

A stalwart opponent of censorship, he helped to publish a limited edition, twelve-volume set Arthur Machen's barred translation of Casanova's Memoirs, financing the printing in Mexico and the start of the career of the artist, Rockwell Kent, who illustrated them. Rex's financing of the printing, distribution, etc. was \$24,000. During this time he was making a good income with the Educational Thrift Service that he had founded. He expected to lose his investment in the Casanova project, but instead made a profit. During this time he also lent \$100,000 to Rockwell Kent so the soon-to-be-famous artist could work on at his art full time in Ireland.

Following is an array of archival data on The Memoirs of Jacques Casanova De Seingal.

- Excerpt regarding Stout's Casanova project from *Rex Stout: A Biography* by John J. McAleer, Little, Brown, 1977
- Copy of front matter from Rex Stout's set of the publication
- NY Times Article (October 1, 1997) "Learning to Love a Lover; Is Casanova's Reputation as a Reprobate a Bum Rap?"
- An Art Review of a showing of Rockwell Kent's work
- A handwritten salutation to Rex Stout in the front of a rare used book that alludes to his "Casanova" project.

movement. He probed it like a muskmelon. What was too soft, too unyielding, or off in scent, color, or flavor, he passed by.

One of Rex's liveliest friendships in this period was with Egmont Arens, his Washington Square Bookshop acquaintance, now his neighbor on West Eighth Street. Egmont was an artist, and later would pioneer streamlining in train design, but in seven years he already had had many careers in New York — as bookseller, editor of the original *Playboy*, art editor of *Vanity Fair*, officer of the Pratt Institute of Art, Manager of the People's Symphony Concerts, editor of *The Philadelphian*, and founder of the Flying Stag Press. In 1921, with two friends, he had sailed the twenty-one-ton schooner yacht *Diabliesse* to Europe. In prior times he had been a cowboy. Egmont was an amiable madman. He liked Rex and sought his friendship aggressively. Rex enjoyed Arens but could not share his emotional approach to life.

Rex's objectivity perplexed Egmont. He campaigned to make inroads on it. Thus on 4 April 1924, he wrote Rex:

It's not very easy to talk to you, because you are so careful, so covered up, so walled about, and one never knows whether the things you say are spoken for the benefit of strengthening the wall, or are the voice of the you within. As I have come to know even this little of your real self, I've often wondered why you bother so about the wall. The real you is so adequate and complete and fine and to-be-loved, that I'm amazed that you keep that part of you so hidden.⁵

Despite his restraints, Rex soon joined Egmont in bringing out a deluxe twelve-volume edition of Arthur Machen's translation of Casanova's *Memoirs*, a book barred from the United States because of alleged erotic content. The idea originated with Egmont, but Rex took no convincing. Censorship would have his lifelong repugnance.

The plan was that Rex would finance the undertaking — which he did, to the sum of \$24,000 — and that Egmont would handle the details of publication. This Egmont did with verve. He asked Havelock Ellis to write an introduction. When Ellis demurred, Egmont, undismayed, asked Arthur Symons to do it. Symons obliged. Egmont then got Arthur Machen himself to supply a new preface. Egmont's efforts did not stop there. He hired Edmund Wilson to read, and correct as required, the whole of the text. Rockwell Kent was asked to prepare twelve illustrations. Egmont, calling himself "Eggface the Pirate," further plotted to have Kent, then abroad, transport to Mexico the remainder of an earlier English edition of the *Memoirs*, so that they could control the market without competition. The scheme called for having Rex and himself fetch the books in Mexico and smuggle them back on a chartered yacht, by way of the Gulf. In Egmont's mind, the thought that they might be intercepted by coast guard ships patrolling for bootleggers only added zest to the caper.

THE MEMOIRS OF JACQUES
CASANOVA DE SEINGALT

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TO ONE THOUSAND NUMBERED
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68

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THE MEMOIRS OF
JACQUES CASANOVA
DE SEINGALT

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English by Arthur Machen with an introduc-
tion by Arthur Symonds a new preface by the
translator and twelve drawings by Rockwell Kent*

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AVENTUROS

1925

Arts

Learning to Love a Lover; Is Casanova's Reputation as a Reprobate a Bum Rap?

By DINITIA SMITH

Published: October 01, 1997

"I have loved women to a frenzy," the 18th-century writer and adventurer Giacomo Casanova wrote in his huge memoir, "History of My Life." And indeed he did. By one count, Casanova made love to 132 women during his life, a large number, at least by the preinflationary standards of the day.

His amorous pursuits made his reputation for the next 200 years, and the name "Casanova" became synonymous with a male neurosis. In popular culture, he has often been portrayed as something of a buffoon. In the 1954 film "Casanova's Big Night," Bob Hope masquerades as Casanova pursuing the lovely Joan Fontaine through Venice. In Fellini's "Casanova," with Donald Sutherland, and in "La Nuit de Varennes," with Marcello Mastroianni, Casanova is irredeemably dissolute.

But the popular portrayal has obscured Casanova's exploits as a magician, a spy, a translator of the "Iliad" and possibly, a co-author of the libretto for Mozart's "Don Giovanni." Casanova was said to be the only person ever to escape from the Doges' Palace in Venice. And he was a monumental egomaniac, able to find enough interesting material about himself to fill 12 volumes of writings.

But for the most part it has been nearly impossible to read Casanova's memoirs in English. They have long been out of print and difficult to obtain. Now, for the first time in over 25 years, they are available once again, in an attractively bound six-volume edition of a 1966 translation by Willard R. Trask, published in May by Johns Hopkins University Press. Next month, Farrar, Straus & Giroux will publish "Casanova, the Man Who Really Loved Women," written by a Belgian psychoanalyst, Lydia Flem. As much a meditation as a full-scale biography, Ms. Flem's book asserts that Casanova was something of a feminist.

It looks as if Casanova is on his way to rehabilitation.

"Having him available in translation makes it possible for people to discover he's a wonderful writer," said Jay Caplan, a professor of French literature at Amherst College.

For Robert Darnton, a professor of history at Princeton and an authority on French literature of the Revolutionary period, Casanova was not the usual Don Juan. "Casanova is a worldly-wise figure who rises above the defeats of his later life through the sheer power of his literary imagination," he said. "Sex is a part of the story, but only the vehicle for a deeper knowledge of the human condition." But who was the historical Casanova? How much of what he wrote was true? J. Rives Childs, a diplomat and author of a 1988 biography of Casanova, combed archives across Europe in an attempt to track down the facts behind Casanova's assertions. "Much has been made," Childs wrote, of "the occasional discrepancies found in the narrative." But most of these lapses, Childs said diplomatically, occur because "Casanova was of exemplary punctiliousness in protecting the identity of women of any social standing with whom he had liaisons."

He was born Giacomo Casanova in Venice in 1725, of Spanish ancestry. In his memoir, he claims that one of his ancestors sailed with Christopher Columbus. Casanova's parents were actors, considered a lowly class by Venetians, but were nonetheless immensely popular. Young Giacomo was a sickly child, given to nosebleeds. When he was only a year old, his mother, Zaneta, abandoned him to the care of his grandmother so that she could pursue her acting career. It could be argued that the rest of his life was a search for the maternal warmth that was abruptly taken from him when he was a baby.

Judging from Casanova's own account of his early exploits, he was a beautiful boy, androgynous in appearance, with curly hair that young girls liked to run their fingers through. When he was 11, Casanova was sent to Padua to study for the priesthood under the tutelage of an Abbe Gozzi. It was there that Casanova seems to have found his real calling, when he was seduced by the priest's sister, Bettina.

Shortly thereafter he returned to Venice in his priestly robes, and seduced two sisters simultaneously. He also came under the protection of the first of a series of rich patrons, a Senator Malipiero, who, Childs speculates, might have been his real father.

From then on, Casanova's life appears to have followed a pattern. There would be a rich patron. Casanova would get involved in a scheme. He would seduce someone. There would be a scandal, and he would have to leave town in a hurry. His feverish travels through France, Poland, Germany and Italy provide a panoramic history of 18th-century Europe, a landscape with few cultural boundaries.

In 1760, he met Voltaire. Casanova described their meeting thus:

"This," I said to him, "is the happiest moment of my life. I have a sight finally of my master; it is for 20 years, sir, that I have been your pupil."

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Equal-Opportunity Approach to Women

Casanova seduced women of all classes, including a number of nuns. He also seemed to like underage girls. He never married, though he had children. In one precipitous episode, he almost married his own daughter, Leonilda. He actually went to bed with her and her mother, though he said that he left the child "intact."

Still, Dr. Flem argues in her new book: "Casanova never breaks up with a woman. Separation is always by mutual consent." And when he breaks up with a woman, there is "no rancor, no heartbreak, no revenge, no heartache. At most a bit of sadness."

Sometimes, Casanova writes, he liked women to dress him up as a girl. He appears to have had some homosexual experiences, though he preferred women to men.

But above all, Casanova liked his women to be intelligent. "Without speech, the pleasure of love is diminished by at least two-thirds," he wrote.

"Casanova was in love with women," Dr. Flem said in a telephone interview from her vacation home in Brittany. "He doesn't try to make a collection of women."

He had a gallant side, too, and was forever coming to the aid of women in distress, including women who were pregnant by men other than him.

"I fell in love with him," Dr. Flem said. "I think he is a man who can understand women. Because, in a certain way, a part of him is like a woman. He likes intelligent women very much. Women are not just an object of desire, but people to talk to. He's very afraid of hurting them, and he likes to stay friends after being lovers. And he is one of the best writers of that century."

In 1743 or 1744, Casanova published a poem that whetted his appetite for "the rewards and practice of literature," he said. He eventually abandoned his plans for the priesthood, and began earning his living as a violinist and a gambler.

The great love of Casanova's life was Henriette, whom he met in 1749. She seems to have been a cross-dresser. Henriette called him "the most honorable man I have ever met in this world." When they parted company in a hotel room in Geneva, she carved a message to him on the window with the point of a diamond. "You will forget Henriette, too," she wrote.

Years later, when he encountered her again, he failed to recognize her. "We have both aged," Henriette wrote to him in 1769 when she was 51. "But will you believe me that while I still love you, I am happy that you did not recognize me? It is not that I am ugly, but plumpness has altered my physiognomy."

The most famous of Casanova's escapades occurred in 1756-1757 in Venice, after he had published an anti-clerical poem and had been imprisoned in the Leads, the prison in the Doges' Palace, by the Inquisition. Casanova broke through the floor of his cell and escaped with the aid of an accomplice. He was said to be the first person ever to have found his way out of the place. Twenty years later, Casanova switched roles, and became a secret agent for the Inquisition.

Among his many jobs, Casanova raised money for the French authorities. He was the founder, in 1757, of a national lottery. Around that time, Casanova also became, temporarily, rich, and began referring to himself as the Chevalier de Seingalt. All his life, he engaged in a series of schemes to make money, including a crackpot attempt in 1763 to transmigrate the soul of the Marquise d'Urfe into the body of a male infant.

By the age of 65, Casanova had worn himself out. His powers had faded, and he got a job as a librarian for Count Joseph Charles de Waldstein at his castle at Dux. It was a terrible time for the old libertine. He was bored, and he hated the food.

Casanova's days in the castle, as described by Prince Charles de Ligne, the Duke's uncle, and quoted in the Childs biography, were not happy. "There was not a day in which, whether for his coffee, his milk, the plate of macaroni he demanded, there was not a quarrel," de Ligne wrote. Worse, Casanova became something of a laughing stock. "He had become angry, they had laughed," de Ligne wrote. "He had shown his French verses, they had laughed. He had gesticulated, declaiming Italian verses, they had laughed."

Memoirs Survive An Allied Air Raid

And so Casanova began his memoirs, "the only remedy to keep from going mad or dying of grief," he wrote. For nine years, he scribbled furiously for 13 hours a day in French, a language that he loved and was more widely spoken than Italian. By the time he died in 1798, his strongest attachment was to his fox terrier, Finette. The cause of death was said to be a painful disease of the bladder. His memoirs extended only to the year 1774.

According to de Ligne, Casanova's last words were: "I have lived as a philosopher and die as a Christian."

For years, Casanova's memoirs languished. Then, in 1820, one of his descendants offered them to F. A. Brockhaus, the German publisher, and Brockhaus published an edited version in German.

During World War II, Brockhaus hid the manuscript in 12 cartons under the Brockhaus office in Leipzig. But the building was hit by an Allied bomb. Casanova's writings were rescued and taken by bicycle to a bank vault. In 1960, Brockhaus published the memoirs in their full form.

"His final conquest, his most beautiful courtesan, is writing," Dr. Flem writes. "Words capture the scents, flavors, curves, textures, sounds and colors of memories." In the end, she writes, Casanova's memoirs are "a display that runs the entire gamut of the senses, warming the soul of an exile who dreads boredom."

Learning to Love a Lover: Reconsidering Casanova

Continued From Page B1

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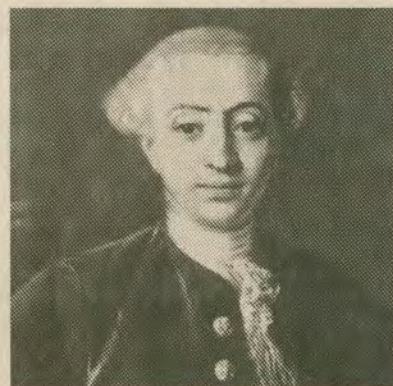
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A portrait of Casanova at 45.

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Kent's rugged style gets rare showing

By Alan G. Artner

Tribune art critic

In the 1930s and 1940s Rockwell Kent's illustrations were widely known in America. But during the 1950s his socialism received more attention than his art, and that combined with a modernist loathing for illustration kept him from regaining the spotlight.

American museum exhibitions of Kent's work were rare, especially after he gave a large group of his paintings "to the people of the Soviet Union" in 1960. There was an important show in Maine almost a decade later. But only now, 30 years after his death, does "Distant Shores: The Odyssey of Rockwell Kent" at the Terra Museum of American Art celebrate him equally as a painter and illustrator.

In his early life, Kent was a wilderness traveler, and the paintings, prints and drawings assembled here testify to that passion. There's something a little creepy about his decades of self-testing in Maine, Newfoundland, Alaska, Tierra del Fuego and Greenland. But he thought such trav-

els represented a "flight to freedom" from so-called civilized man, and the effect of the works proves as much mystical as macho.

In any event, the difficulty of life in Kent's chosen locales rarely comes through in the paintings. And that perhaps has less to do with a stoic attitude than a rugged style. He favored a tight delineation of comparatively few streamlined forms, painted with strong contrasts of light and dark. This gave a heroic cast to unpeopled landscapes and work scenes alike.

The difficulty with the style is its similarity to the "uplifting" ones practiced in totalitarian countries. Kent's romantic, allegorical content was favored over every other by various dictatorial regimes in the '30s, though of course that was not his fault. But whereas his pictorial simplifications were strong, a tendency to simplify philosophically undermines several of the pictures, giving them a certain gooeyness.

That rather than storytelling, which is central to illustration, is what works against Kent, for when he is at the service of someone else's thought — as with Herman Melville's "Moby



Rockwell Kent's "Greenland Winter," 1934-1935.

Dick" — he can be both spare in design and ideationally superb.

Kent's unpeopled landscapes are, too, appealing in the way the works of certain early moderns were, creating a drama purely of light and form rather than overheated sentiment.

"Distant Shores: The Odyssey of Rockwell Kent" continues at the Terra Museum of American Art, 666 N. Michigan Ave., through May 20; a talk on Kent's politics will be at 6 p.m. May 1.



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Dollar Diplomacy

(First Edition, inscribed by
Joseph Freeman to Rex
Stout, with a humorous
drawing)

Description:

First Edition. Very humorously
INSCRIBED by co-author
Joseph Freeman to Rex Stout
and his wife [first wife] on the
front endpaper, with a
drawing of a naked man and
woman embracing:

*"For Rex and Fay / Casanova's
Homecoming; or, The
Technique of Peaceful
Economic Penetration / see p.
28 / With best wishes / Joseph
Freeman."*

Turning to page 28, one can
read about successful
economic penetration,
though it is much less
interesting than the kind

Mr. Freeman suggests in his drawing. Among the earliest titles published by the Viking Press, issued in their first year of existence, one of a handful of jointly-published books with B.W. Huebsch. Near Fine lacking the rare dust jacket. Attractive octagonal bookplate on the front pastedown, small numeric ink notation to same, at the top left corner. **Price US \$1,500.00.**