already made it into a new canon of women writers. It opens further possibilities for studying early modern women writers by modelling a profitable alliance with cultural studies. Still, the volume has by no means exhausted the avenues by which we ought to approach the study of “Women, Writing, and the Reproduction of Culture.” Are there cases, we also may ask, of women’s writing which is not resistant in our terms, but which nonetheless acted centrally to reproduce early modern culture(s)? Tudor and Stuart Britain clearly did not see the liberation of women. To what extent did women, and women’s texts, reproduce the culture which kept this from happening?

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Ian Frederick Moulton. *Before Pornography: Erotic Writing in Early Modern England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. Pp. xiii, 268.

In these days of rising costs, falling currencies, and vanishing book-buying budgets, *Before Pornography: Erotic Writing in Early Modern England* stands out as deserving to be purchased by and for a wide spectrum of readers. Drawing on years of extensive reading (much of it in dusty manuscript archives), Ian Moulton explores — in fluid, well-polished prose — the representation and circulation of erotic desires and sexual acts from roughly the early sixteenth to the late seventeenth centuries. Among its many valuable features, this book is especially noteworthy for its side-by-side consideration of hetero- and homoerotic discourses, as well as its investigation of selected European authors and texts (in particular, Aretino).

For readers who might not be overly familiar with the last decade or so of early modern gender and sexuality studies, *Before Pornography*’s introductory chapter sets the theoretical stage and gracefully establishes the main glossary of terms. Dealing with much-discussed issues such as the development of privacy and the implications of bodily humours, Moulton positions his study as a contribution to the ongoing investigation of the ways in which early modern erotic writing was an arena for the negotiation and contestation of gender, the family, and national identity. In this section, Moulton also clarifies his position that erotic writing is any text that deals with human sexual activity; love, importantly, is neither necessary nor even, as the rest of the book shows, all that common.

Moulton also uses his introduction to explain his use of the term “pornography.” While he has a solid grasp of the problems surrounding historical anachronism and the need for historical specificity, I confess that, by the end of this discussion, I didn’t fully comprehend why the term — which really appears quite seldom in the rest of the volume — was necessary. While Moulton says that many scholars equate early modern erotic representation with pornography, I’m just not convinced that’s been the case (at least since about the mid-1980s).

The only chapter with which I wasn't wholly satisfied is the first. I commend Moulton on his impressive fossicking about in the manuscript repositories of the British Library, the Folger, the Huntington, and elsewhere. However, the argument that the erotic poetry extant in heterogeneous miscellanies represents and shaped early modern attitudes towards sex and gender seems rather familiar. Moulton's careful scrutiny of these battered manuscript collections certainly suggests intersections in readers' minds among eroticism, philosophy, religion, and politics; however, I hoped for but did not find a full discussion of just how he believes the actual *shaping* of early modern identities was furthered through the collecting, scribbling, reading, and coterie sharing of erotic poetry. Of course, Moulton isn't the only scholar who makes a claim for the identity-shaping effects of written texts without delving deeply into just how such creation and metamorphosis is supposed to have occurred. I did, though, quite like Moulton's extended discussion of manuscript circulation amongst women; his thoughts on Margaret Bellasys and possible lesbian panic were particularly delicious.

Chapter Two really gets the interpretative ball rolling. Devoted to exploring the connections between erotic writing, effeminacy, and national identity, this section goes beyond the already myriad examinations of such anxieties in the public theatre to address the ways in which non-dramatic erotic texts represent gender disorder and foreign contagion. That said, one of the real treats of this chapter is, in fact, Moulton's exploration of Fletcher and Massinger's play *The Custom of the Country* (1619) — such a relief after drowning for a decade or more in the Shakespearean lagoon. As Moulton shows, Fletcher and Massinger's depiction of voracious female sexual desires in the context of an all-male brothel(!) gets to the heart of the period's anxieties about male effeminization. Moulton then goes on to relate debates over the morality of poetry to the place Sidney and Spenser found for erotic writing within the constitution of a gentleman. One of his main insights in this section is the extent to which Sidney's *Defense of Poesie* upholds the virtue of erotic writing. Where Moulton really shines in this chapter, though, is in his unpacking of the significance of the burning of Marlowe's translation of ten of Ovid's elegies. Here the boundaries between private and public truly blur, as the erotic and gender dissidence of Marlowe's poems is shown to contain a dangerous narrative of effeminacy and masculine sexual failure.

It is not Ovid, however, but another denizen of the Italian peninsula that Moulton identifies as the *sine qua non* of threatening vice for upstanding early modern Englishmen. What Machiavelli represented for political disorder, Moulton contends, the *diabolo incarnato* Pietro Aretino — in some ways a latter-day Ovid — signified for infectious effeminacy and even sodomy. Aretino is too-little known in scholarly Anglophone circles. *Before Pornography* does a great service in reviving his memory.

Beginning with a history of Aretino himself (a well-heeled, well-connected, socially mobile sodomite) and an explication of his writings (primarily the *sonetti lussuriosi* and the *Ragionamenti*), Moulton establishes the politically sensitive nature of the author and his works. He follows that with a sufficiently detailed

account of the late-sixteenth- and seventeenth-century circulation and publication history of Aretino's works in England. Of primary importance is Moulton's substantiated claim that, following Aretino's death, his political significance and social critique were elided and replaced by a concern for his erotic lewdness.

Moulton's analysis of Aretino's legacy in early modern England is based on the view that the author's "image" involved a "compelling mix of fascination, admiration, and horror" (p. 157). As "Aretine" emerged as an adjective for illicit desire and a range of corrupt sexual practices, many English people roundly condemned the devilish Italian writer. Some others, though, such as Thomas Nashe, defended and celebrated him. Chapter 4 explores in detail Nashe's socially dissident appropriation of the Aretine mantle. The poet's "Choice of Valentines," Moulton argues, draws on Aretino's treatment of female sexual power (warm dildo at the ready) to caution against a loss of masculine authority. The final six pages in this chapter drill down into the poem's manuscript heritage, an obvious source of antiquarian pleasure for the author.

Instead of a formal conclusion, *Before Pornography* closes with a chapter about Aretine eroticism and Ben Jonson's works for the public stage. Returning to the subject of poetry, effeminacy, and national identity, Moulton charts Jonson's transformation from one who scripted appealing, erotically disordered characters to a playwright who sought to dissociate his own writings from effeminate bawdry. The gender confusions and erotic ribaldry that are rife in *Volpone* give way to the stern anti-feminism of *Epicoene*, a rewriting of Aretino's play *Il marescalco* that scrubs away the earlier text's vision of sexual libertinism's effeminizations. It is with his discussion of *Epicoene* that Moulton makes a firm link to the subject of pornography, arguing that it is this erasure of concerns about effeminacy that points to the future development of pornographic representation — a tantalizing end for such a pleasing book.

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Georgina Dopico Black. *Perfect Wives, Other Women: Adultery and Inquisition in Early Modern Spain*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001. Pp. xx, 307.

Perfect Wives, Other Women, is a theoretically engaged, highly original study that examines the intensely scrutinized body of the "wife" in three disparate sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish texts: Fray Luis de León's *La perfecta casada*, a 1583 conduct manual from which Dopico Black borrows the "perfect wife" of her own title; Pedro Calderón de la Barca's 1629 wife-murder play, *El médico de su honra*; and *Los empeños de una casa*, a *comedia de enredos* (akin to farce) written in 1683 by the Mexican nun, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, herself a "bride of Christ," as Dopico Black incisively notes. Through a sophisticated integration of cultural history, etymology, and critical theory, Dopico Black uncovers what she calls an "inquisitorial hermeneutic" (p. 12) that connects this wifely body to that of two