Nymphs, Satyrs and Impotent Old Men
The Portrayals of Elites in Eighteenth-Century British Pornography and Medical Literature

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ABSTRACT

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and Medical Literature

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This thesis examines the way in which the elites were portrayed in eighteenth-century British pornographic texts arguing the texts were part of a wider cultural discourse on luxury, criticising the upper echelons of society for their decadent and vice-ridden lifestyles. Pornographic texts consistently portray the elites of Britain as partaking in sexual deviances including lesbianism, sex with dolls, dildos and household objects. The portrayals could be dismissed as tales fabricated for the titillation of the reading audience except that medical texts of the period diagnose the diseases of nymphomania and satyriasis, the rough equivalent of modern sexual addiction, as primarily affecting those of the upper class. Lifestyle was the key to diagnosis; luxurious living was thought to weaken the elite body rendering it vulnerable to excess sexual passions. Therefore, the hyper-sexual elite in pornographic texts reflected the contemporary cultural understandings of lifestyle and physiology.

Key Words: eighteenth century, Britain, print culture, pornography, sexuality, class, culture, medicine, nymphomania, satyriasis, sexual addiction, impotence, luxury.

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Introduction

…her cloathes uplifted, bare her legs and thighs,
And all expos'd he feasts his ravish'd eyes:
Prostrate before the secret seat of bliss,
The room resounds with ev'ry ardent kiss:
and fancy fir'd all Clarabella's charms
He thinks he now possesses in his arms.
With this fierce back the supple joints he flings,
And his proud matters to a level brings,
When after the injection as above, with eager efforts he begins to move:
The breathing quick, lust rushes tro' each vein
And for that concludes the filthy scene[1]

Just the stuff one would expect to find in eighteenth-century British pornographic texts – aroused men and compliant female bodies. However, this piece is not a sexual interlude between a man and a woman but a man and a life-size fully jointed doll complete with fur-lined vagina built specifically for the man's pleasure. The scene is about a young noble man and his first sexual experience with his sex doll, Claradolla, built in the image of the lady with whom he was in love. Do we consider this excerpt as an isolated episode of eighteenth-century perversion or dismiss it as the product of an author's over-sexed imagination? It would seem that neither rationale is appropriate as similar depictions of perversion and deviance were overwhelmingly ascribed to those of the upper class in eighteenth-century British pornographic texts. Elites[2] were repeatedly portrayed as partaking in all sorts of sexual depravity, including incest, rape, cross-

[1] Anon, *Adollizing: or, A Lively Picture of a Doll-Worship* (London: A. Dodd, 1748) 18 -19.
[2] For the purpose of this paper I define "elite" as referring to characters in the medical or pornographic texts analyzed below as either explicitly belonging to the aristocracy, or else possessing significant wealth or being born into a family with significant wealth. Because class is a slippery issue for the eighteenth century I only identified "elite" characters as those who would have been undoubtedly recognized to hail from social stations above those commonly referred to as "middling" in this period.

dressing and sex with inanimate objects. This group is represented in pornographic texts as defying almost every conceivable sexual norm of the period.

The depictions of the over-sexed and perverted upper crust of British society were not limited to pornographic texts but were also present in medical literature of the period. The connection between pornographic and medical literature has been well established for the early modern period. Scholars for the period maintain that both genres served as a source of sexual knowledge providing the populace with an inexpensive and readily available way to learn about sex and reproduction.[3] Eighteenth-century medical texts presented the diseases nymphomania and satyriasis as those primarily affecting the upper echelons of society. The diseases were eighteenth-century rough equivalents of modern sexual addiction. The root of both diseases was lifestyle. The overindulgent and sedentary lifestyles of the well-heeled changed their physiology, making their bodies soft, vulnerable to the diseases and rendering them unable to control their sexual lusts.

I argue that eighteenth-century pornographic and medical texts in the last two thirds of the eighteenth-century were part of the wider cultural discourse on luxury that criticised elites for their decadent and luxurious lifestyles through depictions of negative and unacceptable sexuality. Concepts of sexuality in this period were increasingly narrowing and becoming more conservative with the only acceptable sex consisting of

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[3] Anna Clark, *Desire: A History of European Sexuality* (NY: Routledge, 2008) 162-163; Julie Peakman, *Mighty Lewd Books*, *The Development of Pornography in Eighteenth-Century* (*England.* NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) 37; Karen Harvey, *Reading Sex*, *Bodies and Gender in English Erotic Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 18; Tim Hitchcock, *English Sexualities*, *1700-1800* (London: Macmillan Press, 1997)14; Roger Thompson, *Unfit for Modest Ears*, *Unfit for Modest Ears: A Study of Pornographic, Obscene, Bawdy and Erotic Works Written or Published in England in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century* (NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1979) 161; Peter Wagner, *Eros Revived: Erotica of the Enlightenment in England and America* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1988) 8-11; Roy Porter and Lesley Hall, *The Facts of Life, The Creation of Sexual Knowledge in Britain, 1650-1950* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995) 36, 107.

the penis penetrating the vagina.[4] All other activities became perversions. This was also the period in which new ideas of sexuality were ascribed to each gender, driven in part by a newly emerging and conservative middle class. Women were increasingly constructed as sexually passive, only fulfilling their sexuality through maternity, remaining chaste otherwise. Those who displayed other types of sexuality were increasingly deemed abnormal.[5] Sexual conquest for men was condoned as a means to prove their masculinity[6] but wanton debauchery was not. Men were expected to control their emotions and physical urges.[7] During the eighteenth century the elites were increasingly criticized for their vice-ridden lifestyles in print culture.[8] While other forms of print criticized gambling, duelling and other negative behaviours, pornography and medical texts offer comment on the sexuality of the upper echelons of society portraying them as the antithesis of acceptable sexual behaviour.

The concept of classed disease is beginning to be discussed by scholars studying the eighteenth century. Roy Porter and G.S. Rousseau have studied the history of gout

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[4] Tim Hitchcock, "Redefining sex in eighteenth-century England," *History Workshop Journal*, 41(1996): 79-80.

[5] Ruth Perry, "Colonizing the Breast; Sexuality and Maternity in Eighteenth-Century England," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 2. 2 (October 1991):209; Carol Groneman, "Nymphomania: The Historical Construction of Female Sexuality," *Signs* 19. 2 (Winter 1994): 342; Hitchcock, "Redefining Sex" 79-80.

[6] David Kuchta, *The Three Piece Suit and Modern Masculinity, England 1550-1850* (Berkeley: University of California: Press, 2002) 135-147; Shawn Lisa Maurer, *Proposing Men: Dialects of Gender and Class in the Eighteenth – Century British Periodical* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996) 20; M. M. Goldsmith, "Public Virtue and Private Vice: Bernard Mandeville and English Political Ideologies in the Early Eighteenth Century," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 9.4 (Summer 1976): 479; Randolph Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution, Volume 1, Heterosexuality and the Third Gender in Enlightenment London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998) 9, 16.

[7] Elizabeth A. Foyster. *Manhood in Early Modern England: Honour, Sex, and Marriage* (NY: Longman, 1999) 36.

[8] Donna T. Andrew, "Adultery à la Mode: Privilege, the Law and Attitudes to Adultery, 1770-1809," *History*, 82.265 (January, 1997): 5-23; Donna T. Andrew, *Aristocratic Vice: The Attack on Duelling, Suicide, Adultery and Gambling in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013) 40-41.

and determined it was a disease belonging primarily to the upper class.[9] Studies have also pointed to the tendency to ascribe so-called nervous disorders to the wealthy. The upper sorts were believed to have more "refined and delicate" nervous systems than their social inferiors rendering them more vulnerable to forms of madness.[10] Kevin Siena has similarly argued that jail fever and the itch were the providence of the lowest classes of society.[11] However, little attention has been given to the concept of classed sexuality for the period. Pornographic texts offer a glimpse at how libido was a classed concept not unlike disease. The texts not only ascribe sexual deviances to the British elite, but importantly, root the behaviours in the physical body, noting that their lifestyles have altered it, rendering them especially vulnerable to sexual diseases.

For the sake of simplicity, I apply the term "pornography" to a number of different works. Roger Thompson has divided sexual works published in this period into four categories: pornography refers to works intended to arouse lust, create sexual fantasy or feed auto-erotic desire; obscene works are those which are intended to shock or disgust, or render the subject of the writing shocking or disgusting; bawdy works are intended to promote amusement about sex, and erotic works are those intended to place sex within the context of love and affection.[12] While helpful for his purposes, Thompsons's definitions are artificial and not particularly useful for mine - what is

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[9] Roy Porter and G.S. Rousseau, *Gout: The Patrician Malady* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) 3-5 and 72.
[10] Roy Porter, *Mind Forg'd Manacles: A History of Madness in England from the Restoration to the Regency* (London: Athlone Press, 1987) 84; Michael MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety and Healing in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) 13-20.
[11] Kevin Siena, "Pliable Bodies: The Moral Biology of Health and Disease," *Cultural History of the Human Body in the Age of Enlightenment*, ed. Carole Reeves (Oxford: Berg, 2010) 41-49; Kevin Siena, "The Moral Biology of the Itch in Eighteenth-Century Britain," *A Medical History of the Skin: Scratching the Surface,* Jonathon Reinarz and Kevin Siena, eds. (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013) 71-83.
[12] Thompson, *Unfit for Modest Ears* IX.

sexually arousing, amusing or romantic varies from person to person. Rather than sink into a quagmire of definitions all works analysed in this paper are simply referred to as pornographic. While the sexual acts are part of the analysis, it is not the degree of eroticism that is central to my argument, but rather which characters perform those acts.

Before a discussion of eighteenth-century pornography can commence a brief history of the genre is required. Scholars argue that the British genre came into its own in the middle of the eighteenth century. Previously, sexually explicit texts in Britain mirrored the trends of the continent adopting the writing styles of French and Italian works.[13] However, mid-century British pornography shifted from metaphoric proses depicting sexual scenarios to a more novel-like style complete with storyline and character development.[14] In fact, Britain lays claim to publishing what is lauded as the first modern erotic novel - *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* was published in London in 1749.[15] Because of the novel-like form, a great deal of information can be gleaned about the characters. Life histories, titles and other clues are divulged, enabling their social status to be determined, allowing for an analysis of the types of sexuality attributed to social groups.

Over the course of the eighteenth century literacy rates rose dramatically and it is estimated that by the end of the century between 45 and 70% of men and 25 to 40% of

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[13] David Frankz, *Festum Voluptatis: A Study of Renaissance Erotica* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1989) 6-55 and 91; Ian Frederick Moulton, *Before Pornography: Erotic Writing in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 220; Lynn Hunt, *Invention of Pornography: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity* (NY: Zone Books, 1993) 30.

[14] J. Paul Hunter, *Before Novels: The Cultural Context of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (NY: W.W. Norton and Company, 1990) 1-37; William B. Warner, *Licensing Entertainment: The Evolution of Novel Reading in Britain, 1684-1750* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1998) 1-4.

[15] David Foxton, *Libertine Literature in England, 1660-1745* (NY: University Books, 1966) 45.

women could read.[16] With a large proportion of the population claiming literacy, the demand for periodicals, newspapers and fiction rose accordingly. Previously, reading habits were intensive, with people reading the same books repeatedly. Increased literacy brought a proliferation of books published and reading became extensive; people read widely on any number of subjects, including pornography.[17] Pornographic texts were easily accessible at countless booksellers across London. The texts were not segregated from other books but sold along with those of various topics.[18] They were also affordable to most readers, with purchase prices ranging from a few pence to a few shillings. For those without a few pence to spare, books, including pornographic ones, could be borrowed from lending libraries or friends.[19] It is further speculated that readership was of both genders. Scholars have noted that many of the prefaces were addressed to women and accompanying illustrations were of women reading the texts in groups, suggesting that women were part of the target audience.[20] The ready availability and affordability of pornographic texts allowed them to act as a medium of public criticism. Increased literacy rates meant that a significant portion of the population were reading the same texts, thus formulating a negative perception of elite sexuality based, in part, on the information provided in pornographic texts.

Furthermore, there were few restrictions on what could be printed in Britain. In the late seventeenth century literary censorship changed from requiring pre-publication

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[16] Hunter, *Before Novels* 66 and 72; Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England 1500-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 18.
[17] Robert Darnton, *Forbidden Best Sellers of Pre-revolutionary France* (W.W. Norton and Co., 1995) 18-19.
[18] Harvey, *Reading Sex* 42; Peakman, *Mighty Lewd Books* 22.
[19] Peakman, *Mighty Lewd Books* 34-35; Harvey, *Reading Sex* 39-40.
[20] Peakman, *Mighty Lewd Books* 27-34; Harvey, *Reading Sex* 47.

permission to post-publication prosecution. Until 1695 books required pre-approval for publication by the Worshipful Company of Stationers. The Company was established by Queen Mary in 1556 for the purpose of examining and licensing books for publication. During the Elizabethan period the powers of the Company were confirmed and expanded. In order to publish a book it had to be licenced by the Company, its content approved and a fee paid. If the Company did not approve of a book because of obscene or offensive content it could not be published or sold. The Company held a monopoly over the trade controlling every aspect including printing, publishing and selling. One could not legally be involved in the book trade without being a member of the Company of Stationers. The Company continued to control printed matter, through various monarchs and a civil war until 1695 when Parliament failed to renew the Licensing Act. Works deemed offensive or obscene were now only punishable under common law if the author, printer or publisher could be identified.[21] If one was certain of anonymity, one's writing could be as offensive as the market would bear with little fear of reprisal. Fictitious names of authors, publishers and printers were often used to avoid prosecution and connection with scandalous material. Authors especially would use pseudonyms to distance themselves from works that may have been offensive, scandalous or politically incorrect.[22] This explains the prominence of anonymous texts and author pseudonyms for pornographic texts, as well as fictitious publishers and places of publication. [23]

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[21] Nigel Wheale, *Writing and Society: Literacy, Print and Politics in Britain, 1590-1660* (London: Routledge, 1999) 57-60; Donald Thomas, *A Long Time Burning: A History of Literary Censorship in England* (NY: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969) 1-28.

[22] Pat Rogers, "Nameless, Names: Pope, Curll and the Uses of Anonymity," *New Literary History*, 33.2 (Spring 2002): 234.

[23] Thomas, *A Long Time Burning* 3.

However, this did not mean that authors and publishers had unlimited freedoms. John Wilkes was prosecuted for producing scandalous material with his *Essay on Woman*. The trick seemed to be not rousing the ire of someone with the power to lodge a complaint with authorities. Therefore, countless pornographic texts were published and distributed without garnering the attention of authorities. However, prosecutions were occasionally made. *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* was one of the texts that was brought to the attention of the courts. The Bishops of London lodged a complaint with the Secretary of State a few months after initial publication in 1749. *Memoirs* differed from other pornographic texts because it was more sexually explicit, describing sexual scenarios in detail. Charges were brought against the author, publisher and booksellers involved in its distribution and they were fined. Early the following year a censored version of *Memoirs* was released with little public attention.[24] Edmund Curll was perhaps the person most often before the courts for publishing practices. He was not only charged with publishing libel but is often lauded as the reason copyright legislation was introduced in England. Curll was unscrupulous, to say the least, publishing works without author permission, printing discarded material, republishing trial accounts and unauthorized biographies. He was charged on several occasions for publishing infractions, including the pornographic *Venus in the Cloister* (1725). The text was a translation of an earlier French text and had been published countless times without comment. It would appear that Curll was charged with libel for its publication simply because it could be proven he was the publisher, thus offering an avenue for authorities to

[24] Walter Kendrick, *Secret Museum: Pornography in Modern Culture* (California: University of California Press, 1987), 98; Foxton, *Libertine Literature* 53, 56.

curtail Curll's unorthodox business practices.[25] In short, if authors and publishers of pornographic text managed not to rouse the ire of someone who would bring charges against them they could print whatever they felt readers would purchase. Therefore, pornographic texts could provide sexual commentary for entire segments of the population without redress. Because the characters of texts were vague descriptions, or perhaps, stereotypes of the elite Lord or Lady, it would have been nearly impossible to prosecute the author or publisher for libel as the texts were not scandalizing a specific person.

Pornographic texts provide an almost censor-free arena to comment on the lifestyles of a specific group of the population. Pornographic texts, therefore, provided a relatively un-hindered medium in which critiques of the lifestyles and sexual indulgences of the upper sorts of British society could be broadcast to the reading public. Although tempting to dismiss the pornographic representations of the lascivious lord and lusty lady as fiction, simply created to arouse and titillate the reader with scandalous tales of their social betters, the depictions are not limited to sexually explicit works. Depictions of the over-sexed elite in pornography are also present in medical texts of the period lending credence to the portrayals. Medical literature of the period diagnosed nymphomania and satyriasis as diseases primarily affecting the upper crust of society because of their soft and sedentary lifestyles. Some case studies in the medical texts are closely reminiscent of scenarios in pornographic texts suggesting that the sexualized tales were part of a larger cultural discourse.

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[25] Paul Barnes, *Edmund Curll: Bookseller* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) 2, 36, 48, 87, 93, 132, 142, 147, 159; Peakman, *Mighty Lewd Books* 24, 40; Harvey, *Reading Sex* 37.

Numerous historians have studied the pornographic texts of this period. Earlier studies have explored the influences and changes that occurred to the style of the texts, while later works tend to focus on the imagery and themes portrayed. In 1965 David Foxton published *Libertine Literature in England 1660-1745*. Foxton focuses on the publishing history of the genre and its political features. By the late 1970s and early 80s studies of early modern pornography and erotica were published exploring the influences on the British genre and the imagery used in the texts. Patrick Kearney explores the differences between eighteenth-century erotic publications and their predecessors as well as the influence of Italian and French works on the British publications in *A History of Erotic Literature*. Peter Wagner's *Eros Revived: Erotica of the Enlightenment in England and America* explores Enlightenment erotica and its social and medical influences. In *Unfit for Modest Ears: A Study of Pornographic, Obscene and Bawdy Works Written or Published in England in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century*, Roger Thompson studies Restoration pornography. Thompson examines the representations in erotic texts and their significance to society. For example, many texts had Catholic characters involved in sexual activities. Thompson links this representation to the political climate of the era, and in doing so he demonstrates how early modern erotica could function as a tool for political or social critique, a function that we will see they continued to perform in the eighteenth century.[26]

[26] Roger Thompson, *Unfit for Modest Ears: A Study of Pornographic, Obscene, Bawdy and Erotic Works Written or Published in England in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century* (NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1979); Peter Wagner, *Eros Revived: Erotica of the Enlightenment in England and America* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1988); David Foxton, *Libertine Literature in England, 1660-1745* (NY: University Books, 1966); Patrick Kearney, *A History of Erotic Literature* (NY: Parragon, 1982).

Most recently, Sarah Toulalan examines seventeenth-century English erotica in *Imagining Sex: Pornography and Bodies in Seventeenth Century England*. Toulalan not only explores the genre but its publication history and the proliferation of sexual publications in this period.[27] However, Karen Harvey's *Reading Sex in the Eighteenth Century: Bodies and Gender in Eighteenth-Century Erotic Culture* and Julie Peakman's *Mighty Lewd Books: the Development of Pornography in Eighteenth-Century England,* are the two most recent works specifically examining eighteenth-century British pornographic works. Peakman examines the thematic representations in eighteenth-century pornographic and erotic works. She argues that the themes portrayed are inconsistent; sometimes mirroring social trends and cultural interests, while at other times not. Peakman notes that in erotic literature bodily fluids are consistently represented over the period despite increasing societal shifts to privacy surrounding bodily functions. For example, the appearance of blood remains an important marker of virginity in erotic texts. Erotic literature, however, also embraced new scientific ideas and discoveries and readily incorporated theories. The field of botany was rapidly advancing and erotica adopted botanical metaphors to describe female bodies. Mirroring societal interest in travel and discovery of new lands and peoples, erotica also borrowed travel themes to create erotic utopias as distant places and women's bodies as new lands to discover and conquer. Further reflecting cultural interests was the consistent theme of anti-Catholic erotic literature, which Thompson has explored for the seventeenth century. Nuns and priests were portrayed as lascivious, with churches and nunneries sites of sexual debauchery

[27] Sarah Toulalan, *Imagining Sex: Pornography and Bodies in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford University Press, 2007).

reflecting the English populace's ongoing distrust and fear of the Catholic Church. Peakman does observe that flagellation becomes an erotic staple in the last quarter of the eighteenth century reflecting public interest in the practice. Not only was the activity a standard form of corporeal punishment but medical literature endorsed it as a cure for impotence. Peakman does not generally explore the characters portrayed in the texts though she does make association between the elites and flagellation.[28]

In *Reading Sex in the Eighteenth Century: Bodies and Gender in English Erotic Culture*, Karen Harvey examines the representations of sexual difference and the body in eighteenth-century erotic culture. Harvey examines the representations of the body, understandings of the female body, gender roles and sexual passion, as well as how space, movement and the senses were utilized to evoke sexual pleasure. She argues that erotic texts portrayed women as possessing sexual desire and as active participants in sexual intercourse, but in a specific manner. She argues that erotic texts portrayed female bodies as soft, yielding and submissive while male bodies are portrayed as strong, dominant and in motion. These portrayals are attributed to the dominant understandings of gender in which men were authoritative and women the supplicants. Representations of female reproductive capabilities were inconsistent. Breasts were used as both symbolic of maternity and sexual desire. Fertility was stressed as an important feature of sexuality, yet during pregnancy the foetus was often referred to as a tumour. She further argues that the spaces in which sex took place were feminized and depicted as dark, lush and secluded places or spaces which were traditionally considered feminine, such as the kitchen, laundry or bedroom, all spaces which could be readily invaded or breached by

[28] Peakman, *Mighty Lewd Books* 1-2, 47-50, 71-74, 105-110, 118-120, 126-128, 161, 166, 169, 170, 193.

the powerful male. Harvey argues that sexual pleasure in erotic texts was a sensual experience in which sight, sound and touch dominate the experience with taste and smell playing little role.[29]

Both Peakman and Harvey do a thorough analysis of the texts and the symbolic representations within, but neither explores the characters in depth or their social classes, despite that having done so may have been useful their arguments at times. Contrary to Harvey's argument, that women were portrayed as soft and submissive, elite women, as you will see, were frequently portrayed as sexually aggressive, counter to the ideals of femininity for the period. Furthermore, despite Peakman's argument - that cultural themes were not consistently adhered to in pornographic texts - there is a reoccurring theme of deviance among the elites of Britain which we will see paralleled widespread cultural critiques of the period. Thus, despite the rich explorations of early modern pornography, an analysis of how class functioned in the texts presents itself as a useful exercise to augment the historiography.

Chapter one explores how the elites of Britain are depicted in pornographic texts. Given that the term pornography literally means "whore writing"[30] the expectation is that the majority of the texts are about prostitutes and their clients. For the most part this holds true. However, certain texts depict members of the British elite as main characters. Analysis reveals that portrayals were consistent; men and women of the elite were hyper-sexual, ruled by their libidos and repeatedly performing sexual acts considered deviant in eighteenth-century society. Members of this group could not control their libidos,

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[29] Harvey, *Reading Sex* 101-110, 111-113, 117-118, 149, 150, 178, 179, 152, 167, 178, 179, 205-212.
[30] Kendrick, *The Secret Museum* 1 and 13; Moulton, *Before Pornography* 5; Peakman, *Mighty Lewd Books* 6.

fornicating with anyone or anything including sex dolls and household items simply to gratify their lusts. Not only are they depicted as hyper-sexual but as transgressing acceptable gender norms. Upper class women were often depicted as assuming the masculine role in sexual relationships and acted like libertines, changing lovers frequently and making a game of pursuit. The portrayals of elite men are just as politically scathing, with scenes of cross dressing, rape and incest, all activities which undermine contemporary ideas of masculinity. Unexpected, for works whose purpose was to sexually arouse, are the repeated portrayals of some elite men as impotent and incapable of sexually satisfying women.

Chapter two examines medical texts of the period, specifically the diagnoses of the diseases nymphomania and satyriasis. The diseases were the early modern forms of what today might be called sex addiction, with nymphomania afflicting women and satyriasis men. Individuals who lived a luxurious and sedentary life were said to be prone to these diseases. Their soft lifestyles weakened the body and mind allowing for nymphomania and satyriasis to emerge. Those afflicted were unable to control their bodily desires, devoting all their time and energies to sexual conquest regardless of consequence, quite like the characters depicted in the seemingly quite different texts of pornography. In fact, some of the case studies supplied in medical literature bear striking similarities to the scenarios in pornographic texts.

Pornography, therefore, was part of a larger cultural discourse which undermined the social credibility of the elites of Britain, by constructing them as weak and immoral. Medical texts root the hyper-sexuality displayed in pornography in the physical body, suggesting that a pathological libido was a natural feature of this class. At a time when

scientific arguments about what was “natural” were gaining even more epistemic authority, such medical argumentation lent considerable force to the critique found in pornography. Moreover, the parallels between medical treatises and pornographic novels do more than merely speak to forms of dynamic interplay across the boundaries of these seemingly divergent genres. That such similar tales sounded from such distinct sources must have amplified the critique considerably, allowing it to echo in stereo and making it seem increasingly credible, despite the fantastic nature of some of the pornographic expressions. Erotic satire may have lent many a good chuckle, but medical discussions of disease have been seen as much more serious business. The weakness of the upper class body was due to their luxurious lifestyles leaving them prone to specific diseases, like nymphomania and satyriasis. The suggestion is that not only was the culture of the elites of Britain altered by luxury rendering them immoral and lascivious but their bodies were changed by luxury, making perversion and deviance an essential physical characteristic.

Lusty Ladies and Perverted Lords
The Hyper-Libidinous Portrayal of Elites in Eighteenth-Century British Pornography
Chapter 1

Wanton sex workers and horny men are just the characters one expects to find in pornographic texts. Granted the majority of characters in eighteenth-century British pornography were just that, prostitutes and their customers, reflecting both the realities of life for the poor in early modern England and the concerns of moral reformers. However, there are a handful of texts featuring members of the upper class, two of which portray upper class men as the main characters. The depictions of their sexuality are intriguing. Members of the social elite are routinely portrayed as being ruled by their libidos, with almost every aspect of their lives revolving around sexual conquest. Elite women are consistently portrayed as having voracious sexual appetites, at times their desire surpassing their male counterparts, partaking in same-sex relations and using dildos or household items to achieve sexual gratification. The depictions of upper class men are, perhaps, even more perplexing. The representations are contradictory. Some elite men are represented as impotent and unable to provide gratification to their female partners while others are driven by lust, ready to fornicate with almost anyone or anything, and even, committing rape or incest to satiate their sexual needs. The two texts which feature elite men as the primary characters portray the men as so lustfully fixated on one particular woman they resort to dressing in woman's clothes to seduce her or engage in sexual relations with inanimate objects to cool their desire. Pornographic texts, for the most part, portray the elites of eighteenth-century Britain as a libidinous group who partake in debauchery and perversion with little concern or care for morals or consequence.

The texts which depict upper class women as featured characters are *Drive-On Coachman: An Humorous Tale* (1739), *Sappho-An: An Heroic Poem of Three Cantos in the Ovidian Stile* (1749), *Prostitutes of Quality; or Adultery a la Mode* (1757), and the listing for Lady Agnew from *Ranger's Impartial List of the Ladies of Pleasure in Edinburgh* (1775). Each of these texts clarifies the class of the female characters within. The construction of the sexuality of elite women is consistent throughout the four texts; they possess aggressive, hyper-libidos, which frequently outstrip those of their male partners.

The social class of Miss Molly, the main female character of *Drive-On Coachman,* is suggested in the introduction. Miss Molly was an "Heiress… and only Child" whose parents sent her to boarding school to "make her modernly Polite." There she learned "Dancing, Love and French" and read "Plays and Romances neatly bound." The family also had connections at court allowing for Molly to attend functions.[31] Furthermore, they chose a husband for her indicating that this was an arranged marriage, a practice common amongst the upper sorts where marriage was an important way to secure social and political ties.[32] Molly was married at the age of fifteen to a "Spouse of Wealth" who was fifty-six.[33] The marriage was not happy because her husband was unable to satisfy her sexually.[34] In order to sooth her lust, Molly seduced the household footman, Tom, by flaunting her body in a "loose night gown" with "her Bosom bare"

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[31] Anon, *Drive On Coachman: An Humourous Tale* (London; J. Brett, 1739) 5 and 24.
[32] Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*, 72; Ingrid H. Tague, "Love, honor, and obedience: fashionable women and the discourse of marriage in the early eighteenth century." *The Journal of British Studies* 40.1 (2001): 78, 90; Rosemary O'Day, *Women's Agency in Early Modern Britain and the American Colonies: Patriarchy, Partnership and Patronage* (NY: Pearson Longman, 2007) 74.
[33] *Drive On* 7.
[34] *Drive On* 9

before him.[35] Tom eagerly responded to Molly's flirtations and the two carried on an illicit affair meeting whenever her husband left the house. Molly demanded sexual intercourse from Tom as often as "ten Times every Day."[36] The situation suited Molly well with her demeanor improving and an "Unusual colour" warming her face. Tom, however, fell into a noticeable decline. Molly's sexual appetites had disastrous effects on Tom's health; "his cheeks grow pale…his limbs begin to fail…his sinews shrink…[and]... His hands too Shake" resembling "a skeleton, tho' still alive."[37] In this piece Molly is portrayed as the dominant sexual character who seduced a man of inferior social status by shamelessly flaunting her naked body in front of him. She continued to seduce him and demand sex at every opportunity to the point where his health began to fail. She used him as though he were nothing more than a disposable sex toy existing only to gratify her every sexual whim.

Lady Agnew of *Ranger's List* is depicted as just as libidinous. *Ranger's List* is a catalogue of prostitutes working in Edinburgh advertising their skill and availability. She was "the daughter of a late worthy Baronet."[38] Lady Agnew is the only elite woman listed in the catalogue and described as a "drunken bundle of inequity" who had worked in the sex trade since the age of thirteen; she "regards neither decency nor decorum, and would willingly lie with a chimney-sweep as with a Lord. Her desires are so immoderate, that she would think nothing of a company of Grenadiers at one time."[39] The implication is that Lady Agnew turned to prostitution because of her heightened sexual drive. She

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[35] *Drive On* 14.
[36] *Drive On* 15.
[37] *Drive On* 16.
[38] Anon, *Ranger's Impartial List of the Ladies of Pleasure in Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: n.p., 1775) n.p.
[39] *Rangers List* n.p.

willingly chose the career as an opportunity to have unlimited sexual intercourse with multiple men, abandoning her life of wealth and comfort as a Baron's daughter in order to indulge in sexual excess.

There are several female characters in *Prostitutes of Quality* and the social class of each is provided. Since the term "quality" usually pertained to persons of the higher echelons of society in the eighteenth century, the text's title could be translated as something close to "Whores of the Aristocracy" inferring that these women will fornicate with any man and behave no better than common prostitutes. Jemima is "the daughter of a Country Gentleman,"[40] the Countess the "daughter of the Earl of Carlott,"[41] Charlotta de Mar, the wife of a Marquis, and her friend Juliana, is simply referred to as a Lady.[42]

Jemima was a young noble woman who assumed the role of sexual pursuer in courtship. She attempted to seduce her beau, Lothario, while the couple was out horseback riding. Having connived to elude their chaperone, Jemima pretended a leg cramp and had Lothario lift her down from the horse. Once sprawled on the grass, Jemima asked him to rub her leg and "chase it [the cramp] with [his] warm hand."[43] Jemima then threw aside her skirts and exposed her bare lower body to Lothario's eyes and hands. Jemima was clearly aroused, "panting and heaving with impatient Wishes."[44] Rather than take advantage of Jemima's vulnerable state, Lothario "conquer'd Nature, to be just to Virtue."[45] However, later that evening, Jemima confessed to Lothario that "the

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[40] Anon, *Prostitutes of Quality: or Adultery à la Mode* (London: J. Cooke, 1757) 27.
[41] *Prostitutes of Quality 97.*
[42] *Prostitutes of Quality* 116 and 127.
[43] *Prostitutes of Quality* 35.
[44] *Prostitutes of Quality* 36.
[45] *Prostitutes of Quality* 36.

Cramp had been but a Pretence, only to give him an Opportunity of gratifying both [their] wishes" and further professes "an uneasiness which nothing but Possession cou'd abate."[46] Yet Lothario again refused her advances. Not willing to be refused, Jemima snuck into Lothario's bedroom later that night and "Threw herself on the Bed" confessing she had already lost her virtue to another, begging Lothario's forgiveness. Her virginity no longer an issue, Lothario "resolv'd to gratify" their mutual desires and the couple "passed the remainder of the Night in as much Satisfaction, as two Persons possessed with a Passion…can find Enjoyment of each other."[47] Jemima played the wanton woman and aggressive seductress, repeatedly pursuing Lothario and cajoling him into sex in spite of his persistent attempts to be virtuous. Jemima does not seem to be seeking a marriage partner in Lothario, as was expected of young noble women, but merely a bed mate who could gratify her sexual desire. Women of this class were expected to remain chaste until they were married. A lack of virginity devalued them on the marriage market considerably.[48] Jemima, thus significantly risked her future to sate her immediate sexual desire.

The Countess, another female character from *Prostitutes of Quality*, was described as being consistently unfaithful to her husband, preferring sex with multiple partners to monogamous marriage. She married a Duke to whom she had "the most strong Aversion."[49] Within days of the marriage she made "publick Testimonies" of

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[46] *Prostitutes of Quality* 38.
[47] *Prostitutes of Quality* 40-48.
[48] Keith Wrightson, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century.* (NY: Penguin Books, 1982) 70-71; Julie Peakman, *Lascivious Bodies: A Sexual History of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Atlantic Books, 2004) 43; Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*, 70-72, 315; Lawrence Stone, *Road to Divorce: England 1530-1987* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) 59-60.
[49] *Prostitutes of Quality* 97.

how much she hated her Husband and began an affair with another man, Baronius. The Countess and Baronius indulged "themselves in all the riotous Delights and loose Desires, for so long a time" that the relationship became the subject of gossip and "the whole Town was sensible to the Affair."[50] The affair ended when Baronius married another woman. Rather than return to her husband the Countess fled to the country and entered "in to a Plurality of Amours."[51] In a desperate attempt to modify her behaviour the Duke had her summoned to Court, in the hopes that if surrounded by those of her own rank she would behave more appropriately. The Countess instead continued her philandering ways and fraternized with "several young Nobleman about the Palace."[52] The Countess, like Jemima, was portrayed as promiscuous, changing lovers frequently for her own gratification. The implication is that the Countess's aversion to her husband was of a sexual nature; rather than engage in sexual relations with him she sought the pleasures of other men, further implying that sexual conquest was more important to her than marriage.

This representation of female sexuality runs contrary to the expected social norm for women belonging to this class. The lower classes had different sexual mores than their social betters with more tolerant views of pre-marital sex and pregnancies than their social superiors.[53] Elite women were expected to remain chaste before marriage and after.

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[50] *Prostitutes of Quality* 98-100.
[51] *Prostitutes of Quality* 102.
[52] *Prostitutes of Quality* 102-104.
[53] See, E.P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (NY: New Press, 1991) 5-8; Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the making of the British Working Class* (University of California Press, 1995) 42-50; Tony Henderson, *Disorderly Women in Eighteenth - Century London: Prostitution and control in the Metropolis* (London: Longman, 1999) 44-45; Tim Hitchcock, *English Sexualities 1700-1800* (London: Longman Press, 1999) 9,10; Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500 -1800* (NY: Harper and Row, 1995) 384, 388, 395; and Roberta Probert, *Marriage, Law and Practice in the Long Eighteenth Century – A Reassessment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 69, 108.

The expectation of chastity was premised on land rights, fortunes and hereditary titles. Aristocrats tended to marry within their own rank as a great deal of property and prestige was at stake and female chastity ensured that bastards would not inherit titles and fortunes. In an era before reliable birth control the only way to ensure blood linage was chastity. Hence a double standard was in place; men were expected to be sexually active before and after marriage, but women were not.[54] Women like Molly, Lady Agnew, Jemima and the Countess were the antithesis of the ideal chaste woman. Instead these women are portrayed as promiscuous and sex-crazed acting more like men for whom sexual conquest was tolerated in and out of marriage.

Charlotta del Mar and Juliana, also from *Prostitutes of Quality*, were noble ladies who participated in countless sexual liaisons, to the extent that they formed a club for the sole purpose of sexual intrigue. Charlotta was unhappily married to a "young Marquis."[55] The couple separated when "their Manner of Living together was intolerable."[56] Upon separation Charlotta "fell…insensibly into intrigue" forming a club, of sorts, with two of her friends. The women agreed to "maintain the Secrets of each other with an inviolable Fidelity."[57] The women would claim to travel for "a Jaunt into the Country, which in reality was no farther than a Bagnio: each had her Gallant, thought [sic] not always the same."[58] Bagnios were bath houses that frequently operated as meeting places for sex. The houses were well furnished and carpeted, provided flagellation services and other

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[54] Wrightson, *English Society* 70-71; Peakman, *Lascivious Bodies* 43; Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage* 70-72, 315; Stone, *Road to Divorce* 59-60.
[55] *Prostitutes of Quality* 116.
[56] *Prostitutes of Quality* 118.
[57] *Prostitutes of Quality* 119.
[58] *Prostitutes of Quality* 120.

sexual aids for the guests.[59] Charlotta "grew bold in her infamy, and seem'd to glory in her Shamelessness" even fornicating with new men in front of "her Favourite Woman Eliza" in order to determine which had the "greatest passion…and was most worthy of her Embraces."[60] Charlotta and Juliana are portrayed as sexually voracious, requiring multiple men to sooth their libidos. Charlotta, contrary to expectations of chastity, was proud of her sexuality and flaunted it to her servant and the public, even treating sexual conquest as a sport in which men could be rated by performance. Like the other women portrayed in pornographic texts, Charlotta and company behaved like men; specifically male libertines who treated sexual conquest as a game.[61]

Sex clubs were popular in the eighteenth century. Beggar's Benison and the Hell Fire Club were both clubs that catered to flagrant sexual activity. The clubs held meetings in which erotica was read aloud and prostitutes hired for sex and bodily display. The Beggar's Benison even had a ceremony in which members masturbated into a test platter as initiation.[62] While the Beggar's Benison was exclusively male, there is evidence to suggest that the Hell Fire Club admitted women.[63] Given the popularity of clubs and that the Hell Fire Club had female members, it is conceivable that women had similar discrete clubs for sexual purposes. Even if no such club existed for women, the presence of male sex clubs catering to elites made the narrative of *Prostitutes of Quality* seem

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[59] Fernando Henriques, *Prostitution and Society: A Survey, volume 2, Prostitution in Europe and the New World* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1963) 151; Ivan Bloch, *Sexual Life in England, Past and Present* (London: Francis Aldor, 1938) 115-123.
[60] *Prostitutes of Quality* 120.
[61] Peakman, *Lascivious Bodies* 46-47.
[62] Peakman, *Mighty Lewd Books* 29-32; Harvey, *Reading Sex* 64-66.
[63] Peakman, *Lascivious Bodies* 109.

tangible and rooted the reader's fantasy in reality suggesting that this was, indeed, how elite women behaved.

Operating in the same vein, is the pornographic poem *Sappho-An. An Heroic Poem of Three Cantos in the Ovidian Stile* [sic] which portrays elite women, not only as libidinous but insatiable. The women of *Sappho-An* are at the royal court.[64] However, rather than seducing servants and young men, these women preferred sex with one another. The preface of the texts claims the piece was "found amongst the papers of a Lady of Quality" suggesting it was biographical revealing the "Pleasures which the Fair Sex Enjoy with Each Other." The story begins with a warning to the "Swains of Britannia's happy, gladsome Isle" that their attempts to seduce women of the nobility are for naught as these women prefer the "secret joys…[of] some fav'rite maid, or handy young coquette" or have their lust sated "in private…with some experience'd, well-known crafty dame."[65] The women practice cunnilingus and "dart the tongue to raise the glowing fire" then use phallic objects to achieve orgasm.[66] The women not only used dildos but candles for "the chandler's art oft feeds a double flame, First lights the bed and then lust does tame." If candles were not available then "vegetables of all sorts" could suffice including "the carrot [or] the friendly parsnip….when some tender hand has wash'd them clean."[67]

It is important to understand that in the early modern period lesbianism was not considered a sexual identity. Female same-sex relations were attributed to either one of

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[64] Anon, *Sappho-An - An Heroic Poem in Three Cantos* (London, Cha. Brasier, 1749) 45.
[65] *Sappho- An* 9-10.
[66] *Sappho- An* 13.
[67] *Sappho- An* 32-35.

the women being a hermaphrodite or as a substitute for "real sex."[68] It is argued that in the eighteenth century a phallo-centric definition of sex emerged, whereby acts that did not include penetration of the vagina by a penis were not considered sex.[69] By this logic, for women to have sex together there must be penetration involved. The popular explanation was that one of the women was a hermaphrodite, possessing an enlarged clitoris that simulated the action of a penis by penetrating the other woman's vagina. Rather than explain lesbianism as a sexual preference it was understood as an abnormality of nature.[70] Furthermore, representations of lesbian desire in literature often portray it as a substitute for intercourse with a man. Women engaged in mutual masturbation to ease their desire when a man was not available. However, once a man was available, the interest in same-sex relations was usually assumed to cease.[71] Either way, female same-sex relations were not considered evidence of a sexual preference but rather a type of masturbation.[72]

The sexual taboo of *Sappho-An* is that these women have libidos that are so out of control that they resort to using dildos to satisfy their lust. Dildos were readily available and in London, sold openly, for example, by a Mrs. Phillips who owned a shop near

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[68] Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 72; Peakman, *Lascivious Bodies* 174; Emma Donaghue, "Imagined more than Women: Lesbians as Hermaphrodites, 1671-1766," *Women's History Review*, 2.2 (1993): 200; Katherine Binhammer, "Accounting for the Unaccountable: Lesbianism and the History of Sexuality in Eighteenth-Century Britain," *Literature Compass*, 6.6 (2010): 2; Emma Donaghue, *Passions Between Women: British Lesbian Culture, 1668-1801* (NY: Harper Collins, 1995) 4.

[69] Hitchcock, "Redefining Sex" 72-84.

[70] Donaghue, "Imagined more than Women" 201; Donaghue, *Passions Between Women* 25.

[71] Donaghue, "Imagined more than Women" 201; Binhammer, "Accounting for the Unaccountable" 2.

[72] Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* 71.

Leicester Square.[73] However, by end of the eighteenth century, the use of dildos was reconstructed as a display of negative femininity.[74] The use of dildos in *Sappho-An* serves to emphasize the hyper-sexuality of its elite women. Furthermore, this image of deviant lust is reinforced by using regular household items in lieu of a dildo. According to Francis Grose, author of the 1785 *A Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*, dildos were typically "made of wax, horn, leather, and diverse other substances[75] but not crude objects as carrots or candlesticks. The implication is that the women of *Sappho-An* possess desires so beyond their control they use any object at hand as a masturbation aid.

Lending credence to the tales of elite women's sexual debauchery and perversion were the accounts of divorce trials that appeared in newspapers and pamphlets. Over the eighteenth century divorce rates amongst the upper sorts and elites increased and public interest followed suit, with detailed reports of their marital breakdowns reported in newspapers and pamphlets. Some scholars attribute rising divorce rates to the increased emphasis on companionate and affectionate marriages. Couples now expected more emotional fulfillment from their marriages. Or more correctly, the women of these marriages expected more.[76] Of the three hundred and twenty five divorces that occurred

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[73] Henriques, *Prostitution and Society* 170; Richard Gordon, *The Alarming History of Medicine* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1993) 144. Mrs. Phillips also sold condoms at her store made of goat or sheep intestine.

[74] Sally O'Driscoll, "A Crisis of Femininity: Remaking Gender in Popular Discourse," *Lesbian Dames: Sapphism in the Long-Eighteenth Century*, eds. John C. Beynon and Caroline Gonda (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2010) 46-59.

[75] Francis Grose, *A Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (London: S. Hooper, 1785) n.p.

[76] Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution* 393-394; Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage* 222-223. Other historians disagree with Trumbach and Stone arguing the trend towards affectionate marriage begun in the previous century. See Tim Hitchcock, "Redefining Sex in Eighteenth-Century England," *History Workshop Journal*, 41(1996): 76, Joanne Bailey, *Unquiet Lives: Marriage and Marriage Breakdown in England, 1660 – 1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 200, 201; Helen Berry and

between 1670 and 1857 all but four were obtained by men.[77] The primary reason men sought divorce from their wives was adultery. Many of these women began relationships with other men during the course of their marriage, usually with a friend or acquaintance of her husband`s or someone in the household.[78] The relationships and subsequent divorces were not private affairs. Acts of Divorce were advertised in newspapers and printed in pamphlets, often including details of the extra-marital relationship. Servants offered testimony at the divorce trial providing intimate and incriminating details of the relationship between the errant wife and her lover. Parliamentary divorce was the only way to obtain a full divorce allowing for remarriage. The process was very expensive and thus socially limited to the upper classes.[79] The printed transcripts for Parliamentary Acts of Divorce for this period follow much the same format. The husband and wife were named, and the reason for this divorce given - usually adultery by the wife, naming her lover. For example, the "Act to Dissolve the Marriage of John Ennever, Gentlemen, with Mary, his now wife" printed in 1753 accused the later of having "entered into unlawful Familiarity, and carried on an Adulterous Conversation, with Jonathan Harvey, then a servant" of hers, sometime in 1750.[80] The reports of divorce which appeared in newspapers supplied more scandalous details of elite men and their wives. The February 13th, 1782 issue of *Parker's General Advertiser and Morning Intelligencer* contained a

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Elizabeth A Foyster eds., *The Family in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 15-16.

[77] Amanda Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998) 73.

[78] Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution* 394.

[79] Stone, *Road to Divorce* 131; Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter* 73; Joanne Bailey, *Unquiet Lives: Marriage and Marriage Breakdown in England, 1660-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 31.

[80] "An Act to Dissolve the Marriage of John Ennever, Gentlemen, with Mary Cornwall, his now Wife; and to enable him to marry again; and for other Purposes therein mentioned," Great Britain Parliament, London, 1753, 1.

detailed report of the circumstances leading up to the marital breakdown of John Williams and his wife, Elizabeth Melhuish. Melhuish had an affair with Navy Captain Joseph Payton, of which Williams discovered evidence in October 1780. Melhuish later gave birth to a child that was not William's issue and was openly living with Payton by this time. Servant Susannah Reeves testified that Payton usually visited Melhuish twice per day when Williams was absent. Melhuish and Payton would lock themselves in the parlour together. Reeves claimed she overheard "a bustle, as it were, in the parlour" and "it was the noise of feet, and some conversation in a low voice." When Reeves entered the room she noticed "the marks and scratches of boot on the floor, and in front of the elbow chair, as if there had been some *bustle* or *game of romps*: and that Mrs. William's cap was ruffled." She also noted "the chairs were covered with linen." Apparently, Melhuish and Payton were concerned about ruining the furniture with bodily fluids during their game of romps. Reeves further recounted an evening when Williams was out and Payton visited. She claims to have found that "her mistress's white jacket was rumpled, her hair disordered …..the marks of the toes of boots on the floor….and that she observed her mistress's stockings afterward to be dirtied with the blackening off the boots."[81] Reeves' accounts leave little to the imagination as to what Melhuish and Payton were up to during her husband's absence. Printed Divorce Acts and newspaper accounts thus created the impression that elite women were similar to the randy-bunch of ladies trolling for men portrayed in pornographic texts. These reports, regardless of their veracity, offer what would have been perceived to be a factual basis for the

[81] *Parker's General Advertiser and Morning Intelligencer* (London, England), Thursday, February 13, 1783; Issue 1958.

representations of the libidinous women in pornography. Such portrayals were, in other words, believable to their reading audience.

Even more intriguing than the representations of elite women are those of elite men. It is expected that pornographic texts include men; most of the sex is penetrative and heterosexual thus men are required. However, the page space given to upper class men is striking compared to that of poor men. Lower class men are given fleeting mention as minor characters in the text, while upper class men are treated with the same amount of verbiage as the women. The depictions of upper class men are not as consistent as those of women; rather, they are contradictory. Some of the elite male characters are portrayed as impotent, others as promiscuous, with a few so utterly lust-driven that they commit unnatural acts. Elite men's sex drive is, like elite women's, portrayed as abnormal and unhealthy. But whereas aristocratic women were depicted as exclusively oversexed, depictions of elite men break in two, seemingly opposite, directions.

Those suffering from impotence include the husband of Miss Molly, of *Drive-On Coachman* who was unable to satisfy Molly who "From the nuptial Sheets …hoped for more, Than barely Greeting with a Snore" for her husband "knew no Joy but Sleep."[82] The Duke in *Prostitutes of Quality* is described as "a Man…who was not much of a Disposition to be too much imposed on…,"[83] implying his potency was lacking thus forcing his wife Arabella to seek sexual solace elsewhere.[84] Elite male impotence is also

[82] *Drive On* 9.
[83] *Prostitutes of Quality* 5.
[84] *Prostitutes of Quality* 1-6.

represented in *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, the lauded first modern pornographic novel. It details the adventures of Fanny Hill a young girl who travelled to London to find work but was recruited by a bawd into prostitution.[85] The text primarily focuses on the antics of Fanny and her fellow prostitutes but includes one upper class man who was impotent. Mr. Norbert was "a gentleman originally of great fortune,"[86] who "could seldom consummate the main-joy itself."[87] The image of impotent men seems out of place in texts whose goal it is to arouse the reader. Perhaps, their purpose is for comparison to the other male characters, to justify female lasciviousness or to even to criticise the behaviour of the British aristocracy by constructing elite men as effeminate. There was a growing tendency in the eighteenth century to criticise the lifestyles of the elites and accusing the men of this group of effeminacy was one tactic. This topic will be explored in the conclusion.

The majority of male characters in pornographic texts, as expected, are seeking sex, however, the elite male characters in the texts, impotent characters aside, seem to make sexual conquest their only pastime in life. The majority of the male characters in *Prostitutes of Quality*, for example, are hyper-libidinous. One male character, Moderno, juggles the affections of several women simultaneously, not for marriage purposes but sexual intrigue. Moderno is described as a fop who lives off the income of the family estate.[88] Moderno "courted" Horteuna until she got pregnant and "had a Child by him, of

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[85] Randolph Trumbach, "Erotic Fantasy and Male Libertinism in Enlightenment England,"*The Invention of Pornography: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity, 1500-1800,* ed. Lynn Hunt (NY: Zone Books, 1993) 253; Hitchcock, *English Sexualities* 19; Peakman, *Mighty Lewd Books,* 19; Foxton, *Libertine Literature* 45.
[86] John Cleland, *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (London: R. Griffiths, 1749) 135.
[87] Cleland, *Memoirs* 143.
[88] *Prostitutes of Quality* 134.

which she was deliver'd at a Midwife's House, privately." Unfortunately, her father found out about the baby and sent Horteuna to the country to live in "Retirement and Restraint."[89] Moderno then moved on to Isabella, a married woman who arranged assignations whenever her husband was out of town.[90] Then there was Sophronia, a wealthy widow who offered Moderno money in exchange for companionship.[91] He also had relationships with Eleanora "the only daughter of a country gentleman"[92] and Lucilla who attempted suicide after Moderno failed to marry her when she became pregnant.[93] He bedded a widow until her brother ended the relationship[94], as well as Cleora and Almara who wrote letters confessing their undying love for Moderno.[95] The behaviour of Moderno, to some degree was expected. Sexual potency was a means of proving masculinity in the early modern period but it was usually proven with women of the lower classes.[96] Sexual intercourse could also be a component of courtship. It was acceptable to begin physical relations after a proposal for marriage had been given.[97] However, this usually did not occur amongst the upper classes where female chastity was important to maintain family lineages.[98] While it was acceptable for elite men to be

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[89] *Prostitutes of Quality* 138.
[90] *Prostitutes of Quality* 142.
[91] *Prostitutes of Quality 145.*
[92] *Prostitutes of Quality* 149.
[93] *Prostitutes of Quality* 154.
[94] *Prostitutes of Quality* 156.
[95] *Prostitutes of Quality* 166-167.
[96] Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution* 14-16.
[97] John R. Gillis, *For Better, For Worse: British marriages, 1600 to the present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985)30-33; Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage* 384-385; Hitchcock, *English Sexualities* 33-34; Richard B. Outhwaite, *Clandestine marriage in England, 1500-1850* (London: Hambledon Press, 1995) xvii; Robert Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society: The Emergence of Separate Spheres?* (London: Longman, 1998) 97-98; Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches* 43.
[98] Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*, 72; Tague, "Love, honor, and obedience" 78, 90; O'Day, *Women's Agency* 74; Wrightson, *English Society* 70-71; Peakman, *Lascivious Bodies* 43; Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*, 70-72, 315; Stone, *Road to Divorce* 59-60.

sexually active, their lusts were expected to be quenched with women of lower classes or prostitutes.[99] Moderno instead flouted social convention seducing women of his own class leaving a path of social destruction in his wake in order to satisfy an overly powerful libido.

Moderno's misdeeds pale in comparison to the depictions of other elite characters such as Bellatus and Adtrastus from *Prostitutes of Quality* who satiated their lust through rape and incest. Bellatus "a Man of Quality, who Ancestors for many Ages past have been esteem'd among the Prime of the Nobility"[100] had a penchant for violent rape. His father, in despair at his life of luxury, idleness and debauchery "sent him to the Wars, hoping the Toils of a Campaign would mortify him."[101] Rather than modify his behavior for the better, Bellatus "grew more hardened in his contempt of Heaven" and raped "a young Maid of Quality, Daughter of the Governor of a Port where he kept Garrison." He was taken to court for the offence but acquitted because of his rank. Shortly after, he raped the "Wife of an Inferior Officer" who had caught his fancy. She refused his advances so he "compell'd two of his Soldiers to hold her, while he perpetrated his horrid Purpose….then left her to receive the same shocking Usage from them." He then arranged for the kidnapping and rape of the fiancé of a friend with whom he was infatuated because she was a virgin and repeatedly refused his advances. Bellatus then arranged for two of his servants to have her

> seiz'd …as she was passing thro' a private Street, and the one stopping her Mouth, and catching her in his Arms, while the other cry'd out the poor Lady was

[99] Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution* 68-69; Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England* (NY: Yale University Press, 1995) 92-93.
[100] *Prostitutes of Quality* 180.
[101] *Prostitutes of Quality* 181-2.

> in a Fit, carried her in that Manner to Bellatus, who waited a few Paces off in a Coach..[taking her to]…a House which he kept on purpose for such Affairs, was without any Ceremony, or preparatory Excuses, compell'd to suffer what her Soul most abhorr'd[102]

At the private house "he kept her with him all that Day and Night, and great Part of the other also, resolved to glut Desire, and riot in the repeated Possession of his Wishes" eventually sending her home.[103]

To the modern reader, rape is a violent rather than sexual act. However, in the early modern period, such was not the understanding. In this period the comprehension of rape was contradictory. It was a capital crime but one rarely prosecuted, and those that did come before the courts frequently received acquittals.[104] The general assumption was that an honest woman could not be raped. An honest woman would not place herself in a situation to be raped or she would put up such a valiant fight to save her chastity that the rape could not occur. If a woman was raped and tried to seek redress in the court system, her behaviour was often scrutinized, facing questions about her morality and whether she had somehow suggested she was amiable to sex with her attacker.[105] The onus for prosecution was not that the woman refused sex with the rapist, but that he had

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[102] *Prostitutes of Quality* 188-189.
[103] *Prostitutes of Quality* 188-189.
[104] Anna Clark, *Women's Silence, Men's Violence: Sexual Assault in England, 1770-1845* (London: Pandora, 1986) 15, 58; Garthine Walker, "Rereading Rape and Sexual Violence in Early Modern England," *Gender and History* 10.1 (April 1998): 1; Antony E. Simpson, "Vulnerability and the age of female consent: Legal innovation and its effect on prosecutions for rape in eighteenth-century London," *Sexual Underworlds of the Enlightenment*, eds. G.S. Rousseau and Roy Porter (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987) 186-188.
[105] Clark*, Women's Silence, Men's Violence* 4, 47-55; Kim Stevenson "Most Intimate Violations: Contextualizing the Crime of Rape," *Histories of Crime in Britain, 1600-2000*, eds., Anne-Marie Kilday and David Nash (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) 81; Jennie Mills, "Rape in Early Eighteenth Century London: A Perversion 'so very perplex'd,'" *Sexual Perversions, 1670-1890*, ed. Julie Peakman (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) 140.

understood her negative reaction as such, instead of coyness.[106] In short, rape was understood quite differently in early modern culture, which scrutinized female behaviour vilifying "immodest" women who aroused the lust of men. Therefore, Bellatus's rapes would not be considered violent acts by many eighteenth-century readers, but rather as sexual episodes in which his libido took over. In this understanding rape could be viewed as a form of seduction.[107] Rape scenes in pornography were a means to arouse the reader. Bellatus's rapes, though frowned upon, would be understood as acts of sexual prowess rather than violence. Bellatus had simply been aroused to the point where he could not control his lust and sated it by whatever means available.

However, the basic storyline of Bellatus committing rape upon a woman belonging to the peerage with the assistance of servants is reminiscent of the trial of the Earl of Castlehaven over a century earlier in 1631. Despite the fact that the Earl was officially charged with the criminal offences of rape and sodomy, aristocratic honour became focal during testimony. The Earl was charged with rape for assisting the household footman, Giles Broadway, assault his wife, the Countess Anne. By aiding in the rape of the Countess, the Earl was forfeiting family and social honour. It was the duty of the male head of the household to protect and provide a moral example to all his dependents, including servants. The Earl's behaviour conveyed the opposite suggesting he was not only immoral but unnatural. By association the Earl was demeaning the mores and values of the aristocracy en masse. Of course, the Castlehaven case predates the texts studied in this thesis by more than a century. However, it remained a point of

[106] Clark, *Women's Silence, Men's Violence* 4; Mills, "Rape in Early Eighteenth-Century London" 153.
[107] Clark, *Women's Silence, Men's Violence* 7; Walker, "Rereading Rape" 5.

fascination well into the eighteenth century, with accounts published as late as 1781. The Earl's trial became one of the most notorious sex scandals of the age and a hallmark for aristocratic vice.[108] If Bellatus's rapes are considered within this context, the crime committed not merely a physical rape but a crime against honour and privilege. Rather than protect a woman, Bellatus did her harm, kidnapping and raping her, and further demeaning her by allowing his servants to have use of her body after he had finished. He also abused the privileges of rank by recruiting servants to aid him in his lustful pursuits, setting a bad example for inferiors in allowing these lustful pursuits to outweigh manly control and reason. Through the act of rape, Bellatus abandoned all pretence of respectable behaviour and respectability for the sake of his libidinous desires.

Adrastus was guilty of a similar sexual perversion. He was the instigator of an incestuous relationship with his wife's sister, Jemima, who repeatedly attempted to seduce Lothario. In a confession to Lothario, Jemima claimed the relationship, had been on-going for the past two years but that she had kept it secret for fear that she would be turned out of the house "to all the Miseries of Want and Poverty."[109] Adrastus "had convinced her that Polygamy was no Crime" and that he "loved her more than her sister," his wife. Once the incest was revealed to the family, rather than oust Adrastus, Jemima was sent to his home "there to remain his guardian" where she would be "forced to repeat

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[108] Cynthia Herrup, *A House in Gross Disorder: Sex, Law and the Second Earl of Castlehaven* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1999) 1-3, 59-70, 116, 133; Cynthia Herrup, "To Pluck Bright Honour from the Pale-Faced Moon: Gender and Honour in the Castlehaven Story," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Volume 6 (1996): 146. Accounts published about the Earl's trial during the eighteenth century include, Anon, *The Case of Sodomy in the Tryal of Mervin Lord Audley, Earl of Castlehaven* (London: John Morphem, 1708); Thomas Salmon, *A Compleat Collection of State Tryals and Proceedings upon Impeachments for High Treason and other Crimes and Misdemeanors* (London: Timothy Goodwin, 1719, 1720, 1730, 1742, 1776, 1781); and Anon, *The History of the most Remarkable Tryals in Great Britain and Ireland in Capital Cases* (London: J. Pemeerton, 1725).

[109] *Prostitutes of Quality* 45-48.

the crime."[110] In this situation Adrastus's sex drive was such that he required two women for gratification committing incest and conceivably bigamy in the process. Adrastus' claims of love and no crime in polygamy suggest that the pair had a verbal contract of marriage, allowing for sexual intercourse between the couple.[111] There are further indications that these acts were condoned, or at least ignored, by the family as Jemima was placed under the guardianship of Adrastus suggesting that such behaviour was accepted and condoned in elite circles.

Understanding contemporary attitudes towards incest is important to contextualizing their appearance in pornographic texts. Incest has long been taboo in most cultures, with varying rationale. The ancients believed that the offspring of incestuous relationships would be damaged in some way, either through physical deformity or barrenness. Christianity further condemned incestuous relationships. Thomas Aquinas argued that because of the pre-existing love between a brother and sister an intimate relationship would create so much love that there would be no room for God. Relationships between close relatives, were therefore, prohibited by Canon Law. Despite the prohibitions by the church, between 1660 and 1908, incest between a brother and sister was not a criminal offence in England or a matter for the secular courts.[112] However, among polite society in the eighteenth century, any sexual relationship between

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[110] *Prostitutes of Quality* 54-64.

[111] Outhwaite, *Clandestine Marriage* xvii; Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society* 97-98; Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches* 43; Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution* 377-378; Weisner, *Women and Gender* 44; Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage* 30; Jeremy Boulton, "Clandestine marriages in London: an examination of a neglected urban variable," *Urban History* 20.02 (1993): 191-193; Gillis, *For Better, For Worse* 16-19; Stone, *Road to Divorce* 24.

[112] Wayland Young, *Eros Denied: Sex in Western Society* (NY: Grove Press, 1964) 136-138.

family members was considered incest.[113] This differed from the lower orders who did not consider a relationship incestuous unless there was a blood bond. As Polly Morris argues many widows and widowers of the lower classes lived in marriage-like situations for practical reasons. Widowers would cohabitate with their deceased wife's sister in order for her to take care of the house and children. Widows often set up house with a relative of their dead husband for financial support. Among the lower sorts these relationships passed without comment as marriage and sexual relations between family members was not vilified.[114] However, among the higher classes Adrastus would have committed incest by having sexual relations with Jemima. He would further be adopting the behaviours of the lower class of society, thus adding more negative connotations to the relationship. In this situation Adrastus' libido was such that it drove him to commit social, legal and religious travesties.

Adrastus had manufactured a situation in which he had two women at his sexual disposal, acting as wives. Adrastus' professions of love to Jemima and conviction that polygamy was not a crime may have been construed as a verbal contract of marriage. Until the 1753 Marriage Act there were several legal ways to marry, of which one was verbal promises. A promise to marry was recognized as a legal marriage under common law.[115] Adratus took advantage of Jemima's ignorance by suggesting their union would be marriage-like and not a sin. The union, besides being incestuous, could even be

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[113] Ellen Pollack, *Incest and the English Novel, 1684-1814* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2003) 2.
[114] Polly Morris, "Incest or Survival Strategy? Plebeian Marriage within the Prohibited Degrees in Somerset, 1730-1835,"*Journal of the History of Sexuality, 2.2* (October, 1991): 246, 252.
[115] Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution* 377-378; Weisner, *Women and Gender* 44; Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage* 30; Boutlon, "Clandestine Marriage" 191-193; Gillis, *For Better, For Worse* 16-19; Stone, *Road to Divorce* 24.

considered bigamous. Bigamy, unlike incest, was a capital crime in England until the late eighteenth century when it was changed to seven years transportation.[116]

However, polygamy or keeping multiple wives, while not legal, was a moral issue and subject of much debate during this period. There were arguments that polygamy would benefit society by reducing the number women seduced, abandoned and shamed by mercenary men looking only for sexual conquest. It was further argued that if polygamous marriage was allowed, rates of infanticide, suicide and prostitution would decline. Conversely, the opposing argument was that men would take multiple wives simply as an act of lust, arranging to have multiple women at their sexual disposal. Furthermore, moralists worried that polygamous marriage would enfeeble a man sexually and reduce the number of children born, thus reducing the population. There were also financial concerns; the vast majority of British men would not be able to provide for multiple wives and numerous children, thus putting further strain on the parish poor relief system.[117] Following this logic it would only be wealthy men who would be in a fiscal situation to take on multiple wives. Indeed, polygamy was such a contentious issue by the end of the century the career of evangelical minister Martin Madan ended in scandal when he published a defence of polygamy in 1780.[118] In this situation, pornography texts tapped into the controversy surrounding polygamy to portray the male elites of Britain as a libidinous group who made major cultural transgressions to assuage their lusts.

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[116] Stone, *Road to Divorce* 143.
[117] John Cairncross, *After Polygamy was made a Sin: The Social History of Christian Polygamy* (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1974) 126-128, 158-163.
[118] Felicity Nussbaum, "The Other Woman: Polygamy, Pamela and the Perogative of Empire," *Women, Race and Writing in the Early Modern Period,* Margot Hendrichs and Patricia Parker, eds. (London: Routledge, 1994) 147.

The depiction of upper class men as driven by their libidos continues and there are even two texts that feature upper class men as their main characters, *Adollizing, or A Lively Picture of A Doll Worship* (1748) and *A Spy on Mother Midnight: or, The Templar Metamorphos'd* (1748). The main character of *Adollizing* is Clodius who is described as "descended of a noble race, High as the Norman, can his lineage trace."[119] The main character of *Spy on Mother Midnight* is simply referred to as "a Young Gentleman."[120] Both stories depict young men whose lust for a particular woman was so strong and uncontrollable it drove one to build a sex-doll in the image of his love and the other to dress as a woman to gain access to his.

Adollizing recounts the extremes to which Clodius went to attract the attention of the woman he loved, Clarabella. Clodius was a "young, gay handsome" man who had a reputation for charming, seducing and discarding women. He is described as "driven by Lust alone" for "True Love, for him is treated as a jest"[121] until he met Clarabella. She was "of noble birth, possess'd of every grace, Beautous mind, as well as form and face…with virtue unaffected."[122] Clarabella, however, did not return Clodius's love. Failing to capture her love, he commissioned a doll to be built in her effigy "by new mechanic aid, as big as life" by various tradesmen.[123] The purpose of this life- size Clarabella doll, who he named Claradolla, was as a masturbatory aid. Clodius rationalized that if women could have dildos to "soften all … cares" he can have a doll to

[119] *Adollizing* 11.
[120] Anon, *A Spy on Mother Midnight: or, the Templar Metamorphos'd* (London: E. Penn, 1748) title page.
[121] *Adollizing* 11-12.
[122] *Adollizing* 14 -16.
[123] *Adollizing* 18.

assuage his desire for Clarabella.[124] The doll was complete with vaginal orifice; "that dear fortress" which causes "all delight" complete with "a tuft of hair….of Clarabella's colour, golden hue." The "vagina" was constructed of a "seven inch bore, proportioned to his mind, with oval entrance, all with spunge [sic] he lin'd."[125]

The eroticism of the text was not of the sexual intercourse Clodius had with the live Clarabella, but with the doll Claradolla. Once the doll's manufacture was complete he placed her on a couch and consummated the relationship. He arranged the doll so that she was lying prostrate, spread her fully jointed legs and penetrated her sponge-lined vagina with his penis as if she were a living breathing woman, eventually reaching climax.[126]

There is little historical record of sex dolls, and *Adollizing* is the only known eighteenth-century piece of its kind.[127] As Anthony Ferguson has noted there are references to sex dolls in ancient literature and mythology in which men created artificial beings to fulfill the role of sex slave. In keeping with Ferguson's research, Clodius's usage of Claradolla corresponds with the findings that modern users of sex dolls not only personify the doll but it functions as a "sexual and emotional outlet" for the user.[128] The use of sex dolls corresponds with the use of play dolls; the user of the doll gives the doll life through imagination. A doll is a projection of what one wants it to be.[129] Clodius

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[124] *Adollizing* 16.
[125] *Adollizing* 17-18.
[126] *Adollizing* 18-19.
[127] Patrick Spedding and Alexander Pettit, *Eighteenth Century Erotic Collection II*, vol 7 (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2002) 307.
[128] Anthony Ferguson, *The Sex Doll*: *A History* (North Carolina: McFarland and Company, 2010) 121.
[129] Gaby Wood, *Edison's Eve: A Magical History of the Quest for Mechanical Life* (NY: Anchor Books, 2003) 214.

built Claradolla in the physical image of Clarabella and assigned her, imaginatively, those characteristics he wished the living Clarabella possessed; most especially desire for him.

However, constructing life size dolls in the image of a woman was not unknown this period. Apparently, in the sixteenth century, François I of France had a life-size doll made in the image of Isabella d'Este, a woman who he admired for her beauty. The doll was not used for sexual purposes but rather as an object to admire and means for Francois to possess beauty.[130] It is speculated that the modern sex doll evolved from the straw dolls used by seventeenth - century French and Spanish sailors on long voyages. The dolls were made of straw or rags and shared by the crew.[131] There is even conjecture that seventeenth-century philosopher Rene Descartes took one to sea with him on a voyage to Sweden, although the purpose of the doll is in dispute. The doll was made in the image of his recently deceased daughter and may have been for emotional rather than sexual purposes.[132] It would seem that the concept of sex dolls was circulating in this period, regardless of the dearth of reference in written record. However, fornicating with a doll would have certainly been considered a perverse taboo by early modern standards.

To the average eighteenth-century reader Claradolla, the sex doll, would be an aberration. Having sex with the doll would be an act akin to bestiality, a criminal act

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[130] Yassana C. Croizant, "Living Dolls: François I and his Woman," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 60.1 (Spring 2007): 115-116.

[131] Ferguson, *The Sex Doll* 13-16.

[132] Gaby Wood, *Living Dolls: A Magical History of the Quest for Mechanical Life* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 2002) *3-5; Ferguson, The Sex Doll 16.* There is conjecture that Descarte's "Francine" may or may not have been a sex doll. The doll was made in the image of his daughter who died of scarlett fever just a few months before the voyage. The doll may have been a coping mechanism for grief. "Francine" did not survive the voyage. The crew, suspicious about the daughter they heard was on board but never saw searched Descartes cabin and found "Francine" in a box. Fearing black magic the sailors threw her overboard. Apparently, these sailors were not French or Spanish and familiar with straw dolls.

punishable by death. Cross-species sexual relations were deemed a sin by the church and under secular law an illegal act, falling under the umbrella term of sodomy which constituted any act of "unnatural" sex. "Natural" sex was pro-creational between a man and woman.[133] Claradolla was not, obviously, an animal, nor was she human however; instead she was merely a replication of human life. Bestiality was viewed as a sort of masturbation to ease lustful desire when women were not available.[134] Masturbation, while not illegal, posed a new set of moral and medical problems. In a Christian society, masturbation was contrary to religious doctrine that emphasized celibacy outside of marriage. It was also believed that it could spoil a man for "real" sex leaving him unable to perform his marital duties. Medically, masturbation could affect a man's health causing a variety of diseases including epilepsy, spinal tuberculosis, and madness. The body was viewed as a corporeal economy: an equal quantity of fluids passing in and out of it was required for the maintenance of good health. Masturbation dispensed large quantities of semen faster than the body could replenish the fluid making the body vulnerable to disease.[135] Clodius's behaviour was thus problematic on a multitude of levels; his desire for Clarabella drove him to commit acts of deviance, transgressing several social norms regarding sexuality and jeopardizing his own health.

In addition, there is evidence to suggest that bestiality was an act usually committed by lower class men. Little research has been done regarding bestiality in the eighteenth

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[133] Tom Betteridge ed., *Sodomy in Early Modern Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002) 1-2; A.D. Harvey, "Bestiality in late Victorian England," *The Journal of Legal History*, 21.3 (December 2000): 85; Erica Fudge, "Monstrous Acts: Bestiality in Early Modern England," *History Today*, 50.8 (2000): 21; Peakman, *Sexual Perversions* 10-12.

[134] P.G. Maxwell-Stuart, "Wild, filthe, execrabill, detestabill and unnatural sin: Bestiality in Early Modern Scotland," *Sodomy in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Tom Betteridge (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000) 88; Midas Dekkers, trans. Paul Vincent, *Dearest Pet: On Bestiality* (London: Verso, 2000) 21.

[135] Thomas W. Laqueur, *Solitary Sex: A Cultural History of Masturbation* (NY: Zone Books, 2004) 185-197.

century; however, research from later periods indicates it was a crime committed by young men with little access to women.[136] The few bestiality trials recorded at the Old Bailey Court support these findings. In July of 1757, James Wales was found guilty of bestiality with a horse. He was a servant and sixteen years old.[137] Bartholomew Langley was found guilty of bestiality with an ass in October of 1770. He was a journey man baker.[138] In April of 1776, sailor Christopher Saunders was found guilty of bestiality with a cow.[139] Although details are scant, they support later findings that bestiality was a crime committed by young, poor men. By ascribing the crime of bestiality to Clodius, the author of *Adollizing* is suggesting that Clodius has the manners and morals of a man of a lowest class. Cloduis in his lust-crazed state for Clarabella, disregarded his rank and all the privileges of his birth. In addition if there was an association with sailors and sex dolls, the degeneracy of Clodious was amplified, for sailors in the early modern period were considered sexually marginal, the male equivalent to whores. These men spent much of their time at sea or in foreign ports, only returning to Britain between voyages.[140] When on land they were a rowdy lot, whiling away their time drinking and consorting

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[136] Fudge, "Monstrous Acts 24; Harvey, "Bestiality in Late-Victorian England" 87; Jens Rydstrom, "Sodomitical Sins are Threefold: Typologies of Bestiality, Masturbation and Homosexuality in Sweden, 1880-1950", *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 9.3 (July 2000): 250, 252.

[137] *Old Bailey Proceedings Online* (www.oldbaileyonline.org), July 1757, Trial of James Wales (t1757013-29).

[138] *Old Bailey Proceedings Online,* October 1770, Trial of Bartholomew Langley (t17701024-38).

[139] *Old Bailey Proceedings Online,* April 1776, Trial of Christopher Saunders (t17760417-28). In the early modern period sailors tended to be young men. The trade was labour intensive and disease rife. The majority of men only stayed in the trade till their early thirties. They either moved onto other ventures or died. For more details about the seafaring trade see: Peter Earle, *Sailors: English Merchant Seaman, 1660-1775*(London: Methuen Publishing, Ltd., 1995) , Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seaman, Pirates, and the Anglo-American World, 1700-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), Peter Kemp, *The British Sailor: A Social History of the Lower Deck* (London: Dent, 1970) and David Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag: The Romance and Reality of Life among the Pirates* (Random House, 2003).

[140] Peter Earle, *Sailors: English Merchant Seaman, 1660-1775* (London: Methuen Publishing, Ltd., 1995) 7-12.

with prostitutes.[141] The social fear regarding sailors seemed to be that in their long abstinences at sea, they would forget their Christian duties, neglect prayer and religious service and wallow in vice. Josiah Woodward, Church of England Minister, moral reformer[142] and author of the *The Seaman's Monitor, or Advice to Sea-faring Men*, warns that sailors "tho' …. born in a Christian Land, …were Strangers to the Principles and Power of the Christian Religion, or they could not be Barbarous…"[143] The problem was that because their "business carries [them] abroad to all Parts of the known World, where [they] converse with Papists, Turks, and Infidels of all Sorts" adopt the ways of foreigners[144] only turning to the Christian God "in Sickness and Danger" when "they crouch and fall on their Knees before him: and in bitter Cries and tears entreat his Mercy."[145] Because of the neglect of Christian duty these men, Woodward insists that sailors partook in all sorts of vice including drunkenness, gambling and blaspheme.[146] By suggesting that Clodius partook in the same sexual perversion that sailors did the author of the text is implying that Clodius, and other elite men by association, was no more moral or respectable than the dregs of British society wallowing in vice and perversion.

The second text to feature an upper class man as the main character is *Spy on Mother Midnight; or, The Templar Metamorphos'd*. In this text, like *Adollizing*, the man, Dick, was spurned by the woman he desired, yet he persevered by unusual methods to

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[141] David Cordingly, *Seafaring Women: Adventures of Pirate Queens, Female Stowaways and Sailors Wives* (NY: Random House, 2007) 181-184; Peter Linebaugh, *The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Verso, 2006) 138-140.
[142] John Spurr, "Woodward, Josiah (1657-1712,)" *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view.article/55600, accessed October 10, 2009.
[143] Josiah Woodward, *The Seaman's Monitor, or Advice to Sea-faring Men* (London: J. Downing, 1705) preface.
[144] Woodward, *The Seaman's Monitor* preface.
[145] Woodward, *The Seaman's Monitor* 32.
[146] Woodward, *The Seaman's Monitor* 33-35.

gain her affections. Rather than build an effigy of his lady–love, Dick dressed as a woman in order to attend a lying-in to be in her company. There are two readings of *Spy on Mother Midnight*: the heterosexual narrative and the homoerotic. Reading the text as a heterosexual story of seduction recounts the travails of a young gentleman hopelessly infatuated with a woman he met at church. He attempted to flirt and woo the woman, Maria, but to no avail; she spurned all his attempts at courtship. Through inquiries Dick discovered that she "had baffled all the *Beau Esprits* of the county."[147] This information spurred Dick's interest on, prompting him to change tactics. Dick "grew very devout" and proceeded to court Maria in a pious manner, quoting scripture and presenting himself as non-threatening. But this tactic failed as well. In a last desperate attempt to win Maria's favours, Dick followed her to the country where she was attending the lying-in of her cousin.[148] Dick dressed as a woman, borrowing his sister's "blue riding Habit….a hat, Feather, and Perriwig,"[149] in order to gain access to the all-female environment of the lying-in chamber and Maria. During the days leading up to the labour, Dick, in his female guise, established a friendship with Maria. Dick learned that Maria was "standoffish" with men because she valued her reputation and guarded it cautiously. Their friendship was such that the night after the baby was born, Maria asked Dick (in female guise) to share a bed with her for the night. Once in the bedroom Maria undressed and rummaged through her "dressing box" looking for night wear. It was there that Dick spied "the image of Manhood: an Ivory substitute of Virility" inside. He immediately concocted a plan to use the phallus to gain access to Maria's body, offering to provide her

[147] *A Spy on Mother Midnight* 4.
[148] *A Spy on Mother Midnight* 6.
[149] *A Spy on Mother Midnight* 8.

with "some kind of comfort from the dildo"[150] promising to use it so artfully she would not know the difference between it and a man. Once the couple was in bed together and their sexual play commenced, Dick penetrated Maria's vagina with his penis rather than the promised dildo. Maria quickly realized "what sort of bed-fellow she had got" but was too overcome with pleasure to resist. The tale ends with Maria forgiving Dick for his duplicity, admitting she preferred men to the "Ivory Substitute."[151] The text concludes with Dick confessing he remained "still in Petticoats" continuing to cross dress as a means to gain intimate access to women, claiming he has "had more than one Affair with the Females of this Part of the World."[152] Dick was clearly not motivated by love for Maria but lust. Her refusals simply heightened his desire for her instigating his episode of cross-dressing. Realizing the sexual success could be had by cross-dressing, Dick continued to do so to gain access to other women.

Cross-dressing in the early modern period was fraught with issues. Gender identity in the period was linked to biological sex with each sex ascribed gender characteristics accordingly.[153] Dressing as a member of the opposite sex suggested that there was sexual deviance involved. In the eighteenth century how a person dressed was a visual indicator of identity.[154] A man dressing as a woman was assumed to have homosexual inclinations.[155] Homosexuality was a new and marginal identity in this period. Men who desired other men were not considered "real" masculine men but

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[150] *A Spy on Mother Midnight* 32.
[151] *A Spy on Mother Midnight* 35.
[152] *A Spy on Mother Midnight* 35.
[153] Hitchcock, "Redefining Sex" 78; Laqueur, *Making Sex* 134**.**
[154] John Styles, *The Dress of the People: Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007) 11, 16-18.
[155] Vern L. Bullough and Bonnie Bullough, *Cross Dressing, Sex and Gender* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993) 115-119.

sexual deviants. Furthermore, sodomy was still a capital crime; a man could be arrested, tried and executed for having sexual relations with another man.[156] In a patriarchal society, in which power and privilege rested on masculine behavior, by dressing as a woman, Dick was jeopardizing his status as a man not only by not being in control of his emotions and allowing lust to rule his actions but by casting doubt on his sexual orientation.[157]

As Dhor Wahrman argues in *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England*, gender identity was not a rigidly policed concept until the latter part of the eighteenth century despite the fact that dress was a presentation of identity. In this "ancien regime" of identity there was some acceptance of cross - dressing, especially in theatre and during masquerades when dressing as the opposite sex was a considered a lark.[158] Reading *Spy on Mother Midnight* as a heterosexual narrative of seduction, Dick cross-dressed as a ruse in order to gain intimate access to Maria. His ploy was duplicitous but successful, seducing Maria and rescuing her from the deviant sexual practice of self-gratification with a dildo. However, it is Dick's continuous donning of female garb that was problematic. Rather than discard the dress once he seduced Maria, Dick continued to dress as a woman for the purpose of sexual conquest.

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[156] Rictor Norton, *Mother Clap's Molly House, The Gay Subculture in England, 1700-1830* (London: GMP Publishers Inc., 1993) 9-11; Richard Davenport Hines, *Sex, Death and Punishment: Attitudes towards Sex and Sexuality in Britain since the Renaissance* (London: Collins, 1990) 56-57, 79; Netta Murray Goldsmith, *The Worst of Crimes: Homosexuality and the Law in Eighteenth Century London* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 1998) 31; Peakman, *Sexual Perversions* 14-15; Hitchcock, *English Sexualities* 60-62; Peakman, *Lascivious Bodies* 148.

[157] Susan J. Wolfson, "Their She Condition: Cross Dressing and the Politics of Gender in Don Juan," *ELH*, 54.3 (Autumn 1997): 600; Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination* 83; Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution* 23-24.

[158] Dror Warhman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006) 47-63; David Cressy, "Gender Trouble and Cross Dressing in Early Modern England," *Journal of British Studies* 35.4 (October 1996): 447-453.

Not only did he continue to cross-dress but he was aroused by it admitting "I had still something about me, which declar'd an Enmity to Petticoats, and could not bear to be under them, without standing up in Support of the royal Prerogative of Breeches. In short, the very idea of a Petticoat, especially the Inside of one, put that Companion of mine into a mighty Fume, and it was some time before I could persuade him that…It was…his…Business to lie down."[159] As David Kuchta argues in *The Three Piece Suit and Modern Masculinity in England, 1550-1850*, the way a man dressed was a visual signifier of his masculinity. Men were expected to dress modestly and avoid flamboyant attire, for to do so was viewed as emasculating. Fashion was a decidedly feminine pursuit and for a man to dress in frippery and finery was effeminate. Gender was not only a sexual category but a political one in which only the male gender held authority.[160] Dick abandoned all pretence of masculinity, visual and otherwise, by not only dressing as a woman but by experiencing arousal while dressed in female garb. The implication is that Dick willingly forfeited his masculinity for sexual conquest.

The homosexual reading of *Spy on Mother Midnight* must also be considered. Recent scholarship by Julie Peakman and Laura E. Thomason argues that *Spy on Mother Midnight* is a homoerotic rather than heterosexual pornographic work. Both scholars argue that Dick's cross dressing is indicative of homosexuality and that the lying-in scene is reminiscent of molly subculture. Molly was the term given to homosexual men in the eighteenth century. It is known that mollies had mock lying-in ceremonies in which the participants dressed as women and acted out all aspects of an actual lying-in, to the extent

[159] *A Spy on Mother Midnight* 8-9.
[160] Kuchta*, Three Piece Suit* 7, 11.

that a "baby" or jointed doll was birthed.[161] Thomason further argues that while most erotic texts of the period dwell on the female physicality, *A Spy on Mother Midnight* dwells on the male.[162] There is a great deal of emphasis placed on the debate of ideal penis length between the women in the lying-in chamber and Dick's initial arousal of being dressed in female garb. There is even direct suggestion of homoeroticism given in the last paragraph of the piece when he explains that he "is still in Petticoats, and ha[s] had more than one affair with the Females of this part of the World; nay, and have done some Execution among those of my own Sex"[163] suggesting that Dick at the very least was bisexual. In the homosexual reading of the text, by dressing as a woman, Dick proclaimed himself as belonging to molly or homosexual subculture, a newly recognized and marginal social identity in the eighteenth century. Previously, sex between men was not vilified, but rather considered an alternative sexual act when a woman was not available. Although still condemned by law and the church, there was a period of gender ambiguity in the male life - cycle in which he was not fully of the male gender allowing sex with other men to be permissible. This was a brief period in his late teens.[164] However, the fact that Dick was aroused by dressing in female garb suggests that he, as an adult male revelled in assuming the female role, desiring other men as if he were a woman. Dick even claims that his female burlesques fooled other men, with them believing he was a woman and had affairs with them. Again, Dick's lust was in control of his behaviour, prompting him to commit deviant acts and marginalize himself. Indeed

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[161] Laura E. Thomason, "The Covert Homoeroticism of *A Spy on Mother Midnight*," *The Eighteenth Century*, 50.4 (Winter 2009): 274-275 and Peakman, *Mighty Lewd Books*, 171.
[162] Thomason, "The Covert Homoeroticism" 276.
[163] *A Spy on Mother Midnight* 35.
[164] Trumbach, *Sex and Gender Revolution* 5, 6, 9*;* Bray*, Homosexuality 47, 75-78;* Davenport Hines*, Sex, Death and Punishment 56.*

if the homosexual reading of this text is the correct one, the critique of elite male sexuality is even more piercing.

Pornographic representations of the British upper classes portray this group as driven by lewd and lascivious lust. Their libidos were the guiding forces of their lives. The women commit adultery without care for husband or family or offer their bodies to men without shame counter to expectations for female behaviour. Molly and Jemima actively pursue men for gratification and will not take no for an answer. The Countess Juliana and Charlotta carry on extra-marital affairs, even forming a club for sexual liaisons. With the exception of Molly's husband, the Duke and Mr. Norbert, the men are equally, if not more so, driven by their sexual desires. The men are not only promiscuous but commit incest, rape, bigamy, polygamy and partake in behaviours that are considered unnatural or common amongst the lower orders of society. Moderno maintains sexual relationships with multiple women, Bellatus and Adrastus place sexual conquest above legal and moral guidelines, while Dick and Clodius transgress sexual acceptable behaviour by cross-dressing, having sexual intercourse with non-humans and in Clodius' case develops bisexual transvestite tendencies. The texts subliminally suggest elites were no better than the lowest classes; the women are compared to prostitutes and the men to sailors. The men are further demeaned by the ascription of homosexual tendencies, suggesting they belong to the most marginal of marginal identities in this period. While it is not surprising that pornographic texts explore sexual taboos and portray characters as hyper-libidinous, the extent of these portrayals suggests there is a deeper reading, especially since the portrayals of the hyper-sexual and perverted elite were also present in medical texts of the period. Nymphomania and satyriasis were

diagnosed as primarily affecting the men and women of the upper echelons of British society.

Nymphomania and Satyriasis
Diseases of the Elite in Eighteenth-Century Britain
Chapter 2

The previous chapter offers an intriguing construction of British elites in the eighteenth century. The portrayals in pornography could be dismissed as arbitrary, constructed by the author to arouse readers, except that medical texts offered a strikingly similar construction of the elites as hypersexual. An analysis of contemporary medical literature reveals that elite men and women were especially prone to the eighteenth-century medical conditions known as satyriasis and nymphomania. These were diseases characterized by uncontrollable sexual desire and libido. Members of the elite were believed vulnerable to satyriasis and nymphomania because of their luxurious and inactive lifestyles. Given that contemporary moralists elsewhere expressed concerns about the sexual habits of the poor, it is noteworthy that the poor were not generally considered prone to these diseases. Medical texts further suggested that these diseases were rooted in the physical body. The notion of classed disease is not novel for this period; other historians have noted how doctors constructed diseases like melancholy, gout and jail fever as rooted in class, the former two affecting elites and the latter affecting the poor. Nymphomania and satyriasis, like melancholy and gout, became medical markers of class, inscribing the same attitudes explored in the previous chapter on the patrician body. Both diseases were mentioned frequently in medical texts for the professional physician and popular self-help manuals throughout the century, suggesting that the diseases were familiar to much of the population.[165] It may be particularly

[165] A full text search conducted on June 12, 2014 of Eighteenth-Century Collections Online reveals that nymphomania (often discussed as "furor uterinus") was mentioned in over one hundred medical texts over the century, while satyriasis over seventy. The types of books ranged from the self-help guide for the

important to note that when they conveyed these ideas doctors did so in texts that commanded more respect and authority than did titillating pornographic works. Elite sexuality in medical texts became a matter of scientific fact.

Before a historical discussion of nymphomania and satyriasis can commence, it is important to be aware that debate about the diseases is still underway. In modern medicine nymphomania and satyriasis are referred to as forms of sex addiction or sexual compulsive disorder. Medical professionals continue to argue about what exactly defines a sexual addict or a sexually compulsive individual. Studies vary in their definitions of sex addiction. Some identify an addict as one who has seven Total Sexual Outlets [TSO] per week, with TSO consisting of sexual thoughts, masturbation or sex with a partner, others someone who has twenty-one or more orgasms per week, and still others as someone whose sexual behaviour has negative effects on their lives regardless of frequency. The problem with defining sexual addiction lies in the fact that defining sexual normativity is notoriously difficult, if not impossible.[166] It would seem that the identity of a sex addict may lie in eye of the beholder; he or she could potentially deem

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layperson such as *The Ladies Friend: or, Compleat Physical Library* by Stephen Freeman, M.D (1785), to that for the practicing physician such as *A Treatise on Venereal Diseases* (1737) and *Diseases incident to Women* (1743) by Dr. Jean Astruc.

[166] For a full discussion of Sexual Addiction, Hypersexuality and Sexual Compulsive Disorder see, Emily Michelle Cripps, *Towards an Empirical understanding of Hypersexuality ,* PhD thesis University of Waterloo, 2004; Jim Orford, *"*Hypersexuality: Implications for a Theory of Dependence," *British Journal of Addictio*n, 73 (1978): 299-310; Steven N. Gold and Christopher L. Heffner, "Sexual Addictions: Many Conceptions, Minimal Data," *Clinical Psychology Review*, 18.3 (1998): 367-381; Janice McElhiney, Ed. M, Sarah Kelly, BA, Raymond Rosen, PhD, and Gloria Bachmann, MD, "Satyriasis: The Antiquity Term for Vulvodynia?," *Journal of Sexual Medicine*, 3.1 (2005): 161-165; John Bancroft and Zoran Vukadinovic,"Sexual Addiction, Sexual Compulsivity, Sexual Impulsivity, or What? Toward a Theoretical Model," The *Journal of Sex Research,* 41.3 (August 2004): 225-234; Stephen B. Levine, "What is sexual addiction?," *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy*, 36 (2010): 261-275; Nicole J. Rinehart and Marita P. McCabe,"Hypersexuality: psychopathology or normal variant of sexuality?," *Sexual and Marital Therapy* 12.1 (1997: 45 – 61.

anyone who has or desires more sexual contact than they as an addict. Because of the lack of a baseline of human sexuality, diseases of hyper sexuality are easily constructed.

While neither nymphomania nor satyriasis were eighteenth-century inventions, the diseases, especially nymphomania, received more acclaim than previously. This was a period of medical and scientific discovery; understandings of the human body and sexuality changed. Given the bevy of scientific discoveries in the early modern period it is no wonder that the populace sought new ways to disseminate medical knowledge. Pornographic and medical texts offered different ways for the reading public to sort out sexual knowledge. Different as they were, these genres cross-fertilized one another, and at times the boundaries between them blurred. Numerous historians have noted that cheap, easily available medical texts were not only a source of sexual advice but could be masturbation aids as well.[167] *Aristotle's Masterpiece* is the most common text studied for the correlation between the pornographic and medical genres. *Aristotle's Masterpiece* was first published in 1684 and re-published well into the nineteenth century. The piece was published as a sexual advice manual detailing male and female genitalia, advising how to successfully execute sexual intercourse for procreative purposes.[168] Evidence suggests the text was also used as a masturbation aid. The preface of the text warns the consumer of the sexual content. Indeed, John Cannon admits using *Aristotle's Masterpiece* as well as midwifery manuals, another sort of text that straddled genres, for

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[167] Anna Clark, *Desire: A History of European Sexuality,*(NY: Routledge, 2008) 162-163; Peakman, *Mighty Lewd Books*, 37; Harvey *Reading Sex*, 18; Hitchcock, *English Sexualities*, 14; Roger Thompson, *Unfit for Modest Ears*, 161; Wagner, *Eros Revived* 8-11.

[168] Porter and Hall, *The Facts of Life* 36-45; Mary Fissell, "Making a Masterpiece: The Aristotle texts in Vernacular Medical Culture," *Right Living: An Anglo-American Traditions of Self Help Medicine and Hygiene,* Charles Rosenberg, ed. (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2003) 66-67.

the purpose of sexual arousal.[169] Cannon was a man of the middling sort who wrote memoirs that included the intimate details of his life, relaying sexual interludes with various women and episodes of masturbation.[170]

Medical and pornographic texts, therefore, served similar purposes in early modern society, to advise the populace about sexuality.[171] Print culture exploded in this period; people increasingly sought advice and clarification from books. When it came to sex, there were many that were convenient and readily available to inform them. If pornography supplied the social stereotypes and mechanics of sexuality, then medical texts supplied the technical aspects and rationale. Medical texts were popular, offering treatments for ailments and advising how to keep a body healthy and strong. These texts were not only significantly less expensive but offered practical alternatives to seeking the aid of a medical professional for sexual advice. Medical texts carried authority as most were written by, or at least purported to be written by, educated physicians.[172]

During the early modern period classical concepts of the human body were challenged and replaced.[173] Until the sixteenth century, the one-sex model of sexual difference prevailed. This understanding was based on the ancient works of Galen,

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[169] Laqueur, *Solitary Sex* 335; Hitchcock, *English Sexualities*, 29; Porter and Hall, *The Facts of Life*, 7.
[170] Hitchcock, *English Sexualities* 28-29.
[171] Porter and Hall, *Facts of Life* 36, 107; Clark, *Desire*, 162-163; Peakman, *Mighty Lewd Books*, 37; Harvey *Reading Sex*, 18; Hitchcock, *English Sexualities*, 14; Roger Thompson, *Unfit for Modest Ears*, 161.
[172] Dorothy Porter and Roy Porter, *Patients Progress: Doctor's and Doctoring in Eighteenth - Century England* (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1989) 23.
[173] Recent scholarship suggests that the one-sex model of understanding sexual difference was replaced with the two-sex model as early as 1600. Physicians recognized the uniquely different physical make up of men and women and took the sex of the patient into consideration for diagnosis and treatment. See Wendy D. Churchill, "The Medical Practice of the Sexed Body: Women, Men and Disease in Britain, circa 1600-1740," *Social History of Medicine*, 18.1 (2005): 17 and Michael Strolberg, "A Woman Down to her Bones: The Anatomy of Sexual Difference in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Century," *Isis*, 94.2 (June 2003): 274-276.

Aristotle and Hippocrates which offered a humoural system of the body. In this system men and women possessed the same basic physiology. Each human body, regardless of sex, was made up of four humours; black bile, yellow bile, blood and phlegm. These four humours corresponded with the four elements of fire, water, earth and air and with the qualities of hot, cold, wet and dry.[174] Body heat was a key element to the humoural system. It was heat, or the lack of it, that determined sexual difference. Men were hot and dry; women cold and wet. Body heat determined whether sexual organs were located internally or externally. Because men possessed higher body temperatures their organs were forced to the outside of the body; colder women's remained internal. Therefore, men and women possessed corresponding organs, but the placement was simply inverted. For example, the male penis corresponded with the woman's vagina and the male testicles with the female ovaries.[175]

A series of scientific discoveries led to the replacement of the one-sex model of understanding with a two-sex model. No single medical discovery ushered in the new two-sex model of sexual difference but a culmination of several collectively eroded the concept that men and women had the same bodies.[176] In 1559 Renaldus Columbus discovered the clitoris, and after much experimentation claimed that it was the "seat of woman's delight" responding to stimulation much like a penis; it got hard when touched. The discovery was important as it complicated the one-sex model because there was not a clear corresponding male organ for the female clitoris.[177] Additional scientific

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[174] Fletcher, *Sex, Gender and Subordination* 33; Wiesner, *Women and Gender* 35; Laqueur, *Making Sex* 8, 35; Hitchcock, *English Sexualities* 42-43.
[175] Laqueur, *Making Sex* 26-33.
[176] Laqueur, *Making Sex* 153; Wiesner, *Women and Gender* 34.
[177] Laqueur, *Making Sex* 64-65.

discoveries reinforced the differences between the bodies of women and men. In 1651 William Harvey theorized that all life came from an egg that was fertilized by the male sperm.[178] A couple of decades later Anton von Leeuwenhoek discovered "animalcules" in male sperm and deemed these to be miniature individuals and preformed structures. It was also discovered that these "animalcules" did not exist in female vaginal secretions, which the logic of corresponding anatomies seemed to demand.[179] Further eroding classical understandings, Regnier de Graaf discovered the ovarian follicle in 1672, which again seemed to suggest anatomical divergences.[180] The cumulative knowledge gained through medical discovery affirmed the bodies of men and women differed, thus eroding the credibility of the one-sex model replacing it with the two-sex model in which each sex had its own distinct body.

This new understanding of anatomy ushered in new understandings of sexuality. The discovery of the human egg resulted in the demotion of the importance of female orgasm. In the one-sex model female orgasm was required for conception to occur. Conception took place when the seeds of both partners mingled to create human life.[181] If women simply produced an egg, orgasm was no longer pertinent to reproduction. Women became the passive receptacles for reproduction, in which the male sperm was the active agent fertilizing the female egg.[182] Since scientific research now suggested that the female orgasm was irrelevant for conception and demoted women to the passive

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[178] Laqueur, *Making Sex* 171; Wiesner, *Women and Gender* 35.
[179] Wiesner, *Women and Gender* 34; Laqueur, *Making Sex* 171.
[180] Laqueur, *Making Sex* 158.
[181] Wiesner, *Women and Gender* 35; Laqueur, *Making Sex* 38-52.
[182] Laqueur, *Making Sex* 172-188; Hitchcock, *English Sexualities* 48-49.

sexual role, women were reconstructed as asexual and lacking sex drive.[183] Women, and their bodies, were understood as increasingly maternal. The female body was designed for motherhood with many the focal of good feminine health resting on the uterus and menstrual cycle.[184] Whereas previously a healthy female libido and its attendant sexual gratification had been literally vital to human existence, they were now called into serious question by early Enlightenment science.

With increased professionalization of medicine in the early modern period, the physician was quickly becoming the expert on health, wellness and sexuality.[185] Female sexuality was of especial interest among medical professionals. Until the eighteenth century feminine health had been the providence of women and midwives, but women's health increasingly became the focus of the male medical professional, with displays of female sexuality increasingly medicalized and in some cases pathologized. [186] Historically speaking, disease, like gender itself, is a social construction, one that can be reconstructed to suit changing ideologies.[187]

Previously, in the seventeenth century, displays of sexuality were more accepted as a phase of life for women. "Green-sickness" was a common illness or complaint

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[183] Laqueur, *Making Sex* 172-188.
[184] Strolberg, "The Medical Practice" 297- 299; Churchill, "A Woman down to her bones" 10-12; Fletcher, *Sex, Gender and Subordination* 48; Londa, Schiebinger, "Skeletons in the closet: The first illustrations of the female skeleton in eighteenth-century anatomy," *Representations* (1986): 53.
[185] Porter and Hall, *The Facts of Life* 33-35, Porter and Porter, *Patients Progress* 6, 10-11,23.
[186] Lisa Foreman Cody, "The politics of reproduction: From midwives' alternative public sphere to the public spectacle of man-midwifery," *Eighteenth-century studies, 32.4* (1999): 478-9, 483-489; Versluysen, "Midwives, Medical Men" 19-33; Lisa Foreman Cody, *Birthing the nation: sex, science, and the conception of eighteenth-century Britons* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2005) 8-17; Adrian Wilson, "The Politics of Medical Improvement in Early Hanoverian London," *The Medical Enlightenment of the Eighteenth Century*, eds. Andrew Cunningham and Roger French (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 34.
[187] Porter, *Mind Forg'd Manacles* 33; Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980* (NY: Penguin Books, 1985) 3.

experienced by young women prior to marriage. In order to alleviate the symptoms and pent up sexual desire it was recommended that these young women marry as soon as possible. [188] "Green-sickness" simply referred to a young woman's blossoming sexuality and readiness to marry.[189] However, in the early eighteenth century, the diagnosis of "Green-sickness" shifted, and became synonymous with chlorosis, a potentially fatal consumptive disease. "Green-sickness" or chlorosis was characterized by a pale complexion with a greenish hue, hence the name "green-sickness", which resulted from "viscous blood, with an Obstruction of the menses….spontaneous lassitudes, a difficulty Breathing, a Palpitation at the Heart, a feverish Pulse, Pain of the Head, a drowsiness and a longing after most unwholesome things, as Chalk, Coals, Oatmeal, Flower, Trash of all Sorts…with a Nauseousness" and "want of Appetite."[190] Over the century the sexual aspects of the disease were demoted, with the physical symptoms and resulting depression becoming central. Rather than sexual desire, physicians emphasised the "profound melancholy" and "state of languor" which accompanied the disease.[191]

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[188] Fletcher 48 and Weisner-Hanks 37.

[189] Helen King, *The Disease of Virgins; Green Sickness, Chlorosis and the Problems of Puberty* (London: Routledge, 2004) 40.

[190]Thomas Sydenham, *The Whole Works of that Excellent Practical Physician Dr. Thomas Sydenham, Wherein not only history and cures of acute diseases are treated* (London: R. Wellington, 1701) 303; George Bate, *Pharmacopoia Bateana: or Bate's Dispensary* (London: S. Smith and J. Walford, 1706) 64: John Quincy, *Pharmacopoia Officinalis and Extemorenea, or a Compleat English Dispensary* (London: A. Bell, 1718) 237; G. Bickerton, *Accurate Disquisitions in Physick* (London: J. Wotton, 1719) 149; Richard Morton, *Phthisiologia; or a Treatises on Consumptions* (London: W. and J. Innys, 1720) 260 and Daniel Turner, *De Morbis Cutaneis. A Treatise on Diseases Incident to the Skin* (London: W. Freeman, 1723) 134-5.

[191] Jean Astruc, *Diseases incident to Women* (London, T. Cooper, 1743) 171, 172; Charles Perry, *A Treatise of Diseases in General, Vol. 1* (London: T. Woodward, 1741) 4. Jean Astruc was French, his works were widely available in England in English. As physician to the French King he was one of Europe's most renowned doctors, and his work was highly respected and influential in Britain. See Jane Doe, "Jean Astruc (1684-1766): A Biological Study," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 40.2 (1960): 184-197.

The sexual component of "Green-sickness" was reconfigured into a separate disease, *furor uterinus* or nymphomania. Nymphomania occurred when

> the Venereal Appetite be excessive, and exalted to a Pitch of Delerium…of Rage of the Womb…and is a Distemper, wherein the Patient is not to be satisfiy'd without venery, and is what happens to Virgins and Married Women and Widows, they discovering their malady by talking obscenely, and being peevish and fretful if thwarted in it, and sometimes they'll ramble through the streets place to place soliciting Venery whomever they can meet with….Sometimes they wantonly uncover themselves before Men and let their Discourses favour of Smut…[192]

If this condition was not cured "it terminate[d] in madness, for the Brain and the Animal Spirits [we]re always affected." [193] This disease no longer indicated a young woman's readiness to marry but rather, an uncontrolled lust stemming from a physical malady.

The womb was at the root of the condition. Nymphomania was triggered by "a turgency or inflammation of the uterine vessels" which "arose from a suppression of the menses."[194] Without regular evacuation of the menstrual blood it was "impossible that women should be well…because the natural texture of the fluids being changed, the order of the whole human machine is thereby broke."[195] This understanding of the female menstrual cycle was a hang-over from humoural medicine. In the humoural system the body and its fluids comprised a corporeal economy in which one fluid could change into another. All fluids must balance for good health, creating neither a deficit nor a

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[192] John Marten, *A Treatise on the Venereal Disease* (London: N. Creach, 1711) 230-231.
[193] Marten, *A Treatise on the Venereal Disease,* 231.
[194] Peter Shaw, *A New Practice of Physick* (London: J. Osborn, 1730) 429.
[195] Stephen Freeman, *The Ladies Friend; or, Compleat Physical Library* (London: n.p., 1785) 131.

surplus.[196] Women's health was dependant on "the regular flowing of terms." [197] There were times in a woman's lifecycle when a lack of menses was unproblematic,

> this…Evacuation is not only a Discharge, or an Outlet, for Superfluity of Blood, but is also, for the Support of the Feotus, before Birth, and most Women who suckle, have during that Time no such menstrual Discharge…that this same Over-plus, is converted into Milk, for the Nourishment of the Infant[198]

In short, women produced extra blood either to feed a foetus in-vitro or produce breast milk to feed the baby once it was born. When a woman was not pregnant this blood had to evacuate the body through monthly menses or some other avenue to maintain health. Men's greater heat caused them to consume blood, but women's cold physiology left them with excess blood that needed purging when they were not pregnant or breastfeeding. If the blood left the body through the "gums, teeth, eyes, [or] ears" it was sufficient.[199] Ill health arose from the lack of evacuation and the blood stagnating in the uterus. The lack of blood flow or "a long suppression of the menses" laid the "foundations for many violent diseases" including madness or sexual delirium.[200] Physicians thus treated nymphomania by attempting to alleviate menstrual obstruction. Dr. Jean Astruc recommended the patient be given "something…of a spirituous nature," "some strong odour…put under her nose," "frictions of the thighs, with hot linnen cloths" or to "dip both feet in warm water" to bring on the menses. If these remedies failed,

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[196] Fletcher, *Sex, Gender and Subordination* 44-47; Wiesner, *Women and Gender* 36-39; Laqueur, *Making Sex* 35-52; Hitchcock, *English Sexualities* 44-45.
[197] Freeman, *The Ladies Friend*, 131.
[198] Simon Mason, *Practical Observations in Physick* (Birmingham: T. Warren, 1757) 146-147.
[199] John Allen, *Dr. Allen's Synopsis Medicinae or, a brief and general collection of the whole practice of physic* (London: J. Pemberton, 1730) 161.
[200] John Ball, *The Modern Practice in Physick, volume 2* (London: A. Millar, 1762) 394.

"there should be no hesitation to bleed the patient copiously in the foot, without delay" and be "repeated four hours after."[201] Dr. Charles Perry recommended a variety of herbal purges to bring on a menstrual period with "suitable exercise" providing the "best Barrier to a relapse." [202]

All women had wombs. However, medical writers of the period argued that particular women were especially prone to menstrual obstructions, and thus nymphomania - those of the upper class. Lifestyle affected when a woman began to menstruate. "In girls… who live a sedentary and inactive life" it began around the age of fourteen, but "happen[ed] later in girls who are inured to hard labour or a slender diet." [203] Dr. William Cullen, the leading British physician of the eighteenth century helped make the link between high living and nymphomania mainstream. Indeed, G.S. Rousseau has suggested that Cullen may have been the first to use the term nymphomania for "furor uterinus."[204] His *First Practice of Physick* was the most important medical teaching text of the second half of the eighteenth century. Generations of students learned that those who ate a "full and nourishing diet," drank "much strong liquor and frequent intoxications" and took part in such activities that induced a laxity such as "living in warm chambers" and drinking much "tea and coffee" were prone to menorrhagia or very heavy menstrual bleeding.[205] Conversely, "women in the country who [ate] sparingly, have less menses, or only very little." [206] Indications suggest that there were ways that

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[201] Astruc, *Diseases incident to Women* 86-87.
[202] Perry, *A Treatise on Disease in General* 12-13.
[203] Astruc, *Diseases incident to Women* 30.
[204] G.S. Rousseau, "Nymphomania: Bienville and the rise of Erotic Sensibility," *Sexuality in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, ed. Paul-Gabriel Bouce (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992) 96.
[205] William Cullen, *First Lines of the Practice of Physic*, vol.3 (Edinburgh: William Creach, 1783) 376-377.
[206] Astruc, *Diseases incident to Women* 44.

class influenced understandings of the female body and provided physical foundation for the diagnosis of nymphomania.

Nymphomania, unlike "green-sickness", was not a disease that only affected young women ripe for marriage but potentially all women of a certain lifestyle. Consider Astruc's contention that the disease could occur in

> virgins, ripe for the embraces of men, if they be excessively enamoured of any lover they cannot have [but also] married women, who are coupled with impotent, or old men; and that young widows, who are deprived of able and vigorous husbands, to whom they have been accustomed; have intense strong, frequent and continual lustful thoughts which are constantly augmented by reading romances…exciting themselves, by wanton touches with their fingers, or suffering it to be done by others…eating dishes that are salty, spicy and acrid' using, rather abusing, rich wines, spirituous liquors, coffee, and chocolate; all which, increasing the acrimony of the blood, inflame the venereal desires [207]

Astruc's discussion of diet at the close is particularly redolent of the class of women he sought to describe. Overindulgence, a criticism which we saw in the last chapter was often launched at the aristocracy, here begins to emerge in a medicalized form. Nymphomania affected women who led a "too indulgent life," [208] "live[d] well, and plentifully" and "lead indolent and sedentary lives." [209] Rich and lazy, such women consumed too much and worked too little. Nymphomania became a disease that one acquired through habit and lifestyle, that of "high feeding" and "want of exercise." [210]

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[207] Astruc, *Diseases incident to Women* 342.
[208] Shaw, *A New Practice of Pysick* 429.
[209] Astruc, *Diseases Incident to Women*, 349.
[210] Freeman, *The Ladies Friend* (1785) 192.

Nymphomania was thus a disease of women with a specific kind of lifestyle, most notably the kind led by elite women.

The social construction of nymphomania did not stop there. By the waning years of the eighteenth century the disease was no longer a physical malady easily cured with purges and diet but a serious mental disorder requiring constant vigilance and possible institutionalization. Numerous forms of madness were linked to femininity. Because of their reproductive abilities, weaker bodies and minds, women were often said to be vulnerable to mental disturbances.[211] In a time that increasingly argued that passive female sexuality was the norm, aggressive female sexuality was now reconstructed, not just as a physical disorder, but as a mental disorder and form of madness.

In 1771 Dr. M.D.T. Bienville published his dissertation *La Nymphomanie* in Amsterdam. The work was translated then published in England in 1775 under the title *Nymphomania, or, a Dissertation concerning the Furor Uterinus*. Bienville's origins and credentials are obscure. Little is known other than that he lived in Holland and published a handful of medical treaties. Evidence of a medical degree is lacking and there is little mention of him in other medical works.[212] Bienville categorized the disease as a mental disorder and type of insanity arguing that the condition begins with "a melancholy delirium…then, turns to a maniacal delirium" and finally "degenerates into a confirmed madness." [213] In keeping with earlier medical opinions, Bienville insisted the disease

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[211] Porter, *Mind Forg'd Manacles* 84-86,105; Ludmilla Jordanova, *Sexual Visions: Images in Science and Medicine between the Eighteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Wisconsin: Wisconsin University Press, 1989) 28, 58; Showalter, *The Female Malady* 8, 24, 55.

[212] Rousseau, "Nymphomania" 96- 97.

[213] M.D.T. de Bienville, M.D., *Nymphomania, or, a Dissertation of Furor Uterinus*, trans. Edward Sloane Wilmot, M.D. (London: J: Bew, 1775) 50-51.

primarily afflicted young women "at a marriageable age, when their hearts, premature in love, have warmly pleaded in favor of some youth, for who they feel a desperate passion" and married women "when they [we]re united either to an husband of so feeble a temperament, as to exact continence in his pleasures, or to a cold mate, but little sensible to the delights of enjoyment." [214] Young widows were also vulnerable "especially if death hath deprived them of a strong and vigorous man." [215] Bienville agreed with Astruc and others who emphasized the over indulgent living of elite women. Following on Cullen's teachings on the effects of diet and lifestyle on female physiology, Bienville presented those susceptible to the disease as women who "proceed to luxurious tables, at which the sharp, stimulating, and poisoned meats" are available, drink "spirituous liquors…as if they were water," the excessive "use of chocolate" and "high living." [216] Bienville's diagnosis of the disease differed little from other medical practitioners except arguing that the disorder "lurks, almost without exception, under the imposing outside of an apparent calm, and frequently hath acquired a dangerous nature, when not only its progress, but its beginnings elude…perception." [217] The danger of the disease was the loss of control; those affected could not control their actions. Sufferers

> yield themselves a prey to this disorder, are uninterruptedly busied with equal perseverance and eagerness in search of such objects as may kindle their passions at the infernal firebrand of lubricity: and if they engage with particular ardor in the pursuit, it is because they are impelled to it, by the natural vehemence of their constitution[218]

[214] Bienville, *Nymphomania* 29.
[215] Bienville, *Nymphomania* 29-30.
[216] Bienville, *Nymphomania* 29, 32, 56, and 57.
[217] Bienville, *Nymphomania* 28.
[218] Bieinville, *Nymphomania* 30.

By using term "natural" and rooting the disease in such women's "constitutions" Bienville spoke volumes, for he implied that the condition was not simply a lifestyle, but a set of qualities deeply inscribed in their very bodies. It was a "natural" feature of their biology.

Bienville also emphasised that partaking in luxurious food and drink were not the only means of acquiring nymphomania; one's pastimes brought vulnerability. Reading "luxurious novels" triggered the natural vehemence which prepared "the heart for the impression of every tender sentiment," as did "learning the most amorous songs,"[219] having "particular conversations with their companions," and by "dishonouring themselves in secret by habitual pollutions…until they have openly passed the bounds of modesty" when "they are no longer fearful of procuring this dreadful, and detestable pleasure from the assisting hand of a stranger."[220] These activities disposed the woman to "listen to the flattering, and seducing compliments of the men who surround her." [221] Carol Groneman concurs that Bienville's emphasis on indulgence, in its many forms, signalled that he was "particularly concerned about warning middle-class women not to yield to the excesses of the upper classes."[222]

Bienville further argued that unrequited love could become a mental fixation for the young women triggering nymphomania. The lovelorn would

> dwell only on the fatal object, who is the cause of their disorder; they see but him alone; all the powers of their mind are, as it were, immoveable; they neither

[219] Bienville, *Nymphomania* 30-31.
[220] Bienville, *Nymphomania* 31.
[221] Bienville, *Nymphomania* 31.
[222] Carol Groneman, "Nymphomania: The Historical Construction of Female Sexuality," *Deviant Bodies: Critical Perspectives on the Differences in Science and Popular Culture,* Jennifer Terry and Jacqueline Urla, eds. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995) 227.

> perceive, nor understand any thing which passes near them….they absolutely neglect every other, and even that on which depends the proper management of their family[223]

She would think only of this one man and lose interest for everything else in her life, becoming "sad, and melancholy." [224] Worst of all these women pursued men, surrendering themselves "up in the most unresisting manner to those desires" and frequently "outstrip the inclinations of their supposed lover, by the immodesty which disgraces their sex." [225] Here Bienville figures the nymphomaniac as too masculine. Her pathology is that her sex drive is even greater than the man she pursues. The last stage of the disease was the worst, in which "every symptom becomes daily more alarming" and

> in a short time renders these wretched sufferers furious, and ungovernable…breaking down, without the least remorse, the barriers of modesty, they betray each shocking secret of their lascivious minds by proposals...and soon the excess of their lust having exhausted all their power of contending against it, they throw off the restraining, honorable yoke of delicacy, and, without blush, openly solicit in the most criminal, and abandoned language, the first comers to gratify their insatiable desires…by employing all arts of seduction[226]

The disease continued to progress until it "rage[d] in all the excesses of a confirmed madness." [227]

While Bienville's treatise provided little new medical information about nymphomania, it presented an all-encompassing picture of the disease for diagnosis; in

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[223] Bienville, *Nymphomania* 34.
[224] Bienville, *Nymphomania* 34 and 35.
[225] Bienville, *Nymphomania* 35.
[226] Bienville, *Nymphomania* 36.
[227] Bienville, *Nymphomania* 37.

theory, any woman of the upper class could, without warning, develop nymphomania. It became the authoritative text on the disease, and, importantly, it galvanized the sense that elite bodies were the most prone. It thus lent considerable scientific credibility to the notion that aristocratic women were lascivious. Readers were thus encouraged to imagine that elite women were potentially forever on the brink of losing control. Women capable of indulging in luxury thus became suspect. Diligence was of the utmost importance and the prognosis bleak. Families of women suffering from nymphomania were counselled to seek professional assistance without delay. Curing the disease could be a long and involved process beginning with purges, daily medications and monitoring of diet. The patient "must not be permitted to eat any meat, except at dinner…which must be white… and free from seasoning." [228] Association with friends should be strictly curtailed allowing contact only with "bosom friends" who would not digress to improper conversation. Maid servants attending the patient – who by virtue of their presence poing to Bienville's assumption of an elite patient - must be "narrowly watched" in the event they were of "easy virtue" and would encourage or assist the patient in improper behaviours such as masturbation.[229] Nor should the patient be left alone for a "single moment, either by day, or night; and to appoint, for her bedfellow, some young woman whose chastity and discretion may stand the test of any trial." [230] If these efforts failed to provide a cure, further bleeding and purging were recommended followed by "a moderately warm bath" every morning and evening, where she was "to remain for two hours." Bed rest was recommended between baths and food. Diet was to be the opposite

[228] Bienville, *Nymphomania* 110.
[229] Bienville, *Nymphomania* 112.
[230] Bienville, *Nymphomania* 112.

of the luxurious foods that might bring on the disease, for example, "broth made of lean beef, veal and crude barley." If the patient complained of hunger, Bienville only conceded she be allowed "an ounce of biscuit, or of light well baked bread soaked in milk." [231] If these cures and regimes should fail, he recommended the woman be committed to a mad-house.[232] Bienville's treaty marked another important shift in the construction of nymphomania; not only did women have it lurking within their systems, just waiting for the right moment to emerge, but its cure no longer simply consisted of alleviating a menstrual obstruction. Nymphomania became a much more serious condition, a mental disorder that required stringent supervision, strict monitoring of food and associates and even possible institutionalization. And while Bienville, like Astruc, was not British his was the only book-length study of the disease published in Britain in the eighteenth century, suggesting that it would have been seen as authoritative. Certainly his presentation of lifestyle as a cause of pathology gave mainstream English doctors little with which to disagree.

The reconstruction of nymphomania as a type of insanity mirrors the overall trend to diagnose many forms of insanity as diseases prevalent among the rich. Dr. George Cheyne, one of the bestselling English physicians, well known for his regimens which emphasized a balanced lifestyle as a form of preventing all manner of disease, argued in *The English Malady* that "nervous disorders" were caused "By intemperance, [and] want of due Exercise" suggesting that lifestyle was a key factor for the diagnosis of mental

[231] Bienville, *Nymphomania* 125-126.
[232] Bienville, *Nymphomania* 129.

illness.[233] Dr. Thomas Arnold in his treatise on the causes and prevention of insanity argued that "the most powerful causes… of Insanity are – religion, - love, - commerce, and the various passions which attend the desire, pursuit, and acquisition of riches, - every species of luxury." [234] Of these "various passions…love...has made more Madmen in every age and nation than any other." [235] Arnold further insisted that "luxury is a fruitful…parent of Insanity" which was why it was not "universally diffused among all ranks of people." He argued that the poor do not have the mental capacity to suffer from mental disorders. The poorer sorts tended not to be affected because they were "thankful if they earn their daily homely morsel…and know no other luxury than good humour." [236] They are further resistant to mental instability because they

> seldom …fix their attention too long, or their affections too violently, and seriously, upon any particular object. In short they are too lax in their attachments… ever to be much troubled with religious, amorous, or commercial Melancholy[237]

The evidence indicates the upper classes were considered weaker and more prone to insanity, mental disorders and disease in general.

These tendencies are not restricted to treaties on nymphomania. Other diseases were also understood as rooted in class. For example, during the seventeenth century Richard Napier concluded that upper class women were especially susceptible to melancholy.[238] Napier kept detailed records of his two thousand patients which included

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[233] George Cheyne, *The English Malady: or, a treatise of nervous disease of all kinds* (London: S. Powell, 1733) 17.
[234] Thomas Arnold, *Observations on the nature, kinds, causes, and prevention of insanity, lunacy, or madness*, Volume 1 (Leicester: G. Ireland, 1782-6) 19.
[235] Arnold, *Observations* 19.
[236] Arnold, *Observations* 24-25.
[237] Arnold, *Observations* 24-25.
[238] MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam* 13-20.

indicators of social status.[239] These can be detected from how he referred to patients - the aristocrats were deemed Lord or Lady, middle sorts were Master or Mistress and lower class individuals were Goodman or Goody.[240] Two of the more common mental ailments Napier treated were melancholy and mopishness. Melancholy was described as being generally sad and uninterested in favourite activities, [241] while mopishness signified an overall gloom and being withdrawn.[242] While there were similarities in how Napier presented the causes of the two ailments, Michael MacDonald has demonstrated how Napier diagnoses people along fairly clear class lines. Melancholy attacked elites and mopishness the lower sorts.[243]

Moving to the eighteenth century, and similar to melancholy, gout was also framed as a disease of the well-heeled. Moreover, like nymphomania, gout was re-constructed over the eighteenth century. Roy Porter and G.S. Rousseau – the latter of whom, as mentioned, also wrote one of the most important early studies of Bienville's *Nymphomania* [244] - trace the changing social construction of the disease in *Gout: The Patrician Malady*. Gout occurs when there is a high concentration of uric acid in the blood stream, causing deposits of sodium urate to build up on the joints, especially of the big toe. The condition causes painful swelling of the joint and a low fever. Attacks are intermittent lasting for a few days or weeks, depending on the severity. The condition

[239] MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam* 13, 28.
[240] MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam* 50.
[241] MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam* 153-160.
[242] MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam* 161.
[243] MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam* 151, 162.
[244] Rousseau, *Nymphomania* 95-119.

usually affects men at middle age but rarely women. The disease is caused by diet and linked with hypertension and obesity. [245]

Between the seventeenth and eighteenth century gout was reimagined. One constant feature, however, was that elite men were always said to be the most common sufferers. During the seventeenth century and early eighteenth centuries gout was considered a hereditary disorder and, therefore, a mark of status and rank. Most upper class men were expected to suffer from the condition at some point in their lives and accepted as much. In the early eighteenth century, links were made between the disease, diet and lifestyle but in a somewhat positive manner. Doctor's argued that men of the upper class had more delicate constitutions which made them more vulnerable to dietary influences than the lower sorts.[246] By the late eighteenth century, however, presentations of the diseases among the upper crust changed. The disease was no longer considered a mark of rank and hereditary but a physical manifestation of a decadent and debauched lifestyle. Popular lore now viewed the disease as a punishment rather than a privilege of rank, as it now signified lack of control, morality and temperance.[247]

Gout for elite men thus paralleled nymphomania for rich women. Those belonging to the higher echelons of society were understood to have different body types leaving them prone to physical maladies and mental disorders. The changing medical diagnoses for gout and nymphomania dove-tails with the overall social trend to criticize the upper classes for their vice-infested lifestyles. As will be discussed in the next

[245] Roy Porter and G. S. Rousseau, *Gout: The Patrician Malady* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998) 3-5 and 72.
[246] Porter and Rousseau, *Gout* 6, 24-33 and 46.
[247] Porter and Rousseau, *Gout* 52-57, 72-89 and 102-105.

chapter, luxury was a source of debate in the eighteenth century and elites were increasingly criticised for overly indulging in various forms of consumption. Luxury, like sexuality, was medicalized. The lavish protein and fat laden diets of the upper sorts caused a myriad of health problems including gout, kidney and bladder stones.[248] Eighteenth-century doctors warning about gout pointed to many of the same causes as nymphomania – especially high living, rich foods and wine. Due to their wealth the upper sorts were able to indulge in foods that were difficult to digest, resulting in any number of digestive obstructions and blockages. Medical theory held that this undigested food in turn fermented and corrupted the blood causing illness. Doctors also argued that excess food consumption caused the nerves to become sluggish or weakened resulting in chronic disease. Various other elements of elite lifestyle were called in to augment the advice about diet, much of which revolved around how elite delicacy could be exacerbated. For example, doctors warned that the upper sort followed fashion, wore thinner and less cold resistant clothing causing them to retreat indoors to and breathe poor air in heated rooms. Most importantly, medical theorists emphasized the sedentary lifestyles of the elites. After stuffing themselves with spiced foods, heavy meats and rich wines, physicians theorized, noblemen sat around rather than exercising their bodies, leading to degraded, sickly constitutions susceptible to disease.[249] In short, diseases like gout and nymphomania were punishments of the wealthy for over-consumption, and doctors used these diseases as vehicles for medicalized expressions of a growing cultural concern. Moreover, as the effects of indulgent living became internalized, they began to

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[248] Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967) 254-257.

[249] Roy Porter, "Consumption: Disease of the Consumer Society,"*Consumption and the World of Goods*, eds. John Brewer and Roy Porter (London: Routledge, 1993) 61-68.

appear as naturally occurring biological features, whether an elite woman's libido or a nobleman's gouty toe.

This does not mean that the lower sorts got off scot-free; they were prone to their own diseases. As Kevin Siena has argued jail-fever was solely the providence of the lower orders. It was believed to occur wherever the poor congregated in large numbers, as in prisons and workhouses, when the mingling of the breath of many produced a toxin which caused the disease. The poor were prone to the disease because of their ill habits and thin bodies. Medical discussions of their "constitutions," not unlike those of gout, presented a picture of a kind of classed physiology, generating a disease that was socially specific. [250] Siena has further shown how theories about "predisposition" of the poor to the skin disease known as "the Itch" advanced a similar picture.[251] There are ways in which more work on how class informed theories of medicine – whether about rich or poor – would make a welcome contribution to the history of medicine. What is important here is that medical presentations of the dangers of luxury allow for a much fuller contextualization of the pornographic depictions of elite men and women that lie at the heart of this thesis.

The behaviour of the women in mid-century pornographic texts bears striking similarities to the case studies supplied in medical texts published in the latter half of the century. Miss Molly of *Drive-On Coachman* was a young woman married to an older

[250] Kevin Siena, "Pliable Bodies: The Moral Biology of Health and Disease," *Cultural History of the Human Body in the Age of Enlightenment*, ed. Carole Reeves (Oxford: Berg, 2010) 41-49.
[251] Kevin Siena, "The Moral Biology of the Itch in Eighteenth-Century Britain," *A Medical History of the Skin: Scratching the Surface,* Jonathon Reinarz and Kevin Siena, eds. (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013) 71-83.

man who could not satisfy her and was fond of reading "plays and romances."[252] Molly was "but half awake at Ten" and drank her morning chocolate in bed, her lust "torment[ed] her both day and night" causing passion to spread through her,[253] with her face taking on an "[u]nsual colour." [254] Molly was depicted as displaying most of the symptoms of nymphomania. She was luxurious and sedentary. She read the "luxurious novels" that physicians warned of, and she was ill satisfied by her impotent husband; even her odd complexion denoted her rising libido. Charlotta, the Countess and Julianna of *Prostitutes of Quality* similarly reflect the general diagnosis. They were each married to men who they found sexually unsatisfying and sought out other men to satiate their desires. Each of the women was indiscrete about their sexual conquests and became the aggressor, taking on the masculine kind of libido that Bienville later described in his treatises on nymphomania. Parallels between these genres are further suggested about nymphomaniacs' "secret…habitual pollutions" in the presentations of elite women in *Sappho-An* masturbating with dildos to sooth their lusts, again one of the symptoms physicians deemed characteristic of the disease.

The similarities between the representation of elite women in pornographic texts and diagnosis of nymphomania are further emphasised in the case studies provided in Bienville`s treaty. It is in these case studies that the correlation between pornographic texts and medical texts becomes evidently clear. "Lucilla" was the first patient with nymphomania Bienville described in detail. She was a young lady who was orphaned at a young age, left in the care of an aunt and educated at a convent school. It was at the

[252] *Drive On* 8.
[253] *Drive On* 9.
[254] *Drive On* 15.

school that she became overly attached to one of the male servants, entreating her aunt to hire him for the family home when she left the school. Her request was refused. Unable to have her way, Lucilla sunk "at once into a melancholy," her health declined; she refused to eat or leave her room, thus shunning society. To make matters worse she rejected "pious books" and read only novels which added "fuel to the flame" fixing all her thoughts on sensuality. While it is never said openly, the suggestion is that Lucilla was romantically attached to the male servant in the convent and when removed from his company began to suffer from withdrawal. Lucilla's infatuation ended when the servant died of pleurisy. Lucilla's tale is reminiscent of both Miss Molly of *Drive-On Coachman* and Lady Agnew of *Ranger's List* both of whom displayed transgressive sexuality by desiring lower class men. Miss Molly fixated her amorous attentions of her footman, Tom, while Lady Agnew of *Ranger's List* spread her affections amongst multiple men to the embarrassment of her family, eventually turning to prostitution where she, without shame, serviced soldiers. Bienville's depiction of Lucilla would thus have offered scientific credence to the notion that nymphomania was not merely characterized as a desire for many men, but also for the wrong *kind* of men, a narrative that eighteenth-century pornographers commonly exploited.

Lucilla's romantic escapades did not cease with the servant's death. After mourning his loss, she became infatuated with a gentleman who lived nearby the family home. The Chevalier refuted her advances, receiving "her obliging assiduities with the cold politeness and disinterested respect peculiar to an amiable man, who either is no lover, or hath given his heart to another."[255] Refusing rejection, Lucilla snuck into his

[255] Bienville, *Nymphomania* 98.

bedchamber one morning while the Chevalier was still in bed with "his body concealed...only by a thin sheet."[256] Rather than be embarrassed by the situation she "assured[d] him he might be obliged to her for taking him by surprize, and that this w[ould] not be the last opportunity which she shall embrace of teaching him to awake sooner."[257] The Chevalier again declined her advances but she then attempted to "raise his passions by lascivious arts"[258] climbing into bed with him, nestling close and using the "lubricity of her motions" and "the most voluptuous words" to rouse the Chevalier's desire.[259] Unfortunately, the seduction failed and the Chevalier removed himself from the bed and Lucilla by summoning a servant. With such graphic and suggestive descriptions it is easy to see how Bienville's text might have been read multiple ways in the eighteenth century. The medical treatise *Nymphomania* could be an example of what historian Peter Wagner called eighteenth-century "paramedical erotica" in which medical texts were used as masturbatory aids. [260] The very narrative structure of Bienville's case study suggests cross-fertilization between medicine and pornography.

Another of Bienville's case studies is that of Leonora. She, like Lucilla, chased men. Few details are given about the pursuits but it is noted that "Several gentlemen of the neighbourhood had with difficulty, escaped from her, during the fits of her furor."[261] Unable to curtail her behaviour, her father had her institutionalized.[262] Leonora's

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[256] Bienville, *Nymphomania* 98.
[257] Bienville, *Nymphomania* 99.
[258] Bienville, *Nymphomania* 99.
[259] Bienville, *Nymphomania* 100.
[260] Peter Wagner, "The Discourse on Sex – or Sex as a Discourse: Eighteenth-Century Medical and Paramedical Erotica," *Sexual Underworlds of the Enlightenment,* Roy Porter and G.S. Rousseau, eds. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987) 46-85.
[261] Bienville, *Nymphomania* 134.
[262] Bienville, *Nymphomania* 134.

behaviour and Lucilla's attempted seduction of the Chevalier are reminiscent of Jemima's seduction of Lothario in *Prostitutes of Quality*. Jemima continued to attempt the seduction of Lothario even though he rejected her advances. Each of the three women displayed sexual aggression in their seduction of the men who interested them, exhibiting a preternaturally masculine libido of the sort described by physicians like Bienville. The only difference being that Jemima's was successful, while Leonora's and Lucilla's were not.

Turning to men, we find yet another disease that helps provide a useful backdrop for understanding eighteenth-century porn, in this case so-called "satyriasis." Satyriasis, the male equivalent of nymphomania, did not receive an over-haul in the eighteenth century. Though not singularly dealt with in its own treaties, it was fleetingly discussed in several medical texts. Because of the sexual double standard, male sexuality was framed quite differently in the eighteenth century. Men were expected to have numerous sexual partners, in and out of marriage.[263] Still there were limits. Satyriasis was defined as the "excessive and violent desire for coition in men."[264] If the desire for sex was so intense as to be described by the term "violent," it followed that "reason is depraved by it."[265] Like nymphomania, satyriasis was characterised by "immoderate, and unseasonable indulgence in lascivious ideas…from the irregular gratification of an

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[263] Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination*, 287-393; Wiesner, *Women and Gender*, 39-40; Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society*, 6-9; Perry "Colonizing the Breast" 212; Margaret Sommerville, *Sex and Subjection* 9, 17; Peakman, *Lascivious Bodies* 30; Lenora Davidoff and Catherine, Hall, *Family fortunes: men and women of the English middle class, 1780-1850* (Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1987) 170; Catherine Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class: Explorations in Feminism and History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992) 75; Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England* 4, 36-39; Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society* 3, 11, 20-23; Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution* 23, 55, 63-68.

[264] Joseph Townsend, *A guide to Health; being caution and directions in the treatment of diseases, volume 2* (London: Cox, 1796) 389.

[265] Anon, *The Edinburgh Practice of Physic* (London: G. Kearsley, 1800) 542.

appetite…which cannot be gratified, decently, lawfully or conscientiously." [266] Perhaps predictably, it could also be caused by "material stimuli, in wine, [and] too great abundance in animal food with spices."[267] With roots in luxurious indulgence, satyriasis, like nymphomania, preyed on the elite[268], being "seldom if ever seen in among the laborious peasants of country villages."[269]

Unlike nymphomania, mental insanity was not the end result of satyriasis. Instead, men who suffered with satyriasis in their youth, suffered from impotency in their twilight years. The eighteenth-century definition of impotency was more encompassing than the modern and can refer to an erection with a small quantity of semen ejaculated at orgasm, the semen discharged too soon with little pleasure, or when the "penis [wa]s weak and flaccid, and cannot be raised by any art."[270]The condition was caused by "immoderate use of…meat or drink,"[271] "fatness of the Body, and greatness of the Belly,"[272] "self-pollution,"[273] or "as the dregs of satyriasis."[274] Impotence, however, was difficult to cure and its prognosis was bleak. Cold baths and nourishing food could help alleviate some forms of impotence but for those with "absolute impotency"[275] or inability to sustain an erection there was no cure.[276]

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[266] Arnold, *Observations* 263.
[267] Townsend, *A Guide to Health* 389.
[268] Arnold, *Observation*s 262.
[269] Townsend, *Observations* 389.
[270] Astruc, *A Treatise on the Venereal Disease vol. 2* 186-187.
[271] John Marten, *Gonosologiumnovum*, (London: N. Creach, 1709) 34.
[272] Marten, *Gonosologiumnovum* 23.
[273] J.H. Smyth, *A New Treatise on the Venereal Disease, Gleets, Seminal Weakness: The Dreadful Effects of Self-Pollution and Other Causes of Impotency* (London: n.p., 1771) 54.
[274] Townsend, *A Guide to Health* 399.
[275] Freeman, *The Ladies Friend* 145.
[276] Gentleman of the Faculty*, Every Lady her own Physician; or the Closet Companion* (London: M. Randall, 1788) 61.

The eighteenth-century medical community understood semen as a precious substance, limited in quantity that must be conserved. It was understood that semen derived from blood that flowed down into the testicles. Because large quantities of semen were ejaculated at orgasm it could have ill effects on a man's body and health if time was not given for the blood to replenish itself. Just as with menstruation, the human body was deemed a corporeal economy requiring a balancing of the fluids. If one dispensed with copious amounts of semen on a regular basis, without giving the body time to catch up, illness and disease would result. Such theories underlay the well-known masturbation panic in the eighteenth century, which framed so-called "Onanism" as a major public health crisis. [277] Moreover, assertions about the interplay between mind and body in medical discussions of satyriasis were not less important than those found in constructions of female conditions like nymphomania or hysteria. Rationality was integral to constrictions of enlightenment-era masculinity. Women's inability to achieve the same levels of rationality left them open to charges of irrationality, like hysteria, and ruled them out of service in the public sphere. For men to lose control – to have their rational mind overpowered by the forces of their corporeal body – was understood as quite a womanly thing to do. In this way, the two very different presentations of satyriasis, impotence on the one hand and sex mania on the other, make sense as symptoms of the same disease. For in either case they presented a kind of effeminate failed masculinity. Doctor's even claimed that in cases of satyriasis "reason is depraved"[278] making a suggestion about effeminate masculinity that would have rung in

[277] Porter, *Facts of Life*, 115; Laqueur, *Making Sex* 35, 38, 68-69; Laqueur, *Solitary Sex*, 195-196; Cath Sharrock, "Reviewing the Spirit of Manhood: Sodomy, Masturbation and the Body (politic) in Eighteenth-Century England," *Textual Practice*, 11.3 (1997): 420.
[278] *The Edinburgh Practice of Physic* 542.

the ears of eighteenth-century readers. Thus just as the nymphomaniac was a masculine woman, the satyriasic was the womanly man.

While there are no case studies supplied for satyriasis, the diagnosis of the disease mirrors the overall depiction of upper class men in pornographic texts. As young men they are ruled by their libidos, letting desire over take their reason. Adrastus and Bellatus of *Prostitutes of Quality*, Clodius of *Adollizing* and Dick of *Spy on Mother Midnight* all commit deviant acts which, in the eighteenth century defy reason; rape, incest, cross-dressing and bestiality are all acts which rational men in control of their emotions and sexuality would avoid. These men could easily be diagnosed with satyriasis because their sexual urges surpassed their ability to reason. The older men in pornographic texts are often impotent. Indeed, it is worth pointing out that impotence also figured in the background of medical tests on nymphomania, as impotent noblemen and other inadequate husbands were frequently configured by Bienville and others as contributing to elite women's decline into nymphomania. Molly's much older husband in *Drive - On* was probably impotent considering that Molly's efforts to engage him in sex ended "all in Vain,"[279] and that he married much later in life than other men. Norbert in *Memoirs* was also impotent, blaming it on his youthful extravagances. Importantly, the text expresses his lamentable condition in a language that drew on prevailing medical ideas, especially the notion that over-indulgence would lead to a ruined "constitution." He had "a constitution not the best, he had vastly impaired by his over violently pursuit of the vices of the town, in the course of which stal'd all the more common-modes of

[279] *Drive On* 9.

debauchery."[280] Although Norbert was only thirty the "natural power of [his] body [was] jaded and racked off to the lees by constant repeated over-draughts of pleasure" which had done the work of "sixty winters."[281] The implication is that the sexual excesses of youth wore out young aristocrat bodies leaving them sexually impotent. If mental insanity denoted the final stages of nymphomania then impotence was the male counterpart for the final stages of satyriasis.

While pornographic and medical texts tell a similar story of hyper-sexuality amongst the elites in eighteenth -century Britain, the medical texts reveal more about the rationale behind the portrayal. Medical texts reveal that sexuality, like disease, was framed by class. Lifestyle alone did not render the upper class prone to nymphomania and satyriasis but the vulnerability became predisposed in their bodies and minds. Elite women had different menstrual cycles and were more prone to obstruction than poor women. Their minds were also more vulnerable. More delicate than sturdy, hard working women, elite women were easily influenced and did not possess the mental faculties to control their physical responses. The bodies of elite men and disease were also framed by class. High living rendered them prone to debauchery in ways that left lasting imprints on their physiology. Sex crazed in their youth, they wore themselves out through debauchery, gluttony and idleness, evolving into impotent old men before their time. The construction of nymphomania and satyriasis and other diseases as primarily affecting the elites, indicates that class was not simply understood as a socio- economic concept but one based in physicality of which sexuality was one marker. It may be thus

[280] Cleland, *Memoirs* 135.
[281] Cleland, *Memoirs* 138.

possible to explore ways in which class, not unlike race, had a physiological component in the eighteenth century. Moreover, the presence of scientific narratives about nymphomania and satyriasis must have coloured how people read pornography and vice versa. The rising tide of criticism aimed at the immoral elite found expression in sexual fantasy as well as worrying medical warnings. Characters and storylines in pornographic novels must have seemed more credible, more realistic thanks to the cultural work performed by doctors like Bienville. Physicians lent considerable authority to claims that the British elite were a debauched lot. Not merely splashed across the pages of a scandal sheet or dirty book, these ideas emerged in more respectable texts. Advocates of such a picture could now point to the hard facts of medical science and rest assured that elite hyper-sexuality was a worrying biological fact. The construction of the elite body as sexually depraved and weak in medical and pornographic texts is not arbitrary but part of a wider eighteenth century debate – that of luxury.

Nymphs, Satyrs and Impotent Old Men
Conclusion

The construction of elites in eighteenth-century British pornographic texts is specific and consistent. They are a group ruled almost entirely by their libidos, without control, respect for social order or morals. The women of the upper class were consistently depicted as lascivious and aggressive, actively pursuing men, regardless of their inclinations or class. Their desires were not limited to men but extended to other women, partaking in same-sex relations when men were not available to sooth their lusts. If neither men nor women were at hand for sexual gratification, they used household objects. These women had no regard for the sanctity of marriage, engaging in extra-marital affairs and forming clubs for sexual amusement. Men of the class were portrayed as either driven by their libidos to depravity or impotent. Elite men in pornographic texts were not only hyper sexual but propelled to perversions by their uncontrollable lusts. They fornicated with dolls made in the image of women, dressed in women`s clothes to facilitate sexual conquest, or committed rape and incest, all behaviours considered sexual perversions in the eighteenth century. Yet the same texts portray other elite men as impotent, lacking the ability to sexually satisfy the women in their lives.

The portrayals of the libidinous upper echelons of British society could be dismissed as a literary technique of pornographic authors to arouse the reader by conveying titillating and scandalous tales about a specific segment of the population, except that the same representations were found in medical texts. The correlation

between pornography and medical texts for this period has been well established.[282] Both texts were a means for the populace to gain sexual knowledge and the genres often cross fertilized. Medical texts of the period diagnosed nymphomania and satyriasis as diseases affecting primarily those of the upper class. Their decadent, sedentary and luxurious lifestyles rendered their bodies soft and vulnerable to the diseases. The suggestion was that lifestyle altered the physical body, somehow changing it at the most basic level, rendering those of different classes prone to different diseases. Elite women were susceptible to nymphomania, unable to control their physical desires once roused. Elite men were afflicted with satyriasis, the male counterpart to nymphomania, losing control of their physical bodies in the wake of their amorous desires. The final stage of the disease was impotence. The lack of sexual control in youth, wore out the body, leaving men impotent in middle years.

What the eighteenth-century reader gleaned from pornography was that there was a connection between the luxurious, soft and sedentary lifestyles of the elites and their out-of-control libidos. The texts almost consistently describe the character's lifestyle before launching into sexual intrigue. Molly of *Drive – On* sleeps late every morning, having a breakfast of "Chocolate i' bed serv'd up", buying new dinner ware to replace the "old fashion'd", even buying a new carriage just to attend a ball with no concern for cost.[283] The implication is that Molly's luxurious and sedentary life-style induced a hyper sex drive that prompted her to seduce a servant. The women of *Sappho-An* are described

[282] Clark, *Desire* 162-163; Peakman, *Mighty Lewd Books*, 37; Harvey *Reading Sex*, 18; Hitchcock, *English Sexualities*, 14; Roger Thompson, *Unfit for Modest Ears*, 161; Wagner, *Eros Revived* 8-11; Porter and Hall, *Facts of Life* 36, 107.
[283] *Drive On* 7-8.

as "dissolv'd in luxury" [284] suggesting that luxury instigated their bouts of mutual masturbation. Clodius of *Adollizing* refuted the concept of respectful employment, shunning the advice of his family to pursue "arms, the law or state" professing his only wish was "to stand favour'd" in women's view, "to be great idol of the fair" spending all his time seducing women "courting, undoing, quitting all by turns."[285] Dick of *Spy on Mother Midnight* does not appear to have anything but sexual intrigue to fill his days and nights. He claims to do nothing more than spend the winter enjoying the "Pleasures of the Town."[286] Even after meeting Maria courting and following her to the country seem to be his only past-times. The characters of *Prostitutes of Quality* also appear to have little to occupy their time other than sex. Lothario spent his youth travelling Europe[287], Adrastus was the "Town Rake" before marriage squandering his fortune on amusements[288], Jemima entertained guests with "Mirth and Jolllity,"[289] Charlotta was described as "perverse and peevish" caring for no one other than herself[290], Juliana was of a "more avaricious" nature incapable of kindness and without modesty[291], Moderno was never employed at anything other than "in the Art of Deceiving….having not one good Quality to recommend him, unless Vanity, Ostentation, Pride and Ill nature may be allow'd to be of the number" caring only to be the "first in Fashion,"[292] while Bellatus is described as the "unworthy Branch" of a good family who is guilty of all the "Vices

[284] *Sappho – An* 22.
[285] *Adollizing* 36.
[286] *A Spy on Mother Midnight* 2-3.
[287] *Prostitutes of Quality* 7-8.
[288] *Prostitutes of Quality* 29.
[289] *Prostitutes of Quality* 31-32.
[290] *Prostitutes of Quality* 117-118.
[291] *Prostitutes of Quality* 127-128.
[292] *Prostitutes of Quality* 133-134.

which corrupt Mankind, and disgraces the Designs of Nature" with no claim to virtue.[293] Each of the characters is portrayed as possessing ample idle time which is only filled with fun, frivolity and sex. The implication is that those leading luxurious lifestyles, with abundant leisure time become sexually voracious, thus linking lifestyle and libido in the reader's mind.

Pornographic texts were, therefore, part of a larger cultural trend in the eighteenth century; they were part of the period's luxury debate in which elites were increasingly criticised for their decadent lifestyles. As Donna Andrew argues in "Adultery a la Mode: Privilege, the Law and Attitudes to Adultery, 1770-1809," there was growing concern and condemnation surrounding aristocratic privilege and vice. Andrew argues "four vices were singled out as exemplars of the religion of the ton: duelling, suicide, gambling and adultery."[294] The four vices were part of the system of behaviour in which the elite made their own rules in accordance to their appetites and privilege. It was believed that there existed a correlation between luxury and sexuality. Those who partook in excess consumer luxury also revelled in excess pleasures of the flesh.[295] Andrew further explores the four vices in her book *Aristocratic Vice: The Attack on Duelling, Suicide, Adultery and Gambling in Eighteenth-Century England* arguing that many of the social

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[293] *Prostitutes of Quality* 180-181.
[294] Andrew, "Adultery à la Mode" 7.
[295] Woodruff D. Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability, 1600-1800 (*NY: Routledge, 2002) 6; Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,2007) 9; Maxine Berg, "In Pursuit of Luxury: Global History and British Consumer Goods in the Eighteenth Century," *Past and Present*, 182 (February 2004): 85-86; Maxine Berg and Elizabeth Eger, "The Rise and Fall of the Luxury Debate," *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods*, eds. Maxine Berg and Elizabeth Eger (NY: Palgrove MacMillan, 2003) 9-19; Jeremy Jennings, "The Debate about Luxury in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century French Political Thought," *Journal of the History Ideas*, 68.1 (January 2007): 79 -87; Jennifer M. Jones, *Sexing La Mode: Gender, Fashion and Commercial Culture in Old Regime France* (Oxford: Berg, 2004) 147-149; Christopher J. Berry, *The Idea of Luxury: A Conceptual and Historical Investigation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 154-157.

"skirmishes" rallied against aristocratic vice were fought in print culture. The misdeeds of the privileged were avidly reported in newspapers and pamphlets as a means of public shaming and cultivated the idea that the upper class was ruled by their passions. The fear was that the lower orders would emulate the behaviours of their social superiors and that vice would spread like a contagion through society damaging the nation as a whole.[296]

The elites of Britain were an easy target of criticism because of their lifestyles of wealth and privilege. Throughout the eighteenth century one ongoing topic of debate surrounded luxury; it could be construed as a positive concept or a negative. Luxury had the ability to fuel the economy, increasing production and consumption. It could increase trade and manufacture through the demand for new goods and services, thus improving the lives of many. Luxury could also be excessive consumption. It could drive vanity, perpetuating the desire for frivolous goods and have a negative impact on morals. Those who suffered from the vice of luxury could not control their impulses, stagnating trade through reckless spending. There was also a moral aspect to the luxury debate. Those who could not control one excess were unlikely to be able to control other more physical desires. Excessive consumption of luxury goods was linked in eighteenth-century thought with sexual excess. The elite and wealthy of Britain were the chief consumers of luxury goods and services as they had the most money to spend and thus were the most likely to fall prey to the evils of luxury including sexual debauchery.[297]

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[296] Andrew, *Aristocratic Vice* 4, 8, 25, 26, 37, 128, 129, 221, 246.

[297] Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability* 6; Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure* 9; Maxine Berg, "In Pursuit of Luxury" 85-86; Berg and Eger, "The Rise and Fall of the Luxury Debate 9-19; Jeremy Jennings, "The Debate about Luxury in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century French Political Thought," *Journal of the History Ideas*, 68.1 (January 2007): 79 -87; Jennifer M. Jones, *Sexing La Mode: Gender, Fashion and Commercial Culture in Old Regime France* (Oxford: Berg, 2004) 147-149; Berry, *The Idea of Luxury* 72-154-157.

Gender and sexuality were key facets of the luxury debate. Throughout history luxury was associated with sensual pleasure, wantonness and lechery. The uncontrollable desire for commercial goods was thought to influence other more bodily desires. If sex for procreative purposes was considered a necessity, sex for sheer pleasure was a luxury.[298] Luxury was also feminized; women were thought more likely to fall prey to the lure of luxury, easily seduced by new, fashionable and frivolous goods. Men who overindulged in luxury were thus effeminate, losing the qualities that made them masculine, rendering them soft, cowardly and feminine. [299] Hence, the portrayals of impotence and effeminacy in pornographic texts; these are the ill effects of luxury.

Pornography, where concerns regarding class, gender, sexuality and luxury converged, offered a useful forum for launching critiques on these topics. The depictions in pornographic texts consistently portray the men and women of the British elite as the antithesis of social ideals. Women were portrayed as hyper-sexual while men were effeminate, either hyper-sexual or impotent, all symptoms of over-indulgence in luxury. Pornography bridges the gap between gossip and scandal, imparting lascivious details of the lives of the rich and famous through printed media. Anthropologists and gender historians argue gossip is an effective means to control female behaviour. They maintain that "[i]n societies where men are expected to be virile and display their power by predatory sexual conquests of women, whereas women are expected to be chaste and virginal…gossip frequently concerns sexual liaisons."[300] As Laura Gowing and Bernard

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[298] Berry, *The Idea of Luxury* 8, 72,87,93; Berg and Edger, "The Rise and Fall of the Luxury Debate" 19;
[299] Shawn Lisa Maurer, *Proposing Men: Dialects of Gender and Class in the Eighteenth – Century British Periodical* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996) 136, 159; Berry, *The Idea of Luxury* 128, 133; Jones, *Sexing La Mode* 145; Kuchta, *The Three Piece Suit* 99-101.
[300] Sally Engle Merry, "Rethinking Gossip and Scandal,"*Towards a General Theory of Social Control, Volume 1 Fundamentals* (Orlando: Academic Press, 1984) 278; Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words*

Capp argue, female behaviour in the early modern period was controlled by the gossip of other women. Gossip functioned as a means to control and enforce acceptable behaviour. Because women's honour rested on her sexual reputation gossip about women was frequently sexualized. This did not mean the woman was actually guilty of some sexual misdemeanor but rather any kind of socially unacceptable behaviour. Gossip worked because it called into question the woman's character. Women deemed sexually immoral were also believed to be dishonest and untrustworthy. The slight to her character could affect a woman's livelihood or marriage possibilities.[301] However, the effect of gossip must also be considered regarding men. In the eighteenth century, masculine behaviour was increasingly scrutinized. Real men were to adhere to strict behaviour patterns and displays of sexuality. A man's private behaviour also affected his public reputation.[302] As Randolph Trumbach argues in *Sex and the Gender Revolution: Heterosexuality and the Third Gender in Enlightenment London*, it became increasingly important for men to prove their heterosexuality and maintain a masculine reputation because of the emergence of a third gender - the sodomite.[303] Therefore, men were as vulnerable to gossip as women with their masculinity and sexual identity resting on reputation.[304]

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and Sex in Early Modern London (Oxford; Clarendon Press, 1998) 59-63, 72-80 and 115-125; Bernard Capp, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2003) 50-64, 189, 212, 276 .

[301] Gowing, *Domestic Dangers* 59-63, 72-80 and 115-125; Capp, *When Gossips Meet* 50-64, 189, 212, 276.

[302] Faramerz Dabhoiwala, "The Construction of Honour, Reputation and Status in Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth-Century England," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6 (1996): 203-204; David Kuchta, *The Three Piece Suit* 135-147; Maurer, *Proposing Men* 20; M. M. Goldsmith, "Public Virtue and Private Vice: Bernard Mandeville and English Political Ideologies in the Early Eighteenth Century," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 9.4 (Summer 1976): 479.

[303] Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution* 6-10.

[304] Bernard Capp, "The Double Standard Revisited: Plebeian Women and Male Sexual reputation in Early Modern England," *Past and Present* 162 (February 1999): 71 - 74, 87- 89.

When gossip travels beyond a specific social group to become public knowledge it is called scandal. Gossip and scandal hold the power to shape public opinion. Gossip and scandal usually has some factual ground. Within the gossip is some kernel of truth that makes the story believable. It is the moral judgment applied to the story that is tailored to the audience.[305] As discussed in the previous chapter, the types of sexuality portrayed already exist in popular culture and were familiar to the reading public. Some scenarios are drawn for criminal trials and scandals; others reflect sexual customs practiced by other social groups. None were utterly fiction. There is no way of knowing if British elites actually took part in these activities but the beauty of pornography is that the genre plays on the unknown. The remainder of society was left to muse and wonder about their nocturnal activities, and these musing and wonderings were not necessarily positive. Historians of the early modern period argue that gossip was usually used among the middle and lower sorts but the technique was also utilized on the elites when their behaviour transgressed social ideals, in the form of public scandal.[306] Eighteenth-century British pornography functions as a form of printed scandal, criticizing an entire segment of the population rather than specific individuals.

Furthermore, the ways in which pornographic texts were written lent them an air of authority, inferring that the author was reporting fact rather than fiction, gossiping about the lives the British elite. Borrowing a technique used by French pornographers, many of the texts tended to favour a voyeuristic authorial style, claiming to be written by

[305] Merry, "Rethinking Gossip" 275-278; Pamela J. Stewart and Andrew Strathern, *Witchcraft, Sorcery, Rumours and Gossip* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 30-39.
[306] Anna Clark, *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of the British Constitution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004) 2.

someone involved or witness to the sexual debauchery.[307] The implication is that the author was relaying not only the most intimate details of the character's lives but their real life stories. *A Spy on Mother Midnight*, for example, was written in the form of a letter from the author to a friend imparting all the titillating details of his cross-dressing and sexual adventures. The author of *Adollizing* similarly assured the reader in the preface "that the ground-work, from whence the term adollizing was taken was a real fact, known to many others as well as myself. The simple fable is this: A person of high distinction failing in his attempt on the virtue of a young lady…resolves to enjoy her at any rate, and thereupon has recourse to the extraordinary method here attempted to be described."[308] The title page of *Prostitutes of Quality* states the text is the "authentic and genuine Memoirs of several Persons of the highest Quality."[309] The preface of the poem *Sappho-An* claims the piece was found "amongst the papers of a Lady of Quality."[310] The introduction of *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* states the text is autobiographical written by Fanny Hill herself in later years recounting the "scandalous stages" of her life.[311] The author of the whore listing *Harris' List* insists he has first-hand knowledge of the whores and their lifestyles resulting from extensive "researches."[312]

Despite what other scholars have argued about eighteenth-century British pornography, they do carry a political message.[313] British elites were an immoral lot,

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[307] Darton, *Forbidden Best-Sellers* 91.
[308] *Adollizing*, IV.
[309] *Prostitutes of Quality*, title page.
[310] *Sappho-An*, title page.
[311] Cleland, *Memoirs* 7.
[312] *Harris's List of Covent - Garden Ladies for the Year 1788* 14.
[313] Hitchcock, *English Sexualities* 23; Scholars of early-modern France argue that pornographic texts played a role in the French Revolution, undermining the authority of the monarchy, aristocrats and the ancient regime through sexual slander. According to Robert Darnton, many of the texts were presented as "fact disguised as fiction" promising the reader a glimpse into the intimate lives of the king and queen and the royal court. For example, *Therese Philospohe* (1748) portrayed the monarch and court taking part in

incapable of controlling their most base desires, raising speculation regarding their place in society. The negative portrayals of sexuality ascribed to the upper echelons of British society were a way to discredit them as the dominant identity of society. The eighteenth century was a period in which a new group was emerging and challenging the elites place as the dominant social group. The newly emerging middle class was in the midst of ushering in a more staid and conservative British identity, which by the next century would be the dominant.[314] Until the mid-eighteenth century British society operated under a system of social hierarchy that was purportedly ordained by God. Rank, lineage and property denoted one's rank on the social ladder; the monarch occupied the top position, and the nobility slightly below that, with women just below their male counterparts.[315] Each class was ranked accordingly on the lower rungs of the social ladder, with the poor at the bottom. Within each grouping women consistently ranked below men, but gender complicated the system with a woman of higher social ranking

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debauched orgies and sacrilege. *L'An 2440* (1771) was a futuristic novel, transporting the reader to France in the year 2440, depicting the monarch as a despot and his officials as corrupt, taxing the populace for the sole purpose of supporting their own luxury. Other pamphlets and texts accused the clergy of homosexuality, the royal court as a site of sexual intrigue and Queen Marie Antoinette as a voracious sexual predator, wearing out poor King Louis with her incessant sexual demands, then turning to other men and women to sooth her insatiable libido. It is argued that the scandalous representations of the ruling class and the political system undermined their credibility with the public, thus aiding the Revolution. See Robert Darnton, *The Forbidden Best- Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* (NY: W.W. Norton and Company, 1995); Robert Darnton and Daniel Deroche, eds., *Revolution in Print: The Press in France, 1775-1800* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1989) XIV; Lynn Hunt, ed., *The Invention of Pornography: Obscenity and the Origins of Modern Pornography, 1500-1800* (NY: Zone Books, 1993) 35-37; Lynn Hunt, "Pornography and the French Revolution," *The Invention of Pornography: Obscenity and the Origins of Modern Pornography, 1500-1800* Lynn Hunt, ed. (NY: Zone Books, 1993) 301 and Vivian R. Gruder, "The Question of Marie Antoinette: The Queen and Public Opinion before the French Revolution," *French History* 16.3 (2002): 291.

[314] Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England, 1727-1783* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989) 59-68; David Cannadine, *The Rise and Fall of Class in Britain* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1993) 4-5; Margaret Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender and the Family in England, 1680-1780* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996) 9; Dror Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class: The Political Representation of Class in Britain, c. 1780-1840* (Cambridge University Press, 1995)1-16.

[315] Cannadine, *The Rise and Fall of Class* 21-24.

considered superior to men of a lower rank. Men were consistently deemed superior to those of both genders of lower social ranking.[316] However, by mid-century the beginnings of industrialization were brewing and a newly emerging professional and merchant class were challenging the aristocratic right to rule challenging the existing social ideology. This emerging middle class had money, property and was quickly becoming a powerful social group, influencing both culture and politics, and challenged the existing hierarchy. [317] Those making up the middle class tended to be involved in trade or industry and were literate and educated. The upper echelon of this station was made up of the professionals - doctors, lawyers, and clergy. There were no distinct boundaries between the middle sort and their social inferiors and superiors but blurred boundaries.[318] This burgeoning class also had had a culture of its own which differed from that of the aristocracy. Those of the middle class considered themselves to be more conservative and virtuous than their social superiors. The burgeoning middle class emphasised new ideals of masculinity and femininity. In the past, manhood was based on the domination of inferiors, sexual control of women and sexual conquest. However, new middle class ideals ushered in the concepts of private virtue, modesty and politeness as part of the criteria for ideal masculinity.[319] Femininity was also in transition. The emphasis for ideal womanhood rested on maternity and passive sexuality.[320] Middle

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[316] Cannadine, *The Rise and Fall of Class* 21-24; Susan Dwyer Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England*, (NY: Columbia University Press, 1998) 140-144; Keith Wrightson, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century* (NY: Penguin Books, 1982) 30, 63, 64.
[317] Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People* 59-68; Cannadine, *The Rise and Fall of Class* 4-5; Hunt, *The Middling Sort* 9; Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class* 1-16.
[318] Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class*, 175; Wharman, *Imagining the Middle Class* 36, 43; Berg, *The Middling Sort* 19-23, 50-56; Earle, *Making of the Middle Class* 3 – 10.
[319] Kuchta, *The Three Piece Suit* 135-147; Maurer, *Proposing Men* 20; Goldsmith, "Public Virtue and Private Vice" 479.
[320] Perry, "Colonizing the Breast" 209; Groneman, "Nymphomania" 342; Hitchcock, "Redefining Sex" 79-80.

class, therefore, was more than a socio-economic category but an identity which differed from its social inferiors and superiors. This group identity, by mid- nineteenth century, would form the dominant ideology in Britain.[321]

As in other times of transition, sexuality was used as a source of political slander.[322] When societies are unstable there is a tendency to scrutinize morals and early-modern British society was no different.[323] As Jason Elliot argues in "The Politics of Sexual Libel: Royalist Propaganda in the 1640s" sexual slander was used by Royalists to undermine Parliamentarians during the British civil war years. Elliot argues that the depiction of Royalists and Parliamentarians in weekly newsbooks was carefully constructed to influence public opinion. The King and his supporters were portrayed as the protectors of law, order and liberty while Parliamentarians were perverts committing pedophilia, bestiality and wanton debauchery. These images were not randomly selected but chosen for credibility drawing on rumours already in circulation which could not be proved or disproved. Similarly, the authors of pornographic texts drew on ideas already in circulation, to depict and discredit the elites of Britain as sexually debauched through slander. Determining authorship of eighteenth-century pornography is problematic. However, we do know that for the authors of other genres of fiction, writing was done in addition to another occupation. Daniel Dafoe was involved in trade, Samuel Richardson a printer and Thomas Smollett was a physician in addition to their literary careers.[324]

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[321] Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes* 28; O'Day, *Women's Agency* 7.
[322] Alan Hunt, *Governing Morals: A Social History of Moral Regulation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 11; Jason Elliot, "The Politics of Sexual Libel: Royalist Propaganda in the 1640s," *Huntington Library Quarterly,* 67.1 (March 2004): 75.
[323] Hunt, *Governing Morals* 11.
[324] Patricia Meyer Sparks, *Novel beginnings: experiments in eighteenth-century English fiction* (Yale University Press, 2006) 8; Harvey*, Reading Sex* 37.

Therefore, it is most likely that the authors of pornographic texts were from the emerging middle class. Thus, a small segment of the population influenced a larger section of the literate public propagating the notion that the upper class was a debauched and perverted group by creating highly sexualized tales reminiscent of those already in circulation. As modern scholars argue, in society some groups "are delegitimized and reduced to a second-class status" portraying them in "a highly distorted and unflattering view….to discourage intellectual borrowing" in order to "not only…unite, but also inspire members of the community to live up to an idealized vision of how they should live."[325] Therefore, the representation of the elite as contrary to the newly emerging sexual normative was a means to devalue their culture and place in society.

The British have a long history of creating their identity in opposition to others – the French, Scots, and Americans most notably. British identity tended to be framed by comparison to other groups by identifying what it was not - Catholic, uncivilized or rebellious.[326] British sexual identity functioned similarly. Blatant sexuality belonged to others from far-away lands or other cultures. For example, racialized groups were frequently understood and portrayed as highly sexual. Cultural differences such as polygamy, nakedness or lack of pre-marital feminine chastity in places such as Africa and the Pacific, were often interpreted as evidence of a naturally lascivious nature.[327] Sexuality was, therefore, one way to measure and demarcate groups of people. However,

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[325] Bhiku Parekh, "Defining British National Identity," *The Political Quarterly* 71.1 (January 2000): 4-8.
[326] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992) 1-5, 20 - 28, 103-147,
[327] George Boulukos, *The Grateful Slave: The Emergence of Race in Eighteenth Century British and American Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 42-43; Winthrop D. Jordon, *White over Black: American Attitudes towards the Negro, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 1968) 33.

this rhetorical strategy was not confined to colonies. Domestically, the oppositional creation of identity was also focussed inward against the upper class suggesting and reinforcing the idea that debauched, depraved and deviant sexuality could attributed to specific groups within society - thereby supplying a negative example through which to reaffirm the newly emerging sexual normative.

Medical texts bolstered the portrayals of the dangerous sexuality portrayed in pornographic texts by rooting it in the elite physical body which had been altered by luxury. The texts intimated that the elite body differed from other social bodies. Diet, living conditions and lifestyle changed the body so it was softer and more prone to diseases of a sexual nature. These texts treated class in ways that parallel some early constructions of race. Environment affected and changed the physical body allowing it to develop innate characteristics. In the eighteenth century race was a multifaceted concept and could refer to religious and cultural differences as well as skin colour. Ideas of race were based on the understanding that climate and culture were interlinked with racial characteristics as an adaptation to environment, both physical and cultural.[328] Cultural differences offered key indicators of race with physical differences often simply the visual signifiers. It was not until late in the century that skin colour became the chief indicator of race. Scholars argue that this shift had much to do with the slave trade, justifying the enslavement of blacks for labour in the colonies. Natural historians believed that climate affected libido, as it did a host of other physical characteristics. In especially warm climates the sexual drive of the inhabitants was thought to be higher than that of

[328] Philip D. Curtin, *The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action, 1780-1850* (Madison: Wisconsin University Press, 1964) 246.

those living in more temperate climes[329] because "in the countries which are much exposed to the burning rays of the sun" the heat stimulated "the imagination and vehemence of passion."[330] In this way, scientists presented hyper-sexuality alongside other physical markers of degeneracy such as allegedly smaller craniums to offer natural proof of savagery. [331] Sexuality was also used as a marker of civilization. Those with uncontrolled sexual passions were less "civilized" than groups who controlled their physical desires. Cultures who displayed blatant sexuality were deemed inferior to others with more conservative sexual mores.[332] The role of such evidence in essentializing formulations of race – rooting race in physical characteristics that were natural and therefore immutable – would only grow in importance as conceptions of race hardened in the nineteenth century. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore early formulations of race in the depth they deserve. But briefly acknowledging the role of hyper sexuality in eighteenth-century formulations of race allows one to reflect on the ways that libido was rhetorically deployed domestically in the eighteenth century. When considering the hyper libido of British elites, luxury functioned not unlike climate. Luxury altered the physical body rendering it libidinous in ways that parallel how hot climates changed the

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[329] Felicity A. Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones: Maternity, Sexuality and Empire in Eighteenth Century English Narratives* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1995) 2-3, 9, 78, 96; Jennifer Morgan, "Some could Suckle over their Shoulder: Male Travellers, Female Bodies and the Gendering of Racial Ideology, 1500-1700", *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Volume LIV.1 (January 1997): 169-170; Margaret Hunt, "Racism, Imperialism, and the Traveller's Gaze in Eighteenth-Century England", *Journal of British Studies* 32.1 (October 1993): 340-341; Pamela Cheek, *Sexual Antipodes: Enlightenment Globalization and the Placing of Sex* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003) 3-2; Felicity A. Nussbaum, *The Limits of Human Fictions of Anomaly, Race and Gender in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 136; Roxann Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth Century British Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000) 23-33.

[330] Arnold, *Observations* 171-172.

[331] Schiebinger, *The Mind has no Sex*206-212.

[332] Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones* 2-9; Morgan "Some could sickle over their Shoulder" 169; Cheek, *Sexual Antipodes* 2-3.

racialized libido. Medical texts therefore suggest that class was more than a cultural concept but a physical state.

Eighteenth-century British pornography was, therefore, more than sexually explicit material designed to arouse the reader, but instead part of a larger cultural discourse that undermined the social and cultural authority of British elites through negative portrayals of sexuality. In a period in which more conservative sexual ideals were gaining supremacy, British elites were ascribed sexual habits that were directly counter to the new ideals. Pornography of the period, rather than simply enforcing existing social norms was reinforcing the development of new more modest sexual culture, suggesting that perverted and depraved sexual behaviour belonged to a specific social group – the upper class. The portrayals in medical texts offer validity to the depictions in pornography by diagnosing diseases of hyper sexuality as primarily affecting the elites due to their decadent and luxurious lifestyles. It became much more difficult to dismiss pornographic portrayals of aristocrats as merely unrealistic caricatures forged in the imaginative fiction once doctors presented the same traits in as medical facts. Medical texts further differentiate the elite body from the rest of society by indicating that luxury altered the physiology, weakening it so that hyper libido was a biological trait. The behaviours attributed to the elite of Britain were more than immorality bred by luxury but a cultural trait rooted in the physical body. Pornography, in conjunction with medical texts, not only criticised the behaviour of the elite of Britain, but devalued their social integrity through negative depictions of sexuality that were congenital, rather than simply behavioural, a situation that could not be altered or adjusted any more than skin colour. The depiction of elites in eighteenth–century

pornographic texts are, therefore, more than scenarios of debauchery and perversion created for mere arousal but a facet of a wider cultural discourse in which the lifestyle of the upper echelons of society was devalued and marginalized.

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