

The Rise and Fall of *Seigneur Dildo*:
The Figure of the Dildo in Restoration Literature and Culture

by

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B.A., University of Western Ontario, 2005
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Abstract

Seigneur Dildoe, as this dissertation will contend, was a fixture in Restoration literature and culture (1660-1700). But what was his provenance, by what means did he travel, and why did he come? This dissertation provides a literary history of the fascinating and highly irreverent dildo satire tradition, tracing the dildo satire's long and winding progress from antiquity to Restoration England, where the tradition reached its early modern zenith. Adding breadth, context, and texture to existing treatments of the trope's political and sexual potency, this dissertation investigates the dildo satire's roots in both Greek comedy (Aristophanes, Herodas) and Latin invective (Martial, Juvenal), its influential association in early modern Italy with Catholicism and monastic life (Aretino), and its introduction in early modern England (Nashe), where it cropped up in the works of a surprising number of literary giants (Shakespeare, Jonson, Donne, Marvell). In Restoration England, we find in the satiric dildos of Butler, Rochester, and the contextually rich "Seigneur Dildoe" articulations of a dildo gone viral: the mock-heroic *Seigneur* deployed as a politically central motif symptomatic of its society's acute patriarchal fissures. Throughout I argue that the dildo satire's longevity is due not to a uniformity of purpose or signification (misogynist, anti-Catholic, emasculating, or otherwise), but to its innate versatility and ambiguity as a fugitive sexual and political figure. I also argue that what does in fact unite the satiric dildo's variety of contingent ends, against what has been assumed in the scholarship, is its status as a markedly anti-Phallic figure.

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Dedication

To my teachers: thank you.
And to Hannah and Austen, my two pillars of support.

Chapter One: Introduction

O! all yee young Ladyes of merry England,
That have been to kisse the Dutchesse's Hand,
I pray you, enquire, the next tyme you doe goe
For a Noble Italian call'd Seigneur Dildoe.

This Seigneur Dildoe was the chiefe of the Trayne,
That came, to conduct her safe over the Maine;
I could not in Conscience, but let you all know
The happy arrivall of Seigneur Dildoe.

...

You will take him at first for noe Person of Note
Because hee'le appeare in a plaine Leather-Coate,
But when you his virtuous Abilites know,
You'le fall downe, and worship this Seigneur Dildoe.¹

Sometime in late 1673, not long after a shipment of French dildos had been seized and burned by English customs and the English heir James, duke of York had married an Italian Catholic princess, the clandestine satire "Seigneur Dildoe" glibly announced that an unassuming *Seigneur* had arrived in England and was there to stay. The ladies of the realm, claimed the knowledgeable satirist, had only to ask their new Catholic Duchess and future Queen for his whereabouts. Soon, virtually every Restoration peeress of note was depicted in the satire as a friend of the euphemized *Seigneur*, and courtiers clamoured to acquire a copy of the poem's

¹ "Seigneur Dildoe", 1-4, 13-16, Oxford Bodleian MS Don. b8 (henceforth Od8 following the sigla of Harold Love, *English Clandestine Satire 1660-1702*). Because I wish to retain the integrity of the many distinct versions and spellings of "Seigneur Dildoe" and view the poem as a multiform tradition, the tradition as a whole is largely referred to as "SD" in this dissertation except where this would cause a lack of clarity or where a particular manuscript version and/or titular spelling is intended. When quoting from "SD" I also default to Od8, except where otherwise indicated (see Bibliography for list of manuscript sigla). When referring to the Restoration trope of the dildo as *Seigneur Dildoe*, I favour the earliest French spelling for consistency's sake.

agglomerative versions, many of which were carefully preserved in manuscript miscellanies whose unadorned leather bindings concealed, like the Seigneur's own leather coat, the risqué riches within.

In 1675, one particularly enterprising courtier, Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset, took the conceit so far as to deliver one of the French-imported dildos sold among dolls and perfumes on the Exchange to one of the Duchess' Ladies of Honour, Frances Sheldon. The joke became public knowledge, as it was undoubtedly intended to, when the note appended to the delivered dildo was allegedly dropped by an unlucky Sheldon and picked up by an indiscreet Earl of Middlesex. It read:

Mush Honord Madame

Me ha here wit sent yr good Laship de dildoa & de Beel in wch me ha prized all things so ver shepe dat (me assure you) me be like to gett but ver ver little by dis employ: for me <rest lost through trimming>.²

Among the most immediate observations we might make about these satirical anecdotes is the dildo's alleged relation to and ubiquity among Restoration women: "SD" is, after all, addressed to the women of England, even as a dildo is addressed individually to the unlucky Frances Sheldon and to countless other English ladies in the "SD" stanzas which follow its general opening. Additionally, we might remark that in both examples overtones of bawdry, irony, and mischief predominate, as does the satirists' concern with narrating the dildo's provenance as a foreign Catholic import (down to a forged, French-accented delivery note in the case of Frances

²See Harold Love, ed., *Works of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 477-8; MS Osborn b 54, 933.

Sheldon). Happily, in many senses, the satirists' concern with the dildo's early modern origins and affiliations mirrors our own, seeming blithely to answer many of the questions modern scholarship might wish to ask about the dildo's provenance and signification; yet just as happily, the dildo narratives woven into these accounts are indeed carefully curated, highly ironic fictions, often raising more questions than they answer despite their apparent candour.³

The sexual politics of *Seigneur Dildoe* in history and criticism

Accounts of the long-eighteenth century dildo trope and "Seigneur Dildoe" in particular – as the first extant satire in the English language devoted entirely to the topic of dildo use – have appeared sporadically but consistently within the history and criticism of sexuality over the past several decades. These are with few exceptions divisible into two often mutually-exclusive approaches: those which interpret the early modern dildo trope as an androcentric, phallogocentric affirmation of male sexual and social dominance, and those which herald the trope as a proto-feminist, proto-modern emblem and tool of female agency.

Strengthened by the legacy of Randolph Trumbach's work on the sodomite as a third gender in eighteenth-century England, specifically by Trumbach's assertion that expressions of female sexualities hardly existed outside of conventional heterosexual marriage before the end of the long eighteenth century,⁴ much scholarship on male sexualities and of sexual themes in male-authored satires on women have tended to approach representations of female dildo use,

³ See Steven N. Zwicker, "Irony, Modernity, and Miscellany: Politics and Aesthetics in the Stuart Restoration." In *Politics and the Political Imagination in Later Stuart Britain* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1997).

⁴ See Randolph Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 15, and "London's Sapphists: From Three Sexes to Four Genders in the Making of Modern Culture" (in *Third Sex Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History* ed. Gilbert Herdt, New York: Zone, 1993, 111-36).

same-sex desire, and/or masturbation with the a priori assumption that these representations have little if anything to do with women or actual sexual practise. Reba Wilcoxon's essay "Mirrors of Men's Fears: The Court Satires on Women", for instance, argues that Restoration satire's lack of true interest in its female victims precludes its misogyny, and that female victims of satire should be uniformly read as one-flesh inversions or "mirrors" of their male authors – that is, as empty metaphorical vehicles used to treat weightier androcentric themes.⁵ Though certainly taking a converse stance on satire's misogyny, Cameron McFarlane takes Rochester's (?) nihilistic satire *Sodom* as his template of early eighteenth-century dildo representation in *The Sodomite in Fiction and Satire, 1660-1750* (1997), in which he argues that sodomy, female masturbation, and the dildo motif are equally deployed in Restoration literature to stand in for an ailing state, referencing women only incidentally and misogynistically as hopeless slaves to the almighty Prick.⁶ Similarly, Harold Love reads the dildo and female masturbation within "Seigneur Dildoe" as an allegory for androcentric politics of state,⁷ claiming that the purpose of the Restoration lampoon was "never sociological".⁸

While other criticism in the androcentric vein has upheld the politics of sex and gender as indeed central to clandestine satire and to dildo satires such as "SD", such approaches have tended to be cursory or partial. James Grantham Turner's important study *Schooling Sex: Libertine Literature and Erotic Education in Italy, France, and England (1534-1685)* (2003), for

⁵ In *Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture, 1660-1700* 3 no. 2 (1979): 45-51.

⁶ 91.

⁷ In his editorial glosses to "SD", for instance, Love often defaults to providing the political position and religious affiliations of the female victims' husband, lover, or family in trying to account for a stanza's satire on particular named ladies. In Chapter 6, I argue that in many such cases it is the female victims' own proclivities and affiliations that are alluded to in their own right.

⁸ ECS 61.

instance, acknowledges the complex erotic and educational possibilities of dildo use in early modern prose dialogues; in the case of “Seigneur Dildoe” and verse satire, however, he glosses the dildo trope as a straightforward case-in-point of the “hyper-masculine walking phallus”, quite literally lording over women.⁹ Taking on an earlier English dildo satire, Ian Frederick Moulton’s extensive discussion of the early modern dildo trope in Nashe’s *Choice of Valentines* (1592) promisingly and justly presents Nashe’s dildo as the locus of “all the issues of sexuality and power raised in the poem”.¹⁰ However, despite the poet’s considerable development of the female viewpoint and of the complex interplay between male and female subjectivities, Moulton’s reading ultimately privileges the subjectivity of the impotent and slighted male character, Tomalin, whose denunciation of his partner’s dildo as “monstrous” is considered in Moulton’s account to be Nashe’s final, androcentric word, containing that of his female partner, the dildo-loving “Francis” (i.e., Frances).¹¹

Nashe’s *Choice of Valentines* is an especially apt case in point of how easy it often is to produce precisely inverse readings of the satiric dildo’s sexual politics, particularly when performing cursory and/or decontextualized analysis. In *Choice of Valentines*, for instance, one might as easily consider Frances’ subjectivity – her resourceful provision of a dildo when faced with an inadequate male partner, sexual self-satisfaction in answer to Tomalin’s sexual

⁹ James Grantham Turner, *Schooling Sex: Libertine Literature and Erotic Education in Italy, France, and England (1534-1685)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 272.

¹⁰ Ian Frederick Moulton, *Before Pornography: Erotic Writing in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 186.

¹¹ 184-6. See also Hannah Lavery, *The Impotency Poem from Ancient Latin to Restoration English Literature* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014).

frustration, and lengthy declaration of the dildo's superiority over the fallible male member – as signs of her self-empowerment and control in this power play between the sexes.

This is precisely the position taken in many feminist readings of such material, many of which implicitly follow from Emma Donoghue's classic excavations into early modern and eighteenth century female same-sex behaviour.¹² As Valerie Traub has shown, much feminist scholarship in response to Trumbach's erasure of early modern female sexualities has made problematic assumptions in opposite directions: that is, in anachronistically positing the existence of 'lesbianism' well before homosexual and heterosexual identities were demarcated as such,¹³ and/or in assuming that they represented a much earlier (i.e. seventeenth-century) and much more totalized female sexual autonomy and activity than can be supported by the bare fact of early modern women's relegation to the domestic sphere and status as the legal property of men.¹⁴

Coming to precisely the opposite conclusion of the satire as Grantham Turner, for instance, Curtis Icard takes men and the male personification of its central figure completely out of the equation in his reading of "SD", characterizing the poem and its dildo-donned ladies as a celebration of "the artificial, infallible, separated entirely from the male, employed onanistically by the female".¹⁵ Patricia Simons' recent essay "The Cultural History of Signior Dildo",¹⁶ which catalogues "SD" within a wide array of dildo satires and representations chiefly

¹² Emma Donoghue, *Passions Between Women: British Lesbian Culture 1668-1801* (London: Scarlet, 1992).

¹³ E.g. Donoghue, *Passions*.

¹⁴ Valerie Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. See discussion of Icard and Simons, below.

¹⁵ 33.

¹⁶ In *Sex Acts in Early Modern Italy*, ed. Alison Levy (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2010),

derived from classical and early modern Italian contexts, also falls squarely within this latter tendency, as Simons finds in both “SD” and the dildo satires of ancient authors such as Martial, Lucian, and Seneca “women exercis[ing] female sexual autonomy with the aid of dildoes”.¹⁷

Though I concur with Icard that there is an intriguing and ambiguously celebratory tone taken by the satirist towards the masturbating ladies of “SD”, specifically in its later versions,¹⁸ to argue that the poem’s female onanism precludes men or male rule elides the poem’s political context of patriarchal phallocentrism and masculinist discourse (however unstable and/or contested these might have been in the Restoration period), within which discussions of the properly (or improperly) masculine and feminine were inextricably yoked. Moreover, reading depictions of female onanism as expressions of female sexual autonomy side-steps in particular the social and moral implications of the one-sex model of sexuality and gender which buttressed early modern patriarchal society,¹⁹ according to which depictions of women fulfilling their lust beyond the bounds of sanctioned sexual practise – in any form or by any means (onanistic, same-sex, sodomitical) – were most often construed as yet further evidence of women’s sexual inferiority.²⁰

It is important when reading dildo satires, then, to check our often latent twenty-first century associations with dildo use before we read, and to attend to the particularities of the

¹⁷ 79.

¹⁸ See Chapter 6, which discusses the “SD” tradition’s ambiguous treatment of women and female sexualities.

¹⁹ See Traub, *Renaissance*, esp. 103, who similarly calls for a contextualized reading of these complex, ambivalent representations of female same-sex and onanistic desire with reference to early modern phallocentric and patriarchal discourses.

²⁰ Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990). See Chapter 2 for a full discussion of the dildo satire tradition’s development alongside one-sex phallic and anti-phallic notions of sexuality and sexual hierarchy, particularly regarding the Juvenalian tradition of invective satires on women and their conventionally boundless lust.

satire's own contexts.²¹ One crucial perspective that is lost when reading "SD" cursorily or from an unchecked modern perspective is that it is all too easy to read the dildo trope through a seemingly self-evident phallicism, wherein the dildo exists either to reproduce or subvert a pre-existing and universal phallic framework. An historical scope which is both broad and deep, in contrast, allows us better to grasp how the phallus, the dildo, and indeed phallicism itself shifted and warped – as indeed it did and still does – across place, time, and discursive context. As Thomas King has affirmed, we have barely begun the necessary work of uncovering how "gendered subjects were produced by those networks of competing discourses that Habermas has called 'the public sphere' and in what specific political terrains gender was deployed".²² In reading the dildo trope from antiquity to early modern England, we must first account, for instance, for the fact that our latent twenty-first century conception of the phallus stems largely from a particular time and place – from Freudian, Lacanian, and post-Lacanian theories,²³ birthed centuries and even millennia after the phalli and dildos considered in this study. This pitfall is particularly manifest in recent theoretical scholarship on the dildo's sexual politics, which has largely plucked the dildo out of history in treating the dildo's position within the phallic economy, and so has tended to make universalising claims about the dildo's

²¹ A notable exception to the rule of decontextualization is Marianne Thormählen's reading of "SD" as deeply rooted in its political, religious, and social contexts, and call for a deeper, more extensive reading of the poem in this vein. See *Rochester: The Poems in Context* (New York; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 287-93.

²² *The Gendering of Men Vol. 1, The English Phallus* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 11, 17-8.

²³ See Heather Findlay, "Freud, Fetishism, and the Lesbian Dildo Debates" which responds to dildo debates within feminist lesbian circles from the 1970s onwards and queries whether it is possible to detach the dildo from its seemingly inescapable phallicism (in *Out in Culture: Gay, Lesbian, and Queer Essays on Popular Culture*. Eds. Corey K. Creekmur and Alexander Doty. Durham: Duke University Press, 1995. 328-42); Jeanne Hamming, "Dildonics, Dykes, and the Detachable Masculine" which suggests that the dildo can be altogether re-constructed in post-gender, post-humanist terms as outside of the phallic economy (*European Journal of Women's Studies* 8.3 [2001]: 329-41); and Jeanine Minge and Amber Lynn Zimmerman, "Power, Pleasure, and Play: Screwing the Dildo and Rescripting Sexual Violence," who do historicize the dildo but err in tracing its origins to the nineteenth century medicalization of sexuality (*Qualitative Inquiry* 15.2 [2009]: 329-349). See also my Epilogue.

symbolic attributes that do not hold up when we take a longer, more contingent Foucauldian view.²⁴ But as Butler has queried, “are we to accept the priority of the phallus without questioning the narcissistic investment by which an organ, a body part, has been elevated/erected to the structuring and centering principle of the world?”²⁵ I suggest in what follows that a substantial segment of historical dildo representation, particularly within the dildo satire traditions of antiquity and the early modern period, poses precisely this question.

Moreover, scholarship which finds dildos in service of other aims, as in Donoghue’s *Passions Between Women: British Lesbian Culture 1668-1801*, which excavates early modern dildo representations as a means of tracing the history of lesbianism, or as in Laqueur’s *Solitary Sex: A Cultural History of Masturbation* (2003), which unearths dildo depictions as a function of the history of masturbation, make it all too easy to assume that the implicit distinctions we find in such scholarship between masturbatory, same-sex, and unsanctioned opposite-sex dildo uses in the early modern and eighteenth century contexts matches the same distinctions which we might commonly make between each of these contexts today.²⁶ In the twenty-first century it is markedly unconventional even in pornography to find dildo-aided female masturbation, sex between women, anal sex between men, and reciprocally penetrative male-female sex alongside one another as functions of the same sexual scene and economy. And yet such is precisely what unfolds in Aretino’s convent pornography *Ragionamenti*, wherein each of these forms of dildo use (alongside other forms of unsanctioned sexual activity) crucially informs and

²⁴ Foucault, *History of Sexuality*. Trans. Robert Hurley. (3 vols. New York: Vintage, 1990).

²⁵ *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

²⁶ For a particularly arresting and illustrative case study of one such conflation of sexual vices applied to a single early modern figure, see Cynthia Herrup, *A House in Gross Disorder: Sex, Law, and the Second Earl of Castlehaven*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

is expressed as a derivation of the other.²⁷ Thus while today it is common to view each of these contexts as culturally separate phenomenon whose symbolic valences are highly divergent, these are modern distinctions which early moderns would not necessarily have made, and which if unchecked impede a holistic sense of satiric dildo representation from antiquity to the early modern world and beyond.²⁸

This is not to suggest, though, that there are no distinctions to be made between forms of dildo use, between dildos and other phallic or sexually penetrative objects, and between various forms of sexual congress. I instead wish to suggest that where and why such distinctions are made throughout history shifts radically between complex cultural, political, and discursive contexts, and differs markedly from our own shifting, multidimensional contexts. Though this dissertation is deeply indebted to Simons' cultural history of "SD" as an important foundation both in its provision of new sources of dildo representation and in its display of the vast reach and merit of such discourse, there is much left to be done with this rich history of dildo representation: Simons' essay-length overview of the dildo's cultural history simply lacks the scope to adequately account for the wide and varied array of dildo depictions she evokes which span diverse and complex contexts of time, place, cultures, and institutions (medical, educational, satiric, and monastic, to name only a few), or to locate particular dildo representations on a spectrum of subversion and conservatism in relation to androcentric norms. (This, of course, is a happy problem that merely upholds the need for a dissertation-length study of the Restoration dildo trope.)

²⁷ See Chapter 2 for a full discussion of this text.

²⁸ Such is precisely what is offered in Chapter 2, which surveys the literary history of the satiric dildo satire from antiquity to Restoration England.

While “SD” and the early modern dildo figure are far from untouched in modern scholarship, then, as several decades of scholarly dildo glosses and the “Cultural History of ‘Signior Dildo’” attest,²⁹ there remain fruitful questions about “SD” and the dildo satire tradition that remain unasked, and whose answers, though not always cogent or definitive, amply reward the effort of sustained scrutiny. Despite the ubiquity of women in “SD”, for instance, we have yet to investigate thoroughly and on the period’s own terms the dildo-wielding women depicted in the tradition, and in the dildo satire tradition writ large. I therefore set out to ask: who were these women, why were they singled out as dildo uses and recipients, and to what ends? What was the range of attitudes and reactions that a contemporary reader or audience might have brought to depictions and allegations of dildo use, including those of the female targets themselves?

Shifting focus to questions more literary in nature raises an additional set of unasked questions for this dissertation to investigate. Among the most crucial of these is indeed that of origins, such as authors and texts have woven them for us. For instance, by what trajectory, if not by that of Mary of Modena’s Italian train, did the satiric dildo motif find its way to Restoration England, and what significations did it accrue along the way? What, in other words, was the literary heritage of the Restoration dildo, and how did Restoration satirists either follow or swerve from this heritage? Why might Restoration satirists have wished to write or

²⁹ In addition to the scholarship noted above, the modern editors of Rochester, most notably Keith Walker and Harold Love, have contributed much in their notes, bibliographical excavations, and editorial glosses to our current understanding of “SD” and its importance as an exemplary Restoration clandestine satire. Love takes up “SD” in each of his *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), “A Restoration Lamppoon in Transmission and Revision: Rochester’s (?) ‘Signior Dildo’” (*Studies in Bibliography* 46, 1993, 250-62), “A New ‘A’ Text of ‘Signior Dildo’” (*Studies in Bibliography* 49, 1996, 169-75), *The Works of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), and *ECL*. For Walker’s substantial contribution to parsing the topical references of “SD”, see Walker, ed., *The Poems of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984).

re-write the dildo's origin story, as we see in the examples with which I opened this Introduction above, and to what ends? And finally, what is the purpose and function of the satirist's deployment of comedy, irony, and sexual humour in figuring the dildo, and how might this bawdy tone add dimension to what may appear in the modern view as the trope's innate and one-dimensional anti-Catholicism, misogyny, and/or phallocentrism?

Introducing the anti-phallic dildo: some arguments

Nathaniel Bailey, *Dictionarium Britannicum*. 1730.

Dildo. From the Italian *diletto*, q.d. a woman's delight; or from our word dally, q.d. a thing to play withal.

Francis Grose, *A Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (1785; 1796).

Dildo, an implement resembling the virile member, for which it is said to be substituted, by nuns, boarding school misses, and others obliged to celibacy, or fearful of pregnancy. Dildoes are made of wax, horn, leather, and diverse other substances, and if fame does not lie more than usually, are to be had at many of our great toy shops and nick nackatories.

In attempting to determine precisely what *Seigneur Dildoe* was up to in Restoration London, this dissertation firstly asserts, and will of course need to take pains to prove, that the material and figurative dildo were prolific in Restoration English literature and culture, however bizarre or unlikely this may appear to us now. Following this, in tracing the trope's signification from classical Greece to early modern England, I wish to demonstrate that both the trope's longevity and its prominence within Restoration culture is due not to a uniformity of purpose or signification (misogynist, anti-Catholic, emasculating, or otherwise), but to its innate ambiguity as a fugitive sexual and political figure. As the *Seigneur* and the clandestine manuscripts which conveyed him so deftly demonstrate in their cross-faction, cross-sex travels across Restoration

London, the dildo trope could be appropriated to suit a wide range of political ends and contexts with ease, and satirists of all stripes took frequent advantage of this ability.³⁰ Finally, I argue that what does in fact unite the dildo's variety of contingent ends and significations across the dildo satire tradition is its signification as a markedly anti-Phallic figure, symptomatic of the innate fissures and incongruities of patriarchal ideals. When set against the phallus of antiquity and early modernity, that is, the dildo appears as the precise inverse of the phallus: a figure of sexual pleasure associated with women (after the tradition of the comic Greek *olisbos*),³¹ detached from the phallus' fundamentally procreative function,³² and free from the common limitations of the penis (unwanted pregnancy, disease, and impotence).³³ As we see with Nathaniel Bailey's 1730 *Dictionarium Britannicum* (quoted above), this was a distinction upheld in England into the eighteenth century through the linguistic association of the dildo with female pleasure, as contemporary dictionaries commonly (if spuriously) glossed "dildo" as derived from the Italian "diletto", or "women's delight".

Although I will expand each of these arguments in the chapters which follow, it bears characterizing the dildo satire's anti-phallic sub traditions here. In the comic sub-tradition of the anti-phallic dildo, initiated by Aristophanic comedy, the dildo appears as a figure of revelry, carnivalesque inversion, and patriarchal subversion, associated with a range of interconnected

³⁰ Legally, the dildo was particularly ambiguous because unless dildo use involved 'unnatural' acts between a woman, it escaped the bounds of sodomy, defined in law as "carnal knowledge between two men, between human and animal, or 'unnaturally' between man and woman" (Herrup, *House*, 28). Its status in the religio-political framework was equally ambiguous, particularly in the Restoration context, as it could (following Aretino's location of the dildo in the Catholic convent) as easily be deployed to uphold the licentious duplicity of Catholic practise, belief, and rites as it could to reveal the hypocrisy, voyeurism, and extremist fear-mongering of puritanical, ostensibly pious Protestants. See my discussion of the religious politics of "SD" in Chapter 5.

³¹ See my discussions of the Grecian *olisbos* and Roman phallus in Chapter 2.

³² Ibid.

³³ This theme is best evoked in Nashe (Chapter 2), in Butler's (?) *Dildoides* (Chapter 3) and in "SD" (Chapters 5-6).

pleasures including those of sex, fantasy, poetry, camaraderie, food, and drink. The comic dildo is conventionally construed as a boon to those in need of a means to pleasure without fear of pregnancy or disease, generally marshalled by sexually disabled men or solitary women, or prescribed to men who wish to prevent being cuckolded. However, the anti-phallic dildo is as easily wielded in the invective mode as an emblem of debauchery and excess, as railers could deploy allegations of dildo use alongside a number of concomitant vices (including same-sex and other unsanctioned sexual practises, such as anal or oral sex) to expose and denounce the supposed depravity of feared or reviled groups, commonly Catholics or the ruling elite. Thus in invective sub-traditions, derived from Juvenalian satire, the anti-phallic dildo is figured not only as an inverted phallus, but as its perversion, threat, and enemy.

The function of the invective dildo satirist is not mutually exclusive to that of the comic satirist's, however, given that the pleasure derived from both raillery and the recounting of sexual vice was itself a kind of prosthetic enjoyment. Similarly, in arguing for the dildo as preserver of cuckolds and the sexually disabled, the comic dildo often serves, allegedly at least, as a means of preventing more socially detrimental vices, upholding as much as subverting the patrilineal and even moral status quo. In the most complex installments of the dildo satire tradition, as we will find in "SD", the dildo's comic and invective valences are often evoked in tandem, making it incredibly difficult for the reader to discern whether we are to condemn, celebrate, and/or join in the dildo-assisted delight we are viewing. In such cases, surely, the reader's response – then as now – is most determined by his or her own biases, predilections, and affiliations.

Methods of reading “SD” as clandestine Restoration satire

In keeping with recent scholarship highlighting the inextricability of the historical and literary functions of texts,³⁴ this dissertation assumes as a central tenet of its methodology that all extant dildo representations dating from classical times to the eighteenth century are both deeply rooted in their historical contexts and also textual and often highly literary in nature.³⁵ The dildo history that the past has left behind reaches us chiefly through plays, verse satires, ballads, prose narratives, and literary pornography, and even the dictionaries, epistles, newsletters, religious texts, and medical treatises that bear witness to the dildo’s past evince more of the literary, perhaps, than of what each of these genres entails in the twenty-first century. It follows that the signification of historical dildo texts, particularly but not exclusively those which are pertinent to particular literary traditions, have ultimately depended on the literary contexts and traditions which have produced them, and that authors deploying the dildo motif have depended greatly on the conventions of genre and mode in producing meaning. (Based on what has been an extensive but as yet far from comprehensive survey, the figure of the dildo, it bears mentioning, appears to have been passed down as a figure of satire perhaps over and above any other form, particularly when one reaches back to the classics.) There are crucial and hitherto unexplored distinctions that remain to be made, then, between

³⁴ See Frances Dolan, *True Relations: Reading, Literature, and Evidence in Seventeenth-Century England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

³⁵ A notable exception to this is the figure of the dildo in visual art and woodcuts, the latter of which were often printed in conjunction with literary texts. Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to consider these except in relation to ancient representations of the phallus in visual art (Chapter 2). For facsimiles and accounts of this material, see Simons, “Cultural History”, Eva Keuls, *The Reign of the Phallus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) and Marilyn Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005).

dildos and other phallic figures within a variety of cultural and literary contexts - between, for instance, the phallic road markers or *herms* displayed in ubiquity in classical Roman cities; the medical penetrative instrument pioneered and published in medical texts of the sixteenth century by Ambroise Paré; Herodas' savvy city wives purchasing their leather dildos from generous shoemakers; Aristophanes' 'leather jobs' rescuing Athenian women from sex starvation in their husbands' absence; the denounced dildos of Juvenal's drunk, carousing 'lesbians' and debauched Duchesses of Donne and Marvell; the glass dildoes wielded by monks and nuns in Aretino's erotic fantasy *Ragionamenti*; and finally, the accommodating cosmopolitan gallant *Seigneur Dildoe* in his late-seventeenth-century age of political strife and shift.³⁶

While my treatments of the dildo satire's thematization of sex and gender are underpinned by King's call, following Foucault, for more sustained treatments of historical gendered subjects, my literary critical methodology in treating the engagement of "SD" with its own Restoration literary and cultural contexts is best supported in the recent criticism by Paul Hammond's *The Making of Restoration Poetry* (2007): a wide-ranging study of the precursors and models of Restoration poetry and its conditions of authorship and transmission which calls

³⁶ As it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to attend to each of these in full, I uphold several as particularly fecund avenues of research for future investigations of the dildo trope. These are, namely: the literary dildo's relationship to early modern and modern penetrative medical devices and the history of medicine; the Restoration dildo trope's particular relationship to French pornography narratives (which often feature dildos), particularly given the *Seigneur's* French provenance and the narratives' wide circulation and translation in England at the beginning of the long eighteenth century; the numerous pictorial dildo texts from Medieval, early modern, and eighteenth-century England that friends and scholars have generously sent my way and that often accompanied editions of pornographic narratives such as the *Cabinet of Venus* (1680); the Restoration dildo's relationship to the royal scepter as a kind of political dildo (given Rochester's famous satiric comparison of Charles II's "Prick" and "scepter" in his satire on Charles II); and especially the dildo trope's decline into pornographic obscurity (as cursorily treated in my Epilogue) until it was finally revived as a politically-central trope amidst attacks on the court during the French Revolution of the 1790s.

for not only clandestine satires such as “SD”, but also Restoration poetry more broadly, to be read contextually with the literary culture’s own norms and ethos in mind. Among the most important contexts, often elided in literary critical readings but which crucially informs the case of “SD”, is that of the Restoration’s unique culture and mode of clandestine satire: satires (also referred to as lampoons) “written for circulation through means other than the licensed press, which is to say oral recitation, manuscript transcription, or surreptitious printing”.³⁷

Restoration clandestine satire commented vehemently and extensively on topical political and social issues of the day, was the first satiric culture in the English tradition to attack royal and aristocratic subjects explicitly and individually, and most often circulated anonymously without the benefit of a known author to heighten its authority. The possession or authorship of clandestine satire was also punishable under severe libel laws, which as Hammond has argued seems to have heightened more than quelled the clandestine cachet and political potency of the “grubby manuscript sheet of libellous verses” within Restoration literary culture.³⁸

The twentieth century resurrection, publication, and canonization of “SD” as the authorial output of the Restoration’s notorious court wit John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, reminds us just how crucial such contextualization and authorial framing are to our reading of any text. Inaugurating the modern study of Restoration clandestine satire, the mid-twentieth-century Yale series *Poems on Affairs of State* (1963-75, henceforth *POASY*) republished and first made available to a modern readership a collection of hundreds of clandestine Restoration satires which had previously been published only in manuscript, and which were first print-

³⁷ Love, *ECL*, 7.

³⁸ Paul Hammond, *The Making of Restoration Poetry* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006), xxii.

published in thirty volumes between 1689 and 1716 series of the same name (henceforth *POAS*).³⁹ Though “SD” appeared in print for the first time in a 1703 *POAS* volume, it was excluded from this new-formed, 5-volume clandestine canon: according to the stated aims of the series, which took the Restoration series’ alternative title *State Poems* rather at its word, “SD” and most other satires on the court ladies were not published in the *POASY* series because they did not pertain obviously enough, at least in the mid-twentieth-century editors’ view, to the period’s politics of state.⁴⁰ (This perception has since been overturned, it bears mentioning, as Harold Love has since argued that the poem is squarely political in its aims and as a wealth of scholarship on the court ladies has demonstrated just how inextricable the politics of sex and state were in the Restoration.)

In modern publications, “SD” was, however, published from the 1950s and across the twentieth-century in emerging editions of Rochester’s full corpus alongside other Rochesterian works which had previously been suppressed as too obscene for publication.⁴¹ Ironically, perhaps, this took place despite the fact that a Restoration reader would only have

³⁹ Here I adopt Harold Love’s definition of publication, which in Love’s widened sense of the term denotes “a movement from a private realm of creativity to a public realm of consumption” (*Scribal*, 36). Love notes that the difference in circulation between scribally and print-published text isn’t a difference in number of read/consumed texts, necessarily, but of an “explosive provision of copies” available at once in the case of print, in contrast to the way in which scribal texts are copied over time to fit demands, often making them capable of sustaining their currency over long periods and bringing them to the attention of many readers (*Scribal*, 38).

⁴⁰ The chief concern of the series is the state poems’ oppositional engagement with historical and political events and (male) figures, as in their selections from the late 1660s, 70s, and 80s *POASY* editors privilege poems that express criticism of the new regime inaugurated by Marvell’s breaking of the Restoration “honeymoon” in his *Advice to the Painter* poems (xxxiv-v, Vols. 1-3), and from the time of the Revolution, those that epitomize the period’s outpouring of Jacobite and anti-Jacobite propaganda (xxxii, Vols. 4-5).

⁴¹ “SD” first appears in Vivian de Sola Pinto’s edition *John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester* (Kegan, 1953). The observations made in this section are based on Nicholas Fisher, “The Publication of the Earl of Rochester’s Works, 1660-1779” (PhD diss., University of Leeds, 2004), and on Hammond, “Rochester and His Editors” (in *Making*), the latter of whom provides an excellent retrospective on the editors and editions of the Rochester canon, both eighteenth and twentieth-century, and on the challenges and methodological difficulties the Rochester canon has posed.

encountered “SD” in radically different contexts: either in oral form, as we will see in Chapter 5, in a fugitive manuscript separate, or within manuscript and print volumes of miscellaneous and generally anonymous clandestine satire - never within an edition of Rochester’s verse (whether manuscript or print). “SD” was never published in a Rochester volume, in fact, either in his lifetime or in the centuries following his death. With the sole exception of John Harold Wilson’s relatively modest volume *Court Satires of the Restoration* (1976), which highlights the poem’s anonymous transmission and multiple manuscript versions, and perhaps with that of Love’s placement of “SD” among “Disputed Works” in his 1999 Rochester edition, “SD” remains a fixture of the Rochester canon, even as the search for firmer author attribution and the original or best text version of “SD” were to remain central preoccupations even in Love’s textual criticism.⁴²

Despite decades of painstaking archival scholarship into the instability, anonymity, and corporate authorship not just of “SD” but of the entire lampoon genre, including multiple and extensive scholarly efforts by Harold Love to demonstrate that “SD” was authored and circulated at a remove from Rochester’s hand (whatever role he likely played in the genesis of the tradition),⁴³ in their most recent edition of Rochester, *John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester: The Poems and Lucina’s Rape* (2010), Keith Walker and Nicholas Fisher overturn much of the import and thrust of Love’s findings. While they place the poem within those works “Less Securely Attributed to Rochester”, concede in their notes the probability of the poem’s shared authorship,⁴⁴ and admit the unlikelihood of Rochester having been associated with “Additions” to the poem (almost certainly added after his death),⁴⁵ they nonetheless assert that there

⁴² See n. 29, above.

⁴³ Ibid, especially “A Lampoon” and *Works*.

⁴⁴ 150.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

“appears no reason to doubt [Rochester’s] association” with the first fourteen stanzas of “SD”, and by this logic re-assert the poem’s rightful context of readership as within the Rochester canon, where readers who are unlikely to pause for editorial footnotes may never consider that the poem had many authors, was anonymously circulated, and was disseminated in many versions for a span of several decades.⁴⁶

The salient question here is: how might we approach a text differently which survives in multiple (that is, eleven extant) multivalent versions and manuscript contexts – all unique and highly various – hailing from a period of over thirty years of Restoration history (many of which post-date Rochester’s death), and all the likely product of a number of anonymous hands, than we approach one which appears to us in a single well-groomed authorial edition? This question is particularly pertinent if we reference the past decades of revelatory scholarship on the vibrant print and manuscript cultures of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries;⁴⁷ and its importance is particularly compounded, I suggest, when we approach an ‘obscene’ text, particularly a dildo text allegedly from a mind as notorious for its obscenity as the Earl of Rochester’s. That “SD” is in fact an anonymously circulated, multivalent product of its many authors, as we will see in Chapter 5, and in many respects a product of its culture’s wider imagination rather than of a single mind within that culture, radically alters how we might

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ See in particular David Veith, *Attribution in Restoration Poetry: A Study of Rochester’s Poems of 1680* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1963), Margaret Ezell, *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* (1999), Love, *Scribal Publication* and *ECL*, and Hammond, *Making*.

interpret the text and its central dildo trope as culturally central, marginal, or abject. It also radically transforms the particular questions we might think to ask of them.⁴⁸

Where Harold Love's foundational studies *Scribal Publication* and *English Clandestine Satire* are primarily concerned with establishing norms and distinctions within clandestine sub-genres of Restoration poetry, then, my approach to "SD" and the Restoration dildo satire counters the tendency to instill authorial order and textual uniformity on a genre that is by nature furtive and multiform, in keeping with Hammond's characterization of the Restoration culture's predilection for blurring the lines between private life and public spectacle, between individual and communal authorship, and between the heterogeneous variety of models, purposes, personae, and genres from which poets drew at will.⁴⁹ This viewpoint is additionally predicated on Margaret Doody's argument in *The Daring Muse* (1985); that is, that in searching for neoclassical order and correctness in the long eighteenth-century, we have tended to underestimate the "excitement" that can be garnered in reading poetry of this period, and to overlook its arresting "strangeness"—traits of which *Seigneur Dildoe* is a self-evidently excellent example.⁵⁰

In my treatment of "SD" and the dildo satires of the Restoration I therefore draw extensively from Hammond's emphasis on the period's penchant for anonymous and corporate modes of authorship; for clandestine, oral, and manuscript modes of publication; and for the

⁴⁸ For a discussion of Rochester's anonymity and its "complex effects upon the ways in which the poetry might be read", see Hammond, *Making*, 61-6. As Hammond has queried, "instead of regarding anonymity as a problem, can we not see it as a functional device, as a resource which enabled certain kinds of writing and reading, rather than a tiresome puzzle which obscures the real canon of those named poets in whom we are primarily interested?" (*Making*, 49).

⁴⁹ *Making*.

⁵⁰ 3.

assumption of satiric poses in the making of poetry, all of which is compounded in the case of a clandestine satiric tradition.⁵¹ The case study of “SD” provided in this dissertation upholds Hammond’s view that particularly fundamental to this period’s poetry are the rhetorical strategies of deploying classical allusion, topical allusion (especially to political, sexual, and court intrigue), contemporary literary allusion (particularly between theatre and lampoon cultures), anonymity, and the use and fashioning of multiple personae and authorial poses to enhance its authority, all of which jumbled together serve to “invite the reader to engage in a very active form of reading, making him in important respects a co-author, another maker of the text”.⁵² It is little wonder, then, that as David Farley-Hills has observed, the Restoration was “an age of copious poetry...the last in which it was an advantage, as it had been in many an earlier prince’s court, to ‘dance and eek sing and wel portraye and write’”; indeed, that it was “in some ways the last age when poetry was an important means of communication at all levels of society”.⁵³

Dissertation and chapter overviews

This dissertation’s chapters have been structured to provide a loosely chronological literary history of both the Restoration dildo satire and of *Seigneur Dildoe*, situated within over-arching frameworks of literary mode, particularly the comic and invective, and of contingent conceptions of gender, sexuality, and the phallus. They begin as they must with the dildo

⁵¹ *Making*.

⁵² xxii.

⁵³ *The Benevolence of Laughter: Comic Poetry of the Commonwealth and Restoration* (London: Macmillan, 1974), 1.

satire's extant western origins in ancient Greece and Rome, chronicling important developments of the genre and trope in the Medieval, early modern Italian, and early modern English contexts, and culminate in a sustained, multi-chapter critical inquiry into *Seigneur Dildoe's* peculiar proliferation as a multivocal, multiform, and culturally-central entity within early Restoration England (roughly the 1660s to mid-1670s). I conclude the history with a brief account of *Seigneur Dildoe's* afterlife and decline as an increasingly euphemised and subsequently abjected *Seigneur* and *Monsieur* in later Restoration and early eighteenth-century texts, acknowledging the trope's generally overlooked appearance in canonical works by Swift and Fielding and those texts already accounted for in Deborah Needleman Armintor's excellent discussion of the dildo as "little man" in her monograph *the little everyman: Stature and Masculinity in Eighteenth-Century English Literature* (2011).⁵⁴

Chapter 2 begins the task of establishing *Seigneur Dildoe* as an anti-Phallic figure and "person of note" by tracing the formative traditions of satiric dildo figuration that help distinguish convention and innovation in "SD".⁵⁵ This method of inquiry is particularly founded on scholarship by Wilson, Love, and Hammond which has established Restoration poetry as extensively engaged with classical models in both its authorized and clandestine forms, and which overturns Pope's influential assertion that Restoration satirists heeded little apart from their own ephemeral bipartisanism. Chapter 2 takes as its point of departure Harold Love's indication that "SD" stems from a tradition of "misogynistic" dildo satires reaching back to the

⁵⁴ See especially "The Labour of Little Men", 80-104.

⁵⁵ Readers are cautioned: "You will take him at first for noe Person of Note / Because hee'le appeare in a plaine Leather-Coate, / But when you his virtuous Abilites know, / You'le fall downe, and worship this Seigneur Dildoe" (13-16).

Mimes of Herodas (2nd century BCE),⁵⁶ but attends for the first time to the comic mode of this Grecian genesis and to the dildo satire tradition's loosely bifurcated but highly various evolution across Greek, Roman, Medieval, and Early Modern contexts. In its classical contexts, dildo satires of note discussed in my second chapter include Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* and Latin satires by Lucian, Martial, Seneca, and Juvenal; in its early modern Italian, Pietro Aretino's *Ragionamenti*, whose carnivalesque account draws from both classical and Medieval traditions to establish the dildo as commonplace figure within the pagan-Catholic monastery; and in its early modern English, Thomas Nashe's *Choise of Valentines*, which draws from the Aretine model but displaces Aretino's deployment of the dildo motif onto the urban brothel and impotent male, occasioning a flurry of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century reactions by authors as prominent as Harvey, Shakespeare, Jonson, and Donne. As I will demonstrate throughout this dissertation, these authors and texts each had a profound and lingering effect on the anti-phallic form and genesis of *Seigneur Dildoe*.

Moreover, the literary history I provide in Chapter 2 demonstrates that Restoration England inherited a dildo satire tradition that was a multivalent, sophisticated dialectic between comic and invective classical traditions, ones that figured the dildo as an anti-phallus construed either as a female tool or male bane. Beginning with a contrastive discussion of Greek 'olisbos' comically wielded by masturbating women in Old Comedy (5th century BCE) versus the Roman dildo as necessary implement of the defamed tribade in Latin satire (1st and 2nd century CE), and distinguishing each of these with that of the sacred phallus, Chapter 2 establishes the fundamental contingency of the figurative dildo against the presumed

⁵⁶ "A Lampoon", 251.

universality of the one-sex phallus, while also highlighting two foundational modes of dildo depiction in female same-sex and masturbatory contexts, respectively. Additionally, the history provided in Chapter 2 qualifies Love's implicit characterisation of the dildo satire tradition as uniform, denunciatory, and self-evidently "misogynist", assumptions that have been widely applied to the dildo satire tradition but never, to my knowledge, investigated at length. While as Chapter 2 will demonstrate the invective dildo satire tradition clearly earns its reputation for misogyny and dildo denunciation, the gender politics of its comic inverse are much more intricate and intriguing to plot, given that the comic dildo operates within a one-sex phallogentric framework but subtly subverts it, whether by upholding the advantages of the dildo over the penis or by assuming a relatively sympathetic female narrative point of view in its thematization of sex, gender, and power. The legacy and far-reaching influence of the dildo satire tradition, then, invites new readings of *Seigneur Dildoe* as a comic, anti-phallic figure and aid to the women of England.

Chapter 3 carries the literary history of "SD" forward to the early Restoration by recounting how the dildo satire and trope was repurposed in the Restoration context as a localized and newly politicized vehicle and emblem at the heart of a heated dispute between court and city interests, between Juvenalian and comic modes of dildo figuration, and between puritanical and libertine approaches to sexual themes and license. Chapter 3 investigates how and why the literary figuration of the dildo first reached its early modern zenith in the late seventeenth century, a period unique in the history of dildo figuration both in its preservation of material dildo evidence and in its particular obsession with the dildo figure, when the dildo appeared in Marvell's influential anti-royalist satire *Last Advice to a Painter* (1667) and when

numerous “Ballers”, a group of Restoration court libertines which included authors Samuel Butler and John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, took up the cause of dildo-importation to dispute the seizure and burning of a 1670 shipment of French dildos by citizen customs officers (or enemy “Farmers”).

Chapter 3 marshals a range of epistolary and satirical commentary on these events to suggest that we should not be too hasty to discount the largely celebratory, bawdy tenor of these initial libertine defenses of dildo use and importation within Restoration England in favour of the Marvellian, anti-court dissent which rose up against them. Helpfully, this dildo dissent is chronicled and lampooned at length in *Dildoides*, Samuel Butler’s (?) 1672 extended mock-heroic defense of the English dildo, which explores the complexity of the dildo as a naturalized foreign commodity and which exposes all those involved in the dildo debates to ridicule – the extremist, slippery-slope reactionary thinking of the citizen Farmers, the debauched, effeminate flamboyance of the aristocrat Ballers, and the easy acquiescence of a gullible audience of onlookers quick to heed the latest and loudest voice in the debate – while ultimately advocating in support of the dildo from an amoral position of balance and reason against puritanical (or aristocratic) excess. Based on what evidence has been passed down to posterity, at least, it is just to view the comic response as that which in many ways won the satiric day; we thus find in the Restoration dildo debates a sincere, if tongue-in-cheek, Restoration libertine interest not only in dildo importation as a liberal mercantile venture, but also to a qualified ethic of sexual permissiveness in arguing for the freedom of dildo use and penetrative pleasure amongst both men and women.

Before turning to sustained analyses of *Seigneur Dildoe's* most salient and commonly parsed themes – its politics of sex and religion – Chapter 4 shifts briefly from literary to textual history, establishing the prolific thirty-year (ca. 1673-1703) oral and manuscript transmission of “SD” to determine precisely how and why it is just to treat this fugitive lampoon as among the most widely circulated and culturally influential satires of the day, and indeed to justify such extensive readings of its sexual and political themes. Chapter 4 establishes how “SD,” though originating among the Ballers at court and clearly comic in original conceit and tone, was disseminated in wide-reaching, aggregate versions each bearing witness to distinct and sometimes discordant aims and voices that were accrued in transmission. This textual and tonal heterogeneity is best accounted for by “SD’s” form as a sung ballad in stand-alone stanzas purpose-made for improvisation with each transmission and performance, and by examining its eleven extant unique manuscript versions and contexts as a means of determining the distinct ways in which “SD” was read, encountered, and co-authored by Restoration interlocutors from a variety of social and cultural milieu that extended well beyond the ballad’s original court locus.

Although “Seigneur Dildoe” has been commonly read as an individually-authored text attributed to John Wilmot, Second Earl of Rochester, I also argue in Chapter 4 that the complex oral, manuscript and print history and largely anonymous circulation of “SD” over a thirty-year period – that is, for at least 23 years after Rochester’s death in 1680 - demands that it be read as a poetic tradition rather than as a single poem, and as a product of corporate authorship and the Restoration cultural imaginary rather than the authorial product of a single figure’s ethos or pose, as was the case with both Aretino’s and Nashe’s dildo. Building from this premise and

using both bibliographic and literary-critical methods, I review and uphold Harold Love's argument that the place of "SD" in the Rochester canon is dubious, but question Love's (and more recently Walker and Fisher's)⁵⁷ editorial grounds for conflating and flattening the eleven extant versions and distinct manuscript contexts of "Seigneur Dildoe" into just two familial groupings.

By re-establishing each MS version of the poem, its emphases and marginalia as unique and 'reliable' text – that is, as testaments to its copyist(s)' rationale for ex/inclusion, signs of his interpretive principles and co-authorial interventions, and the version's context of readership - Chapter 4 showcases how the clandestine transmission of a Restoration lampoon was not an incidental but a core attribute of its literary success and mock-heroic subversion, opening up the variety of purposes to which a topical Restoration lampoon could be put (compounded in the case of an allusion-rich dildo satire). Additionally, I demonstrate that the fugitive, clandestinely-transmitted Restoration lampoon, doubled in *Seigneur Dildoe* himself, epitomized the comic hero: unassuming and morally flawed, to be sure, but possessed with charms and virtues enough to earn virtually limitless passage through both town and the Restoration imagination, attracting both the love and revulsion of rapt audiences in its progress.

In Chapter 5, I examine the fugitive hero, "SD", in all his variety and variation, applying the methods proposed in Chapter 4 and reading each of the many versions of "SD" to identify precisely what the figure of the dildo signified within the Restoration's chaotic religio-political framework. I particularly test the hitherto untried assumption, given the *Seigneur's*

⁵⁷ John Wilmot, *Earl of Rochester: The Poems and Lucina's Rape* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

Catholicism, association with Mary of Modena and the duke of York, and number of Catholics that are named in the tradition, that “SD” is indeed a uniformly and fundamentally anti-Catholic and anti-Yorkist poem and figure. Here, acknowledging the poem’s comic rather than invective framework alters our view considerably, as given the comic tradition’s penchant for irony and revelry figures named within the comedy should not be too hastily presumed the ultimate butts or targets of the joke. Indeed, I argue in Chapter 5 that Mary of Modena and the Duke of York are among the most lightly handled satiric targets of “SD”, particularly in the poem’s original iterations, and are treated in what reads much like a raucous (if unflattering) nuptial roast, their wedding and the Duke’s public declaration of Catholicism fit occasions in several early versions for the poem’s emphatic bait and switch attack on the intolerance, anti-Catholicism, and xenophobia of the Duke’s proto-Whig, citizen opposition.

Beyond these initial purposes, however, Chapter 5 also acknowledges that as a fugitive, improvisational figure that in its thirty-year run was clearly co-opted by satirists from a variety of political stripes drawing from a range of dildo satire precedents, the dozens of unique stanzas of “SD” that were accrued in transmission testify to a variety of satiric targets hailing from both the puritanical city and the supposedly crypto-Catholic court. There is reason indeed for one contemporary witness wryly to comment that “SD” seems to have “touched all the Ladies from Wapping to Westminster”, regardless of their factional or religious affiliations;⁵⁸ but even this sage commentator neglected to account for the numerous men also named in the tradition as friends of the *Seigneur*. As a virtually limitless, clandestine and fugitive figure, then,

⁵⁸ Walter Overbury, in *Williamson Letters*. Jan. 26 1674; 2.132. Also published in *Letters Addressed from London to Sir Joseph Williamson...In the Years 1673 and 1674*, ed. W.D. Christie (London, 1874), ii. 132, and quoted in part in Love, *Works* 476.

“SD” was able to target virtually any figure or vice – whether of depraved morality or foppish intolerance - at which a satirist wished to aim, its many versions elevating (and hopelessly complicating!) a seemingly over-simple, throwaway ballad to a communal locus of sustained and significant, thoroughly irreverent, political debate.⁵⁹

If Chapter 5 qualifies the longstanding assumption that “SD” and the Restoration dildo was deployed exclusively as an anti-Catholic trope, Chapter 6 takes up the even harrier task of parsing its alleged misogyny, particularly its depiction of women, female desire, and the use of *Seigneur Dildo* as a sexual implement used in place of (or in addition to) *Count Cazzo*. Given that such a vast number of lampoons were devoted to the period’s ladies,⁶⁰ this chapter reads the shot-gun stanzas of “SD” in light of the recent criticism on Restoration sexual politics to re-investigate the satirists’ keen interest in figuring the women of England as rampant dildo users, and particularly in treating the individual histories – including personal reputations, proximities to power, rumoured sexual intrigues, and celebrity personae – of the women they so graphically and routinely depicted. Chapter 6 builds from a growing body of recent scholarship on the ladies of the Restoration court and town, but is particularly indebted to that of Catherine MacLeod and Julia Marciari Alexander, whose edited collections *Painted Ladies: Women at the Court of Charles II* (2001) and *Politics, Transgression, and Representation at the Court of Charles II* (2007) inspired renewed scholarly interest in the period’s prolifically painted but previously

⁵⁹ Here I am particularly drawing on Hammond’s conception of the political cachet attached to the “grubby manuscript sheet of libellous verses” (*Making* xxii), both unprintable and powerful.

⁶⁰ See Wilson, *Court Satire*, “Introduction”.

overlooked ladies.⁶¹ It considers as its case study the celebrity career of royal mistress Barbara Villiers, Duchess of Cleveland, whose countless affairs and sexual brazenness inspired countless satires, the ambiguous admiration of many, and a new fashion of female libertinism at Court.

To add necessary context to the satires on Cleveland and on her lampooned female contemporaries, Chapter 6 also surveys satiric disputes between the so-called truewits and halfwits (led by the Earl of Rochester and Jack Howe, respectively) over the proper aims of the period's clandestine satire, whether those of moral denunciation, secularized critique, or voyeuristic gossip. These contexts clearly establish the satirists' gossip-mongering interest in the ladies' rise to new eminence within the Restoration court, amply demonstrating that prominent women of the Restoration court and town, especially its royal and aristocratic mistresses, actresses, and female authors, attracted a highly ironic range of ire, lusty voyeurism, and libertine praise, all of which served to promulgate their celebrity as much as to undercut it. Often acting as keen self-fashioners, many of whom did not scruple to act in their own defence, the ladies of the court were far from passive or defenceless under Charles II's royally-sanctioned ethic of female 'kindness', a fact which as I demonstrate in my closing

⁶¹ John Harold Wilson, *All the King's Ladies: Actresses of the Restoration* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1958) is again one of the early outliers in this field of inquiry. In addition to the edited collections noted above, notable recent scholarship on Restoration women (and contemporary depictions of Restoration women) on which Chapter 6 is based includes Rachel Weil, "Sometimes a Scepter is Only a Scepter: Pornography and Politics in Restoration England" (in *The Invention of Pornography: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity, 1500-1800*, 1993) and *Political Passions: Gender, the Family and Political Argument in England 1680-1714* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999); Frances Dolan, *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender, and Seventeenth-Century Print Culture* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1999); Nancy Klein Maguire, "The Duchess of Portsmouth: English Royal Consort and French Politician, 1670-85" (Malcolm Smuts, ed. *The Stuart Court and Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), and Alison Conway, *The Protestant Whore: Courtesan Narrative and Religious Controversy in England, 1680-1750* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010).

reading of the women of “SD” is particularly exploited in those stanzas which depict the ladies gaining quick-witted ascendancy over their foppish male counterparts.

Finally, my Epilogue book-ends the literary history of the dildo satire and trope by briefly considering *Seigneur Dildo*'s afterlife in the eighteenth century, both to recuperate the cultural weight of the comic dildo at the advent of the long eighteenth century and to trace its revisionist relegation exclusively to misogynist invective, its subsumption into polite euphemism, and descent into the annals of the patently impolite. These chart across the eighteenth century not a disappearance of the dildo, by any means, but rather its abjection from direct, mainstream discourse with rising conceptions of female sexual passivity, social decorum, and the companionate marriage.

Chapter 2: Classical and Early Modern Predecessors

Introduction: the potent and impotent Restoration dildo

When we survey satires of the Restoration for the dildo motif, particularly those associated with the Rochester canon, two dildo iterations are most likely to draw our gaze. The first is, of course, “SD”: the dildo as *Seigneur* a foreign Catholic male – or more accurately, an appropriately French eunuch or Italian castrato, depending on one’s version, gallivanting about London and passed along among the women (and men) of the court and town. His virtues as comic hero, the satirist would have us note, are both evident and universal to all who know him: though morally dubious and decked only in plain leather garb, the *Seigneur* is more than capable of satiating any and all sexual appetites, even those of women whose desire is conventionally boundless and impossible to satiate.

And so, in a matter-of-fact manner, the dildo of “SD” turns an old one-sex model trope on its head. The conventional insatiability of women, particularly in the “SD” narrative those English women of Catholic faith,⁶² has not been due to their inherent failing as an inferior sex, but due to their lack of an implement “safe, sound, ready, and dumb” enough to manage the job.⁶³ In this conceit, in keeping with the impotence motif in literature from antiquity to the Restoration,⁶⁴ it is not the female but the male of the species, due to the frailty and fallibility of the male member, that has been found wanting. Aphra Behn’s *Cloris*, disappointed by an

⁶² As Frances Dolan has argued, “disorderly women” and Catholicism were intimately linked in the seventeenth century given their mutual conflicted status as both foreign and familiar in the English Protestant imagination, particularly against the early modern norm of white, Protestant, masculine Englishness. See *Whores of Babylon*, 4, 5.

⁶³ “SD”, 49.

⁶⁴ See Varney, *Impotency Poem*.

overwhelmed, impotent Lisander in “The Disappointment”, simply lacked a dildo; and had the speaker of Rochester’s “The Imperfect Enjoyment” only brandished a dildo to conquer in his stead, he might have avoided the humiliation and shame of sexual defeat. If only they’d known “the discretion and vigour of *Seigneur Dildoe*”,⁶⁵ as the satirist would say.

But there is, of course, a second prominent deployment of the dildo motif which draws our gaze in the wider Rochesteriana. In Rochester’s (?) *Sodom* (1678), a dark, pornotopic play so obscene and hyperbolic even the Restoration court deemed it unplayable, dildos again figure as an important set piece. But in *Sodom*, in keeping with the classical one-sex conception of the almighty Prick as the ordering principle of the world – no simulacra allowed – dildos are furnished only to be utterly inept at quenching the unbearable sexual thirst of the Kingdom of Sodom’s Prick-deprived women. In contradistinction to the omnipotent Prick, then, in this conceit dildos are figured as useless counterfeits, impotent in both the natural (i.e. opposite sex) and unnatural (i.e. same sex) sexual economies.

Students of history, satire, and particularly the one-sex model as instituted by the ancients and carried forward into early modern Europe are likely to find the second of these conceits (wherein women and dildos appear only as downtrodden set pieces of male phallogentric hubris) as the more familiar and salient of the two dildo trope iterations. Indeed, the impotent dildo of the likes of *Sodom* casts a long shadow, such that we risk bringing our knowledge of the one-sex model and of invective dildo satires such as *Sodom* and Juvenal’s

⁶⁵ 60.

sixth satire to our readings of the dildo motif in other satiric modes, and pronounce the whole lot, as Harold Love and others have after him, both misogynist and inescapably phallogocentric.⁶⁶

But aside from simply urging us to check our unchecked biases, I must of course justify my reading of the first dildo trope – that is, of “SD” and the sexually-superior *Seigneur* as a comic disruption of the one-sex phallogocentric framework, which I contend it fundamentally subverts. There are several methods with which to answer this question, already outlined in Chapter 1 and due to be applied in later chapters of this dissertation. This chapter, however, builds the foundation of the comic, subversive nature of the *Seigneur Dildoe* trope as anti-phallus by establishing its literary and figurative heritage, which as this account will demonstrate is longstanding, multi-layered, and fundamentally comic in origin, the potent dildo evolving in the western satiric tradition alongside its invective inverse.

Satiric dildo origins and the Restoration dildo

Dildos have existed for at least a millennium and a half, and are likely to have existed for much longer than this. In 2005, German scientists discovered a 28,000-year-old - that is, Stone-Age penis-shaped object made of stone whose purpose(s) scientists were unable to verify due to its age and lack of contextual information. It was noted, however, that the smoothness and life-like (8”) size of the implement allowed for sexual use as a distinct possibility.⁶⁷ The dildo’s recurrence as a literary motif, likewise, is at least as old as the ancient world, as texts from a variety of cultures (Greek, Roman, Babylonian, Egyptian, Chinese) tell tales of women who use

⁶⁶ See Love, “A Lampoon”, 251, and McFarlane, 91, respectively.

⁶⁷ Jonathon Amos, “Ancient phallus unearthed in cave”, *BBC News*, July 25, 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/4713323.stm>

sexual ‘instruments’ either by themselves or with each other.⁶⁸ In western iconography and texts of the ancient, Medieval, and early modern periods, the dildo appears on Attic vase paintings, in comedy, mime, verse satire, and prose dialogue, and in penitentials, legal records, and medical manuals.⁶⁹ As such, the dildo’s proliferation within texts of the Restoration English court such as those glossed above is much less random or novel than it might appear from a distance, and the tonal shifts and thematic multivalence between Restoration iterations of the trope and between the many extant versions and stanzas of “SD”, specifically, are crucially informed by the several evolving traditions and modes of dildo depiction within classical and early modern texts.

The history of the dildo as a literary motif reveals that by the English Restoration, the dildo was well-established as a humorous, satirical figure of social disruption, wielded in the comic tradition by licentious urban matrons who used dildos for solitary masturbation (a topos established in ancient Greece), and in the Latin invective tradition by tribades, sometimes identified as *heteraisteria* or high-class prostitutes, who used a dildo or strap-on to penetrate others (a topos established in ancient Rome). From the Roman period to the mid-seventeenth century, the dildo was a marginal literary figure that could not be named in polite literary circles or that lent infamy to those authors who did, such as Pietro Aretino and Thomas Nashe. Nonetheless, the dildo re-appears again and again in texts, we can surmise, not only because it

⁶⁸ August Stanley, *Mothers and Daughters of Invention: Notes for a Revised History of Technology* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 208-9.

⁶⁹ Because of the fecundity and reach of the dildo motif, it is unfortunately beyond the scope of this chapter and dissertation to consider each of these traditions in full. For Medieval dildo representations, see Ruth Mazo Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing Unto Others* (2005). For discussions of dildos in other early modern European contexts, see Sherry Marie Velasco, *Lesbians in Early Modern Spain* (2011) and Ulinka Rublack, *Gender in Early Modern German History* (2010).

reflected a recurring social and material reality, but also because of the dildo's figurative ability to convey power (i.e. access to pleasure, freedom from sexual dependence, and access to masculinity and masculine behaviours) to those sexual subordinates who wielded it, and because as such it fundamentally undercut the logic of sexual hierarchies and conventions.

Distinguishing between phallus and dildo in Ancient Greece and Rome

The phallus was ubiquitous in the Greco-Roman world, particularly in ancient Rome. In the mid-eighteenth century, the discovery of Pompeii's ruins made the ancient Roman obsession with phallic iconography and worship impossible to deny, however the increasingly polite tastes of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century caused commentators to ignore or obfuscate this fact.⁷⁰

As cultural historian Patricia Simons and classicists Eva Keuls, Catherine Johns, Alastair Blanshard, Marilyn Skinner, and others have firmly established, ancient Greco-Roman culture featured visual representations and figures of phalli prominently, usually as symbols of fertility, as a figure of apotropaic enchantment to ward off the evil eye, and/or in reference to sacred Priapic or Dionysian ritual.⁷¹ As Simons indicates, the original Greek conception of the term *phallos* designated "an object carried in procession, often by women or cross-dressed men, in celebration of Dionysus".⁷² These processions were public and prominent, cornerstones of Greco-Roman religious life. Priapus, sometimes considered the son of Dionysus and the

⁷⁰ See Catherine Johns, *Sex or Symbol: Erotic Images of Greece and Rome* (1982), and G.S. Rousseau's essay on Richard Payne Knight and his *Discourse on the Worship of Priapus* (1786-7), "The Sorrows of Priapus: anticlericalism, homosocial desire, and Richard Payne Knight", in *Sexual Underworlds of the Enlightenment* ed. Rousseau and Porter (1987).

⁷¹ In particular, see Simons, "Cultural History" and "The Phallus: History and Humor" in *The Sex of Men in Premodern Europe: A Cultural History* (2010), 52-64, as well as Alastair Blanshard, *Sex: Vice and Love from Antiquity to Modernity* (2010), 61-2.

⁷² *Sex of Men*, 53.

quintessentially phallic god, was responsible for the fertility of gardens and farms. A figure with a prominent, over-sized ithyphallus who often carried fruit within his clothes, Priapic statues were thought to protect property and aid fertility.⁷³ As such, the phallus was “an artifact more than an intellectual symbol, of talismanic, exuberant and even humorous use far more than [an abstract figure of] remote majesty or hidden mystery”, as it was to become in the modern world.⁷⁴ As Blanshard indicates, the sacred use of the phallus also extended to the most devout of ritual uses, as “even the Vestal Virgins supposedly kept a sacred phallus as one of the objects under their care... in keeping with the cult’s focus on fertility”.⁷⁵ In addition to processional and cult uses, phalli were also featured in public thoroughfares and private residences, ubiquitous “in garden statues of Priapus, on *herms* [statues of Hermes, god of travel, whose prominent ithyphallus pointed the way for passing travelers] and *termini* marking boundaries, at street corners and doorways, as votives, cakes, lamps, wind chimes, statuettes, amulets and other pieces of jewelry”.⁷⁶ It is important to bear in mind that where the modern reader or viewer is most likely to see sexual imagery, given our preoccupation with large, ithyphalli (erect penises),⁷⁷ denizens of the ancient world were most likely to view phallic imagery as protective, religious, and practical.⁷⁸

⁷³ Johns 52.

⁷⁴ *Sex of Men*, 53.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 61.

⁷⁶ “Cultural History” 79. See also Johns, 50-81. For facsimile images of all of the above, see Simons, “Cultural History”, as well as Keuls, *The Reign of the Phallus* (1993) and Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture* (2005).

⁷⁷ As Catherine Johns reminds us, the Greco-Roman ideal was in fact a small penis. The ithyphallus, particularly in the enlarged size most often depicted in phallic images, was considered grotesque, or at least humorous; it was Priapus and his satyrs, not the ideal human male, who sported such monstrosities. See Johns’ discussion of Priapus, 50-52.

⁷⁸ Catherine Johns argues against modern conceptions of early fertility rituals as wholly “mystical”, arguing that they were in fact quite “practical”. For peasants, especially, she asserts, “the fact is that if this growth and

But were any of these phalli dildos? Although dildos undoubtedly *did* exist in the ancient world, for the purposes of the current study it is crucial to differentiate between the phallus of herms, termini, ritual, and all other forms that served a sacred and/or apotropaic function and the dildo of profane (that is, mundane/non-religious), instrumental use, not least of all because the phallus was associated with the fundamentally *masculine*, fertile, and procreative, while the dildo, though a penetrative instrument shaped rather suspiciously like a phallus, was associated in the Greco-Roman world with the explicitly *feminine*, with the fundamentally *infertile*, and with pleasure, in contradistinction to procreation, as its fundamental end.⁷⁹ Moreover, as social anthropology reminds us, in a society as fundamentally religious as the Greco-Roman, that which was considered ‘sacred’ and that which was considered ‘profane’ were “two classes, two opposite kinds, generally designated by two distinct terms...The division of the world into two comprehensive domains”.⁸⁰ The phallus, as

reproduction does not proceed in the expected fashion, people will starve”, lending a sense of seriousness and urgency to phallic ritual, even amidst revelry and humour (39). Similarly, phallic votives and amulets were thought to have a potent healing ability, which is why individuals, particularly children, wore phallic amulets about their person.

⁷⁹ For Blanshard, who warns against seeing in the sacred phallus the secular sexual connotations of the modern world, the case of the Vestal Virgins is a particularly useful test-case for this demarcation, a case-in-point of the Greco-Roman ability to “separate out the fertile from the erotic in the contemplation of the phallus” (61). Though the Virgins’ sacred phallus was a physical object that might more easily evoke erotic than religious readings for the modern reader, its function was expressly sacred, not profane/erotic. As we shall see, we have Aretino and his ilk to blame for this immediate eroticisation of sacred ritual, which became a popular and enduring conflation as early as the 16th century. My approach follows Blanshard’s distinction while also identifying profane dildos where they may be found in the Greco-Roman world. I thus avoid seeing dildos in phalluses, but also avoid Blanshard’s extreme of seeing only the phallus where we in fact find probable or definite dildos.

⁸⁰ Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Carol Cosman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 36. In this my analysis parts ways with Patricia Simons’ account in “Cultural History” – the only such account that has been attempted to date - of the dildo’s premodern cultural history. Simons’ account glosses the ubiquity of Greco-Roman phalluses as though they were potential or proto-dildos, and does not distinguish between historical phalluses, dildoes, and medical implements, all of which are conflated and presented as self-evident ‘origins’ of ‘Signior Dildo’. The sacred phalli evoked above are not dildos, however they might appear to modern (secular) eyes; nor, without direct evidence, should they be conflated with dildos or assumed to have an ancestral relationship with them.

we've seen, was a figure of fertility in all its forms – not only of human fertility, but also of the plant and animal kingdoms, upon whose generativity the ancient world so closely depended for survival. It follows, then, that as an implement of sexual pleasure entirely separate from procreative purpose or potential, the dildo was markedly *anti*-phallic, even as it paradoxically signified the dildo-wielder's adherence to the culture's phallogocentric economy of penetrative, dyadic (that is, active/passive) sex. The classical and early modern dildo was above all an ironic figure, that essential ingredient of effective satire; the phallus' carnivalesque foil, though symptomatic of the same cultural investment in the penetrative male member as the symbolic ordering principle of the world.⁸¹

The masturbatory dildo as domestic and commercial commonplace: Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* and Herodas' *Mimes*

Although many Attic vase paintings feature nude women pleasuring themselves with dildo-esque/phallic objects,⁸² to find unmistakable dildos in the Greco-Roman world, the comic traditions of Classical and Hellenistic Greece are particularly instructive. In Old Comedy and

⁸¹ This, of course, raises the irresolvable question of whether such an inversion is in fact normative or subversive in nature, or perhaps both. The accounts which follow align with Jennifer C. Vaught, *Carnival and Literature in Early Modern England* (Ashgate 2012), who finds that the “collective, ideologically diverse perspectives of [the] wide range of [criticism on the carnivalesque] indicate that carnival and carnivalesque motifs in early modern literature and culture can be either normative or transgressive in nature or purpose or sometimes both” (n. 21). And though it is beyond the scope of this argument to examine his claim in each case, it would also be productive to test the accounts provided in this chapter against Jonathan Haynes' claim that “the festive moment [of carnival] is essentially conservative in a strong and stable society, potentially evolutionary in an unstable or sclerotic one” (*ELH* 51 [1984]: 656). The criticism, reaching back to Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World*, is thoroughly surveyed in Vaught, *Carnival and Literature* (particularly as catalogued in n. 21).

⁸² See also Keuls, 82-6, Martin F. Kilmer, *Greek Erotica on Attic Red Figure Vases* (London: Duckworth, 1993), 26-30, and Bernadette J. Brooten, *Love Between Women: Early Christian Responses to Female Homoeroticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 57, among others. The paucity of contextual evidence that has left classicists divided on how to read the images on these paintings. Scholars disagree over whether these paintings depict *hetairai* or free women; whether they serve a pornographic or other purpose; and over whether they are intended to depict dildos – explicitly erotic/titillating objects and poses whose purpose is the viewer's vicarious pleasure – or whether their function is more properly phallic (that is, humorous and/or apotropaic) in nature. For a survey of critical views, see Skinner, 77-8.

Mime, particularly, the dildo appears as a masturbatory tool used by free-born, married women – a relatively privileged class of women, particularly in Athens, which was known for its strict relegation of women to the private sphere. In Greek, these dildos are denoted in terms suggesting a markedly profane function and even an explicitly female purpose, as in the Grecian context they are never referred to as *phalloi* or other terms related to phallic worship, Priapic or Dionysian ritual (this conflation would appear several centuries later as an early modern Aretine innovation). Hence the objects we find in Old Comedy are designated *olisbos*, deriving from a verb meaning “to glide” or “to slide”; and in the mimes of Herodas and others, we find dildos as *baubon*, meaning (in one account) “vulva,” and which as George Devereux has indicated would never be used to denote the androcentric phallus of Dionysian myth but only ever to denote dildos used by women.⁸³ In dialogues that are, of course, dramatized and imagined by male authors and performed by cross-dressing male actors, Grecian women and their love of luxurious commodities are parodied as they gossip and share knowledge about the dildo in private, homosocial spaces. Grecian dramatists do, however, include enticingly and often comically naturalistic information regarding dildo procurement, use, and efficacy, and dramatize the possibility that women might find sexual fulfillment without the aid of a flesh-and-blood man, despite their much-emphasized dependence on the phallocentric sexual order.

Perhaps the most memorable and enduring Grecian depiction of dildos as a commonplace fixture in married women’s domestic life is that in Aristophanes’ Old Comedy play *Lysistrata* (411 BCE).⁸⁴ In *Lysistrata*, as in several of his other comedies, Aristophanes

⁸³ See George Devereux, *Baubo: die mytische vulva*, trans. E Moldenhauer (1981), qtd. in Manuelle Gragnolatti and Sara Fortuna, *The Power of Disturbance: Elsa Murante’s Aracoeli*.

⁸⁴ According to Skinner, similar jokes referring to *olisbos* also occur elsewhere in Old Comedy (296 n. 36).

provides an idealistic, dream-like solution to the war and civil conflict that had threatened Athenian society since the outbreak of the Peloponesian War (begun 431 BCE),⁸⁵ here centring on the women of Greece and the dildo, by extension, as its unlikely saviours.

At the time of the production of *Lysistrata* (411 BCE), the successful 416 BCE Athenian expedition to Melos, during which Athenians had mercilessly slaughtered Melos' adult males and enslaved its entire population of women and children, remained the subject of much dissent within Athens.⁸⁶ Euripides had produced his blatantly antiwar tragedy, *The Trojan Women*, in response to this slaughter the following year, warning that Athens would befall a similar fate should its hubris and folly lead to defeat. Similarly, the historian Thucydides described Athens as an irrational and "typical tragic character, fallen victim to the vice of hubris".⁸⁷ It is self-evident that Athenian women would have feared such an outcome befalling their own city. Heedless of dissenting voices and spurred on by thoughts of imperial glory and the war-mongering leader Alcibiades, however, the Athenians mounted a grand expedition to Sicily, marshalling the whole of its formidable naval forces. The Athenian defeat was devastating, but luckily the destruction of the city of Athens at Sparta's hands did not come (a fact that Aristophanes' audience could not yet have known).⁸⁸

In response to this time of particular political crisis for Athens, then, and staged in a highly public and well-attended comic festival forum,⁸⁹ *Lysistrata* depicts the men of Greece as

⁸⁵ Sommerstein, "Introduction".

⁸⁶ Keuls 381.

⁸⁷ Ibid. 382.

⁸⁸ Ibid. 484-5.

⁸⁹ Sommerstein indicates that as part of the five-day City Dionysia the Athenian theatre-going audience was "enormous by most modern standards" and relatively heterogenous (xxiv, xxv); while few women are recorded for

incapable of leadership and wisdom in their perpetual war-mongering state. In consequence, the Athenian *Lysistrata* and the collective women of Greece, perhaps emboldened by the festival atmosphere of the Adonia and the shocking castration of Athenian herms,⁹⁰ decide to take social and political action in their inept husbands' stead. Throughout the course of the play, the women of Athens emphatically transgress their prescribed female role in brokering a lasting political alliance with the women of enemy nation states; occupying the Acropolis (far exceeding the bounds of their normal relegation to private residences); seizing control of the Athenian treasury; and collectively foregoing sex with their husbands in order to render the men of Athens so sexually starved and desperate that they agree to make peace with the Spartans in exchange for a return to the normal sexual order.

This is not a heroic but a comic play, of course, and therefore these heroic deeds by such unlikely heroes are not without their foibles and perils. The major source of conflict and impediment to the women's noble solution lies in the fact that the group of conventionally libidinous women must necessarily starve themselves of sex through their own actions, and thus initially find it nearly impossible to conceive of (much less go through with) their sexual

posterity as being in attendance, they were not barred from the festival. *Lysistrata* in fact makes an explicit address to the women of the audience (1051), corroborating their attendance.

⁹⁰*Lysistrata* is set during the Athenian period of preparation for the aforementioned Sicilian expedition, which Aristophanes imagines to have coincided with the female festival of Adonia – an “antipatriarchal” festival mourning the death of the beautiful Adonis and a period of relative freedom for women, wherein they were free to move about the city and assemble in private locations (Keuls, 382; see also Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, trans. Douglass Parker [New York: Signet, 2009], 283-9). This period also coincides with the well-documented and unprecedented castration of the herms of Athens in a single night just prior to the launch of the disastrous Sicily expedition (Keuls, 387, 393). Although the culprits were never discovered, the sacrilege was taken very seriously by Athenian authorities – taken as both “a subversive act, indicative of plots to overthrow the government” (Keuls, 388), as well as an act of sacrilege, given that “Hermes...was the god of travel, [which] must have cast an ominous spell over the preparations for the expedition” (Keuls, 388). If Aristophanes is factual in his depiction of the Adonia taking place just prior to the launch of the Sicilian expedition, this Athens-wide act of sacrilege may conceivably have been executed by the women of Athens, who would have had more opportunity and motive than any other group in Athens to carry out such a well-organized coup. See Keuls' hypothesis, 381-95.

strike. Enter the comic dildo. That is, the reality of masturbatory dildo-use and possession among Grecian women is treated as a commonplace figure of euphemism and fun when it is introduced first because of a Milenesian dildo shortage - a hyperbolically 'tragic' by-product of the ongoing war's tendency to turn commercial allies into political enemies - and then as an earnest answer to the women's problem of heroic abstinence. Specifically, Calonice, Lysistrata's Athenian confederate, complains of her sexual frustration given that in addition to her husband's absence, "since the Milesians betrayed us, [she hasn't] even seen one of those six-inch leather jobs which used to help us out when all else failed".⁹¹ The war, it seems, had been so cruel as to deprive Grecian women of the finest in foreign dildos – reason enough to broker for peace. Suggesting that the Milenesian leather dildo shortage has not impacted their supply of domestically-manufactured dog-hide dildos, however, Lysistrata retorts that "in the words of Phericrates, you can always fall back on a dead dog".⁹² Another female confederate, showcasing a range of opinions and experiences with these matters, seems unimpressed with the ability of local *olisbos* to sexually satisfy, retorting that "those imitation things are sheer crap".⁹³

⁹¹ 108-110.

⁹² 158-9. According to Sommerstein's gloss, this line literally means "'to skin a skinned dog', meaning a leather dildo (made of dog's skin)" (226 n.25). The allusion is to Phericrates, apparently "a contemporary comic poet, somewhat older than Aristophanes" (226 n.24). Unfortunately, Sommerstein does not identify the reference. It is noteworthy, however, that in this euphemism the dildo is ungendered, not personified, and figuratively related to the material from which it's made, rather than figured as a male (or foreign male, in the case of *Seigneur Dildoe*). Not only is the dildo 'dead', but the formulation also makes clear that the masturbatory action will be done by the women wielding the dildo: in fact, in this figuration, she performs an act of violence upon the dildo in 'beating' or 'skinning' it.

⁹³ 160. There is some syntactical ambiguity here, which I enjoy reading as intentional and playful, about whether the "imitation things" to which Myrrhine refers indicate penises as the 'real thing' and the *olisbos* as imitations thereof – as in, "those [*olisbos*] are sheer crap" – or whether she is instead referring to the local dog-leather imitations of 'real' Milenesian *olisbos* as sheer crap.

Ultimately, the women are able to put the needs of the state ahead of their own sexual needs, or perhaps they do find other ways to service themselves while on their sexual strike – it is never confirmed whether dildos are used to help the women assuage their lust in the interim - and they succeed in forcing a brokered peace among the Grecian city-states. In the end, then, though it is unclear whether the Grecian dildos have indeed serviced the women of Athens in their husbands' stead, it is made clear that dildos are well known to the citizens and women of Greece and are depicted as a figure of euphemistic wit, far from an impediment or figure of denunciation. It's even suggested that for some Athenian women, at least, dildos have been instrumental in checking the hubris and war-mongering tendencies of the Grecian male, bringing about political peace and the play's comic conclusion.

Expanding upon Aristophanes' theme of dildos as an urban female commodity, *Mimes* 6 and 7 of Hellenistic playwright Herodas⁹⁴ depicts *matronae* as much more self-serving and obsessive in their desire for sexual implements. The mimes feature a dialogue between two gossiping housewives, Coritto and Metro, who discuss how to obtain a leather dildo and reveal that a local shoemaker, Cerdon, crafts them for those women who seek out his patronage for more than shoes.⁹⁵ Coritto, the 'woman in the know', catalogues the *baubon's* features for her

⁹⁴ As Elena Esposito indicates, the genre of the mime features the Hellenistic period's "widespread taste for attenuated poetry and realistic representation", and particularly consists of "short compositions that focused on character portrayal and features of everyday life, [which] offered poets the opportunity to observe aspects of the lower middle class, but filtered through the lens of a carefully defined and refined, 'aristocratic' art form" ("Herodas and the Mime", 267). Herodas' *mimiamb*s, a combination of the *mime* and *iamb* genres, specifically, are notable for their "'realism' and exploitation of marginal themes and humble or even déclassé characters which had been excluded from 'high' literature", but that was disseminated among a learned, "select audience" (269). Despite the popular origins of the mime, then, they should not therefore be mistaken as 'popular' in composition or reception (269).

⁹⁵ See Brooten, 108, and Skinner, 188-9.

friend Metro, rating it very favourably compared to the flesh-and-blood member: “Just between us two”, Coritto confides, “no man’s part is that firm, / and not only that, but silky smooth as a dream, / and the straps are more like wool than leather”.⁹⁶ Gone in Herodas’ account, then, are the misgivings and dissatisfactions of Aristophanes’ women! Having confessed her secret and passed on her knowledge of Cerdon’s whereabouts, Coritto alleges that “a kinder cobbler to a woman you could not possibly find”, suggesting the willingness of local merchants to bend the rules of sexual hierarchy in the name of profit.⁹⁷

Subsequently, *Mime 7* depicts Metro, who is now informed about the local shoemaker’s array of products, inviting Cerdon to showcase his great variety of products among other friends for their own examination. Skinner notes that while in the original Greek most of the terms used by Cerdon to exhibit and describe his handiwork do indeed indicate kinds of shoes, there are two which do not (“*Nossides*” and “*Baukides*”), which instead refer back to the dildos or *baubons* mentioned in the previous mime (189). Through careful plotting and euphemistic language, then, this creates an “unspoken equation between shoes and dildoes [which] becomes a running joke as the customers bargain over and even try on the wares for fit”.⁹⁸ Here, the function of the parody is clearly to showcase Herodas’ comic talents as much as it might be to undercut his parodic objects – but even then, Herodas’ tone is distinguished by the

⁹⁶ *Mimiambi*. [The mimes of Herodas], ed. J. Arbutnot Nairn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1904).

⁹⁷ That is, given that sex for pleasure, such as a Greek male might engage in with his household slaves or at a brothel, was exclusively a male prerogative. For a Roman-era expression of this double-standard, see Lucian, *Dialogues of the Courtesans* 5, which is also discussed below.

⁹⁸ Skinner, 189.

characteristically Hellenistic predilection in iambos for “relatively mild and amusing”, rather than “vitriolic and cruel” modes of parody.⁹⁹

In alleging (or imagining) that local women are in the habit of purchasing dildos and loaning them to one another, Herodas’ dildo mimes, like Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata*, suggests that dildos are passed on in a material as well as instructive homosocial network between high-born Grecian matrons. This, we shall see, was to become a commonplace motif and assumption in the early modern English context as well. Undoubtedly, these mimes are far from utopic and markedly less kind towards women than *Lysistrata* or their beloved Cerdon, as Herodas is sure to display the wives’ hypocritically scathing attitudes towards their female slaves, emphasize the covetous, obsessive nature of their dildo-desires (Coritto is distraught that Cerdon would sell her only one of his two then-available dildos), and showcase the antagonism between women alongside their homosocial bliss. For instance, while Coritto is happy to share her dildo with a beloved friend, she becomes irate upon hearing that it has been passed along to her enemy, Nossis.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, Herodas and Aristophanes alike present dildo use among the urban women of Greece as an occasion for bawdry, above all: *beating a dead dog* appears as the wide-spread, unauthorized behaviour of hyper-sexualized, somewhat masculine women, to be sure; but in the Greek tradition, this is laughed off as a relatively harmless comic weakness that may in fact do more social good than harm, and that especially against its own context is far from misogynist or invective in tone.

⁹⁹ James J. Clauss and Martine Cuypers, *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature* (2010).

¹⁰⁰ 6.34-6; see also Skinner, 188.

The paradoxical, the hypocritical, and the makeshift: the dildo as same-sex penetrative device in Roman satire

Among the most salient distinctions we find when we move from the Greek to the Roman contexts is a shift from the comic to the invective mode, as the dildo becomes a figure of revulsion in the Latin context rather than one of carnivalesque revelry. With the passing of the Grecian empire and the subsumption of Greek culture under Roman rule in the early first century CE, the figure of the dildo-wielding, masturbating matron also gave way to a new tradition of dildo representation in Roman satire: ¹⁰¹ the dildo as supplementary instrument of the unnatural, man-aping *tribas* (as borrowed from the ancient Greek), or tribade. It is important to distinguish between the same-sex predatory tribade of the early modern period and her Roman precursor, however. ¹⁰² In most early modern and eighteenth-century accounts, the tribade's stock-in-trade is her unnatural, gender-transgressive desire for and active penetration of a passive female partner, a trespass that is often heightened and materialized by her use of a strap-on dildo, as in Henry Fielding's *The Female Husband* (1741). As such, the early modern tribade is the active, penetrative, and usually predatory partner in a female same-sex exchange, whereas her 'passive' female counterpart is *not* considered a tribade, often viewed more leniently or overlooked as inconsequential to the narrative. ¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ In a sense, the Roman figure of the tribade is a loose offshoot of the Attic *hetairistria*: prostitutes who were conventionally associated with same-sex desire, as evinced on red vase paintings. This is in keeping with the practise of the Second Sophists, among whom was the satirist Lucian, to return to Attic Grecian exemplars in their works. See Jennifer Larson, *Greek and Roman Sexualities: A Sourcebook* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 15.

¹⁰² For discussions of the early modern tribade, see Donoghue, *Passions*, and Traub, *Renaissance*.

¹⁰³ In *The Female Husband* as in conventional tales of female husbandry, the 'husband' is ultimately punished under law, which is how (allegedly) the tale comes to light. See Henry Fielding, *The Female Husband and other writings*, ed. Claude E. Jones (Liverpool, Liverpool UP, 1960); Patricia Crawford and Sara Mendelson, "Sexual Identities in

In contrast, however, few Roman texts, particularly satires and visual representations, are quite so simplistic or dyadic in their deployment of the tribade motif. Though she is always depicted as a figure who transgresses her proscribed female role, the tribade's social and sexual methods in the Roman context are described with a considerable degree of variation, and the dildo is only one of her many possible sexual means. The *Moral Epistles* of Seneca the Younger (first century CE), for instance, depict a "tribas" penetrating a man, not a woman, presumably (but not certainly) with a dildo;¹⁰⁴ Martial's satirical account of the "tribas" Bassa (*Epigrams*, c. 50 CE) similarly identifies her as a "fucker", but does not assign a gender to her conquests and asserts that she uses her "monstrous clit [which] thinks it's a cock" to bed them;¹⁰⁵ and Philaenus, a second tribade featured by Martial, is described as an indiscriminate penetrator (means unknown) of both women and men, and is particularly noted for her exhibition of social male traits such as a love of wrestling and drinking. Martial mocks Philaenus' utter ignorance and ineptitude in aping the male role because she also stoops to perform cunnilingus on women – an activity connoting inferiority and debasement in the Roman context – misguidedly "thinking it's manly".¹⁰⁶ Regardless of her sexual means, these figures are clearly intended to

Early Modern England: The Marriage of Two Women in 1680" (*Gender and History* 7, no. 3, 1995), 362-77; Fraser Easton, "Gender's Two Bodies: Women Warriors, Female Husbands and Plebeian Life" (*Past and Present* 180, 2003), 131-174. For an eerily analogous account in a trial from late twentieth-century Australia, see Diane Hamer, "The Invention of the Dildo" (*Australian Gay and Lesbian Law Journal* 2, 1992), 41-54.

¹⁰⁴ 95.21.

¹⁰⁵ 1.90. This is clearly a precursor to the hermaphroditic and enlarged clitoris traditions in early modern and eighteenth-century Europe, according to which unconventionally masculine women were routinely suspected of having (and medically examined for evidence of) an enlarged clitoris – "the first sign of its transformation into a penis" (Roberta C. Martin, "'Beauteous Wonder of a Different Kind': Aphra Behn's Destabilization of Gender Categories," *College English* 61.2 (1998), 196). See also Traub, *Renaissance*, 47, and scholarly accounts of female husbandry in n. 103, above.

¹⁰⁶ 7.67.

be reviled, judging by the satirists' tone towards these masculine behaviours and the women who commit them.

In comparison with its Greek precursors, then, in the Roman figure of the dildo as tribade's tool, the Greek frankness and relatively neutrality about sexual activity give way to euphemism, denunciation, and often a considerable degree of author-cultivated mystery and fascination with the taboo – no doubt heightened by the various and often obfuscated means by which a tribade could conceivably pursue her transgressive passions. Even the terms used to denote the tribade allow for and in some cases create ambiguity as to *how*, precisely, she might go about having sex with her conquests, as both the borrowed Greek term *tribas* and its equivalent Latin *frictrix* designate a “woman who rubs”.¹⁰⁷ Despite the fact that a dildo or strap-on is frequently assumed to be the tribade's penetrative instrument of choice, then, the terms used to describe her allude to the possibility of mutuality – particularly, of mutual rubbing, or frottage – and do not necessarily or exclusively refer to the tribade as the ‘active’ sexual partner.

Thus while in several satiric Latin accounts it is a given that when two (or more) *matronae* or *heterataie* have sex, a dildo is a necessary and necessarily present penetrative instrument, in others, the dildo (or a small array of other conceivable substitutes) is an unnamed spectre: a figure of allurement, deployed by the author to cultivate a sense of narrative uncertainty and mystery around how women, those who do not possess the *real thing*, might go about having sex. (This sense of mystery, of course, is still known to us today.)

¹⁰⁷ Larson, *Greek and Roman Sexualities*, 16.

In these texts, the presence of a dildo is both an unspeakable obscenity, signalling sex that unmistakably transgresses the natural order of things in many ways at once, and an enticing mystery posed by the hypocritical satirist, a ‘who(what)dunnit?’ for the fascinated (and probably titillated) reader to endlessly imagine.

In figuring the dildo another immediate distinction we find when we move from the Grecian to the Roman world, then, is a shift away from direct, denotative Greek terms such as *olisbos* and *baubon* that clearly designate *dildo*, and a reluctance to identify a woman’s penetrative instrument in certain terms. (There are, of course, exceptions to this, which will be discussed below.) Ironically, then, while commentators of the Roman period had no scruples about proudly displaying and directly referring to the sacred phallus, or *fascinum*, after the phallic god Fascinus, in contrast, the Latin had no term for *dildo*, as in the Roman period authors opted for a variety of indirect and often coy means of signalling the presence of a dildo. And as indicated it is clear that satirists of the Roman period tended to treat the theme of women’s dildo use much more scathingly than their Greek precursors, opting most often for the invective rather than the comic mode.

The sixth of Juvenal’s infamous *Satires* (1st and 2nd century CE), an extended satire on/against women, is a notable case in point. Often identified as an originary text of the anti-tribade satiric tradition which inspired spirited revivals across the long eighteenth century, Juvenal’s satire does not in fact name or directly indicate the presence of a dildo; nor, for that matter, are any women explicitly named as *tribas*. Rather, the ‘tribade’ scene in question satirizes the gender and religious transgressions of two aristocratic Roman *matronae*, Tullia and

Maura, who are censured by the hypocritically self-righteous, railing satirist for taking male liberties for themselves, and for behaving like low prostitutes.¹⁰⁸ They spend the night engaging in all manner of masculine and blasphemous behaviours: they drink and wander in the streets at night, unescorted; stop their litters to symbolically piss out the results of their night's drinking on a statue of Pudicitia, goddess of wifely virtue; and then, for sacrilegious good measure, they "ride one another other and thrash around with no man present", also in front of Pudicitia's altar.¹⁰⁹ As Watson and Watson indicate, the equestrian metaphor used for the women's sexual activities is one which suggests a male-female sexual position as well as one commonly used by prostitutes *el fresco*.¹¹⁰ Specifically, "in this schema...the woman sits astride a male 'horse', but here the mount is female".¹¹¹ But how precisely does the rider mount her steed, one is left to wonder? Juvenal has given us no clear indication of by what means, precisely, the women have sex. Onto what implement, exactly, does the rider mount, or does she manage without?

While the ancient world has left no extant accounts of how such scenes might have been read by Roman contemporaries, scholars have consistently argued for the presumed presence of a dildo in Roman readers' minds, creating (for example in Martial and Juvenal's texts), "scenarios focused on the phallic lesbian... a deviant and intractable reversal of the

¹⁰⁸ See Watson and Watson, *Martial* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 167 n. 306-13.

¹⁰⁹ *Juvenal and Persius*, ed. and trans. Susanna Morton Braund (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004). http://www.loebclassics.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/view/LCL091/2004/pb_LCL091.i.xml. As Lindsay Watson and Patricia Watson indicate, this depiction is in keeping with the "overarching theme of the Satire [which] is the hypersexuality of contemporary *matronae*, the claim that they are without exception slaves to their *libido* (e.g. 53, 130, 254, 329-34, 349, 535-7). Most frequently this is manifested in their rejection of *pudicitia*, leading them to engage in adulterous sexual activities of every conceivable kind" (42).

¹¹⁰ 167.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* 169 n. 311.

phallic man whom the Romans considered the proper model of sexuality”.¹¹² John Clarke cites the example of an ancient Roman scene, similar to that in Juvenal, which depicts two women engaged in sex and imitating a well-known position usually reserved for male-female couples: one standing figure penetrating a figure who is reclined. Because the genital area is blocked from view, however, it is impossible to discern precisely *how* the standing or active partner penetrates the reclined woman, or whether she does at all. Clarke argues that given the culture’s “socket mentality”, one can infer that a Roman audience would presume the presence of a penetrative instrument and that “ancient Roman male viewers would have immediately assumed that the standing woman had a dildo strapped to her genitals” in this scene as well as all literary and visual scenes which depict two women involved in an explicitly sexual act, such as with the female ‘mount’ in Juvenal’s sixth satire.¹¹³

The Roman assumption of a penis or dildo wherever sex takes place is well supported in an anecdote repeated in the *Controversiae* of Seneca the Elder (30 CE).¹¹⁴ As a rhetorician, Seneca’s purpose is less to ruminate on the humorous and/or debauched paradoxes of female same-sex encounters and dildo use, and more to display – ostensibly to denounce, but covertly to exploit - the predilection in Greek rhetoric for the full repetition of vulgarities in obscenity cases, and Roman superiority in refraining from such vulgar rhetorical methods. All the while asserting on the face of his account that the Roman custom of omitting obscene details is superior, Seneca’s speaker repeats in full the account of a Greek husband who, upon finding his

¹¹² Ibid. 168.

¹¹³ 168.

¹¹⁴ 1.2.23. The Latin texts referenced throughout this section are quoted from Jennifer Larson, *Greek and Roman Sexualities: A Sourcebook* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), unless otherwise noted.

wife in bed with another woman, murders them both. The husband, forced by Greek authorities to relate the scene precisely as he discovered it, indicates that he found the women, or *tribas*, in bed, and before committing his murderous act, paused to check whether the “man” was “natural or sewn on”. The husband presumes the presence of a ‘man’, a penis or ‘sewn on’ dildo, so thoroughly that he allays his murderous rage for long enough to check by what and whom his marital right had been usurped, whether a man or a woman using a man-aping, penetrative tool. He foresees no other options.

Similarly, pseudo-Lucian’s contest dialogue, *Amores* (2nd century CE), also assumes that women who have sex with one another must necessarily do so ‘just as men do.’ Here, the speakers contest whether the (adult male) love of women or boys is preferable, and the proponent for male-female love is so vehemently against male same-sex penetration that he is willing to allow women the penetrative prerogative, however despicable he finds it, before he will support its all-male converse:

If males find intercourse with males acceptable, henceforth let women too love each other. Come now, epoch of the future, legislator of strange pleasures, devise fresh paths for male lusts, but bestow the same privilege upon women, and let them have intercourse with each other just as men do. Let them strap to themselves *cunningly contrived instruments of lechery*, those *mysterious monstrosities devoid of seed*, and let woman lie with woman as does a man. Let wanton tribadism -- that word seldom heard, which I feel ashamed even to utter -- freely parade itself, and let our women's chambers emulate Philaenis, disgracing themselves with Sapphic amours. And how much better that a woman should invade the provinces of male wantonness than that the nobility of the male sex should become effeminate and play the part of a woman!¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ 28.

In this account, as in Seneca the Elder's, it is clear that women, or *tribades* such as the 4th century BCE poet Philaenis, *must* necessarily 'lie' with one another as men do in order to have sex, i.e. by penetrating each other with strap-on dildos. In this tribadic context, in sharp contrast to the Greek contexts discussed above, dildo use is unmistakably unnatural and abject both because it allows women to assume the specifically male right to have sex exclusively for pleasure, and because the woman 'on top' assumes the male penetrative sexual role, allowing her to have sex exactly as a man would.

Yet in addition to his abhorrence of this unnatural act, the speaker perhaps betrays a note of hypocritical fascination with it (a common characteristic of many less assured Roman accounts of female same-sex activities). Why not refer to strap-ons, one wonders, simply as "instruments of lechery"? Why describe the '*strange pleasures*' of tribadic women at such length, note the '*cunning contrivance*' of their instruments, aggrandize those '*monstrosities devoid of seed*'? While the speaker's hyperbole is clearly intended to emphasize the anti-phallic, barren nature of the dildo and of the gross misconduct of those women who strap them on – heightening the even greater monstrosity of male-male penetration by comparison - it is as though the speaker can't help but draw our attention to the very tribadic practise he hesitates to name (but hypocritically does), that he claims is '*seldom heard*' (but that will now be heard by all of his interlocutors). And as for the dildo, that instrument which he does not

directly name, the speaker instead expends not one but two vitriol-charged circumlocutions to explain it to his interlocutor.¹¹⁶

Evincing an even wider array of tantalizing and suspense-building circumlocutions than the *Amores* but none of its invective, Lucian's *Dialogues of the Courtesans* (late 2nd c. CE) is undoubtedly the most tantalizingly indirect account of a tribade's penetrative means. A noted precursor of Aretino's *Ragionamenti* and of the vogue for the erotic prose dialogues and female husband narratives in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Italian, French, and English contexts, this courtesan's dialogue includes the titillating tale of one courtesan's same-sex encounter with the Lesbos-native Megilla and her 'wife' in suggestive (but always just short of instructive) detail. Megilla, the courtesan Leiana does not hesitate to relate, is a *heterasteria*,¹¹⁷ one of those "women...in Lesbos, who look like men and...won't do it with men, but ...have sex with women as though they themselves were men".¹¹⁸ Indeed, she styles herself Megillos and sees herself as a man in every way but genitally, referring to her Corinthian companion, Demonassa, as her 'wife'.

We quickly learn that Leiana has slept with Megilla (and thus has first-hand knowledge of her 'arts' but, despite the best efforts of Leiana's nosy and emotionally manipulative

¹¹⁶ James L. Butrica has recently asserted that 'lesbians' in Roman times appear so rarely in Roman texts, relative to discussions and satires male-female and male-male sexual relations, because Romans truly did not care to think that much about them ("Some Myths and Anomalies in the Study of Roman Sexuality", in *Same Sex Desire and Love in Greco-Roman Antiquity and in the Classical Tradition of the West*, ed. Beert C. Verstraete and Vernon Provencal, 209-270. New York: Routledge, 2013). The texts assembled here, however, comprise the exceptions to this rule, and suggest that for some authors at least, tribades were a curiosity - an odd sub motif (under the larger motifs of women and their many ills) perfectly suited for satire because of the paradox they allowed the satirist to exploit.

¹¹⁷ In fact, both Megilla and her wife (Demonassa) are referred to as *heterasteria*. (Demonassa, though nowhere masculinized in the account, is said to "practise the same arts as Megilla".) The *heterasteria* was a class of free-born courtesans who were known to prefer the sexual company of women, and who were further characterized by their wealth, relative independence, and as Brooten has noted, their position outside of the traditional patriarchal order.

¹¹⁸ 5.

inquirer, Clonarian, Leiana is much less forthcoming about what, exactly, transpired between them:

Clonarian: We hear some odd things about you, Leiana – that Megilla, the rich woman from Lesbos, loves you just like a man, and that you sleep together and do I don't know what with each other! What's this? Are you blushing? But tell me if it's true.

Leiana: It's true, Clonarian. But I'm ashamed, because it's so strange.

Clonarian: By the nurturing goddess, what's going on? What does the woman want? And what do you do when you are together? See, you don't care for me or you would not hide such things.

Leiana: I care for you as much as I do any other woman. But this woman is amazingly like a man.

Clonarian: I don't understand what you mean, unless perhaps she is a woman-lover [*heterasteria*]. They say that there are women like that in Lesbos, who look like men, and they won't do it with men, but they have sex with women as though they themselves were men.

Leiana: It's like that.

Clonarian: Well, Leiana, tell me all about it – how she first came on to you, how you ended up agreeing to it, and what happened after that.

Leiana complies in part, relating Megilla's first advances at a drinking party, and her confusion and ignorance of such matters when Megilla attempts to seduce her. In what follows, Leiana herself assumes the position of the incredulous, confused, and uninformed (male) reader, incapable of imagining how a woman might have sex with another. Clearly intended for comic effect, Leiana relates having sifted through what mythical and folkloric accounts she knows to explain the strange phenomenon before her, impertinently demanding of Megilla whether she is, like Achilles, a man in disguise, "hidden among the maidens in his purple robes?" Or else, an hermaphrodite, possessing both male and female "parts"? Or finally, a woman like Ovid's Iphis

or like the folkloric tale of “someone in Thebes [who] was changed from woman to man...by the name of Tiresias”? All of this deferral and delay caused by Leiana’s naïveté comprises a full half of the dialogue, Megilla patiently insisting each time that she has “the mind and the desires and everything else of the man”, but that she is very much a woman; that she does not have or require a penis, but has “a much pleasanter method of [her] own” for having sex; and finally that she is capable of pleasing women as well as any man might, and uses “something instead of a penis” to do so. In the end, Leana opts to “[give] her a chance” not because she has been inflamed by desire, but “because [Megilla] begged so much and gave [her] a very costly necklace and dresses of the finest linen”.¹¹⁹ But for the reader and for Clonarion the climax is in an incomplete one, not only because an unconvinced Leaeana submits only to bribery and persuasion, not to any sexual desire of her own, but also because she discloses only that she “threw [her] arms around [Megilla] just as though she were a man, and [Megilla] kissed her and then got busy, breathing hard, and seemed to enjoy it beyond anything.” We, with Clonarion, are left to wonder about (and supposedly to fill in) the explicit details:

Clonarion: What did she do, and how, Leana? You must tell me!

Leaeana: Don’t ask for the details. It’s a shameful thing, so by heaven I won’t tell!

We note throughout this dialogue, aside from the rather flimsy narrative excuse that tribadic acts are too ‘shameful’ to tell, that considerable attention is drawn by Lucian to what, precisely, Megilla might have ‘instead of a penis’. Is it a dildo? Is it an enlarged clitoris? Or is it some other, non-penetrative method entirely? Despite insistence from Clonarion, desperate to

¹¹⁹ 52.

discover more details about Megilla's methods, Leiana titillatingly excludes the precise method by which Megilla and her kind have sex.¹²⁰ Thus while Lucian's account "assumes a familiarity with the phenomenon of sexual love between women", he simultaneously dramatizes that which is unfamiliar to readers, specifically to men, and "depicts this masculine behaviour as shameful" and "strange".¹²¹

And according to the Roman phallogentric sexual ethos which served as the backdrop for Lucian's *Dialogues*, it is, undoubtedly. But within the satire itself, just how seriously does the framing of the narrative allow us to take this excuse? We are reminded of the shamefulness of the tribadic act only twice – at the outset of the dialogue, and at its conclusion, as a kind of structural bookend; the dominant tone throughout the dialogue is one of shame, to be sure, but also of curiosity, coyness, even shameless voyeurism.¹²² The concept of 'shame' functions instead to heighten the sexual mystery at the dialogue's outset, and as an excuse for its unresolved, imagination-heightening conclusion. Instead of offering us one tidy solution to the answer of how and with what tribades have sex, Lucian offers us endless possibilities generated in the reader's mind. Thus while Brooten surmises that Lucian's readers would implicitly understand the economy of shame implied in the dialogue, other readings are possible. As suggested above, it is equally (and simultaneously) possible that 'shame' is cited by a crafty satirist as a convenient excuse to veil the details of female same-sex activities in

¹²⁰ 53.

¹²¹ Brooten, 53.

¹²² Moreover, as Brooten notes, this "rhetoric" of shame is rather "conspicuous, since the families upon whom [the *heteresteraí*] might bring shame are strikingly absent. As courtesans, they are already outside a family structure. As wealthy courtesans, Megilla and Demonassa are patently independent...Lucian does not explain why this behaviour is shameful or upon whom those women bring shame" (53).

titillating secrecy, first deferring and then deliberately eluding the question of what is, precisely, Megilla's "substitute for what a man has", creating narrative suspense, suggesting but never confirming the presence of a dildo, and heightening the reader's desire to know.¹²³

From Ancient Rome to 16th century Italy: Pietro Aretino and the Catholic monastic dildo

As evinced in Juvenal, Martial, Seneca the Elder, Lucian, and pseudo-Lucian, ancient Rome possessed a vital tradition of satiric and philosophical discourses against female active sexual behaviour and transgression, socially perceived as quite seriously "contrary to nature"¹²⁴ – a doctrine entrenched long before Christian monotheism replaced Roman paganism, and before specifically Christian doctrines of female submission to patriarchal authority became the norm. As Brooten has shown, there was a considerable continuity of moral and social views on sexuality and sexual behaviour from the pagan to early Christian periods, much more so than is usually assumed.¹²⁵ Similarly, Ruth Karras indicates that the Medieval period inherited its predominant sexual mores from the ancient Roman world, particularly the insistence on the active male and passive female sexual roles, the conception of sex as a necessarily penetrative act (and one, argues Karras, that always signalled the penetrator's power over both the passive

¹²³ Or, perhaps, I extend Lucian too much credit: perhaps the problem truly *is* one of ignorance, and Lucian does not himself know how women bed one another! ...Lest some Roman satirists' penchant for creating mysterious allure around the figure of the tribade be equated with the ubiquity of male-consumed lesbian porn and the fetishism of pseudo-lesbianism in our contemporary cultural moment, Butrica (c.f. n. 37) and the evidence presented in studies of Greco-Roman sexuality remind us that female same-sex depictions are far outnumbered by discourses - literary, philosophical, and otherwise- on male same-sex relations, which were considered far superior by many Greco-Roman commentators (pseudo-Lucian notwithstanding). Importantly, the Greco-Roman world privileged the male, not the female, form, and with few exceptions, authors viewed women as useful for their role in procreation but otherwise not worthy of sustained consideration relative to men.

¹²⁴ Brooten, 2.

¹²⁵ Brooten, *Love Between Women*, is entirely devoted to redressing the common assumption of a radical discontinuity between the moral, specifically sexual, views of the ancient Greco-Roman and early Christian worlds.

receptacle and her/his ethnic group),¹²⁶ and the assumption that sexuality and sexual desire were inextricable from biological factors (sex) as well as social comportment (gender).¹²⁷

As Karras indicates, the Medieval Church was particularly responsible for an institutional deepening of the pre-existing fault line between procreative and non-procreative sex, intensifying official prohibitions against sex for pleasure. Intercourse, after all, was created by God so that humankind could be fruitful and increase in number.¹²⁸ According to church strictures, sanctioned or sinless sexual behaviour was that which served only the purpose of procreation and which was divorced from the pursuit of pleasure, even within marriage. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, this resulted in a fair degree of continuity between the ancient Roman and Medieval period (roughly 500-1500 CE) in attitudes towards female masturbation and same-sex behaviour, and towards dildo use. In keeping with to their Roman precursors, Medieval texts neither foregrounded (i.e. through frequent or graphic depictions) of same-sex behaviour nor failed entirely to comment on it. They most severely condemned and punished any female same-sex or masturbatory sexual activity that involved a penetrative instrument (i.e., dildo), perhaps because the material presence of the dildo made manifest an act that would otherwise have left no material trace.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ 30.

¹²⁷ See "Introduction", particularly 6.

¹²⁸ Gen. 1:28.

¹²⁹ According to Karras, as in the Greco-Roman tradition there is a "paucity of evidence of [women's same-sex behaviour because]...most of the sources we have for medieval sexuality are primarily concerned with men. Women's behavior is important insofar as it affects men: adulteresses deprive men of their rights to sexual exclusivity, prostitutes tempt men, and so forth. Women might be seen as aggressively lustful, but they remained passive in the sense that society expected men to remain in control and make the choices" (139).

While the monastic dildo of Pietro Aretino's *Ragionamenti* (1534) comprised the first sustained dildo satire evolution since the Roman era, Aretino drew from important innovations to the dildo motif within moral, medical, and legal documents of the Medieval period, and these thus warrant reviewing here. Firstly, Medieval religious and legal records provided firmer evidence of and contexts for material female dildo use than the ancient world had been able to provide in literary accounts; secondly, Catholic penitentials, records of parishioners' prospective sins and their suggested punishments, comprised the first documents to associate dildo use with monastic life, a topos that was to proliferate as a satirical and political weapon in the early modern world.¹³⁰

In addition to the Greco-Roman literary dildos that were likely to have resurfaced with the flurry to recuperate and translate ancient texts in Renaissance Italy, then, confessional and penitential accounts from the early middle ages to the early Italian Renaissance listed the punishments of women wielding "instruments" with one another rather definitively and suggestively.¹³¹ In several of these, particularly *Lollard's Conclusions* of the late fourteenth century, nuns who used "instruments" were singled out for censure and severe punishment.¹³²

¹³⁰ See Simons' "Cultural History", 80.

¹³¹ As Simons aptly puts it, "efforts by the Catholic church to police the use of dildoes paradoxically gave the devices a textual and confessional presence. Confessors asking whether women had employed 'instruments' [referred to euphemistically as *machina*, *molimen*, or *instrumento*] could spark the very idea" ("Cultural History" 80). Simons cites the *Decretum* of Berchard of Worms (ca. 1012) as a particularly suggestive example set of confessional questions to be asked of women: "Have you done what certain are accustomed to do, that is, to make some sort of device [*molimen*] or implement [*machina*] in the shape of the male member, of a size to match your desire, and have you fastened it to the area of your genitals or those of another with some form of fastenings and you have [sic] fornicated with other women or others have done with a similar instrument [*instrumento*] or another sort with you?" (qtd. 80). Simons notes that in the case of a woman having done any of the above, "penance of three or five years was required; masturbation without a dildo necessitated one year" (80).

¹³² For instance, the Penitential of Theodore (ca. 700) specifically references the sin of women who 'practise vice' with one another; in this text, this sin is not to be punished as male-female adultery, and the women's methods remain undefined. However, the Penitential of Bede (c. 730) proscribes "three years [of penance] for a married man who has sex with a married woman, four years for 'sodomy' (undefined), three years for 'a woman fornicating with

Highlighting the Foucauldian capacity for discourses of repression to generate the very discourse it seeks to quell,¹³³ knowledge of such ‘instruments’ would have been passed from Latin penitentials through “the confessional, from oral reports by men or women who could read Latin, by reading certain passages in the increasing number of vernacular publications, [and] by way of rumor or news reports”.¹³⁴ In fiction, the subject was taken up in Giovanni Sercambi’s fictional tale “De libidine”, published for a small circulation around 1400, in which an abbess “made a well-formed object of fine silk filled with millet” for the nuns’ use,¹³⁵ a substitution for their sexual lack which satisfied the nuns until “an actual ejaculating man proved the inadequacy of the mere tool”.¹³⁶

Multiplying explicit sexual description and an unabashed celebration of sexual pleasure first in his *sonnetti* and then in his *Ragionamenti*, Pietro Aretino, the infamous ‘father of pornography,’ is undoubtedly to blame (or to thank) for popularizing this association of Catholicism and nuns with dildo-use in the early modern world, and for transforming the dildo trope from one which had been a subject of bawdy, potentially disruptive humour among the Greeks and lewdness and denunciation among the Romans into a more blatant subject of erotic fantasy and voyeurism. Conflating classicist-inflected paganism with Catholicism and blurring the distinction between the sacred phallus and the profane dildo, Aretino’s stated object in his

a woman,’ and seven for ‘nuns with a nun by means of an instrument’” (141). Karras notes that “penances are generally higher for transgressions by monastics, so it is not clear whether it is the nuns or the instrument that make the penance higher” (141). Approx. 700 years later, the Lollard Conclusions (1395) “expressed some of the same concerns about nuns’ sexual activity, including contraception, abortion, and infanticide, sex with each other, bestiality and the sexual use of objects” (141). Karras notes that the behaviour is more often called out in general terms than in specific cases, however (141).

¹³³ *History of Sexuality* Vol. 1., 18-9.

¹³⁴ Simons, *Sex of Men*, 80.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 81, trans. Simons.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

pornographic writing was a contra-Catholic philosophical belief that sexual and visual delight in the body should be celebrated, not censured, and that the sexual organs should be venerated as symbols of life and fertility, worn as amulets and charms much like the ancient Romans proudly featured the sacred phallus. As he indicates in his defence of the *sonnetti lussiori*:¹³⁷

When I saw [the *posizione*] I had the same kind of impulse which made Giulio Romano do the original paintings, and inasmuch as the poets and sculptors, both ancient and modern, have often written or carved – for their own amusement only – such trifles as the marble satyr in the Chigi Palace who is trying to assault a boy, I scribbled off the sonnets which you find underneath each one. The sensual thoughts which they call to mind I dedicate to you, saying a fig for hypocrites. I am all out of patience with their scurvy strictures and their dirty-minded laws which forbid the eyes to see the very things which delight them most.

What wrong is there in beholding a man possess [*montare*] a woman? *It would seem to me that the thing which is given to us by nature to preserve the race, should be worn around the neck as a pendant, or pinned onto the cap like a broach, for it is the spring which feeds all the rivers of the people, and the ambrosia in which the world delights in its happiest days.*

It is what made you, who are one of the greatest living physicians... It has begotten the loveliest of children, the most beautiful of women, and the holiest of saints.

Hence one should order holidays and vigils and feasts in its honor, and not shut it up in a bit of serge or silk. The hands indeed might be hidden since they gamble away money, sign false testimony, make lewd gestures, snatch, tug, rain down fisticuffs, wound and slay. As for the mouth, it spits in the face, gluttonizes, makes you drunk and vomits...¹³⁸

Aretine's dildo, oddly in keeping with the philosophical aims stated here, is a carnivalesque conflation of the sacred phallus – the “fruit” he wishes to see everywhere, worn and wielded proudly – with the profane dildo of the ancient and premodern world, symbol of pleasure and

¹³⁷ There is always, of course, the distinct possibility that Aretino's self-defence is merely that, and does not represent his full or true thoughts on the matter.

¹³⁸ Thomas C. Chubb, trans., *The Letters of Pietro Aretino* (Hamden: Shoe String, 1967), 123-5. Qtd. in David O. Frantz, *Festum Voluptatis: A Study of English Erotica* (1989), 50. Frantz notes that Chubb has “weakened” Aretino's language with his euphemistic choice of “possess” for the Italian verb “*montare*”, which likewise Frantz is reluctant redress in indicating that “the Italian...is clear enough” rather than offering his own translation (50).

sexual satisfaction as a justifiable end unto itself. Aretino's dildos, ubiquitous in the fantasy-world of the pagan-Catholic cloister, are at once sacred and phallic, a metonymy for the generative power by which we are all alive and present in the world, and profane, in that they symbolize delight, knowledge, and enjoyment in daily life. (One can only imagine how the ancient Romans might have been outraged at the blasphemy of Aretino's equation of base phallic simulacra, the unnatural woman's drudge, with the sacred phallus and subject of their religious rites.)

From the very first in Nanna's dialogue with fellow courtesan and interlocutor Antonio in book one of *Ragionamenti*, dildos are depicted as an integral part of convent life, particularly as a necessary feature of the carnivalesque fantasy of sexual variety and the free pursuit of pleasure that we, along with Nanna, might not think to find at even the most corrupt of convents. Indeed, it is as though Nanna's dildo, plucked from a basket of "fruit" during a sumptuous feast at the book's outset, never leaves Nanna's hand for the entirety of her life as a nun. A presence which is always glossed but rarely closely examined in academic studies, dildos, 'fruit' (among other playful metaphors) which fulfill Aretino's dream of seeing phallic amulets and charms venerated and proudly displayed, figure prominently in well over half of the sexual scenes depicted in Nanna's tale as a young ingénue on a Catholic convent, her sexual initiation/coming of age tale.

In the first book of the *Ragionamenti*, the uses to which Aretino puts the dildo are many and various, the playful conceits used to describe these 'fruit' overwhelmingly abundant, and Aretino evinces all of Lucian's deliberate coyness but none of his avoidance in relating sexual scenes. Instead, the dialogue showcases and teaches the reader (along with Nanna) both

sexual ingenuity and a novel variety of uses to which the dildo can be put, extending Aretino's own sexual repertoire well beyond the male-female sexual poses we see in the *posizione* with masturbatory and same-sex acts. Nanna's tale gives readers a heightened level of naturalistic attention to the Muranese dildo's use and materiality, maintaining interest and heightening delight by preferring metaphorical over denotative diction;¹³⁹ it masculinizes the dildo-wielder, but without the condemnation of the Roman satirist; and it establishes the dildo as an educative as well as pleasurable tool through extended scenes of voyeurism, visual learning, and mimicry.

Nanna's first dildo encounter takes place on her very first day at the monastery, after she has been swiftly disabused of the notion that life in the monastery is hard and austere by being treated to a sumptuous, pagan-esque feast.¹⁴⁰ Gluttony is linked to sexual pleasure and the carnivalesque conflation of heavenly and earthly delights as the nuns and monks conclude the meal by fondling one another, halting only to laugh in delight as a boy appears, bearing a basket containing what is heralded as "fruit from the earthly paradise".¹⁴¹ The company promptly lunge for the dildos, this time more prosaically described as "those glass fruits made in Murano near Venice to look like a prick, except that these had two large dangling bells that would have done honor to a tambourine".¹⁴² These appear in a variety of sizes, and are immediately clutched and venerated by the nuns in a manner that answers Aretino's phallic call

¹³⁹ For an account of Aretino's purposefully "florid style of speech", and of Antonio's objection to the "extravagant (and hilarious) sexual metaphors" Nanna employs, see Ian Frederick Moulton, *Before Pornography: Erotic Writing in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 127-8, who argues that Aretino's purpose is to do the precise opposite of pornography in his choice of language.

¹⁴⁰ The sexual scenes throughout Book 1 are invariably concluded with great hunger and feasting – usually on wine and pastries, as the Friar does following his 'blessings' (42).

¹⁴¹ 13.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

to worship to abundant satisfaction (“blessed, not just lucky, was the woman who grabbed the biggest, thickest fruit, nor did a single one of [the nuns] forget to kiss hers, saying as she did: ‘These little things abate the temptations of the flesh’”).¹⁴³ Although assuming an air of innocent, virginal astonishment, Nanna confesses a keen desire to have one of these glass fruit for herself and is luckily handed one of two dildos plucked by a nun who does not wish to seem greedy. To further underscore the worldly tone of the sacred assembly, the Abbess brings the feast to a close with a merry blessing in the vernacular.¹⁴⁴

Nanna’s sexual education takes place through erotic voyeurism and is, quite literally, at her own hands following two very instructive dildo encounters, wherein she witnesses not only how to satiate her lust, but how to subvert moral and hierarchical strictures in order to do so. At first, she is led by a monk guide (‘The Bachelor’, her allocated pseudo-husband) to view painted scenes reminiscent of the *posizione*,¹⁴⁵ and then to view a real-life orgy via a small, centrally-set room seemingly purpose-build for sexual voyeurism;¹⁴⁶ however, subverting the expectation raised by the narrative that the Monk will be responsible for Nanna’s sexual education, he is unexpectedly called away. Alone with nothing but her dildo, Nanna examines the unusual and unexpected excesses she has seen in the convent and the curious object that

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Throughout *Book I* of *Ragionamenti* Aretino is keen to foreground his philosophy of sexual pleasure: most explicitly, towards the close of Nanna’s tale, a Lutheran friar visits the convent to deliver an exhortation on the naturalness of pleasure and the virtues of sexual love (42), referencing divine example (specifically, Cupid) and conflating pagan ritual, Catholic practise, and the pursuit of limitless pleasure. For good measure, he gives his blessing to each member in his audience of rapt nuns using “one of those glass devices (you get the picture?)” (42). Given that the friar presumably does not lack a flesh and blood member with which he could have chosen to bless the sisters, this is clearly an emblematic use of the phallus, conflated with the dildo’s purpose of providing sexual pleasure, and reminiscent of Priapic worship in the classical context.

¹⁴⁵ 14-7.

¹⁴⁶ 17.

has been in her hand since the opening feast, feeling perplexed about why the sisters “cherish” it so much.¹⁴⁷ As if in answer to her question, Nanna’s attention is pulled away from her dildo to the adjacent room, where “four sisters, the General, and three milky-white and ruby-red young friars” merrily indulge in an orgy of sacrilegious sexual and sartorial inversions, including the penetration of the General by his friar inferiors and a nun’s figurative penetration of his vestments and seat of power (rather hilariously, she “[rolls] herself up in the General’s cassock, [seats] herself pontifically, and [begins] to imitate a superior laying down the law for the convent”).¹⁴⁸ The company’s bliss is briefly punctured by the “great despair” of one of the sisters, who is “so squint-eyed and swarthy that she had been spurned by all”. Her ostracism is short-lived, however, and Nanna watches attentively as the nun handily redresses her lack by producing her “glass tool”, filling it “with water heated to wash the messer’s hands, [sits] on a pillow on the floor, push[es] the soles of her feet against the cell wall, and then [comes] straight down on that great crozier, burying it in her body as a sword is thrust into a scabbard”.¹⁴⁹ As the orgy terminates in a fantasy of mutual orgasm, the entire company, including “the nun with her Murano prodder”, achieve climax as one.¹⁵⁰ By her own actions and the presence of a

¹⁴⁷ 19.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ 19-20.

¹⁵⁰ 21. It should be noted that Aretino’s glass dildos are not presented as omnipotent and universally satisfactory, however. At a later point in her account Nanna next witnesses two sisters each “working away with a glass carrot” but with much less satisfaction than hoped (25). It does not seem to occur to these nuns that they might apply their carrots to each other, however, and they are rather shown to lack Nanna and the Swarthy nun’s ingenuity: “What madness this is, to think that our appetites can be satisfied by these filthy daubers? They give no kisses, nor do they have tongues or hands with which to touch the keys” (25). Here, the dildos are likened to “ghosts”, and one of the sisters considers it “mean and paltry if [they] waste [their] youth fiddling around with these hunks of glass” (25). They thus forsake their dildos – smashing them against their walls for good measure – and repair to Naples to find young men to bed (25).

dildo, the swarthy-eyed nun is effectively transformed from a sexual outsider to one of the company.

The second masturbatory scene Nanna recounts is that of her own sexual initiation, again not through the seduction and education of a man, but through her own agency and ingenuity, facilitated by the dildo that she holds. Having been “unstrung by the discomfort of watching [the orgy]”, Nanna once again contemplates “that glass affair” that has remained in her hands all this time, which has taken on a new significance after what she has witnessed.¹⁵¹ This is enough to heighten her arousal to the point of emulation, even though it requires the ingenuity of substituting her own piss for the nun’s warm water (“not having the hot water the sister had told [her] to use if [she] wished to employ the glass fruit, [her] wits sharpened by necessity, [she] pissed right into the handle of the spade” by way of a “little hold that had been put there so it could be filled with warm water”).¹⁵² Nanna recounts the entire experience – her first sexual experience – with both metaphoric and naturalistic detail, casting herself as gallant knight, and the dildo as her devastating weapon:

Gallantly I lifted my habit and, resting the butt end of the dagger on a box, with the point suck between my thighs, I began slowly, gently to wear away my lust. There was a great burning and stinging under the prod of that huge roach head, so that I felt both pain and pleasure, but soon the pleasure was greater than the pain, and gradually that glass ampule came alive, and so, drenched with sweat, *riding it like a true knight errant*, I shoved so hard that just a trifle more and it would have disappeared in me entirely. And as it rammed deep into me, I felt that I was dying a death sweeter than blessed life. After holding its beak down there in the soft wetness, I felt all alather. I then drew it out, and I still had that burning sensation that bites at a man with the itch when he stops scratching his thighs, and suddenly I looked at it. It was all bloody! I was so frightened I was just about to scream: ‘I want to confess!’.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ 20.

¹⁵² 21.

¹⁵³ 22, my emphasis.

Reminiscent of Juvenal's tribades, Nanna's use of the dildo (like that of the nun she has witnessed) is markedly active, and she imagines herself in a masculine role: she is a gallant knight, the active grammatical subject 'wearing away' her lust, 'riding' the dildo, and penetrating herself as much as she is being penetrated by a glass object. Aretino's masturbatory dildo (or, more properly, Nanna's and the nun's) blurs the distinction active/passive, or at least, the diction allows them to be both, simultaneously; although the dildo 'comes alive', by turns a mounted steed and by turns an agent that 'rams' her, Nanna casts herself in the role of courtly seducer, and it is in a sense to herself, as much as to the dildo (which is itself an unlikely culprit), that she loses her hymen, that emblem of virginal innocence.

Upon witnessing further sexual scenes, Nanna satiates her voyeuristic lust, along with the reader's, by again masturbating with her dildo, first taking care to refill the cold piss with fresh, warm piss to simulate ejaculation, and again feeling "quite comforted at the front door".¹⁵⁴ When "the Bachelor" finally returns and the pair have penetrative sex, Nanna's first with a male partner, she immediately compares penis and dildo, but notes only a difference in texture, as "it seemed to [her] that that flesh one was less crude and rough than the glass one", which Antonia (her interlocutor) exclaims is a "great secret!".¹⁵⁵ The purpose of this inclusion, surely, is to slightly privilege the real thing over the simulacrum, to satisfy the demands of verisimilitude, and to quell the reader's own desire to know.

¹⁵⁴ 27-8. Dildos which simulate ejaculation were far more common during and before the sixteenth century than they would come to be in the seventeenth, perhaps due to the growing consensus within medical texts that male ejaculate was not required for a woman to orgasm.

¹⁵⁵ 33.

Meanwhile, the General's merry band rouse themselves for further sexual escapades, undertaking a supposedly Babylonian 'jousting' contest in which *all* of the boys and nuns present participate.¹⁵⁶ This scene extends and heightens the metaphor of female dildo-wielding knighthood and conquest, but abandons the more conventional masturbatory dildo accounts in the book's first scenes in favour of carnivalesque innovations in sexual poses and acts: namely, when it is the first nun's turn to 'joust', she redresses her lack of a "pine lance" by "pick[ing] up a glass one, and at the first crack burie[s] it deep in the General's buttocks, while planting, for good measure, the bells in her own love-patch". A second nun, "copying her sister, plunge[s] her two-balled lance in the backside of the young man [participant friar], who, when he felt the impact, squirmed like an eel". And finally, the "squint-eyed" nun, now fully accepted into the company,¹⁵⁷ offers everyone "plenty to laugh at", we are told, because she "burie[s] her glass patty-cake, on which she had dined that morning, in her sister's oven", and is penetrated from behind in turn, "so that they all looked like a spit of damned souls that Satanas was roasting at the fire for Lucifer's carnival".¹⁵⁸ Here, female same-sex penetration is a laughing matter, but that does not mean it lacks anything in sexual efficacy; if anything, the swarthy nun's ingenuity, again showcased in her novel choice of target, is what increases her desirability for the merry band.

¹⁵⁶ Alongside dildo use, carnivalesque anal sex abounds in this book of the *Dialogues*, involving both men and boys reversing their prescribed roles and being penetrated in turn (25-7).

¹⁵⁷ In fact, this previously abject nun is reported as "a real delight...[getting] off the wittiest remarks in the world" at everyone's escapades (24). Through humour and dildo-aided ingenuity, it would seem, the "cock-eyed" nun is fully accepted into the company.

¹⁵⁸ 24.

If, as Moulton has indicated, Aretino's express purpose in his use of an overwhelmingly large metaphorical vocabulary in *Ragionamenti* is intended to avoid the repetitiveness and reductiveness of conventional erotic texts,¹⁵⁹ then Nanna's final dildo-wielding scene in Book 1 is a marked attempt to improve upon the male-female limitations of Aretino's own *sonnetti*. In the convent, Nanna is anonymously sent what appears to be a beautiful prayer book – a *Magnificat* – but which is actually a book “crammed with pictures of people amusing themselves in the modes and postures performed by the learned nuns” - clearly an allusion to Giliano Romano's *posizione* - which Nanna finds both amusing and arousing, and which compels her to try them for herself.¹⁶⁰ When a sister comes running to find out the source of Nanna's merriment, they are mutually “seized with a great desire to try the painted positions”, and “resort to the glass handle”, i.e., assuming male-female postures and penetrating each other both vaginally and anally ('the bad way') with Nanna's dildo, to do so.¹⁶¹

Aretino's dildo accounts, like his use of language, are generative, derived from a hybrid of the Grecian model of masturbating matronae and the Roman model of man-aping tribades, but clearly intended to expand the dildo's sexual possibilities beyond these models. Aretino's glass dildos thus penetrate both men and women in a variety of paired and group combinations, are deployed in both the 'good' and the 'bad' way, operate alongside such other sexual taboos as sodomy and buggery, play a key role in the sexual education and voyeurism of a young female initiate,¹⁶² and subvert the conventional roles of one-sex phallocentrism in a

¹⁵⁹ 127-8.

¹⁶⁰ 44.

¹⁶¹ 44.

¹⁶² See Turner, *Schooling Sex*, 34-5, which takes up the subject of Nanna's erotic education but omits discussion of Nanna's dildo-aided self-explorations.

plethora of modes and poses – comprising dildo use in virtually any and every way, we may assume, its author could imagine. Aretino’s dildo, then, as his sexual representations more broadly, is erotic fantasy, clearly inviting the reader to participate in and be educated by the illicit pleasures on display.

Whether we are to ultimately read Aretino’s dildo as one of orgiastic, humorous, and irreverent celebration in the scenes he recounts – that is, loosely after the Grecian *olisbos* – or as explicit, materialized evidence of the depravity, sin, and sexual transgression rife in the Catholic convent, emblem of its society’s perverted seat of power, remains ambiguous in these accounts, and is probably deliberately so: mining Aretino’s infamous history of political and cultural engagement rather deepens these ambiguities than clarifies them. While it is clear that in his lifetime Aretino was a censured critic and satirist of the church establishment, it is equally clear, as articulated in his defence of the *sonnetti lussiori*, that he was an earnest pornographer at least in outward pose, extolling the essential goodness of sexual pleasure. The inherent paradoxes of the dildo trope as a figure which may be wielded in the invective tradition to reassert power over its transgressive subjects, and in the comic to elicit humour, wit, and voyeuristic wit, are perfectly emblematic of Aretino’s duality of purpose. Critics have taken a bifurcated view of Aretino as a noted ‘scourge of princes’ and anti-Catholic satirist and critic on the one hand (which accounts for his extensive depiction of Catholic monastic gluttony and excess in the *Ragionamenti*), and as a shameless pornographer and lover of limitless eroticism on the other (a viewpoint which accounts for his carnivalesque mode).¹⁶³

¹⁶³ See Frantz, *Festum*, Moulton, *Before Pornography*, Grantham-Turner, *Schooling Sex*, and Julie Peakman, *Mighty Lewd Books: The Development of Pornography in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

Tellingly, the dildo does not appear again in either subsequent book of *Ragionamenti*: it is as if, once Nanna abruptly leaves the cloister for her respective ‘lives’ as a wife and a courtesan, the dildo ceases to exist, a relic, in Aretino, of the monastic world alone. This suggests that for all Aretino’s professions of the limitless of erotic potential, the dildo’s natural limit is indeed the hypocritical strictures of convent life, beyond which it does and cannot extend. Restoration wits and dildo lampoonists would be heavily influenced by Aretino’s pornographic influence – Julie Peakman, for instance, points to the enduring influence of Aretino’s erotic works in England well into the eighteenth century, including the *Ragionamenti* and his *sonetti lussuriosi*. They would also come to be particularly attendant to his ambiguity of purpose, his blurring of sacred and profane, and his morally suspect, self-implicating mode of sexual satire; *Seigneur Dildoe*, in particular, would be deeply indebted to Italian pornographic traditions and to Aretino’s fusion of Catholicism and dildo use.¹⁶⁴

From Aretine ‘fruit’ to Nashe’s ‘knaues’: *Nashes Dildo* in early modern England

While Pietro Aretino relegated the pleasures of the dildo to metaphors of fruit and plenitude and to the Catholic cloister (the latter theme, as we shall see, was to be exploited in “Seigneur Dildoe”), Aretino’s self-styled English successor, Thomas Nashe or the ‘English Aretino’ (1567-c. 1601),¹⁶⁵ established the dildo in the English vernacular and relocated it onto the Elizabethan urban landscape. Whereas due to the particularities of his sixteenth-century Venetian context

¹⁶⁴ In her overview of pre-18th century influences on pornographic texts in eighteenth-century England, Peakman indicates that Italy was the most influential and prolific publisher of erotic texts in England into the seventeenth-century, but was supplanted by France in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. See Peakman, *Mighty Lewd Books*, and also Moulton, 15.

¹⁶⁵ For full accounts of Nashe as the English Aretino, see Frantz, *Festum*, Moulton, *Before Pornography*, and Grantham-Turner, *Schooling Sex*.

Aretino was markedly successful in his self-fashioning as an influential, patron-supported “Scourge of Princes”, Nashe’s attempt to become the English Aretino – that is, a Juvenalian satirist whose erotic and political verse was intended both to critique his culture from within and to promote the satirist himself as an influential figure in the realm – was comparatively unsuccessful in this regard.¹⁶⁶ Ian Moulton has linked this to the particularly acute anxieties around gender and effeminacy in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century England, given new ideals of English masculinity and repudiation of effeminacy, particularly in the literary realm, that were thought to be required in order for England’s imperial ventures to succeed. These were of course heightened by the gender anxieties caused by the nation’s female monarch, Elizabeth I.¹⁶⁷

In this late sixteenth-century English context, the ‘Aretine’ – an adjective used liberally to refer to a “range of disorderly sexual practises associated with Aretino and his writings in early modern England”¹⁶⁸ – had come to take on a markedly pejorative tone, particularly with the rise of anti-Italianate discourse in late sixteenth-century England.¹⁶⁹ Accordingly, Nashe owned only Aretino’s political influence on his writings and career, never the influence of his erotic writing, presumably because he understood the contemporary bias against erotic writing as ‘effeminate’ in Elizabethan England and did not wish to foreground this aspect of Aretino’s oeuvre in fashioning his own authorial persona. And while Nashe likely did this, as Moulton theorizes, in order to mitigate charges of sodomy and effeminacy, thanks to his well-

¹⁶⁶ Moulton, 160.

¹⁶⁷ 158-60.

¹⁶⁸ Moulton, 158.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. 161.

documented feud with Gabriel Harvey and the unfashionableness of his mode of authorship and verse, these charges were compulsively hurled at him anyway.¹⁷⁰

Perhaps in an attempt distance himself from Aretino's erotic verse, then, in redeploying the dildo trope in his verse satire *Choise of Valentines* (1592), Nashe eschewed the Aretine model, seeing fit to reinvent the English dildo by entering the term into direct English discourse, a move that had not been attempted by Aretino or by the Italian, French, or Latin dildo satire traditions, and had not been equalled in the western speaking world since the explicitness of the ancient Greek *olisbos* and *baubon*. Nashe likewise turned from Aretino's carnivalesque conflation of dildo and phallus, and of a variety of masturbatory, same-sex, and opposite-sex uses to centre on his own rapidly secularizing and urbanizing Elizabethan context, and to re-establish the dildo after the Roman fashion as a masturbatory anti-phallus, instrument of female pleasure, foil and foe of the male flesh-and-blood member.

Along with Aretino, whose *Ragionamenti* appeared in England as early as 1584, certainly early enough to inform Nashe's own deployment of the dildo motif in his *Choise of Valentines* whatever his attempts at distance, Nashe was hugely influential on the dildo's recurrence as a literary motif in England throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and undoubtedly inspired Rochester and other Restoration courtiers to take up the satiric dildo motif.¹⁷¹ Where the criticism has commonly read in Nashe's "knaue" dildo a doggedly misogynist critique of female sexual and social control over themselves and over men,¹⁷² I

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ For Aretino's influence on Nashe, the seventeenth-century context, and on Rochester in particular, see Turner, *Schooling Sex*, 264-87; Johnson, *A Profane Wit* (2004), "The Grand Tour"; Peakman, *Mighty Lewd Books*, "Foreign Influences", 15-7; Frantz, *Festum*.

¹⁷² Moulton.

instead read Nashe's treatment of the dildo as revelatory of both female and male culpability in the ailing social order, and as a tool whereby Nashe explores the implications of an increasingly commercialized English society, of sexual freedoms and pleasures that are never free in a marketplace economy (and that might not in fact be pleasurable!), and of an urban landscape wherein, as Brown has recently argued, "both the market-place and the city are characterized by multiplicity, open-endedness, ceaseless movement, and superficial social exchanges".¹⁷³

Nashe & the dildo's linguistic origins in early modern England

Current consensus places Nashe's *Choise of Valentines*, more commonly known by his contemporaries as *Nashe His Dildo* (or *Nashe's Dildo*), as the etymological point of origin for the English term 'dildo' in its modern usage.¹⁷⁴ Like Aretino, Nashe cultivated a reputation for linguistic innovation, so it's likely that it was Nashe who first took the term – previously, a nonsense word used as a common ballad refrain – and instituted its modern usage. This likelihood is certainly supported by the manner in which the dildo quickly and widely became associated with Nashe as *his* dildo at the turn of the seventeenth century. It's also likely that Nashe (or an unnamed, unknown source) drew inspiration from Italian as well as domestic sources in his Adamic naming of the dildo, however: by description, the dildos to which Nashe's satire refers are certainly akin to Aretino's - glass with a hollow centre through which a liquid substance, often water, milk, or urine, as in *Ragionamente*, could be pumped to simulate ejaculation. In any case, the idea of 'dildo' as Italianate in origin became predominant by the

¹⁷³ Georgia Brown, "Sex and the City: Nashe, Ovid, and the Problems of Urbanity", in *The Age of Thomas Nashe*, ed. Guy-Bray et al. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 14.

¹⁷⁴ See Simons, *Sex of Men*, Jonathan Crewe, *Unredeemed Rhetoric: Thomas Nashe and the Scandal of Authorship*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 65-66, Moulton, *Before Pornography*, 78-9.

eighteenth century. Following Nathan Bailey's collection of *Old English Proverbs* (1735), particularly, it was common to posit 'dildo' as an abbreviation of the Italian 'diletto,' meaning pleasure or delight;¹⁷⁵ according to Bailey, whose account echoes the feminine overtones of the Greek *olisbos* and *baubon*, 'diletto' and its English equivalent 'dildo' specifically signified "a woman's delight". Regardless of whether Nashe drew on the Italian 'diletto' in his coinage, his dildo theme in *Choise of Valentine* is strikingly that: an erudite exploration of woman's delight at the expense of, or having dispensed with, the effeminized, impotent male.

The Dedication

Nashe's self-conscious, highly stylized framing of his dildo begins with a dedication to Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton and Baron of Titchfield, although it is equally explicit in his self-insertion through his namesake protagonist, Tomalin, and in the peculiar invocations to a wanton muse which frame the verse narrative.¹⁷⁶ Ostensibly, Nashe begs Southampton's pardon for the "wanton Elegie" he is about to present,¹⁷⁷ and promises "better lynes" at a later time, presumably to better honour his patron.¹⁷⁸ In this same rueful vein, he blames his inability to write on a topic of more depth on his Muse, whom he claims is "devorst [sic] from deeper care" and so inspires him to write only on wanton subjects.¹⁷⁹ Against this apologetic grain, however, and highly reminiscent of Aretino's defense of erotic writing, Nashe also provides a second, bolder justification for his choice of theme, one which suggests a knowing

¹⁷⁵ See Chapter One.

¹⁷⁶ "Choise of Valentines", in Thomas Nashe, *Works*, ed. Ronald McKerrow and F.P. Wilson. 5 vols. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958), 1-2. All page ("Dedication") and line references below are to McKerrow and Wilson's edition.

¹⁷⁷ 4.

¹⁷⁸ 14.

¹⁷⁹ 3.

purpose on the author's part: he claims the ubiquity of the behaviour he is about to describe, asking that his patron "ne blame [his] verse of loose unchastitie / for painting forth the things that hidden are, / since all men acte what I in speache declare, / onlie induced with varietie".¹⁸⁰ Quite brazenly, then, in arguing that his verse is no more unchaste than all men's (and women's) actions, not imagined fantasies or unfulfilled desires, Nashe presumes the universality of the sexual behaviour depicted in the poem.

Anticipating but pre-emptively defending against charges of lewdness such as those Aretino faced for his *sonnetti*, Nashe claims that he only had the audacity to "[paint] forth" what is conventionally left "hidden", and "declare" – translate into speech, manuscript, and denotative language – what is conventionally acted but seldom if ever verbalized. Nashe's self-aggrandizement as the innovative scribe-poet ushering a mode of universal behaviour into the world of letters and vocalization is heightened in the subsequent stanza of the dedication, as Nashe points to a paucity of verse on the subject of "loues pleasures",¹⁸¹ in contrast to verse in praise or complaint,¹⁸² particularly in "theis latter times".¹⁸³ Nashe claims, then, that he will redress a pair of gaps with his present text: first in writing on taboo subjects that he holds are insufficiently and/or inadequately treated in his time; and in boldly naming the hitherto unnameable in public and direct discourse: both sexual acts and the implements used in these acts. This strategy of direct, Adamic naming would afford Nashe a greater discursive potency and a masculine boldness, perhaps, but would also place his 'lewdness' in plainer view for his enemies to decry – a fact which Nashe's detractors certainly exploited to the full. Whatever his

¹⁸⁰ 5-8.

¹⁸¹ 11.

¹⁸² 9.

¹⁸³ 12.

claims to swerve from Aretino's model as an erotic poet, then, ultimately Nashe's dedication prepares the reader for precisely the Aretine: for a description of love in all its pleasures; for sexual variety, and for consequence-free, omnipotent sexual fulfillment not unlike that achieved by the nuns and monks encountered in Aretino's sexually-idealized cloister.

Nashe's Dildo

Initially, *Choise of Valentines* is set in what appears to be the conventional pastoral setting of a ballad, a country fair and the pairing off of 'true louers' at Valentines' Day,¹⁸⁴ and the scene is set to provide readers with scenes of sexual fulfillment of a kind that they have been promised in Nashe's dedication. Appearances, however, are deceiving (and frequently contradicted) throughout *Choise of Valentines*. Aretino's pretended intention of providing scenes of unmitigated pleasure is subverted as the apparently idyllic setting is swiftly undercut by the transactional and financial nature of sex that has overtaken freer, purer forms of love, even in the countryside. The young swain Tomalin, our vantage point on the proceedings, finds himself removed from these scenes of lovers' "ioyes":¹⁸⁵ *his* choice Valentine, whom we might take at first to be an innocent country girl, the nymph to his shepherd, has fled the village to escape Puritanical officials ("Good Justice Dudgeon-haft, and crab-tree face, / With bills and staves had scar'd hir from the place"),¹⁸⁶ leaving Tomalin to seek her at a "house of venerie",¹⁸⁷ or urban brothel. Tomalin, appearing at first every inch the innocent, bumbling swain, seemingly confused by Frances' escape and convinced of her faithful devotion to him, is not what he

¹⁸⁴ 1-16.

¹⁸⁵ 16.

¹⁸⁶ 18-9.

¹⁸⁷ 24.

appears to be, either: he arrives at the brothel prepared to pay for his pleasure, even employing the commercial language of horse-hire to request his prostitute (He “bouldlie made enquire / if they had hackneis to lett-out to hire, / and what they crau’d, by order of their trade, / to lett one ride a iournie on a iade”).¹⁸⁸ After a lengthy repartee with the brothel Madam underscoring the financial transaction inherent in the pursuit of his desire¹⁸⁹ – male sexual satisfaction, in the urban landscape depicted by Nashe, must necessarily be paid for - Tomalin pays the Madam, and freely consents to pay a high premium to have his choice of “fresher ware” than he is first offered.¹⁹⁰ We may note here that Frances is more expensive not because she is newer to the trade or because she will afford men more pleasure, but because she maintains a markedly superficial illusion of quality, luxury, and freshness, particularly through the “veluett gounes, / and ruffs and periwigs as fresh as Maye” in which she is kept.¹⁹¹

The easy, quickly “ravish’d”, and effeminate Tomalin has difficulties bedding the sense-confounding Frances almost from the first.¹⁹² Though she helps maintain the flattering, patriarchal illusion that he is her only “true loue” by offering to leave the brothel with him at once,¹⁹³ Frances’ actions bely her professions of modesty, as she throws herself on him with abandon and handily convinces him to consummate their passion immediately - for ““who is able to abstaine so long?””.¹⁹⁴ (This, of course, is further proof of Tomalin’s initial comment that ““soe more men are beguilde / with smiles, with flatt’ring wordes, and faned cheere /

¹⁸⁸ 25-8.

¹⁸⁹ 30-42.

¹⁹⁰ 54.

¹⁹¹ 64-5.

¹⁹² 78-9.

¹⁹³ 85-92.

¹⁹⁴ 93-8.

when in [women's] deedes their falsehood doeth appeare").¹⁹⁵ Passively succumbing to this advance,¹⁹⁶ Tomalin is "ravis'd" by his unlimited tactile and visual access to her body.¹⁹⁷ This is sexual ravishment at its most effeminizing, of course, as the full sight of Frances' bodily "joyes" 'unarms' Tomalin,¹⁹⁸ and renders him impotent to carry out his desires (or, "makes the fruites of loue oftsoone by rype, / and pleasure pluckt too tymelie from the stemme / to dye ere it hath seene Jerusalem").¹⁹⁹ At this, Tomalin utters a forlorn lament that provides a thematic key to the poem, as to the impotence poems of the late seventeenth century: "What shall I doe to shewe my self a man?"²⁰⁰ Herein lies the problem, of course: when women hold sway over the fulfillment of male desire, even when they are hired to satisfy, how can a man retain his masculine vitality, his full potency, which must overcome resistance in order to conquer?²⁰¹

If Nashe's Tomalin is, from the first, unmanned and effeminized in *Choice of Valentines*, Frances, too, consistently assumes a more masculine than feminine role. When Tomalin's efforts to chastise himself mentally into re-arousal fail, Francis takes it upon herself to give him an erection through vigorous (and rather humorous) stimulation of Tomalin's penis.²⁰² It is at this point in the poem that we first hear Frances speak at length, and from this juncture the narrative point of view, given through unclearly delineated quotations, shifts somewhat confusedly between the two characters, complementing the blurring of the characters' genders, and what appears to be a conventionally misogynist, Juvenalian rant against the falsity

¹⁹⁵ 81-4.

¹⁹⁶ 99-101.

¹⁹⁷ 102-117.

¹⁹⁸ 105.

¹⁹⁹ 118-120.

²⁰⁰ 127.

²⁰¹ See Aphra Behn's Cloris, "The Disappointment", who does not offer sufficient resistance to Lisander's advances and so renders him impotent, unable to conquer.

²⁰² 131-2.

of women shifts dramatically with this oscillation in point of view. Like Aphra Behn's Cloris would nearly a century later, Frances' lament at Tomalin's impotence centres on her own sexual disappointment (though no more so than Tomalin's account has focused solely on his own self-interest): "Unhappie me', quoth shee, 'and wilt' not stand? / ...Perhaps the sillie worme is labour'd sore, / and wearied that it can doe noe more; / if it be so, as I am greate a-dread, / I wish tenne thousand times that I were dead".²⁰³ The unconventional inclusion of the female (Frances') reaction to male impotence, the clearly satiric humour of Frances' hyperbolic reaction (although who, precisely, Nashe intends to target is somewhat more complex), Frances' markedly belittling and clearly humorous characterization of Tomalin's penis as "sillie worme",²⁰⁴ and most conspicuously, her insistence upon receiving full sexual gratification in addition to the *financial* recompense which has already been paid for the sexual transaction all underscore Nashe's satiric targeting of both male *and* female sexuality – of the urban sexual economy itself, indeed, in which Tomalin has wittingly participated - as depicted in the Tomalins and Franceses of his time.

Despite this abuse, however, Frances' exasperated ministrations somehow succeed in raising Tomalin's penis (or is it Tomalin himself?) "from his swoune",²⁰⁵ and what follows is a rather optimistic account – in tone, at least, this is clearly from Tomalin's point of view - of 'successful' penetrative sex wherein Tomalin is the active, if haphazard, partner.²⁰⁶ Despite the energetic language employed to describe this sequence, Tomalin unwittingly appears a rather

²⁰³ 133-6.

²⁰⁴ 133.

²⁰⁵ 142.

²⁰⁶ 143-52.

dilettante, over-zealous, and oblivious lover to his long-suffering “Grissell”, comic in his apparent lack of control, and subtlety. To wit,

he flue on hir as he were wood,
And on hir breeche did hack and foyne a-good;
He rub’d, and prickt, and pierst her to the bones,
Digging as farre as eath he might for stones.²⁰⁷

When it seems as though Tomalin is about to come before Frances (as “what [is] so firme that maie continue euer?”),²⁰⁸ Frances stops him short, regains control of the situation and instigates “crotchet-time” – that is, mutual rhythm – in order to prolong the experience and multiply their pleasure with a sought-after simultaneous orgasm.²⁰⁹ When Tomalin soon ejaculates, Frances’ exclamations and physical contractions seem to suggest, to Tomalin at least, that Frances too has reached climax.²¹⁰ Again, however, appearances are other than they seem, or perhaps Tomalin is simply an inept reader. In any case, Frances punctures Tomalin’s fantasy of successful conquest as she very outspokenly informs him, with much renewed exasperation, that she has not yet come.²¹¹ Seeing that Tomalin is literally spent, that his “soule is fleeting hence, / and life forsakes his fleshie residence”,²¹² and that she is left still burning with desire,²¹³ Frances laments the frailty of the male member, bids adieu to that

²⁰⁷ 143-6. What confuses here is whether the narrative has shifted to a third person point of view, such that references to ‘him’ throughout this section refer to Tomalin generally, rather than his penis specifically (which would be the case if Tomalin were referring to his penis as a third-person male). This becomes particularly important when determining whether to read the statement that Frances’ eyes are fixed on ‘him’ throughout the exchange as Frances’ fascination with Tomalin’s penis, or her connection to Tomalin through eye contact (155-6). Given Nashe’s comparison of Francis to Chaucer’s forbearing Grisell, one is discouraged from interpreting Frances’ gaze as a lover’s eye-contact. For a different view, see Lavery, *Impotency Poem*, “Chapter 5”.

²⁰⁸ 178.

²⁰⁹ 183-4.

²¹⁰ 192-200.

²¹¹ 203-8.

²¹² 209-10.

²¹³ 222.

“faint-hearted instrument of lust / that falseie hath betrayde our equale trust”,²¹⁴ swears that “hence-forth no more will [she] implore [its] ayde, / or thee, or man of cowardize upbrayde”,²¹⁵ and finally, definitively, supplies herself with a dildo, that comparatively stalwart instrument of lust, gleefully proclaiming:

My little dildo shall supply their kind,
 A knave that moves as light as leaves by wind,
 That bendeth not, nor foldest any deal,
 But stands as stiff as he were made of steel,
 And plays at peacock twixt my legs right blithe,
 And doth my tickling swage with many a sigh.
 For, by Saint Runyon, he'll refresh me well,
 And never make my tender belly swell.²¹⁶

In this clearly complimentary personification of the dildo as a light-footed ‘knaue’ – here, deploying the terms neutral sense of “young man”,²¹⁷ Frances handily catalogues the dildo’s virtues over the penis, anticipating the Restoration arguments of both Butler’s (?) *Dildoïdes* and of “Seigneur Dildoe”, and centring on the dildo as a foil to the mundane sexual problems of male impotence and impregnation, those material impediments to ‘free’ sexual love. The dildo, that is, is ever erect and never impotent; does not fatigue, as man might; is refreshing and able to produce a female orgasm in its ability to simulate ejaculation,²¹⁸ and yet never causes an unwanted pregnancy, which would be a particular boon to an unmarried woman such as a prostitute.

²¹⁴ 233-4.

²¹⁵ 235.

²¹⁶ 237-244.

²¹⁷ *OED*.

²¹⁸ That is, orgasm was commonly thought to be achieved mutually. See Laqueur, *Making of Sex* 46-51. Women who masturbated with dildos were thought to be more sexually satisfied by simulated ejaculation into the early seventeenth century, a belief which had waned by the Restoration period. See also n. 154.

The point is not without its counterpoint, however; despite these sound reasons for Frances to supply herself with a dildo, it is as though the poet's Muse can't help but intervene in this praise of the explicitly anti-phallic instrument,²¹⁹ craftily re-casting the dildo as a 'knaue' in the most pejorative of senses. Thus Frances' testimony of the dildo's virtues, its potent instrumentality in service of female desire, is undercut by a defence against its apparent usurping of the god Priapus' power:

Poor Priapus, whose triumph now must fall,
 Except thou thrust this *weakling* to the wall,
 Behold how he *usurps* in bed and bower,
 And *undermines* thy kingdom every hour.
 How *sly* he *creeps* betwixt the bark and tree,
 And sucks the sap, whilst sleep detaineth thee.
 He is my mistress' page at every stound,
 And soon *will tent a deep intrenched wound*.
 He waits on courtly nymphs that be so coy,
 And bids them scorn the blind-alluring boy.
 He gives young girls their gamesome sustenance,
 And every gaping mouth his full sufficiency.
 He fortifies disdain with foreign arts,
 And wanton-chaste deludes all loving hearts.
 If any wight a cruel mistress serves,
 Or in despair, unhappy pines and sterves,
 Curse eunuch dildo, senseless, counterfeit,
 Who sooth may fill, but never can beget.²²⁰

Adroitly exploiting the pejorative denotations of the term 'knaue' current in Elizabethan England, namely as a lowly, servile figure ("A male attendant, page, or other servant; ...a man of low rank or status; a commoner, a peasant")²²¹ and as a cunning usurper ("A dishonest

²¹⁹ Excepting tone it is unclear from textual indications whether this is in fact Tomalin's Muse or Tomalin himself responding in outrage.

²²⁰ 245-262.

²²¹ *OED*.

unprincipled man; a cunning unscrupulous rogue; a villain; (in early use also) an unpleasant or disagreeable man”),²²² the speaker here alleges that dildos are to be found, blamed, and cursed in any case where a ‘blind-alluring boy’ such as Tomalin finds himself ‘in despair’ because he is denied sex from a dildo-satiated mistress.

However, this rebuttal, though certainly not lacking in venomous outrage on the part of the usurped Priapus, lacks much of the coherent logic of Frances’ straightforward praise of the dildo’s virtues. It is blind emotion, not sage logic, that fuels the Priapic outrage here. As such, the dildo is unevenly personified as a crafty usurper to Priapus, or the rightful throne of male sexual power, who strikes with the utmost potency and efficacy when the male member is asleep (read: impotent); simultaneously, he is characterized as an effeminate, subservient page, subject to his mistress’ will, demeaned as a fulfilling source of sexual sustenance for girls and women, but nothing more. (As we see earlier in the poem, this is a sexual economy in which it is difficult to be both effeminate/subservient to female desire *and* potent; thus, how is it that the dildo is suddenly capable of being both?)

Here, then, the dildo is imbued with an enormous power, even the power to avoid being overcome by his own effeminacy: he is a deterrent for women from male love, an accessory to young women appearing and being simultaneously ‘wanton’ and ‘chaste’; and a “eunuch...senseless, counterfeit”, the cause and source of many men’s subservience to a ‘cruel mistress,’ despite the fact that the dildo is unable to beget children. It is as though the over-hasty, over-heated, and (rather Tomalin-esque) haphazard narrator has not paused to discern the best and surest manner of attack, the right means of disarming the dildo and defending his

²²² Ibid.

god, Priapus – that is, he has not paused to consider whether it would be better to accuse the dildo of effeminate subservience, a page or a eunuch’s status, the latter of whom may not get a woman with child; or whether to depict the dildo as a traitor, imbuing him with a masculine ability to usurp, strike, act the foreign conqueror, and thus be fully capable of satisfying female conquests. And so, in his rage he has done both, unwittingly undercutting both his own ethos and providing a paltry defense of usurped Priapus, at best (which is a double, of course, for his own male potency, prerogative, and pride).

This muddling of attack-tactics and of narrative purpose is further compounded by a lengthy description, reminiscent in part of Aretino’s ejaculating glass dildos and sodomitical suggestions, by which any reader may know the dildo’s material and physical attributes, given with the weak justification that it will aid those who, “if revenge enraged with despair / that such a dwarf his wellfare should impair, / would fain this woman's secretary know, / let him attend the marks that I shall show”:²²³

He is a youth almost two handfuls high,
 Straight, round, and plumb, yet having but one eye,
 Wherein the rheum so fervently doth rain,
 That Stygian gulf may scarce his tears contain;
 Attired in white velvet or in silk,
 And nourish'd with hot water or with milk;
 Arm'd otherwhile in thick congealed glass,
 When he more glib to hell below would pass,
 Upon a chariot of five wheels he rides,
 The which an arm-strong driver steadfast guides,
 And often alters pace as ways grow deep
 (For who in paths unknown one gate can keep?).
 Sometimes he smoothly slideth down the hill,
 Another while the stones his feet do kill
 In clammy ways he treadeth by and by,

²²³ 263-266.

And plasheth and sprayeth all that be him nigh.
 So fares this jolly rider in his race,
 Plunging and sourcing forward in like case,
 Bedash'd, bespirted, and beplodded foul,
 God give thee shame, thou blind misshapen owl.²²⁴

Given the speaker's abundance of material information about the dildo's many noble materials (velvet, silk, glass), his ability to be dexterous and graceful as he is guided on "five wheels" by an "arm-strong driver" (that is, of course, the masturbating woman, who, unlike our unfortunate, ungraceful Tomalin, knows just how to please herself in "alt[ering] pace"), and given the narrator's own tendency (alongside our protagonist Tomalin's) to undercut his aims with impotence and ill-fated attempts, the speaker's previous outburst against the dildo as monstrous and unnatural, a "eunuch", a "blind misshapen owl", is markedly deflated. The reader must again cope with sudden shifts in tone: throughout the sequence the dildo's sexual escapades are rather pleasantly described as that of a "jolly rider", but then are abruptly treated to invective ('blind misshapen owl') in the closing couplet. What's more, the sad fact is that Tomalin's *own* true 'misshapen owl' – the limp penis, which cannot hold the intended shape, in contrast to the ever-erect, 'steel'-like dildo – are as likely a source of failure and ineptitude which leads to this usurpation of Priapus – are what necessitate the dildo in the first place.

In this reading of faulty and shifting appearances, then, particularly where any sexual exchange is concerned, how we are to take the description and characterization of *Frances'* dildo depends entirely on narrative point of view, and cannot be divorced by the scenes of flesh-and-blood male inadequacy and impotence that have preceded it. Undoubtedly,

²²⁴ 284-303.

commenters are justified to an extent in pointing to the way Nashe's dildo is personified as "monstrous" anti-phallus – specifically, as "monstrous, a human being that is deformed and dysfunctional"²²⁵ – "a blind mischapen owle,' 'bedasht, bespurted, and beplodded foule',²²⁶ as well as "a eunuch, a dwarf, and impotent", or a "senceless, counterfet, / Who sooth maie fill, but neuer can begett".²²⁷ However, we should also consider that Tomalin's view of the matter is not the only viewpoint we are afforded in the poem, and that Tomalin's reaction is surely qualified by his effeminacy throughout the poem and by the intensity of shame, frustration, and anger which the reader can readily imagine would follow from having paid for such an imperfect enjoyment. It is equally crucial to consider that each of the epithets hurled at Frances' implement logically applies as much (if not more) to Tomalin's impotent penis as to the furnished dildo, and that both are outgrowths of this ailing sexual economy based on false appearances, monetary transactions, and imperfect enjoyments.

The legacy of *Nashe's Dildo* in seventeenth-century England

Whatever the linguistic origin of 'dildo', it is clear that Nashe's brazen use of the term resonated among his contemporaries and beyond.²²⁸ By 1617, John Davies of Hereford claimed in *Wits Bedlam* that *Nashe's Dildo* (variously referred to in the satire as "Nashes choosing

²²⁵ Moulton, *Before Pornography*, 185.

²²⁶ 288, 87.

²²⁷ 185, 263-4.

²²⁸ See Moulton, *Before Pornography* 183, for a corroborating account of the dildo's post-Nashe proliferation. Alongside canonical mentions of dildos in Donne, Jonson, Shakespeare, and Middleton, of particular note is Moulton's gloss of an "anonymous poem in a manuscript collection (Rosenbach MS 1083/15, c. 1600-20) that also contains a garbled copy of 'Choice of Valentines' [which] refers to a woman who 'made hir Dildo of a mutton bone' (p. 26)" (183). Sadly, I was unable to view the Rosenbach MS.

V'lentines" and simply "Dildo") was "known to every Trull".²²⁹ And for good reason. Apart from his own satire *Paper's Complaint* (1611, reprinted 1625), wherein Davies' personified protagonist 'Paper' complains of the obscenities such as *Dildo* that are committed by poets to its pages,²³⁰ literary dildo appearances of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries comprise four full pages of Gordon William's *Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart Literature* (1994).²³¹ The remarkably long laundry list of literary dildo appearances between Nashe and the Restoration includes John Donne's "Elegy 2" or "The Anagram" (c. 1595); Gabriel Harvey's *The Trimming of Thomas Nashe Gentleman* (1597), a satire by Nashe's arch-enemy suggesting that he should write exclusively about dildos and in lieu of religious themes; John Marston's Juvenalian *Scourge of Villanie* (1598; 3.30-32, 8.128-9, 131-2), perhaps the first early modern English satire to link dildo-use to the sexual perversions of court women; Marston's plays *Antonio and Mellida* (1600) and *The History of Antonio and Mellida* (1602), wherein 'Dildo' appears as the name of a minor character (a servant), alongside 'Catzo' (Italian for penis); George Chapman's *Monsieur D'Oliue* (1606), a comedy wherein yet another character (the monster) identifies himself as "Dildo"; John Barnes' *Divils Charter* (1607), a tragedy on Pope Alexander the sixth which alludes to Roman and Aretine (Italian-made glass) dildos;²³² Ben Jonson's *The Fountaine of Selfe-Love* (1601, 1616) and *The Alchemist*

²²⁹ See *Epigram 206* ("Tis merry, when knaues meet"), wherein Nashe's *Choice of Valentines/Dildo* is alluded to among choice pamphlets, epigrams, and satires wielded by youths of the town.

²³⁰ It seems that efforts to procure and destroy Nashe's *Dildo* were as strong as those by 'youths' who wished to enjoy it, as Paper alleges that many of his dildo-bearing pages had been torn up and discarded by righteous men (among other works by Nashe).

²³¹ See also *EEBO*, "Dildo/e".

²³² That is, 3.5 alludes to "Bacchick fantasies: / To draw that triumphant swerlidildido, / Vpon some spirit of the Buttery", and more specifically to dildo-manufacture via an "Ita-lian Vitraillist [glass-maker], / W-ich in the fierie *Phlegitonian* flames, / Did worke strange vitriall dildidoes [sic] for Dames".

(1610; 5.5), wherein the dildo appears as a joke in a mock-litany and as graffiti, respectively;²³³ William Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* (1609-11, 1623), which references the peddling of dildo ballads;²³⁴ Thomas Middleton's "A Chaste Maid in Cheapside" (1613; printed 1630), which revives the ballad-refrain usage of 'dildo' to layer the old refrain with the term's newly-acquired, bawdy connotation;²³⁵ Richard Turner's *Youthe Know Thyself* (1624), a political commentary which warns youth against being corrupted by the particular depravity of the present age (citing "dildoes, Merkins, and sophistications, / With thousands of such lust-full variations" as proof); John Jones' *Adrasta* (1635), which develops the dildo's associations with the sexual politics of court women, the "Aretine", and dildo use; John Ford's *The Fancies, Chaste and Noble* (1638), which employs the term dildo as an insulting slur against a male page, calling him a "milk-liverd dildo"; Thomas Heywood's *Machievel's Ghost* (1641, reprinted 1642), which gives the character of the projector as one who avoids Parliament at all cost, preferring instead to "engrosse all the Carrots and Parsnips that comes to London, to make Dildoes for the Citizens wives, old maidens, and poore Whores"; Henry Neville's *The Parliament of Ladies* (1647), which concludes includes a hyperbolic account of a hermaphroditic, dildo-wielding figure infiltrating the eponymous Parliament of Ladies; Neville's *Newes from the New Exchange, or The Commonwealth of Ladies* (1650), a mock news item which comprises the first extant

²³³ In *The Fountaine of Selfe-Loue*, the dildo is named in "Palinodia" among those things - fantastical, humorous, and otherwise - from which the characters Amorphus and Phantaste, along with the Chorus, ask to be defended: specifically, Phantaste asks that "From perfum'd Dogs, Monkey's, Sparrowes, Dildos, and Parachitos, / (Chor.) Good Mercury defend vs." Note that the 'perfum'd dogs', but not the dildo, were omitted in the 1616 edition of Jonson's *Workes*.

²³⁴ 4.4.190-8.

²³⁵ In the play's first act, Allwit, an out of work cuckold, breaks into song, singing "La dildo, dildo la dildo, la dildo dildo de dildo". When two servants overhear this, however, one asks the other, "What has he got a singing in his Head now?" The second servant, clearly familiar with domestic dildo manufacture, wittily replies: "Now's [he's] out of worke he falles to making *Dildo's*".

satire to accuse a named Lady (Lady Middlesex) of dildo use,²³⁶ as would become the norm in the Restoration; *The Good Womens Cryes against the Excise of all their Commodities* (1650) and ‘J.C.’s “The Merry Bell-man’s Out-cryes” (1655), the first of which claims to have been printed in *Dildo at Distaffe Lane*, and the second of which - a satirical list of public notices, this one searching for a maid’s lost maidenhead – asks informants to bring word to the (presumably fictional) “Signe of the Dildo”; Richard Flecknoe’s *Enigmaticall Characters* (1658), which is reminiscent of Jonson’s *Alchemist* in mentioning the character of “an ordinary French Laquey” known for his “ability to paint excellent well...flying dildos upons wals”, among other things; Sir John Mennes, “The Lowse’s Peregrination” (1655, 1661), wherein an English louse tells of the “leacherous passages” he has witnessed while stranded in a Venetian bordello, an explicitly Aretine context, including “the use of the *Dildo*...without measure” in “all *Aretines* ways”.

Taken on the whole, this list (which is not exhaustive!) shows that a great deal of bawdy and satiric innovation was applied to the dildo topos in English texts following Nashe, and that early seventeenth-century authors demonstrated a keen willingness to draw from a variety of representational traditions to provide ever-evolving contexts for the motif. There are common threads across the early seventeenth century, all of which inform the heterogeneous dildo satire tradition that the Restoration was to inherit, imitate, and build upon. These include dildo-deployment in satiric railing against the depravity of the age (Marston, Davies, Donne, and others); comedic bawdry, light-hearted sexual punning and humour (chiefly dramatic works, ballads, and verse satire); anti-puritan traditions mocking stock English male types

²³⁶ The allegations made in this item about Lady Middlesex’s sexual proclivities are quite alarming, particularly the suggestion that she prefers dildos of a startlingly enormous size.

(citizens, cuckolds and/or manufacturers of dildos); and concomitant anti-court traditions linking dildo use to stock female types (conventionally lecherous and/or masculinized court ladies and/or bawds).²³⁷ Among the raillers, as Ian Frederick Moulton has indicated, Marston's satires in particular register the early modern English moral reaction against dildo-use as a morally bankrupt, base sexual activity, characterizing it as sinful, obscene, and among the most heinous of sexual acts,²³⁸ and epitomize conventional anti-court traditions attacking court women in particular for their cornucopia of "perverse sexual practices – including bestiality, oral sex, and the use of dildos",²³⁹ all of which would become foundational to Restoration satires on court Ladies.²⁴⁰ However, following Nashe, the dildo as sexual commodity – sometimes foreign/Italian, but more often domestic, until the international climate was to shift during the 1660s and 70s - appears as an equally prominent topos across the texts catalogued here.

By the Restoration, then, the dildo trope had already aired in the western and English imagination as the province of sex-starved wives, or urban whores, of mannish *tribades*, of savvy shoppers, or savvier merchants, of Catholic convents, and of the aristocratic elite. The dildo had been heralded as a women's tool, denounced as a false phallus, alluded to as a titillating possibility, upheld as a commercial commodity, and established as form of Catholic and voyeuristic decadence. And undoubtedly, by the time the dildo was poised to become a major figure of the Restoration social imaginary from 1670 onwards, satirists, dramatists, and

²³⁷ On the linking of anti-court and anti-puritan/anti-Presbyterian satire, see my Chapter 3 discussion of *Dildoides*, particularly n. 297.

²³⁸ *Scourge of Villanie*, 3.

²³⁹ *Before Pornography*, 185.

²⁴⁰ See Chapter 6.

balladeers had already well-established the commonplace that English women, particularly ladies of the court, used dildos and were well-versed in the *Aretine*. Beyond the core conception of the dildo as anti-phallus, there was no single model of dildo discourse for an early modern to follow; instead, there were many, as even the device's moral and legal status within ancient and Christian frameworks remained ambiguously undecided. In figuring "Seigneur Dildoe" and his ilk, then, Restoration satirists had a wealth of neoclassical, Aretine, native, and contemporary dildo-wielding models from which to draw: and they drew upon virtually all of it, revelling, subverting, and manipulating at will.

Chapter 3. Citizen Farmers, Court Ballers, and the Restoration Dildo Disputes

As we have seen, the use of dildos as a sexual and satiric implement was far from a novelty when Charles II returned from his travels and was restored to his father's throne in 1660. Indeed, the ancient Greek, Roman, and early modern Italian and English cultures bequeathed a remarkably complex and heterogeneous dildo figure to the Restoration imaginary. However, as this chapter will demonstrate, the Restoration period's particularly unruly and divided political and social climate, not least of which included its tendency to conspiracy theory, anti-Catholicism, and xenophobia in opposition to the cosmopolitan ethos of the libertine court, occasioned a more politically-motivated and culturally central dildo figure than had been seen since Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*. This figure, however, unlike that of *Lysistrata*, was also to become the dildo satire tradition's most hotly contested and extensively recorded for posterity, as all involvement in the Restoration dildo disputes, whether for or against, participated in the dildo's rise to prominence as a Restoration figure of note.

What I call the Restoration zenith and vogue of satiric dildo figuration, then, was caused by a number of intersecting factors to be discussed in turn in this and the following chapters, including matters of mercantilism, trade, and taxation, debates over religious and political freedoms, sex and gender trouble, and the period's penchant for clandestine satire and sexual gossip. Here, my chief concern is with the mercantile match that lit the blaze: the literal conflagration of a 1670/1 shipment of French dildos which met a fiery fate at the hands of English customs officers, and which consequently failed to arrive in the hands of their court libertine purchasers. This act, reminiscent to at least one onlooker of the Great Fire that had

recently devastated London in 1666,²⁴¹ was unprecedented in the recorded history of the material and figurative dildo, and set the dildo trope ablaze as scores of Restoration poets and commentators, chiefly Samuel Butler, John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, and others of the Duke of Buckingham's fashionable faction of court wits, distilled the modes and narratives of centuries' worth of dildo figuration into a localized and highly publicized dispute over the fate of English dildos and all their attendant baggage. The more poetically skilled of these, likely including both Butler and Rochester, deftly integrated a variety of classical, continental, and topical allusions and modes into their reinvention of the dildo satire form, producing dildo satires that were both unique in their unwavering focus – never before, that is, had entire poems been devoted entirely to the subject of dildos as is the case in the Restoration poems *Dildoides* and “Seigneur Dildoë” – and compellingly intricate in their comic, mock-heroic poetics, their poetic wit circulating Restoration England as a kind of dildo of the mind, intended that readers might fulfill their pleasure and pass it on.

Through contextualized readings of the dildo's brief anti-royalist appearance in Andrew Marvell's *Last Instructions to a Painter* (1667) and Samuel Butler's (?) anti-parliamentarian burlesque *Dildoides* (1671), accompanied by a catalogue of dildo texts which rose up in the early 1670s from the ashes of the dildo shipments' flames, this chapter carries the literary history of the satiric dildo into the late seventeenth-century, as English culture was rapidly secularizing in an era of increased trade, mercantilism, and public sphere debate. Was the

²⁴¹ The Great Fire of London was a potent and enduring source of anti-popish conspiracy amongst Protestant citizens who had originally claimed that Catholics had started the fire, and to anti-republican responses to these unfounded theories. This, of course, further aligns with the aims and inverted motifs of the dildo as martyr to the purifying flames in both *Dildoides* and “SD” (discussed below and in Chapter 4). See Peter Hinds, *The Horrid Popish Plot: Roger L'Estrange and the Circulation of Political Discourse in Late Seventeenth-Century London*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), especially 151, and Frances Dolan, *True Relations*, “The Great Fire”.

dildo, as any item foreign to conventional morality, worth importing, trading, manufacturing, and selling so long as it supported the domestic economy writ large? The Restoration dildo figure which arose, Phoenix-like, from this flurry of incendiary events of the late 1660s and early 1670s, then, appeared not just as an emblem of an ephemeral dispute, but as a figure born and reborn in any era to articulate the double bind of modern mercantilism in the face of conventional order.

Prequel to the fire: Marvell's *Last Instructions* (1667) and the early 1660s

As we saw at the end of Chapter 2, the dildo figure did not disappear with the Commonwealth, only to be restored with the merry monarch at his Restoration in 1660. Instead, authors and satirists such as Henry Neville, James Smith, Richard Flecknoe, and Sir John Mennes, along with a variety of anonymous balladeers, had kept English readers and authors well enough informed about the bawdy and satiric uses of the dildo across the Interregnum, as authors both puritanical and libertine concerned with questions of sanctioned and unsanctioned, reasoned and excessive appetites, could find in the earlier models of John Davies and John Donne the potency of the dildo as an emblem of courtly excess.²⁴² Simultaneously, of course, Aretine *Postures* and dildo-filled convent pornography narratives were infamous and (by all accounts) copiously consumed within Restoration court and court-peripheral circles, as were the bawdier classical satiric traditions that were translated and revived in the period's topical satire, and that would have been part of any courtier's classical education.²⁴³

²⁴² See Rochester's conception of "right reason" in *Satyr Against Reason and Mankind*. One clearly didn't have to be puritanical to be critical of the court's excessiveness.

²⁴³ See Peakman, *Mighty Lewd Books*, 15-7, for the republication and circulation of Aretino and Italian erotic texts in seventeenth-century England and France.

What's more, following the rise of trade and the foreign importation of luxury goods into England, a new material muse appeared to inspire the minds of bawdy balladeers, prose pornographers, and satirists, and to whet the appetites of their readers: the dildo had become a well-known part of London's booming commercial trade, as well as of its literary landscape. As early as 1660, for instance, the anonymous *Practical Part of Love* reminded readers of urbane women's penchant for using "artificial Dildo's", freely purchased at the "Change", to "avoid the mischief that may ensue by natural ones".²⁴⁴ In support of this assertion, Butler's (?) *Dildoides* (1671/2) chronicled the infamous debate over the fate of a confiscated shipment of imported French dildos (as we shall see at length in this chapter); Overbury's letter to Lord Rochester (1672) asked for Rochester's intercession as part-purchaser of the same; "Seigneur Dildoe" intimated that women should apply to Catholic purveyors of foreign goods and luxury items on the Exchange, specifically, as those most likely to sell dildos; Rochester's "Tunbridge Wells" (1674) depicted Etherege's "Sir Nicholas Cully" purchasing a dildo for sale among the toys and baubles in the toy shops of Tunbridge Wells; and a *Character of a Town Misse* (1675) depicted its titular 'Miss' deploying "a French merchant to supply her with Dildo's".²⁴⁵ Dildo trade, it seems, was a booming business in the early Restoration marketplace.

Though perhaps allured by the vogue for foreign ware – the Italians, in particular, were notorious since Aretino for their achievements in the glass variety - Restoration enthusiasts needed not acquire their dildos from foreign sources, however, as authors became increasingly attentive to domestic dildo manufacture. "Satyr Undisguis'd" (c. 1682, Harl. 7319.267), for

²⁴⁴ 22. Qtd. in Williams, *Dictionary*.

²⁴⁵ 7.

instance, alerted its readers to the existence of English dildos self-made through craft and thrift; “The Present State of Matrimony” (1683, Harl. 7317.5) likewise alerted readers to dildos of local English make, presumably for sale.²⁴⁶ Although Italy was famed for its trade in glass, it was not without its English rivals: in the field of natural philosophy, for instance, as early as his 1672 report to the Royal Society of London Isaac Newton had rejected conventional Venetian prisms on the grounds of their faultiness, innovating and supporting domestic glass manufacture which had begun to gain on its Italian competitors.²⁴⁷ Thus in keeping with its early English heritage, which likewise derived its dildos from both local and Aretine sources, the Restoration imagination – at least of those in the know – did not figure the dildo as an exclusively foreign or luxury implement, however those of foreign ware were perhaps more appealing in their continental cachet.

It’s just as telling, perhaps, that aside from stray references to domestic dildo sale the satiric dildo (along with clandestine satire more generally) was largely dormant during the first half of the 1660s – that is, before the twin fires which sparked the period’s dildo vogue. The first years of the Restoration were marked largely by political and social optimism at Charles II’s Restoration rather than by political unrest,²⁴⁸ at least outwardly, and by panegyric in place of satire,²⁴⁹ and so the satiric dildo as a comic figure of hierarchal disruption and an invective figure of anti-aristocratic opposition was, for a brief time, muted.

²⁴⁶ Williams, *Dictionary*, and *EEBO*.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁸ See deF. Lord, ed., *POASY* Vol. 1, Love, *ECL*, and Hammond, *Making*.

²⁴⁹ With the exception of a few Cavalier “squibs” on their impoverished state in the new regime, very few oppositional satires survive from the period 1660-1666. As Love has indicated, it was not the harsh anti-dissenter measures taken in the early 1660s that finally revived the interregnum tradition of oppositional verse satire, but the instigation of Waller’s laudatory poem *Instructions to a Painter* (1665), a poem in exaggerated praise of the Duke of York’s role in the military victory of the English against the Dutch in January 1665 that set off the satirists.

Among those relatively few clandestine satires that were produced in the first half of the 1660s, the invariable satiric butts were the disgraced and defeated supporters of the late Commonwealth: those puritanical Parliamentarians, in the view of the Royalist satirists, whose austere views had been overturned and ridiculed with the Restoration. The most notable anti-Parliamentarian achievement in this vein was Samuel Butler's three-volume mock-epic *Hudibras* (1663-78), an anti-Puritan burlesque in mock-heroic iambic tetrameter couplets that launched the Restoration vogue for the mock-heroic mode that was to become so characteristic of the period,²⁵⁰ and that proliferated so immediately and extensively that it soon caught the attention of king himself, found its way to members of lower ranks and the court periphery such as Samuel Pepys, and was to effectively launch and solidify Butler's literary career.²⁵¹

In keeping with the systematic shaming of those who had gained power after his father's execution, when Charles II regained the throne after his long exile he did so with the carefully crafted fiction, disseminated in panegyric by John Dryden and other prominent poets, of his having never lost it. After all, to do otherwise would be to admit the fallibility of the monarch's absolute, divinely-ordained right to rule, and with it the fallibility of patriarchal hierarchies and any concomitant modes of power that were based on birthright rather than achievement or the people's will.²⁵² And yet, often at cross-purposes with this acute need to maintain the divine authority of the king over his people, with the return of the Stuart regime

In opposition of the omissions and misprisions of Waller's partial and flattering account, the satiric 'painter poem' tradition quickly caught on, with the *Second, Third, and Fourth, Fifth, and Last Instructions to the Painter* (many of which were likely written by Andrew Marvell) appearing in 1666-7 to encourage the eponymous painter to paint the flaws and shortcomings of the military and courtly elite, each gaining particular momentum and weight as the English victory began to turn into defeat, and a *Final Instructions* appearing in 1671. See Love *ECL*, 228.

²⁵⁰ See Farley-Hills, *Benevolence*.

²⁵¹ See deF. Lord, ed., *POASY* Vol. 1.

²⁵² See Hammond, *Making*, 107-114. Even Dryden, however, acknowledged that Charles II had been "chose again to rule the Land" in "Dr. Charleton", 52 (my emphasis).

came the return of luxurious excess, neo-classicism, scientific innovation, and the importation of French customs to the English court. Theatres were reopened, debauchery, masquerade, and the public flaunting of infidelity became the order of the day, women (and especially court mistresses) were placed in unprecedented positions of cultural, social, and political prominence as actresses, playwrights, and high-ranking members of the Queen's retinue,²⁵³ the Royal Society, whose motto, fittingly, was "nullius in verba" – "take no one's word for it" – was established to challenge religious dictates through reason- and empirically-based modes of inquiry, and a flamboyant, culturally-vibrant court at Whitehall created an aristocratic 'star' culture – as much gossiped about and admired by the wider culture as it was judged and despised²⁵⁴ - to rival that of its French cousin. Initially, Charles' subjects seemed to welcome this return to a monarch's merry rule - or at least, they knew well enough to pretend to.²⁵⁵

English morale finally wavered following the twin devastations of the Plague and Fire of London in 1665-6, and fell with the added blow of an expensive and humiliating military loss against the Dutch, England's greatest rivals for trade and control of the sea, at the end of the Second Anglo-Dutch War (1665-67).²⁵⁶ These circumstances finally allowed the anti-royalist satirists whose voices had been muted at the Restoration to regain public support and to speak out against what they perceived to be the growing tyranny, military ineptitude, financial irresponsibility, and French effeminacy of this new Stuart regime. This oppositional view was necessarily disseminated through clandestine (that is, unprinted or pirate-printed) but highly

²⁵³ See Chapter 6.

²⁵⁴ See Samuel Pepys, *Diary of Samuel Pepys*, Roger Morrice, *Entering Book*, and Anthony Hamilton, *Memoires du Count de Grammont* for contemporary accounts of these phenomenon.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, and Sonya Wynne, 44.

²⁵⁶ Hammond, *Making*, 117.

viral modes of satiric attack, particularly as clandestine modes of manuscript circulation and pirate publication became more efficient and sophisticated as the period progressed.²⁵⁷

Loudest and most articulate among these oppositional voices, Andrew Marvell drew extensively from Neville's mode of direct, individualized dildo satire attack in *The Commonwealth of Ladies* (1650) and considerably raised the newly-fashioned (and fashionable) 'painter poem' convention in stature and complexity in his *Last Instructions to a Painter* (1667),²⁵⁸ a hyperbolic satire against the luxuries of the court following the particularly humiliating and unnecessary English defeat against the Dutch on the River Medway in June of 1667. Although only a moment among many in the long, loosely-structured satire on the inept and irresponsible figures of Whitehall,²⁵⁹ *Last Instructions* renews and blatantly politicizes the dildo trope as an anti-royalist weapon in associating the implement with Anne Hyde, Duchess of York, whose inventiveness as a prominent member of the Royal Society did not escape Marvell's notice. (In the Duke's case, this created a long-standing, anti-Catholic-inflected association, as we will see in my Chapter 4 discussions of "SD".)

Listed among the many sexual and political infidelities and shortcomings of the court and of the royal family, Marvell's first movement repeats and underscores the accusations made against Anne Hyde, Duchess of York in previous painter poem installments, particularly

²⁵⁷ It's also important to note that in this newly-minted mode of oppositional satire, the clandestine element just as often added to than detracted from the potency and proliferation of a well-aimed, politically-supported Restoration satire, especially as publishers and professional scribal communities (such as that of the infamously bi-partisan scribal publisher Julian) began to organize and streamline the business of clandestine publication and manuscript circulation. These points, largely drawn from Love, Hammond, and my own primary research, are elaborated with reference to the transmission of "SD" in Chapter 5.

²⁵⁸ On Marvell and the Restoration vogue of the painter poem, see Love, *ECL*, 106-117, and Steven N. Zwicker, "Sites of Instruction: Andrew Marvell and the Tropes of Restoration Portraiture" in Marciari Alexander and MacLeod, eds, *Politics and Transgression*, 123-140.

²⁵⁹ Ibid, especially Zwicker, "Sites".

regarding her alleged extra-marital sex and the begetting of bastard heirs passed off as the Duke of York's.²⁶⁰ Marvell's account then borrows from the dildo satire tradition, particularly the anti-aristocratic models of Juvenal, Donne, and most recently Neville, to increase the breadth and gravity of Hyde's supposed transgressions by adding congress with "glassen Dukes"²⁶¹ – seemingly Aretine in their Italian-imported glass composition – as one of her many representative faults. However, Marvell's account also innovates and indeed insists upon Hyde's inventiveness as a commoner-turned-royal, not merely asserting that Hyde has been a passive consumer of the dildo as in conventional dildo satires but has acted as an "inventress free / Of's Highness' Royal Society": a "Philosopher" and experimenter apparently of true Society bent in that she is not content to merely imitate the forms of her sexual infidelity and excess.²⁶² Hyde's particular experiments and efforts to improve upon "glassen Dukes", then, is to make them "malleable",²⁶³ suggesting that they are of her own Newton-esque fashioning. Undoubtedly, of course, Hyde's husband the Duke of York is equally targeted in this portrait as her unwitting cuckold, as is the Royal Society and Charles II as its patron (the portrait concludes by alluding squarely to the Duke as Hyde's "prey"). However, not to be overlooked here, and as is indeed a Restoration novelty in the dildo satire tradition, is Marvell's insistence upon the Duchess' own inventive achievements as clear occasions for his satire: all carried out, it seems,

²⁶⁰ 253-6. As has been noted in the scholarship, Anne Hyde was a particular target because many prominent court and Parliament figures had opposed the match between the Duke and Hyde on a variety of grounds, including her commoner origins. The pair therefore had had to marry in secret.

²⁶¹ 60.

²⁶² 257-8.

²⁶³ 60.

with official sanction and in full public view (thanks in no small part to Marvell's own portrait, of course).

In the influential Marvellian tradition of oppositional satire that proliferated and grew as anti-royalism turned potent anti-Jacobitism after the Revolution of 1688/9,²⁶⁴ then, the dildo is marshalled as it had conventionally been to emblemize the number and variety of depraved excesses, inverted hierarchies, and unsanctioned alliances of the ruling elite which had rendered the State weak and susceptible to such devastating martial losses as that suffered against the Dutch. In this Parliamentary, proto-Whig rendering, dildo use is implicitly linked with adultery, effeminacy, and other such offences against the realm's patriarchal fabric that had been instigated and sanctioned by the French-influenced Charles II,²⁶⁵ his brother James, Duke of York, and their court. Ironically, of course, the anti-royalist polemicists were caught in one of the conventional paradoxes of oppositional satire: they upheld the dildo as a sign of depravity, excess, and threat to the same patriarchal institution which in other senses their own anti-royalist positions sought to unravel.²⁶⁶

A factional dildo war: court Ballers versus citizen Farmers, 1670-71

Against this late 1660s backdrop of an increasingly unpopular and satirized court, and against that of war-bankrupted royal coffers which forced Charles II to covertly seek financial

²⁶⁴ See Love, *ECL*, 238-42.

²⁶⁵ See n. 267.

²⁶⁶ Hypocrisy and inconsistency, of course, are features of satire which all sides are prey to but which seldom impede satiric potency.

aid and alliance from the Parliament and from Louis XIV in the secret treaty of Dover,²⁶⁷ in 1670/1 English customs officials – Citizens, or residents of the City, conventionally satirized by court satirists as foolish, cuckolded puritan prudes - seized and burned a shipment of French leather dildos, sparking a sustained flurry of factional debate over the status of dildos in England.²⁶⁸ This act of dildo censorship and destruction – the first recorded act of its kind in the English context, and likely well beyond - is recorded for posterity thanks to the vehement opposition of prominent libertine courtiers, particularly those associated with the Duke of Buckingham’s faction such as Samuel Butler,²⁶⁹ Henry Savile, and the Earls of Rochester and Dorset, all of whom resented this conservative act of censure.

In a letter of 26 January 1672 sent to alert an absent Earl of Rochester of the dildo seizure, Henry Savile bares the factional stake of the matter in his markedly martial and religiously-inflected diction, and exhibits the libertines’ material and philosophical stake in the shipment of these goods as well as Savile’s irony and allusion-rich assumption that Rochester should rush to join this political defense of dildos:

In the meantime your Lordship has been extremely wanting here, to make friends at the Customs House where has been lately, unfortunately, seized a box of those leather instruments your lordship carried down one of. But these barbarian farmers [i.e., Customs officers], prompted by the villainous instigation of the wives, voted them prohibited goods so that they were burned without mercy, notwithstanding that Sedley and I made two journeys into the City in their defense. By this, my Lord you will see what things are done in your absence, and then pray consider whether it is fit for you to be

²⁶⁷ See Ronald Hutton, “The Making of the Secret Treaty of Dover, 1668–1670” in *The Historical Journal* 29 no. 2 (1986), 297–318, and Tim Harris, *Restoration: Charles II and His Kingdoms 1660-1685* (London: Penguin UK, 2005).

²⁶⁸ The event is recorded as a preface to one copy of *Dildoideas* in Bodleian MS Firth c 15, which indicates that the poem “was occasioned by a parcel of dildos brought from France, hid under other commodities, and being discovered was ordered to be burned” (3).

²⁶⁹ Although not a ranking member of the court, by 1670 Butler had risen from his pre-*Hudibras* obscurity and had assumed a post as the Duke of Buckingham’s secretary (*ODLB*).

blowing of coals in the country when there is a revenge due to the ashes of these martyrs. Your Lordship is chosen general in this war between the Ballers and the farmers; nor shall peace ever be made till they grant us our wine and our dildos custom free.²⁷⁰

Some background about this supposed war of self-styled ‘Ballers’ against the so-called ‘Farmers’ is necessary here to understand the precise terms and stakes of Savile’s appeal to Rochester. As Johnson and Thompson have noted, in the late 1660s and early 1670s members of the Buckingham faction – led, as Savile’s letter indicates, by the Earl of Rochester – had begun to style themselves “Ballers” – derivative of the term for those who frequented balls (or the then-popular Masques at court), and were known to commit outrageous sexually debauched acts.²⁷¹ Although the group was well-known both within and beyond the Court, Samuel Pepys was among the first to define their aims for posterity: “Here I first understood the meaning of the company that lately were called ‘Ballers’; Harris telling how it was by a meeting of some young blades and my Lady Bennet and her ladies; and there dancing naked, and all the roguish things in the world.”²⁷² Thompson explains that the group commonly held orgies at a local brothel (184), which Johnson likens to the orgy scene in Rochester’s obscene play *Sodom* (1678) wherein a male and female company dance naked and fornicate with one another, including with the use of dildos (107-8). Johnson also notes that the group used Hobbes to justify their practices, took turns being responsible for importing dildos from France

²⁷⁰ Rochester, January 26, 1671, *The Letters of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester*, ed. Jeremy Treglown (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 62-4.

²⁷¹ Johnson, *A Profane Wit*, 107-8, and Thompson, *Unfit for Modest Ears*, 184.

²⁷² *Diary of Samuel Pepys*, 30 May, 1666. As a secret rake himself, Pepys was perhaps both censorious of and enviously fascinated by this behaviour. I discuss this aspect of Pepys’ character and *Diary* in Chapter 6, particularly in relation to Pepys’ dubious obsession with Barbara Villiers, Lady Castlemaine.

for the group's use, and eventually forsook their patronage of Mrs. Bennet's bawdy house after a number of the Ballers contracted sexually transmitted diseases from Bennet's prostitutes in the early 1670s.²⁷³

Although much is left to conjecture, including the seriousness of his plea, Savile's appeal suggests that the Ballers' central conflict with their enemy was a quite self-serving and markedly juvenile one; namely, the provision of "customs free" and freely imported wine and dildos from France and the continent following several Excise Acts of 1667 and 1661 which had placed heavy taxes on wine and other foreign imports.²⁷⁴ In the strictest sense, at least when taken out of wider literary and political contexts, this clearly hyperbolized 'war' between the Ballers and Farmers bespeaks little more than the debauched fun of spoiled elites against a group of customs officers who were merely doing their job. However, taken altogether the complexity and extent of satiric reactions to this event and all that it inspired suggests a rather more culturally central matter than the simple occasion of French luxuries being wrested from a particularly libertine group of courtiers. If nothing else, the manner in which Butler and company revive the comic modes of dildo satire prevalent in the mode of Aristophanes, Aretino, and Nashe showcases the wit and innovation this group was capable of in the mock-heroic vein, providing a perhaps welcome and modern comic counterpoint to the Juvenalian-turned-Marvellian take on the aristocratic dildo that may have otherwise dominated Restoration satire.

²⁷³ Some better documented libertine uses of dildos – most of them humorous – will be discussed in Chapter 4.

²⁷⁴ Danby Pickering, *Statutes at Large* Vol. 8, 1660-1685 (Cambridge, 1763).

Samuel Butler's (?) *Dildooides* (1670/1)

Although it is a critical commonplace that Butler's *Dildooides* was occasioned by this seizure and burning of French dildos by English customs, it has not been recognized that *Dildooides* is in fact a detailed and carefully-plotted mock-heroic burlesque of the dildo-burning incident itself²⁷⁵ - that is, of the apparently drawn-out verbal 'battle' between the Ballers and the Farmers over the imported dildos' status and fate, as corroborated by Harry Savile's letter to Rochester. *Dildooides* stages this battle over dildos as a public dispute between seemingly incognito members of the court and members of the mercantile classes – an unruly, mock-heroic prototype for the debate cultures that would be formalized in salons, debate societies, and coffee houses and would rise to prominence with the continued emergence of the public sphere across the eighteenth-century.²⁷⁶ This close burlesquing of the melodramatic scene of dildo martyrdom makes it abundantly clear that the author (whether Butler or a close member of the Buckingham/Baller faction²⁷⁷) exploits a close, if not first-hand, knowledge of the event and alleged debate to explore the topic of dildo and French importation into England in the period. It satirizes and caricatures the follies of all sides of the dispute (although as we shall see, the great weight of the satire falls on the too-easily swayed Farmers, who are rather more derisively than genially treated as would be more common in burlesque), and capitalizes on the

²⁷⁵ One of the few critical treatments of *Dildooides*, that of Deborah Needleman Admintor in *the little everyman*, 87-89, particularly attends to its commercial themes. However, Admintor incorrectly glosses the poem as having first been published in 1722, and so mistakes its poem's original/immediate commercial context as that of the 1720s.

²⁷⁶ See Donna T. Andrew, ed., *London Debating Societies, 1776-1799* (London, 1994).

²⁷⁷ Although all print copies (ca. 1706) and scribally-published and produced MSs of the 1690s attribute the poem to Butler, early manuscript sources of the poem throw Butler's authorship in question as was common with this type of clandestine satire. For instance, a very early and generally reliable witness, Sir William Haward's MS Oxford Don b8, indicates that the poem is "supposed to have been written by Sedley". It is clear, however, that whatever its authorship the poem assumes the Butlerian/Hudibrastic pose, and was written from within the subject position of the Buckingham coterie.

vogue for burlesque that was created by Butler's own multi-volume *Hudibras* (1663, 1668, 1678) and furthered by Buckingham's excellent dramatic burlesque *The Rehearsal* (1671), which Butler is thought to have a part in authoring. It also clearly speaks back to Marvell's anti-royalist use of the dildo as an emblematic weapon, proffering another reading - or more accurately, a few additional readings - of the dildo, particularly from the comic and royalist, libertine viewpoint, and from the parodied and ventriloquized viewpoint of the proverbially money-hungry mercantile classes, who must have profited from the Court libertine obsession with imported luxury goods.

The speaker of *Dildoides* poses as an observant, explicitly unaligned but implicitly Baller- and dildo-sympathising bystander chronicling the unfolding of events that fateful day, beginning with a conventionally caricatured, unflattering portrait of all involved players (that is, of the court Ballers, the citizen Farmers, and of those Ladies of rank who use dildos), and a detailed introduction of the context of topical events and the intrinsic value-systems at play. In this, the speaker shows himself to be an authority on matters both classical and topical, given the number and quality of allusions in the poem, clearly well-connected at court, clearly raised, along with the English populace, on John Foxe's ubiquitous *Book of Martyrs* (first published in English in 1563), and evincing an extended interest in dildos while simultaneously burlesquing those who show a similar interest.

The poem is set in iambic tetrameter couplets, after Butler's *Hudibras* and signalling the satire's mock-heroic intentions. The satirist opens with a deft mock appeal to pathos that is at once hyperbolic and strategically moderate: "Such a sad Tale prepare to hear", he primes us,

“as claims from either sex a Tear”,²⁷⁸ making the Ovidian assumption of equally strong sexual desire between the sexes.²⁷⁹ Taking initial aim both at the irrational, ‘envious’ act of the puritanical city Customs officers and at the Ballers’ sexual indiscretions and ailments due to age, wine, and syphilis, and probably ventriloquizing the Parliamentarian view of matters at least in part, the urbane, news casting speaker informs us that

Twelve Dildoes (Means for the Support
Of aged Lechers of the Court)
Were lately burnt by impious Hand
Of trading Rascals of the Land,
Who envying their curious Frame,
Expos’d those Priapuses to the Flame.²⁸⁰

Any court-educated libertine of moderate wit, or even a well-connected official such as Samuel Pepys, would recognize in the diction of “curious” a clandestine shorthand for all things pornographic, bawdy, and titillating,²⁸¹ signalling the speaker’s layers of playful irony throughout the poem and his particular penchant (characteristic of the Restoration treatment of sexual themes) for juxtaposing explicit sexual description and figurative or indirect implication. Here Butler’s speaker immediately and helpfully solves the puzzle of what, precisely, the Ballers intended these dildos for: supplementing the impotence-inducing ravages of age, drink, and syphilis, and ruling out rather more homosexual/sodomitical possibilities (at

²⁷⁸ 1-2.

²⁷⁹ See Ovid, *Amores* 3.784, taken up in Aphra Behn’s “The Disappointment”, which likewise references the equal “fire” of the lovers.

²⁸⁰ 3-8.

²⁸¹ The term ‘curious’ was frequently used in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to disguise but suggest sexual motifs. See, for example, Bradford K. Mudge’s discussion of Edward Curll as a pedlar of the ‘curious’ (*When Flesh Becomes Word: An Anthology of Early Eighteenth-Century Libertine Literature*, ed. Bradford K. Mudge, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), xxv. This meaning is noted in the *OED* but the earliest recorded use of the term in this sense dates to 1877, which is centuries too late.

least if this burlesquing speaker can be believed). And phallic envy masked as puritanical piety, it would seem, was to blame for the Farmers' violent, religiously-inflected actions against the Dildoe deities, which the poet here equates with the Roman deity, Priapus.²⁸² Returning to the elegiac tone of his opening, the speaker heightens the irony of this Priapic Dildo metaphor as he laments: "O barbarous Times, where Deities / are made themselves a Sacrifice".²⁸³

Digressing from his heroic narrative to perform a hyperbolic mock-blazon of the dildo's many varieties and excellences, the speaker upholds the individualized needs of the prospective female dildo-consumer as a key consideration in the period's expanding culture of commerce and mercantilism, re-emphasising the trope's anti-phallic connection to women while also stressing the commercial implications of the instrument alongside the moral and practical.²⁸⁴ Thus not unlike a caricatured hawker of wares, the satirist heralds the wide selection of shapes, sizes, and materials of dildo that had allegedly arrived from France, available to fulfill women's individualized sexual needs, including those of both realism and fantasy:²⁸⁵

Some [dildos] were compos'd of shining Horns,
More precious than ten Unicorns.
Some were of Wax, where every Vein,
And every Fibre, were made plain.
Some were for tender Virgins fit,
Some for the wide salacious Slit
Of a rank Lady, tho'So torn,

²⁸² See Chapter 2, especially regarding the Roman phallus and Nashe's treatment of the dildo. This rather secularized Restoration appropriation of Priapus was not at all uncommon in satiric treatments of sexual themes: see Behn, "The Disappointment".

²⁸³ 9-10.

²⁸⁴ For a full discussion of the commercialist motif in *Dildoideas*, "SD", and their successor "Monsieur Thing's Origin", see Adminton, *The little man*. For my reservations regarding Arminton's mis-contextualization of *Dildoideas* to the 1720s, see n. 275.

²⁸⁵ Compare to the range offered and marketing language used by any twenty-first century sex shop, which generally feature a range of both "abstract" and "realistic" dildo models (the latter of which feature 'veins' and all). For example, c.f. "Dills", www.womynsware.com, Vancouver BC.

She hardly feels when Child is born.²⁸⁶

Notwithstanding the outrageous fact that a single horn dildo outshines ten (!) unicorns, this exalted account is particularly undercut, it should be recalled, by the speaker's earlier more prosaic assertion that the cremated dildos numbered only twelve, and by the text's headnote indicating that all were made from humble leather, all the more to burn well in the bonfire.

Exploiting the humour and satire of these discrepancies to the full, and dovetailing with conventional satiric attacks on ladies of the court, the speaker adeptly handles the inflation of polite diction and abrupt, obscene deflation of his subject matter, particularly in yoking the relatively chaste and fittingly contained (that is, end-stopped) "tender Virgins fit" with the excessive (that is, alliterative and enjambed) "wide salacious Slit / of a rank Lady". Adding to the facetious art of this obscene epithet for the sexually experienced court "Lady", the diction of "rank" evokes and exploits to the fullest the multitude of contextually-applicable denotations current in the Restoration: of high social standing, surely, but also headstrong, rebellious, proud, insolent, and arrogant; eager, impetuous, having great speed or force; indecent, obscene, highly offensive; fat, overfed, swollen; lustful, licentious; and not least of all, the common modern sense of rancid, festering, rotten, or putrefied,²⁸⁷ which is especially fitting given the anxiety over the prevalence of sexually-transmitted disease, particularly syphilis, in the Restoration period.²⁸⁸ Thus through witty debasement the satirist efficiently reinvigorates the stock, conventional portrait of the over-sexed, sexually insatiable court lady by intersecting

²⁸⁶ 11-18.

²⁸⁷ *OED*.

²⁸⁸ Syphilis and its ravages appear most famously as a recurring topos of the Earl of Rochester, who died of syphilis in 1680 – a disease he very possibly contracted during the Ballers' orgies at the bawdy house that will be discussed below. However, the topic is widespread because a real mortal danger in the period, and far from limited to the Rochester canon. See Johnson, *A Profane Wit*, 227-244.

it with highly visceral and topically acute matters of class politics, female sexual appetite, feminine decorum, and sexual/physical hygiene.

Before continuing on to the small matter of chronicling the events of the day, the satirist continues his humorous and pun-filled introduction to the subject by introducing *Dildo* as an anthropomorphic figure somewhat after the manner of Nashe, but mute and paradoxically anosmic (given that he “has Nose”); more importantly, he is omnipotent and superior to the flesh-and-blood “Rogue” in key respects, but (in sharp contrast to Nashe) mock-heroic rather than monstrous in this ability:

Dildo has Nose, and cannot smell,
No Stink can his great Courage quell;
At sight of Plaister he’d ne’er fail,
Nor faintly ask, What do you ail?
Women must have both Youth and Beauty,
E’er the damn’d Rogue will do his Duty,
And then sometimes he will not stand to
Do what Gallant or Mistress can do.²⁸⁹

As in Nashe, the dildo is foil to the impotent male, which in the late seventeenth-century context places the dildo poem in close relation to the Restoration impotence poem, most famously Rochester’s “Imperfect Enjoyment” and Behn’s “The Disappointment”. Faced with the rank or ailing court lady, however, somewhat in contrast to the elegies of Nashe, Rochester, and Behn, impotence is readily imagined as a point of masculine pride rather than of emasculating shame, as the reader can easily imagine revulsion and impotence as the expected

²⁸⁹ 19-26. See Rochester’s “By all Love’s Soft...” for a parallel concern with hygiene in connection to sex, and “To the Post Boy” for similar evidence of a man’s resort to plasters. These concerns were also ubiquitous in the period’s lampoons, which as we will see in “SD” (Chapter 6) were often directed at the hygiene (or lack thereof) and disease-spreading promiscuity of the court ladies.

and even correct response to the Rank Lady's repugnance, given the extent to which the satirist has quite viciously attacked her. This then implicitly aligns the ever-ready dildo with those courtiers, royal brothers, and most notably Charles II himself (who by 1670 had begun his decade-long affair with the French imported Louise K roualle, Duchess of Portsmouth) who stooped to bed such rank ladies.²⁹⁰

Nonetheless, the satirist's treatment both of the Rogue who fails in his sexual duty and of the smell- and speech-deprived Dildoe is both light and genial (damn'd is a very mild oath!), particularly given the relatively harsh exposure of the Rank Lady's sexual repulsiveness (signalled, of course, by the tell-tale plasters and rank smell of syphilis). However, the Rank Lady is not entirely scapegoated for the wider reality of fallible and inconstant male potency: as Nashe acknowledges in the context of the sixteenth-century urban brothel and Rochester and Behn's more famous impotence poems several years later, Butler's satirist considers that the problem of impotence is not limited to the repulsiveness and real sexual danger represented by the Rank Lady's too-extensive sexual experience, but that the mystery of male impotence is also a matter of the very foundations of masculinity, psychology, and sexual performance as even 'youth and beauty,' effort and will do not guarantee a Gallant's sexual potency.

All of this, of course, might expose inherent incongruities in the patriarchal hierarchy of sex and power should the speaker pause to consider them. What, precisely, was the fundamental basis of the male right to rule – a metonym of the monarch's right to rule - if the notion of his uniquely male, uniquely royal power could at any time be undercut by impotence

²⁹⁰ This is reminiscent of a stray (and unfortunately now lost/unverifiable) contemporary reference to Charles II as "lascivious dildo king", which is in turn reminiscent of the speaker's self-characterisation as a "fucking post" in "The Imperfect Enjoyment".

and uncertainty, by his poor sexual choices in bedding rank ladies, and by his failure to control even his own bodily functions and sexual will? However, rather than examine this philosophical crux any further, Butler's speaker balks from this quandary, facetiously recalling that he has digressed too long from the sad tale he had set out to tell, claiming that he has "too long have left [his] Heroes, / Who fell into worse Hands than Nero's".²⁹¹ In this, however, the speaker is again unable to resist affairs of weight, as he juxtaposes a comically elementary rhyme with an apt allusion linking the burning of innocent dildos to that of Rome, which as Tacitus reports Nero blamed on innocent Christians who were then crucified and lit ablaze to provide the city with a series of torches leading into the city, and by implication to the events following the Great Fire of London, for which conspiracy theorists similarly blamed innocent Catholics.²⁹²

The speaker's return to the prosaic scene of "twelve [dildos] shut up in a Box" shifts his attack back to topical religious themes, particularly to an attack on dissenter/Presbyterian discourse, as he dubs the immolated dildos "Martyrs as true as are in *Fox*".²⁹³ Here the reference to Foxe's well-read *Book of Martyrs* – a famous account of the martyrdom of Protestants at the hands of Catholics²⁹⁴ – is fit to appeal to a popular, cross-class audience, but particularly aimed at those citizens of a puritanical bent. The speaker alleges that upon finding the "Goods forbidden" under "lawful Traffick hidden",²⁹⁵ the "City Herd" – "low church" Anglicans and dissenters both like and unlike the Baller faction in being "Goats in Head, but not in Lechery" (36) - call upon "Counsel grave, of deepest Beard" (33) for consultation. They

²⁹¹ 28.

²⁹² See n. 242.

²⁹³ 30.

²⁹⁴ See Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.

²⁹⁵ 31-2.

Forgetting each his Wife and Daughter,
 Condemn'd those *Dildo*s to the Slaughter:
 Cuckolds with Rage were blinded so,
 They did not their Preserver know.
 One less Fanatick than the rest,
 Stood up, and thus himself address:²⁹⁶

...And so with diction that tells his largely libertine loyalties (“fanatick”, as we see in Dryden’s *Absolem and Achitophel*, being a term of considerable negative weight associated with Puritans and later citizen dissenters, Presbyterians, and Whigs who came to dominate London politics and commerce),²⁹⁷ the satirist ‘records’ the speeches of several dildo apologists and one vehement dildo hater in turn – the former all allegedly less fanatical members of the City Herd, but suspiciously and ridiculously reminiscent of Ballers in their appeals to reason and the mercantile and sexual utility in their pro-dildo arguments. (Were these indeed Ballers in citizen Farmer disguise, hidden in their midst, as Rochester was said to have enjoyed?)²⁹⁸

A moderate first speaker, echoing the central preoccupations of Rochester’s *Satire Against Reason and Mankind*, philosophically considers the dildo within the framework of boundless human appetite, arguing that the dildo is not to be blamed for the human propensity

²⁹⁶ 37-42.

²⁹⁷ For a discussion of furiously-waged political and rhetorical battles over Catholicism, ‘True Protestantism,’ and Protestant dissenters (including commonly deployed anti-dissenter epithets such as ‘Fanatick’), see Hinds, *Horrid Popish Plot*, 181-2, and 168-97 more broadly. Hinds also notes that Catholics and dissenter ‘fanaticks’ were often conceived of as being in collusion against ‘True’ Protestantism (defined narrowly by many as firm allegiance to the established Church of England) (183), which accounts for satirists’ propensity to link anti-Catholic and anti-dissenter/Presbyterian attacks in single oppositional satires such as “SD”.

²⁹⁸ Gramont, for example, records Rochester having posed as a citizen for a considerable length of time in 1674 in lieu of observing his banishment from London. He thus “[took] a house and [masqueraded] as one among the set of merchants and bankers, [where] he was able to keep abreast of news from Whitehall while amusing himself at the Cits’ lavish feasts and parties” (Johnson, *A Profane Wit*, 183). While there he is also said to have joined in on the citizens’ signature attacks on the court, including those on its government, licentiousness, and royal mistresses (183). The truth or validity of Gramont’s account, of course, matters rather less than Rochester’s contemporaries having thought this the type of shape-shifting activity in which the court wits were accustomed to engage.

to do as much harm as *any* instrument might if used too liberally, even wealth and religion.²⁹⁹ Religion in particular, the speaker notes in tones evoking anti-dissenter/anti-presbyterian discourse, “hath ruin’d Nations, / and caused vast Depopulations, / Yet no wise People have refus’d ‘em, / Because that Fools sometimes abus’d ‘em”.³⁰⁰ This is a rather erudite (if politically volatile) point to make near the end of century that had seen a religiously-inflected civil war and had begun to take serious issue with the royal brothers’ French and Catholic tendencies (surely linking back to the earlier allusions to Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs* and the reign of Nero).³⁰¹ Shifting to an appeal specifically suited to the mercantile male members of his audience, the speaker quite literally ‘sells’ the importation of the dildos in the secularized terms of commercial gain, arguing that, like any other merchandise in demand, dildo importation comprises an economically sound enterprise given a ready and flexible English consumer base (“Methinks unjustly we complain / If Ladies rather chuse to handle / Our Wax in *Dildo*, than in Candle, / Much Good may’t do ‘em, so they pay for’t, / And that the Merchant never stay for’t”).³⁰²

Ever the crafty salesman, the speaker subsequently presumes to placate and empathize with any conservative “Neighbours” by listing himself amongst those who ostensibly “hate” the dildo³⁰³. This hate is nationalist, xenophobic, and specifically Francophobic in nature: it is not ‘dildo’ but “Monsieur Dildo” – the imported French dildo and all he stands for - that the speaker claims to hate.³⁰⁴ Reminiscent of Isaac Newton’s resolve to manufacture English prisms

²⁹⁹ 45-8.

³⁰⁰ 49-50.

³⁰¹ Peter Hinds discusses a similarly dangerous pro-Catholic stance in *Horrid Popish Plot*, 135.

³⁰² 56-61.

³⁰³ 61, 64.

³⁰⁴ 65.

in place of faulty Venetian glass, the speaker's witty, ostensibly nationalist solution to this quandary is to "translate" the French "Invention" into a naturalized *English* asset. He therefore attempts to allay the Citizens' presumed anxieties towards 'foreign imports' into Restoration England, both commercial and royal, by appealing to (or exploiting) their conventional penchant for lucrative mercantilism. It is only moments before this speaker rather (too) easily resolves his ambivalence towards dildos by declaring his desire to have "two for [his] own use",³⁰⁵ and defends this choice on the grounds that "Priapus was a *Roman* deity, / And such hath been the World's Variety".³⁰⁶

Immediately following this declaration, a second speaker characterized by his "limber prick, and grisly Chin" steps in to defend the dildo on the grounds that the device should be employed as a kind of war-time aid or prosthetic limb to compensate for the ravages of the pox,³⁰⁷ repeating the rumour that it had (like the dildo) originated in France:

For Soldiers maimed by Chance of War,
We artificial limbs prepare:
Why then should we bear such a Spite
To Lechers hurt in amorous Fight?
And what the *French* send for Relief,
We thus condemn like Witch or Thief.
Dildoe, that Monsieur sure intends
For his *French-Pox* to make amends
For such without the least Disgrace
Might fill the lusty Fore-man's Place.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁵ 57. Although nowhere indicated, it is easy to imagine the voice of a Rochesterian Baller in rather thin Farmer disguise in the speaker's assertion that "may treat [dildos] like *Turks* and *Jews*, / I will have two for my own use" (67-8). See n. 298.

³⁰⁶ 69-70.

³⁰⁷ 74.

³⁰⁸ 75-83.

Once again in line with Rochester's poetics of anxiety surrounding sexual performance and impotence, most squarely treated in "Disabled Debauchee", it is unsurprising that a prosthetic implement might be a welcome addition to the sexual repertoire of libertines or of undesirable, limp-pricked men such as the satirist imagines this speaker to be. Thus, this unfortunate speaker argues, "Lechers, whom Clap or Drink disable, might here have *Dildoes* to their Navel".³⁰⁹ Yet of course this male strap-on defence – particularly the innovative assertion that *Monsieur Dildoe* has been sent by the French to make amends for their culpability in spreading syphilis to England – is entirely out of character, one imagines, for even the most moderate of voices within the Citizen Herd. For if they are "Goats in Head, but not in Lechery", what would a Cit fear of catching syphilis and needing the aid of a dildo?

Demonstrating an apparent lack of focus, the limber-pricked speaker veers rather wildly between modes of defense as he first claims that with the aid of these male strap-ons even the most impotent and unattractive of males can "with false Heat and Member too, / Rich Widow for Convenience woo"³¹⁰ – a self-serving and attractive possibility, undoubtedly, for the impoverished Restoration courtier who sought to maintain an expensive lifestyle at court (but surely a much less attractive possibility to a rich mercantile audience which sought to protect its rich widows from such predators). He then swerves in an opposite direction in upholding the pocketed dildo as the safeguard of great ladies, repeating the cautionary and already well-travelled satiric tale of unfit access to power and stooping below one's station: namely, of "a

³⁰⁹ 88-9. Lest we had any lingering questions about what use the Ballers had with dildos – and how they were employed.

³¹⁰ 90-1.

Lady of great Honour / [who] Marr[ied] a Foot-man waiting on her".³¹¹ "Were one of these timely apply'd", he reasons, "'T had eas'd her Lust, and sav'd her Pride; / Safely her Ladyship might have spent, / Whilst such Gallants [dildos] in Pocket went".³¹²

Shifting slyly from court lady to city wife in his stock attacks, and mischievously equating the two, the limber-pricked speaker empathizes with the more pressing concerns of his citizen audience, namely the 'natural' sexual appetite, infidelity, and indiscretion of women of *all* classes (not just the high-born, or rank Ladies), repeating stock attacks on citizen wives' own propensity to sleep with the help:

Which of us able to prevent is
His Girl from lying with his 'Prentice,
Unless we other Means provide
For Nature to be satisfy'd?
And what more proper than this Engine,
Which would out-do 'em, should three Men join.
I therefore hold it very foolish,
Things so convenient to abolish;
Which if you burn, we safely may
To your own Act the Ruin lay,
And all that cast themselves away.³¹³

This heroic tool, then, is upheld as a convenient means of safeguarding female honour and preventing cuckoldry. In this, the dildo discourse burlesqued in *Dildoïdes* offers a solution to a central preoccupation raised in Nashe's *Choise of Valentines* and subsequently renewed in "Seigneur Dildoë": the prospect that the impotent and/or inferior penis may be replaced by a prosthetic. Where invective and elegaic subtraditions of the anti-phallic dildo repudiate this

³¹¹ 92-3. That ladies of the court would stoop below their station to bed (and allegedly in this case marry) the help was lampoon convention. For a discussion of the social leveling of Barbara Villiers, Lady Castlemaine and Duchess of Cleveland, see Chapter 6.

³¹² 94-7.

³¹³ 100-10.

replacement as a challenge to and even a usurping of masculinity, the burlesque comedy of *Dildoides* (and the comic Restoration dildo poem more generally) presents the invective argument's facetiously balanced counterpoint, seeing in the prosthetic implement not competitor or "disgrace",³¹⁴ but sexual relief and even an added safeguarding against cuckoldry. This is particularly emphasized in the limber-pricked speaker's concluding argument that husbands could avoid cuckoldry simply by permitting wives the use of the dildo to assuage their 'natural' sexual appetites.³¹⁵ Of course, this comic turn also functions as yet another joke at the expense of the anxious and godfearing citizens, and adds to the satire's already multivalent purpose (i.e., of rehearsing arguments in defence of dildo and luxury commodity importation into England, of lampooning rank ladies, and of exposing those courtiers who bed, or require dildos to bed, rank ladies) to see whether the Customs fops will fall for the ruse, supply their wives with dildos on masse, and render themselves ever more ridiculous in the process.

As this limber-pricked speaker finishes his discourse, it appears as though the narrative has reached its climax and will in fact reach a comic conclusion. The satirist indicates and underscores the deep efficacy of the second speaker's pathetic appeal, as when

At this, all Parents Hearts began
 To melt apace, and not a Man
 In all the Assembly, but found
 His [the ironically limp-pricked speakers'] Reasons solid were and sound.
 Poor Widows streight with Voices shrill,
 With Shouts of Joy the Hall did fill;
 For wicked Pintles have no mind to her,
 Who hath no Money, nor no Jointure.³¹⁶

³¹⁴ 84.

³¹⁵ 98-101.

³¹⁶ 111-8.

If the crowd – particularly the poor, sex-less widows – were so swayed and moved to redeem and welcome the heroic merits of the dildo, how then did these Twelve dildos come to ruin?

In answer, the satirist records the intervention of a new, third speaker, who “in haste [breaks] through the Throng” and reintroduces a crisis in the narrative:³¹⁷ the crisis, reminiscent of Aretino’s heathen, prick-worshipping convent, of this good Protestant Christian company having been swayed by the influence of a false Priapic idol.

...Are we among
Heathens or Infidels, to let ‘scape us
This image of the lewd Priapus?
Green-sickness Girls will soon adore him,
And wickedly fall down before him,
For him each superstitious Hussy
Will Temple build of *Tuffy Muffy* [sic].³¹⁸

Continuing this slippery-slope anti-dissenter fallacy in terms that remain uncannily familiar in alarmist modes of religious and political reasoning today, the interventionist speaker imagines that if the dildo is accepted among the company of citizens, it will not be long until “Idolatry will fill the Land / and all true Pricks forget to stand”.³¹⁹ (Such world-altering, emasculating potency ascribed to the dildo!) The speaker therefore curses the “Wretch” who created “those Arts”,³²⁰ rather unsurprisingly assuming the dildo to be a male invention, given to women,³²¹ and ironically establishes and assumes the dildo’s clear and absolute supremacy over the penis as

³¹⁷ 119.

³¹⁸ 120-6. “Tuffy muffy”, or rather “tussy mussy”, is a phrase for a nosegay, a bouquet of flowers, and thus denotes the cunt.

³¹⁹ 127-9. See also Dryden’s “St. Cecelia,” which articulate’s the period’s preoccupation with idolatry.

³²⁰ 129.

³²¹ 139-42.

he elaborates on and underscores his assertion that women will eschew men and stop ‘pitying’ – presumably acquiescing, and being subservient to – the male and his sexual appetites should she have constant enjoyment of “Man in this Epitome [i.e., the dildo]”.³²² The outraged interventionist then comes dangerously close to conflating the instrumentality of penis and dildo as he declares the dildo a blasphemous “Derogation / From Sacred Rites of Propagation, / ... turning th’Action of the Tool / (Whence we all come) in Ridicule”.³²³ He concludes his rousing speech with a call to action, a warning to women that the dildo is merely a ruse that will make their husbands and lovers as lazy and effeminate as the French, and an appeal to the Citizens’ sense of self-pride and superior cunning:

Let’s then, with common Indignation,
Expel these Priapuses out ‘o’th’Nation,
From all these Instruments of Lewdness;
And Ladies, take it not for Rudeness;
For never was so base a Treachery
Design’d by Men ‘gainst Female Lechery.
Men would kind Husbands seem, and able,
With feigned Lust, and borrow’d Bawble.
Lovers themselves would rest their Passion
In this fantastick new *French* Fashion:
But the wise City will take care
That Men shall vent no such false Ware.³²⁴

In his final assessment of the debate and its fateful outcome for the French dildos, Butler’s satirist loses all pretense of bipartisan satire as he comments that we

See here th’unstable Vulgars Mind
Shook like a Leaf with every Wind;

³²² 131-4. Rochester’s speaker similarly figures the penis as separable from the male in “The Imperfect Enjoyment”, in which he objectifies, scolds, and removes himself from his ill-performing penis.

³²³ 135-8.

³²⁴ 143-54. See Rochester’s “Imperfect Enjoyment” for a similar dichotimization of lewdness versus love and loyalty.

No sooner had he [the interventionist speaker] spoke, but all
 With a deep Rage for Faggots call:
 The Reasons that before seem'd good,
 Now are no longer understood.³²⁵

Never mind that some of these 'winds' were quite possibly the winds of Baller imposters intended to toy with and mock Citizen interlocutors even as they were unwittingly swayed to agree with opinions in the Ballers' favour. In either case, the dildos' quasi-Phoenix-like fate was fixed, as

This last Speech had the cruel Power
 To bring these *Dildoes* latest Hour.
Priapus thus in Box opprest,
 Burnt like a *Phoenix* in its Nest,
 But with this fatal Diff'rence dies,
 We find no *Dildoes* from his Ashes rise.³²⁶

With this hyperbolic end, Butler's burlesque – though an equal opportunity roast of all involved parties, including the aged and lecherous Ballers, the naive, sheep-like Citizens and Farmers, and the proverbially licentious women of various social and marital standings, the poem clearly dwells considerably more on the shortcomings of the Farmers and their social group than on their aristocratic opponents. Here, too, as throughout Butler's tale, there is a realism in topical and material references to the reality of dildo importation and proliferation in England: the dildos in various shapes and sizes, hid (as such contraband conventionally was) in box crates under other lawful material,³²⁷ subsequently burnt in their packing-crate "nest", Phoenixes reminiscent of Dryden's London, waiting to be reborn from their ashes.³²⁸

³²⁵ 155-60.

³²⁶ 161-6.

³²⁷ See Darnton, *Literary Underground*, and Frantz, *Festum*.

³²⁸ See Dryden's "Annus Mirabilis" for a depiction of London as Phoenix following the Great Fire. Note also that Phoenix was a common cant term for the penis.

The phoenix rises

The dildo was indeed reborn, of course, in *Dildoidea*'s own poetic form, as in a manoeuvre familiar throughout Rochester: failure to rescue the martyred dildos was transformed into artistic success. Thus the Sedley-an call to avenge the martyrs was a summons to wit, to art, to that mental prosthetic that gave pleasure so unnerving to puritanical citizens.³²⁹ Following this, dildos in both material and linguistic form arose in 1670s England more numerous than before, as the twelve French dildos' mock-heroic demise instigated a veritable explosion of discourse in a variety of aims and modes. Edward Howard, for instance, took up the theme of dildo use in both "The Fricatrice: or, She Upon a She" and "The Precise One" (1673), which left little to the imagination regarding female masturbation and same-sex activity; "Seigneur Dildoe" (1673), the prolific subject of my subsequent chapters, occasioned a linguistic explosion of *Seigneur Dildoidea* and its various pleasures; Rochester's (?) "Tunbridge Wells", "Satyr" ("Say heav'n born muse", ca. 1674) and *Sodom* (1678) each conveyed a great deal of topical and indicative realism, despite their dark obscenity; and most instructively of all, the English translation of *L'Ecole des Filles, or The School of Venus* (1680), made the dildos of French prose pornographies accessible for the first time to a non-French-speaking English audience.

The dildo figure, sometimes operating under the guise of "Robin", likewise proliferated in late seventeenth-century broadside ballads which were as bawdy and instructive as its elite cousins. The dildo of "The London Lasses Hue-and-Cry after her Dearly Beloved Robin, Whom

³²⁹ This is also an inverted call to avenge the Protestant martyrs of the reign of Bloody Mary by purging the Church of England of Catholic and idolatrous elements, which was a central platform of the Puritans during the English Civil War and one of the justifications for the regicide of Charles I. See Patricia Crawford, "Charles Stuart, That Man of Blood" (*Journal of British Studies* 16, No. 2, 1977), 41-61.

She Unluckily Lost Last Saturday Night”, for instance, is rather self-evident to those in the know once it is made all but explicit that the beloved “Robin” is a lover of the artificial variety; “News from Crutchet-Fryers” tells a particularly “strange story” of country dildo and merkin manufacturers who “plaistered them round about” by throwing them over their neighbours’ walls (the balladeer seems at once aghast at and enchanted by this); “The Lancashire Cuckold: Or, the Country Parish-Clark Betray’d by a Conjuror’s Incharnted Chamber-Pot” confusingly conflates an enchanted, infidel penis and dildo in yet another strange, fantastical dildo tale; in “The Maid’s Complaint for Want of a Dil-Doul” the dildo appears in aid of female “greensickness”; and finally what resides in “The Pedler Opening of his Packe, to Know of Maydes What tis they Lacke” we of course may readily imagine. Just as tellingly, numerous ballads of the late seventeenth-century, surely compelled by the dildo’s new mercantile and discursive prominence as a sexual implement, began exploiting the term’s sexual denotation to punning effect, repeating the nonsense phrases long employed in early English ballads (e.g. “with a dildo dee dee...”) to lend a smutty undertone and punning wit to an ostensibly polite ballad.³³⁰

Beyond the marketplace and the literary landscape, linguistic records in both convivial and scientific veins also bear testimony to the dildo’s centrality in the Restoration imagination following the early 1670s dildo disputes. The dildo clearly arose as a Restoration subject of revelry and practical jokes, as we have already seen with the Earl of Dorset’s 1675 delivery of a dildo to Frances Sheldon (see Chapter 1), and as is clearly the case in many stanzas of “Seigneur

³³⁰ See, for instance, “Medley” (“State and ambition, all say to great Caesar”). This and the proceeding are from the *English Ballad Broadside Archive*, Pepys Collection.

Dildoë”.³³¹ It is presumably in this comic vein that a dildo reference appears, amusingly and somewhat inexplicably, in an editorial gloss to Charles Blount’s *A Vindication of Mr. John Dryden* (1673) which alludes to, but unfortunately does not explain or expand upon, “the Dildo of Mr. Dryden’s Muse”.³³² Concurrently, the dildo vogue’s topical influence on exploration and scientific inquiry, specifically that of horticulture, is equally evident in William Hughes’ decision, exemplified in *The American Physitian* (1672), to dub a species of American cactus encountered on his journeys a “dildoë tree” - a tall cactus of a shape that is, to be quite apt after the Restoration fashion, unmistakably dildo-esque. (This appellation, we should note, was then recorded in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, 1696, and further entrenched by the explorer William Dampier in *A New Voyage Round the World*, 1697.)³³³

This list of the Restoration dildos recorded for posterity, moreover, does not even begin to comprehend what is sure to be an additional wealth of euphemistic dildo references and allusions lurking in Restoration and early-eighteenth century texts and yet to be identified, or located within manuscript and print collections yet to be sifted, catalogued, and/or digitized; nor do the accounts provided here include the dozens of Restoration and eighteenth-century references which rose up following the particular vogue of “Seigneur Dildoë” and which I catalogue in subsequent chapters. What began as incendiary dispute over the fate of imported dildos and their figurative presence in Restoration England, then, clearly and quickly outgrew this context and purpose, since as we have seen the dildo trope reappears in a plethora of

³³¹ For instance, see Chapter 6, n. 553 for my discussion of an “SD” stanza on the aging Dorothy Sunderland, who allegedly furnished a merkin for *Seigneur Dildoë* from her own pubic hair so that he might have a pair of whiskers (85-8).

³³² *EEBO*.

³³³ *OED*; William’s *Dictionary*, *EEBO*.

Restoration texts and forms serving a broad number of aims and occasions, including satires in both the Marvellian/invective and comic modes, folk ballads, epistles, newsletters, prose pornographies, and works of natural philosophy. None of these were quite so prolific or culturally impactful, however, as the dildo trope's fugitive progress about town as *Seigneur Dildo*: the subject to be taken up in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4. The Fugitive Trope: A Textual History of “Seigneur Dildoe”

Far from heralding the demise of dildos within Restoration England, the satirist-speaker of *Dildoïdes* was oddly prescient about the ubiquitous, Phoenix-like status the dildo would accrue across the period. Thanks to the infamy of now forgotten early modern dildo works by Pietro Aretino, Thomas Nashe, and many early modern French writers who followed their example and whose erotic works were well known and translated in Restoration England, the figure of the dildo was hardly an unknown at the Restoration, and to both Marvell’s *Last Instructions* and Butler’s *Dildoïdes*, the dildo secured a central place in the early Restoration satiric imagination.

However, it was not until sometime in late 1673 that a second more improvisational dildo poem, “Seigneur Dildoe” (or “Signior Dildo” in many versions), rose from the ashes of *Dildoïdes* to greet a new Duchess of York, the Duke’s newly-arrived Italian-Catholic bride, Mary of Modena, and to produce the conception of the dildo as *Seigneur* that was to dominate the English imagination from the moment of its genesis well into the mid-eighteenth-century. A ballad that exploited and expertly fused both folk and classical traditions, “SD” took comic and unabashedly explicit aim at scores of ladies (and a few men) of the court and town, many of them Catholics and/or royal mistresses, accusing each of acquiring and spending intimate time with the *Seigneur* following his alleged entrance into England as one of Mary of Modena’s train.³³⁴ Given that both “Last Instructions” and *Dildoïdes* circulated widely in manuscript as marvellously successful examples of the period’s aptitude and interest in the clandestine transmission of texts, it raises the question of how and why the dildo as *Seigneur*, and not the dildo as Duchess’ Royal Society invention or as libertines’ martyred phoenix, was successful in

³³⁴ 1-4, “SD” (all versions, with relatively minor variation).

capturing the English cultural and literary imagination in a way that its predecessors had not. Self-evidently, the “SD” tradition’s innovations in topicality, thematization, and dildo figuration must have had substantially to do with this – these will be treated in turn in Chapters 5 and 6 to follow. I contend here, however, that perhaps the best answers to this question derive not from the poem’s topos but from its form, transmission, and textual history.

Whereas both “Last Instructions” and *Dildoïdes* had circulated in clandestine manuscript but relatively stable form – that is, as complex extended satires whose scribes and readers did not appear to amend the poem in its transmission, but instead sought to transmit its authors’ original satire as faithfully as possible – this time, *Seigneur Dildoë*’s infamous progress among the Restoration Court and town was captured in standalone ballad stanzas whose form was inherently improvisational, corporate, and purpose-made to be manipulated at users’ will. (One imagines that this was one or several Court wits’ ingenious and particularly successful answer to Sedley’s call, alluded to in Chapter 4, to avenge the ashes of the French dildo martyrs lost to the flames of Customs officials.) As a result, countless unique versions and more than fifty-four standalone stanzas of “SD” allegedly sprung up to punningly “[touch] on all the Ladies from Westminster to Wapping”, according to one contemporary witness, able to quickly and easily expand beyond the poem’s original occasion and to collect numerous new occasions, victims, and themes along its haphazard journey, many of which happened to be at odds with each other.³³⁵ “SD” thus adopted an aggregate form and theme more squarely aligned with the

³³⁵ Overbury’s letter to Sir Williamson, cited n. 58, and discussed in full below. A full reading of the poem’s initial anti-Yorkist ribbing of Mary of Modena as well as its thematic expansions beyond this occasion is provided in Chapter 5.

emerging Restoration vogue for ‘shot-gun’ lampoons and individualized libels than its more intricate dildo satire precursor, *Dildoïdes*,³³⁶ and was therefore better poised for more universal purpose and more prolific success.

Against the grain of decades of modern criticism which has privileged questions of authorship and ‘best’ text editions when treating Restoration clandestine satires, this chapter traces the remarkable and chaotic textual history of “SD” as a testament to its fugitive success, and which, along with the comic heroism and enduring cultural afterlife of its titular figure, the euphemised *Seigneur* or *Signior*, comprise the best evidence for the centrality of the dildo figure within the literary and cultural imagination of Restoration England. While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide full, detailed accounts of each of the eleven versions and manuscript contexts of “SD” now extant (although in my research this undertaking has richly rewarded the effort!), here I present the salient features of the more than 30-year tradition alongside corroborating evidence from epistolary accounts and dramatic allusions to justify the extended readings of its thematic import that will follow in Chapters 5 and 6, and to establish that from its outset, “SD” proliferated anonymously not as an authorial piece but as a cultural artefact and poetic tradition, one that quickly extended well beyond the reach of its initial author(s) and coterie, and that amassed multiple modes and contexts of readership in its fugitive, mock-heroic transmission. In this, I attend to the many manuscript contexts and versions of “SD” and to all they can tell us about its proliferation and reception to prove that

³³⁶ In “Lampoon”, Love defines ‘shot-gun’ lampoons as libellous and sexually explicit songs and poems wherein the satirist first “addresses his targets in general terms and then picks them off one by one” (250). Both Wilson and Love gloss this form as particularly prominent in the Restoration. The term “lampoon” itself, it should be noted, derived from the French “lamper”, meaning “let us drink” (Love, *ECL*, 13).

the *Seigneur* became ubiquitous not in spite of the tradition's textual and thematic elasticity, unattributed or uncertain authorship, and largely oral, clandestine transmission, which is the prevailing viewpoint in the criticism, but precisely because of them.

The "SD" tradition: a critical and textual overview

It is difficult to over-emphasize the textual variety of the extant "SD" versions, which have been characterized by editors of the Rochester canon as differing both "widely" and "wildly".³³⁷

Editors have established that the textual unruliness of the eleven extant versions of "SD" is due to their clandestine (that is, unsanctioned and usually unprinted) circulation in manuscript and oral recitation or song from 1673 until its printing in 1703. Rather than attending to these contexts as unique and illustrative texts in their own right, their aims have generally been to clarify the "SD" tradition by simplifying it - determining a cogent textual genealogy, grouping versions according to family likeness, and ascertaining an original or author-intended best text.³³⁸ Consequently, scholars have given too little attention to the fact that the eleven extant

³³⁷ Walker, *Poems*, 186. That is, no two are exactly alike in stanza number, inclusions/omissions, or ordering, notwithstanding the chaotic variation of individual lines and substantives. See Love's extensive notes on the textual tradition in his edition of Rochester, *Works*, as well as in Love's "A Lamoon" and "Another 'A' Text".

³³⁸ See Introduction for his this tendency persists from the ground-clearing Rochester edition of David Veith, to the repeated engagements of Harold Love, and to Walker and Fisher's most recent edition of Rochester. Although Harold Love attends much more closely to the versions of "SD" than his predecessors and successors, he nonetheless conflates the versions despite their variety and degree of scribal intervention and contextual evidence, grouping them into 'A' (defined by Love as demonstrably early, ca. 1670s) and 'B' (or demonstrably late, ca. 1690s) versions, despite the fact that the 'early' versions are remarkably various and are not as demonstrably early as Love would wish. For example, Od8 records 14 stanzas plus 26 "Additions"; another 14-stanza version, BLa40, is most similar to the first 14 stanzas of Od8, but still contains only 12 of the 14 initial stanzas of Od8; BLh17 and NWLp are most divergent, containing 23 and 27 stanzas, respectively, and each has stanzas that are unique to only that version and not included in the "Additions" section of Od8. Because of their particular degree of textual and thematic variation and contrastive manuscript contexts, I therefore consider each of what Love calls 'A' versions as texts and versions in their own right. I do, however, agree with Love's 'B' version grouping, as these textually and thematically bear a much stronger family resemblance and are relatively closer in number and ordering of stanzas (22/23) as well as substantives. It is just to surmise that these and the first print edition of "SD" (o2pa3), which is similar to the manuscript 'B' group and likely descended from the same exemplar.

versions of “SD” are nearly as variable in their contexts of transmission and satiric emphases as in their degree of textual variety.

Concomitantly, while Harold Love has mounted a persuasive case against Rochester’s single authorship of “SD” and for its likely corporate authorship as a product that originated within the Buckingham faction at Court,³³⁹ the poem has remained fixed within the Rochester canon and is still predominantly upheld by editors and critics alike as an authorial, univocal piece,³⁴⁰ which as my discussions will show delimits its cultural reach and potency considerably. I thus renew Love’s call to view “SD” as a corporately-authored piece, but for reasons that extend beyond the conventional aims of right author attribution and canon formation and that instead consider the authorial anonymity of clandestine satires, as Hammond has argued, as a central aspect of the Restoration lampoon’s poetics and fugitive success as works of viral gossip that circulated much like the *Seigneur* himself is said to.³⁴¹ Where it has remained beyond the scope particularly of editorial inquiries, necessarily carried out with the imperatives of author attribution and a ‘best-text’ edition in mind, to examine in full just how diverse the manuscript versions and contexts of “SD” truly are, then, this critical gap is precisely my point of departure

³³⁹ Love provides thorough accounts of the versions’ inconclusive attributions in “A Lampoon”, and again in *Works*. Love chiefly notes that Keith Walker, like ground-clearing Rochester editors David Veith and Vivian de Solo Pinto before him, accepts the poem as Rochester’s based on demonstrably late (1690s and early 1700s), posthumous manuscript and print attributions. He also notes that the closest contemporary compiler and witness of “SD”, Sir William Haward, whose manuscript miscellany (Od8) is discussed in full below, does not attribute the poem to Rochester or anyone. I add to Love’s account that though Rochester and/or members of his coterie may very well have been the poem’s original author(s) in the fall of 1673 – they are certainly the most usual suspects for such an undertaking, as we have seen with *Dildoïdes* - it does not follow that Rochester was the poem’s only author, particularly as the poem began to accrue stanzas in transmission and continued to do so well after Rochester’s decline and death in 1680.

³⁴⁰ See Chapter 1, Walker and Fisher, *Poems*.

³⁴¹ See Chapter 1, n. 55.

as I query what the versions and MS contexts of “SD” suggest about how this curiously prolific lampoon was encountered, altered and perceived during the Restoration.

The extant MS versions of “SD” range in length from 14 to 37 stanzas long, targeting many dozens of named individuals, and altogether have preserved fifty-four unique stanzas of the poem for posterity. Although it is highly likely that Rochester had a hand in writing early versions and/or stanzas of the poem, whether individually or corporately (perhaps in a bout of drunken satiric flyting with his Baller associates?), “SD” did not long remain the relatively short 14-stanza drinking song that was first penned in 1673, nor was it widely considered his until after many decades, but rather grew and spread through the anonymous appropriation and improvisation of many subsequent hands. The great variety one encounters in the eleven extant versions of the poem is compounded when one considers that these represent only a handful of the thousands of copies and countless versions of “SD” that must have existed before the Reformation of Manners initiated by William and Mary caused countless separate and bound volumes of impolite material from earlier decades to be destroyed and/or hidden – many versions of which must have been sung or recited by necessity, rather than written, to avoid such a martyr’s fate.

Oxford Bodleian MS don b 8: “SD” as political satire, improvisational drinking song

The foregoing interpretations rely heavily on the personal manuscript miscellany of Restoration courtier and antiquary Sir William Haward (1617-1704), whose fourteen-stanza version and twenty-three recorded “Additions” (that is, a recording of some of the 28+ stanzas “SD” accrued in transmission) attest to the existence of many more versions of the poem than

have survived. These best exhibit “SD” as a haphazard social product that was more likely to have been circulated anonymously than as the product of a single author, particularly in the early 1670s. Haward’s initially-recorded 14 stanzas of “SD” also provide the closest thing to an origin story for the poem that is available to us, attesting to the poem’s original occasion and political valences, the date of authorship of its (most likely) original version, and its anonymous and oral transmission. Haward’s version, alongside contemporary epistolary and dramatic evidence (discussed below), also suggest that even in its earliest forms and periods of transmission, “SD” had begun to capture the attention of individuals beyond insular London circles, particularly that of the Ballers (i.e., the Rochester/Buckingham faction) at Court. This further distinguishes the textual history of “SD” from that of its predecessor *Dildoides*, which ventriloquizes Citizen views on the dildo but bears no real evidence of a departure from the confines of the Court libertine coterie.

Sir William Haward’s personal miscellany of some 721 pp., Bodleian MS don b 8, remains one of the richest and most suggestive extant manuscript contexts of “SD”. While Haward was well placed at court as a member of the Cavalier Parliament in the early 1670s and until his death in 1704 (he had been a gentleman of the bedchamber in the court of Charles I), he had no known social or political connections to the younger libertine coterie of Rochester and Buckingham,³⁴² suggesting that whatever the intention of its author(s), the poem had quickly escaped the confines of the young libertine coterie at Court. Haward’s Parliamentary position, considered alongside his reputation as a noted (if sometimes mocked) antiquarian and

³⁴² ODNB.

his placement of “SD” alongside a well-balanced documentation of both sides’ (Royalist, anti-Royalist) views of related Parliamentary matters, also suggest that his interest in recording “SD” was predominantly moderate and antiquarian in nature – a matter of recording the political events of his time and the cultural reactions thereon, rather than a matter of recording his own anti-Catholic or anti-Yorkist political feelings, or yet of transcribing “SD” in his personal miscellany for the purpose of sexual titillation, gossip-mongering, or social gratification.³⁴³ Though it was well within Haward’s gentlemanly means and purview to hire a scribe or secretary to compile the miscellany in his stead, or to care little for its legibility, quality, and form, Haward’s spacious, readable volume demonstrates both his care and skill as a scrupulous, comprehensive compiler and documenter of Restoration events and concerns over a period spanning no less than thirty years (c. 1670?-1704).

As a diligent antiquarian, Haward does not scruple to record all that is of interest to him or that he judges to be of interest to future readers, whether that be a political treatise, a published literary work, a salacious lampoon-du-jour, the latest Parliamentary proceedings, or a naval manifest. To the modern view, this often creates the jarring effect of unevenly yoked items placed in succession, of which a prime example is Haward’s ostensibly guileless placement of the pious “On the bible. A pindaric ode” between his first untitled (and markedly less pious!) fourteen-stanza installment of “SD” and twenty-three stanzas of “SD” entitled “Additions”.³⁴⁴ In this, Haward is simply the epitome of the user-publisher according to Love’s

³⁴³ See Kelliher’s account of Haward’s noted scribal skills, *ODNB*.

³⁴⁴ Items 188, 189, and 190, and 477-8, 478-80, and 480-2, respectively. I am not the first person to note this characteristic “cognitive dissonance” in Haward’s miscellany and in many Restoration manuscript miscellanies (See Love, *Scribal Publication*, 140), which could easily form the basis of its own full-length study.

widened sense of seventeenth-century publication,³⁴⁵ and the additions and glosses of succeeding owners that appear in the manuscript's blank leaves and margins, at least one of whom added his own material to the miscellany in 1728-9,³⁴⁶ testify to the validity and longevity of his effort.

Although it is not customary for Haward to date his transcriptions (unless, it would seem, he could record a date or attribution on very high authority), in the case of "Seigneur Dildoë" we are given a very near estimate, given that the list of Grants by privy seal which precedes "Seigneur Dildoë" is noted by Haward as having been "entered 23 November 1673" (item 187, p. 476). The date as well as the political valences and aims of "Seigneur Dildoë" as highlighted by the MS context of Od8 are further underscored by the adjacent presence of six separate entries of Parliamentary proceedings dating from the twentieth of October to the fourth of November, 1673 (items 170-82, pp. 467-75), which Haward scrupulously heads:

On the 20th day of October 1673 the parliament met by adjournment, and immediately the House of Commons, knowing they should be prorogued, without going to prayers, fell into debate about the marriage of his royal highness with the daughter of the Duke of Modena, and at last after some debate passed this vote, or to this purpose, than an humble address should be made to his majesty that he would be pleased not to permit the marriage of his royal highness with any lady, but of the Protestant religion...

³⁴⁵ See *Scribal Publication*, 36-39. Love defines seventeenth-century scriptorial publication very broadly as "a movement from a private realm of creativity to a public realm of consumption" (36), and identifies the compilation of a personal miscellany as a chief mode of user publication (79-83).

³⁴⁶ See Od8 ff. v. and viii, the former of which gives a description of the manuscript and a list of contents, and is dated Feb. 27, 1728-9. The latter contains the inscription "My book Frances Leneve".

Haward also transcribes a copy of Charles II's speech denying this application at some length, particularly its claim that the marriage of the Duke of York to the Duchess of Modena will strengthen the influence and hold of Catholicism in England. Considering the amount of space Haward devotes to the matter of the Duke of York's marriage to the Duchess of Modena,³⁴⁷ this context provides his most likely rationale for transcribing a substantial fugitive lampoon on the subject, the first fourteen stanzas of which may well have come into his hands as little as three weeks following these recorded Parliamentary proceedings, and within days of Mary Beatrice's arrival in England on 21 November 1673.

The close dating of Haward's version both identifies the unattributed, 14-stanza version he records initially as textually close to the form in which the poem originally circulated – anonymously, it should be noted, as even a relatively well-placed courtier and exacting MS compiler such as Haward had no knowledge of or wish to record Rochester's (or anyone's) authorship of the poem, and he therefore records neither author nor title – and also places the poem in a distinctly political context, despite its bawdry, recording the anti-Yorkist and anti-Catholic reactions of Parliament to the Duke of York's choice of second bride for posterity. The context provided by this version, then, aligns the cartoonishly comic and explicitly erotic "SD" with the "state poems" lampoon tradition as defined by deF. Lord and the editors of the Yale *Poems On Affairs of State* series,³⁴⁸ which to the modern view (as to that of the *POASY* editors),

³⁴⁷ There are particularly anti-French, perhaps more so than anti-Catholic, undertones to Parliament's objection to the Duchess of Modena as a choice for the Duke of York. The Modenese were said to be predominantly loyal to Louis XIV rather than to Rome, and in some accounts Louis is even said to have hand-picked Mary to be the Duke's bride, ensuring that the match took place (*ODNB*). This matter is further discussed in Chapter 5.

³⁴⁸ See Chapter 1.

may seem an unlikely juxtaposition, but to a serious courtier and antiquarian of the Restoration such as Haward, no such distinction between erotic and political, comic and gravely momentous, needed to be made.³⁴⁹

Yet Haward's version also demonstrates that this well-glossed political context, often presumed to be the primary or only context or theme of note within the poem, was not its only transmission rationale or occasion. Perhaps an even greater and under-considered contribution of Haward's miscellany to our understanding of "SD" are its indications that the poem is a true Court satire/folk ballad hybrid, and that like its folk-ballad forebears, it was fashioned to be the product of a community rather than an author: that is, it was intended to be improved with each performance, and intended to be *sung*.³⁵⁰ (This would explain why the majority of the initial copyists of "SD" were much less concerned with its authorship than we are today.) Haward titles his first fourteen-stanza section of "SD" with the ballad's appropriately bawdy new tune, namely "To the tune of Peg's gone to sea with a soldier".³⁵¹ Given this heading and lack of other title or attribution, it follows that Haward himself first encountered this version of "Seigneur Dildoe" socially through song (presumably, given that the tune of "SD" locates it as a drinking song, in particular, with libations in hand).

³⁴⁹ My own readings of similar MS miscellanies of the Restoration show this to be typical of the period's compiling methods, rather than unusual or unique to Haward. See William J. Cameron's "Restoration" group, discussed below.

³⁵⁰ See Devine and Fisher, discussed below.

³⁵¹ Regarding the tune of "SD", see n. 353.

Moreover, Haward records twenty-three stanzas of separately titled and thematically haphazard “Additions” (pp. 480-82), which may themselves have been written in two sittings.³⁵² These were clearly recorded after Haward had encountered new stanzas, which could logically have occurred anytime between 1673 and the terminus date of his MS (1704), and testify to the song’s highly aggregate nature. Beyond these “Additions”, there is also a clear indication in Haward’s MS that he expected “SD” to remain vital and fluid, as he has left ample space at the end of the entry in case he should come across any additional stanzas. Overall, the corroborating details of Haward’s MS version demonstrate that the self-enclosed ballad stanzas of “SD” rendered it ideal for re-appropriation, improvisation, and thematic variation - perfect for a communal drinking song which allowed interlocutors to easily add and omit stanzas or shuffle rhymes with each re-rendering. In a very real sense, this intrinsic elasticity of form invited each performer and transcriber of “SD” to become its co-authors, and the poem’s perpetuation in song suggests that it continued to amuse and appeal well beyond its original context, lending it measures of cultural significance and a critical importance it would not possess if it were simply a textually unruly, repetitive poem to be read on the page.³⁵³

³⁵² Although clearly in the same hand, there is a marked change in the size of Haward’s script after the first six stanzas of the “Additions”, which are in a large, spacious hand, and the seventeen which follow, which are in a markedly tighter script. Because Haward’s manuscript leaves yet more room for additional stanzas following these twenty-three, I consider it plausible that Haward may have added to “Signior Dildo” on several occasions as stanzas became available to him, and that the latter section of ‘Additions’ were added on a later occasion than the former.

³⁵³ In *Scribal Publication*, Love expresses a similar sentiment: “Although it has not been customary for scholars to treat the stanzaic lampoon as a sung form, and the manuscript sources frequently neglect to identify the tune, musical performance will often give cogency to an otherwise nondescript text... To hear ... “Signior Dildo” sung to its original tune of ‘Peggy’s gone over sea with the soldier’ locates it socially as an improvisatorial drinking song in a way that gives point to what on the page is a rather tedious repetition of a rudimentary joke” (234).

Scribal interventions and the 1690s Jacobite scribe: British Library Harley MS 7317 (BLh17)

Given the lack of dating, attribution, scribal/scriptoria and/or other solid markers of ancestral relationships in most MS versions besides Haward's, it is impossible to determine the textual lineage of the manuscript versions of "SD" with any degree of precision or certainty. Given the extent to which "SD" was transmitted orally, however, this is perhaps unsurprising: "SD" need not have been transcribed from MS sources or fixed exemplars, but could be transcribed from memory. While there is considerable overlap and some marks of textual kinship between the three most demonstrably aggregate versions of "SD" (Od8, NWLp, BLh17), each possesses stanzas, sequencing, and other textual markers that are unique only to that version, and which therefore challenge Love's grouping of these versions into a single 'A' version, upon which basis I consider them as texts in their own right. Beyond these versions' first four stanzas in common, that is, all that is sure is that each appears to be somewhat longer than the last, and that each demonstrates an additional degree of remove from the original locus of fourteen (or perhaps four) stanzas, and likely from Rochester and his coterie.³⁵⁴ And what Love has identified as the relatively stable 'B' versions of "SD" may very well derive from a re-writing of the late 1680s or early 90s, as Love surmises; it is equally possible, given that the content of the 'B' versions bear no signs of being more specific to the 1690s than any other version of the poem,³⁵⁵ that the greater likeness between the 'B' versions can be explained by

³⁵⁴ See John Burrows, "A Computational Approach to the Rochester Canon" in Rochester, ed. Love, *Works* (Appendices), 682. Burrows finds the fourteen-stanzas of Od8 closest stylistically to other known works of Rochester, with the "Additional" stanzas increasingly more remote.

³⁵⁵ This observation is based on my own thorough sifting of the manuscript and topical evidence, with reference to the editorial glosses of Walker and Love and secondary research into the figures and events named in the stanzas of "SD", which aside from the marginalia of BLh17 (discussed below) has not yielded any substantial evidence to suggest that the 'B' version which chrysalized in the 1690s was indeed a re-write of that decade. What's more,

the scriptoria of that period using whatever version of “SD” they had to hand as the exemplar for the poem.

While the ‘B’ versions of “SD” are undoubtedly more textually uniform, wherein substantives and stanza variation is relatively minor, it is misleading to consider the more demonstrably improvisational or unique versions of the poem as ‘early’ and this crystallized ‘B’ version as comparatively ‘late’ (ca. 1689), when in fact the agglomerative MS versions of the poem date from between 1673-1695 (1673 – Od8, “Additions” unknown, c.1679 – BLa40, BLh17-c. 1695, and date unknown-NWLp, 28 stanzas). Love’s grouping of the versions of “SD” into two familial groups - “early” or ‘A’ versions, and “late” or ‘B’ versions, even though only two of four ‘A’ versions date to the 1670s, implies a sense of the textual tradition as one that saw improvisation and agglomeration only in the poem’s early period of circulation, and uniformity and fixity in its later period of transmission.

Instead, a closer examination of the aggregate or former ‘A’ versions as distinct versions in their own right reveals that “SD” remained textually elastic, co-authorial, and multivocal, particularly regarding its topical references to popular court figures, well into the 1690s. This is best illustrated by the 20-stanza version of “SD” in British Library Harley MS 7317 (ff. 65v-67), a highly divergent (formerly ‘A’) version of c. 1695. Contrary to what we might expect of a poem that began ostensibly as anti-Yorkist satire, the unidentified scribe and annotator of BLh17 is a consummate interventionist of explicitly Jacobite tendencies, and the manuscript miscellany as

although BLh17 is grouped among Love’s ‘A’ versions as much closer in family likeness to Od8, NWLp, and BLa40 than to productions of the 1690’s, its date of transcription (c. 1692) almost certainly post-dates that of the “B” version exemplar of BLh19 and the ‘Cameron’ scriptorium. On the Cameron scriptorium, see n. 368.

a whole bears a close relationship with the Jacobite camp.³⁵⁶ What is consistent, of course, is the commentator's oppositional, irreverent pose, and his appropriation and alteration of the poem to best suit his own context and purpose.

Compellingly, the Jacobite scribe makes extensive marginal glosses throughout the MS miscellany, many of which fill entire margins to continue below his main text, and often veer into the editorial.³⁵⁷ Love has called BLh17 "error-prone", specifying that the marginal glosses throughout the miscellany "are mostly the creation of the scribe or compiler, who was not very well informed".³⁵⁸ In the case of "SD", Love bases this assessment on the fact that several of the scribe's marginal glosses and substantive alterations,³⁵⁹ such as those regarding the Duchess of St. Albans and the Duchess of Grafton, could not possibly refer to the poem's originally satirized figures,³⁶⁰ as the women glossed by the scribe were either much too young, had not yet married or inherited a given title, or were not yet alive during the 1670s, the period of the poem's original circulation.³⁶¹

Certainly, from an editorial perspective it is just to stress the Jacobite scribe's unreliability and lack of informed sources. However, when "SD" is considered not as an author-centred piece of the early 1670s but as a fundamentally elastic cultural artefact fit to be

³⁵⁶ Specifically, to another similar manuscript miscellany which bears James II's arms, Yale University Library, MS Osborn b 111 (Yo11). See also *POASY*, Vol. 5, 531 for a discussion of this manuscript miscellany.

³⁵⁷ An excellent example of this is a particularly involved note regarding the Earl of Marlborough (ca. 1691-2, ff. 114), which engulfs over half of the page and veers well within the scribe's own ruled margins.

³⁵⁸ "Lampoon", 251.

³⁵⁹ It is, of course, impossible to be certain that substantive alterations are the work of the scribe rather than that of his exemplar.

³⁶⁰ BLh17 lines 37 and 57, respectively. For instance, Diana Beauclerc became the Duchess of St. Albans only upon her marriage on 13 April 1694; similarly, the Duchess of Grafton was only six in 1673, certainly too young to attract the poem's sexual allegations at that time!

³⁶¹ Love, *Works*, 477-78.

repurposed and re-rendered by any number of anonymous authors, the Jacobite scribe of BLh17 is more aptly read as yet another co-author of “SD”.³⁶² That is, whether uninformed about the Court events and figures of the 1670’s or not, the scribe of BLh17 follows the improvisational spirit of the lampoon by making the subjects of “SD” topical once again, replacing dead, unknown, and/or long-forgotten courtiers of the 1670’s with figures that were familiar to readers of the 1690’s, and worthy to be satirized. (In this reading, for example, the Jacobite scribe’s alteration of a stanza on “Doll Howard” (Od8.45-48), a maid of honour to the queen in the 1670’s but who was of little-to-no import in the 1690’s, to refer instead to “Moll: Howard” (BLh17.61-64), a court bawd of the 1690’s who would have “not yet begun her career”, as Love indicates, in the 1670’s, but who would have been well known to readers of the 90s).³⁶³

In addition to the inclusion of five stanzas that are unique to his version, the Jacobite scribe alters the satiric aim of his text with a combination of marginalia, relatively subtle textual alterations, and other markers such as bold script and underlining, often transforming what is generally aimed in other versions into a pointed, topical attack on a figure of the 1690s. Compare the generally-aimed satire of the Howard “Additions” stanza, a joke which is at the expense of all ‘fond’ Duchesses (the sense and plural form of which are preserved in BLh19.33-36 and all other ‘B’ versions), to the singular form and specific attack of the same stanza in BLh17, transcribed respectively:

Our dainty fine Dutchess’s have gott a Trick,

³⁶² Somewhat ironically, Love would not have disagreed with this reading, as he elsewhere argues so strongly and convincingly against Rochester’s (individual) authorship of “SD”. (See for example n. 342.)

³⁶³ Wilson, *Court Satires*, 252-4.

To doate on a Foole for love of his Prick
 But their hopes were undone, did their Graces but know,
 The discretion, and Vigour of Seignior Dildo. (Od8.A1-4)

The Duchess of Grafton. A delicate **Dutchess** who has found out a trick
 To be fond of a fool for the sake of his Prick
 How this Lord were undone if her Grace did but know
 The discretion & vigour of Seignor Dildo. (BLh17.45-48)

The scribe's use of bold and underlined script here, typical of the way his collection not only glosses topical references but also visually ensures that his marginal contributions will be well-marked, suggests a scribe whose interventions signal a deliberately interactive and even revisionist relationship with his text, one that places this version of "SD" squarely in his 1690s context.³⁶⁴

Variety in context: Jacobite and anti-Jacobite, political, erotic, and antiquarian MSS

In *English Clandestine Satire*, Love follows the assumptions of Keith Walker and David Veith before him in suggesting that the sexual content of Restoration lampoons such as "SD" simply provided vehicles for thinly veiled political content, and had little to no bearing on the sexuality or sexual practises of the women and men named in its verses.³⁶⁵ While this may have been true in some contexts and for those readers of "SD" whose interest in the poem was markedly political in nature, there is no reason to assume that this was the uniform or even dominant approach to such material. Indeed, the textual history of "SD" is one that displays a potentially limitless variety, particularly when one considers its ballad form and the fact that its

³⁶⁴ *Works* 478.

³⁶⁵ See in particular 245-7, wherein Love makes this point with direct reference to "SD".

versions and modes of transmission attest not to a singular or authorial dildo poem, but to a *type* of culturally-appropriated dildo poem, and to a central, euphemized dildo figure that entered the wider cultural vernacular despite originating from court politics and affairs.³⁶⁶

It is also worth bearing in mind that the extant versions of the poem represent only those that have been preserved for posterity by those relatively few individuals affluent enough to compile and keep expensive, well-made books, and that dared to preserve them against the harsh reform climate of the reign of William and Mary following the Revolution of 1688-9. Within those versions of “SD” which have survived, there is contextual variety even among those versions that bear a close textual resemblance, suggesting the variety of co-authorial and readerly relationships one could have with the *Seigneur* at the beginning of the long eighteenth century. The manuscript miscellany of Sir William Haward, as we have seen, demonstrates that the early ends of “SD” were both political and communal, and perhaps even convivial; in any case, Haward’s is a scrupulous antiquarian’s view, observing and recording the poem’s evolution from somewhat of a remove.

Elsewhere, the poem appears in manuscript miscellanies compiled by owners or scribes of both Jacobite (BLh17) and anti-Jacobite (NWLp) biases and compilation tendencies, at least one of whom, as we’ve seen, exhibits an unmistakably proprietary relationship with his text.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁶ Although the version of “SD” that Overbury alleges “touched on Ladies from Westminster to Wapping” has not survived – Wapping, it should be recalled, was home to lowly dock-workers and merchant families at the outskirts of London, there is no reason to doubt Overbury’s testimony that the satire of “SD” had exited the court milieu and extended into London proper.

³⁶⁷ NWLp, discussed and transcribed in full in Love, “A New ‘A’ Text”, is a twenty-eight stanza version of “SD” in the hand of Sir Edward Herbert of Cherbury, a staunch Protestant who took an active role in accusing and apprehending Catholic perpetrators of the supposed Popish Plot (1678-9). Sir Edward is known even to have informed against the Catholic branches of his own extended family (*ODNB*). One can surmise that the anti-Catholic motifs of “SD” would have been of particular interest to Sir Edward, given his religio-political affiliations. While I

Even the crystallized 'B' group versions of the later Restoration, all but one of which appears in the professionally-compiled and distributed manuscript miscellanies of the 'Cameron' scriptorium,³⁶⁸ demonstrate that one did not need to alter the text of "SD" to alter its satiric emphases and impact dramatically. Four of these versions (Of15, OSe15, Pt2, Np42) are featured in the Cameron Scriptorium "Venus" group, a collection of Restoration lampoons that are outstandingly obscene or erotic in nature, even among a lampoon genre that is known for its sexual explicitness: here, the erotic, quasi-pornographic facets of "SD" provide the clear rationale for its inclusion in the volume, which dovetails with the growing eighteenth-century interest in pornography and is clearly crafted with a reader of sexually risqué texts in mind. ("SD" features prominently as the third or fourth item in the volume, following *Dildoïdes* to comprise a short but potent 'dildo' section near the outset of the volume.)

The remaining two versions of "SD" (V90, VAd43) appear in two massive (800pp.) volumes of the Cameron Scriptorium "Restoration" group, whose compilation rationale is clearly to preserve the unprinted clandestine satire of the previous age against the stricter moral climate of the Williamite age. Here, as in Haward and the printed *Poems on Affairs of*

was able to examine the 'Powis papers' in the National Library of Wales which preserves Sir Edward Herbert's family documents, I was unable to locate "SD" among this collection due to its unfortunate (and perhaps curious) misplacement.

³⁶⁸ What is commonly referred to as the 'Cameron Scriptorium' was first identified and described by W. J. Cameron in his 1963 article "A Seventeenth-Century Scriptorium" and expanded upon in his fifth edited volume of the Yale *Poems on Affairs of State* series (1975). Cameron identified three distinct groups of manuscripts produced by this scriptorium (although all are thought to be from a common exemplar): These are the 'William Group,' which consist only of satires from the reign of William and Mary; the 'Venus Group,' which consist of libertine verse with a strong erotic element; and the 'Restoration Group,' which are expansive collections of libertine verse and state poems dating from the 1670's to 1688, and whose purpose was likely antiquarian. Of the six 'B' MS versions of "SD", four are in the Venus group (Np42, Of15, OSe15, Pt2) and two in the Restoration group (V90, VAd43). These latter are 854pp. and 880pp. long, respectively(!). BLh19, which Cameron indicates is not a product of the scriptorium but a likely descendant of its exemplar, bears a strong resemblance to the MSs of the Restoration group.

State volumes which are closely linked to these miscellanies (o3, 1703; see Chapter 1), “SD” appears as less of a topical or politically potent piece than as a document of its time, and as a testament to the looser social and sexual mores of the courts of Charles II and his brother, James.

“SD” goes viral: transmission and the *Seigneur* in the early-to-mid 1670s

While only one of eleven manuscript versions of “SD” date to the early 1670s – those that did were likely to have been unbound separates, lost through the common practise of reappropriating the paper for other uses after reading – there is also the evidence of the *Seigneur*’s literary allusions and other cultural appearances to consider. The most notable of these are the letter of a contemporary witness and newsagent and a pair of allusions on the Restoration stage, which together provide strong corroborating evidence that not only “SD” in all its versions, manuscript and sung, but also the euphemized shorthand *Seigneur*, became an immediately recognizable and lasting hit within the court as well as within wider Restoration culture beyond Whitehall.³⁶⁹

Although the period’s most notable diarist, Samuel Pepys, does not record coming across a copy of “SD” (though he does make frequent and rather disparaging references to the general proliferation of lampoons),³⁷⁰ his contemporaries Sir Joseph Williamson and Walter Overbury are more helpful. In a letter to Williamson dated January 26 1674, Overbury mentions “Sir Nic[holas Armourer] sen[ding] [his] excellency a song of a certain senior that

³⁶⁹ Love, “Lampoon”, 250. See also *Monsieur Thing’s Origin* (1722), which provides a retrospective history of the *Seigneur* euphemism.

³⁷⁰ See Chapter 6 for an account of his awareness of lampoons on Barbara Villiers, Lady Castlemaine in particular.

came in with the Dutchesse of Modena, which if it is miscarries I must take care to write it anew, though it reaches and touches most of the ladies from Westminster to Wapping".³⁷¹ Though euphemised to refer only to the eponymous 'senior', the reference to "SD" here is unmistakable, and has long stood as an editorial cornerstone in the dating of "SD":³⁷² that is, it provides concrete evidence that "SD" could have been written no later than late January 1674, nicely bookending Haward's Nov. 23, 1673 inscription (its earliest possible date of composition). Beyond dating, however, the implications of this gloss for the textual history of "SD" requires some additional unpacking, as they illuminate many aspects of the lampoon's transmission and proliferation, not least of which is the fact that dildo and ballad stanza alike are said to have intimately "touched" the entire female population of Restoration London.³⁷³

First, if on the strength of Haward's MS we are right to surmise that "SD" was written very shortly after the arrival of Mary of Modena in late November 1673, Overbury's gloss demonstrates the poem's unusual degree of topical stamina, as "SD" was still 'news' as late as January 1674, as many as two months after the composition of its first version, at which point (as explicitly stated in Overbury's testimony) fresh copies were still being made, sought-after, and circulated. This was a particularly unusual feat in a culture wherein satiric news and gossip easily overshadowed by the latest lampoon or breaking scandal.³⁷⁴ Among the most likely explanations for this longevity, in addition to that of the political centrality of the Duke and Duchess of York in the 1670s and 80s, is that the dildo motif and standalone ballad stanzas of

³⁷¹ Walter Overbury, in *Williamson Letters*, 2.132.

³⁷² See editorial notes to "SD" in Love, *Works*, and Wilson, *Court Satires*.

³⁷³ Note that neither Love nor Wilson have considered the implications of Overbury's allusion beyond those of textual proliferation and dating.

³⁷⁴ Love, *ECL*.

“SD” had become a kind of woodcut mold, easily re-used and adapted for disparate satiric purposes. Second, in his diction Overbury demonstrates a marked keenness that his patron should have a copy of this poem, whether from one source or another. This urgency conveys a sense of “SD” as required reading for the Restoration aristocrat or courtier, whether he be at court or not: it’s particularly noteworthy that Overbury felt Williamson’s receiving a copy of SD was so important that he would make sure to copy and send him another should the first one miscarry.³⁷⁵

Third, the contents of this gloss, though brief, also give some clear indications regarding where, to, and by whom “SD” was being transmitted in this earliest period of transmission, at least in part. Sir Joseph Williamson was stationed in Cologne, Germany in early 1674, and as Overbury’s prior letters indicate, Overbury acted as his agent in sending him news from home, including that of political developments, romantic intrigues at court, and songs and poems such as “SD”. (In a previous letter dated January 16, 1674 he sends regards from Samuel Pepys, who must have been a source for such items.) Williamson’s letters also indicate that he employed several agents in addition to Overbury who acted on his behalf in this regard. “SD”, then, was demonstrably among those lampoons that routinely exited the capital in the period via London-based news agents who kept their patrons apprised of topical news and happenings – predominantly reaching country estates, but here stretching even as far as the continent.³⁷⁶

³⁷⁵ One wonders whether Overbury could have done this from memory, or whether he would have copied a manuscript version of the poem that was in his possession, and equally, why Overbury would suspect or fear miscarriage of the lampoon in the first place – perhaps because of its content? Or perhaps a more practical explanation suffices: stationed across the sea in Germany, perhaps Overbury could not be sure that missives would reach his patron reliably.

³⁷⁶ It is noteworthy that one of the extant MS copies of “SD”, Vienna Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Cod. 14090 (V90), also found its way to the continent.

On the whole, Overbury's letter to Williamson provides firm evidence, consistent with that provided by Haward's MS, that "SD" remained neither an artefact of the London-based court nor of any particular coterie within it, but proliferated out to elites who were not based in London, via agents and members of the gentry and middling sorts in London (as Samuel Pepys and Walter Overbury both were). We may also note that Overbury's letter names neither the title nor author of "SD": whatever the poem's affiliation with the Earl of Rochester (or of any other noted author), the lampoon appears to have been known by and for its titular character, the *Seignior*, not its author(s), and did not rely on the fame or notoriety the infamous Earl (or any author) to become essential reading.

"SD" in town and theatre

Though clearly broader in its transmission than any single faction or coterie, both Haward's MS and Overbury's epistle to Williamson largely exhibit "SD" as a product of the court, and one that has both the court and the male spectator as its epicentre (the former of these being hardly a surprise, since its victims of attack are predominantly Ladies and courtiers with prominent positions at court). But there is also considerable evidence that women and/or the common person, or at least interlocutors without direct ties to or agents within the court, had access to and took an interest in the lampoon, probably owing to its folk ballad form and dissemination in song.³⁷⁷

Beyond rendering "SD" more improvisational, the folk ballad form and musical transmission of "SD" must have allowed it to transcend its court and high culture origins as a

³⁷⁷ For scholarship on the overlap of oral and literate culture in this period, see below.

classically-derived dildo poem on the subject of the aristocratic elite, and to disseminate quickly and easily beyond closed court coterie. Stephen Devine and Nicholas Fisher, drawing from Clause M. Simpson's *The British Broadside Ballad and its Music* (1966), have brought the musical form of "SD" to life through their setting of the poem in *Songs to Philis: A Performing Edition of the Early Settings of Poems by the Earl of Rochester 1647-80* (1999). In setting the first four stanzas of the poem to music, which alone are common to every version of the poem and least specific to topical court figures and sexual affairs, Devine and Fisher demonstrate that while specific stanzas of the lampoon may have appealed or signified only to the informed crowd at court, other more general stanzas of "SD" likely held a wider oral, musical, and thematic appeal.³⁷⁸

As we have seen in Chapter 3, the Restoration's broadside ballad showed as much of a penchant for the dildo motif as its clandestine satire;³⁷⁹ and as will be discussed at length in Chapter 5, the original 1673 occasion of the Duke of York's marriage to the Italian-Catholic Mary of Modena, occurring alongside his open declaration of Catholic faith earlier in the same year, would have been accessible and of interest to any in the English populace, given the Duke's status as heir to the throne and the mounting unease regarding Catholic threats to the realm. This supposition is also upheld by the origins of the court lampoon genre itself, which as defined by Love is a co-opted "folk-form, deriving from much older models of improvised satirical balladry...[which were] stanzaic, usually written to a broadside ballad, country dance or

³⁷⁸ 22-3.

³⁷⁹ These genres, of course, are far from mutually exclusive. Pepys's example, for instance, shows how common it was in the period to be a consumer of both broadside ballads and clandestine satire.

playhouse tune”.³⁸⁰ Adam Fox’s book-length study of the persistence of oral and ballad cultures and their co-mingling with print cultures well into the late seventeenth century, while focusing predominantly on folk forms rather than on the court or on the relationship of folk forms to court appropriations, makes it clear that the milieu of country, city, and court, though distinctive, were not mutually exclusive.³⁸¹

Though the evidence is indirect, a pair of Restoration comedies dated 1674-5, *The Mall: Or, The Modish Lovers* and *The Mistaken Lovers* dramatize and enact all of these possibilities. The earliest of these, *The Mall: Or, The Modish Lovers. A Comedy* (printed 1674, performance date unknown),³⁸² was performed by the King’s Company and features the familiar Restoration plot of the lecherous, ageing cuckold being duped by his young, beautiful wife. The play’s second scene features a suspense-filled moment in which the female protagonist, Mrs. Easy, is surprised by her suspicious husband while discussing a letter from her would-be lover with her enabling servant, Peg.³⁸³ Upon discovery by Mr. Easy, who fears an intrigue and demands to see the document in his wife’s hand, Mrs. Easy attempts to divert his attention to the woes of their young love-lost kinswoman, Grace, as she fumbles for another to give him in its place:

Mr. Easy. What's this I pray?
Mrs. Easy. I am undone! Nay I protest you must not see't for the World, it is a new Song.
Mr. Easy. Some bawdy Lampon, Ile warrant ye, Ile see't.

³⁸⁰ Love, *Scribal Publication*, 232.

³⁸¹ *Oral and Literate Culture in England, 1500-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). See also Arthur F. Marotti and Michael D. Bristol *Print, Manuscript and Performance: The Changing Relations of Media in Early Modern England* (Columbus: Ohio State UP), 2000, and Fumerton, *Ballad Broadsides in Britain, 1500-1800* (New York: Ashgate, 2010).

³⁸² The extant copy of this play is a print edition dated 1674. It is inscribed: “Printed for William Cademan at the Popes-head in the lower walk of the New Exchange in the Strand. 1674”. Because the play’s dedication is signed “J.D.” and because of his noted position within the King’s Company, this play was contemporaneously ascribed to John Dryden. Dryden denied his authorship, however, and the attribution remains dubious/inconclusive. (*EEBO*)

³⁸³ All sexual puns on character names surely intended: ‘Peg’, as in the “SD” tune ‘Peg’s Gone Over the Sea with the Soldier’, often functioned as shorthand for ‘Pego’, or penis.

Mrs. Easy. Ile protest it is not Sir, when 'tis set you shall hear it sung.
 Enter Grace weeping.
 She's come in very good time. Alas! poor Cousin Grace, and have you Sir, can you be so cruel to Cousin Grace, pray let her have the Man she loves.--- Peg, hast never a Song to change this for?
 Aside.

Peg. Yes, Madam, but 'tis a very scurvy one.

Mr. Easy. I say Ile see the Paper.

Mrs. Easy. Any thing dear Peg, but the Letter,
 Aside.
 Come Dear will you consider Grace?

Mr. Easy. The Verses I say, I smell a Plot, 'tis some Love Letter, come, come, produce, produce.

Mrs. Easy. I vow Dear I am asham'd you shou'd see e'm, they are so very silly.

Peg. I Sir, and something---

Mr. Easy. Bawdy too, Ile warrant ye, let's see, let's see.

Peg. Truly Sir, my Mistress has not read e'm yet.

Mr. Easy. What's here, Sig--- Sig, [H] ->Signior--- hey day, what's the Devil got amongst you two: I shall <-[H] ->Signior ye, and you want a <-[H] Signior.

Mrs. Easy. What say you concerning Grace Sir?

Mr. Easy. I say you are all naught, and 'tis time you had all Men, lusty Men, able Men, for the Devil will supply their places else, and therefore I design tomorrow, to marry Grace to a young lusty Lad, and a Knight, de ye see a Knight.

Although the allusion to the *Signior* is again indirect and euphemised, as in *Overbury*, it is clear that the lampoon which Peg has given Mr. Easy is “SD”, which is in subject matter alone as “bawdy”, “scurvy”, and “silly” as is suspected by Mr. Easy and blindly claimed by Mrs. Easy. Mr. Easy’s quick decision that young Grace marry some rightful, lusty young man as soon as possible rather than be tempted to the “Devil” – clearly, given the context, the *Signior* that Mr. Easy has just learned is well-traveled among the women of Restoration society – suggests a note of surprise and alarm that women such as Peg and Mrs. Easy have such a lampoon (and its namesake) in their possession. However, as the butt of the satire in such plays – the ailing dupe of an old man who must be cuckolded for having dared to marry such a vital young wife – the joke and indeed, the satiric attack, is really on him, as the audience is put in the position of

siding with Mrs. Easy and Peg at the expense of Mr. Easy's obliviousness about sex and female desire, and that Peg, a female servant of the lower sort, should be more informed about such songs and affairs than Mr. Easy.

The epilogue to the *The Mistaken Husband* (performed by the King's Company in 1674, printed 1675),³⁸⁴ similarly assumes its audience's familiarity with the *Signior*, repeating the Restoration commonplace that women invariably had dildos on hand should they lack other means of sexual fulfillment, and relying on this familiarity to deliver a final mock-tragic appeal to gallants in the audience to be kind to players and women alike, lest the latter be forced to take up *Signiors*.³⁸⁵

Although works of dramatic and poetic fiction, and therefore of course not to be taken as a straightforward history or presentation of the facts, the allusions to the *Signior* in *The Modish Lovers* and the epilogue to *The Mistaken Husband* dramatize and rely on the notion that men and women alike – not ladies of the court or women of particularly high standing, as might be suspected of a court lampoon, but lower gentry and even servants, would have read and encountered “SD”, or at least be aware of its euphemized distillation, and that servants could be expected to routinely read, possess, and even furnish such songs and lampoons upon request.³⁸⁶ And as pieces performed by the King's Company before a relatively heterogeneous

³⁸⁴ *The Mistaken Husband* has also been linked to the Dryden canon, who reputedly gave the play to the company to perform; Dryden claimed, however, that the play had been given to him as an anonymous work and upon the play's print publication, which attributed the play to him, expressed anger to be attached to it. The epilogue is unsigned in the contemporary print edition. (EEBO)

³⁸⁵ To wit: “What will not poor forsaken Women try, / when Man's not near, the *Signior* must supply / Excuse our *Play*; we dare not hope its taking / We're told of a fine House, and Clothes a making. / And these hir'd *Signiors* when we meet together, / May then wear *Sattin*, though they now wear *Leather*” (EEBO 1675), 13-18, original italics.

³⁸⁶ Compare to George Etherege's *The Man of Mode* (1676), wherein a group of rabble-rousers of the lower sort so offend Medley by carousing down the street singing appropriated court lampoons.

and certainly mixed female and male audience of the town,³⁸⁷ more tangible yet is the implicit but compelling evidence that this mention-by-euphemism must have been recognizable enough to a Restoration theatre-going audience for the crowd to have grasped the joke: that is, the audiences on the whole would have had to have read, heard, or at least heard of “SD”, and be able to identify the lampoon in and among Mr. Easy’s uncomfortable sputters and reactions, or for the speaker of the epilogue to deliver his closing appeal, for the comedy of the scene or epilogue to work. Thus the content of *The Modish Lovers* and the epilogue to *The Mistaken Husband* demonstrates the close relationship between lampoons of the Court and the culture of the theatre and Town, and specifically corroborates the likelihood that “SD” proliferated widely in the Restoration beyond an exclusively Court and male audience. Indeed, these performances must have contributed to and even ensured this proliferation.

Conclusion: the case of Bla40

On the basis of its textual history and contexts of transmission, this chapter has argued for “SD” as a fugitive text and an aggregate product of its wider lampoon culture rather than that of a single author or coterie. In its extant manuscript contexts alone, “SD” was demonstrably of interest to Restoration authors and readers of a variety of political affiliations and social stations, and appears variously as a royalist parody of Parliamentary proceedings, a weapon of politicized slander in both anti-Yorkist and anti-Caroline modes, a neutral antiquarian’s history, a titillating piece of bawdy balladry, and most enduringly as a comic, euphemized joke and

³⁸⁷ See for instance Wilson, *All the King’s Ladies: Actresses of the Restoration* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1958). Pepys’ *Diary* also corroborates this, as Mrs. Pepys was a regular theatre goer.

commonplace. Relatively few of these contexts, particularly those which place the poem nearest the date of its original 1673 occasion and the lifetime of one of its most likely originators, the Earl of Rochester, attribute the poem to Rochester. Clearly, as a piece of lampoon gossip squarely in formal vogue and fit to suit virtually any refurbishment, the “SD” tradition needed no such author-centered aid in attracting a keen and extensive readership, one which demonstrably contributed liberally and at will in its co-authorship.

What’s more, the wider evidence of Restoration manuscript miscellanies and the new evidence of the ca. 1675 MS miscellany Bla40,³⁸⁸ a collection of Marvellian, Rochesterian, and miscellaneous verse while does provide an early attribution to Rochester, demonstrates that given the choice between grouping “SD” among Rochester’s proto-canon and among the contemporary canon of lampoons and songs, Restoration scribes and compilers placed “SD” in the company of anonymous lampoons as its best and rightful context. Similarly, while “SD” is attributed to Rochester in its first print publication of 1703, “SD” first appears in print not within the canon of Rochester in either its Restoration or early eighteenth-century forms, but amongst other lampoons – that is, the popular collection of Restoration lampoons *Poems on Affairs of State* – and was not to appear within the print canon of Rochester, anachronistically, until the twentieth century revival of Rochester’s verse.³⁸⁹ Despite its clear preoccupations and topoi in common with the Rochester corpus and with the satires of his court Baller

³⁸⁸ This manuscript version of “SD” was first noted by Harold Love, *Addenda, Corrigenda and Indexes to Source Manuscripts* (Monash University, 2008). <http://arts.monash.edu.au/english/resources/rochester-edition/addenda.php>

³⁸⁹ See Introduction. As Hammond indicates, “the influence of modern editions of Restoration works is so powerful that it often takes a special effort both of scholarship and of imagination to undo the neat packages into which editors have assembled the poetry...and instead to envisage that poetry as it was encountered by its first readers” (*Making* 49): that is, anonymously and usually in manuscript separate or oral form.

confederates, then, it follows that this lampoon context, and the author function as an anonymous “pose” rather than that of a named individual,³⁹⁰ be considered as key elements of its poetics.

As I trust this chapter has demonstrated, when we ask different questions of “SD”’s MS versions and contexts than those of authorship and origin, they reveal a poem that evinces the Restoration’s predilection for blurred lines and satiric reversals, and that by turns documents and transcends the feuds of pro- and anti-Jacobite factionalism, the cultural barriers of class and literary communities, and the sharp distinctions we are now accustomed to place on Restoration satires as exclusively low or high in form and tradition, political, social, literary, or erotic in aim and purpose, and (as we will see in the subsequent chapters) uniform in theme. Like *Dildoïdes*, “SD” deploys the satiric figure of the dildo in part to document and contribute to the Restoration’s social and political gossip du jour – more often than not, as we will see in Chapters 5 and 6, respectively, that which revolves around the nation’s much-feared Catholics and the new-found freedoms of the period’s affluent women – but in a more comic, multivocal, and multifaceted mode than was to become the norm in the increasingly volatile, bipartisan climate of the late 1670s and 80s.

³⁹⁰ As Hammond aptly expresses it, “it would take an unusually well-informed reader to know who actually wrote [Restoration lampoons], so the expectation must be that the recognition of authorship would play little part in the reading process. Without attributions, these poems relate not to named authors, to particular rakes, but to an ethos, a style of life, a group of attitudes and poses, a shared idiom. ... Anonymity frees the persona from the author, and in so doing invites the reader to write himself into this play of social and erotic fantasy. There is a canon here, but it is not authorially-based so much as persona-based: the unifying interest is not in the author but in the pose” (*Making*, 64).

Chapter 5: Re-Reading the Catholicism of “SD”

As I have argued in Chapter 4, when we ask questions of the MS versions and contexts of “SD” beyond those of authorship and origin, a more multivalent poem emerges than the one unearthed and canonized by Rochester editors and critics of the mid-to-late twentieth century. From this vantage point, “SD” emerges instead as an important installment in the anti-phallic dildo satire tradition and as a Restoration cultural artefact, an enduring early eighteenth-century joke that was fundamentally improvisational, anonymous, multi-faceted, and textually non-hierarchical. This chapter builds from the findings of this textual history as well as from the wider literary history of the satiric dildo trope to query whether, under the scrutiny of contextualized close reading, “SD” was indeed as elastic and comic in substance as in form, and particularly takes up its engagement in this light with anti-Catholic themes and aims. Though it is readily apparent that the Restoration dildo as *Seigneur Dildoe* was reborn as a foreign Catholic figure – the first of its kind in the English context, its engagement with anti-Catholic and religious motifs does not equate to a uniform or uncomplicated anti-Catholic aim, especially in a satiric climate wherein discourses were often reappropriated to suit a variety of aims and purposes on all sides of factional, social, and individual divides.

According to decades of critical comment, most extensively that of Harold Love and most recently reinforced by Walker and Fisher’s recent edition of Rochester, the “anti-Catholic” identity and political aim of “SD” is straightforward, uniform, and indeed the sum purpose of

the poem.³⁹¹ From the subject position of the Buckingham faction at court,³⁹² Love argues, “SD” targeted Catholics and Yorkists, particularly the newly-outed Catholic James, Duke of York,³⁹³ proponents of his match to the Italian-Catholic Mary of Modena, members of the Howard family, and members of the Queen’s household, “between whom”, as Love indicates, “there was considerable overlap”.³⁹⁴ On closer scrutiny, however, such a seemingly tidy conclusion raises a number of questions and incongruities. For instance: as we’ve seen in *Dildoides*, the Buckingham faction were themselves dildo and foreign-trade advocates in many respects, having spent much of the Interregnum in the Catholic court of Louis XIV and having been demonstrably intent in the early 1670s to both disseminate dildos of the comic, mock-heroic variety and more prosaically to secure “their wine and their dildos *customs free*”.³⁹⁵ Unless guilty of gross hypocrisy, which given our subjects’ notoriety for shape-shifting should never be ruled out,³⁹⁶ it is unclear why Rochester or other members of the Buckingham faction should figure the dildo as a specifically Catholic implement and vehicle of slander with an aim seriously to injure the political standing of the Catholic presence at Court. Moreover, if given its choice of named targets the aims of “SD” are anti-Catholic and anti-Yorkist, or an attack on the threat of Catholic, Catholicizing heirs to the throne, those versions and stanzas of the poem which forthrightly contradict such an aim and target, for instance those against Citizen ‘Puritans’, the Dutch, pious Protestants, and the Buckingham faction itself have yet to be

³⁹¹ See gloss in Walker and Fisher, eds, Rochester’s *Poems*, 145.

³⁹² In *Works*, Love locates the likely origin of “SD” as the Buckingham faction, a likelihood which I corroborate in Chapter 4.

³⁹³ The Duke of York had publicly declared his Catholic faith in August 1673, only a few months before the first appearance of “SD”, and shortly before his marriage to Mary of Modena was secured.

³⁹⁴ *Works*.

³⁹⁵ Rochester, *Letters*. See Chapter 3.

³⁹⁶ See Chapter 3, n. 298.

accounted for. And even if we are to grant the poem a uniformly political purpose, perhaps one that compelled opponents' replies, what is to be made of the poem's light, comic tone, its urbane, news mongering speaker, and its relatively gentle treatment of both the Duke and Duchess of York and of the majority of its dildo-wielding Catholic and female 'victims', which is all the more remarkable in a climate wherein Restoration lampoonists spared no bile in attacking their opponents?³⁹⁷ What are we to make of the *Seigneur's* mock-heroic personification and the satirist's professed championing of the dildo as clearly and universally superior to his flesh-and-blood foes, which along with the cataloguing of promiscuous, dildo-wielding women, is one of the few constants in this otherwise thematically disparate tradition? On the basis of all of these, and in keeping with Butler's (?) *Dildoides*, this chapter argues that Catholics are in fact among the most lightly and comically handled of the victims singled out for attack in "SD", as is the *Seigneur's* own status as a Catholic foreigner, and that it is the puritanical mores of citizen dissenters whose anti-papist fanaticism is more harshly treated in many versions of the poem.

An anti-Catholic, anti-Yorkist poem? Parsing the first four stanzas of "SD"

O! all yee young Ladyes of merry England,
That have been to kisse the Duchesse's hand,
I pray you, enquire, the next time you doe goe,
For a noble Italian call'd Seigneur Dildo.

This Seigneur Dildo was the chiefe of the Trayne,
That came, to conduct her safe over the Mainie;
I could not in Conscience, but let you all know
The happy arrivall of Seigneur Dildo.

³⁹⁷ Compare these much less ambiguous lines on the king's mistress, Lady Castlemaine, for instance: "Next comes Castlemaine, / That prerogative quean; / If I had such a bitch I would spay her. / She swives like a stoat, / Goes to't leg and foot, / Level coil with a prince and a player" ("A Ballad [1667]", in Wilson, *CSR*). See also my discussion of the so-called half-wits' juvenalian output in Chapter 6.

Att the Signe of the Crosse in Saint James's Streete,
 When next you endeavour, to make your selfe sweete,
 By buying of Powder, Gloves, Essence, or soe,
 You may chance gett a sight of this Seigneur Dildoe.

You will take him at first for noe Person of Note
 Because hee'le appeare in a plaine Leather-Coate,
 But when you his virtuous Abilites know,
 You'le fall downe, and worship this Seigneur Dildoe.³⁹⁸

It is curious that despite the seemingly “rudimentary”, “repetitive”,³⁹⁹ and “uncomplicated” nature of the poem’s central joke⁴⁰⁰ – the poem goes on from the stanzas quoted above to provide a generally formulaic litany, stanza by stanza, of English court ladies with whom the *Seigneur* has allegedly made court – editors and critics over the last century have failed to reach a consensus about exactly what the poem’s satirical stance is. Critical accounts from the advent of Rochester studies have generally given the poem’s chaotic textual variation and labyrinth of obscure topical references a wide berth, opting instead to rely on the poem’s crystalized, ca. 1703 print and manuscript version, synthesize its moments of more generalized satire, and read “SD” as a cogent expression of its author’s (that is, Rochester’s) poetics or as among the tradition of early modern and eighteenth-century pornographic/erotic works.⁴⁰¹ Others consider “SD” and sexually-explicit Restoration satires like it as having very little to do with

³⁹⁸ 1-16.

³⁹⁹ Love, “A Lampoon”.

⁴⁰⁰ In *Sexual Freedom in Restoration Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), Warren Chernaik refers to “SD” as “lighthearted and uncomplicated”, and elides the *Seigneur*’s patent potency in the poem, reading the women of “SD” as “insatiable” and “desiring a prick at all times” (72, 73).

⁴⁰¹ Chernaik, for example, views “SD” is an expression of Rochester’s ethos of “tyrannical sexuality” (*Sexual Freedom*), whereas Marianne Thormahlen, *Rochester*, Sarah Wintle, “Libertinism and Sexual Politics” (in *Spirit of Wit: Reconsiderations of Rochester*, ed. Jeremy Treglown, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), and Reba Wilcoxon, “Mirror”, view “SD” as Rochester’s authorial view of hedonistic sexuality. While I agree that the sexual politics of “SD” are deeply informed by Rochester’s poetics and poetic corpus, I do wish to overturn assumptions of the poem’s uniformity and saliency of authorial theme and aim, particularly given the tradition’s corporate authorship and multiple appropriations (discussed below).

women, female sexuality, or even erotic themes more broadly, and much more to do with political matters and the masculine public sphere.⁴⁰² And in most recent editorial or topically-inflected accounts,⁴⁰³ as indicated above, “SD” is read as even more pointedly political in aim, aimed specifically at the Catholic presence in England and the Yorkist camp at court, particularly given the poem’s original occasion which is introduced in the opening of the poem.

The four stanza opening of “SD”, common to all versions with relatively little variation, in fact introduces all of the above themes and thus warrants closer scrutiny: to make its point, its satire relies on *both* sexual and political affairs, particularly its period’s volatile backdrop of a substantial build-up of anti-Catholic and anti-Yorkist sentiment, and of growing concerns and satirical responses to the perceived power and erotic liberties taken by the women of its court. This should not lead us to conclude, however, that the satire of “SD” is necessarily anti-Catholic, anti-Yorkist, anti-dildo, or anti-woman, but rather that the anti-phallic dildo is a highly effective and supple satirical tool that allowed Restoration satirists to evoke and/or subvert each of these discourses at will.

The four-stanza common opening of “SD” makes the original occasion of “SD” - the arrival of Italian-Catholic Mary of Modena in November, 1673 – abundantly clear, introducing the satirist’s aim to treat the new-minted marriage of the Duke and Duchess of York with the

⁴⁰² See discussion below, and especially Love, *ECL*, Chapter 1. In some such lampoon accounts, the dildo-wielding aristocratic woman and her foreign-Catholic bauble are simply frightening phantasms whose purpose is to hold up a cathartic mirror to Englishmen’s fears; in others, lampoons such as “SD” seen as are political instruments, in this case directed at Charles II and employing ‘Catholic’ sex practices and the alleged debauchery of Court women as metaphorical smoke screens for treasonous slander, and to mitigate the acute political danger of satirizing their Francophile king through more direct means.

⁴⁰³ In their most recent edition of the poem, Walker and Fisher have similarly categorized the poem as “anti-Catholic”; David Veith and Frank Ellis particularly emphasize the political context of the Duke of York’s marriage to Mary of Modena in their editions.

suggestion that *Seigneur Dildoe* has come along to England as “chiefe of [her] Trayne”. While the satire’s political context of dissent at the Duke of York’s choice of an Italian-Catholic bride is unmistakable, particularly in Haward’s manuscript context,⁴⁰⁴ these stanzas also serve double-duty as a tongue-in-cheek advertisement for dildos, explaining how, precisely, an English lady could expect to find and purchase a dildo in London (complete with a fictitious and amusing satirical story of its supposed provenance and arrival in England from continental Europe).⁴⁰⁵ Indeed, Mary of Modena’s triumphal entrance is about as quickly raised as it is eclipsed by news of the Seigneur’s arrival, an event onlookers may otherwise have been missed in and among all the fanfare.⁴⁰⁶ Thus the Seigneur is introduced as the lampoon’s true protagonist and comic hero, fittingly Catholic after the Aretine fashion: he has attained this elevated station, the satirist confides through aptly phrased euphemism, because of his noted sexual ability and aptitude in “conduct[ing] her safe over the Maine” (i.e, his ability to bring her to orgasm). A “noble Italian”, indeed!

Beyond the obvious Catholic associations, to fully grasp the joke – that is, to fully appreciate the aptness of Mary of Modena as the subject of dildo satire, particularly for the allegation that she would naturally have consorted with the Seigneur before her marriage, would require some knowledge of both the Duchess’ personal history and of the Aretine tradition (specifically, Aretino’s establishment of convent dildo-use in Book 1 of the *Dialogues*). Beyond her Italian-Catholic heritage, a heritage which from the time of Aretino had acquired a widespread association with all manner of unconventional sex, Mary Beatrice Anna Margherita

⁴⁰⁴ See my discussion of *Od8*/the political contextualization of Haward’s manuscript miscellany, Chapter 4.

⁴⁰⁵ See Chapter 1.

⁴⁰⁶ 3-4.

Isabella d'Este (1658-1718), daughter of the Duke of Modena, was a particularly juicy target for dildo satire. Raised and educated in a local Carmelite convent – that notorious hotbed of dildo-wielding licentiousness to any reader or detractor familiar with Aretino's erotic fantasy of convent life, she had publicly objected to and even vehemently refused the match with the English Duke of York almost until the last, preferring instead to remain in the Carmelite convent and become a nun.⁴⁰⁷ For minds steeped in the Aretine, as the majority of the Restoration court undoubtedly were either directly or by reputation,⁴⁰⁸ such a personal history and set of circumstances was naturally ripe for a good dildo joke, especially when compounded with the close-preceding legacy of *Dildoïdes* (here, we note the confusion of origins wherein the “noble Italian” is also a French “Seigneur”, reminiscent of the waylaid 1671 shipment of French dildos), and with Marvell's accusation that the former Duchess of York, Anne Hyde, was also figured as an accomplished dildo user. To the Restoration ear, then, “SD” surely resounded as much of erotic fantasy and topical gossip as it did of political engagement, its comedy and ridiculously aggrandized dildo figure smacking of considerably more than simple anti-Catholic polemic at its inception – perhaps even, given its relatively light handling of both the Duke and Duchess of York, to be performed as a set of unofficial fescennine verses at the Duke of York's wedding festivities.⁴⁰⁹

Undoubtedly, of course, these opening stanzas of “SD” also serve to introduce conventional anti-Catholic themes alongside the comically erotic references and additions to extant dildo satire topos, lending the poem complex layers of context from the outset. Thus we

⁴⁰⁷ ODNB.

⁴⁰⁸ See Chapter 3.

⁴⁰⁹ Love, *Works*, 476.

find out that in keeping with Aretine jabs at the Catholic nature of dildo use, when the Seigneur finally leaves the new Duchess' side, the shop where the "young Ladyes of merry England" may allegedly find the *Seigneur*, now that he has been marshalled into England by the convent-educated, is a luxury goods importer ("powder, gloves, essence", *Seigneurs*) of Catholic tendencies, doubly marked by the "Signe of the Crosse" and "St. James' Streete". The rest reads as a cautionary tale of Catholic beguilement into the worship of a false, debauched idol, wherein the *Seigneur's* erotic (and blasphemous) "virtues" will indubitably convert the women of England and lead them into Priapic idolatry of a kind articulated in Butler's *Dildoides* ("you'll fall down and worship this Seigneur Dildoe").

This 'anti-Catholic' sentiment, however, is conveyed in a comic, irreverent tone, and offset by stanzas which take equal-opportunity aim at the same antipapist discourses which are evoked in the poem's anti-Catholic images. Against the uniformly 'anti-Yorkist' brush with which "SD" is routinely painted, the satire on the Duke and even the Duchess is light indeed, even congenial: when one considers what else might have been insinuated about the match, its comedy and thrust read more like the ribald wedding toast of rakish groomsmen than as a politicized attack intended to undercut or truly undermine the Duke. By the time she has arrived in England, claims the satirist, the Duchess of York welcomes the Duke and has overcome any feelings held against the match: in this, the Duke is spared from being cast as the undesirable lover, though the occasion and the 25-year age discrepancy between the pair easily allowed for the Duke to have been cast (and more seriously satirized) as such. More crucially, the satirist spares the Duke from accusations of sexual inadequacy, excess, or ineptitude, which as readers of Rochester's "Satire on Charles II" will be well aware, frequently functioned as a

double for political impotence in the period: in contrast to what we might expect, the satirist assumes (and in many versions directly declares) that upon leaving to join the Duke in England, the Duchess in fact discards the *Seigneur*,⁴¹⁰ clearly in the understanding that in the Duke's company she will no longer be in need of his services, as she was in her convent life. It is ironic, then, and perhaps part of the joke, that while Mary of Modena is in many senses the quintessential dildo-wielding Catholic woman, of all the women in England she alone does *not* consult the *Seigneur*, suggesting that the conventional association of sexual licentiousness with Catholics has been symbolically passed on (via the transmission of *Seigneur Dildo*) to all Englishwomen. This detail serves not only to spare the Duke of any real sexual slander, but also goes so far as to assert his sexual prowess (again, one can't help but wonder if and how this might have played a part at the wedding festivities). Surely, such a careful treatment is rather out of place if this poem is intended to slander the Duke in any truly damaging fashion, even through ostensibly comic means.

Beyond the light treatment of the Duke and Duchess of York, moreover, the speaker's tone in these opening stanzas is more urbane and amused than alarmed, and is in fact acting to promote the 'good news' arrival of a commercially-available, lusty *Seigneur* to the English female populace. The satirist adopts the guise and tone of a dildo Believer, and *Catholicizes* his audience in the widest sense of the term. Thus if the dildo and those who use it - Catholic or otherwise - are guilty of blasphemy, dildo masturbation, and other such Catholic sins, both the satirist and we the audience are guilty of the same, complicit from the start. The much-

⁴¹⁰ See especially the variant lines of BLh17, 7-8, in which Mary of Modena declares she is off to join the Duke, with whom she "has no more need for *Seigneur Dildo*".

debated and widely-perceived danger of the Duke's Catholic conversion, match to Mary of Modena, and the perceived likelihood of these events bringing about a Catholic future for the English realm are clear satirical subjects here. But while this hotly-debated subject (combined with a humorous erotic fantasy) was sure to attract a wide audience, given the frantic and rather alarmist nature of Parliament's objection to the match.⁴¹¹ Critics of the court who may have been drawn in by this ostensibly anti-Catholic satire placed themselves at serious risk of being lampooned by their own gullibility.

"SD" as anti-Presbyterian satire (Od8)

When particular versions of "SD" are compared in full, those that appear to have been among the earliest and closest to the lampoon's original coterie are also among the least anti-Catholic in orientation, and most in keeping with the light, comic handling of the poem's opening.⁴¹² While these versions catalogue some of the more notorious behaviour of court women and Catholics in the fall of 1673, their satire is relatively mild. Instead, perhaps unsurprisingly given their close date and provenance, they evince the strongest thematic relationship with *Dildoïdes*, as the weight of the satire falls on those 'Citizen fops' whose extreme reactionism would have them confiscate and burn both dildos and effigies of the pope alike.

⁴¹¹ Od8.

⁴¹² The versions in question are Od8 and BLa40, both fourteen-stanza versions of the early-to-mid 1670s and which share thirteen stanzas in common, with some variation in line and stanza order and a few key substantive differences. Od8 is discussed in full below; comparatively, BLa40 (vs. Od8) displaces stanza 5 regarding the "Countess of Rafe" to stanza 8, and truncates the episode between Lady Suffolk and her daughter Lady Betty from three to two stanzas (stanzas 6-7). The additional stanza found in BLa40 appears at stanza 12 (Od8 Addns. 15, and in every other version of SD), and dwells on the comparative virtues of the fondness for prick vs. dildo.

In Od8, the MS version of Sir William Haward, the dildo-as-*Seigneur* largely appears as an unlikely and rather sympathetic foil to reactive English ‘barbarism’ and the religious fanaticism of puritanical citizens and dissenters. Notably, the *Seigneur* is given voice to address his English keepers and rivals in this version and only one other (surely the first recorded instance of a vocal dildo in the English language!): following the poem’s stock opening, Od8 begins its shotgun catalogue with the tale of how the Seigneur preserved “the Countess of Rafe”, Elizabeth Montague, “safe” from the “fierce [English] Harryes” of the Court⁴¹³ – that is, from the many forceful suitors to which Montague had been subjected before her failed pursuit of the Duke of York resulted in a consolation marriage to Ralph Montague on 24 August 1673.⁴¹⁴ In thanks for his heroic interventions, the Seigneur is unceremoniously “smother’d...under her Pillow”;⁴¹⁵ however, he does not suffer silently and instead passes comment on the English populace, dryly concluding that “‘Tis a barbarous nation”” based on all he has suffered as a foreigner to the realm.⁴¹⁶ Pitted against real Englishmen (in some later versions, as we will see below, this contest would be extended and the men reduced to their metonymic pricks), the dildo, a ‘false’ and foreign Catholic man, emerges an undignified victor.

An unflattering but by no means vicious series of stanzas on royal mistresses (who, due to the match with Mary of Modena, “noe more with his Highnesse can range”),⁴¹⁷ undesirable

⁴¹³ 18.

⁴¹⁴ According to Harold Love, *Works*, these ‘Harryes’ likely included Rochester’s friend, Harry Savile, who had attempted to rape her by hiding in her closet at night; Henry Jermyn, nephew of St. Albans, and an infamous seducer; and Harry Sidney, who was reputed for his good looks.

⁴¹⁵ 19.

⁴¹⁶ 20.

⁴¹⁷ 45.

lovers, and undesirable mistresses,⁴¹⁸ rounds out the roll call of the ladies and a few male courtiers who spend time with the *Seigneur* in Od8 – for who, if not outcast mistresses and unwanted suitors, would require the *Seigneur's* services more than they?⁴¹⁹ In keeping with both Rochester's oeuvre and the caricaturesque lampoon convention of the day, the ailing, imperfect body features strongly here: redheads ("Red Howard", "Red Sheldon"),⁴²⁰ the over-tall ("Temple soe tall"),⁴²¹ aged septuagenarians who have never managed to secure a wife ("St Albans");⁴²² a Lady whose rotten teeth make her "smell best below" and bar her from the company of men ("Doll Howard");⁴²³ a mother and daughter duo infamous at Court for their excessive and infantile comportment ("Lady Suffolke" and her daughter, "Lady Betty").⁴²⁴

Placed as a generalizing book-end to the individual attacks noted above, the penultimate stanza of Od8 – present in all extant versions of "SD" but nowhere so prominently placed as in Od8 and its close textual pair, Bla40 - is an ode to the virtues of the dildo which characterizes the *Seigneur* as "sounde, safe, and ready, and dumbe / As ever was Candle, Finger, or Thumbe".⁴²⁵ Echoing the opening stanza's anti-phallic declaration of the dildo's virtues and inverting the monstrous diction of Nashe's Tomalin, here candle, finger, and thumb

⁴¹⁸ Stanza 6 features "Lady Southeske", who was also distinguished by having been linked romantically with the Duke of York, and who is credited in the poem as the first to have "cloth'd [the Seigneur] in Satten, and brought him to court" (22). According to Grammont, Anne Hamilton, wife of Robert Carnegie, third Earl of Southesk, was successively mistress to Philip, Earl of Chesterfield and then James, Duke of York (Grammont I.166-70). She was also Catholic, and lived in Europe from 1675 (perhaps after her husband discovered her infidelities?).

⁴¹⁹ As Love notes, the one joke that is not made in the poem, and that is perhaps begging most to be made, is that it is Charles II's Queen who stands most in need of the *Seigneur's* services.

⁴²⁰ Ann Howard, daughter of William Howard, Earl of Berkshire, and Frances Sheldon, respectively.

⁴²¹ This rather inert jab at Philippa Temple's height, drawn from earlier lampoons, reads suspiciously as an improvisational line-filler. See Wilson, *Court Satires*.

⁴²² 37-40.

⁴²³ 45-8.

⁴²⁴ 25-36.

⁴²⁵ 49-50.

are called “nasty devices” in comparison with the far-superior “merritts” of the dildo,⁴²⁶ which the satirist implores the women to discard in favour of Seigneur Dildoe.⁴²⁷ Whatever the personal and potentially various aims of the shotgun stanzas, this one renews the shamelessly mischievous championing of the dildo’s superiority over other makeshift devices: as an implement after the Greek *olisbos* that is purpose-made for women’s sexual pleasure and for no other purpose, the point here is surely the joke, and the erotic appeal, of the dildo’s many virtues, Catholic origins or not.

On yet another note of relative realism, the penultimate stanza of Od8 also indirectly establishes the dildo’s many advantages over its flesh-and-blood counterparts. Like other lesser devices but unlike a woman’s encounter with a natural male, the dildo is ‘safe’, and cannot impregnate; is always ‘ready’, and will never be impotent; and is ‘dumbe’, and will neither gossip nor fuck and tell. Allegedly, then, with the dildo women could achieve the near-impossible in the Restoration Court and subvert the strictures of the one-sex model to boot: they could fulfill their natural lusts through relatively consequence- and dependence-free liaisons, pursue their pleasures with biological and social impunity - that is, if they were only willing to risk being publicly lampooned for their proclivities.⁴²⁸ Perhaps even more momentously, the dildo is also justly characterized as *sound*: that is, “free from disease,

⁴²⁶ 51-2.

⁴²⁷ 52.

⁴²⁸ Of course, in a darker sense the existence of a dildo poem calling out what these women and men are allegedly doing in private shatters the illusion of sexual impunity even as it creates it – creating a sense of the Restoration court and Restoration sexual ethos as a rather claustrophobic (and certainly incestuous) one, wherein if one cares about being named and shamed publicly for private sexual acts, one will need to be vigilant to the point of paranoia in order to keep any manner of secret at all from prying ears, eyes, and satirists’ pens. Of course, even then, there would be no stopping the fictional slander frequently invented or embellished by satirists (See Love, *ECL*).

infirmity, or injury; having or enjoying bodily health; healthy, robust".⁴²⁹ In a society riddled with syphilis and other sexually-transmitted diseases, which frequently caused impotence, serious ill health, and death, the appeal of sexual soundness to its contemporary audience is not to be underestimated, as this was a status seldom or only fleetingly enjoyed by any person who wished to fulfill his or her desires outside of the strict sexual confinement of arranged, status-based marriages. In this context, then, the dildo's sound status, particularly contrastive against the backdrop of a culture and poetics wherein disease – particularly sexual disease – figures so largely, would have been an attractive one indeed.⁴³⁰

Moving from the dildo virtues to human flaws, the final stanza of Od8 comprises a satire on the "Cittizen Fops"⁴³¹ – staunch Protestants, as we saw with *Dildoides*, who inhabited the city and were routinely ridiculed for their mercantile interests, puritanical bent, and stock status as easy cuckolds. Here, these Cits are again ridiculed for their failure to recognize the *Seigneur's* many merits, and are informed that if they only chose to embrace the virtues of the *Seigneur* and allow women his services, they would "keepe their fine Wives from the Foremen o'th'Shops".⁴³² Subsequent to presenting this pragmatic quandary, Haward's version culminates in a Butleresque satire on *Protestant* fanaticism and religious extremism in a lampoon otherwise predominated by Catholics and all that is Catholic as ostensible joke-fodder. But because the Cits have paid no heed to this good advice, claims the speaker, and instead

⁴²⁹ *OED*. This is also a possible inversion of the classic antipapist discourse equating Catholicism to sexual infection, corruption and contagion, as here the Catholic dildo is more sound than Presbyterian/republican/former Cromwellian measures.

⁴³⁰ See for instance Rochester, "Disabled Debauchee".

⁴³¹ 53.

⁴³² 54.

react to both Catholics and dildos as things to be feared, reviled, and eradicated, they “deserve, that their Hornes should still grow, / for burning the Pope, and his Nephew Dildoe”.⁴³³ Here, the satirist’s allusion to Pope-burning refers most immediately to the annual burning of Pope effigies for Gunpowder Treason Day on November 5, a celebration which was particularly accentuated from 1673 onwards due to the Duke’s publication of his Catholic faith, and perhaps indirectly to Protestant celebrations of the accession of Elizabeth I on November 17,⁴³⁴ events that would have just taken place at the time of “SD”’s initial period of circulation in late November 1673. The Gunpowder Treason Day celebration, which is here treated rather pejoratively as the stuff of fanaticism, is equated with the burning of Catholic dildoes, or ‘Pope’s nephews’ – an occurrence which as *Dildoides* treats so extensively took place at least once in 1671, and which was also undertaken by ‘guilty’ Citizens on innocent victims. Whether completely in earnest or no, the lampoonist calls men who perpetrate such acts to be “Rascalls” – a mild epithet to be sure, but one which again puts the satirist and audience on the side of dildos and religious moderation, if not the conventionally hedonistic (and implicitly innocent) Catholics themselves.

In a full reading of Od8, then, “SD” evokes both anti-Catholic and anti-dissenter satire, which were not uncommonly linked in contemporary satire, ribbing both the Catholic presence at court and those too puritanical to treat such foreign imports as princesses and dildos with something less than fanatical over-reaction. Indeed, it is the former of these, the poem’s anti-Catholic tendencies, which reads as relatively light-hearted, not unlike a rather elevated,

⁴³³ 55-6.

⁴³⁴ Ronald Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England: The Ritual Year, 1400-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 253.

bawdy, and allusion-rich kind of bridegroom's toast. Here, the Duke's newly-declared faith and past conquests are mocked rather good-naturedly, while those oppositional critics who risked open and vehement objection to both his faith and his match with Mary of Modena are both taken to task for their volatile, incendiary reactionism.⁴³⁵

Variations upon the theme(s)

By the appearance of the Od8 "Additions" and the aggregate versions of "SD" (namely, NWLp, BLh17, and the 'B' version collective), the lampoonists had become the lampooned, and the fittingly *Catholic* (that is, all-embracing) uses to which the *Seigneur* could be put were multiplied. Consequently, each of the manuscript copyists discussed in Chapter 4 recorded several subsequent thematic groupings that in some cases elaborated upon and in others outright contradicted the themes evinced in Od8 and the poem's opening four stanzas. Alongside Haward's indications of the way the "SD" tradition accrued additional stanzas, or variations upon the poem's original themes, these thematic variations provide excellent evidence of the likelihood that those versions which circulated after the recording of the fourteen-stanza versions of "SD" (represented by Od8 and BLa40) became further and further removed socially, thematically, and even geographically from the lampoon's coterie of origin. On the principle of conspicuous omission, the evidence they provide also strengthens the likelihood that the Buckingham faction at court – which in the early 1670s included Butler, Rochester, Wycherley, Dorset, Sedley, and Killigrew, among others⁴³⁶ – was responsible for its

⁴³⁵ This links directly back, of course, to perennial republican and Protestant fears and theories of Catholic conspiracy, the most salient of which in this context is that which followed the 1666 Fire. See Chapter 3, n. 243.

⁴³⁶ See Love, "Scribal Texts and Literary Communities: The Rochester Circle and Osborn b. 105" in *Studies in Bibliography* 42 (1989): 250-62.

inception. Perhaps even more importantly, they evince several English viewpoints on the presence of dildos, Catholics, and the rise of promiscuous women in England – three conflated phenomena in the English imaginary, thanks in no small part to “SD” - as well as the propensity and poetic ability of Restoration wits and lampoonists to explore such themes in a variety of novel and conventional modes (including both the comic and the invective). While these subsequently recorded manuscript versions emphasize a variety of satiric themes and targets, it is curious and perhaps equally important that their copyists do not, with the exception of the ‘B’ versions which will be discussed in full below, appear to have required or sought thematic uniformity in their choice of recorded stanzas, but instead record a rather chaotic, that is, multidirectional and generally non-sequential, flurry of responses to and appropriations of the *Seigneur*.

Most notably among these groupings, BLh17 and the “Additions” of Od8 each contain a number of stanzas that could hardly have been included or at least publicly aired in the poem’s original context of court coterie circulation, namely stanzas that target the wives and mistresses of the Buckingham faction that originally produced “SD”,⁴³⁷ Charles II’s chief mistresses, who were beloved by Charles II and are conspicuously absent in the early versions,⁴³⁸ and even

⁴³⁷ Agglomerative stanzas on the wives, mistresses, and humiliating affairs of the Buckingham faction include a stanza on Charlotte de Hesse, wife of Thomas Killigrew (Od8A.30, BLh17.17, NWLp.18, “B”.16/7); the Countess of Falmouth, Dorset’s beloved secret paramour and wife as of 1674 (Od8A.17, BLa40.9, BLh17.10, ‘B’.6/7); and most notably on Anna Maria, Countess of Shrewsbury. Shrewsbury was Buckingham’s mistress until early 1674, and had been widowed by an infamous duel over her in [1670] in which Buckingham had emerged the victor. Both Shrewsbury and Buckingham were publicly shamed for the brazenness of their relationship in early 1674: on 3 January, 1674 the Shrewsbury family secured a royal decree demanding that Buckingham and Shrewsbury separate, as the pair had been opening living with one another in the Cockpit at Whitehall since her husband’s murder (alluded to in stanza’s reference to Shrewsbury as “Countess of the Cockpit”). The dissolution of the affair led to Buckingham’s removal from offices, political decline, the king’s good graces, and as we see here, satire on the subject (BLh17.13, “B”.12). See Love, *Works*, Wilson, *Court Satires*, and *ONDB* for biographical information.

⁴³⁸ These figures first appear in the “Additions” of Od8, and will be taken up further in Chapter 6.

Charles himself,⁴³⁹ whom the original author(s) of “SD” clearly deemed too dangerous a target (even for a light-hearted treatment) in the poem’s initially close and probably quite public quarters of circulation. In particular, the Jacobite scribe of BLh17, as we saw in Chapter 4, makes a number of substantive and marginal alterations to the lampoon’s satiric targets to focus its attacks on the illegitimate progeny of Barbara Villiers, Duchess of Cleveland and Charles II, alterations that, when taken together, fittingly de-emphasize its treatment of the Duchess of York (who, after 1685, had become Queen), and transform “SD” into a kind of retrospective judgement on the Court and legacy of Charles II, particularly its debauched sexual practises and its illegitimate, ill-gotten fruit, at least one of whom (the Duke of Monmouth) seriously challenged the claim of the Catholic Duke of York (later James II) to the throne.

BLh17 and NWLp record some of the tradition’s most direct attacks on Catholics in a hybrid of the comic and invective modes, including a relatively pointed multi-stanza attack on “gracious Queen Kate” and her “Togate of Rome”, i.e. Queen Catherine and her Catholic confessor (and supposed dildo intercessor), Philip Thomas, Lord Howard (1629-94).⁴⁴⁰ These versions, as we will see in Chapter 6, also record many of the most direct treatments of dildo-use as negative symptom of uncontained, unlicensed female sexuality, desire, and power after

⁴³⁹ In a stanza recorded in the “Additions” of Od8 (18), a female speaker, presumably Portsmouth, declares that if the king “fucks [her] no better” she’ll “lay [him] aside for Signior Dildo”. This stanza is discussed in full in Chapter 6.

⁴⁴⁰ “Additions”, 93-100. This pair of stanzas emphasizes the conventional link derived from Aretino between dildos/general sexual vice and ‘devout’ Catholicism, as Howard and the Queen are depicted including the *Seigneur* in their confessions. They are also among the few stanzas of “SD” to suggest that the dildo is being used by a man (Lord Howard), again after the Aretine fashion, presumably for sodomitical purposes: “He hath ma<n>y preferments in church & in state / For he governs ye Conscience of gracious Queen Kate / & Though in ye pulpit his parts he nere showe / He is father Confessor to signior Dildoe” (96-100). Philip Howard is undoubtedly targetted because he was instrumental in securing the marriage between Charles II and Catherine of Braganza after the Restoration, and was awarded with the post of Lord Almoner to Queen Catherine of Braganza from 1665. In England, Howard was widely known to be a devout Catholic, and he exercised considerable influence in various capacities as a leading English Catholic, particularly after the election of Pope Clement X in 1670 (who favoured him). *ODNB*.

the invective tradition of dildo satires, stanzas that throw the relative congeniality of the Od8 stanzas into sharp relief and whose apparent conservative impulse, presumably intended to contain the threat of the rise of women by revealing its ugliest features, would most appear to serve as a voice of dildo denunciation.

Demonstrating the limitless malleability of the dildo device, the “Additions”, NWLp, BLh17, and even the ‘B’ versions also record stanzas targeting individuals whose background is far from Catholic, or in one case aristocratic: these include a glance on the secret crimes of the ostensibly pious “Good Lady Bedford”, Anne Russell Bedford, wife of Protestant nonconformist (Presbyterian) William, Duke of Bedford and their daughter “Young Lady Varney”;⁴⁴¹ on the crude Dutch breeding of Protestant Catherine de Hesse, wife of Thomas Killigrew, who is as quick to welcome “heer Van Dildoe” to England as any Catholic; and a pair of stanzas on Mary Knight, a famous singer (properly, a member of the Town rather than Court) and alleged bawd to both the Duchess of Cleveland and Nell Gwyn.⁴⁴² Catholics and aristocrats, as readers well knew from other modes and installments of the dildo motif,⁴⁴³ were not the sole proprietors of the dildo-monger’s shop.

Finally attempting, it would seem, to bring order to the chaos of these disparate stanzas and versions of “SD”, the ‘Cameron’ Scriptorium took as their exemplar a crystalized a version of “SD” (Love’s “B” version) that evinced an effort on the part of some unknown satirist or copyist to fashion the stanzas of “SD” into a roughly sequential narrative. Though some thematic inconsistencies remain - for example, the scribe includes the Shrewsbury (anti-

⁴⁴¹ “Additions”, 19-20. For Bedford’s family connection to the Rye House Plot, see n. 556.

⁴⁴² Od8A.31, NWLp.19; See Wilson, *Court Satires*.

⁴⁴³ See Chapters 2 and 3.

Buckingham) and Killigrew (anti-Dutch) stanzas alongside stanzas on Catholic targets, the “B” versions provide the most narrative structure and generally continuous tale of the Signior’s progress within Restoration London, perhaps in a witting effort to mimic the way in which he had already begun to circulate around town in clandestine poetic form, and book-end its individualized shot-gun stanzas with a conclusion of generalized satire that draws from and expands upon the politically moderate spirit of Od8, culminating in a pursuit sequence wherein *Signior Dildo* meets his hyper-phallic foe and enraged pursuer, “Count Cazzo”, in full mock-heroic battle. As key determinants of the *Signior’s* comic and figurative success these mock-heroic innovations warrant scrutiny, and are the subject of the remainder of this chapter.

“SD” as mock-heroic narrative and satire on English phallocentrism (Love’s “B” versions)

In the “B” versions of the poem, the narrative of “Signior Dildo” marks the *Signior’s* gradual but distinct transition from youthful, effeminate passivity to gallant, manly activity in his sexual transactions with the Ladies of the Court. In this version, then, the dildo’s personification as Signior is most fully realized, and gives his characterization at the outset of the poem new significance. Though introduced as a “Noble Italian”,⁴⁴⁴ the Signior is referred to at first as “so modest a Youth” easily mistaken for a commoner,⁴⁴⁵ or “no Person of Note...in a plain Leather Coat” (13-4)⁴⁴⁶ – a fitting appellation given his initial status as a kind of plaything covertly passed between women. Because of the new and deliberate ordering of this version’s stanzas,

⁴⁴⁴ BLh19.4. All line references in this section refer to BLh19, unless otherwise noted. One of the tradition’s many incongruities that this author/editor has eradicated is that of national origin: here, the *Signior* is unmistakably Italian in title.

⁴⁴⁵ 20.

⁴⁴⁶ 13-4.

here the Signior's suffering at the hands of women increases incrementally: he is first ingloriously "hid" under the arm of Lady Suffolk, stolen by Lady Betty, and then most callously (and comically) "Stifl'd" beneath the pillow of the Countesse of Rafe.⁴⁴⁷ Further, his initial 'conquests' are undercut by their implied distastefulness, as the Signior is relegated to all manner of variously undesirable women of the court. No longer needing to spare either the king or Buckingham faction, these include "Her Grace of Cleveland", or Barbara Villiers, who having "swallowed more pricks than the ocean has sand...[was] fit for just nothing but Signior Dildo"; the "countess o' th' Cockpit", or the infamous Countess of Shrewsbury, to whom the Signior would be relegated once forsaken by "all her old lovers";⁴⁴⁸ "Doll" or Dorothy Howard, whose "teeth being rotten...smell[ed] best below";⁴⁴⁹ and "Tom Killigrew's wife", or Charlotte Killigrew, who greets the Signior with a "fart and belch sour".⁴⁵⁰

Before long, however – perhaps in conjunction with the dissemination within England of his "virtuous abilities", "discretion and vigor"⁴⁵¹ – Signior Dildo quickly graduates from "youth" to "gallant", from passive object to "lusty...swinger".⁴⁵² He is deemed capable of undoing foolish fops on whom duchesses "dote for the sake of [their] prick",⁴⁵³ a hypothesis that is then proven by the Signior's victories over Count Cazzo and "a rabble of pricks" in a series of mock-heroic battles that dominate the rest of the version. Having defeated "candle, carrot, and thumb" with his anti-phallic superiority,⁴⁵⁴ as a kind of graduating hero, he goes on to face and

⁴⁴⁷ 22, 25, 31-2.

⁴⁴⁸ 45, 48.

⁴⁴⁹ 55.

⁴⁵⁰ 65, 66.

⁴⁵¹ 15, 36.

⁴⁵² 20, 29, 28.

⁴⁵³ 34.

⁴⁵⁴ 74.

defeat an even more formidable foe: the penis or ‘Cazzo’, even as he competes for a worthier prize, the “fair” Madam Knight, to whom he offers his “Services” in defiance of her partner Count Cazzo.⁴⁵⁵ Although the *Signior* at first appears defeated – that is, as Madam Knight relegates him to her “arse”,⁴⁵⁶ while Cazzo is afforded pride of place - that he is included at all in a kind of ménage-a-trois comprises at least a partial victory on the part of the Signior, as Count Cazzo is unsuccessful in retaining exclusive access to his Lady. Though the Count initially responds haughtily to the Signior’s challenge (“carr[ying] his nose very high / In passion [swearing] his rival should die”),⁴⁵⁷ Count Cazzo’s pride and stamina are tested to their limits until he finally concedes defeat and “Shutt[s] up himself, to let the world know, / Flesh and Blood cou’d not bear it from Signior Dildo”.⁴⁵⁸

Having sexually ‘come of age’ in proper gallant fashion by transitioning from passive youth to active maturity – this rather ironically, given his status as a bollocks-free castrato - and having proven his heroism in vanquishing one such worthy foe as the Cazzo, Signior Dildo is then ready to face his ultimate challenge, as

A rabble of pricks who were welcome before,
Now finding the Porter denied ‘em the door,
Maliciously waited his coming below
And inhumanly fell on Signior Dildo.⁴⁵⁹

Far from the clandestine interior realm of the feminine boudoir where women once commanded him, the Signior and his rabble of foes forsake such vaginal doorways and interior

⁴⁵⁵ 70, 69.

⁴⁵⁶ 72.

⁴⁵⁷ 77-8.

⁴⁵⁸ 79-80.

⁴⁵⁹ 81-4.

spaces for the exterior, to stage publicly and for all time a hyper-masculine, climactic battle of the phalluses, the Signior flying “along the Pall Mall” and the pricks “following fully cry”.⁴⁶⁰ Though his victory is admittedly muted by this hasty, effeminate flight, the Signior nonetheless wins out once again over the furious rabble of penises – this time because he is not encumbered as the pricks are by “ballocks...wobbling after” them,⁴⁶¹ the appendage constitutive of the burden and threat of reproduction to which *Signior Dildo*, as a kind of augmented castrato and anti-phallic male, is not susceptible.

Importantly, this version of “Signior Dildo” clearly places the audience in the position of those women who, “concerned out of every Window”,⁴⁶² watch the phallogentric match unfold. And from that vantage point, we see the fragility and hyperbole of xenophobic English masculinity on full display in the figures of enraged pricks, who would seek to claim sole access to the women of the realm, and in their mock-heroic dildo foil: we can’t help but be amused at the ridiculous spectacle, and along with “the good Lady Sandys”, “burst into laughter / to see how the Bollocks came wobbling after”.⁴⁶³ This point is set into further relief when the pursuit stanzas of “SD” are set alongside the satire against Citizen Fops, which it shares in common with all versions of “SD”, and with Butler’s *Dildooides*, both of which uphold the radical libertine ideals of complementarity between penis and dildo, and of allowing women access to pleasure and sexual fulfilment via dildo use in a troubling subversion of the one-flesh model of sex. Here in the pursuit stanzas, “SD” dramatizes what occurs when the relationship between penis and dildo becomes one of aggression, fear, masculine insecurity, and over-reaction: that is, it

⁴⁶⁰ 86.

⁴⁶¹ 90.

⁴⁶² 87.

⁴⁶³ 88-90.

becomes an over-aggrandized and ultimately futile competition in which only female onlookers emerge victorious.

Conclusion

When modern best-text editions of “SD” are studied at a distance and independent of the poem’s complex topicality and literary heritage, it can be easy to mistake the poem’s foreign Catholic dildo and repetitive ‘shot-gun’ stanzas for one-dimensional anti-Catholic polemic rooted in centuries of Protestant/Catholic discord. Indeed, in the poem’s general opening the knowing satirist of “SD” anticipates precisely such an underestimation and false judgment of the *Seigneur’s* comic talents, expecting his audience’s propensity to superficial analysis and knowing that we will “take [the Seigneur] at first for noe Person of Note / because hee’le appeare in a plaine Leather-Coate” as non-descript as many of the miscellanies that originally housed such clandestine satire.⁴⁶⁴ But he is instead a supple and potent figure, capable of “touching” the women (and men) of Restoration England with his satire, whatever their religious or political proclivities.

In the later mock-heroic sections of the “SD” tradition, in particular, the *Signior* is revealed to right readers not as the vile, quasi-Nashian interloper and figure of Catholic depravity that we might at first take him to be, but as a virtually omnipotent, safe, and universally gratifying anti-phallic foil to the inferior *Count Cazzo*, and thus to a form of English masculinity that has reduced itself to its Prick and so placed false stock in an ailing phallic

⁴⁶⁴ 13-16.

patriarchal order. However, the satirist is indulgent, like Aristophanes before him, in affording his readers a perfect solution to this problem of male impotence: that is, in slyly tipping us off to the *Seigneur's* many virtues, whereabouts, and escapades, in (largely) advocating for balance and reason in place of phallogentric and xenophobic extremism, and in giving us every opportunity to discover and enjoy the *Seigneur's* freer pleasures – those in both material and poetic and form – for ourselves.

Chapter 6: Re-reading Women in “SD”

As argued in earlier chapters, among the few constants across all versions and stanzas of the haphazard lampoon “SD” are its comic heritage and mode, its foreign Catholic titular character, and as exemplified above, its focus on women in shot-gun stanzas which name dozens of prominent ladies of the Restoration court and town as friends of the *Seigneur*. Having established the poem’s comic, anti-phallic roots and oppositional suppleness in previous chapters, this chapter reviews the “SD” tradition’s figuration of women, sex, and gender in light of its subversion of English masculinism, particularly attendant to the personal and literary histories of the women named within its stanzas, to the tradition’s cob-web of allusions to topical sexual gossip, and to the *Seigneur*’s personification as a bollocks-free male subservient to the keen and varied desires of women.

Women in “SD”: the critical view

That Pattern of Virtue, her Grace of *Cleaveland*,
 Has swallow’d more Pricks, then the Ocean has sand;
 But by Rubbing and Scrubbing, so large does it grow,
 It is fit for just nothing but Signior *Dildo*.⁴⁶⁵

As part of a Restoration lampoon culture written and largely consumed by men, it is perhaps understandable that despite the ubiquity of named women in the tradition, “SD” is often assumed in the criticism to centre primarily on androcentric matters, and for the women of

⁴⁶⁵ BLh19.10.37-40.

“SD” to disappear from view.⁴⁶⁶ John Harold Wilson, for instance, suggests that the Restoration court lampoon so often targeted women not because they attracted or warranted the satiric attention in themselves, per se, but because they were easy targets who “could not defend their honour with sword and dagger.”⁴⁶⁷ In this view, the lampooned ladies of “SD” are best read as red herrings - smutty window-dressing for disguised attacks on their male betters, or at best stock, self-evident repetitions of old misogynist or anti-aristocratic types. In consequence, the topical glosses of editors such as Harold Love tend to emphasise the political, family, and court connections of the women named, even when these connections are far less topical or newsworthy than the women’s own notorious affairs at court.⁴⁶⁸

Seigneur Dildoe notwithstanding, it follows from this view that the masturbating women of “SD” appear as unremarkable iterations of a well-worn early modern type: the over-sexed, libidinous woman reduced (as above) to her cavernous, insatiable vagina. So reduced, *her Grace of Cleaveland* reads as a one-dimensional figure descended directly from Juvenal and the Galenic one-sex model, in which female genitalia is merely male genitalia, inverted; and wherein women are merely imperfect men - all animal (and all *libido*) compared to their rational male counterparts.⁴⁶⁹ From this vantage point, too, “SD” upholds a conservative

⁴⁶⁶ Most recently, this has been the case in the accounts of Rachel Weil, who allows for the work of representation as constituting real (if unintentional) power, but who reads satirists accounts and the public promiscuities of ladies rather exclusively in homosocial terms as coded political messages passed between male courtiers. Weil thus reads both the female and the erotic in Restoration lampoons as stand-ins for affairs of state, rather narrowly defined (in my view) to have little to do with the power dynamics of gender, sexuality, or public promiscuity. See Weil’s tellingly titled “Sometimes a Sceptre is Just a Scepter”, 1993, and more recently, “The Female Politician in the Late Stuart Age”, in Alexander and MacLeod (eds.), *Politics, Transgression, and Representation*.

⁴⁶⁷ *Court Satires*, xvii.

⁴⁶⁸ See my discussions of individual stanzas below. I readily acknowledge, though, that the recent surge of scholarship on the court ladies has offered much additional biographical and socio-political context not available to Love in preparing his 1999 edition of Rochester’s *Works*.

⁴⁶⁹ Lacqueur, *Making Sex*, especially 25-43.

impulse that for all its bawdry, re-inscribes the classical and early-modern conception of women's entrenched inferiority in all spheres of life, predicated on and ensured by her sexual dependence on men.

But what of *Seigneur Dildoe*, in fact, and of those women who are shown to so satisfyingly wield him? – As I have argued in Chapter 5 in treating the *Seigneur's* Catholicism, we should exercise caution before pre-emptively eliding the comedy of the dildo and the women imagined to wield it, and on several grounds. Firstly, as I have argued in Chapter 5, “SD” stands apart from many of its Restoration lampoon contemporaries in taking a comic, ironic, and multivocal stance towards its subject matter, in many stanzas using wit and pliancy to undercut the period's antipapist, xenophobic, and masculinist discourses as forms of insecure English masculinity. It follows, surely, that the tradition's treatment of women be examined in the same light. Additionally, when placed in the broader context of the heterogeneous dildo satire tradition discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, “SD” likewise evinces several telling distinctions from its precursors. Though “SD” comprises an installment in the Restoration period's hugely popular satires on the court ladies, many of which were far from generous to their victims, and reaches back to Juvenal's sixth *Satire* Nashe's *Choice of Valentines* to air male anxieties about female ascendancy – this at a time when strife over succession to the English throne had perhaps never been more acute – it eschews Marvellian invective in favour of the comic, urbane tenor of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, Herodas' *Mimes*, and Butler's *Dildoidea*.⁴⁷⁰ We should anticipate this comic heritage and mode to have profound implications on its treatment of women.

⁴⁷⁰ See Chapters 2 and 3.

More pressingly still, while “SD” adopts and extends *Dildooides*’ precedent for personifying the dildo as a foreign Catholic male, where *Dildooides* depicts the dildo as a largely inert commodity fought over by male figures - controlling Customs “fops” and the Court libertine elite in search of their newest plaything, in “SD” the players and possessors of the masculinized *Seigneur* are almost exclusively women – and relatively active, self-sufficient women at that. Thus, against its own satirical heritage “SD” appears to do more than simply recycle a stale misogynist trope, and instead returns to the Aristophanic model as the first of the English dildo satires to cast a set of predominantly female characters, but innovating its Aristophanic form by figuring as frequent dildo users a group of influential, topical women who inhabit the regular fabric of contemporary society (i.e., not confined to their homes as in ancient Athens, a cloister as in Aretino, nor a brothel as in Nashe), and who have novel access to the public sphere in their roles as courtiers, authors, actresses, and celebrities of the Court and Town. Ennobled by its Restoration backdrop of phallic failure and of openly promiscuous and newly influential Court women – foreigners to the public realm just like Catholics and the *Seigneur* himself – “SD” is the first of the dildo satires in any context, classical or early modern, to seriously query whether with the help of *Seigneur Dildoe* women required men at all, at least for sex.

In this chapter, then, I suggest that the rise of brazen Restoration women – female figures whose desire was pursued boldly and publicly for the first time in early modern English history – was indeed central to the verse portraits of “SD,” to their ambiguous, anti-phallic deployment of patriarchal tropes, and to the dildo satire’s zenith during the reign of Charles II. This chapter builds its case for the centrality of women and female desire to the “SD” tradition,

first through the case-study of royal mistress Barbara Villiers, Duchess of Cleveland, whose brand or “pattern” of female brazenness produced many progeny; and second, through a survey of contemporary lampoons by both male and female authors which establish, challenge, and champion the new vogue of female libertinism in Restoration culture. Together, these accounts demonstrate that Restoration satirists (along with diarists, dramatists, portrait artists, and gossips) were deeply invested in the topicality and cultural centrality of the female figures they so often depicted, and often engaged in keen debates about the period’s contested mores of sex, gender, and sexual comportment alongside concomitant affairs of state.

With these contexts and viewpoints in mind, I conclude the chapter with a contextualized reading of the dildo and dildo-wielding women of “SD” through the array of topical allegations levelled against them. As I will argue, some of these clearly set out to undercut, if not morally or politically denounce, the female behaviour and figures they describe; however, many take a more comic and ambiguous approach to the bawdy fantasies they recount, conveying a sense of qualified female agency, secularized humour, and the voyeuristic pleasure to be found in a good piece of titillating gossip, whatever one’s political or moral leanings. Always knitting these accounts together, however, is the disruptive fantasy of unfettered desire and unlimited female access to the dildo: a sexual implement that is uniformly depicted in “SD”, as in much of the comic dildo tradition which precedes it, as superior to its flesh and blood counterpart, and that as a masculinized but false member echoes the phallus but is patently anti-phallic, undermining the phallogocentric one-sex conceit as a sound basis for female subserviance.

Cleveland and the painted ladies

Since the appearance of Wilson's pioneering anthology *Court Satires of the Restoration* (1976), a fresh wave of interdisciplinary inquiry into the ladies of the Restoration court and town,⁴⁷¹ particularly its royal and aristocratic mistresses, queens, actresses, and female authors, has unearthed new evidence about the ambiguous and often transgressive status of elite women within Restoration England. This evidence suggests that though Restoration women may have held little historically-verifiable or sanctioned political power in the period,⁴⁷² they instigated a new model of female participation in the newly-emerging public sphere and held a new and considerable sway over the imaginations of the court elite, the satirists, and the populace more broadly, principally through widely-disseminated representations in portraiture, engravings, lampoons, and gossip. Significantly, "SD" was one of only a few exemplary lampoons chosen for publication in the inaugural volume which launched this new line of inquiry, *Painted Ladies: Women at the Court of Charles II* (2001), alongside biographies, scholarly essays, and full-size colour prints of the famed "Windsor Beauties" series by royal portrait artist Sir Peter Lely. In this, the editors of *Painted Ladies* identified a clear but underdeveloped relationship between the ladies' portraits, their brazen court careers, and their portraits in satiric verse, particularly those in "SD".⁴⁷³

This relationship is perhaps best elucidated in the ubiquitous figure of Barbara Palmer, Duchess of Cleveland, whose figure appears twice in the extant "SD" tradition (among only a small handful of women to warrant the honour of double-mention), and whose image, career,

⁴⁷¹ See Chapter 1.

⁴⁷² See n. 474.

⁴⁷³ See Swicker, "Sites of Instruction", which links topical Restoration satire and portraiture to the period's popular 'painter poem.'

and celebrity persona as royal mistress and female libertine were among the most frequent subjects of lampoonists, artists, diarists, and gossips in the early Restoration. Undoubtedly, as the satirist of “SD” suggests, Cleveland represented a “pattern” of a type of Restoration woman that had become all too familiar to Restoration commentators and satirists by the early 1670s: the royal or aristocratic mistress and female libertine who conducted her affairs and birthed her bastard children in full view of the public eye. Cleveland both earned her reputation and carefully cultivated it by employing her wit, beauty, and brazenness to attract sympathetic courtiers and command respect from her enemies, by using her aristocratic birth and proximity to the king as means to sexual licence and social advancement, and by winking ironically and wittily at her detractors, especially through the widely distributed images of royal portrait artist Sir Peter Lely.

Becoming royal mistress

By the time an anonymous lampoonist paused to coin the c. 1673 stanza of “SD” with which I headed this chapter, its satirical victim, Barbara Palmer, Countess of Castlemaine and Duchess of Cleveland, had already enjoyed and completed her decade-long reign as Charles II’s chief mistress from c. 1660-1670. She had, in fact, both carved and held a role as the first openly-acknowledged royal mistress that England had seen for centuries, and in this role had become one of the most influential and widely-known women and courtiers of the period.⁴⁷⁴ The very opposite of virtuous, Cleveland exemplified a type of unrepentant royal and aristocratic mistress unique to the early Restoration, particularly to the reign of Charles II

⁴⁷⁴ See Sonya Wynne, “‘The Brightest Glories of the British Sphere’: Women at the Court of Charles II” in *Painted Ladies: Women at the Court of Charles II*, ed. Julia Marciari Alexander and Catherine MacLeod (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2001), 36-49. See also *ODNB*.

(1660-85): a high-born society adulteress whose comportment challenged the conventional mores of femininity, piety, and female honour exemplified by Charles' virtuous Queen, and who used her famed beauty, boundless sexuality, class privilege, and character as a "querulous, fierce, loquacious, excessively fond, or infamously rude" woman, to borrow from contemporary Delariviere Manley, as means to fulfill her desire for both indiscriminate sexual pleasure and social advancement.

It is unclear when or how Cleveland first caught the eye of Charles II, but it is clear that her libertine values and loose morals antedated her affair with the king, subverting any notion that Cleveland had been seduced into a life of sin by the merry monarch. Cleveland's "arch, lively" letters c. 1657-9 to her first elicited lover, Philip Stanhope, second earl of Chesterfield provide an excellent illustration of both her character and her libertine approach to love, revealing that Cleveland was often the engineer of their illicit meetings, and recording her pleasure - real or feigned - in the affair. "The joy I have of being with you last night", she writes racy to Stanhope on one occasion, "has made me do nothing but dream of you".⁴⁷⁵

Though of good aristocratic stock, in April of 1659 Cleveland married wealthy royalist lawyer Roger Palmer, a match below her station, probably to help offset her royalist family's impoverishment in exile.⁴⁷⁶ However, the marriage did little to deter her from pursuing an elongated affair with the king, probably begun in late 1660 shortly after Charles' restoration to

⁴⁷⁵ Steinman 11-13, qtd. *ODNB*.

⁴⁷⁶ To my knowledge, at least, there is no record of her family's support or opposition to either the match with Palmer or the liaison with Charles. One wonders if the rumour mill may have assumed her family's support, given the spate of satires (discussed below) that allege families' involvement in and/or approval of female courtiers' extramarital affairs.

the throne,⁴⁷⁷ nor did it impede her progress within Restoration court circles. Under another monarch and in another court, perhaps, the public nature and knowledge of her status as royal mistress would have led to disgrace, or at least to exile from the public eye; instead, in the libertine court of Charles II, it was her cuckold Roger Palmer, created Count of Castlemaine in 1661 so that Cleveland and the king's bastard children might enjoy the benefits of the title, who left the country for most of the ensuing decades. Palmer returned to England periodically only to find that his family had grown considerably in his years of absence, and that Cleveland had become one of the most widely represented and recognized figures of the period.⁴⁷⁸

Despite public knowledge of Cleveland's unabashed lack of honour and libertine approach to love, Cleveland proved steadfastly unwilling to be relegated to the obliqueness of infamy, and especially in the 1660s appears to have had Charles' full and integral support in maintaining a publicly-prominent situation at court. After Charles' marriage to Catherine of Braganza in 1662, Cleveland made her presence felt when she insisted (via Charles) that the Queen appoint her to her household as Lady of the Bedchamber - only a modestly remunerated post, but one that would secure her in as central a sanctioned position at court as was available to a female courtier of the period. It also symbolized her ascendancy over the Queen, who possessed full knowledge of Cleveland's status but was powerless – and seen publicly to be powerless, again and again – to subvert Cleveland's will.⁴⁷⁹ Cleveland maintained her centrality

⁴⁷⁷ In any case, Charles acknowledged her first daughter Anne at her birth on 25 February 1661. See *ODNB* and Wynne, "Brightest Glories".

⁴⁷⁸ "Roger Palmer", *ODNB*.

⁴⁷⁹ See Wynne, "Brightest Glories", and my discussion of Cleveland's portrait as St. Catherine below.

at court and beyond by appearing publicly in splendour,⁴⁸⁰ cultivating her own de facto train, and hosting lavish dinners and balls; by bearing five of the king's illegitimate children, ensuring that each was royally acknowledged, titled, and advantageously married; by forming patronages, alliances, and friendships with influential peers, ministers, and foreign ambassadors, including the Duke and Anne Hyde, Duchess of York; by taking care to appear sympathetic and kind to the masses;⁴⁸¹ and by insisting that she be allowed and respected in polite company as a member of the Queen's household, ensuring that even the most disapproving peers and peeresses pay her court or face severe repercussions.⁴⁸²

Cleveland's self fashioning through portraiture

Beyond her unabashed libertinism and aptitude for social advancement, another of the novel aspects of Cleveland's court career was her deliberate self-fashioning of a celebrity persona. While there is undoubtedly truth in Rachel Weil's cautionary assertion that in reality (vs. satire, rumour, or public opinion) there was likely very little that any of Charles' favourites could do to persuade him to act against his will,⁴⁸³ to my view this does not preclude Sonya Wynne's

⁴⁸⁰ Indeed, Pepys was to watch Villiers' every public move, and often "glutted [himself] with looking on her" (*Diary*, 23 August 1662). On 23 Feb. 1663 Pepys describes Cleveland appearing at "the great ball...much richer in jewells than the Queen and Duchess put together" thanks to the Christmas presents showered upon her by both the King and by peers.

⁴⁸¹ On one occasion Pepys observed a royal procession from Whitehall to Hampton Court, where he saw Villiers alone "of all the great ladies" run into the crowd where a child had been hurt by falling scaffolding, which Pepys found "so noble" (*Diary*, 23 August 1662).

⁴⁸² Wynne, "Brightest Glories", 44. The Clarendons, for example, faced political ostracism when the Earl's wife failed to pay Cleveland proper respects, and Cleveland was widely considered to have had a hand in Clarendon's fall from power.

⁴⁸³ Weil argues, in fact, that Charles used his mistresses as proxies to make clear his will while also maintaining deniability (see n. 477). Ultimately, any assertion about the degree of real influence the king's mistresses wielded over him is subject to interpretation, given the cloak-and-dagger, clandestine nature of the Restoration court and the resulting paucity of hard evidence. According to rumours, at least, Cleveland's most common tactic was to leave

characterization of Cleveland as a keen self-fashioner who used her carefully-cultivated array of sexual, political, and cultural connections to her advantage.⁴⁸⁴ Cleveland owed much of her early celebrity to a close, allegedly co-creative relationship with court portrait artist Sir Peter Lely, whose clearly impassioned portraits of Cleveland projected an arresting and much-emulated image of what would quickly become a characteristically Restoration mode of female iconography. Predicated not only on ideals of beauty, as in previous royal courts, but also on a unique mode of bare-faced eroticism signalled by the sitter's dishabille of dress and hair (a style that even the pious Queen would soon emulate),⁴⁸⁵ heavy-lidded 'bedroom eyes', and a bold return of the male gaze, Lely's portraits of Cleveland were additionally imbued with richly embedded and often discordant meanings,⁴⁸⁶ which in conjunction with the confident and self-aware tone of Cleveland's poses added to her persona a sense of wit, play, and keen awareness of the ironies inherent in her position.

Given Cleveland's highly publicized status as royal mistress, it's fitting that Lely's most widely copied and disseminated early portrait was his signature painting of Cleveland as the penitent Mary Magdalen.⁴⁸⁷ This was a more risqué association than even Magdalen's history

court when persuasion failed so that Charles would be forced to come after her and reconcile by giving way to her will. See also Wynne, "Brightest Glories".

⁴⁸⁴ Consider the following episode, in which (to historians' or contemporaries' knowledge), Charles did not (and clearly did not need to) intervene: during a period of disagreement with relative George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, Buckingham and co-conspirator Lord Arlington engaged the wit of Elizabeth, Lady Harvey, to speak out against Cleveland and to discredit her in the king's hearing. In retaliation, Cleveland arranged for an actress to caricature Harvey during a performance of Ben Jonson's *Cataline*, which was so forceful and effectual that Harvey retreated from the fracas and Buckingham soon appeared at Cleveland's house to reconcile. Cleveland also ensured that the actress was soon released from jail after being imprisoned for the public caricature of her social superior.

⁴⁸⁵ Pepys, *Diary*, 13 July 1663. Pepys found the Queen "mighty pretty" on this occasion, in comparison to her usual "modest, and innocent look" (*Diary*, 7 Sept. 1662).

⁴⁸⁶ Marciari Alexander and MacLeod, *Painted Ladies*, 128.

⁴⁸⁷ To modern eyes the iconography of the portrait is subtle rather than overt, but to a Restoration viewer Cleveland's status as a Protestant Magdalene would have been plain, signaled mainly by the pose showing her head resting on her hand, and her loose, flowing hair. The religious implications of this portrait were intensified

as a whore would first have it appear, however. By implication, the iconography placed the profligate, bastard-rearing Charles II in the position of Christ, and substituted the chaste relationship of Magdalen and Christ for one remarkably less chaste; and whereas Magdalen had long stood as a symbol of pious penitence and the renunciation of sexual sins, Cleveland was quite the opposite of penitent, both in pose and in life. (She would, in fact, never renounce or suffer overmuch for her promiscuous ways, even decades after the death of Charles II).

Cleveland also appeared in subsequent portraits by Lely in more outwardly virtuous guises as Madonna and child (c. 1663), as shepherdess (c. 1666), and as St. Catherine (c. 1667); yet in each of these overt piety is undermined by layers of impious irony, as well as cultural and political agenda. Cleveland's portrait as shepherdess was in fact commissioned by a third party, the courtier Robert Spenser, whose request speaks to Cleveland's status as a cultural figure and sexual commodity and to her reputation as one of "the most beautiful and powerful women at court".⁴⁸⁸ More brazenly, Lely's portrait of Cleveland as St. Catherine in fact comprised an impudent challenge to the sanctioned authority, pious virtue, and hierarchal ascendancy of the Queen, as St. Catherine was well-known to be Queen Catherine of Braganza's namesake, signature pose, and subject of serious religious devotion. In full view of the public eye, then, Cleveland posed as St. Catherine to deliberately usurp the Queen's prerogative, to sully the Queen's pious and sacred iconography with her markedly less pious public image, and to invite

after Villiers' conversion to Catholicism in 1663, wherein an etching by J. Enghels after Sir Peter Lely's portrait (1667) makes the conventional Catholic iconography of Magdalen more overt (namely by including a cross, skull, an ointment jar, and Bible open to Psalm 55). See Marciari Alexander and MacLeod, *Painted Ladies*, 128.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.

direct comparisons between herself and the queen, in which she appeared both the greater beauty and the more powerful figure.⁴⁸⁹

Most ostentatiously - even blasphemously – is Cleveland’s portrait as the Madonna and Child,⁴⁹⁰ in which the Christ child featured in the portrait was none other than the second of five illegitimate children by Charles. Because this relationship between sitter and religious allegory would have been readily apparent to a Restoration audience, the portrait deliberately and publicly challenged the “implied piety” of its subjects, “flaunting the very preposterousness of mistress and bastard as Madonna and child”.⁴⁹¹ This was a painting intended to be richly ironic; it was probably also intended to be funny, which as Julia Marciari Alexander and Catherine MacLeod point out was “intensified by Barbara’s noticeable girth: under her robes she appears to be pregnant,” undoubtedly with another of the King’s illegitimate children.⁴⁹² Intensifying the subversion of sacred iconography evinced in her portrait as Magdalene, Cleveland’s sitting as Madonna certainly evinced an apparent but barely deniable blasphemy wherein Charles II is placed in the position of God, his pregnant and sexually dissolute mistress in the position of the Virgin Mary, and their illegitimate son in the position of Christ himself. The portrait thus subverted sacred notions of female sexuality in favour of secular libertine ideals and altogether exploded the longstanding dichotomy of virgin and whore. This move was

⁴⁸⁹ Marciari Alexander and MacLeod, *Painted Ladies*, 129; See also Roach, “Celebrity Erotics”.

⁴⁹⁰ Marciari Alexander and MacLeod note that Barbara’s “loose-fitting red and blue robes”, which are not at all typical of the Restoration, “clearly allude to the Virgin [Mary]’s traditional attire, the red robe and blue cloak symbolizing her passion as well as her role as Queen of Heaven” (124).

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 125.

⁴⁹² *Ibid.*

all the bolder considering that many contemporaries believed the portrait to have been engineered by Cleveland herself.⁴⁹³

In the context of one-sex iconography, Cleveland's relationship with Sir Peter Lely initiated and popularized a mode of Restoration portraiture of the Court Ladies which in some senses fell squarely in line with the one-sex conception of the licentious woman. Importantly, however, it marshalled the notion of women's boundless desire not as the source of her inferiority or moral debasement, but as a fount of sexual and cultural power predicated on frankness and on the pleasure to be garnered between the art of the portraiture, the fascination of the onlooker, and the pose of the sitter. This iconography had a profound impact not just on Cleveland but also on the culture's conception of the female libertine and Court Lady, a fact which should be borne in mind in our readings of verse portraits on the same subjects.

Onlookers and diarists: Cleveland's ambiguous reception in court and town

As the period's diarists, satirists, and commentators clearly attest, Cleveland's position, figure and image, the latter widely disseminated as highly sought-after engravings based on Lely's portraits, elicited an impassioned and ambiguous response even among those who clung to conventional notions of morality. Indeed, Cleveland's perceived proximity to Charles II – the centre of power in the realm – forced all those with whom she interacted to choose between a morally suspect and politically precarious position. Though courtiers might be tempted to shun Cleveland for her damning lack of virtue and clearly effeminizing influence over the king, many

⁴⁹³ Ibid.

clearly admired her celebrated beauty and/or wished to court her favour due to her many connections, not least of which was her access to the king via access to that other, influential scepter.⁴⁹⁴ Thus while diarist John Evelyn expressed a common view of Cleveland as “the curse of the nation”, other contemporary accounts attest to the culture’s avid, ongoing, and ambiguous fascination with Cleveland’s carefully-fashioned public image, and suggest that even Evelyn’s pronouncement may not have been as straightforward as it might appear.⁴⁹⁵

In keeping with his career as a secret rake, *Pepys’ Diary* attests to an especially well-documented, erotically-charged affair-by-proxy with Cleveland, showcasing his particular desire to follow her career at court, to collect and disseminate information about her from a variety of informants, and an even greater keenness to catch glimpses of her whenever he could, whether at Court, in Hyde Park, or at the theatre. Significantly, however, this fascination was not Pepys’ alone, as his *Diary* also attests to not only his own fevered interest in Cleveland’s affairs, but also to those of his large and varied network of interested informants and gossips, a group which included peers, colleagues, servants, and the female members of Pepys’ own household. (Both Mrs. Pepys and Mrs. Sarah, Lord Sandwich’s housekeeper, for instance, are chronicled as having followed the Duchess of Cleveland’s affairs and fashion very closely: Mrs. Pepys is said to have followed the Duchess into a London shop on one occasion and to have purchased an ornate gown in purposeful imitation of Cleveland’s fashion, and Mrs. Sarah was often the source of Cleveland’s latest happenings and whereabouts.)⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹⁴ See Rochester, “Satire on Charles II”.

⁴⁹⁵ See Roach, “Celebrity Erotics.”

⁴⁹⁶ *Diary*, 26 Sept. 1666 and 1 Jan. 1663, respectively.

Yet even a besotted Pepys could see the amoral, corrupting influence inherent in Cleveland's inversion of social hierarchies and conventions of sanctioned and unsanctioned power. Thus what makes Pepys' fascination so illuminating is that it so often wavers on the cusp of traditional moral and voyeuristic libertine prerogatives, his sexual desire, empathy, and attraction to Cleveland's celebrity flourishing in full awareness of her sins, including those of open and unrepentant sexual promiscuity and ongoing slights of a virtuous and undeserving Queen.⁴⁹⁷ Pepys' views on Cleveland's separation from her husband in 1662 exemplify this characteristic ambivalence about her allure, demonstrating Pepys' awareness of the extent to which he was torn between his sense of propriety – his moral sensibility – and his libertine sensibility, or attraction to Cleveland's superior beauty and humanity:

This day I was told that my Lady Castlemaine [Cleveland] (being quite fallen out with her husband) did yesterday go away from him, with all her plate, jewels, and other best things; and is gone to Richmond to a brother of her's; which, I am apt to think, was a design to get out of town, that the King might come at her the better. But strange it is how for her beauty I am willing to construe all this to the best and to pity her wherein it is to her hurt, though I know well enough she is a whore.⁴⁹⁸

Thus, despite being concerned and as fully aware as Evelyn that Cleveland posed a threat to both Charles and the conventional order, Pepys' ruminations throughout his *Diary* invariably default to a self-serving desire that Cleveland retain her prominence at court so that he might continue to have opportunities to watch, meet, and admire her – so that he might pursue his own personal pleasures simply by gazing on Cleveland's portrait or ruminating on her affairs.⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁷ In "Celebrity Erotics", Joseph Roach discusses the voyeuristic relationship between Pepys and Cleveland at length.

⁴⁹⁸ *Diary*, 16 July 1662.

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

Pepys' plight, as that of other courtiers torn between denouncing and embracing Cleveland's presence, suggests that Evelyn's characterization of Cleveland "as the curse of the nation" does not merely characterize her ensnarement and emasculation of the king, but encompasses her wider influence on the nation's courtiers, ethos, and populace as well.

Chronicling Cleveland as pattern of female libertine, social leveller: lampoon accounts

Unfortunately, Pepys terminated his *Diary* several years too early to record his thoughts on the appearance of "SD" in 1673, and on its rather unflattering accusation, predicated on dozens of satirical slurs like it, that Cleveland had in fact "swallowed more pricks than the ocean has sand". Whatever Pepys' thoughts on the matter, the satirists seemed sure: Cleveland had strayed from the expected Bathsheba-like fidelity as concubine of the nation's sovereign to consume other, invariably lesser, pricks. Here it is crucial to acknowledge that this allegation extends beyond a conventional slight aimed at a patented dishonourable woman, but is instead predicated on a kind of hyperbolized verisimilitude (a fact that, given issues of succession and the king's failure to beget a legitimate heir, would have mattered rather more than if Cleveland's bastards had presented no possibility for claim to titles or successions).

Shunning the codes of honour and fidelity upheld by custom and the Queen, during her reign as Charles' chief mistress Cleveland was both reputed and confirmed to have taken a variety of lovers, to have "behaved in the radical manner of a female libertine...[by] being as unfaithful to the King as he was to her".⁵⁰⁰ Cleveland is insecurely reputed to have had an affair

⁵⁰⁰ Wynne, "Brightest Glories", 44.

with courtier Henry Jermyn while in her role as royal mistress as early as 1663,⁵⁰¹ but even had this first rumour proved spurious, her succession of affairs in the late 1660s, and indeed until the end of her lifetime, certainly wasn't. In her time as Charles II's mistress alone, Cleveland was securely linked to affairs with rope-dancer Jacob Hall in c. 1667, actor Charles Hart the following year, playwright William Wycherley in 1671, and John Churchill, later duke of Marlborough (1650–1722), for whom she acted the masculine role as keeper from 1671-5. Thus another of the unusual aspects of Cleveland's history, especially in the context of a longstanding double standard of honour that required virtue and fidelity in women but that allowed infidelity and promiscuity in men,⁵⁰² and that understood gradations of sexual transgression as fundamentally informed by class hierarchy, is a rampant and widely-publicized infidelity not only to her husband, her social inferior, but also to the king, her superior and sovereign.

Consequently, and usually in perfect concert with the most prominent of Cleveland's sexual and political affairs, the period's lampoonists closely chronicled her extracurricular career. On the occasion of her affair with Jermyn, for example, the 1663 lampoon "On the Ladies of the Court" imagined Cleveland's seeming boundlessness to extend as far as taking a

⁵⁰¹ The king, at least, believed in the rumour - resulting in the king delaying his acknowledgement of their second child, Henry Fitzroy, who was born on 20 September 1663. *ODNB*.

⁵⁰² Many of his early modern contemporaries would have held that it was well within Charles' kingly and male prerogative to behave in the manner of the Lucretian libertine, eschewing fidelity for promiscuity, according to classical custom, in order to avoid the effeminizing effects of a too-avid devotion to one lover, or to exercise natural sexual appetites, given that fidelity, according to the libertine ethos, was contrary to sexual nature. (In the minds of most, of course, the alleged outcome of his promiscuity - an avoidance of effeminization - patently eluded Charles, and instead eroded his perceived authority.) Charles is notorious for having exercised his right to stray from both his Queen and from Cleveland during her reign as royal mistress, publicly pursuing other aristocratic and common mistresses and objects of royal desire; but English society, of course, had conventionally demanded different standards of honour from its women.

same-sex lover and engaging in a particularly masculine style of love-making, as first she is shown “playing at flats” with a fellow Court Lady, and then is depicted “swiv[ing] like a stoat” with a male lover.⁵⁰³ With even greater topical precision, “A Ballad 1667” fittingly adds social levelling to Cleveland’s repertoire on the occasion of her publicized affairs with rope dancer Jacob Hall and actor Charles Hart, rather justly (re)circulating the report that Cleveland “goes to’t leg and foot / level coil with a prince and a player”. And it is in a similar vein of verisimilitude, though here with an additional admixture of hyperbole, that in “SD” we are reminded that Cleveland has “swallowed more pricks / than the ocean has sand”, occasioning her need for a sizeable dildo (itself an implement of topical fame), given that her vagina has clearly grown cavernous with so much sex and illegitimate childbirth (her children by Charles alone numbered five by c. 1673). It is thus in a spirit of hyperbolic caricature more than empty or unjust slander that the satirists figured Cleveland as a woman with a voracious, indiscriminate sexual appetite, one which frequently and unrepentantly usurped several male prerogatives (i.e. those of unchecked promiscuity, of social levelling in her choice of bedfellows, and of keeping lovers after the male fashion). And as we have seen of Cleveland’s self-representation in her portraits and epistles, it’s a distinct possibility that Cleveland may have welcome such satiric portraits as a further propagation of her celebrity and chosen persona.

When in 1670 Charles replaced Cleveland with her successor, the beautiful Louise de Keroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth, rumours circulated that Charles had at last cast Cleveland

⁵⁰³ ‘Playing at flats’ is helpfully explained in “The Ladies’ Complaint to Venus” c. 1691 when Venus tells sexually-forsaken ladies, “you are to blame / And have got a new game / Called flats, with a swinging clitoris.” Perceived ‘coldness’ towards male suitors had been long-standing commonplace in indicating female same-sex tendencies in the seventeenth-century. As Harold Love indicates, those maids of honour at the Restoration court “who did not take lovers, especially royal lovers, were accused routinely of being lesbians” (*ECL* 37).

aside in retaliation for her many dalliances with other men, recasting him in the role of proprietary patriarch.⁵⁰⁴ Publicly, at least, Cleveland seems to have met with the king's unwavering support throughout his lifetime, providing ample evidence of Wynne's observation that she and the king "seem to have shared a certain attitude towards love, that it was an external, irresistible force, and almost always inconstant".⁵⁰⁵ Thus subverting this patriarchal narrative of the king's displeasure with Cleveland's extracurricular activities is strong evidence that their parting was in fact quite amicable - that Cleveland was not cast aside callously, and managed to transform her sexual relationship with the king into a form of lasting friendship.⁵⁰⁶ Materially, Charles supported Cleveland and his children by her until the end of his reign, granting her the title of Duchess and her sons dukedoms - levels of rank conferred only on royal family members - only after her termination as reigning mistress.

Ever apprised of her latest affairs, the more astute among the satirists did not fail to note Cleveland's aptitude at maintaining the king's favour despite her demotion to mistress emeritus, nor did some fail to mock the more vehement of her detractors. Thus in Cleveland's second appearance in the "SD" tradition, in this instance a late stanza of ca. 1680 light-heartedly chronicling her enduring influence and great success at attaining favours for children and friends alike, the satirist informs us that the "stiffe stalking lord [Arlington] with his high limber prick / has shut himselfe up & pretends to be sick / Cause Cleauland resolves y^e King shall Bestowe / Her son Euston's Blew ribbon on signior Dildoe" (89-93). Here, it is Arlington who appears in the most ridiculous, sexually-exposed, and unflattering light, whereas

⁵⁰⁴ See "Lampoon [1676]", 1-8, in Wilson, *Court Satires*.

⁵⁰⁵ Wynne, "Brightest Glories", 44.

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

Cleveland, the King, and their son, the young earl of Euston – who had in fact been made Knight of the Garter in 1680⁵⁰⁷ - are spared any sexual exposure or real malice. And where we might expect a tone of condemnation and censure, we instead find one of mocking fun: here, because our gaze is drawn to Arlington's hysteria, it is perhaps more quaint than scandalous to find Charles' former mistress decking her beloved dildo in the king's favours.

As these lampoon accounts demonstrate, throughout the 1660s and 70s Cleveland's legacy as "pattern of virtue" was not easily avoided or quickly forgotten. Even as late as 1676, when Cleveland's time as Charles' favourite had long passed and she prepared to leave the English court for the French (where she could live more comfortably off of her income), the satirists marked the occasion by dedicating entire satires wholly in her honour - "Lampoon, March 1676," for instance, offering a helpful retrospective on Cleveland's career of "lechery" for any Restoration denizens who had somehow managed to forget or remain uninformed (6). And though the satirical portraits are certainly not as indulgent or nuanced as Lely's portraiture, nor as full of avid lust and admiration as Pepys' *Diary*, it is important to recognize that these modes of portraiture – satire, visual art, and gossip – worked in tandem to produce the full image of any Restoration courtier, especially the female libertine or painted lady, as even the cuttingly sexualized portraits of the satirists served to establish and augment the celebrity of their subjects, disseminating fame even as they exposed infamy. In each of these satires it is important to recognize, too, that by their very topical nature these accusations go well beyond conventional slanders against loose women, even though they generally deploy them to hit

⁵⁰⁷ Henry Fitzroy, first Duke of Grafton. *ODNB*.

their mark. In Cleveland's case, they chronicle decades of factually-based gossip about her unabashed sexual affairs, and solidify both for contemporaries and posterity her centrality in the Restoration culture and imagination.

Cleveland's legacy and progeny

True to the satirist's report, as Cleveland's reign as chief mistress came to a close (and well before), many more Restoration ladies copied themselves after her new pattern of libertine comportment – leaving ample room, of course, for variations thereon. The period's actresses – the first professional actresses in England, after Charles II decreed that boys would no longer be legally allowed to play female roles – were famed both for their prominent, risqué roles on stage and for their roles as frequent jades for hire off-stage. (On stage, they copied the profligate behaviour of their court betters, especially in the period's famed Comedies of Manners.)⁵⁰⁸ What's more, the loosened morals and new sexual ethos of Charles II's post-puritan regime allowed for gendered modes of dress and comportment to be considerably loosened, with female courtiers frequently adopting masculine behaviours and modes of dress, and for the advent of professional female authorship, placing a number of the age's female wits in the masculine roles of authorship, theatre production, and publication. Thus the age which saw the likes of Barbara Palmer, Duchess of Cleveland rise to prominence also saw the rise of many more painted ladies, in a variety of senses, among whom were Cleveland's widely reviled French successor, Louise de Keroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth,⁵⁰⁹ exotic foreigner Hortense

⁵⁰⁸ See Roach, "Celebrity Erotics".

⁵⁰⁹ As Wynne has indicated, each "mistresses' political role tested the limits of female participation in politics in this period"; however, Portsmouth carried her position of political power further than Cleveland, acting as a direct

Mancini, Duchess of Mazarin, beloved actress and Protestant whore Nell Gwyn, court bisexual, duelist, and cross-dresser Lady Elizabeth Harvey, and prolific playwright and author Aphra Behn, to name only a few.

True to form, the satirists quickly corroborated these developments, churning out the period's spate of lampoons on the ladies of the court and town, and affirming as much as denouncing the new female norms of the age. With characteristic vigour and alliterative flair, the Earl of Rochester, for instance, reported that

Whitehall Cunts are grown soe Common,
 Foule and wide they're fitt for noe man;
 Rubd by Porters, ramm'd by Chaire man,
 Towsd and teased from *King* to Carman,
 Frigg'd in Chappells, fuckt in entryes
 By the singing Boyes and Centryes,
 Peppered as they come from Prayers
 By the next Oares att Privy Staires,
 With taile turn'd upp to all they know
 From Bishop Crew to Coachman Crow.⁵¹⁰

Though on the opposite side of the political and ideological divide,⁵¹¹ the c. 1680 "Satire on the Court Ladies" nonetheless confirmed Rochester's portrait, suggesting that the women of the

intermediary between Charles & his ministers and the French ambassadors (44). Nevertheless, very much after Cleveland's pattern, she was as successful as her predecessor in being perceived to control "access both to his person and to his favour," and therefore to appear as the most influential and powerful – as well as most venomously hated - woman at the English court for the remainder of Charles' reign (136). See Dorset's (?) *Colin*, esp. 1-22.

⁵¹⁰ "Advice to a Cuntmonger", 15-24. Meanwhile, "On Several Women About Town" goes a helpful step further and identifies the prime locations for any number and manner of illicit court liaisons - of course, the period's infamous balls and masquerades, wherein even the most famous of attendees could disguise their identities and take to the shadows, take top position.

⁵¹¹ This anonymous Juvenalian satire appears to have been written by a confirmed misogynist and militant Protestant, probably of the Country or proto-Whig party. See Wilson, *Court Satires*, 36.

age had surpassed even its men in their shameless enjoyment of all forms of debauchery, including not just promiscuity but also public drinking, gambling, and profanity. Thus,

No ways to vice to this our age produce,
 But women, with less shame than men, do use.
 They'll play, they'll drink, talk filth'ly and profane,
 With more extravagance than any man.
 I blush to think one impious day has seen
 Three duchesses roaring drunk on Richmond Green.⁵¹²

In "Utile Dulce" the infamous gossip and Juvenalian satirist Jack Howe, himself and his sisters the subjects of numerous lewd lampoons, likewise deemed it commonplace to see ladies in the dead of night, "Crammed up in hackney coach with each a knight, / Scouring from house to house like drunk or mad, / Plaguing the Town with noise and serenade".⁵¹³

Proving the rule by the exception, Dorset's (?) *Colin* similarly reported that one willing candidate for Charles' extramarital bed was disqualified because she had not yet adequately cultivated her dissolute graces, and could not "swear, drink, and talk bawdy, / virtues requisite for that place / more than youth, wit, or a good face".⁵¹⁴ These ladies were not only shameless, asserted Howe, but keen to gain a reputation for promiscuity, as in full public view they "seem[ed] at strife / [to see] whose reputation shall have shortest life".⁵¹⁵ And lest we were tempted to think that rampant vice was solely the prerogative of the high born, our anonymous railler in "Satire on the Court Ladies" went on to report that the new vogue had spread

⁵¹² 31-6. In Wilson *Court Satires*, 36. All quotes from clandestine satire in this section are taken from Wilson's edition, unless otherwise indicated.

⁵¹³ 88-91.

⁵¹⁴ 116-19. This is a reference to Cary Frazier (Wilson).

⁵¹⁵ 108-9. See Rochester, "Artemisa to Chloe", which makes a similar equation of female 'freedom' with infamy, arguing that "our silly sex, who born like monarchs free, / turn gypsies for a meaner liberty / and hate restraint, though but from infamy" (56-9). They are also said to "forsake the pleasures to pursue the vice" (61).

throughout England, as “example from the great the lesser take, / and some grow scandalous for scandal’s sake.”⁵¹⁶ Seemingly unaware of the ironies inherent in doing so, he thus invokes his Muse to “speak out...and all the vices tell / with which our countries, Courts, and cities swell”.⁵¹⁷ These turn out to be many, both general and particular, and of course all explicitly bared to the audience.⁵¹⁸

In defence of female libertinism and satiric meritocracy

If the topical substance (if not the hyperbole or moral position) of the satiric accounts is to be believed, Restoration ladies not only eschewed virtue, but also courted a reputation for vice as the new fashion upheld by Charles himself, ironically buttressed by the very hierarchal structures set in place to ensure propriety, virtue, and the self-perpetuation of the elite through iron-clad primogeniture.⁵¹⁹ In an age that saw not only the king but also his brother, ministers, and illegitimate sons publicly cavorting with women of the court and town, and in which acute anxieties and factional unrest about succession spill over in the Exclusion Crisis of 1679-81 and

⁵¹⁶ 31-2. Again, Rochester’s verse corroborates this report. See Rochester’s “A Ramble in St. James’ Park”, which asserts that “unto this all-sin-sheltering grove [St. James’ Park] / whores of the bulk and the alcove, / Great ladies, chambermaids, and drudges, / the rag-picker and heiress trudges. / Carmen, divines, great lords, and tailors, / ‘Prentices, pimps, poets, and jailers, / Footmen, fine fops do here arrive, / And here promiscuously they swive” (25-32).

⁵¹⁷ 13-4.

⁵¹⁸ Though he first singles out several of the usual suspects – the king’s chief mistress of the 1670s, the Duchess of Portsmouth, whose end is no less than to “destroy our prince’s honor, health, and soul” (21-2), and the almost equally prominent Duchess of Richmond, whose “house and body have a thousand ways / to let in fucksters which she still betrays” (25-6), the railler’s real interest appears to be in the dissolute example set by these prominent, elite figures on the rest.

⁵¹⁹ One satire makes this link explicit, extending the new norm of female libertinism to one of widespread familial and communal complicity (perhaps not an altogether unjust observation when we consider the Duchess of Cleveland’s history). “For why should strangers show a discontent, / Where husbands, mothers, and all friends are content, / ... The good man smiles to see his lady pleased, / And hugs the fop by whom his horns are raised” (76-7, 82-3).

the Revolution of 1688/9, oppositional satirists had more than just cause to rail against the carelessness, excess, and scandal of their betters.

Yet as we have already seen with the history of Cleveland and with the dildo disputes discussed in Chapter 3, not every satirist who took up the age's unbound libertinism claimed the righteous purpose of the Juvenalian railler, nor assumed a uniformly or straightforwardly antagonistic stance towards the figures or behaviours he (and sometimes she) lampooned. As we will see below, some authors and satirists in fact came to the ladies' defence, and attacked the ladies' attackers; others were even-handed, barefaced in their voyeuristic purpose. And even the Juvenalian railler faced the perennial problem of having his declared purpose - righteous denunciation - undermined by the explicit detail of his satire, a level of detail which might at any time reveal his own orgiastic pleasure in the scenes he described, stoke his audience's own dark desires, and propagate the very acts he pretended to quell.

"An Answer to the Court Ladies," a 1680 satire often grouped in manuscript sources with the "Satire on the Court Ladies," illustrates a core rivalry between the so-called 'half-wits' and 'true-wits' of the Court, one that showcased the factions' difference in attitudes towards both the act and purpose of lampooning and towards the sexual willingness (or *kindness*) of women. The true-wits, among whom Rochester was generally considered chief, could be notoriously variable in their satiric attitudes and attacks on court women, and as we have seen of both Rochester's satire and that of Butler's *Dildoides*, were not above exposing the sexual behaviour of Court women themselves to achieve their own ends, the chief of which was to

showcase their superior wit and poetic adeptness.⁵²⁰ But demonstrably their core rivalry was not with women, but with a group they considered a hack tribe of half-wits led by notorious lampoonists Jack Howe and Goodwin Wharton.⁵²¹ Though the truth of the matter inevitably lies somewhere between or beyond the claims of these warring literary factions, the rivalry, as that chronicled in *Dildoides* between the Ballers and the Farmers, puts the raillery of the half-wit satirists against women in relief, and demonstrates that satires on Court women, at least those of the most debasing, malicious, and straightforward (or witless) type, as “A Satire on the Court Ladies,” should not be taken to represent the universal or even majority perspective of the Court and Town. Instead, they were often viewed in those contexts as the output of fringe pretenders and jealous eccentrics.⁵²²

Thus the self-styled Truewit of “An Answer to the Court Ladies” takes issue with the pretense of half-wits who rail against women, particularly with their misconception that those satirists who are “most malicious”, “not that write best” (6), will win “the bays” (5). (We note, of course, that the Truewit does not oppose satirisation of women, or any group, per se – merely that which serves the purposes of malice first and both wit and justice last.) True to his word, the Truewit’s ensuing shot-gun stanzas are aimed primarily at a catalogue of professional

⁵²⁰ See Introduction, particularly regarding Farley-Hills, *Benevolence of Laughter*, and the importance of poetic wit in the Restoration.

⁵²¹ For full lists of those who were known or alleged ‘half-wit’ lampoonists – generally, but not exclusively, professionals of the Town - and those Court amateur rakes who comprised the Truewit camp, see “An Answer to the Satire on Court Ladies” in Wilson *Court Satires*, and Love, *ECL* 158-76.

⁵²² On Wilson’s character of Howe and his ilk as such, see Wilson, *Court Satires*, 41. Of course, this fringe status did not ensure that malicious satirists such as Jack Howe would not find their mark and achieve their ends (presumably, to disrupt the sexual intrigues of Court luminaries), judging from the episodes discussed later in the poem.

male poets and half-wits who battle it out for the bays:⁵²³ Dryden is judged first as “a devil at his pen”, but is spared more damning epithets in a show of fairness because he at least “pecks only at men”, and “spares not his own sex to make his jest”.⁵²⁴ Worse are the lampoons of the insecure and jealous “young satyrs” – the poet here punning on the differing etymology of *satire* and *satyr* to underscore the true satyr-like (e.g., over-sexed and base) nature of these false satirists – who “write of others ‘cause none think of them”.⁵²⁵ He reserves particular attention for the notorious practices of Jack Howe, that well-hated hypocrite and voyeuristic spy, whose “smutty jests and downright lies” are aimed at “those the most he calls his friends.”⁵²⁶ These, according to our Truewit, allegedly include lies about two prominent Court women, Arabella Churchill, former maid of honour to Anne Hyde, Duchess of York and mistress to the Duke, and Frances Stuart, Duchess of Richmond, who “in their lusts happy might still have been / had they not loved, believed, and trusted him”.⁵²⁷ Countering his opponents’ allegedly artless smut with a mock-heroic simile that speaks to the half-wits’ ineptitude,

⁵²³ The notable exception that proves the rule is the satirist’s characterization of George Etherege’s wife as one who “represents all forms, a bitch, / a wizard, wrinkled woman and a witch” (21-2). His wife is a witch, however, as punishment for Etherege’s own folly, as he “always of women writes and always rails; / for which the gods have plagued him to the height, / and for his comfort sent him such a wife!” (18-7).

⁵²⁴ 13, 14, 16.

⁵²⁵ 24.

⁵²⁶ 28, 30. The Truewit’s account of Jack Howe’s activities as spy, including his alleged purpose(s) in doing so, sheds considerable (if biased) light on the climate of clandestine affairs and lampooning at Court. That is, “His whole design is to be thought a wit; / Therefore this freedom takes to farther it; / Sends forth his spies; his home-spun sisters too / Daily inform what their acquaintance do. / Then out himself he packs and scouting goes, / Singles out pairs as he thinks fit, and those / He handles civilly, then frames his jest, / Writes what he sees, feigns and makes out the rest. / His person too he much admires and strove / Once to be thought renowned for feats of love” (33-42). Note that Howe was famed for sending out his five unmarried sisters on his behalf – see Wilson, “Appendix”, and “Satyr” (Harleian MS 6913 p. 235), Wilson 45 n.28.

⁵²⁷ 44, 45-6. There is a possibility that here the Truewit follows his opponent’s lead and hypocritically (or wittily?) invents these claims of betrayal. Wilson holds that “there is no reason to believe that either lady ‘loved and trusted’ Jack Howe” (*Court Satires* 45); this does not mean, however, that no such trust ever existed, given the inevitably piecemeal nature of corroborating evidence about clandestine affairs of the period.

jealousy, and spite in both love and wit, the Truewit concludes that “so fallen angels, once bereft of bliss, / envy and pine at others’ happiness.”⁵²⁸

Throughout his “Answer”, then, the anonymous Truewit opts to “leave out” the ladies except in showing how they have been wronged, and to instead take aim at his worthier – because more foolish - half-wit rivals. Providing a secular, reason-based argument common in the popular dramatic paratexts of the period,⁵²⁹ he expands on his choice by noting that if women are “kind [i.e., willing to grant sexual favours] ‘tis hard that we should curse, / or if they’re cruel, ‘twill but make ‘em worse”.⁵³⁰ He therefore counsels that if only for pragmatism’s sake, “men should of choice their [women’s] kindness recompense, / if only for their own convenience”.⁵³¹ We may note in these arguments a chivalrous sentiment reminiscent of Wilson’s claim, cited in Chapter 1, that women are targeted by satirists merely because they are the easier targets; however, I would argue that there is a pointed difference between the libertine mode of chivalry espoused by the Truewit and the more conventional mode of chivalry (or lack thereof) suggested by Wilson. Namely, by his own logic the Truewit both defends and spares women from his satire not because they are weak or undefended - his own satire against the half-wits shows that they are not without those who will take their side – or yet, because

⁵²⁸ 31-2.

⁵²⁹ See Wynne, “Brightest Glories”, 44, who notes that Behn was a vocal defender of female libertinism against puritanical censure. This is particularly evinced in Behn’s dramatic paratexts, which were well circulated and influential in the period. As Diana Solomon has demonstrated, prologues and epilogues by prominent dramatists were so well sought-after in the period that they were print-published both alongside dramatic texts and as separates, were circulated in manuscript miscellanies alongside other works, and were often alone deemed worth the price of admission at a play, many courtiers and other playgoers appearing only for these witty airings of the latest satire and gossip and then leaving the playhouse soon thereafter. See Solomon, *Prologues and Epilogues of Restoration Theatre: Gender and Comedy, Performance and Print* (Newark: University of Delaware, 2013).

⁵³⁰ 9-10.

⁵³¹ 11-12.

they are pure, passive damsels innocent of sexual intrigues – his argument in fact suggests the opposite - but because they are “kind,” and by extension undeserving of satire, a literary form whose express purpose in this secularized view is to correct and chide folly and malice, not moral transgression.⁵³²

This mode of female kindness, in other words, is not conceived as a vice or folly to be satirized within the Truewit’s economy of desire-based sexual exchange. Instead, opposing the morally-based attacks of the half-wits, this secularized championing of female kindness serves convenient political ends, aligning with and showing a kind of fealty to the king’s own libertine ethos of unfettered love (along with that of his female favourites), and serves the Truewit’s sexual ends just as nicely, ensuring a kind of revised harmony that occurs between the sexes not when virtue and honour culminate in the bonds of marriage and fidelity, as in both conventional comic and Christian custom, but when each sex acts mutually to fulfill their innate desires.⁵³³

Any chivalric sentiment inherent in the Truewit’s defence of female libertinism are also undercut by Restoration women’s wide reputation for wielding the satiric pen in their own defence. This apparently became such a problem in the period that one railler felt it necessary to devote an entire satire to the subject, declaiming against

Female lampooners a new fashion’d thing
Lord! unto what excess will Women bring
This Age? ere long they’l make no more

⁵³² We note that the one woman who is singled out for attack in the “Answer” behaves in a manner which deserves such a treatment.

⁵³³ This is, of course, a fantastical ideal that relies too fundamentally on the perpetual and equal willingness of all parties involved, including the king and other figures of authority; that ignores the very real, very persistent strictures of hierarchy – including the privileges of gender, class, and rank, as we shall see in our discussion of the Duke of Buckingham, below; and that ignores both the strength of moral custom and the material realities of pregnancy and disease.

to ride the men then they did them before.
 And yett that they should scourge and satyryze
 Mens Actions, when from them nought did arise
 Both now and since the great Creation
 But ill to Man save Procreation.
 To some perhaps ile grant that glorious gift
 of Poetry to help them att a lift
 But pray don't Ladies if you presume to write
 for lett me tell you if you go to shite
 youl get more Poetry and witt from thence
 By reading of that high flowne stile and sence
 of Bawdy Ballads pasted on the wall
 Than both you have the Parson too and all.⁵³⁴

Though clearly intended to smear the vogue of the lampoon authoress through a variety of slippery-slope defences, the anonymous satirist helpfully suggests to posterity that a reliance on male authors or patrons was not a libelled woman's only means of defense in the Restoration period, nor that 'victim' was her only feasible role in the lampoon culture.

While clearly aggrandized, the satirist's claims are again based on topical fact, responding to the period's minor vogue of female lampoonists and wider prominence of masculine women. Harold Love's archival excavations provide ample evidence that while a majority of the period's anonymous lampoonists can reasonably be assumed to be male, in many known cases Restoration women took up their pens in self-defence, in libelling others tit for tat,⁵³⁵ and/or in taking an active role in the sub-literary culture by curating their own lampoon collections.⁵³⁶ Katharine Sedley, the former mistress of the Duke of York, reputedly

⁵³⁴ Manchester, Chetham's Library MS Mun A.4.14 91. See Love, *ECS*.

⁵³⁵ These, of course, are only the documented cases – Love rightly points out that due to the clandestine and libellous nature of Restoration MS culture, it is difficult to know with any certainty the extent to which women – or indeed anyone – was involved in the culture. For Love's compilation of known/attribution lampoon authors, as well as of female lampoonists, see *ECS*, 168-74.

⁵³⁶ Both Aphra Behn and Sarah Cowper, great-grandmother of the eighteenth-century poet, kept large personal MS miscellanies containing lampoons, satires, and bawdry, Behn's MS miscellany (entitled *Astrea's Booke*) showing

responded to a lampoon against her by Sir Carr Scroope by retaliating in kind,⁵³⁷ earning her such a reputation as a railler that she was singled out by a fellow lampoonist as “a wither’d Countess...who rails aloud / at the most reigning vices of the Croud.”⁵³⁸ Similarly, the notoriously mannish court bisexual Lady Harvey, herself a lampoon ‘star’, was considered the author of a lampoon on court ‘chits;’ Anne, Lady Freschville and Catherine Stanhope were credited, though probably spuriously, with co-authoring the well-circulated c. 1682 satire “Lady Freschville’s Song of the Wives;”⁵³⁹ and the relatively unknown Olive Porter was the attributed author of “The Description of a Poetess”, a satire which earned her a counter-attack in “Scandal Satyr’d” (in which she is helpfully named for posterity).

If women felt unequal to the task of lampooning on their own behalf, it was common practise for wronged, vengeful, or capricious parties - often women - to hire anonymous professional authors or male wits to write lampoons against their enemies, generally in exchange for money or political favours.⁵⁴⁰ Aphra Behn, the period’s most prolific and accomplished female author, is thought to have numbered among these professional lampoonists-for-hire, and though she was careful to avoid mention in any definite record of clandestine lampoon authorship, her published verse and prose demonstrate that she was

that Behn even saw fit to copy a bawdy lampoon deploying the dildo trope. Neither MS miscellany, however, contains “SD”.

⁵³⁷ Love, *ECL*, 172. Notably, Love’s source is a letter of 30 January 1677 by another lady - Lady Chaworth - chronicling the exchange between Sedley and Scroope. Unfortunately, it remains unclear to which lampoons the letter refers.

⁵³⁸ Leeds, Brotherton Library MS Lt 38, 207.

⁵³⁹ Wilson, *Court Satires*, 112-6.

⁵⁴⁰ Love, *ECL*, 170-2. Though it is often difficult to securely attribute particular lampoons to proxy scribes and poets, Aphra Behn is generally considered to number among the professional poets whose services could be hired out to pen a lampoon against one’s enemies or in one’s self-defence.

deeply engaged with the period's lampoon culture,⁵⁴¹ that she was herself an accomplished lampoonist in a variety of genres, particularly in satiric prose and dramatic paratexts,⁵⁴² and that she often risked the satirists' ire in taking up women's defense.⁵⁴³ Ultimately, while it is clear that prominent female figures did risk further censure if they chose to mount their own defence, they were far from passive or defenceless in the face of such attacks, and that many took up their pens regardless of the risk.

Re-reading gossip, women, and the dildo in "SD"

As we have seen, Restoration innovations in sex, gender, and culture were highly topical and elicited a range of satirical responses, both for and against. Part of the joke of "SD," as I have suggested in Chapter 1 and in Chapter 5, was in creating the fiction that the dildo had only just arrived in England, and could have been engineered only on the Catholic continent – a joke on any gullible puritanical Cit, too ill-informed to imagine that no Englishman (or woman) had ever attempted the invention. To those in the know, this fiction is made obvious by the pre-existing

⁵⁴¹ In the prologue to her most celebrated play *The Rover* (1677), for instance, Behn takes on and dismisses the entire lampoon culture as inferior to the works of true authors, comparing "characters genteel and fine", crafted with toil and care, to those of the half-wits who "by long converse about the town / Have wit enough to write a lewd lampoon". Treading on thin ice, perhaps, she alleges that "their chief skill lies in a bawdy song", concluding that "the only wit that's now in fashion / Is but the gleanings of good conversation".

⁵⁴² In prose, that is, Behn's capacious and inventive scandal narrative, *Love Letters Between a Nobleman and his Sister*, is justly read as a 300-page state lampoon; in verse, Behn responded frequently and directly in her dramatic paratexts to both the pretensions of the "half-wits" and to any and all who railed against the new freedoms taken by women of the age, particularly that of female authorship.

⁵⁴³ In her epilogue to *Sir Patient Fancy* (1678), Behn directly answers the slander that was repeatedly levelled at the new vogue of female authorship as an unnatural act and practise, calling out those "half wits", that "unthinking tribe," who lampoon and slander female authors without thought or just cause. Behn's tone, though witty and certainly biting, is fair to the extent that she names no names and allows that she and her female comrades, while rejecting the opinions of fools, do "subscribe" to "all the men of wit". That is, Behn does not reject male leadership in the literary realm, per se, but echoes and upholds the Truewit's sentiment of meritocracy in merely asking that female authors be upheld as legitimate, skilled authors when they "artfully" copy men of "foppery" and "nonsense" in their plays and thereby prove their ability to "write as well as men".

topicality of both the dildo and of the English women who were so suspiciously quick to embrace him. In parsing the individual shot-gun satires of “SD,” however, it is often not as easy to gauge the satirist’s position either for or against the dildo-wielding women he depicts. That is, though the engineer of “SD” clearly opted to forego invective in favour of both a comic mode and ballad form, it is unjust to say he intended his female victims a kindness or show of solidarity in, say, alleging that their vaginas had become over-massive with too much use.

A third purpose, then, already suggested by the celebrated career of the Duchess of Cleveland, perhaps best explains the satirists’ intent, at least ostensibly: disseminating voyeuristic gossip about the sexual intrigues of the day, usually augmented by the degree of celebrity, notoriety, and topicality of his victims and themes. Gossip, whatever the satirists’ other political or ideological aims, was an underlying purpose of much of the age’s sexual satire, a notion adeptly expressed by the anonymous satirist of “Satire (1682),” reminiscent of Wycherley’s gossip-mongering Medley in *The Man of Mode*, who is refreshingly blunt about the satiric enterprise as a means of circulating sexual gossip. Before recounting the Court’s latest affairs, he introduces his satire simply and vividly, foregoing the common pretense to moral outrage:

This way of writing I observed by some
Is introduced by an exordium,
But I will leave to make all that ado,
And in plain English tell you who fucks who.⁵⁴⁴

⁵⁴⁴ 1-4.

Concluding his series of shot-gun stanzas as slyly and as frankly as he begins, he states simply that he'll "say no more, but only this one thing: / All living creatures fuck, except the King".⁵⁴⁵

Reading "SD" as a chronicle of some of the day's most salacious gossip, as an opportunity to air scandalous and/or titillating news of some of the most notorious sexual celebrities of the court, and as a bawdy exercise in imagining its culture in the throes of pseudo-clandestine dildo use best accounts, I contend, for the tradition's tendency to cross factional lines, and indeed its facility in doing so. (I challenge anyone to read the account of ageing merkin-maker Dorothy Spenser, Waller's *Sacharissa*, as anything else.⁵⁴⁶) It also accounts for the predominance of women in the tradition, because whereas male promiscuity and even bisexual behaviour was a classically precedented and expected if not exactly moral or legal commonplace in the early Restoration court, female infidelity, especially on so large and publicized a scale, was a scandalous (and surely titillating) early modern English novelty, to say the least.

⁵⁴⁵ 53-4. It is difficult to interpret this final reference outside of the poem's immediate context. Does the satirist mean to take a jab at critics who daren't risk airing the intrigues of the king directly, and instead take aim at anyone but Charles? Is it meant to jab at those who want to believe that the king is blameless and is merely controlled by his dissolute ministers? Or yet, is the line meant to be more straightforwardly ironic, a humorous joke predicated on the common-knowledge that the king is famous for his sexual intrigues, and undoubtedly king of the "fucksters"?

⁵⁴⁶ That is, the savvy ingenuity of "Old Lady Sunderland" earns her lampoonist's bemused admiration at the report that she has "shaved herself close both above, and below, / to make a payre of whiskers for Seignior Dildoe" (85-88). At this, the lampoonist admits that he "could not but smile" (85). Sunderland is Dorothy Spenser (nee Sidney, 1617-84), Dowager Countess of Sunderland and Waller's 'Sacharissa'. The "brothers" mentioned are Henry Sidney, who is remembered for his connection to William of Orange, but who in 1673 was a member of the Duke of York's house, and Philip Sidney, who was styled Viscount L'isle. Aside from the clear (and successful!) attempt at humour here, another uncommon feature of this stanza is the manner in which the speaker/satirist so clearly states his reaction to this news, which stands apart from the rest of the tradition. This is very useful in corroborating the lightheartedness with which much of the satire – sexual and otherwise – is likely intended in this piece. It's also noteworthy that Sunderland had not been a member of the court for some time – she lived elsewhere and was famous at court only for her immortalization in Waller's poetry and for her connections to her famous brothers Algernon, Henry, and Philip. So she stands apart from the majority of targets in SD as *not* being an active member of the court, further corroborating Overbury's report that the *Seigneur* "touched" all the ladies of England.

Taken together, as we have seen in previous chapters, the “SD” tradition identifies friends of the *Seigneur* on all sides of political, national, and moral divides, including affiliations with warring female courts and male coteries, Catholic and Protestant faiths, English, Dutch, Italian, and French nationalities, pro- and anti-Yorkist politics, ostensibly pious and publicly debauched moral codes. And as we have seen, dildo figuration in broadside ballads, already established the early seventeenth-century, re-surfaced and flourished throughout the Restoration to extend this scope yet further, transcending class barriers and demonstrating that dildos were not seen as the exclusive province of aristocrats, but as a tool ubiquitous even among women of the lower and middling sort.⁵⁴⁷

Thus when we synthesize the complex web of “SD” victims’ political and sexual affiliations – a web whose individual threads can as often mislead as illuminate - we are left with a sense of female dildo use as characteristic of the age, either as an object to be found in every women’s toilette, or as prescribed antidote to the ills begotten by other sexual means, and with topical notoriety, particularly of women reputed for libertine sexual appetites, as the most common link between “SD” victims. (This is quite fitting, I think, for a poem that is, after all, about dildos and those imagined to use them.) However, what makes “SD” unique and particularly instructive among the dildo satire tradition is its encyclopedic cataloguing and innovation of a veritable plethora of uses to which the *Seigneur* could be put – equally sexual, social, and political.

As we saw with the example of the Duchess of Cleveland, a notorious swallower of pricks both royal and common, many women named in “SD” fall prey to the conventional

⁵⁴⁷ See Chapter 3.

assumption that, given their often well-earned reputations for taking illicit lovers of all stripes, they have also added the *Seigneur* to their sexual repertoire, perhaps (as in Cleveland's case) because they have so worn themselves out with their promiscuous behaviour and birthing of bastard children that they were quite literally "fit for just nothing but Seignior Dildoe". Extending beyond pure mischief, however, this logic was often keenly attentive to the material realities of promiscuity, childbirth, and their effects on the female body in an age of rampant syphilis and rudimentary medicine, and borrowed heavily from the speaker's mercantile argument in *Dildoides* that dildos could be purpose-fit to a variety of female consumers, including the manufacture of particularly large dildos for those in possession of a "wide salacious slit / who feels not when child is born." A large subset of women who were deemed prospective friends of *Seigneur Dildoe*, then, were ageing female libertines and/or discarded lovers whose years of lechery had taken a toll on body and beauty, including, at least in her capacity as Charles' former royal mistress, Cleveland herself.⁵⁴⁸ The *Seigneur* thus appears in these cases – or rather, is offered by a comically-motivated, mock-considerate satirist - as a false consolation and further insult to women whose limitless lust has inevitably survived their desirability and/or ability to otherwise pay the wages of sin.⁵⁴⁹

As common in the extant stanzas of "SD", however, are depictions of women that are sympathetic to the female courtier's viewpoint, whether facetiously or in earnest, figuring the *Seigneur* as the preserver and defender of women from a variety of dangers and

⁵⁴⁸ See Pepys' commentary on Cleveland's physical decay, *Diary*, c. 1669. The figure who best exemplifies the dildo as consolation, however, is another of Cleveland's successors, "Doll" or Dorothy Howard – former mistress of the Duke of York – who "no more with his Highness can range, / [so] we'll proffer her therefore this civil exchange, / her Teeth being rotten, the Smell's best below, / and needs must be fitter for Seigneur Dildoe" (45-8).

⁵⁴⁹ Such is the fate, it seems, with "the Countess of Cockpit who knows not her name / Is famous in story for a killing Dame / When all her old lovers forsake her I trow / She must be content with Seigno^r Dildoe." (BLh19.45-8).

disappointments inherent in contemporary court life, libertine and otherwise. Thus the dildo is also prescribed to female courtiers whose desirability remains *too* intact - for whom the unfortunate price of desire and assuming the male prerogative is, rather ironically, a life spent financing common and/or penniless lovers, or of having to endure the presence of fools, attempted rapists, and degenerates.⁵⁵⁰ Thus, the savvy Mary of Modena, Duchess of York, by this point clearly having settled into English culture enough to hear that “Cazzo has diverse intrigues in the court”, takes it upon herself to issue *Seigneur Dildoe* to each of her maids of honour so that they might have the means to both satiate their desire and spurn Cazzo’s troublesome advances, presumably including the ill effects of an unwanted pregnancy or disease. Similarly, and apparently for no fault of her own, Elizabeth Percy, “Countesse of Rafe,” relies on the services of *Seigneur Dildoe* to “preserve herself safe” from “the fierce Haryes” at court, Percy having in fact spurned the advances of a number of unwanted suitors and fended off at least one attempted rapist throughout the 1660s and early 1670s.⁵⁵¹ Elsewhere in satires

⁵⁵⁰ A prime example of the former is our lampoonist’s account of the Countess of Falmouth, who like her forebear Cleveland earned a wide reputation as a notorious lover (and frequent keeper) of great and common alike, and thus “of whom people tell, / her Footmen wear shirts of a Guinny an Ell.” (These would be, as Love informs us, incredibly expensive shirts!) Here the kind lampoonist takes it upon himself to inform an unwitting Falmouth, given that she is somehow ignorant of the innovation, that she “might save the expense, if she did but know / how lusty a young Swinger is Seignior Dildoe” (Od8a.65-68). Taking on a common defence against foppery, in another stanza the lampoonist declares that the fools of the realm could be justly forsaken and elided with the aid of the Seigneur, as “our dainty fine Duchesses have got a Trick, / to doate on a Foole for love of his Prick / but their hopes were undone, did their Graces but know, / the discretion, and Vigour of Seignior Dildoe” (57-60).

⁵⁵¹ 18. Whereas Love reads and glosses the lampoonist’s attack on Elizabeth Percy as primarily occasioned by her husband’s affiliation with the Queen’s household as Master of the Queen’s Horse (c. 1665-1678), I instead take as more pertinent the lampoonist’s topical interest in Percy herself, especially given the precise sexual nature of the allegation. Here, as is common “SD”, the lampoonist takes it upon himself to disseminate an entire sequence of hot topical gossip: before her marriage to Ralph Montague and the Duke’s to Mary of Modena, that is, Percy had allegedly been in hot pursuit of the Duke of York, hoping to become his next duchess. Concurrently, she was put in the difficult position of having to fend off several “Harrys” – at least two keen suitors and an attempted rapist, the former of whom was likely Rochester’s friend, Harry Savile, and the latter of whom were Henry Jermyn, nephew of St. Albans and an infamous seducer, and Harry Sidney, reputed for his good looks. See glosses in Wilson, *Court Satires*.

on court women it had become commonplace to accuse women who refused to take lovers of lesbianism;⁵⁵² here, in keeping with the model of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, it is instead imagined that if a woman was capable of spurning men's advances, it must be because she had the aid of the *Seigneur* to defend (and satiate) her.

In addition to these rather unflattering depictions of the *Seigneur* as the consolation of forsaken women, prick substitute for the needy, or potential preserver of the unwitting and/or beleaguered, more than a few female libertines are shown to in fact choose the *Seigneur* as the superior option, preferring him to their male lovers (whom they have forsaken), and instigating yet another new "fashion" among both the women at court and the dildo satire tradition (Od8a.92). (We may recall that this phenomenon also instigates the mock-heroic battle that culminates the crystalized later versions of "SD," between spurned Cazzo, to whom the Porter now routinely "shows...the door," and conquering dildo, discussed in Chapter 5.) So it is with the spectacularly loutish "Drunken Price" (Henrietta Marie Price, Queen's maid of honour), whose masculine traits are further evinced by her willingness to "be in at all sport" and tendency to be "oft'ner in prison then wayting at Court." Unlike the scathing invective we find against such masculine comportment in the satires of Juvenal and Howe, however, here the satirist remains in the guise of neutral newsmonger, merely relaying the latest news that Price

⁵⁵² This is most true in the case of Frances Teresa Stuart, Duchess of Richmond, with whom Charles II was deeply infatuated in the 1660s and whom he hotly pursued, probably in vain, for more than a decade. Stuart's abstinence from a royal affair earned her the accusation in a 1663 satire ("On the Ladies of the Court") of "playing at flats" with another court lady, none other than Charles' own chief mistress, Barbara, Duchess of Cleveland (7). See also Wilson, *Court Satires*, 3-4, and Pepys, *Diary*, February 8, 1663. Ever tuned in to Cleveland's affairs, Pepys readily believed a wide-spread tale that Cleveland and Stuart even underwent a mock wedding ceremony, attended in the end by the king. Another famous court 'lesbian' and eschewer of men was Lady Elizabeth Harvey, whose masculine traits (including often being seen wearing masculine clothes in public) earned her a reputation for a "long clitoris" and same-sex appetites ("Colin" 45). "Lady Freschville's Song of the Wives" (13) alludes to Harvey as a dildo-like substitute for libidinous wives, approved by husbands in lieu of worse affairs with men.

has “left her old Gallant limping Will Francho, / and is now in the fashion with Seignior Dildoe”.⁵⁵³

And even the publicly pious, alleges the satirist, are not immune to this fashion, and too know the virtues of the Seigneur. Capitalizing on the vogue for all things Aretine, the lampoonist’s depiction of the devout Catholic Queen, Catherine of Braganza, engaging in dildo use with the aid of her Lord Almoner, Philip Howard, is strongly rooted in Aretino’s *Dialogues*, assuming that even the most pious of religious enclaves is in fact a hotbed of clandestine sex: thus we are informed that Lord Howard is confessor not only to the Queen, but also to

all the young Ladys, that come,
And if that Italian, they desire, for to know,
He interprets betweene them, and Seignior Dildoe.

He hath many preferments in Church, and State,
He governs the Conscience of gracious Queene Kate,
And though in the Pulpitt his parts he ne’re show,
Hee’s Father Confessour to Seignior Dildoe.⁵⁵⁴

No less immune to accusations of solitary vice are good Protestants and zealous non-conformists, however, as “Good Lady Bedford,” wife of a Protestant dissenter, is also accused of an assortment of sexual crimes that are “suspected by none” (except the knowledgeable satirist, of course!) because she masturbates while praying in her closet yet conveys such an air of piety.⁵⁵⁵ The only material difference between a Protestant prayer closet and Catholic confessional, it would seem, was the presence of an intermediary.

⁵⁵³ 89-92. Editors have had difficulties contextualizing/verifying these allegations, and I’ve fared no better.

⁵⁵⁴ 94-100. A similar allegation of clandestine dildo use is made of the Duchess of Modena: “The Dutchesse of Modena, who look’t soe high, / Is well contented with this Seignior to lye, / And because that the English nothing of it should know, / For her Gentleman-Usher tooke Seignior Dildoe” (“Additions” 125-8).

⁵⁵⁵ 73. The mother of seven sons and three daughters, Bedford is charged with “pimp[ing] for her Daughter, and ly[ing] with her Sonne” (74), and of then “sen[ding] Robert, to visit his Aunt of Bristow, / Whil’st she pray’d in her

Imagining and developing this possibility more squarely than Butler's *Dildoidea*, however, the *Seigneur* also represented a means for women to gain access to power, whether real or imagined, whole or partial, warranted or unwarranted.⁵⁵⁶ In this light a conspicuous near-absence in the tradition is that of Louise de Keroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth, Charles II's chief mistress of the 1670s, who through her sexual hold over the king was widely reputed to have achieved a more complete and politicized control over him than even Cleveland had before her, and who was arguably, then, the most politically powerful woman of the period.⁵⁵⁷ Portsmouth appears in only a single stanzaic addition to "SD", and even then she appears anonymously, with the audience left to deduce that it is in fact Portsmouth who is alluded to (the association is particularly veiled to a modern reader). Indeed, as Harold Love indicates, what appears at first glance to be a seemingly general satire on a lady's sexual dissatisfaction and power is in fact spoken in the parroted voice of Portsmouth, who challenges the king

Closett with Seignior Dildo" (75-6). Love identifies the named daughter as Lady Diana Varney, widow of Sir Greville Verney, and the Aunt in question is Anne Digby, Countess of Bristol (nee Russell), Lady Bedford's sister-in-law. (Digby's husband, George Digby, second earl of Bristol, was a Catholic.) Although William was infamously sent to the chopping block for the Rye House Plot (1683, *ODNB*), the satire in this stanza (unlike the subsequent stanza) may antedate those events by as much as a decade, aiming chiefly at the wife's sexual excess and deviance rather than her husband and son's involvement in religious/factional politics. Reminiscent of claims made by the railler of "Satire on the Court Ladies", incest is coupled in this account with a mother pimping for her daughter, which are in turn linked with blasphemous onanistic trysts with the Seignior that are disguised as time spent in solitary prayer.

⁵⁵⁶ In another stanza the masculine comportment and 'lesbianism' of infamous court bisexual Lady Harvey is also explicitly politicized, as Harvey is lampooned for creating her own bisexual faction (or "junto"): "When steward & Harvy doe meet & debate / In private of mighty affaires of y^e state / They alwaies admitt to make up y^e Junto / A trustie Butler & signior Dildo" (NWLp.65-68).

⁵⁵⁷ See Nancy Klein Maguire, "The Duchess of Portsmouth: English Royal Consort and French Politician," in *The Stuart Court and Europe: Essays on Politics and Political Culture*, edited by R. Malcolm Smuts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 247-273. Portsmouth's absence is particularly conspicuous given the vehement hatred of Portsmouth at the English court, and the extent to which satirists were unafraid to voice their scathing dislike in other satires, of which Dorset's "Colin," alluded to above, is exemplary. It is likely that in 1673, when "SD" first appeared, Portsmouth's influence was too great and Charles' unwavering loyalty to her too complete for the satirists responsible – likely Rochester and/or members of the Buckingham faction at court – to risk slandering her, should they have wished to, in a satire which initially circulated at such close proximity to the king.

directly: “Great Sir, I pray, what doe you intend, / To fumble so long att the Galleryes end? / If you fuck mee noe better, I’le have you to know / I’le lay you aside for Signior Dildo.”⁵⁵⁸ (Love identifies Portsmouth as the speaker of this stanza because her apartments were situated at the end of the Long Gallery at Whitehall, referencing “the Gallery’s end”.)

The anonymity, however, is telling here. It suggests, perhaps, that the lampoonist could or would not risk libelling Portsmouth more openly – that her reach made such a move dangerous, given Portsmouth’s political weight under Charles II. Yet other satirists did not scruple to slander Portsmouth openly and vehemently, even as early as 1673.⁵⁵⁹ Whatever the satirist’s purpose, the anonymity of the satire inevitably creates an openness and general aim that would otherwise have been contained if Portsmouth were more explicitly named or referenced. We may deduce that this is Portsmouth speaking, but we may as easily imagine this account as a more general satire on the whole of the female sex, who are seen ordering their male lovers – even those as high as the king – in service of their sexual desires. What’s more, this account is additionally unbound by a narrative framework or satirist’s spin. In Nashe’s *Choise of Valentines*, by contrast, Frances’ use of a dildo to satisfy herself after Tomalin has failed her is succeeded by a string of Tomalin’s invective against both whore and dildo, making it abundantly clear that, from the male subject position, this behaviour is to be condemned as that which undermines long-held hierarchies and dynamics of power. Here,

⁵⁵⁸ 69-72.

⁵⁵⁹ See, for example, Dorset’s (?) “Colin”.

however, the audience is left quite on its own to deduce what it will, leaving the ballad performer to convey tone and a sense of intended meaning, or the reader to interpret what he (or she) will from memory or the page.

When one considers the players depicted here, the intimacy of bawdry and sexual politics is especially remarkable. That is, if the sexual content here is politically-encoded, it surely pertains as much to the politics of sex and gender as sites of an age-old struggle for power as to the politics of the nation and its factional strife. Indeed, in the commandeering figure of Portsmouth, especially, these discourses are seen to be intrinsically linked. Is it unthinkable, horrifying, or titillating to imagine that the King's favoured and pampered mistress would be brazen enough to take issue with his sexual skills, and threaten to reject his allegedly fumbling advances in favour of an inanimate device should he fail to perform satisfactorily? The sexual power of the lady evinced here might be more safely contained if Portsmouth were simply called out by name in the stanza, and if her French-Catholic, tyrannical, and meddlesome ways were more explicitly denounced – as they were in countless other satires which spared no explicit punches – as the malevolent reason she would have the cheek to order Charles about in this manner.

Instead, Portsmouth's identity remains obscured and/or implicit, and these biographical details are omitted entirely, leading to a moment that is rare in a Restoration lampoon, but that is ubiquitous throughout "SD": a moment in which, much in the manner of Nashe's *Choise of Valentines*, we find a scene between a man and a woman in which the lady desires and demands to be sexually satisfied – by the lord of the nation, no less – and is willing to cast aside even the King and his lavish preferment if this doesn't come to pass. Perhaps most unlikely of

all, the satirist voices no judgment on Portsmouth's actions, however much we are expected to pass it on our own – and what's more, the king is denied the courtesy extended to Tomalin in Nashe's parallel tale to respond to Portsmouth's demands. It is Portsmouth who speaks, not the king. It is most probable, of course, that the satirist simply trusts his Restoration audience to read the political implications of this scene as emblematic of a nation in hierarchy-inverted chaos without needing to pre-determine their reading. But it appears within the context of bawdy gossip, and so perhaps it is just as thrilling as it is horrific to imagine these scenes of subordinate ascendancy, unfiltered and unchecked.

Although unmatched throughout the tradition, this stanza colours the scores of stanzas throughout "SD" which depict women pursuing and fulfilling their sexual, social, and political desires or "delights" in ways that do not always rely on their subordination to a more powerful male patron, sexual or otherwise, in order to do so. The *Seigneur*, though masculinized, is their social subordinate, and is ruled by the desirous women he 'seduces.' As always in the comic dildo satire tradition, it seems, the *Seigneur* is ever at the ready should desire strike – ensuring that female insatiability and the repercussions of other forms of pleasure may not be quite the impediment to female advancement in the social and political spheres that it once was. He is, indeed, an anti-phallic woman's tool and delight, whatever commentators or readers might see fit to make of this.

Conclusion

As I have argued in this chapter and throughout this dissertation, it is crucial to consider *Seigneur Dildoe*, Restoration clandestine satires on women, and the women therein who are

said to bed the *Cazzos* and *Seigneurs* of England as intrinsically linked not only to the period's affairs of state but also to the culture's acute concerns and cultural innovations surrounding gender, sexuality, and social upheaval. The satiric evidence provided in this chapter particularly confirms that for a brief but satirically potent period at the beginning of the Restoration – before open-ended and discursively multiple debates on such subjects as female desire and the readiness of dildos were muted by bitter factionalism and the Reformation of Manners – the rise of Restoration women in publicly promiscuous, celebrity roles gave new imperative to age-old debates on female sexuality and virtue, spurred on by decaying notions of the superior one-sex male body as a sound basis for sexual and political order.⁵⁶⁰ The satiric figure of the dildo, in all its fecund heritage and inherent disruptiveness, and particularly when wielded in the comic, politically interventionist mode of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, was perfectly poised to articulate these topos and with a considerable degree of wit and complexity.

The comic dildo satire and the *Seigneur Dildoe* joke reached its zenith during the reign of Charles II, then, not just because of the Restoration court's fabled love for comedy, bawdry, and debauchery, or because of the period's localized crises of absolute royal authority and factional strife, but also because of its liminal position, as established by Laqueur, Foucault, and Habermas respectively, at the decline of the one-sex model, the advent of modernity and the imperative to discourse, and at the emergence of the public sphere which allowed for new players - including Catholics, women, and other social subordinates – to permeate society's upper echelons and vie for power within the public sphere.⁵⁶¹

⁵⁶⁰ See Laqueur, *Making Sex*, and Hobbes, *Leviathan*.

⁵⁶¹ See, for instance, Chapter 3's discussion of Anne Hyde, who was born a commoner but was poised to become the nation's future Queen upon marrying the Duke of York.

With the imagined possibility of women's access to power within the public realm through their liberation from a sex-based dependence on men, *Seigneur Dildoe* echoes and reiterates women's subservience to her basic libidinal instincts under the one-sex model, unable to imagine female desire for anything other than penetrative sex, but also frees female desire from its reproductive function and presents the flesh-and-blood male as potentially obsolete and disposable within a new order of things. In the figure of the masculinized but bollocks-free *Seigneur*, then, the Restoration dildo appears as a double bind, a figure of fundamental irony both affording power and delimiting it, a fittingly mock-heroic, incongruous emblem of its culture's precarious and fearful uncertainty about the true basis of power.

While "SD" does not champion female sexual autonomy, precisely, and so is not what we might properly call feminist (or proto-feminist) in its discernible aims, neither does it leave the usual phallogocentric frameworks of misogyny altogether intact, clearly setting out to both defamiliarize and subvert phallic rule, ridiculing the precarious fallacy of basing the social and political orders on the fallible male body, and on the demeaning absurdity of metonymically reducing human beings to their genitalia. Indeed, as we see with the speaker's self-characterization as his mistress' "fucking post" – a kind of human dildo – in Rochester's "The Imperfect Enjoyment", under the decayed one-sex phallogocentric model it was not merely the *Seigneur* but also the *Cazzo* who had been reduced to an instrument defined by its sexual function (or what is more common in the Restoration literary imagination, dysfunction).

Undoubtedly, the women of "SD" do not appear in an altogether flattering light; but they, at least, are represented with some measure of voice and individuality. It is the women in the tradition who speak: marshalling men to fetch and carry at their whim, ordering male lovers

to fulfil their desires, laughing, speaking, and gazing down from superior heights. In the 'B' versions, particularly, it is the women of the piece who ultimately possess wit enough to preempt *Cazzo's* unwelcome advances and to discern his reactionary battle with the *Seigneur* as the absurdity that it is. Under the satiric ethos of the Truewits, it should be recalled, such wit is to be championed, while irrational folly – here that of the *Cazzo* first and foremost – is to be ridiculed. In the comic subversion of "SD", then, the men of England, having wreaked social and political havoc in reducing themselves to their central organ, are laughed at in ridicule by its women, who symbolically gaze upon and are positioned above the ridiculous, phallogocentric display unfolding before them, indicating – almost, and in hindsight, fleetingly – that perhaps the symbolic, uncontested primacy of the phallic order, as of the Stuart dynasty and of absolute monarchy more broadly, had been irrevocably undermined at the end of the seventeenth century, and that its reign – for a time – had begun a haphazard descent.

Epilogue: The Afterlife of *Seigneur Dildo*

In a rear view coloured by centuries of Whig ascendancy, the decline of early modern bawdry and English libertinism, and the rise of the two-sex model following the Revolution of 1688, it was not the reign of the phallus but the prominence of the satiric dildo in Restoration literature and culture which appears as a figure in decline, indeed as a short, fleeting, and rather peripheral episode in the nation's history of literature and sexuality. Sexually passive women who under the model of sexual differentiation possessed no greater desire than to be loving wives and mothers came to have no need for *Seigneur Dildo* or his range of services, whether sexual or political, and those women who did were increasingly figured in the eighteenth-century literary imagination either as the stuff of pornographic male fantasy or as monstrous, unnatural aberrations from the polite norm.⁵⁶² Increasingly, the dildo trope had no explicit place in satiric eighteenth-century canons, as even highly euphemised echoes of the dildo motif as satiric "little man" – in book two of Swift's *Gulliver Travels* (1726), wherein Gulliver travels as a six-inch man within Brobdingnag, and Fielding's *Tom Thumb* (1730), for instance – became increasingly rare.⁵⁶³

The dildo motif continued to thrive in clandestine pornography and fantasy prose narratives, as *Dildoïdes* in particular was published and republished within pornographic print collections throughout the century, but this mode of highly eroticized clandestine text had lost the political potency and cultural centrality of its Restoration counterparts, at least until the

⁵⁶² See Fielding, *The Female Husband* (1741).

⁵⁶³ For an eye-opening reading of the little man as dildo euphemism in eighteenth-century satire, see Adminton, *The little everyman*.

1790s and the French Revolution gave new imperative to sexually subversive texts.⁵⁶⁴ Under the reformed moral climate particularly of the mid-to-late eighteenth-century, then, the English populace quickly forgot, through a kind of selective amnesia, that the *Seigneur* had once been figured and imagined as both a foreign commodity and a mainstay of any woman's boudoir, one which could be imported, domestically manufactured, bought and sold in London shops, and routinely found in the possession of any woman in England (young or old, rich or poor, married or single), comprising as basic and indispensable a part of her toilette as powders or essence.

Though as chronicled in previous chapters "SD" and the euphemised *Seigneur* proliferated to the end of the seventeenth century and even into the first decades of the eighteenth, the dildo motif of the early eighteenth-century took on a markedly retrospective view, chronicling the dildo's progress in the libertine courts of the past but denying its presence in the increasingly polite social climate of the present. "Monsieur Thing's Origins: or, Seignior D—'s Adventures in Britain", a satiric dildo ballad of 1722 and the last extant verse satire of its kind, takes precisely such a view. Here, the fiction of the dildo's Restoration origins is displaced definitively onto Catholic France, and the *Seigneur*-turned-*Monsieur* is transformed from a loveable rake and comic hero into a figure of scathing misogyny reminiscent of the male figures of Rochester's *Sodom* – one whose masculinist subject position is exclusively favoured and who reviles both his passive female conquests and the drudgery of the task. When met with a pair of sexually assertive women – tribades who demean the *Monsieur* by taking turns "strapping him to their middle" – we are met with a tirade of Juvenalian invective at the monstrosity of

⁵⁶⁴ See Darnton, *Literary Underground*.

this usurpation, transforming the Restoration predilection for indulgence, revelry, and comic subversion into bare-faced hatred.

But it is important not to allow such revisionist retrospectives to govern our view of the dildo's figurative past as a heterogeneous trope that persisted in comic, subversive form and as a material tool in aid of women's pleasure more often than not. From the modern viewpoint – as indeed the so-called 'lesbian' and theoretical dildo debates of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries attest, due to the mores of our own unchecked phallogentrism, we too often meet the history of the dildo trope with the expectation of its phallogentrism, its misogyny, and its uniformity across time and space, when indeed we expect to find it in the past at all, imagining times and cultures preceding our own to be more rudimentary or demure in their imaginings of sexual pleasure.

The most recent of these theoretical inquiries into the dildo's cultural presence and influence, published in 2010, has argued that the dildo's history is relatively short (approx. 150 years), that it is always necessarily and essentially a phallus, and that "although there are records and pictures of phallic symbols throughout history, it was not until the early to mid-1800s that the dildo appeared, quite openly, as a viable sexual tool...[and] valid medical device to protect women, as a benefit to men, from hysteria".⁵⁶⁵ A large part of the imperative and significance of this dissertation, then, has been to provide a literary and material history of the dildo in proof that this to be patently not the case, as indeed the dildo's history as a literary, figurative, and material presence in the classical and English contexts demonstrates that like

⁵⁶⁵ Jeanine Minge and Amber Lynn Zimmerman, "Power, Pleasure, and Play: Screwing the Dildo and Rescripting Sexual Violence", 2010, 333.

the phallus, gender, or sexuality more generally, the dildo has a longstanding history of thousands of years whose connotative and even denotative meanings have shifted constantly and significantly, and continue to shift in our own time.⁵⁶⁶

“Despite appearances”, as Lawrence Stone reminds us, “human sex takes place mostly in the head. The Freudian assumption that sex is an unchanging infrastructure and that there has been no change in the strength of libido over time has therefore no basis in reality, so deeply is it overlaid by cultural norms”.⁵⁶⁷ And as Laqueur has reminded us, the norms and fluxes in our cultural conceptions of sexuality are always motivated by political ends and carried out through discursive means, including those which we bring to bear on the sexualities of the past. Despite the inability to ever fully escape the blinders of our own political and contextual frameworks, however, there remains an optimistic note to be gleaned in all of this: the dildo is not, as we have long thought, a straightforwardly phallogocentric device imagined and wielded exclusively by men, nor has its historical and literary purpose been to inscribe or reinscribe the universal dominion of the immutable phallus. Instead, the dildo, in both its material presence and its discursive form as a satiric figure, has largely acted to defamiliarize and subvert this otherwise apparent fact.

When we peer into clandestine satire of the Restoration, then, we expect to find the dildo in the obscene, quasi-pornographic verse of Rochester, of course, in pornographic accounts of female same-sex activity, perhaps, but above all in satiric denunciations of such

⁵⁶⁶ See Introduction, for instance, for the dildo’s denotative shift in meaning from Nathaniel Bailey’s 1735 dictionary gloss to that of Francis Grose, *A Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (1785; 1796), which defines the dildo squarely as a penis substitute: that is, as “an implement resembling the virile member, for which it is said to be substituted, by nuns, boarding school misses, and others obliged to celibacy, or fearful of pregnancy”.

⁵⁶⁷ *Family, Sex, and Marriage, 1500-1800* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977) 484.

activity. But, happily, the satiric dildo subverts these expectations and is to be found both here and well beyond. The dildo motif, as we have seen, also lurks in early modern and Restoration drama, in lyrics, letters, ballads, and memoirs, in commercial advertisements, in newsletters and other early forms of journalism, and of course, in both prose and verse satire in a number of tones, purposes, and sub-genres. We expect the Restoration dildo trope to be new, to be a Catholic interloper, to be an innovation of the court of Charles II or of Rochester's poetics of obscenity; instead, we find it only among the greatest, most complex, and most culturally potent in a vast and rich tradition of dildo satires rooted in Grecian comedy, bawdry, and political subversion. We expect it to lack dimension, to eschew nuance and an interest in a multiplicity of themes, but here, again, we are pleasantly incorrect. Instead, we find a tradition that shows the Restoration literary imagination in some strange sense at its clandestine finest, most comically attractive, and certainly its most diverting: responding to the great impotencies and uncertainties of the age not with nihilistic self-pity, reactionary fear, or escapist fantasy, but with humour, revelry, and a sense of acute possibility in the anti-phallic heroism of *Seigneur Dildo*.

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Agglomerative versions

- Od8. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS don b 8. Comp. Sir William Haward.
- BLa40. British Library Additional MS 73540.
- BLh17. British Library Harleian MS 7317.
- NLWp. Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales Powis Papers. Formerly uncatalogued; currently lost. Transc. Sir William Herbert, 3rd Earl of Cherbury.

Love’s ‘B’ group versions and first printing (“Signior Dildo”)

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- Np42. University of Nottingham Library, MS Portland Collection, Pw V42.
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