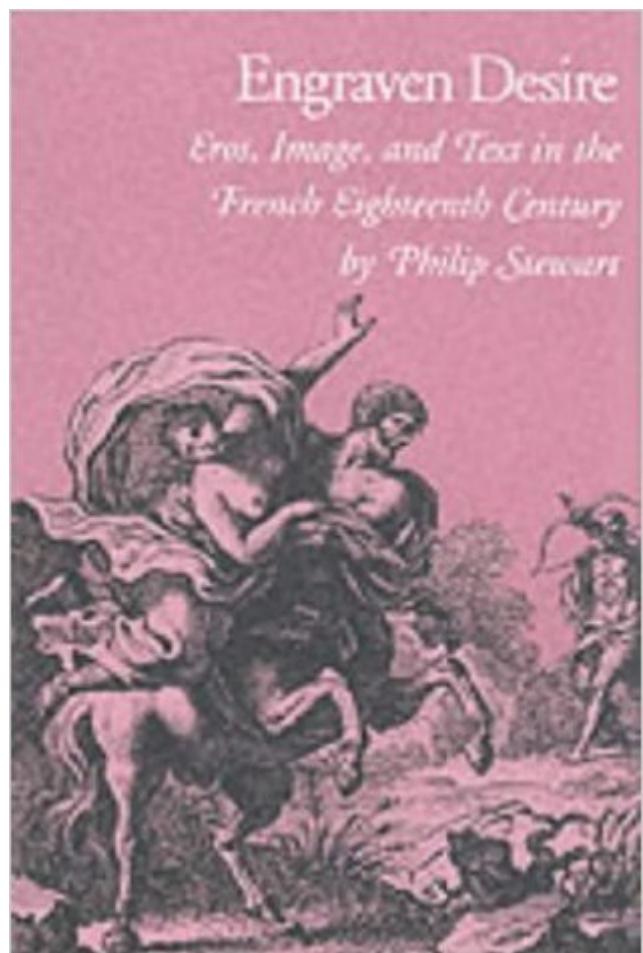


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Engraven Desire: Eros, Image, And Text In The French Eighteenth Century



Synopsis

How do literary illustrations affect the way we readâ "or more subtly, what we read? Through a critical investigation of the role of engraving played in eighteenth-century French literature, Philip Stewart grapples with this question. In both its approach and its conclusions, his project marks a provocative departure from the tradition of viewing illustrations as merely pictures, rather than as texts to be interpreted themselves. Focusing on the objectification of women by the â œmale gaze,â • Stewart analyzes the various ways in which this masculine power is simultaneously represented and veiled: the fascination with women playing â œmaleâ • roles, such as soldiers; the preponderance of voyeuristic images of the naked female body; the transformation of male power into hostile forces of nature that render women helpless. Further, Stewart shows how â œindecentâ • engravings that purported to test the limits of eighteenth-century morality often merely reinforced prevailing images of women. Addressing critical concerns about the societal enforcement of gender roles in literature along with essential questions about the function of illustration, *Engraven Desire* provides surprising insight into the culturally conditioned act of reading. Stewartâ ™s work, itself richly illustrated with hundreds of arresting reproductions, makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the interplay of art, literature, and society.

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