



# **Through the Reading Glass: Women, Books, and Sex in the French Enlightenment (SUNY series in Feminist Criticism and Theory)**

*SUELLEN DIACONOFF*

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**Through the Reading Glass: Women, Books, and Sex in the French Enlightenment (SUNY series in Feminist Criticism and Theory) SUELLEN DIACONOFF**

*Argues that women's relationship to books and their promotion of reading contributed greatly to the cultural and intellectual vitality of the Enlightenment.*

Through the Reading Glass explores the practices and protocols that surrounded women's reading in eighteenth-century France. Looking at texts as various as fairy tales, memoirs, historical romances, short stories, love letters, novels, and the pages of the new female periodical press, Suellen Diaconoff shows how a reading culture, one in which books, sex, and acts of reading were richly and evocatively intertwined, was constructed for and by women. Diaconoff proposes that the underlying discourse of virtue found in women's work was both an empowering strategy, intended to create new kinds of responsible and not merely responsive readers, and an integral part of the conviction that domestic reading does not have to be trivial.

Suellen Diaconoff is Professor of French at Colby College. She is the author of *Eros and Power in "Les Liaisons Dangereuses": A Study in Evil*.

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