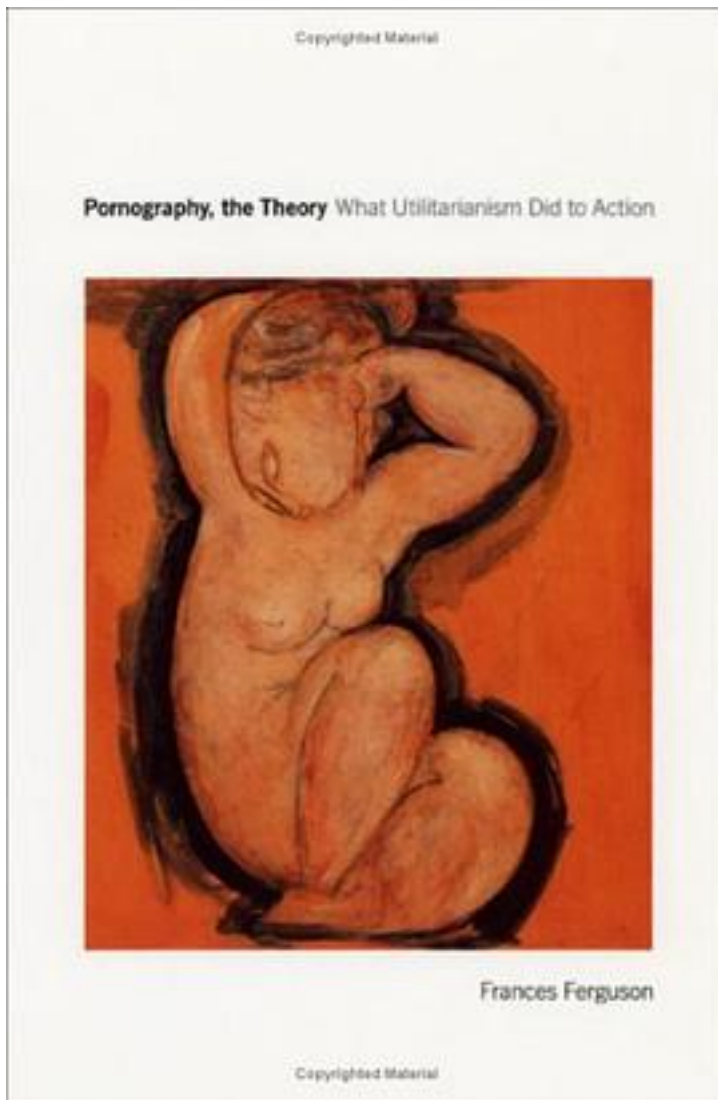


# Pornography, the Theory



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著者:Frances Ferguson

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When we think of debates about pornography, what first comes to mind is the question of whether it should be banned or protected. But perhaps we should ask instead what pornography tells us about the way individuals are valued or represented. Combining literary criticism and political theory, Frances Ferguson describes the affinities between pornography and less controversial representations to provide a better understanding of its harms and to demonstrate how it works. Pornography first developed in western Europe during the late eighteenth century in tandem with the rise of utilitarianism, the philosophical position that stresses the importance of something's usefulness over its essence. Through incisive readings of Sade, Flaubert, Lawrence, and Bret Easton Ellis, Ferguson shows how pornography - like utilitarian social structures - diverts our attention from individual identities to actions and renders more clearly the social value of such actions through concrete literary representations. Only when pornography is used to expel individuals from social structures or institutions that promote value, Ferguson argues, is it potentially dangerous. Impassioned, judicious, and deeply informed, Pornography, the Theory will prove to be essential reading for anyone interested in literature and its cultural history.

作者介绍:

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