collections of “dangerous” reading materials, bibliographies of “forbidden” books, clandestine sales catalogues, and the libraries of rich collectors who inspired characters like *The Story of a Dildoe*'s Mr. — — —.

The generic diversity of print materials labelled obscene in this period is a topic of longstanding scholarly interest, one that has led to close analyses of the attempts that moralists and legislators made to develop criteria with which to distinguish legitimate sexual representations from criminal texts. Examining the reasoning underpinning these criteria has resulted in better understandings of ideas about reading in the nineteenth century, especially

in relation to class and gender, and of the anxieties that the changing print marketplace aroused.² It has also helped establish the origins of notions of artistic, educational, and scientific merit that shaped censorship laws in the twentieth century.³ Increasingly, however, scholars have begun to look more closely at how and why the obscene was often treated as a single category of print amid legal attempts to define the term more strictly, with public and private discussions of indecent matter routinely linking works that belonged to different genres, that had been published at different times and in different places, and that referred to sex with varying degrees of explicitness, together through common reference. Among several recent studies, Sarah L. Leonard's examination of obscenity in the German states identifies commercial factors at play, arguing that the category's internal diversity, as represented by state authorities, was not solely the result of wide-ranging anxieties about the effects of reading, but also an effect of the stigmatizing influence of trade routes through which seemingly innocuous works accrued associations with obscenity, making obscenity "not simply a matter of words on the page."⁴

This essay advances understandings of the relationship between the material circulation of books and obscenity's treatment as a generically diverse category by examining how the modality of the archive influenced the production, advertisement, and interpretation of a wide range of works that referred to, or were otherwise associated with, sex in Victorian Britain. My investigation focuses on the reading, writing, collection, publishing, and advertising practices of a loose network of wealthy book collectors, bibliographers, self-styled sexual scientists, and pornographers brought together in the last half of the nineteenth century through their shared interest in what they often termed "forbidden books." I argue that, unlike the period's moralists and legislators, these men—and they were, fantasies of female participation aside, men—did not seek to distinguish legitimate scientific, legal, and artistic forms of sexual representation from those that were indefensibly obscene. Rather, they imagined the obscene as a generically diverse, globally scattered, and historically suppressed archive of publications that, like the cabinet Lucille discovers in *The Story of a Dildoe*, represented the key to hidden sexual knowledge and unrealized sexual pleasure. They defined the parameters of this archive, expanded it, and refined its mythos through the practices of collection, bibliography, writing, publication, and advertisement.

The discourse of the secret museum, as I will term it,⁵ which structured these activities was rooted in a tradition of eclectic reading stretching back

to the early modern period. As James Grantham Turner has shown, this tradition linked “hard core” sexual writing with less explicit political, pedagogical, scientific, amatory, and humorous works to form a multifarious “canon” of “libertine” literature, through which readers had in the past explored such issues as female education and the relationship between cognition and desire.⁶ Even as some pornographers were beginning to rewrite parts of this canon to meet demand for works focused more narrowly on sexual acts,⁷ the network that this essay examines perceived it—and framed their own promiscuous reading and publishing practices—through the lens of new laws, cultural discourses, and institutional systems that sought to discipline Victorian reading practices. Their strategy of the obscene newly privileged the historical circulation of books, imposing a logic of interpretation based on a work’s retroactively ascribed position within a historically suppressed archive of “forbidden books,” an archive inclusive of many works associated with the older libertine canon as well as this network’s own multifarious publishing legacy.

This history demonstrates the continued centrality of eclectic reading and publishing practices within erotic print culture during a period associated with the hardening of pornography as a genre.⁸ Although it represents only one way in which the obscene was conceptualized, it offers a model of reading that can help us imagine how less privileged Victorian readers, who left few records of their experiences of reading about sex, might have approached less costly “archives” of sexual information and entertainment.⁹ In revealing how those most invested in erotic print culture attributed at least as much interpretive significance to the circulation of books (and the perceived circulation of books) as did state and legal authorities, it also emphasizes that culture’s contiguous relationship with broader cultural discourses and interpretive practices. At the same time, the interacting models of reading, writing, and publishing that this essay traces underscore the need for us, as book historians, to look beyond the bounds of authorship, genre, national borders, or business practices when we study the “sociology of texts”¹⁰. Observed in action, these models illustrate how meaningful relationships between books develop outside those categories: amid interacting historical, ideological, and commercial factors, diversely arrayed print materials can become imaginatively linked—and those imaginative links can subsequently structure the ways on which such materials are produced, disseminated, and interpreted by their readers.

The Secret Museum, Institutional and Bibliographical

Fantasies of a globally scattered, multifarious archive of explicit publications, drawn together by their mutual histories of suppression and by their mutual production of sexual knowledge and sexual pleasure, permeated Britain's clandestine print culture in the wake of the establishment of real museum collections of "forbidden" materials across Europe. As the joint forces of Western imperial conquest and the emergent field of archaeology prompted the increased entry of explicit antiquities into national institutions in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, administrators had created restricted collections to preserve these priceless objects while shielding morally vulnerable museum visitors from graphic depictions of sex. The Museo Borbonico's Gabinetto Segreto in Naples, established in 1821 to house explicit artifacts discovered in Pompeii and Herculaneum, was the earliest and perhaps the most famous of these "secret museums."¹¹ The British Museum followed in the Museo Borbonico's footsteps in the late 1830s, forming a "Secretum" to segregate explicit antiquities from collections accessible to the general public.¹² Around 1857, the same year that Britain's first piece of legislation against obscenity, the Obscene Publications Act, was passed, the institution established the Private Case, the nation's first collection of this kind to focus primarily on printed works.¹³ The imaginative debts that Victorian bibliographies of "forbidden books" owe to such collections—and especially to the Private Case—begin to show how larger cultural discourses about obscenity influenced the processes of interpretation, production, and exchange in which their authors participated.

The Private Case itself both reflected and offered a new interpretation of the cultural discourses about obscenity that had inspired its establishment. The collection's system of management was rooted in the same elitist views of reading competence that motivated the Obscene Publications Act.¹⁴ Access to Private Case materials was restricted to gentleman scholars who acquired knowledge of the collection through elite social networks—the only readers considered appropriately equipped to survey the materials it housed.¹⁵ Incorporating into one body pornographic fiction and images, medical and scientific works on sexual topics, antireligious and antigovernment tracts, slang dictionaries, bibliographies of explicit books, bawdy poems and plates, titillating biographies, and even a catalogue for the Gabinetto Segreto, the Private Case's holdings also reflected discourses about obscenity circulating in the public sphere, representing the wide range works

conceived threatening to the moral integrity of vulnerable readers.¹⁶ At the same time, however, the Private Case's structure implied ideas about obscenity that did not feature in that public discourse. The collection flattened the historically and generically diverse works it contained into a single category of equally "dangerous" materials, effacing distinctions between legitimate and criminal representations of sex that were becoming increasingly central to Victorian debates about how to regulate the print marketplace.¹⁷ With no organizational apparatus to rank its varied holdings according to genre, utility, or the amount of social danger posed, the Private Case implicitly represented them as a field of comparable publications.¹⁸ Furthermore, the Museum's very act of preserving these books suggested that, as well as acting as a source of corrupting sexual pleasure, this field represented a valuable source of knowledge for gentleman scholars.

Wealthy male collectors and bibliographers of "forbidden works" viewed the obscene in almost exactly these terms, starting with the category's internal diversity. Like such collectors' private libraries,¹⁹ the bibliographies of "forbidden books" that Henry Spencer Ashbee and William Laird Clowes published in the 1870s and 1880s encompass nearly as wide a range of works as the Private Case. Ashbee's *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (1877), *Centuria Librorum Absconditorum* (1879), and *Catena Librorum Tacendorum* (1885), privately printed under the pseudonym "Pisanus Fraxi," describe a generically, historically, and linguistically diverse body of works—including legal and religious tracts, medical works, and translations of Eastern sex manuals, "gallant" novels and other works associated with the libertine canon, and new pornographic magazines, novels, and poems—that represent sexual bodies, acts, and desires in different styles, with varying degrees of explicitness. The composition of Clowes's *Bibliotheca Arcana*, which the author also privately printed, in 1885, under the pseudonym "Speculator Morum," is so similar that the bibliographer has often been accused of plagiarizing Ashbee's work: productions such as *The Life and Adventures of Miss Randihole: How She Lived, Loved, and Enjoyed Herself* (1802) jostle with Pietro Aretino's *Ragionamenti* (1534), Richard Payne Knight's *Account of the Remains of the Worship of Priapus* (1786), Richard Burton and F.F. Arbuthnot's 1873 translation of the *Kama Shastra*, Ovid's *Art of Love* (AD 2), a book of *Notes on the Sexual Instinct in Youth* (1876), an eighteenth century account of divorce trials for adultery, and a French guide to the *Gabinetto Segreto*.

Unlike the Private Case, or the Roman Catholic *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (1559–1948) (from which Ashbee borrowed the title of his first bib-

liography), such bibliographies did not aim to conceal offensive works from public view, nor facilitate their suppression. Although they circulated clandestinely, these works conspicuously display their authors' expert knowledge of the "field," as they call it, with Ashbee taking particular pride in having personally examined the works described in his bibliographies over a period of many years.²⁰ Their lists' variety is not the result of throwing any offensive work that came to mind onto the page, but reflects a studied understanding of the obscene, one likely informed by knowledge of the tissue of "citation, translation, 'traduction,' [and] imitation" that linked many of the works associated with the libertine canon²¹ as well as newer cultural discourses about the range of potentially endangering reading material that influenced the Private Case's own ad hoc composition. Their authors' encounters with institutional collections of "forbidden" materials—they examined some through books, like M.L. Barré's illustrated catalogue of the *Gabinetto Segreto*, *Musée Secret*,²² and almost certainly inspected the Private Case in person²³—would have only strengthened their impressions of the obscene as an internally diverse category of works.

Where these bibliographers and the Private Case's administrators' understanding of the obscene diverged is the degree to which they ascribed relationships between works that fell into the category. For the Private Case's administrators, "secret museums" were merely mechanisms for containing socially threatening materials, but Ashbee and Clowes conceived these collections as synecdoches of a much larger, historically traceable, and globally dispersed family of publications, a family that their bibliographies attempt to reconcile. Clowes's *Bibliotheca Arcana* proclaims itself the record of an "arcane archive," while Ashbee imagines his bibliographies as museums which, like the Private Case, gather together "into [a] common fold the stray sheep," "forbidden books . . . the pariahs of every nation."²⁴ As this passage implies—and as the titles of his bibliographies, which translate as "List of Prohibited Books," "A Company of a Hundred Hidden Books" and "A Chain of Books to Be Passed Over in Silence," underscore—one of the key elements that unites these "miscellaneous" works for these bibliographers is their common history of suppression.²⁵ With its preface's repeated references to the "forbidden" nature of the works it contains, and its subtitle, *Brief Notices of Books that Have Been Secretly Printed, Prohibited by Law, Seized, Anathematized, Burnt or Bowdlerized*, Clowes's *Bibliotheca Arcana* also emphasizes that a common history of restricted circulation is the tie that binds the works he brings to light.

Ashbee's and Clowes's characterization of the archive they seek to reconstruct as a "suppressed" one is exaggerated. Most of the works their bib-

liographies list had been restricted from circulation in one way or another at some point in their history (either by their producers and distributors themselves or by various authorities) but this was not true for all of them.²⁶ The bibliographies conflate sexual content—something the works they list works *do* have in common—with suppression, a practice with a long history within European clandestine print culture that would expand as the secret museum discourse increasingly shaped its methods of production and exchange. Like these bibliographers' views of the obscene as a multifarious category of publications, the way they collapse sexual content with a history of suppression bears the trace of larger Western discourses about obscenity that looked on a work's material history as evidence of its legitimacy, or lack thereof. As Leonard has shown, "assumptions about social spaces—who offered a book, to whom, and in what context—marked a text as a certain kind of object. As publications travelled along [certain routes], . . . they accrued meanings that branded them as dangerous, even criminal," leading to some surprising cultural beliefs about what works were obscene, and what were not.²⁷ This was especially true of the British context, where a work's "circumstances of publication" and dissemination were, by 1868, legally considered evidence for or against its obscenity.²⁸ In their bibliographies, Ashbee and Clowes invert culturally imagined links between the material history of print materials and their respectability, claiming a common history of suppression for works they frame (echoing the language of moralists and legislators) as moral "poisons."²⁹

Clowes's claim that suppression not only united works within the forbidden archive he sought to bring to light, but also "purified and hallowed" them, hints at the justificatory benefits that collapsing explicitness and suppression could offer. The "true bibliophile," he claims, "sees not its foulness" when he looks at a "forbidden book": "To his eyes it wears a halo of martyrdom." Clowes considers such a book's "sufferings" very noble indeed: it has paid the price, he says, for offering its readers "a true glimpse . . . of that most terrible and absorbing of all dramas, the secret workings of the human mind," in horrifying detail. Like realist novels and paintings, these "secret denizens of the library" offer the "truth" of nature, providing readers with valuable insights into "human motives and human passions." A responsible man will "carefully lock away such books, just as the authorities of the British Museum lock them away" because they are dangerous to vulnerable readers, but "he will treasure them. . . . Because . . . they unfold . . . the secrets of the most shadowy and most complex side of man's nature."³⁰ By ascribing a varied archive of "forbidden books" with a common function

as well as a common history, Clowes claims outright what the Private Case's existence implied: each work in the archive constitutes a valuable source of sexual knowledge as well as a source of endangering sexual pleasure.

Ashbee, too, argues for the epistemological force of the archive he unveils. He does not limit its sources of valuable knowledge to the anthropological and medical works he includes in his bibliographies, but also frames erotic fiction as "one of the surest sources whence to gather a picture of past times."³¹ "Truth," Ashbee claims, is

what we want from a novel, if it is to be of permanent value . . . the author describes the epoch in which he lives, the people with whom he associates, the scenes which he has visited. . . . Now, Erotic Novels . . . contain, at any rate the best of them, the truth, and "hold the mirror up to nature" more certainly than do those of any other description . . . [T]heir authors have, in most instances, been eye-witnesses of the scenes they have described . . . themselves enacted, in part, what they have portrayed. Immoral and amatory fiction . . . must unfortunately be acknowledged to contain . . . a reflection of the manners and vices of the times—of vices to be avoided, guarded against, reformed, but which unquestionably exist, and of which an exact estimate is needful to enable us to cope with them.³²

For Ashbee, then, an obscene novel like *Venus Schoolmistress* (1830), which chronicles the adventures of the "daughter of a woman who kept a day school, and who never let pass an opportunity to flog her pupils," reveals the true nature of a "*lech*, which has existed from time immemorial" in the British Isles.³³ Similarly, the novel *Vies des Dames Gallants* (1666) and *A History of the Rod* (1870) each offer evidence that "Tribadism is chiefly indulged in by Turkish and French women" and that "the propensity which the English most cherish is undoubtedly Flagellation."³⁴

Scholars have approached Ashbee's characterization of erotic fiction as a mirror of reality with justifiable skepticism. The sexual fantasies that color the bibliographer's insistence that fictional episodes of sexual activity "really happened,"³⁵ as well as the fact that such claims function to justify a project that would leave its author vulnerable to accusations of impropriety,³⁶ emphasize that Ashbee's and Clowes's insistence on obscene fiction's sociological value was self-interested. However, self-interest does not negate the possibility that these claims reflect these authors' genuine understanding of how erotic fiction functioned. European erotic print culture was rooted in a tradition of eclectic reading that had long treated explicit fiction as a pedagogical tool,³⁷ and both men were also working in a period when, as

Sally Shuttleworth and John Holmes have each shown, the belief that literature is a “mirror” of reality was quite mainstream. Respectable Victorian scientific experts often cited poets and novelists as authoritative observers of human character, “even to the point,” Holmes has argued, “where fictional characters were taken as case studies.”³⁸ This was especially true of scholars working in emerging scientific disciplines for which gathering case studies proved difficult. Early European sexologists, as Anna Katherina Schaffner has demonstrated, often substituted fictional narratives—including pornographic novels listed in Ashbee’s bibliographies³⁹—for case studies, using them as a basis for theorizing the nature of sexual desire.⁴⁰

If Ashbee’s and Clowes’s understanding of pornography’s dual function drew on mainstream ideas about the nature and functions of fiction, it also drew on ideas about obscenity then central to public debates about how to define the term. According to many moralists and legislators, medical, scientific, and legal works that referred to sex were highly problematic objects: such works were, in many cases, social or scientific necessities, but they also constituted a social threat since the sexual information they conveyed risked inciting sexual pleasure (and thus immoral behavior) in the “wrong” readers’ hands.⁴¹ These bibliographers imagined erotic fiction operating the other way, necessarily transmitting valuable sexual knowledge to the reader even as it attempted to arouse him. This act of extending ideas dominant within cultural discourses about obscenity fits with other patterns of thinking that underpinned Ashbee’s and Clowes’s conception of the secret museum. Their bibliographies push these discourses to their endpoint: a range of texts discussed in the same context becomes a literal archive, for instance, and a work’s placement within that archive indicates both that it has a material history in common with the archive’s other members and that it simultaneously transmits sexual knowledge and elicits sexual pleasure. The view of obscenity as a varied, and very real, archive that these bibliographies present, and the ideas about the functions of sexually explicit writing and the significance of publication history that they attach to it, also influenced how men whose social circles overlapped with Ashbee’s and Clowes’s wrote and published works about sex.

Writing the Secret Museum

Ashbee and Clowes worked within a loose network of collectors, writers, and publisher- booksellers brought together by their mutual interest in “for-

bidden books.” The Cannibal Club, one of the only formal organizations associated with this complex web of social and business relationships, offers a useful focal point for further mapping its participants’ interpretation of public discourses about obscenity, one that will begin to show how this interpretation shaped the production and dissemination of different kinds publications that referred to sex in the nineteenth century. This exclusive and influential inner circle of the Anthropological Society of London, founded by James Hunt in 1863, included some of the network’s most well-known figures, including James Campbell Reddie, Edward Sellon, Sir Richard Francis Burton, Algernon Charles Swinburne, and Richard Monckton Milnes. Its members’ publishing activity not only demonstrates how the modality of the archive shaped a semi-clandestine production of books about sex in this period, but also provides a backstory for representations of the “secret museum” that emerged out of the print network they participated in. The Cannibal Club’s members not only fantasized about the secret museum, but expanded the secret archive as it was materially conceived: their publications became tightly integrated into late-Victorian bibliographies of “forbidden books,” and, as the next section will show, in clandestine sales catalogues that framed themselves as entry points into the secret museum.

As its name and official symbol (a mace carved to look like an African head gnawing on a thighbone) suggest, the Cannibal Club’s members gathered to discuss race and sex “freely and openly, without regard to popularity, respectability, and other idols of the day.”⁴² Unlike the X Club, the famous coeval scientific dining club whose members’ anxieties about accusations of indecency deeply impacted their publishing practices,⁴³ the Cannibals did not “tremble at the idea of ‘acquiring an unhappy notoriety’.” “We wanted,” Burton declared in 1873, “to have the truth and the whole truth, as each man sees it.”⁴⁴ As Matt Cook has observed, the papers that Reddie, Sellon, and Hunt presented at Anthropological Society meetings, and later published in Hunt’s short-lived *Anthropological Review*, showed “little reticence in describing extremes of sexual behavior.”⁴⁵ The longer historical and anthropological studies and translations of Eastern sex manuals that the Cannibals and their associates privately printed provided even richer descriptions of sexuality, conveying observations about variations in genital size, intersex bodies, and such exotic “historic” and “foreign” practices as pederasty, clitoridectomy, miscegenation, eunuchism, bestiality, flagellation, and infibulation.

The Cannibals also wrote and published pornographic literature on the same themes. Working in collaboration with one another and with publish-

ers known for issuing obscenity, including William Dugdale, William Lazenby, and John Camden Hotten, they issued these works anonymously or under pseudonyms, sometimes years after circulating them privately amongst themselves.⁴⁶ Members of the Cannibal Club almost certainly authored *Lady Pokingham; or, They All Do It* (c. 1879) and other stories serialized in the *Pearl* (1879–80) and similar erotic magazines.⁴⁷ The Cannibals and their associates also wrote novels like *Venus in India; or, Love Adventures in Hindustan* (1889), which aligned with the group's interest in foreign sexuality; *Laura Middleton: Her Brother and Lover* (c. 1865) and *The Romance of Lust* (1873–76), which express the group's enduring interest in the incest taboo; and likely *Sins of the Cities of the Plain* (1881), which explores desire between men.⁴⁸ Luxuriously produced and printed in small numbers, these publications were sold clandestinely, often through word of mouth, at high prices. They were exchanged between Club members alongside similar productions, bought from the publishers they worked with or smuggled from the Continent. Since the Cannibals were generally rich and well connected—many of them were affiliated with Parliament, the courts, the Foreign Office, and the military—they did not fear censure for these activities. As Lisa Sigel has emphasized, these men “represented the state” in their daily lives, and considered themselves above the law.⁴⁹

Although historians long dismissed the Cannibals' anthropological research as a “ritual pretense” designed to excuse their “debauched” activities,⁵⁰ recent scholarship considers the dining club's activities an important chapter in the history of social science. Several critics have argued that, as well as providing its members with a stage for resisting sexual mores, the Cannibal Club acted as a forum for developing new ideas about how to study human behavior at a time when many social scientific disciplines were just beginning to emerge.⁵¹ Many of its members also belonged to the Ethnological Society, the Royal Geographic Society, and the Royal Society, and their scholarship, while often incendiary, proved influential to the development of anthropology.⁵² Although pathbreaking in its demonstration of how so-called “fringe” scholarship contributed to the development of social science, this revisionist work largely overlooks how the modality of the archive shaped the Cannibals' writings and the ways they were disseminated. Examining how ideas about the secret museum laid out in Clowes's and Ashbee's bibliographies show themselves in the Cannibals' choices about what to publish, and how, helps situate two key features of the organization—the “biblio-erotics” that suffused its culture,⁵³ and its members' apparent belief that science and pornography “went hand in glove”⁵⁴—within a broader historical context.

If the sensuous “biblio-erotics” embedded in this group’s collective imagination is, as Sigel has pointed out, appallingly crystallized in Burton’s promise in 1863 to procure his friend Frederick Hankey a human skin, flayed from a live African woman, to bind one of his erotic works,⁵⁵ the pride of place the Cannibals and their associates gave to the archive is most apparent in their works themselves. The pornographic literature that the Cannibals wrote and read obsessively returns to the image of the archive, deploying what Anjali Arondekar has termed a “metanarrative of an ever-circulating ‘canon’ of pornographic texts.”⁵⁶ Stories in erotic periodicals like the *Pearl* (1879–81) and the *Boudoir* (1883) are replete with references to caches, collections, or archives of forbidden books, as are such novels as *Rosa Fielding*, *Laura Middleton*, *The Merry Order of St. Bridget*, and the *Romance of Lust*, which the Cannibals wrote, and many of the works that they read. These narratives describe the locations and contents of forbidden collections—often naming real publications—and recount the journeys they have made in secret, passing from hand to hand.

Some of the references to the book that appear in these productions, such as the joke vaguely linking book production and sex that appears in *Tom Brown’s Jest Book* (“Why is an unbound book like a lady in bed? Because it is in sheets”),⁵⁷ simply register an affectionate awareness of the medium through which the erotic narrative travels. Most, however, fantasize about the knowledge, power, and pleasure that the “forbidden” archive offers its readers. Caches of explicit books are often framed as aphrodisiacs, facilitating the energetic sexual episodes the narrative recounts. *Rosa Fielding’s* Captain Torrent’s “cupboards contained dozens of exciting books,” which make up, alongside his “walls . . . covered with licentious pictures” and plentiful collection of dildos and birch rods, the engine that drives his “perpetual cockstand.”⁵⁸ The episodes recounting the *discovery* of the forbidden archive that appear in these works often glory less in the archive’s aphrodisiacal qualities, though, than in the thrill of being privy to forbidden knowledge. Lucille’s discovery of a secret cabinet full of “bad books” in *The Story of a Dildoe* does not immediately initiate sexual activity, but acts as a stimulus for intellectual arousal and exchange: the discoverer’s first instinct is to make notes on the cabinet’s varied contents and post them to a friend.⁵⁹

The Cannibals’ mixed production of sexual-scientific writing and pornography can be understood as an effort to add to—even recreate—this knowledgeable and pleasurable archive by publishing different but complementary forms of writing that simultaneously aroused the reader and unveiled sexual “truth.” The Cannibals and their associates were acutely

conscious of their scholarly writings' eroticism and, like many readers and writers associated with the older libertine canon, they equated their inclusion of potentially arousing sexual detail in these works with a sophisticated worldly scientific ethos. John Davenport's preface to his history of phallic worship, *Aphrodisiacs and Anti-Aphrodisiacs* (1869), frames its explicit content as important information, arguing that social conventions impeding such information's dissemination impede social-scientific progress:

The reproductive powers of Nature were regarded by the nations of remote antiquity with an awe and reverence so great, as to form an object of worship, under a symbol, of all others the most significant,—the *Phallus*; and thus was founded a religion That scarcely any notices of this worship should appear in modern works . . . may be accounted for by considering the difference of opinion between the ancients and the moderns as to what constitutes — modesty; the former being unable to see any moral turpitude in actions they regarded was [sic] designs of nature, while the latter, by their over-strained notions of delicacy, render themselves . . . obnoxious to the charge that . . . modesty, when banished from the heart, . . . [takes] refuge on the lips.⁶⁰

Richard Burton's preface to his notorious translation of the *Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night* (1885–88) follows a similar line of argument, critiquing Edward William Lane's earlier, heavily expurgated translation of the *Nights* in order to frame his own far more explicit translation as better scholarship. Lane's penchant for "avoid[ing] the 'objectionable' and aught approaching to licentiousness," Burton complains, was only one of a litany of scholarly errors Lane made, but the most unforgivable because it pandered to prudish sensibilities.⁶¹ The inclusion of graphic sexual detail is thus framed in such works as responsible intellectual practice. Fulsome sexual description is figured as a function—even a sign—of a work's scholarly accuracy.

Although these prefaces did, as Sigel has argued, function as defenses against accusations of impropriety,⁶² the way in which they and other elements of the Cannibals' scholarly apparatuses emphasize and even expand these works' eroticism suggests less a resigned acceptance of sexual detail in social-scientific work than an embrace of scientific eroticism. Burton's notes in the *Nights* on the tale of "Abu Nawas and the Three Boys"—a story omitted from Lane's translation due to its homosexual content—advises "all but anthropological students" to "skip over all anecdotes in which . . . [Abu

Nawas's] name and abominations occur."⁶³ Like "warnings" pornographers often included in their advertisements,⁶⁴ such notes actually highlight the "offensive" content. The Cannibals' frequent practice of annotating such passages with footnotes that describe, for instance, "what Persian boys call . . . 'Alish Takish'," extended the volume of such content.⁶⁵ Even apparent attempts at expurgation could enhance these works' eroticism. Davenport's *Aphrodisiacs*, for example, reproduces many of its more explicit anecdotes in languages other than English, restricting full readings of the work to well-educated, supposedly "capable" readers; but this editorial method also draws attention to the text's censored status, and, in doing so, highlights the untranslated passages' potential to arouse.⁶⁶ Readers educated in languages in which the excerpted material was written (most of the readers who would have access to the work) would find that these anecdotes rarely conform to Davenport's self-consciously "objective" tone, leading to an ambivalent textual construction that has earned *Aphrodisiacs* a varying reputation: as the work of "a linguist and pioneering sexologist,"⁶⁷ that of "a semi-learned pornographic hack,"⁶⁸ and as dull "pseudo-scholarly pornography."⁶⁹

If these works showcase, as Colette Colligan has suggested, the emergence of an exclusive new kind of sexual science also designed to function as sexual entertainment,⁷⁰ so too do the pornographic works produced alongside them showcase a self-consciously reflective form of sexual entertainment, one that, as Arondekar and Sigel have each shown, shares themes, ideas, and structural similarities with the Cannibals' scholarship.⁷¹ *Venus in India*, for example, not only explores the "contradictory erotics of Imperial rule," but turns into "an ethnographic journey" resembling the Cannibals' anthropological writings when its hero, who incessantly monitors his own desires, finds himself unable to have sex with native women.⁷² Burton's translation of the *Nights* further supports the theory that the Cannibals considered their pornographic writing part of their scholarly project, showing how, like Ashbee and Clowes, they perceived fiction as a "mirror of reality." Throughout, the translator emphasizes the fictional *Nights*' value as a work "of the highest anthropological and ethnological interest."⁷³ His Terminal Essay, which proposes "to treat of the Social Condition which The Nights discloses," is especially explicit in its treatment of the *Nights* as an accurate reflection of Arab history and psychology,⁷⁴ proclaiming that the "reader who has reached this terminal stage has seen the mediaeval Arab at his best and, perhaps, at his worst,"⁷⁵ and draws on both the *Nights*' stories and Greek, Roman, and French literary classics to support Burton's theory of a pederastic "Sotadic Zone."⁷⁶ Combined with the earlier links Burton makes

between the fictional writings of William Makepeace Thackeray and Henry Fielding and the Anthropological Society's labor to reveal sexual "truth," the reader is left with the impression that, like science, literature records, analyses, and disseminates sexual "truth."⁷⁷

The structure and narrative of the novel *Sins of the Cities of the Plain* suggests how the Cannibals and their associates further conceived explicit literature and science as like texts that operated best within a larger archive of "forbidden works": although works of different genres each simultaneously establish sexual knowledge and transmit sexual pleasure, their real power resides in their location within the archive, where they are able to speak to one another. *Sins* depicts its protagonist's sexual confessions as a true record of events that may be extrapolated to understand the sexual practices and psychology of young male "sodomites." The novel bolsters its claims of veracity by incorporating real-life events, places, and publications associated with same-sex male sexual activity into its narrative, which recounts how the handsome prostitute Jack Saul comes to document his sexual exploits for a wealthy benefactor.⁷⁸ The techniques of realism that *Sins* deploys might be dismissed as attempts to enhance the text's eroticism: the novel's incorporation of real places, events, people, and publications associated with sexual intrigue and scandal is hardly unusual in Victorian pornography. However, the three short essays on "The Same Old Story: Arses Preferred to Cunts," "Sodomy," and "Tribadism" that appear in the back pages of the novel situate the narrative within a scientific framework, framing the story not simply as titillatingly true to life, but as a document that forms a useful basis for scholarly study, even to the point of comprising a scientific case study itself.

The text of *Sins*' essays enhances the work they undertake paratextually. The essay on sodomy, for instance, implicitly parallels Jack's reported experiences with the French forensic specialist Auguste Tardieu's empirical observations of sodomite bodies. Before describing the specialist's conclusions based on his investigation of "two hundred and seventeen cases of passive sodomy," the essay informs readers, tongue in cheek, that "although we have *made the most careful research*, we do not know of many professional male sodomites in London."⁷⁹ The essay does not say that Jack Saul is one of the "professional male sodomites" that the author "knows," but since *Sins* is ostensibly the "true" confession of a "professional male sodomite," proximity encourages the reader to interpret his confession as a narrative case study. At the same time, the essay does not attempt to conceal its own eroticism, describing the homosexual pleasures enjoyed by "lusty fellow[s]"

in ancient Rome.⁸⁰ The essays and the fictional narrative that together form *Sins of the Cities of the Plain* not only show that these genres each convey sexual knowledge and arouse sexual pleasure, but also demonstrate how they can speak to one another, forming a knowledgeable and pleasurable archive that is more than the sum of its parts.

As with its representation in Ashbee's and Clowes' bibliographies, the varied archive of explicit material that the Cannibals and their associates fantasized about, and expanded through their publishing activity, was a restricted one. Although these men represented themselves as social rebels,⁸¹ they published conservatively, ensuring that their writings circulated within a narrow and privileged circle. The pornographic literature they wrote was circulated privately in manuscript, then clandestinely published and sold at high prices by trusted publisher-booksellers. Many of their scientific publications, such as Davenport's *Aphrodisiacs*, were printed privately in small numbers at the author's expense, often by the same printers who worked on the Cannibals' pornographic material.⁸² Others were issued through "private societies" founded expressly for publishing and distributing these works. For example, Burton and Arbuthnot's Kamashastra Society published their translations of explicit Eastern literature and sex manuals, including the *Nights*, the *Ananga Ranga* (1885), the *Perfumed Garden* (1886), the *Bharistan* (1887), and the *Ghuilistan* (1888). The Society sold these prohibitively priced and luxuriously produced works only by subscription to wealthy men like, and including, the Cannibal Club's members. Through such publishing practices, these elite readers and writers jointly produced a "secret museum" of their own, a generically diverse body of works about sex concertedly restricted from public view.

Restricted publication was an acknowledged method of evading censure in a period in which authorities were mainly concerned with suppressing explicit works that risked falling into the hands of "vulnerable" readers. The Cannibals' private methods of publication allowed them to freely explore the productive possibilities of the grey area between science and pornography that concerned moralists and legislators, where other writers, often dependent on the support of institutions that demanded respectability, could not. That the erotic appeal of the Cannibals' publications often depended on the reader's skills to look beyond the distancing techniques of scholarly rhetoric hints, however, at the greater imaginative role that the secret nature of the secret museum played in shaping their practices. As well as being erotic itself—a closeted space, whose secret allure the Cannibals and their associates often figured through metaphors of "feminine seduction and se-

cretion”⁸³—the secret museum represented exclusive knowledge that a rare combination of gender, wealth, and privilege allowed these men alone to access.⁸⁴ The thrill of being privy to restricted knowledge, and the allure of the authority that this knowledge bestows on its reader, suffuses the fantasies of the archive that their pornographic writings express, and haunts their claims (paralleling those of Ashbee and Clowes) that a work’s full disclosure of sexual “truth” necessitated its concealment from public view.⁸⁵ The definitional restriction of the secret museum, both as it was imagined and as it was realized in the Cannibals’ publishing activities, underscores how this incendiary group’s ideas were as influenced by popular beliefs about class, gender, and reading competence as were the self-censored publications of the X Club.

The Cannibals’ production of a diversely arrayed archive of works about sex represents a compelling phase in cultural history. It reveals one way in which public discourses about obscenity operated dialectally, acting alongside an older tradition of eclectic reading to initiate the production of an array of “dangerous” works through their attempts to discipline sexual representation. It also emphasizes that nineteenth-century sexual scholarship did not necessarily involve the public unveiling of sexual truth, but also involved the production and reproduction of deliberately restricted knowledge. As the next section will show, the Cannibals’ publishing activity further represents what is, perhaps, an even more compelling phase in book history: both its structure and its content influenced the publishing and advertising practices of publisher-booksellers who sought to capture a wealthy readership by exploiting the secret museum’s allure.

Marketing the Secret Museum

To be kept under Lock-and-Key. BIBLIOTHECA ARCANA. Being a rough list of rare, curious and uncommon books, pamphlets, prints & engravings that have been Privately Printed, Prohibited by Law, Seized, Anathematized, Burnt or Bowdlerized; more particularly, those relating to the Mysteries of Human Affinities, or dealing with the Attractions and Aversions—Vices and Virtues—Loves and Longings—Hates and Failings—Passions and Peculiarities of Live, Moving, Men and Women—and throwing light upon the PSYCHOLOGY OF SEX.⁸⁶

Ripping text straight from the title of Clowes’s bibliography, the publisher Charles Carrington’s clandestine catalogue *Bibliotheca Arcana* (1899) sug-

gests how nineteenth-century publisher-booksellers exploited the interpretive possibilities of secret museum discourse to market their wares.⁸⁷ Building on publishing and marketing techniques developed by earlier vendors of sexual entertainment, from the 1860s entrepreneurs like Carrington, John Camden Hotten, H.S. Nichols, and Leonard Smithers harnessed the language and structure of the secret museum as they sought to capture a market of elite clients interested in “forbidden books.” These publisher-booksellers emphasized the rarity and supposedly restricted nature of their publications with increasing sophistication, even forming their own “private societies” (modeled after those founded by members of the Cannibal Club) to disseminate works about, or associated in the public imagination with, sex. They also developed clandestine catalogues that represented themselves as secret museums, linking new publications with the “archive” of knowledgable and pleasurable works that bibliographers like Ashbee and Clowes had defined. More broadly, these publisher-booksellers applied the modality of the archive to their businesses, fashioning varied and flexible bodies of publications that allowed them to diversify their market shares. These publishing experiments show how the secret museum discourse continued to structure print networks connected with sexual writing in the nineteenth century, moving out of the realm of the collector’s library and the coterie, and into the realm of retailing.

Dealers in sexual entertainment had long exploited the thrill of secret knowledge: the advertising copy of earlier pornographers is suffused with claims that the works they sold were rare, forgotten, or suppressed.⁸⁸ However, this new generation of self-styled “gentleman publishers” provided more fulsome descriptions of their publications’ rare or suppressed nature than ever before in the catalogues, prospectuses, forewords, and other paratexts they used to market their wares. The promotional materials they fashioned to attract wealthy clients regularly included tales of a work’s origin in a forgotten collection, suggesting that they employed these practices strategically, tapping into the secret museum discourse. Hotten’s circular for his *Library Illustrative of Social Progress* (1872) offers a telling example in its framing of the collection of flagellant literature as a lost archive of sexual knowledge:

[I]t is well known that the late Henry Thomas Buckle collected a large library of curious books. Among the many topics that engaged his attention was the subject of CHASTISEMENT . . . By rare good fortune, he collected an almost complete set of the astounding books issued by George Peacock, in the last century, and

as no other examples of some of these rarities are known to exist, it is proposed to privately print a few copies as “Curiosities of Literature.” Apart from their extreme rarity, the works are remarkable for the light they throw upon the state of society in the last century, and the mania that possessed all classes for chastising and being chastised.⁸⁹

As with the many of these claims, there is “not a word of truth” to Hotten’s advertising copy: as Ashbee noted with some annoyance, “the original tracts did not come from the library of Buckle, nor had he, in all probability, ever seen them.”⁹⁰ Nevertheless, it served “to thicken the atmosphere of the arcane”⁹¹ that attracted wealthy clients like Ashbee, and synecdotally situated the *Library Illustrative of Social Progress* within the secret museum that they fantasized about.

These publishers’ exploitation of the values attributed to restricted circulation by the elite readers they sought to serve is also evident in their increased use of the phrase (often rendered in bold type) “privately printed” in promotional materials, and in their experiments with the private society as a mode of publication. Although the private society, with its high prices, limited numbers, and private distribution, represented a way of shielding these publishers from the arm of the law, it also allowed them to fine-tune the existing trade in luxury pornography by integrating their businesses into the network of collectors, readers, and writers they hoped to serve.⁹² In consultation with Burton, Smithers and Nichols modeled their own Erotika Biblion Society on the Kamashastra Society, publishing luxurious limited editions of explicit works, many of them translations of Eastern and ancient classics, for private subscribers at high prices.⁹³ The Society’s first publications, Smithers’s translation of the *Priapeia* (1888) and *Les Tableaux Vivants* (1888) (an English translation of a collection of erotic pieces first published in French in 1870) were poised to attract the same wealthy and well-connected audience that subscribed for Kamashastra Society publications, as were the prospectuses, editor’s notes, forewords, and other paratexts that accompanied these works, which highlight their limited production, their restricted circulation, and their esoteric appeal for “Scholars and Students of Sexual Psychology.”⁹⁴

One of the Erotika Biblion Society’s last works, *The Mistress and the Slave* (1905), was marketed as “a realistic Masochist novel” that related “the ascendancy which a woman of the lower class gets over a man of position and wealth.”⁹⁵ This example illustrates how Smithers and Nichols not only borrowed from but also advanced the Kamashastra Society model,

by developing a body of publications that more closely resembled the secret archive that their clients fantasized about. Situating a generically varied range works within the same imprint, and emphasising through advertising how each work acted both as sexual scholarship and as sexual entertainment, these publishers encouraged the Erotika Biblion Society's subscribers to collect its "rare" publications and read them alongside one another. The imprint was a success, replacing the Kamashastra Society within Burton's circle and inspiring imitators, such as the Paris-based *Erotica* Biblion Society.⁹⁶ However, the failure of Smithers's and Nichols's Lutetian Society, which mainly published "scholarly and undiluted retranslations" of Émile Zola's novels in the mid-1890s, demonstrates the private society's limits as a marketing aid. Although English translations of Zola's works had been subject to a well-publicized obscenity trial only a few years prior to the Society's creation, few readers bought its two-guinea editions.⁹⁷ This is likely because most of the people who could afford them could already read Zola's works in cheaper and more easily accessible French editions. Publishing works that contained references to sex or that were associated with obscenity in the public imagination was not enough: a private society of the Kamashastra model, with its expensive offerings, had to convincingly *unveil* "secret" knowledge to succeed.

The most interesting commercial application of the secret museum discourse to emerge in the late nineteenth century, and the one I devote the most space to here, allayed some of the risks of poor market judgement that doomed the Lutetian Society. Drawing on the interpretive possibilities of the archive, each of the publishers examined in this section fashioned a flexible collection of works for sale that ranged across the continuum of the licit, the "borderline," and the illicit, surpassing the variety characteristic of earlier pornographers' catalogues. This publishing model allowed these dealers to serve several different audiences, acting both as "respectable publishers" and as "pornographers." They did not strictly divide their businesses into "open" and "clandestine" sections, but marketed overlapping categories of works to different readers. Even as they harnessed the powers of context to market some of their "riskier" publications openly, as the century wore on they increasingly framed varied catalogues that included the same publications as secret museums that offered up rare and exclusive sexual knowledge.

With its close ties to the Cannibal Club, Hotten's publishing business offers a useful focal point for examining this publishing model early in its development. A former bookseller's apprentice and journalist, Hotten set

up a bookshop in Piccadilly in 1856 and began publishing the following year.⁹⁸ He issued only a handful of books early in his publishing career, but between 1864 and 1873 he issued more than five hundred titles. Simon Eliot's impressive study of the mercurial businessman frames him as a "general publisher," noting that his disparate titles included humorous works, American and European literary works, classics, critical and biographical works, "How to" books, puzzle books, books on current events, political treatises, illustrated gift books, historical reprints and facsimiles, works on local history and heraldry, popular histories, writings on science and technology, language and reference works, anthropological works, and "pornographic volumes."⁹⁹ But while Hotten's output was diverse, it was not random. The publisher exploited the interpretive possibilities of context to sell a number of publications to various groups in the open market as well as semiclandestinely to elite readers in the Cannibals' circle, allowing him, as Ashbee claimed, to become a "respectable . . . publisher of tabooed literature."¹⁰⁰

As Eliot observes, "there is a seamless transition from one sort of publishing to another [in Hotten's catalogue], so seamless in fact that in certain circumstances it is difficult to say where one publishing genre ends and another begins." Specifically, there is a remarkable slippage between the "respectable" and the "indecent" in the publisher's oeuvre. The publisher's "reprints of traditional and classic texts" include works by Boccaccio and Rabelais—often labelled obscene by moralists—as well as more "respectable" classics by Malory and Bunyan. His "historical reprints and facimiles" include both a reproduction of *The Statutes of Henry VII* (1869) and *Exhibition of Female Flagellants in the Modest and Incontinent World* (1872). Likewise, among Hotten's "popular histories" are both the innocuous *History of Sign Boards* (1866) and—in exactly the same format and price, Eliot notes—another work of flagellant literature, *A History of the Rod* (1870). Eliot concludes that, "for Hotten, it might have been difficult to see where 'legitimate' publishing ended and pornography began within [these publishing] categories as well as between them."¹⁰¹ But the different ways in which the publisher marketed these works suggest that he was well apprised of the blurry lines between licit and illicit reading material, and deliberately cultivated a catalogue that spanned the continuum.

As the reviews of Hotten's "curious" edition of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and *Slang Dictionary*; or, *The Vulgar Words, Street Phrases, and Fast Expressions of High and Low Society* that appeared in *Bell's Life in London* and the *Sporting Times* suggest, the publisher marketed mildly risqué publications to the young male readers these periodicals served alongside inno-

cent offerings.¹⁰² He also advertised somewhat more explicit material to the readers of works like Theodore Taylor's *Thackeray the Humourist and the Man of Letters* (1864) and Artemus Ward's *Among the Mormons* (1865), placing notices for a PRIVATELY PRINTED edition of *Musée Secret*, for instance, in their end papers alongside listings for comparatively banal publications, such as a new edition of Godfrey Charles Mundy's *Pen and Pencil Sketches of India* (1832).¹⁰³ In 1870, he daringly placed advertisements for flagellant literature in the *Ladies Treasury* and the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*. The flood of letters to the editor on the topic of corporal punishment that *Englishwoman's* published between 1867 and 1870—which, as Sharon Marcus has observed, often read like expensive flagellation novels, leading the pornographer William Lazenby to republish verbatim extracts in his collection of flagellant literature, *The Birchen Bouquet* (1881)¹⁰⁴—blurred the lines between social debate and pornography, and gave Hotten an opening to market *A History of the Rod* and the *Library Illustrative of Social Progress* to lady readers.¹⁰⁵ Whether by situating them in the context of his more mundane publications or by aligning them with “respectable” debates about childrearing, then, Hotten harnessed the interpretive powers of context to sell “risky” works to a mainstream audience.

At the same time, these works fell naturally into the publisher's offerings for a narrower circle of readers, which included members of the Cannibal Club. As Hotten expanded his publishing business in the 1860s, he inserted himself within their circles, joining the Royal Geographic Society and Royal Ethnographic Society and using his membership to promote his books.¹⁰⁶ The publisher cultivated close relationships with Cannibal Club members, loaning out his library of explicit works via “a select mailing list,”¹⁰⁷ and publishing Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads* after the publisher Edward Moxon withdrew the work from circulation.¹⁰⁸ His cultivation of this social network paid off: he began to issue the Cannibals' writings clandestinely, selling them back to this wealthy circle, largely through word of mouth, alongside productions like the *Library Illustrative of Social Progress*, *Musée Secret*, and even the *Slang Dictionary*.¹⁰⁹ Falling into a spectrum of respectability, Hotten's flexible catalogue exploited the different ways in which a work could be perceived, in a culture that considered a work's contexts of production and circulation signs of its function and its value.

Working later in the century, Nichols, Smithers, and Carrington also dealt in a wide range of publications, as individuals and in partnership. All three publishers issued both publicly accessible and clandestine catalogues of works for sale, which illustrate how they experimented with various different approaches to selling a body of works that spanned the continuum

of respectability. Carrington and Nichols marketed some of their “riskier” publications to a wide audience, harnessing, like Hotten, the suggestive powers of context to make them appear more respectable.¹¹⁰ Conversely, Smithers’s openly published *Catalogue[s] of Rare Books* attempted to use the logic, the language, and part of the canon of the secret museum to sell his more mainstream publications to readers hungry for rare, arcane collectibles. If contemporary publishers like John Lane capitalized “on the prestige of the ‘limited edition,’ . . . and the appeal of the risqué” in marketing late-Victorian aestheticism,¹¹¹ Smithers went several steps further by folding his developing trade in belles lettres into catalogues that represent themselves as museums of scarce and valuable publications.

The publisher’s April 1895 *Catalogue of Rare Books*, for instance, announces itself as a key to the world of arcane knowledge and pleasure by advertising, on its first page, “A GRUSOME CURIOSITY,” a “minuscule” 1858 edition of Thomas à Kempis’s *De Imitatione Christi*, idiosyncratically printed in microscopic type and “most tastefully and appropriately bound in HUMAN SKIN, emblematically blind-tooled with Death’s Heads, Crossbones, and Hour Glasses, gilt edges, by LORTIC. £10 10s . . . the only example of Human Skin Binding that has been offered for sale for many years past.”¹¹² Smithers advertised this symbol of luxurious deviance, which recalls the Cannibal Club’s fetish for anthropodermic bibliopeggy, alongside a varied library of books and manuscripts. Some had been produced by Cannibal Club members, such as Arbuthnot’s *Vikram and the Vampire: Tales of Hindu Devilry* and Burton’s translation of *Il Pentamarone*, which, Smithers emphasises, is marked by “a great freeness of language; so much so indeed that Lady Burton made unsuccessful efforts to prevent the Book appearing in its uncastrated state.”¹¹³ Others, advertised under the heading “CURIOUS,” are reprints of “gallant” works well represented in Ashbee’s and Clowes’s bibliographies and in the Private Case.¹¹⁴

These regular denizens of the secret museum serve to frame other volumes in this *Catalogue of Rare Books*. Some, like the new sexological and anthropological works from the continent that Smithers included in the catalogue—ranging from the dubious “Dr. Jacobus ****s” *L’Amour aux colonies* (1893) (which the publisher advertised as “£3 10s. Only 330 Numbered Copies Printed; one of the most Remarkable Works of the Century”) to Richard von Krafft-Ebing’s respected *Psychopathia Sexualis* (“with especial reference to CONTRARY SEXUAL INSTINCT. A Medico-Legal Study. £3 3s”)—are a fairly natural fit for the secret museum as the Cannibals and their associates imagined it.¹¹⁵ But many other works in the catalogue

enjoyed less obvious appeal to seekers of arcane knowledge and pleasure, including Smithers' editions of Alexander Pope's *Rape of the Lock*, illustrated by Aubrey Beardsley, and Arthur Symons's *London Nights*. The effect of the catalogue is not a degradation of the secret museum, however, but an expansion of it: through the suggestive powers of context, Smithers's editions of belles lettres and new sexological and anthropological works become associated with an arcane (and highly collectible) archive.

These publishers' clandestine catalogues—and many of those issued by their competitors—deployed the language and archival structure associated with the secret museum far more strongly to market their wares in the 1890s and early 1900s. These mail-order catalogues—often printed on thick paper, bearing elaborate lettering, ornamental borders, and titles that allude to the rarity, forbidden nature, and private or “secret” circulation histories of the works offered within—offer up for sale a “canon” of publications largely made up of works already associated with the secret museum, but also inclusive of newer publications about, or associated with, sex.¹¹⁶ At the same time, they often borrow from writings *about* the secret museum to frame themselves *as* secret museums.¹¹⁷ Carrington's *Bibliotheca Arcana* is the most overt in this regard. Its title page borrows from Clowes's bibliography to collapse the boundaries between the varied works it lists¹¹⁸ by likening them through their common subject matter and supposedly shared history of suppression, and figures the list as a whole as a collection that throws ‘light upon the PSYCHOLOGY OF SEX.’

Again plagiarizing liberally from Clowes's bibliography, Carrington's preface to *Bibliotheca Arcana* further frames the varied works that the catalogue offers for sale as rare, valuable artifacts of an archive whose history stretches “from the earliest times down to the present day.” According to the preface, this secret archive simultaneously represents a moral threat to Britain's social body and promises its moral salvation: the dangerous, even poisonous eroticism of its component parts is justified by their power to privately assist the “Lawyer, Preacher, Doctor, or Magistrate”—examples of the relatively affluent, educated male readers that Carrington's targeted—in understanding sexual experience.¹¹⁹ As in Ashbee's and Clowes's bibliographies, this power apparently extends to erotic literature, which will shed light on such subjects of sexological enquiry as “the urning, or man-loving man.”¹²⁰ In short, Carrington's catalogue borrows the schema of the secret museum that such bibliographers, collectors and writers so carefully mapped, and attempts to sell books back to them in their own words.

Conclusion

The collaborative nature of the network of collectors, bibliographers, writers, and publisher-booksellers from which the secret museum discourse emerged is reflected in the ways it represented “forbidden” books. Like members of a coterie, the denizens of the secret museum share common experiences, travel along the same routes, speak to each other’s concerns, and work toward the same goals. But these relationships are often fictive, projected onto these works out of their readers’ desire for forbidden knowledge, sexual insight, or profit. In this respect, the secret museum discourse is not unique. It has much in common, for instance, with reading practices of homophile subcultures at the fin de siècle, which interpreted a diverse body of poems, stories, novels, and essays containing references to homosexual experience as a literature of same-sex desire hidden at the center of the Western canon.¹²¹ That the logic of the secret museum not only structured the interpretation of diversely arrayed texts within Britain’s clandestine print culture, but also came to influence the writing, publication, and retailing of print materials, suggests a need for book historians to examine such eclectic, archival reading practices more comprehensively, in order to understand better their effects on the print marketplace within and across national borders and time periods. Studying the sociology of texts means attending not only to the changing material lives of individual works, but also examining how these lives are shaped by their relations to others, real and imagined.

Notes

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1. *The Story of a Dildoe: A Tale in Five Tableaux* [1880] (London: Privately Printed, 1891), 79–80.

2. See, for example, H.G. Cocks, “Reading Obscene Texts and Their Histories,” *Media History* 18, no. 3–4 (2012): 275–88; Gowan Dawson, *Darwin, Literature, and Victorian Respectability* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Kate Flint, *The Woman Reader, 1837–1914* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995); Walter Kendrick, *The Secret Museum: Pornography in Modern Culture* (New York: Penguin, 1988); Barbara Leckie, *Culture and Adultery: The Novel, The Newspaper, and the Law, 1857–1914* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999); and Peter D. McDonald, “‘Old Phrases and Great Obscenities’: The Strange Afterlife of Two Victorian Anxieties,” *Journal of Victorian Culture* 13, no. 2 (2008): 294–302.

3. See, for example, Lynda Nead, "Bodies of Judgment: Art, Obscenity, and the Law," in *Law and the Image: The Authority of Art and Aesthetics of Law*, ed. Costas Douzinas and Lynda Nead (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 203–55, 214–16.

4. Sarah L. Leonard, *Fragile Minds and Vulnerable Souls: The Matter of Obscenity in Nineteenth Century Germany* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 57. The studies mentioned in notes 2 and 3, especially Leckie, *Culture*, also touch on how the perceived effects on the reader of works containing sexual information linked very different kinds of works about, or associated with, sex in the public imagination. Focusing on a later period, Collette Colligan, *A Publisher's Paradise: Expatriate Literary Culture in Paris, 1890–1960* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014), and Rachel Potter, *Obscene Modernism: Literary Censorship and Experiment, 1900–1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), also examine the relationship between the range of works represented as "obscene" and the interpretive effects of trade routes.

5. I have borrowed the phrase "secret museum" from Kendrick, *Secret Museum*, where it is used to indicate the diverse body of cultural products that have been conceived as "pornography" in various times and places (xiii). My use of the phrase in this article refers more specifically to a subcultural discourse about obscenity that arose in response to this larger cultural phenomenon.

6. James Grantham Turner, *Schooling Sex: Libertine Literature and Erotic Education in Italy, France and England, 1534–1685* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), ix. See also Karen Harvey, *Reading Sex in the Eighteenth Century: Bodies and Gender in English Erotic Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), which examines a similarly eclectic "canon" of erotic material in the eighteenth century, linked by authors, readers, publishers, and distributors through a complex web of intertextual references, citations, and publishing and advertising practices. Ian Moulton (*Before Pornography: Erotic Writing in Early Modern England* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000]) examines roughly the same group of works as Turner in his study of early modern erotic writing, but resists characterizing them as a canon (6).

7. See Kathleen Luby, "Making Pornography, 1749–1968: The History of *The History of the Human Heart*," *ELH* 82, no. 3 (2015): 897–935.

8. Luby, "Making Pornography," 898.

9. Victorian readers encountered eclectic lists of works about, and associated with, sex for sale in newspapers, through which pornographers advertised from about the late 1820s, as well as acquiring a wide range of publications considered "dangerous" by the authorities on the streets, in bookstalls, and in other public spaces (for examples, see "Kalogynomia," *The Age*, October 14, 1827; "Just published by H. Smith," *The Satirist; or, The Censor of the Times*, February 21, 1841; "Gems for Gentlemen," *The Era*, March 6, 1859; and "Scarce and Rare Books," *The Illustrated Police News*, January 4, 1896). Although it is beyond this article's scope to address the relationship between popular forms of erotic print culture and the moneyed practices associated with the secret museum discourse, it is worth noting that these lists, which typically advertise less expensive works than did clandestine catalogues, loosely represent a popular "archive" or "canon" of erotica that overlaps with the secret museum, as described by the network this article examines. Such lists include cheap editions of erotic classics well represented in portrayals of the secret museum (such as John Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* [1748]), but they also incorporate bawdy songsters, popular medical works, racy novels, and (by the late nineteenth century) pornographic photographs. They also exclude many of more expensive staples of the secret museum, such as the works of the Marquis de Sade, and their paratexts make less overt use of descriptive terminology (e.g. "rare," "curious," "forbidden," "secret," "library," "suppressed," "privately printed") associated with it. Victorian erotic print culture can therefore be conceived as constitutive of a number of overlapping "canons" or archives associated with sexual education and entertain-

ment. Although it represents only one strategy of the obscene in this period, the secret museum discourse can help us imagine how less privileged readers might also have read more popular “canons” of sexually detailed works, understanding medical works, bawdy songsters, and pornographic photographs (for instance) as works of a similar “type”.

10. D.F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* [1984] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

11. Nead, “Bodies of Judgment,” 212.

12. David Gaimster, “Sex and Sensibility in the British Museum,” *History Today* 50, no. 9 (2000): 10–15, 10.

13. Peter Fryer, *Private Case—Public Scandal* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1966), 40–41.

14. See HL Deb May 11 1857 vol. 145, 102–4, which outlines the views about reading competence that motivated the Lord Chief Justice John Campbell’s introduction of his Obscene Publications Bill.

15. Nead, “Bodies of Judgment,” 212.

16. For examples of Victorian discussions of these varied works’ obscenity, see “The Action Against Kahn, of Coventry Street, for Extortion: Suppression of Obscene Quackery,” *Lancet*, August 15, 1857, 175; “Moral Sewage,” *Saturday Review*, December 24, 1864, 776–77; “Mr. Swinburne’s Defence,” *London Review*, November 3, 1866, 482–83; and Annie Besant, *Is the Bible Indictable? Being an Enquiry whether the Bible Comes within the Ruling of the Lord Chief Justice as to Obscene Literature* (London: Freethought Publishing Company, 1877).

17. “Law of Libel,” *Solicitor’s Journal & Reporter*, February 11, 1865, 302–4, and “The Legality of the ‘Confessional Unmasked,’” *Pall Mall Gazette*, July 13, 1867, 10, each offer a good example of the distinctions between legitimate and criminal representations of sex that British authorities often made in this period.

18. Alison Moore, “Arcane Erotica and National ‘Patrimony’: Britain’s Private Case and the Collection de l’Enfer of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France,” *Cultural Studies Review* 18, no. 1 (2012), 196–216, 211.

19. See, for instance, J.C. Reddie, “Bibliographical Notes On H. S. Ashbee’s Collection,” 2 vols., Add MS 38828–38829, Western Manuscripts Collection, British Library; and *Catalogue of the Library of W.C. Rule, Esq.* (London: Dryden, 1895), in *Album 7: A Collection of Prospectuses and Catalogues of Erotic and Obscene Books, Pictures and Instruments*. 1889–1929. Unpublished. Cup. 364.g. 48. Rare Books and Manuscripts Collection, British Library.

20. See, for instance, Speculator Morum [William Laird Clowes], *Bibliotheca Arcana: Brief Notices of Books That Have Been Secretly Printed, Prohibited by Law, Seized, Anathematized, Burnt or Bowdlerized* (London: George Redway, 1885), xvi, and Pisanus Fraxi [Henry Spencer Ashbee], *Index Librorum Prohibitorum: Bio-Biblio-Icono-graphical and Critical Notes on Curious, Uncommon, and Erotic Books* (London: Privately Printed, 1877), xv. As Lubey, “Making Pornography,” 913–14, points out, however, Ashbee’s bibliographical labor was not quite as fastidious as he claimed: his erroneous characterization of certain editions of “forbidden books” as verbatim reprints of older publications, for instance, shows that he did not in fact personally examine all of the *editions* listed in his bibliographies.

21. Turner, *Schooling Sex*, x.

22. J.C. Reddie, “Bibliographical Notes” lists *Musée Secret* among the works in Ashbee’s private library. Clowes describes *Musée Secret* in Morum, *Bibliotheca*, 119.

23. Given that Ashbee and Clowes each refer to the Private Case in their bibliographies of “forbidden” books (see Fraxi, *Index*, viii, 89, 204; Morum, *Bibliotheca*, 7), that Ashbee cites Private Case shelf marks (see Fraxi, *Index*, 427), and that Ashbee’s friends were on the British Museum’s board of directors (see Ian Gibson, *The Erotomaniac: The Secret Life of Henry*

Spencer Ashbee [Da Capo Press, 2001, 147–59], it seems likely that these bibliographers had first hand experience with the Private Case.

24. Fraxi, *Index*, li, lxiii. The ways in which Ashbee and Clowes each organized their bibliographical entries—and the bibliographers' comments about their organizational methods—further emphasize how they viewed these works as a “field” or family of forbidden publications, with authorial, generic, thematic, and national ties among some of the works examined taking on secondary importance to their membership in the forbidden archive. Clowes's bibliography is arranged miscellaneously, “without any reference either to subjects or to authors,” nor to language, national origin, or genre (Morum, *Bibliotheca*, xxi). Ashbee's bibliographies are arranged according to several different organizational principles, each of which he deemed relatively arbitrary, intended to help the reader locate entries easily rather than act as interpretive mechanisms. (See, for instance, *Centuria Librorum Absconditorum: Bio-Biblio-Iconographical and Critical Notes on Curious, Uncommon, and Erotic Books* [London: Privately Printed, 1879], xii – xiii). Ashbee's first bibliography is arranged alphabetically (see Fraxi, *Index* liii–liv), while entries in the second bibliography are loosely arranged by subject or author (see Fraxi, *Centuria*, xii – xiii). The third bibliography's entries are organized into three parts, which list 1) works by theme, 2) works by national origin, and 3) new editions of works listed in Ashbee's previously published bibliographies, respectively (see Pisanus Fraxi [Henry Spencer Ashbee], *Catena Librorum Tacendorum: Bio-Biblio-Iconographical and Critical Notes on Curious, Uncommon, and Erotic Books* [London: Privately Printed, 1885], xiv – xlv).

25. Fraxi, *Index*, xiv.

26. For instance, although Clowes' bibliography lists a French guide to the Gabinetto Segreto (see Morum, *Bibliotheca*, 119), such guides circulated openly in Britain throughout the Victorian period, in English as well as in French and other European languages.

27. Leonard, *Fragile Minds*, 57.

28. See “The Queen, on the Prosecution of Henry Scott, Appellant, *v.* Benjamin Hicklin and Another, Justices of Wolverhampton, Respondents,” *Censorship Landmarks*, ed. Edward De Grazia (R.R. Bowker: New York and London, 1969), 5–11.

29. Fraxi, *Index*, xxvii.

30. Morum, *Bibliotheca*, viii–xi.

31. Fraxi, *Catena*, xxxv.

32. Fraxi, *Catena*, xxxv–xli.

33. Fraxi, *Index*, 398–99.

34. Fraxi, *Index*, xxxiv–xxxviii, xl.

35. Steven Marcus, *The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid Nineteenth-Century England* (New York: Basic, 1966), 46. See also Gibson, *Erotomaniac*, 109.

36. Lisa Z. Sigel, *Governing Pleasures: Pornography and Social Change in England, 1815–1914* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 61.

37. See Turner, *Schooling Sex*.

38. John Holmes, “The Poet of Science: How Scientists Read Their Tennyson,” *Victorian Studies* 54, no. 4 (2012): 655–78, 674. See also Sally Shuttleworth, *The Mind of the Child: Child Development in Literature, Science, and Medicine, 1840–1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 131–32.

39. See, for example, Iwan Bloch, *Sexual Life in England* [1901–03], trans. William H. Forstern (London: Francis Aldor, 1938), which draws extensively on Ashbee's bibliographies as well as Ashbee's private collection of “forbidden books” to construct a history of English sexual life and a theory of English “national character.” (See Iwan Bloch to Henry Spencer Ashbee, 20 July 1900, Bloch Collection, Magnus Hirschfeld Gesellschaft, Berlin.)

40. Anna Katharina Schaffner, “Fiction as Evidence: On the Uses of Literature in Nine-

teenth-Century Sexological Discourse," *Comparative Literature Studies* 48, no. 2 (2011): 165–99.

41. See "Law of Libel," 304.

42. Quoted in Sigel, *Governing*, 52.

43. Dawson, *Darwin*, 11, 94.

44. Quoted in Sigel, *Governing*, 52.

45. Matt Cook, *London and the Culture of Homosexuality, 1885–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 91–92.

46. See Peter Mendes, *Clandestine Erotic Fiction in English, 1800–1930* (Aldershot: Scolar, 1993), 8, 42–43, 156, 172–73, 179, 193–94, 200–202, 236–37, 289, 345–37, 372–73.

47. Mendes, *Clandestine*, 156, 289.

48. Mendes, *Clandestine*, 179, 194, 235–237, 214–16.

49. Sigel, *Governing*, 55–58.

50. Dane Kennedy, *A Highly Civilized Man: Richard Burton and the Victorian World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), 168.

51. See, for instance, Sigel, *Governing*, 50–80; Andrew D. Lyons and Harriet P. Lyons, *Irregular Connections: A History of Anthropology and Sexuality* (University of Nebraska Press, 2004); and Kennedy, *A Highly Civilized Man*.

52. Lyons and Lyons, *Irregular Connections*, 6, 16.

53. Ian Hunter, David Saunders, and Dugald Williamson, *On Pornography: Literature, Sexuality, and Obscenity Law* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1992), 40.

54. Sigel, *Governing*, 60.

55. Sigel, *Governing*, 50.

56. Anjali Arondekar, *For the Record: On Sexuality and the Colonial Archive in India* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 113. See also Colligan, *Publisher's Paradise*, 195–99, for a detailed analysis of an early twentieth century novel that self-consciously continues this tradition of intertextual reference, and represents within its narrative archival reading practices associated with the secret museum.

57. *Tom Brown's Jest Book; or, The Companion to the Cloister* (London: Edward Duncombe, n.d.), 91.

58. *The Victim of Lust; or, Scenes in the Life of Rosa Fielding* (London: Printed for the Booksellers, c. 1867), 110.

59. *The Story of a Dildoe*, 70.

60. John Davenport, *Aphrodisiacs and Anti-Aphrodisiacs: Three Essays on the Power of Reproduction* (London: Privately Printed, 1869), 1–2.

61. Richard Francis Burton, *The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night* (London: Printed by the Burton Club for Private Subscribers Only, 1885–88), 1:xii.

62. Sigel, *Governing*, 62.

63. Burton, *Nights*, 5:64.

64. See, for instance, Henry Smith [William Dugdale], "Works Sold by H. Smith," in *The Lady of the Camelias* [sic] by Alexander Dumas (London: H. Smith [William Dugdale], c. 1855). British Library Shelfmark c.194.a.447(1).

65. Burton, *Nights*, 5:64–65.

66. See Carol O'Sullivan, "Translation Within the Margin: The 'Libraries' of Henry Bohn," in *Agents of Translation*, ed. John Milton and Paul Bandina (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2009), 107–29, 123, 125 for further analysis of how this form of expurgation highlights erotic elements in a text.

67. Gibson, *Erotomaniac*, 24.

68. Marcus, *Other Victorians*, 72.

69. Ronald Pearsall, *The Worm in the Bud: The World of Victorian Sexuality* [1969] (Gloustershire: Sutton, 2003), 388.

70. Colette Colligan, *The Traffic in Obscenity from Byron to Beardsley: Sexuality and Exoticism in Nineteenth-Century Print Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 57.

71. As Kristen M. Girtan has shown (see "Mingling With Matter: Tactile Microscopy and the Philosophic Mind in Brobdingnag and Beyond," *Eighteenth Century* 54, no. 4 [2013]: 497–520), pornographic writing engaged with scientific ideas well before this period. Although the Cannibals' use of pornographic narrative to explore interests also addressed in their scientific writings cannot be considered a "new" invention, their extensive coproduction of sexual-scientific and pornographic works does represent a deliberate intensification of a historical interplay between these forms of writing.

72. Arondekar, *For the Record*, 179.

73. Burton, *Nights*, 1:xi; 10:115, 156.

74. Burton, *Nights*, 10:173.

75. Burton, *Nights*, 10:63.

76. Burton, *Nights*, 10:252–53.

77. Burton, *Nights*, 1:xviii.

78. See Cook, *London*, 18–22, for an extensive analysis of *Sins*' historicity.

79. *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain; or, The Recollections of a Mary Ann* [1881] (Olympia, 2006), 115, emphasis added.

80. *Sins*, 117–18.

81. See Sigel, *Governing*, 51–52.

82. Gibson, *Erotomaniac*, 24–25.

83. Moore, "Arcane Erotica," 211.

84. In this way, the secret museum again recalls the bourgeois privilege associated with the Private Case and other institutional collections of "dangerous" reading materials. See Moore, "Arcane Erotica," and Fryer, *Private Case*, 16–26, 36–56, and 125–38.

85. See, for instance, Richard Francis Burton, "The Thousand Nights and a Night," *Academy*, August 15, 1885, 104.

86. Charles Carrington [Paul Ferdinando], *Bibliotheca Arcana: Being a Rough List of Curious, Rare and Uncommon Books* (Paris: Charles Carrington, 1899), in *Album* 7.

87. It is beyond the scope of this article to fully describe these publishers' methods of production, marketing, and distribution. For further information on this topic, see Colligan, *Publisher's Paradise*, 75–140; Mendes, *Clandestine*, 3–45; James G. Nelson, *Publisher to the Decadents: Leonard Smithers in the Careers of Beardsley, Wilde, Dowson* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000); and Sigel, *Governing*, 81–92.

88. See, for example, the pornographer William Dugdale's descriptions of works for sale in Henry Smith, "Works Sold by H. Smith."

89. Quoted in Marcus, *Other Victorians*, 73.

90. Fraxi, *Index*, 239–241.

91. Marcus, *Other Victorians*, 71.

92. Potter, *Obscene Modernism*, 63.

93. Jon R. Godsall, *A Tangled Web: A Life of Sir Richard Burton* (Leicester: Matador, 2008), 398.

94. Nelson, *Publisher*, 315–16.

95. "The Mistress and the Slave: A Masochist Realistic Love Story" (n.p.: Erotika Biblion Society, c. 1904), 3, in *Album* 7.

96. Mendes, *Clandestine*, 57–58.

97. Mark Longaker, *Ernest Dowson* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1944), 133. For further details about the Lutetian Society, see Denise Merkle, "The Lutetian Society," *TTR: traduction, terminologie, redaction* 16, no. 2 (2003): 73–101.

98. Simon Eliot, "Hotten: Rotten: Forgotten? An Apologia for a General Publisher," *Book History* 3 (2000): 61–93.

99. Eliot, "Hotten," 63–64.
100. Fraxi, *Index* 252–53.
101. Eliot, "Hotten," 69–70.
102. See, for instance, "Literature: The Slang Dictionary" and "Literature," in *Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle*, May 19, 1869, 2–3.
103. See endpaper advertisements in Theodore Taylor, *Thackeray the Humourist and the Man of Letters* (London: John Camden Hotten, 1864), and Artemus Ward (Charles F. Browne), *Among the Mormons (His Travels)* (London: John Camden Hotten, 1865).
104. Sharon Marcus, *Between Women: Friendship, Desire, and Marriage in Victorian England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 135–48.
105. See, for example, John Camden Hotten, "A History of the Rod," *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, August 1, 1870, and John Camden Hotten, "Mr. Hotten has just completed," *Ladies Treasury*, April 1, 1870, 65.
106. See, for example, "Notice: Abyssinia and its People," *Bookseller*, October 31, 1867, 839.
107. Sigel, *Governing*, 56.
108. Edmund Gosse, *The Life of Swinburne* [1912] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 23.
109. Sigel, *Governing*, 56.
110. See Sarah Bull, "A Purveyor of Garbage? Charles Carrington and the Marketing of Sexual Science in Late Victorian Britain," *Victorian Review* 38, no. 1 (2012): 55–76 for information about how Carrington advertised "risky" sexual-scientific publications as respectable reading material on the open market, even as he characterized them as erotic publications in clandestine catalogues and prospectuses that aimed to attract readers interested in "forbidden books." *Catalogue of a Few Old Books*, no. 8 (Sheffield: Nichols, 1888), in "Erotica Producers (Vertical File) (England) (19th Century) Nichols, H.S.," Special Collections, Kinsey Institute for Sex Research (Bloomington, Indiana), offers a good example of how Nichols advertised works associated with the "secret museum" openly early in his career: he scattered them among vast lists of works for sale that had little or no associations with sex or obscenity, including volumes on architecture, botany, physiology, phrenology, art, philosophy, agriculture, printers and printing, geography, and geology, as well as novels by Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, and George Eliot. Nichols did, however, discreetly highlight such works' interest for readers in search of forbidden books by labelling them "curious," "rare," and "scarce."
111. Peter McDonald, "Modernist Publishing: 'Nomads and Mapmakers,'" in *A Concise Companion to Modernism*, ed. David Bradshaw (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 221–42, 227.
112. Leonard Smithers, *Catalogue of Rare and Curious Books*, April 1895 (London: Leonard Smithers & Co., 1895), 1.
113. Smithers, *Catalogue*, 4.
114. Smithers, *Catalogue*, 6.
115. Smithers, *Catalogue*, 6, 3.
116. These latter works could include, for instance, transcripts of Henry Vizetelly's defense for selling Emile Zola's novels and Oscar Wilde's publications. See Gregory Mackie, "Publishing Notoriety: Piracy, Pornography, and Oscar Wilde," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 73, no. 4 (Fall 2004): 980–90 for an extensive analysis of how, after 1895, Smithers and Carrington exploited Wilde's association with obscenity in the public imagination to market his publications as "notorious" or "forbidden."
117. For other examples, see *Album 7* (especially catalogues 16, 25, and 34) and Carrington's clandestine catalogue cum bibliography *Forbidden Books: Notes and Gossip on Tabooed Literature* (Paris: For the Author and His Friends [Carrington], 1902). The fact that obscenity was not protected under copyright (see David Saunders, "Copyright, Obscenity and Literary History," *ELH* 57, no. 2 [1990]: 431–44) may explain why Victorian pornographers' catalogues tended to be very similar: reprinting (from one another and from older works origi-

nally published by others) was more cost-effective than sourcing new publications. The exploitation of the secret museum discourse examined in this article may have originated in attempts to make lemonade out of the lemons, as it were, of relatively unoriginal catalogues.

118. These works include—predictably—pornographic novels associated with the Cannibal Club, such as the *Romance of Lust*; recent editions of Pietro Aretino's *Ragionamenti* (1534–36), John Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1748), and the Marquis de Sade's *Justine, ou Les Malheurs de la vertu* (1791); the Erotika Biblion Society's edition of the *Priapeia*; Burton's incendiary translation of the *Nights*; Clowes' and Ashbee's bibliographies of "forbidden books"; a record of Henry Vizetelly's defense for selling Zola's works; a slang dictionary; a work on *Conjugal Love: or, The Pleasures of the Marriage Bed*; and early sexological studies by Richard von Krafft-Ebing and Albert von Schrenck-Notzing as well as original pornographic novels and dubious anthropological and sexological productions.

119. Carrington, *Bibliotheca*, 3.

120. Carrington, *Bibliotheca*, 45.

121. Stefano Evangelista, "'Lovers and Philosophers at Once': Aesthetic Platonism in the Victorian 'Fin de Siècle,'" *The Yearbook of English Studies* 36, no. 2 (2006): 230–44; Mark Mitchell and David Leavitt, "Introduction," *Pages Passed from Hand to Hand: The Hidden Tradition of Homosexual Literature in English from 1748 to 1914* (London: Vintage, 1999).