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**Title: ‘The Act of Copulation being Ordain'd by nature as the ground of all
Generation’: fertility and the representation of sexual pleasure in
seventeenth-century pornography in England**

Abstract

To a modern reader pornography and the representation of reproduction are mutually exclusive, despite their common subject matter: sex. But seventeenth-century pornographic texts do not conform to modern ideas about the nature of pornography. Sexual intercourse is defined as for the purpose of procreation with cataclysmic consequences resulting from its avoidance. In this period the pleasures of sex represented in the pornographic text are intimately entwined with ideas about reproduction and conception, and an understanding of the body which is temporally and culturally specific: sexual pleasure was understood as not complete pleasure if it did not have the possibility of conception. The connection between the sexual act and its reproductive function is emphasised through metaphors that connect the body and the state, or the land, emphasising that early modern social and economic stability depended on reproductive ability.

‘The Act of Copulation being Ordain’d by nature as the ground of all Generation’: fertility and the representation of sexual pleasure in seventeenth-century pornography in England

To modern eyes pornography and the discussion and representation of reproduction are mutually exclusive, despite having a common subject matter: sex. It seems to be stating the obvious to say that pornography today is about sex but not about reproduction. In the modern pornographic text (whether visual or literary) sex is represented as for pleasure in itself, and is divorced completely from its primary purpose, the reproduction of the human race. Many analyses of early pornography are often ahistorical in this respect, assuming that pornography represents the pleasures of the sexual body in isolation from its function of reproduction for the pleasure of the reader or viewer, and ignore the presence of a concern with ‘generation’ in a literature which a modern audience would expect to be solely about sexual pleasure.[1] This assumption may owe something to the fact that much of this material is writing (purportedly) of or about prostitutes, reflecting the etymological origins of the word ‘pornography’ and its historical roots as a variety of literature. A literature about prostitutes immediately suggests a genre in which sex will be represented as for pleasure alone: a prostitute supplies sex as a commodity rather than as a means of producing a child. One would expect therefore any reference to conceiving a child to be as an occupational hazard, rather than as an integral part of the pleasure of sexual intercourse. However, I want to argue in this article that for seventeenth-century consumers of pornographic, or erotic, material, sexual pleasure went hand in hand with the desire, and need, for conception to occur.[2] This understanding that conception was central to the experience of sexual pleasure in intercourse permeated a wide variety of literature that is sexual in nature, and if we overlook the importance of this aspect of early modern sexuality, we may miss out on understanding an essential component of early

modern mentalities, about how early modern men and women understood their world and its purpose.

An assumption that pornography is about pleasure for its own sake, can also give rise to a taxonomical problem for the modern analyst of this material. Whereas modern pornography has become restricted to the representation of images of the sexual body and the body engaged in sexual acts, the literature that I will discuss here as early modern pornography was not limited in this way. The texts are interspersed with other sorts of material, such as philosophical discussion, or humorous stories. Despite the fact that the term pornography was not one that was used in the seventeenth century, there clearly was a concept of the 'pornographic' at the time, though many different terms were used to invoke it. There is contemporary evidence which suggests there was a kind of sexual literature that was of a particular nature, and into which a variety of texts were thought to fit, including medical and midwifery books, cheap pamphlets, longer prose narratives and various kinds of verse. This literature has been described variously as 'bawdy', 'erotic', 'lewd', 'libertine' or 'pornographic' and this difficulty in arriving at a particular term reflects the fact that texts in this period do not fit neatly into a particular, clearly-bounded category. Dorelies Kraakman, among others, has pointed out that pornography 'has long been a hybrid in Western European literary history, partaking of genres as diverse as medical and paramedical advice literature, drinking songs, political pamphlets and the novel'.^[3] I will therefore discuss a wide variety of texts in this article as pornography.

In this way also seventeenth-century pornographic texts are not transgressive, as some scholars have insisted is a necessary part of such literature. For example, Peter Wagner in *Eros Revived*, argues that it includes 'a deliberate violation of existing and widely accepted moral and social taboos.'^[4] Rather, these texts reinforce contemporary moral strictures, expounded in sermons and other prescriptive literature, that the primary

purpose of marriage, and hence sexual intercourse, is procreation.[5] They also bolster other contemporary promotion of population growth linking it with economic prosperity through lower wages and prices: 'The more are maintained by Laborious Profitable Trades, the richer the Nation will be both in People and Stock and ... Commodities the cheaper.'[6] This idea perhaps became more important after 1650 when the steady rise in population that had been taking place throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries came to a halt, falling again until the early eighteenth century when it resumed its expansion.[7] This period also saw emigration of around 300,000 people, mostly men, to the West Indies and the North American colonies, as well as the final major outbreak of plague and the spread of other potentially fatal diseases such as typhus and smallpox, perhaps increasing contemporary perception of a need for more bodies. It was also a time of high infant mortality: one child in four died before reaching the age of nine. Again, this may perhaps have encouraged a contemporary perception that more pregnancies might ensure more surviving children.

Discussion of ideas about fertility therefore can be found alongside descriptions of the sexual body and sexual acts. In this period the pleasures of sex represented in the pornographic text are intimately entwined with ideas about reproduction and conception, and an understanding of the body which is temporally and culturally specific: sexual pleasure was understood as not complete pleasure if it did not have the possibility of conception. While it is acknowledged that sex is highly pleasurable and that is why people - both men and women - experience such strong desire for sexual engagement, at the same time it is invariably stated that the pleasure stems from a desire to reproduce. The moment of conception is the moment of exquisite sexual pleasure. To this end, then, the sexual act is primarily described in terms which make this belief apparent, and which emphasise the need for penetrative heterosexual sexual intercourse with mutual, if not simultaneous, orgasm. This understanding of the connection between pleasure/orgasm

and conception is also reflected in wider contemporary cultural practices such as the law, and can be seen particularly with regard to the prosecution of rape: until the early eighteenth century an allegation of rape was discounted if pregnancy resulted because the sexual encounter must have been pleasurable for conception to have occurred.[8] Similarly, changes in reproductive knowledge are reflected in later eighteenth-century erotica, where the linking of female orgasm with conception gives way to new theories.[9] In other sorts of text, as for example, Rochester's 'closet drama', *Sodom: Or the Quintessence of Debauchery* (c.1680) and Charles Cotton's *Erotopolis* (1684), the connection between the sexual act and its reproductive function is conveyed through metaphors which connect the body and the state or the land, emphasising the notion that social, political and economic stability depends on reproductive ability.

In 'Redefining Sex in Eighteenth-Century England' Tim Hitchcock argues that the eighteenth century saw a fundamental change in sexual practice which can account for major demographic changes.[10] He suggests that:

sex changed. At the beginning of the century it was an activity characterised by mutual masturbation, much kissing and fondling, and long hours spent in mutual touching, but very little penal/vaginal penetration - at least before marriage. ... But the important thing is that there was an equality of emphasis on a wide range of different parts of the body.[11]

Pornography is, among others, one genre of literature that Hitchcock cites in support of his argument. However, a detailed analysis of a variety of seventeenth century pornographic texts does not support Hitchcock's assertion. What these texts actually reveal in their depictions of a variety of sexual activities is a privileging of heterosexual penetrative sex over all other varieties of intercourse. The emphasis in these

representations is clearly on penetrative heterosexual sex with male ejaculation - and preferably simultaneous male and female orgasm - to ensure conception. The pornography of the seventeenth century does not celebrate a 'polymorphous perverse' attitude to the sexual body, but rather focuses on the male and female genitalia in close conjunction as the site of sexual pleasure. In this construction of desire, it is the male genitals which are particularly privileged and which are inscribed as both the objects of desire and the means of satisfying desire.[12]

Hitchcock further suggests that the early modern construction of women as sexually appetitive necessarily constructed a mutuality in sexual relations. It meant that the expectation of satisfying the woman, of bringing on her orgasm, would allow varieties of sexual activity in which penile penetration would be merely one variety. But what these texts actually reveal is an understanding of the sexual body in the seventeenth century in which mutual sexual satisfaction *required* penis/vagina sexual activity. And in this scenario the penis with its ejaculate is the active, controlling part. We therefore see consistent representation of the penis and the testicles as the objects of female desire, and as the dominant image in descriptions of sexual activity. For example, in the originally French text *The School of Venus* this valorisation of the penis can be seen consistently throughout the text. It is at the forefront of all action and description of sexual activity: the sensation of the penis in the woman's hand or the sight of it displayed to her arouses her desire. Susanne tells Fanchon: "I no sooner felt it, stiff as it was, than I gave up all thoughts of sleep and responded to his caresses ... then he bounded about all over the bed, showing me his yard erect." [13]

There is an expectation that the mere sight of the male sexual organ is arousing to the woman. The testicles also are objects of desire, pleasure and value. In *The Practical*

Part of Love (1660), in a play on words about gemstones, the precious 'stones' which are testicles are praised above all others:

As for the word Pretious, I look upon it as an Epethete belonging either to Stones or Jewels. I confess I love a Diamond, Rubie, Emerald, &c. But above all pretious Stones, that I know there is none like those ----- You know my meaning, such is their great utility and excellency; I could even lose my self in writing their Encomium, they offered so much matter, that if I should but once begin, I should not know when to end.[14]

Man is crucially, physically, necessary for complete female gratification in the act of love because his semen is required to bring on the supreme female physical pleasure. While women are described in these texts as achieving orgasm by a variety of means, this is not characterised as complete sexual gratification unless it is orgasm achieved simultaneously with a man during penetrative sexual intercourse. It is quite apparent that it was understood that female orgasm can be brought on by manual stimulation, particularly of the clitoris (whether by herself, another woman, or a male partner), or by stimulation with an object (a dildo), and this is clearly described and explicitly stated in different texts at different times.[15] But at the same time, it is also explicitly stated that an emission of semen is necessary to bring on orgasm and complete female pleasure. Indeed, semen is represented as a fluid of extraordinary powers and properties.

It could be argued that it is not surprising to find an early modern pornographic literature which does not divorce sex from reproduction, as it was produced at a time in which there did not exist the reliable and efficient means of contraception which are available today. However, although undoubtedly seventeenth-century men and women did not have access to the effective methods of contraception brought by modern scientific and technological innovation, women were able to control their fertility to a certain extent. They could

practice abstention, *coitus interruptus*, abortion and infanticide, but most importantly, prolonged lactation following the birth of a child.[16] Audrey Eccles argues that women were aware of possibilities for both abortion and contraception in the period, and it is clear from legal records that women did procure abortions, both through the use of oral abortifacients and the use of instruments inserted into the womb, albeit at the risk of killing themselves as well as the foetus in the process.[17] More recently, Laura Gowing has also shown how women's knowledge of the female body and its reproductive capacities included awareness (and use) of herbs and potions to prevent pregnancy, as well as techniques for 'unblocking' the courses, or menstrual periods, which were clearly understood as intended to produce abortion.[18] It is also possible to read these early pornographic texts 'against the grain'. While the overt message of the text advises and promotes methods of ensuring fertility and conception, it also covertly informs readers how to restrict their fertility by practising the opposite of what is prescribed. However, the message here also must be that such sexual activity will not be as pleasurable as that which is likely to ensure conception, possibly offering a deterrence to their use.

In these texts semen is credited with amazing powers in the production of female pleasure. Not only is there 'no kind of sugar or confectionery as sweet in the mouth as that liquid in the cunny', but it is 'what actually causes pleasure.'[19] Over and over again we see described the special pleasures of semen and the ecstasy that it brings to women. Quantity is important here, a copious amount of semen is to be preferred. In *The Dialogues of Luisa Sigea*, Tullia envies those lucky women who are married to men who have three testicles and who are therefore able to produce even more semen. She tells Octavia:

All the heroes in this family nearly always present themselves at the duels
of Venus with three witnesses ... Lucky are the wives they possess! ...

those that have three operators engaged at it, as, for instance, Fulvio, the brother of my friend Pomponia, flood of course the women with a still greater quantity than those who have only two.[20]

James Grantham Turner dismisses this in *Schooling Sex* as a 'ludicrously mechanical equation between the volume of sperm injected and the amount of pleasure experienced by the woman'.[21] But the great desire for the male ejaculate - and preferably in large quantities - which is attributed to women in these texts springs from an understanding of the body based on humoral pathology and the Galenic-Hippocratic two-seed model of conception. In this model women are cold and moist while men are hot and dry. To experience sexual pleasure women must become hotter. A woman's sexual temperature must be raised during intercourse until she reaches the point of orgasm, which may occur before or after her male sexual partner, but it will be most intense if it occurs at the moment when the heat of the sperm touches the womb: 'Then, like a flame flaring when wine is sprinkled on it, the woman's heat blazes most brilliantly.'[22] Sperm has vital heat in three elements: its natural, elemental heat, heat from the father's soul, and from the heat of the sun.[23] So it is not only the greater heat which results from the two simultaneous orgasms which ensures the greater pleasure, but also the special properties of the semen itself. Heat is increased by the friction of intercourse and then raised even further by the emission of semen, thus increasing pleasure. But the semen itself also has properties and characteristics which in itself inflame desire: 'It is a serous, irritating humor that produces a most demanding itch in precisely that part of the body contrived by Nature to be hypersensitive to it.'[24]

This understanding of the qualities of semen, the requirement for heat for the production of orgasm, and hence female sexual pleasure and conception, is one that had wider cultural ramifications in the period, and that we can see informing witchcraft beliefs.

Sexual intercourse with the Devil was understood to be sterile because his semen was cold. This belief in the coldness of the semen of the Devil is repeated in witchcraft confessions in the period, such as that of Françoise Secretain in 1598 who reported 'that the Devil had four or five times known her carnally, in the form sometimes of a dog, sometimes of a cat, and sometimes of a fowl; and that his semen was very cold.' [25]

The pleasure of an orgasm which is brought on by the pleasure of feeling the heat of the male ejaculation is therefore unquestionably superior to that which is brought on by other means. It is the possibility of conception which is the crucial ingredient for the greatest of pleasures, for it is only when male and female ejaculate meet that the greatest heat, and therefore the greatest pleasure, results. These texts thus reveal a culture in which heterosexual, penetrative sexual intercourse, completed by orgasm is the form of sexual activity that was considered most acceptable and capable of delivering complete sexual gratification for both partners. Fore-play or manual stimulation of genitals is represented either positively as a means of further arousal designed to give pleasure to the partner (where mutual attraction has already ensured there is mutual desire) before or after penetrative intercourse, or negatively as the resort of impotent - and usually old - men who cannot achieve erection. In this case, the man feverishly, and generally uselessly, 'toys with' and 'fondles' the woman in a vain attempt to arouse his desire, and the woman tries her best to stimulate manually his recalcitrant penis into a semblance of life.

Mother Creswel in The Whore's Rhetorick (1683) describes such a type in scathing tones:

It is impossible to express the hugging, squeezing, antick gestures, and ridiculous expressions the old dotard will use on this occasion, just such as Nurses prate to their fondlings, who understand not what they say. ... So, Child, this decrepit Minion, this sickly lover, will never of himself be able to elevate his drooping courage, unless thou raise and encourage him with

thy warmer hand. If thou wouldst have him spit in the proper place, thou must chase him like a mortified piece of flesh, scratch him in every wrinkle, tickle him in the Flank, and under the Arms. ... But then after all thy industry, when thou hast animated the insensible log, and inspired it with a faint venereal motion, the terrible tryal of thy patience is then at hand. ... when the crazy Lover is emboldened to pay a debt, he has for many Months owed *Cupid*; he will be so tedious and nauseous in the performance, he will go near to tire any Woman of ordinary Flesh and Blood.[26]

Contrary to what Hitchcock has suggested, extended fore-play is represented here as irritating and unsatisfactory for the woman - both to give and to receive - rather than as essential for her sexual satisfaction. The fore-play here is not 'for' her, it is for the benefit of the man, to try and arouse his flagging sexual capacity. Jokes about the sexual incompetence of old men with young wives were ubiquitous in this period. Such a man was invariably portrayed as stereotypically cuckolded by his sexually unsatisfied and lustful young wife, no doubt easily finding a target in a society in which such May-December matches formed a substantial proportion of the re-marriages of older men.[27] Elizabeth Foyster has argued that male sexual performance was an important component of male honour in this period: masculinity required a fully functional penis and a sexually satisfied wife.[28] But not only must a man have a penis which will achieve erection at his desire, he must also have a penis that can be brought to ejaculate. Virility, masculinity, requires an easy achievement of orgasm.

This same idea that sexual pleasure cannot be divorced from conception and 'generation', is expounded in Rochester's *Sodom*, though in a completely different fashion. Rather than focus on the necessity of conception for pleasure, the play reverses the equation and

demonstrates the cataclysmic consequences of separating sexual intercourse from reproduction. The pursuit of sexual pleasure through barren and sterile forms of intercourse leads to disease and destruction, not only of the individual but also of the state. Rochester represents sterility as the result of pursuing sex for pleasure to the exclusion of both morality and the requirement for reproduction. Ros Ballaster has concluded, 'That Rochester's writing is preoccupied with the physical mechanics of sexuality yet repeatedly eschews issues of procreation and generation indicates the ultimate barrenness of the totalizing philosophy it pursues.'^[29] But *Sodom* is concerned precisely with the issue of procreation and what happens when it is divorced from sexual pleasure.

The play is a sustained political satire which does not just criticise the King and his Court for sexual excess, but also expresses concerns about royal authority and legitimacy which opens itself up to challenge when the monarch abnegates his responsibility for producing an heir. *Sodom* was written at a time, around 1680, of acute anxiety about the succession. In the absence of a legitimate son and heir it was becoming increasingly apparent that England would see the return of a Catholic monarch. Charles II's Catholic brother, James, the Duke of York, would succeed to the throne should Charles die without legitimate male issue. *Sodom* portrays in dramatic form the bankruptcy and sterility of a nation in which the King pursues his pleasures to the detriment of his subjects' happiness and well-being, thus placing the nation in jeopardy.

The plot turns on a reversal of sexual norms. The King, Bolloximian, decrees

Henceforth, Borastus, set the nation free.

Let conscience have its force of liberty.

I do proclaim, that buggery may be used

O'er all the land, so cunt be not abused.^[30]

The King's name itself, a play on slang for testicles, indicates that his function and his priority should be to reproduce, to ensure continuity and stability of rule.[31] But, as the men have turned away from women, they are left to the pursuit of pleasure by other similarly sterile means: 'Dildos and dogs with women do prevail - / I saw one frigging with a dog's bob-tail.'[32] That women have resorted to bestiality further emphasises the turning away from 'the proper object', the reproduction of the human species.

The result of this turning away from 'natural' reproductive intercourse is disease of epidemic proportions that wastes the nation and leads to its destruction. The only remedy is,

To Love and Nature all their rights restore,
Fuck no men, and let buggery be no more.
It does the propagable end destroy,
Which Nature gave with pleasure to enjoy.
Please her, and she'll be kind; if you displease,
She turns into corruption and disease.[33]

The turning away from the proper object of intercourse is not the only sexual error which leads to barrenness. Sexual excess also has the same result. It was a commonly held belief of the time that whores did not conceive because of their exposure to excessive quantities of different seed. Though, as we have seen, a large quantity of seed ejaculated during intercourse was desirable to bring on the woman's pleasure and so ensure conception, too much seed emanating from a variety of sexual partners leads to the opposite conclusion, the impossibility of conception. So 'common women' and whores cannot conceive: 'By reason of divers seeds, which do corrupt and spill their instruments of conception; for it maketh them so slippery, that nature cannot retain the seed; or else it is, because one seed destroyeth another, and so neither is good for generation.'[34]

Anxiety about the succession, as there is no legitimate male heir to succeed to Charles II, and the probability that the Catholic Duke of York will succeed to the throne is reflected in a play in which all 'normal' sexual activities are inverted or cast aside, leaving only acts which are meaningless because sterile (and of course Catholicism was routinely associated with sodomy, as well as other sexual irregularities, in English anti-Catholic discourse). The play highlights the bankruptcy of the pursuit of pleasure for pleasure's sake, where there is no possibility of the 'natural' and expected outcome of sexual relations: conception and birth. Without the production of legitimate offspring to inherit either property or nation, the Kingdom will fall apart. Here the modern understanding of pornography as a means of sexual pleasure for its own sake has been turned on its head: pleasure for its own sake is sterile and therefore destructive. Sexual pleasure requires its 'proper' aim: reproduction.

This entwining of sexuality and reproduction is also apparent in different seventeenth-century English erotic texts that deal with ideas about fertility. The popular genre of travel writing also spawned a sub-genre of pornographic travel literature which took its conventions and exploited them for erotic purposes. Charles Cotton's *Erotopolis* (1684) is a spoof travel narrative in which the fertility of the sexual body and its role in reproduction is its most important characteristic. Here the theme of fertility is highlighted in his concentration on the description of the land as the female body, emphasising its fertility and how this can be enhanced and controlled.[35] Despite the extensive use of metaphor in this text, the analogy of female body to landscape is not pursued as extensively or as closely as it is in later eighteenth-century texts that deploy the extended botanical and topographical metaphor.[36] *Erotopolis* does not describe the charting of an entire land whose layout resembles the supine female body, over which the reader roves freely in exploration. Rather, the body appears dismembered and reduced to its reproductive function. The land is discussed in terms of its fertility and the control of that

fertility.[37] The metaphors employed are all those to do with cultivation or barrenness of land, the enclosure and possession of land, taking responsibility for the products of the land, and the difficulties of holding on to land and of reaping its benefits.

Cotton concentrates on the problems of controlling the fertility of the land/women, of ensuring that it continues to produce as required:

tho it be fertile enough, yet after you have sufficiently plowed it and sown it, it requires neither showres nor the dew of Heaven, nor puts the husbandman to the troublesome Prayers for the alteration of weather; yet if the husbandman be not very careful to tend it and water it himself every night, once or twice a night, as they do Marjoram after Sun-set, he will find a great deal of trouble all the year long.[38]

This text repeats in metaphorical form the idea expressed in jokes about cuckolds and May-December relationships: that a man must continue to satisfy his wife sexually in order to keep her from adultery. But the fertility of the land and any pleasure which it may currently bring cannot be relied upon to continue, for with long use it will become barren, and will eventually disappear: 'in the Winter and Autumn seasons there is no enduring the Country: The Prospect is not worth one farthing, the ways grow deep and rugged, the land grows barren; there is little or no pleasure in tilling the ground'.[39]

Through the sustained use of these metaphors Cotton emphasises that sexual pleasure is tied to reproductive ability.

These seventeenth-century pornographic texts, then, do not deploy ancient tropes about man as tiller of female soil merely because they are common metaphors for the sexual act. They represent an act in which its outcome is crucial to its meaning and its pleasure. Contemporary understanding of the reproductive body and how 'generation' occurred

linked sexual pleasure with conception. We misunderstand early modern pornography if we think about it solely in modern terms, as a means to the end of sexual pleasure in and for itself. We also lose the possibility of understanding how early modern men and women thought about not only sex and sexual pleasure, but also about their world and its purpose. If we read the texts' emphasis on ensuring fertility and conception as merely an early modern guide to birth control, then we miss the most important dimension of this literature. Rochester's pornographic farce *Sodom* serves as a timely reminder that fertility and the production of an heir were not only to do with sex and sexuality, but were also to do with politics and the nation. Heterosexual sexual intercourse and its 'natural' end, reproduction, is crucial for legitimacy, stability and rule. These pornographic texts were not merely a precursor to changing eighteenth-century practices, as Hitchcock has argued; they offer a different, but equally important way, of understanding a seventeenth-century culture in which sex is not just sex. It is reproduction, land and inheritance.

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- [1] 'Generation' is the term used for reproduction in the early modern period. See Barbara Duden (1991) *The Woman Beneath the Skin: A Doctor's Patients in Eighteenth-Century Germany*, (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press), p. 28, especially footnote 99, p. 205; and Elizabeth B Gasking (1967) *Investigations into Generation 1651-1828*, (London: Hutchinson), Introduction.
- [2] There has been much debate over the differentiation between 'pornography' and 'erotica'. See, for example most recently Karen Harvey (2001) Gender, Space and Modernity in Eighteenth-Century England: a Place Called Sex, *History Workshop Journal*, 51, pp.158-179. I will refer to pornography throughout.
- [3] Dorelies Kraakman (1999) Pornography in Western European Culture, in Franz X. Eder, Lesley A. Hall and Gert Hekma (eds) *Sexual Cultures in Europe: Themes in sexuality* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press) pp.104-120, p.105.
- [4] Peter Wagner (1988) *Eros Revived: Erotica of the Enlightenment in England and America* (London: Secker & Warburg) p.5.
- [5] See for example, Henry Smith (1591) *A Preparative to Marriage*, (London). For a discussion of marriage and marital conduct books see Kathleen M. Davies (1981) Continuity and Change in Literary Advice on Marriage in R.B. Outhwaite (Ed.) *Marriage and Society: Studies in the Social History of Marriage* (London: Europa) pp.58-79 and Anthony Fletcher (1994) The Protestant idea of marriage in early modern England in A. Fletcher and P. Roberts (Eds.) *Religion, Culture and Society*

in Early Modern Britain (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) pp.161-181.

- [6] J. Pollexfen (1697) *A Discourse of Trade, Coyn and Paper Credit*. Cited in D.C. Coleman (1976) *Labour in the English Economy of the Seventeenth Century*, in Paul S. Seaver (Ed.) *Seventeenth-Century England: Society in an Age of Revolution*, (New York and London: Franklin Watts Inc.) pp.112-138; p.113.
- [7] E.A.Wrigley. and R.S. Schofield (1981) *The Population History of England 1541-1871: A Reconstruction* (London: Edward Arnold).
- [8] Patricia Crawford (1994) *Sexual Knowledge in England, 1500-1750* in Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich (Eds.) *Sexual Knowledge, Sexual Science: The History of Attitudes to Sexuality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) pp.82-106, pp.87-88. Crawford cites eighteenth-century justices' handbooks as reflecting this change in attitude, dating from 1716. See note 42.
- [9] See Julie Peakman (2003) *Mighty Lewd Books: The Development of Pornography in Eighteenth-Century England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave) pp.78-92.
- [10] The population increased threefold in the 150 years from 1680 to 1831. Analysis has shown that this was due more to an increase in fertility than to a decline in mortality. Historians have therefore sought to find convincing explanations which could account for this phenomenon. See Henry Abelove (1989) *Of Sexual Intercourse during the Long Eighteenth Century in England*, *Genders*, 6, pp. 124-130). There has been much debate about the cause of the population increase in the eighteenth century, beginning in the late seventeenth-century. See for example, E.A Wrigley (1983) *The growth of population in eighteenth-century England: a conundrum resolved*, *Past & Present*, 98, pp. 121-151 and Peter Razzell (1994)

Essays in English Population History (London: Caliban Books).

- [11] Tim Hitchcock (1996) Redefining Sex in Eighteenth Century England, *History Workshop Journal*, 41, p.79.
- [12] Although these texts generally reproduce the Galenic-Hippocratic two-seed model of conception in which a conjunction of both male and female seed produce the resulting embryo, they also reflect the Aristotelian model in which the male has the defining and most important role in conception.
- [13] Michel Millot and Jean L'Ange (attributed to) (1655) *The School of Venus: or, the Ladies Delight reduced into rules of practice* (Paris; translated and with an introduction by Donald Thomas 1972, London: Panther), p.137.
- [14] *The Practical Part Of Love*, pp. 21-22.
- [15] Female orgasm was recommended to cure various disorders, and some medical works suggested that a midwife should rub the female genitals in order to bring this on to cure a particular affliction. See, for example, Nicholas Culpeper, Abdiah Cole, and William Rowland (1655) *The Practice of Physick, In Seventeen several Books. Wherein is plainly set forth, The Nature, Cause, Differences, and Several Sorts of Signs; Together with the Cure of all Diseases in the Body of Man. Being chiefly a Translation of The Works of That Learned and Renowned Doctor, Lazarius Riverius, Now living: Councillor and Physitian to the present King of France*, pp.419-420. For a discussion see Porter and Teich, *Sexual Knowledge, Sexual Science*, especially chapter 5, Robert Martenson, *The Transformation of Eve: Women's Bodies, Medicine and Culture in Early Modern England*.

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- [16] See Angus McLaren (1984) *Reproductive Rituals: The perception of fertility in England from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century* (London and New York: Methuen) and Dorothy McLaren (1985) Marital fertility and lactation 1570-1720, in Mary Prior (Ed.) (1991) *Women in English Society 1500-1800* (London and New York: Routledge; first published, London: Methuen) pp. 22-53. See also E.A. Wrigley (1966) Family Limitation in Pre-Industrial England, *Economic History Review*, XIX: 1, 2nd series), pp. 82-109, p. 104; and Wrigley and Schofield *The Population History of England*. Wrigley notes that Population growth could be limited by the use of *coitus interruptus*, abortion and infanticide: all options open to English communities in this period.
- [17] Audrey Eccles (1982) *Obstetrics and Gynaecology in Tudor and Stuart England* (London and Canberra: Croom Helm), p.67. John Keown (1988) *Abortion, Doctors n the Law: Some aspects of the legal regulation of abortion in England from 1803 to 1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) pp.6-8.
- [18] Laura Gowing (2003) *Common Bodies: Women, Touch and Power in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press) pp.46-7. See also G.R. Quaife (1979) *Wanton Wenches and Wayward Wives* (London: Croom Helm) p.120. Quaife argues that '... attempted abortions were widespread and often successful, but they were resisted by many girls for fear of their physical safety ...'
- [19] Millot, *The School of Venus*, pp. 117, 151.
- [20] Nicholas Chorier (1890 reprint edition) *The Dialogues of Luisa Sigea (Aloisiae Sigeae Satyra Sotadica de arcanis Amoris et Veneris. Aloisia hispanice scripsit, Latinitate donavit Joannes Meursius)* Literally translated from the Latin of Nicolas

Chorier (Paris: Isidore Liseux; first published c.1660) p. 39.

- [21] James Grantham Turner (2003) *Schooling Sex: Libertine Literature and Erotic Education in Italy, France, and England 1534-1685* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p.145.
- [22] See Thomas Laqueur (1987) *Orgasm, Generation, and the Politics of Reproductive Biology*, in Catherine Gallagher and Thomas Laqueur (Eds.) *The Making of the Modern Body: Sexuality and Society in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press) p. 8, and Thomas Laqueur (1992) *Making Sex: Body and Gender From the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge Mass. and London: Harvard University Press) pp. 35-52.
- [23] See Danielle Jacquart and Claude Thomasset (1988) *Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages* (trans. Matthew Adamson, Cambridge: Polity Press; first publ. France, 1985) pp.52-60.
- [24] Laqueur, *Making Sex*, p.44.
- [25] Quoted in Darren Oldridge (Ed.) (2002) *The Witchcraft Reader* (London and New York: Routledge) p.6.
- [26] Ferrante Pallavicino (Philo-Puttanus, pseud.) (1683; facsimile reprint 1979) *The Whore's Rhetorick, Calculated to the Meridian of London; And conformed to the Rules of Art. In two Dialogues* (New York: Delmar Scholars' and Facsimile Reprints; first published London), pp. 137-142.
- [27] See, for example, Margaret Pelling (2001) *Who most needs to marry? Ageing and inequality among women and men in early modern Norwich*, in Lynn Botelho and

Pat Thane (Eds.) *Women and Ageing in British Society Since 1500* (Harlow, Essex: Longman) pp. 31-42, esp. p. 34.

- [28] See Elizabeth Ann Foyster (1996) *The Concept of Male Honour in Seventeenth Century England* (University of Durham Ph.D thesis) pp. 80-88. For a different angle but with a similar conclusion see Kathleen Brown (1995) 'Changed ... into the fashion of man': The Politics of Sexual Difference in a Seventeenth-Century Anglo-American Settlement, *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 6:2, pp. 171-193, p. 182. Impotence, though hard to prove, could also be grounds for the annulment of marriage.
- [29] Ros Ballaster (1998) John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, in Steven N. Zwicker (Ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1650 - 1740* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) pp. 204-223, p. 208.
- [30] John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester (c.1680), *Sodom: Or, The Quintessence of Debauchery* in Paddy Lyons (Ed.) (1993) *Rochester: Complete Poems and Plays* (London: Everyman) Act One, Scene One, ll. 67-70, p. 131. There has been much debate over the attribution of this play to Rochester, but recent scholarship has concluded that it is his work. See J.W. Johnson (1987) Did Rochester Write 'Sodom'?, *Publications of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 81, pp.119-153.
- [31] See Gordon Williams (1994) *A Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart Literature* (London: Athlone) Vol.I, pp. 61-63.
- [32] Rochester, *Sodom*, Act III, ll. 119-120, p. 145.
- [33] Rochester, *Sodom*, Act V, ll. 44-49, p. 152.

[34] *The Problems of Aristotle*, D9. See also Sharp, *The Midwives Book*, p. 80.

[35] See Mary Fissell (1995) Gender and Generation: Representing Reproduction in Early Modern England, *Gender & History*, 7, pp.433-456, p. 437. Fissell describes Erotopolis as 'the first erotic cartography in English'.

[36] See, for example, Thomas Stretser (1741) *Arbor Vitae: Or, The Natural History of the Tree of Life* (London). For a discussion of the gendering of landscape see especially Carole Fabricant (1979) Binding and Dressing Nature's Loose Tresses: The Ideology of Augustan Landscape Design, *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 8, pp.109-135; Simon Pugh (1999) *Garden-nature-language* (Manchester: Manchester University Press); and Karen Harvey (1999) *Representations of Bodies and Sexual Difference in Eighteenth Century English Erotica* (Ph.D thesis, University of London) esp. chapters 6 and 7.

[37] Patricia Parker notes how descriptions which itemise the female parts move on to controlling and limiting fertility. See Patricia Parker (1987) Rhetorics of Property: Exploration, Inventory, Blazon in *Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender, Property*, (London and New York: Routledge) pp. 126-154, p. 131.

[38] Cotton, Erotopolis, p. 7.

[39] Cotton, Erotopolis, pp. 17-18.