

The Devil between Your Legs

Every woman possesses the capability to frighten away the prince of evil, given her innate status as female (or one who owns a cunt). But why cunt? The word, like *bitch* and *whore*, were not always so negatively associated. Most negative words that have come to mean something monstrously feminine have their roots in old women-centered religions of the Eastern world, and it is only recently that the male dominated West has decided to use what Inga Muscio argues was “always ours” to actively harm women (Muscio 9).

Muscio posits the cunt as the ticket by which women around the world will be united to stand up for ourselves and relearn how to love our bodies, ourselves, and our environment. Her eye-catching title (*Cunt*) certainly starts the ball rolling, but it isn't enough to simply shout a “bad” word from the rooftops. What are we to do with the cunt? What have other people done with the cunt? It has meant many things through the ages, but most agree that it's been a while since it's meant something positive.

My primary source for this research is a pamphlet of pornography by Thomas Rowlandson, who was an engraver/artist from the late 18th and early 19th century (the Georgian into the Victorian era). He's most known for his satire and humor, and most of his work depicted humans with cartoonish qualities. He also has an impressive body of pornographic work. Some of this was printed for just his friends, while some of it was printed for the masses. For the considerable paper trail that he left, there is still plenty of speculation about his work and his intentions.

Though Thomas Rowlandson was known to be a bit of a comedian, a great deal of his cartoons appear to be hiding inside jokes: for example, *The Hairy Prospect*. The piece depicts a

woman lifting her skirts up to expose herself to a nearby demon, who howls in terror as he turns his face. Though it seemed to be well-received, no one to my knowledge thought to question



what exactly was going on in this picture. What were Rowlandson's intentions when he drew this? Was he having a laugh? Was he referencing some kind of phraseology or tall tale that his immediate audience would have recognized, but has since been lost to time? This image appears in a chap book (a cheap pamphlet intended for street peddling printed between 1500 to 1800) filled with other erotica, and the purposes of the remaining images seem clear enough, if the accompanying poems are any

clue. Even the attached poem for this image seems a bit curious: though his trademark irreverence is displayed through the crude terminology like "shagg'd about with hair," he also says that Satan was frightened of the "grim" display (Rowlandson 20). What makes a vagina grim? Where does this adjective come from? The world of medicine? Law? Religion? What do men have to say about it? What do women have to say about it? How do those answers differ, and what school of thought did Rowlandson belong to?

Rowlandson's humorous application of the cunt complicates Muscio's idea of the angry cunt, and my research has provided me with more questions than answers. Given all of this uncertainty, I think that the real finding within this centuries-long conversation is the uncertainty, or the paradoxical relationship between the cunt and the satire. Most members of this conversation have called the cunt one thing: shameful, nasty, weird, or some other insensitive adjective. However, I think that satire is the perfect vehicle by which to tell others about the cunt and all the amazing powers it possesses, because satire is supposed to be dark comedy that

prompts thoughts about uncomfortable truths. Womanhood can come from a dark place: thousands of women each year die from domestic violence, experience sexual assault, and even more die from childbirth and other curable diseases in developing countries. This research doesn't even begin to attempt to understand why these things happen or attempt to help break the "glass ceiling" that still lingers throughout developed countries. It is my goal to simply illuminate humor in the face of inequality and fear as a not-often used vehicle that isn't recognized for its elusive yet unique potential to drive change and discussion, and to encourage more discussion about this paradoxical uncertainty that has plagued women for centuries.

I believe that Thomas Rowlandson wished to reestablish the cunt as the life-giving force that it is but was aware that he'd have a difficult time getting his peers on board. He sensed a correlation between satire and the cunt as a form of demonized femininity that few else have noticed or have been willing to utilize, in either seriousness or humor. Thus, Rowlandson's art, and specifically *The Hairy Prospect*, aims to prompt laughter in the face of the cunt, and therefore restores the vitality of the cunt through shared hilarity.

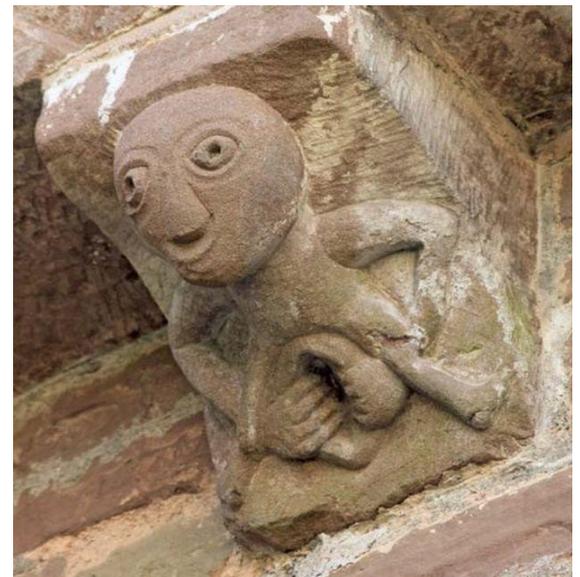
The Hairy Prospect both beckoned to the past and looked to the future through his eye-catching satire, and where he fits in this timeline of monstrous femininity and demonized cunts illuminates an important change in the way the vagina would be viewed for a long time after. Though his work is not extremely well known (and thus it'd be difficult to assert that his work directly influenced subsequent depictions of the vagina), his whimsy highlights something curious, entertaining, and rather fascinating about the concealable yet everlasting nature of womanhood. Humor¹, and specifically satire, is a more applicable vehicle for this conversation than one would initially think because satire is dark comedy in the face of truth that we don't

¹ To begin to understand where exactly humor stands within this body of work would require much more time and is best left to people more qualified than I.

want to admit to, and it prompts more questions and conversations than answers. This uncertainty parallels the fear and power associated with the cunt, which makes the cunt a fantastic embodiment of satire².

Renaissance/Early Modern Period (Rowlandson's predecessors)

Prior to Rowlandson's work, the bulk of the "cunt conversation" was dominated by the Renaissance/Reformation period, which was marked by a widespread religious revival. As such, most of the art that was produced during this time was heavily influenced by biblical imagery. As one could expect, none of the art was particularly humorous. This heavily influenced biblical imagery permeated every aspect of life, and women's rights reached a new low in the Western World. Vaginas and their owners were something to be kept hidden under multiple heavy layers of clothes and were told to "keep silent in church" (*NIV Bible*, 1 Cor 14:34).



The closest *recurring* equivalent to the vagina-demon motif that I could find was the Sheela-na-gig, which, unsurprisingly, also doesn't answer any questions in a straightforward manner. She too is cloaked in uncertainty like *The Hairy Prospect*. The Sheela is a reappearing character found on Gothic cathedrals throughout the United Kingdom. She appears as a cartoonish naked woman with her knees to her chest, pulling her legs apart to reveal an exaggerated vulva.

² I want to note that this project aims to provide a general overview of the history of the cunt. When discussing this, one cannot forget the importance of the Eastern world, the queer vagina, the history of humor, and other topics that are not covered in this paper for the sake of time.

Most scholars have compared her to a gargoyle of sorts. Still, it seems a bit strange that something so vulgar would appear in the Puritanical part of the world. As such, scholars disagree wildly over why she's there and what role she plays. Some have speculated of her presence in Celtic mythology, citing her as the "old crone" who appears to teach a young male hero a lesson by tempting him to sin. Some have jumped on this idea and called her a "warning" toward young Christian men about the dangers of lust. But, some archaeologists have found evidence of the Sheela's vulva being rubbed repeatedly, and that has led to speculation about the Sheela as a positive talisman; she could be rubbed for good luck much like a Buddha? There is also some writing: albeit sporadic and few: about the potential apotropaic effects that the Sheela brings. This seems to insinuate that some understand the inherent power and vitality of the vagina, but that they are few and overpowered by the voices who shout with fear.

Albrecht Durer was an engraver/woodcutter from the century prior to Rowlandson. Though the voluptuousness of Durer's figures correlates with Rowlandson's style, Durer is far less lewd than Rowlandson. None of his art is supposed to be funny, either. This can most likely be attributed to the fact that Durer is firmly established in the Reformation period (~1517-1645), which was marked by art that was heavily religious. Thus, most of Durer's work consists of altarpieces and depictions of biblical imagery, but he has a few works that stand out. Figure 2, titled *The Four Witches* (alternate names: *The Four Naked Women*, *The Four Sorceresses*, *Scene in a Brothel*) depicts four naked women. Though the women are again well-rounded in figure, none of them display their vagina. Moreover, only one of them displays her breasts. There is also a startling lack of demonic imagery. With the exception of the skull on the ground and the small

beast hiding in the mirror on the left, nothing distinguishes these four “witches” from any other four naked women.

Another Durer piece, simply titled *The Witch*, (Figure 3) also lacks a graphic depiction of a vagina. It’s still quite indecent, and the Witch is riding atop a goat, which is an occult symbol.

The Witch in question shares a lot of similarities with other crone-type figures, including a hooked nose, wrinkly skin, and drooping breasts³. Figure 4, titled *Vanitas, or Avarice* illustrates a similar crone-type figure, but instead with intent to warn viewers against



greed⁴. She holds a bag of gold in her hands, indicative of her lust for power or money. Her wrinkled face and drooping breasts show hints of past beauty, but it is implied that her pursuit of material gain is what caused her aesthetic downfall. Even though there are no vaginas present, the vagina has once again been demonized, and it’s not in the name of humor.



³ Even though she isn’t exposing her vagina, most of my 21st century readers found her to be adequately vulgar.

⁴ Most of my 21st century readers also found her adequately vulgar.

Since none of the other art examples are willing to show a vagina as blatantly as Rowlandson does, it can be firmly established that the vagina holds a kind of inherent power that most are afraid to depict or attempt to grasp. In addition, since the images that have vaginas either heavily hinted at or barely concealed tend to involve demonic imagery or references, it can also be established that the vagina is something to be feared, or to be hidden away. This aligns with the Western ideologies that keep information about the vagina hard to reach, but Rowlandson belonged to the Western world as well. Why did he decide to make fun?

The inherent fear of the vagina and its innate purchasing power goes back as far as humor does, but few have ever attempted to connect the two ideas. Women of the middle ages were not exempt from demonization, as a number of outrageous tests were constructed to verify a woman's virginity. These included stepping over a wand or broomstick handle, to being forced to don a "chastity mantle" that wouldn't fit false virgins (or would rip open to reveal the buttocks of an unfaithful woman), to attempting to hold tight to a young steer with a greased tail, to having her urine inspected (since it was believed that the urine of a virgin contained the power to do things like restore sight and heal impurities) (Bernau 64). The sexual imagery isn't subtle, and the humiliation is ripe. Also, if women were suspected of being a "false virgin" on their wedding night, her close relatives (siblings, parents, aunts or uncles) would have to enter her bedroom and inspect the bedsheets for blood, or simply vouch for her virginity with their knowledge of the events of her young adulthood (Bernau 62). Clearly, a woman's word is not her own. Furthermore, a woman's "private" parts are not her own.⁵ If the woman is property, then her vagina is the proof of purchase. However, another virginity test consisted of drinking from a horn that would "stick to the lips of a cuckold" (Bernau 68). In this case, it is the man who is

⁵ For more instances of a woman's body as a source of spectacle and grotesquerie, see Mary Toft and the case of the 17 Rabbits, and Lady Flora and the case of the mistaken pregnancy.

humiliated, not the woman. This has been a source of disagreement between scholars for many years. In the event of a virginity test, who was punished? The man, for “letting his woman run wild”? The woman, for infidelitous behavior? The family, for the “contaminated goods” that they attempted to give away to her fiancé?

This could be why *The Hairy Prospect* is considered to be so lewd, even centuries later. If a vagina is property that doesn't belong to the woman it's attached to, to assert your power over another party using your vagina could be considered theft, incredibly disrespectful, or an abomination. But vaginas aren't property anymore (not supposed to be, on paper). But modern readers are still offended, or at the very least startled by the depiction in *The Hairy Prospect*. Thus, the power within a vagina isn't dependent on who it belongs to.

A similar image (Figure 5) to *The Hairy Prospect* appears with a fable written by Jean de La Fontaine. The fable, *The Devil of Pope-Fig Island*, tells the story of a farmer who makes a bet with the devil to determine who can dig better trenches for seeds. The farmer's wife, when she sees that her husband is in danger of losing, presents herself to the devil and explains that her husband “tried out his claws” on her and left the “gaping wound” that she is revealing by lifting her skirts (her vagina). The devil, afraid of his opponent's might, forfeits the competition and runs away (Blackledge 10). The similarities between this and *The Hairy Prospect* are striking, but this lacks the focal point of Rowlandson's drawing: her vagina. We clearly see what's happening in this picture: great care is taken to depict the devil's fear, we are afforded a small glance at her buttocks, and her smirk is evident enough. The poem was written in 1674, which is before Rowlandson, but the accompanying drawing was not published until 1762, which is firmly in the Rowlandson era. This differs from the Rowlandson piece, which was drawn before the accompanying poem was penned, and the drawing and poem are by the same person. Thus,

The Devil on Pope-Fig Island (drawing) can be thought of as a commission to illustrate a story, rather than an original comedic illustration (like *The Hairy Prospect*).

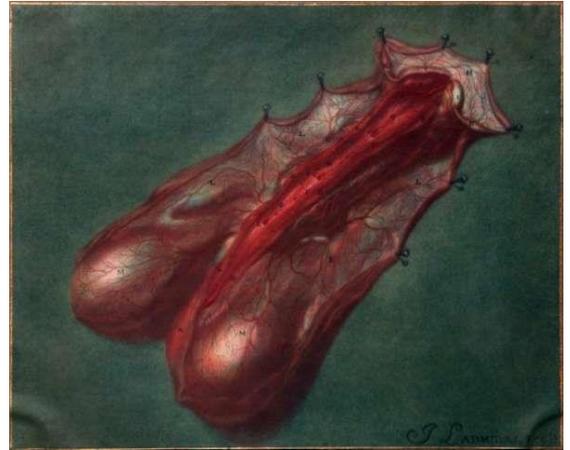
This fable is not funny in the same way *The Hairy Prospect* (both image and poem) is. This fable is the sort of story you tell young people to warn them against making bets with the devil, not something you share with your mates over a few pints. The fact that Charles Eisen (illustrator of *The Devil on Pope-Fig Island*) chose to depict the poem in this way, though a bit less bawdy than Rowlandson, is noteworthy though. This offers less credibility to the prediction that Rowlandson was simply having a laugh, since this motif can be found in other places from the same century.

Jan Ladmiral published *Four Anatomical Color Prints* in 1736, and his notoriety only grew after this with the acquiring of his mentor Le Blon's equipment and techniques upon the engraver's death. His images weren't supposed to be comical either: they were used for academic purposes. The first image in this pamphlet, a sample of mucosa from the stomach lining, was the first image to be color printed in a medical textbook. The other images feature a hip joint, and the layers of tough, ligamentous tissue that cover a brain. The final is of a penis that has been sliced parallel and splayed open to reveal its contents (Figure 6). Though somewhat graphic, it contained a kind of beauty. The intricacies astounded me, but I also wondered: why a penis? A feasible argument could be made for the androcentric



world of 1736, but why was this picture displayed and utilized as the work of art that it is, while visually equivalent pictures of vaginas are overwhelmingly censored?⁶

Since the Renaissance was marked by religious reform, most of the art produced was either modest or heavily biblical. If a woman shows something other than submission, she's given the title of witch. Most of the pieces here follow that formula, apart from the splayed penis, but in addition to an androcentrism argument, it must also be noted that it was around this time Anatomy was being shaped into its own field. Anatomy started with grave-robbing and illegal cadaver dissections, and the splayed penis was meant more for instructive purposes than simply aesthetic art. And none of this art is funny. Durer's witches are supposed to shock the viewer with its grotesquerie, and the splayed penis received similar treatment from my 21st century peers.



Rowlandson and his contemporaries

Thomas Rowlandson is firmly established in the Georgian era, which probably made it relatively easy to create fun satire⁷. Though London was not opposed to having a laugh at the King's expense, it must be noted that the reason why Rowlandson was able to make fun must be partially attributed to his status as a white man. For example, Mary Shelley lived in the same era and was subject to the same England, her magnum opus *Frankenstein* is not a funny book. Its poignancy and melancholia can be partially attributed to her status as a woman, as it is much harder to make jokes about a terrible situation when you're living inside it.

⁶ Ironically, I found more female peers willing to look at the splayed penis illustration than I found male peers, and those who were willing to view it quickly expressed their regret.

⁷ George III was a truly absurd gent.

By contrast, Rowlandson lived a privileged life. Mary Shelley wasn't poor, but Rowlandson was a white man whose parents/relatives had enough money to send him to art school. Nothing is known of Rowlandson's mother, beyond the fact that she died when Rowlandson was very young. Rowlandson's father was a failed weaver/supplier for the textile industry, and he sent his two children, Thomas and Elizabeth, to live with his sister (Thomas' aunt) in Central London. His father died shortly thereafter, and Rowlandson's wealthy aunt was able to fund Rowlandson's art schooling.

He entered art school at the age of sixteen, and many stories are on record of his horseplay. There is evidence of his "romping with maidservants" in the basement of the school, participating in a strike against the poor quality of food, and "carrying a pea-shooter into the life academy, while old Moser was adjusting the female model, and had just directed her contour, Rowlandson let fly a pea, which, making her start, she threw herself entirely out of position, and interrupted the gravity of the study for the whole evening" (Grego 54), and he was nearly expelled for this.

Rowlandson's close friend (who helped write his obituary) Henry Angelo illustrated Rowlandson as someone who criticized the boisterous and pompous England that grew during the Regency. Rowlandson was known to gamble, drink, and solicit heavily, and he was so prolific his work was vast enough to "wallpaper China" (Heard 15). He is further described as a "purveyor and lover of laughter" (Heard 16).

Given all of this, it may come as a surprise that he wasn't always known for his bawdy cartoons. Prior to about 1778, he mainly produced watercolors of the aristocracy participating in wealthy activities like attending horse races and entertaining in salons (Hayes 36). His famous work that accompanies William Combe's stories *The Tour of Doctor Syntax in search of the*

Picturesque and *The English Dance of Life and Death* also were not commissioned until the early 1800s. Plenty of things could have played a role in his decision to alter his vision for his work. Most say it was at this time that he was nearing bankruptcy, and when he realized that salacious caricatures made him more money he never looked back. Moreover, he was always known as a man who rejected Puritanism and loved laughter. It's likely that his more risqué work wasn't well-known until after this date due to the censorship that accompanied the religious reform of the era. This would certainly help explain the fact that the chap book in which *The Hairy Prospect* appears was published in 1872, almost 50 years after Rowlandson died.

Thomas Rowlandson is most “well-known” (for those who knew him when he was alive) for his trilogy *The Tour of Doctor Syntax in Search of the Picturesque*, an epic poem in three parts that was written by William Combe. Though this was the first time Combe and Rowlandson had collaborated on a project, it would not be the last. They went on to write and illustrate *The English Dance of Life*, *The English Dance of Death*, and *The Adventures of Johnny Quae Genus*. All these works can be classified as epic poetry or satire, and they all tend to be somewhat Quixotic in nature (Figure 7). As such, they are quite funny, but most English scholars would call these works *parodies* rather than *satire*.

Even though his work with Combe is not pornographic, it is still recognizable as a Rowlandson piece: the man has a long, pointy nose and chin, the women are curvy, and he managed to slip a dog into the foreground.

Through a gathering of sources on Rowlandson's other works, Victorian



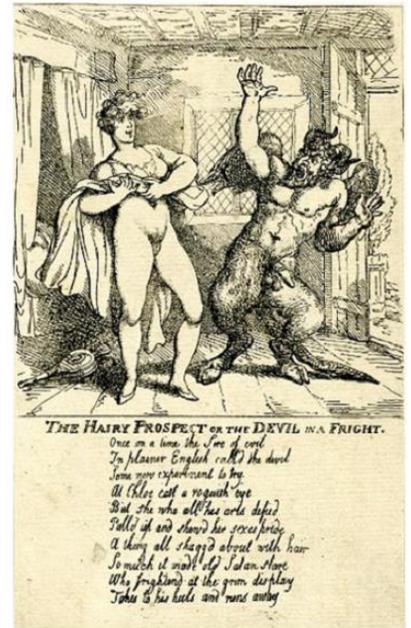
sensibilities, medieval gender identities, and 20th century voices, I have come to conclude that Rowlandson was “shooting peas,” albeit in a witty manner, but this work belongs to a greater conversation about the power of the vagina that has been raging for centuries. This dialogue around the vagina consisted of mainly negative emotions: fear, shame, anger, etc. Rowlandson’s caricature added something original to the fight that feminists are still undertaking: *humor*.

The chapbook (that *The Hairy Prospect* appears in) in question was also not meant to be published for the masses. Most scholars believe the images that appear in it were drawn around 1800, and that only ten or so were copied, as gifts for his closest friends (Ashbee 346). Not much is known about how and why it was published after its initial copying. Though we know that it was originally published by J.C. Hotten, who published some other works by Rowlandson and wrote the hilarious “criticisms” that appear in this facsimile I’ve cited, I’m not sure who gave the book its title: “Pretty Little Games for Young Ladies and Gentlemen with Pictures of Old English Sports and Pastimes.” The tongue-in-cheek nature of the title only hints at the fantastically crude contents. If we investigate the drawings further, *The Hairy Prospect* (Figure 8) differs from the others by more than a few accounts.

Once upon a time the Sire of Evil
 In Plainer English call’d the Devil
 Some new Experiment to try
 At Chloe cast a roguish eye

But she who all his arts defied
 Pull'd up and shew'd her sexes pride
 A thing all shagg'd about with hair
 So much it made old Satan stare
 Who frightened at the grim display
 Takes to his heels and runs away (Rowlandson 20).

Rowlandson wrote the 10 lines of poetry on each of the illustrations. His wit and whimsy apparently extended into his writing capabilities in addition to his art, but the poem for *The Hairy Prospect* differs from the others as well. Rarely does he name his figures, and the other stories he writes are not nearly as full of twisting action or subversions. The poetry that accompanies *The Toss Off* (Figure 9), for instance, merely details to us the way by which a young girl came to be fondling this old man's penis.



As Maramount her music grinds
 Love a pleasing passion finds
 He calls the little wanton in
 And tells his wishes with a grin
 She takes the circumcised part
 And plus her hand with easy art
 The spouting tube emits amain
 Which causes Love's awkward pain
 The Christian girl you understand
 She'll take a Jewish thing in hand (Rowlandson 32).

Yes, it's amusing that a "Christian girl" will "take a Jewish thing in hand," but all in all, this recount of a sexual favor isn't far enough out of the ordinary to make a modern reader sit up and take proper notice.

Though *The Hairy Prospect* has its revealing qualities, it lacks some other distinct Rowlandson features. Most of his female



figures have large breasts and buttocks, as evidenced in *The Toss Off*. The penis, breasts, and buttocks are the main focal point of *The Toss Off*. Additionally, if one were to assign this image a “punchline,” Rowlandson would probably draw our attention to the apparent age difference between the two parties and to the Jewish/Christian complication written in the poem. The woman is coy, soft, and girlish, while the man appears almost haggish by comparison. His nose and chin are nearly as pointy as his “circumcised part”.

I include for the sake of the vagina, hilarious and not demonized, *The Curious Wanton* (Figure 10). This is the only other image that features a vagina, and the vagina in this image is more of an afterthought. It’s not elevated, but it’s also not deemed a monstrosity or made into something disgusting. Additionally, the accompanying 10 lines are closer to *The Hairy Prospect* than they are to *The Toss Off*.



Miss Chloe in a wanton way
 Her durgling would needs survey
 Before the glass displays her thighs
 And at the sight with wonder cries
 Is this the thing that day and night
 Make man fall out and madly fight
 The source of sorrow and of joy
 Which king and beggar both employ
 How grim it looks yet enter in
 You'll find a fund of sweets begin (Rowlandson 62).

Rowlandson seems to be riffing on the joke he started earlier in *The Hairy Prospect*. He asserts in his witty, erotic poetry that the vagina is “the source of sorrow and joy” and “makes men fight.” It’s still a “grim display,” but he uses humor in this

image as well. This could be the same woman, since they are both called Chloe. And in both images, Chloe seems to be asserting something that was considered “grim” or not befitting for

women in this century. Showing your vagina has the power to scare away the devil and to prompt men to fight and to beg. In these moments, Chloe is making an active choice in her nudity. She hasn't been stripped by a man or for the sake of a man: she is the one who lifted her skirts up and smirked at the reaction of her onlookers. Betty Dodson⁸ called the women who follow suit "cunt-positive and orgasmic on their own terms" in Inga Muscio's breakout book *Cunt* (Muscio xvii).

Muscio's book was published in 2002, but this is not a new idea. Whether or not it's considered funny remains up for debate, but I think subverting explanations is always a good place to start if your aim is to provoke laughter.

If the audience thinks that this act is not funny, the following is usually the result. In *Hymen: An Accurate Description of the Ceremonies used in Marriage, by every Nation in the Known World* (published 1760, formally dedicated to "Ladies of Great Britain and Ireland"), the unknown author asserts that

Women alone can soften the natural roughness of the other sex; man will always retain his rude and savage disposition, till softened by an intercourse with those whose coy submission and modest pride have power to subdue his ferocity. From such alone can he learn the virtues of humanity, by their precepts alone, can he hope to acquire politeness: precepts, which will always be more listened to than the dry lectures of philosophers, and which must ever powerfully influence the minds of men, whilst they love the precept for the teacher's sake (Uxorius viii).

There is a power in this action and in this mindset that Rowlandson recognized, and then proceeded to laugh at. The unknown author did not: he doesn't sound *afraid*, per say, but he's exceedingly careful. However, Rowlandson could have been anticipating that such a revolutionary idea would be met with scorn, so by padding it with satire he assures that people

⁸ Dodson wrote the introduction to *Cunt*.

hear this idea that a woman has a kind of inherent influence. This poetry doesn't tell a cohesive story in the same way the other examples do, but it does tell us that Chloe recognizes the same power ("ancient yet contemporary, inherent yet lost, reviled yet redemptive cuntpower") that Rowlandson recognized, and she isn't afraid to utilize it (Muscio 7).

Though Chloe's vagina lies near the center of *The Curious Wanton*, another important aspect of his joke is the fact that Chloe is staring at herself, as evidenced by the title. Furthermore, Rowlandson has drawn more attention and sexualized her breasts and thighs than her vagina. Thus, the question still stands: what possessed Rowlandson to make the focal point of *The Hairy Prospect* a vagina? Is the vagina supposed to be as sensual as the breasts and buttocks of his other female figures? Finding the answer to that question will help determine whether he was pulling our chain, or if something more convoluted was taking place behind the scenes.

Rowlandson was constantly inverting expectations and finding new ways to add humor to his work, one of which was adding dogs to the foreground and background often. I present *New Feats of Horsemanship* (Figure 11). Even the publisher, Hotten, says in the criticism for this page: "As for the dog gaping below, he is a fool" (Hotten 37). We once again have an example

of a “poorly drawn” horse, ample buttocks, astonishing feats of cartoonish movement (regarding the woman’s ability to turn her neck like an owl), and a cheeky title and accompanying poetry.

Well mounted on a mottled steed
 Famed for his strength as well as speed
 Corrunna and her favorite buck
 Are pleas’d to have a flying fuck
 While o’er the downs the courser strains
 With jary eye, and loosened reins
 Around his neck her arms she flings
 Behind her buttocks move like springs
 While Jack keeps time to every motion
 And pours in loves delicious potion
 (Rowlandson 38).

Perhaps the demon howls in fear at the sight of the woman because he recognizes their similarities and is thus afraid of her untold power.

The famous science fiction writer Mary Shelley was prompted to write her masterpiece, *Frankenstein*, when she and her husband, along with a small group of other up and coming writers and artists, were tasked with writing the scariest ghost stories around a campfire. She thought and thought for days, until a “waking dream” of sorts came upon her and she saw “the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together and felt the terror” as the “hideous corpse” stood before him (Mellor 40).

She wrote furiously, the words pouring from her as if they came from another place. Her diaries describe the act of writing this story like a waking dream, or something that had to be exorcised from her⁹. The rest of the artists didn’t finish the stories they had begun, but they



⁹ Or in other words, not exactly a “joy” to write.

continued to spend time together during that summer at their respective lake houses. Shelley writes in her diary that Lord Byron's presence strained her relationship with her husband because when Lord Byron came over to converse with Percy, she had to "become a woman." She was left out of the stimulating conversations. She was "just a wife" who only had access to the "physical intimacy" but lacked "mental intimacy" (Mellor 215). For this reason, Shelley wrote that she always identified more with Frankenstein's creation than with Doctor Frankenstein, for she too was a cast aside thing: a creature not taken seriously despite its education, for her brain was housed inside a body that people did not respect. Frankenstein's monster could quote Shakespeare, Milton, and Goethe, but no one would listen after looking upon his hideous form. It didn't matter that Shelley was wildly intelligent and ahead of her time: people weren't about to take advice from a woman. Though she didn't expressly use the words "monstrous woman" anywhere in her writings, this idea is plain enough. Most feminist scholars agree that *Frankenstein* is about what happens "when a man tries to have a baby without a woman" (Mellor 40), and others cite the "horror of afterbirth" when Dr. Frankenstein flees from his creation in terror (Mellor 41). Given that Shelley wrote *Frankenstein* only a few months after her first child miscarried, and according to her diary she was still reconciling the physical absence of her mother and the emotional absence of her father, it can be reasonably assumed that *Frankenstein* is about both the dread and potential failure of family.

Though Shelley lived around the same time Rowlandson did, it'd be ridiculous to request *Frankenstein* being rewritten as a comedy. Shelley's life was steeped in Gothic imagery, and it follows that her novel would be as well. Rowlandson was able to satirize the monstrous woman through his privileged status as a white man (who had a rich aunt who could send him to art school, among other things), but to ask Shelley to do the same thing would be an insult to the

artistry of *Frankenstein*. Thus, warring depictions of the vagina can coexist in the same century, and this doesn't make one more correct than the other. I simply want to note that what Rowlandson was doing was unexpected, fresh, and would be revisited later in a variety of manners.

Victorian Manners, Demonized Cunts

Though the 21st century holds onto this idea of the English Victorians as strait-laced and stuffy, the Victorians got up to plenty¹⁰. They're still holding onto the last remnants of Puritanism and are overly concerned with what the rest of the world thinks, but they've also legalized prostitution and designer drugs. As such, there's a quiet, albeit condescending, respect for the vagina that is rarely voiced aloud.

Even though legalized prostitution and designer drugs *sounds* fun, life was not perfect for many women who had to make their way without the help of a man. Fanny Cornforth's story is happier than most, and even she faced a fair quantity of social disparagement. She was born Sarah Cox in 1835, and, like many young Victorian girls, made her way into adulthood by procuring a series of dangerous jobs that required her to "sell" her body. Though she fiercely upheld that she was "not a prostitute," she did spend a significant number of years as a skivvy (young girl who worked as a housemaid), enough that she hid this fact from her future employers when she turned to modeling, or rather, when she was pushed into modeling (Hughes 226). She moved to the city to live with her wealthy aunt and, while out looking for employment, came upon a few members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (a group of artists who collaborated and worked in similar styles) drinking in a garden. One of them came up behind her and undid her hair so that it "tumbled down [her] back." Since this was a 19th century equivalent of reaching

¹⁰ They just didn't want to admit it.

inside a woman's shirt to cop a feel, she scolded him, and the man apologized and then insisted that she "go to his studio and sit to him" (Hughes 225). Her aunt brought her to Dante Gabriel Rossetti's studio shortly after this interaction, and Rossetti very quickly had her "streetwalking" (Hughes 226). When he saw her discussing her past with clientele and observed her movements, he asked her to model for his painting *Found*. After finishing *Found*, he asked her to sit for at least three more paintings. She was also his unofficial housekeeper for some 25 years, boasting a longer relationship with Rossetti than Rossetti's wife.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti belonged to a group of artists who called themselves the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, whose doctrines emphasized the personal responsibility of the artist and attention to detail, while also borrowing from Romanticism (Hughes 220). His later work starred Fanny Cornforth, with whom he had a long and passionate affair. His piece *Bocca Baciata* (Figure 12) was one of the earliest paintings he did with her, marking a new direction in his work after much of the inner circle had disbanded (Hughes 222). The title means "kissed mouth", which is borrowed from an Italian proverb inscribed on the back of the painting: "The mouth that has been kissed does not lose its good fortune: rather, it renews itself just as the moon does" (Hughes 218).



His piece caused a stir in more ways than one¹¹. It was well known that the Pre-Raphaelites prided themselves on the continuity between paintings of the same subject due to their hyper-specific details, and *Bocca Baciata* was more idealized than his previous work. It was

¹¹ Yet none of my 21st century peers found *Bocca Baciata* to be scandalous. Most of them were slightly horrified by *The Hairy Prospect*, though.

also public knowledge that Rossetti and Cornforth were sleeping together. One of the members of the Brotherhood called it “gross sensuality of a revolting kind” and expressed concern that Rossetti had fallen prey to Epicureanism (Hughes 221). Even those who weren’t members of the Brotherhood or had formal art training tended to agree that *Bocca Baciata* was “the kind of dirty picture you had to travel to Paris to find” (Hughes 221). Surprisingly though, the Catholics who viewed the painting tended to give it more positive reviews purely because it shared qualities with aforementioned “foreign prints” that you’d have to go to Paris to find (Hughes 221).

It’s strange that Rossetti’s work with Cornforth was so drastically divided. Those who hated it scolded its provocations, while those who praised it did so on account of its ethereal beauty. In addition, *Bocca Baciata* caused much more upheaval than Rowlandson’s work ever did. Granted, some of Rowlandson’s work was only distributed to his closest friends, but *The Hairy Prospect* stands out as scandalous and indecent even to the 21st century¹². Perhaps those who knew of Rossetti’s relationship with Cornforth dismissed his work due to negatively held prejudices toward “women of the night”? The paradoxical dissociation between the thousands of prostitutes and the remaining millions of Londoners who pretended they didn’t exist hints at not only the shame and fear surrounding womanhood, but also an unvoiced respect. Prostitution was legal because it was believed that men needed a healthy outlet for their sexual needs, since women of the house were expected to have sex for the sake of procreation only. Efforts (albeit minor) were made to keep the workplaces of middle class prostitutes safe: many underwent examinations for venereal diseases and had the backing of their community if an officer attempted to fine a prostitute for something other than prostitution (public drinking, assemblage in public places). Many married women sold their bodies in addition to their husband’s wages if

¹² More proof of the everlasting quality of the vagina.

she had a particularly large family (Gatrell 104). It could be that Thomas Rowlandson's use of humor in *The Hairy Prospect* is an attempt to help reconcile these warring beliefs.

It is a bit strange that Londoners in this time called prostitutes "fallen women" when literal thousands of women made their living as prostitutes (Gatrell 572). We can only speculate on the myriad of reasons why Victorian women went into sex work, but the prevailing theory is that it wasn't something one did for fun, given the social defamation. The disconnect between the image of the stuffy Victorian that the 21st century holds and the sex-obsessed culture that they hid is a bit jarring. Granted, a "fallen woman" could mean anyone from a spinster to a widow, or any woman who dared to defy the very small box women had been granted through her words and actions. This fallen woman is represented in art as a prone figure, usually in the throes of hysteria or prayer. She isn't given a voice; her job is to prostrate herself into a spectacle for the sake of redeeming any femininity she has left. These images belong to a Triptych by Augustus Egg, titled *Misfortune* (Figure 13) and *Prayer* (Figure 14). In *Misfortune*, the children and father simply sit and observe the woman, whose face we can't see. She has been demeaned to what was believed to be the lowest position a woman could occupy. Nina Auerbach, author of *Woman and the Demon*, recognizes the unfairness of this stance and offers up some modern translations of these pieces and more, quoting recent art scholars who want the fallen woman to be remembered as a victim of capitalist ruin. They've attempted to elevate her beyond the

“pitiable monster” (Auerbach 157), or at the very least to place her on the same rung of the social ladder as the “shabby seamstress” (Auerbach 158).

Though there are attempts to elevate the women of the night, they still faced social slander. They were permitted to exist, and to conduct their work in quasi-legal manners, but not much beyond that. The fallen women were left to either grovel at the feet of others, or assert themselves so proudly and thoroughly that they’d shame others into thinking about “dirty pictures from France.”¹³

None of the pieces above are particularly complimentary of women, but attempts were being made (regarding Rossetti’s representation of Cornforth) to change that portrayal, and the fight to change those portrayals are still being had by women into the 21st century.

20th Century and into the

Future

The women of the 20th century have begun the

process of trying to reclaim the cunt, but those in charge don’t seem to listen¹⁴. The women begin to shout. Those who wish to fight for women’s rights attempt to shout over all the other voices who still hold tight to their fear, and they try to shout over all the other terrible crimes against women that still take place, and as such, it makes laughter difficult to find. Nonetheless, the battle methods utilized by 20th and 21st century



¹³ Rossetti still painted multiple glowing pictures of Cornforth, despite having some idea of the reaction he’d receive.

¹⁴ And why should we be surprised? People have been hung up on this since the 12th century at the very least.

women overall are creative in their search for the elusive humor, and in their exercise of their voices and cunts.

Some try to fight this fight by rewriting the traditional rules. Joanna Russ makes a compelling argument in her essay “Pornography for Women, by Women, with Love.” In it, she chronicles the K/S “zines” from the 80s which are usually cited as the earliest example of modern fanfiction. (K/S refers to stories that depict Captain Kirk and Spock from the *Star Trek* franchise in a homosexual romantic relationship). A vast majority of these stories (some are cute and comedic, others are graphic in their depictions of sexual acts) are written by women, and the readership is also overwhelmingly female. It isn’t too hard to believe that women probably know what women like and know what women want to read about in their x-rated fanfiction, but Russ wants to know: Why Kirk and Spock? She asserts that it has everything to do with equality (or inequality, depending on how you view it).

The argument is structured as such: even in the most equal of heterosexual relationships, there will be a power dynamic that tends to skew toward the man. Regardless of how well the man treats the woman and how much respect is allotted to her, she will never truly hold dominion over their coupling (for mostly physical reasons, but mental and emotional aspects can also come into play depending on the two parties). A relationship between two men (granted, Spock is alien, but more on that later) allows for more equality and in some cases, more adventurous lovemaking. Russ argues that a K/S dynamic allows for more creative definitions and depictions of love. She also cites that their inherent differences (Spock is a Vulcan-human hybrid, while Kirk is a human male from the year 2233) help the K/S writers because Spock is usually coded in feminine ways that Kirk is not (matrilineal, Vulcan/human sides are warring, cyclical reproductive biology, quiet and reserved, etc). Thus, K/S stories allow for love between

a “woman” and “man” in the way that women desire their relationships to play out: full of respect, thoughtfulness, reciprocity, and free from any societal pressures or woes that they’ve been raised into. As follows, women are not only aware of their physiological and social disadvantage, but willing to invent brilliant ways around the rules to regain their lost acreage. I do not know how this idea would be changed if more women knew about *The Hairy Prospect* or were taught that their womanhood could make the devil scream. Maybe the contents of *The Hairy Prospect* are a well-kept secret among men for this reason.

The way that old ideologies that promote gender inequality damage marriages should come as no surprise. Furthermore, the idea that these dangerous ideas can permeate every aspect of life shouldn’t be too large of a leap in logic. However, not everyone realizes or has attempted to reconcile the fact that the very language we use to define female bodies and male bodies has set us up for failure in terms of gender equality right from the start. In *Bodies of Law* (1997), Alan Hyde attempts to understand why the way we define bodies in the courtroom differs so strongly from the way we define a body in any other context. The idea of the female body as an “inferior male body” (Bernau 71) goes back even farther than Freud. In the past, people who subscribed to this idea called a vagina is an inverted penis, a womb an internal scrotum, the ovaries imperfect testicles. Though this idea seems to be supported embryonically (each tissue that makes up a section of a penis has a homologue in the vulva: clitoris=prepuce, scrotum=labia majora, etc), the two sets of gonads still do vitally different things.¹⁵

Perhaps a fear of the vagina developed because we recognize it as a “hiding place” (Hyde 165), or something that needs to be searched: such is the case of Shirley Mello Rodriques¹⁶ (in

¹⁵ It is possible to take this idea of the homologous gonads too far, as the debate about the vagina as a “passive vessel” and the frequency with which the language used to describe penises is overtly aggressive is a conversation that’s still being (un)made today.

¹⁶ Trigger warning: Rodriques’s story is not funny. It is invasive and humiliating.

Rodrigues v Furtado, 1991). Hyde summarizes her case beside the case of Norman Harrington (Harrington v Almy, 1993), which he uses to brilliantly shed light on the vastly different treatments that each party received in the courtroom and beyond.

Hyde begins Rodrigues' story by elaborating upon the vagina as a "fetishized body part separate from the body" (Hyde 165), and this already sounds paradoxical. He asserts that in the case of body cavity searches (which usually include the vagina), it is the language we use to describe the vagina as a "space, empty, and constituted by relations with others" (Hyde 165) that allows for such invasive procedures to continue. The opening line of the court case document that Hyde provides reads "Search warrants for appellant's apartment and vagina were issued" (quoted from Hyde 165), and Hyde remarks upon the absurdity of this claim: "are they really parallel? She may own the vagina, but only rent the apartment" (Hyde 166). Though Rodrigues sued the court and the hospital where the examination took place, in which she says she was "held down" on the examining table by a nurse while a doctor "inserted a probe inside her and conducted a bimanual palpation of her abdomen and vagina" (Hyde 166), the events that happened at the hospital are still "alleged" (Hyde 166). Hyde then scornfully comments on the line "the search revealed an absence of foreign bodies" when he asks whether or not Rodrigues own body could be considered foreign (Hyde 166). Would it not be obvious that the body being searched belonged to her? If the search reveals an "absence of foreign bodies", Hyde offers that the search is "designed precisely to not reveal her as a human subject" (Hyde 166). He compares this to the Freudian "castration anxiety" that young boys apparently feel when they gaze upon the "absence" or "lack" of their mother's vagina (Hyde 166).

This chapter is followed by "The Legal Penis," in which Hyde recalls "a few months after the court constructed the searchable vagina of Shirley Rodrigues, it had occasion to construct the

unsearchable penis of Norman Harrington” (Hyde 173). As silly as this already sounds, the following is also not supposed to be even remotely amusing. Harrington had been accused of sexually abusing children and had temporarily lost custody of his son and was suspended from his duties as a police officer. When the investigation stalled, Harrington expressed interest in returning to his job. The city manager agreed to reinstating only if he was psychologically examined, and Harrington refused when he learned that said examination would contain a penile plethysmograph (Hyde 173). A plethysmograph is an instrument for measuring changes in volume in an organ due to blood or oxygen¹⁷. The plan was to have Harrington view child pornography while hooked up to the device and describe what he saw verbally, while the machine monitored his apparent arousal. When he refused to undergo the test, he was fired (Hyde 174). He took this to court over what he believed was a constitutional violation and received over \$900,000, and he was also rehired as an officer, but confined to a desk job (Hyde 175).

Hyde points out that a search warrant had been issued specifically for Rodriques’ vagina, but not for Harrington’s penis. If vaginas are *concealable*, it follows that they should be *searchable*. Furthermore, the search of Rodriques vagina required no special technology, and the possible results were clear and binary: either there would be drugs, or there wouldn’t be drugs. Harrington’s case hoped to illuminate a hidden psychological urge without recognizing the fact that men can have erections totally unrelated to their surrounding stimuli, and the fate of his career was placed upon such a test. Harrington’s penis was never searched, unlike Rodriques, but his genitals were also never constructed as an inherent lack or in its relation to others. His penis

¹⁷ This test is usually called upon when blood clots or upper respiratory problems are suspected.

was not “forced to reveal its narrative” (Hyde 178), or rather, it wasn’t splayed out for all to view like Admiral’s illustration from the 17th century.

The idea of Harrington’s penis as an “unsearchable” thing (Hyde 173) only follows when we admit that (perhaps the contents are a *little* more protected) its boundaries are simply more respected than its female counterpart.¹⁸ In fact, most would argue that it’s not entirely accurate to call a vagina a “female counterpart” to a penis.¹⁹ . Nonetheless, the vitality of the penis certainly rivals the vagina. This is to say that the debates regarding embryological homologies and differing views on the vagina as an inverted penis, or the vagina as a passive vessel, are far from over. Blackledge argues that the combative views regarding female genitalia are “the most polarizing possible” (Blackledge 5). The West hides it, fears it, while the East represents it in art as the origin of all life, calling it “divine” (Blackledge 5). There is a bit of a disconnect between ancient Eastern art and the way the modern East treats their women, but they too are waging the war for women’s rights along with the West.

Despite what strong currency a vagina can be, it’s startling that we still know remarkably little about what’s going on “down there.” Making the cunt into a vehicle for a joke seems to be such an absurd task. For example, writings dated 1672 that mapped and defined the clitoris appear to be more accurate than diagrams from 1968 (Blackledge 5). Why is this information kept under lock and key, doomed to “rediscovery” every three-hundred years or so? The things I was taught in middle school sex education²⁰ were either deliberately misleading or are now

¹⁸ I do still wonder why men (most doctors in 1736) stomach this image more efficiently than my modern male peers did. I’m sure one could make an argument for the fluctuation of the views on penile censorship, but that is an entirely different body of work.

¹⁹ Todd Akin’s infamous “legitimate rape” comment does have a grain of truth to it, but not for humans. Some female animals, including ducks, squirrels, and zebras can reject sperm.

²⁰ I went to school in a small town in West Michigan notorious for its conservatism. My hometown is often referred to as a place “with a church on every corner,” or a place where your Dutch neighbors will gossip about you if you wash your car on a Sunday.

outdated.²¹ For thousands of years of evolution and hundreds of years of technological advances, humans are *still* just brains thinking about themselves.

In Muscio's book *Cunt*, she recognizes the difficulty in finding one common ground for all women to unite them against the forces that keep them out of power. This is done not in the name of laughter, but in defense against hostility. Women are "lawyers, mothers, Christian motorcycle dykes, whores, filmmakers, athletes, nurses...", and all sizes and colors. However, we all have cunts, "be they biological, surgical, or metaphorical" (Muscio xxvi). The choice to reclaim a word like "cunt" was also a deliberate one, given the fact that the word "vagina" comes from the Latin word for "sheath, for a sword," (Muscio xxvi) which propagates the idea of the vagina as nothing more than a docile emptiness, and fails to recognize the vitality of its life-giving force. The word "vagina" is also inextricably tied to the idea of the vagina as the birth canal, and while mothering another human being is a remarkable thing women are capable of, not every woman chooses to do this. Muscio calls the cunt "the very fount of our power, genius, and beauty" (Muscio xxvii). A bold claim, but certainly something to be considered. In response to those who "don't understand them [cunts], don't like them, and find them ugly", Muscio says that the cunt is "the symbolic and physical zenith of our existence", because "when they bleed, we are *bleeding people*... braggadocio of human males causes our wombs to clench up in spasms of pain... When cunts have stupendous orgasms, we may reel for days... when they're fucked against their will, we often feel like a diarrhea shit has been offed upon the very essence of our soul, and may live the rest of our days cleaning it off in whatever way we see fit" (Muscio xxvii).

The 20th century and beyond has brought amazing strides for the rights of women, but women still seem unable to make jokes given the terrible things that are still happening. *Cunt* is

²¹ A remarkable number of scholars still debate the presence of the female prostate and female ejaculate.

not a funny book. *The Story of V* is not a happy book. These books are filled with self-righteous indignation. They are self-referential, which seems to be a new development in this conversation²², but it's still extremely difficult to have a laugh when the right to possess one's own womanhood is still being decided on a day-to-day basis.

Conclusion

There is something curious astir within *The Hairy Prospect*. Even through the resonance with both earlier and later traditions, Rowlandson's work stands out in the cunt conversation because humor is elusive. He was working to keep a conversation going (even though he might not have been aware of it) that he wouldn't live to see the fruits of. Only a brilliant satirist like himself could produce something adequately funny, adequately thoughtful, and adequately irreverent that would manage to speak to both men and women from multiple walks of life.

From the tightly buttoned Renaissance men to the 21st century women crocheting "pussy power" hats, nearly everyone has had something to say about the vagina. Few have been able to make this conversation even slightly funny. When people laugh, unease and fear are able to dissipate, and more learning is able to take place. Rowlandson seems to be stuck at a turning point in vagina history: his status as a white man allowed him the freedom to publish his own commentaries, and his status as a cartoonist allowed him the freedom to caricature something that had been previously held as either a source of aversion or animosity.

The Hairy Prospect is the result of a man who liked to make people laugh, but also seized upon an opportunity to push the limits of social boundary and convention for his time. He utilized the unique creative potential of satire, which can expertly embody a state of womanhood.

²² Why have men *ever* been the leading voices on vaginas?

It seems paradoxical at first, since this state of womanhood carries such a dark and violent past, but satirical humor exemplifies both the ridiculousness and the seriousness of this situation.

In doing so, Thomas Rowlandson was able to not only pay homage to the artists before him but added his own commentary to the growing debate surrounding censorship and the female figure. I like to think that if he could see the world that exists today, he'd find yet another way to shock us into pearl-clutching through his witty satire.

Though humor seems hard to come by in situations such as these, laughter's ability to overcome and unite must not be overlooked. Those who don't see eye to eye in every instance must not discount their ability to share laughter, and it becomes easier to start difficult conversations after a chuckle or two. A bit of irreverence will keep us humble and human, and it would be tough to find someone who could assert that a bit more humanity and humility is a negative thing. In short, comedy, no matter how slippery, reveals truth and inspires positivity.

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- Figure A. Thomas Rowlandson. *The Hairy Prospect*. ~1808-1817. Engraving. *Pretty Little Games for Young Ladies and Gentlemen with Pictures of Good Old English Sports and Pastimes*, J.C. Hotten, 1845.
- Figure 1. Unknown. *Sheela-na-gig*. ~1125. Sculpture.
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- Figure 3. Albrecht Durer. *The Witch*. 1500. Engraving.
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- Figure 4. Albrecht Durer. *Vanitas or Avarice*. 1507. Oil on limewood.
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avarice_\(D%C3%BCrer,_Vienna\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avarice_(D%C3%BCrer,_Vienna))

Figure 5. Charles Eisen. *The Devil of Pope-fig Island*. 1762. Engraving.

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Figure 6. Jan Ladmiral. *Human Penis*. 1741. Engraving and mezzotint. *Four Anatomical Color Prints. Four Anatomical Color Prints*, Leyden, 1736.

Figure 7. Thomas Rowlandson. *Dr. Syntax Drawing after Nature*. 1812. Engraving. *The Tour of Doctor Syntax in Search of the Picturesque*. R. Ackermann's Repository of Arts, 1817.

Figure 8. Thomas Rowlandson. *The Hairy Prospect*. ~1808-1817. Engraving. *Pretty Little Games for Young Ladies and Gentlemen with Pictures of Good Old English Sports and Pastimes*, J.C. Hotten, 1845.

Figure 9. Thomas Rowlandson. *The Toss Off*. ~1808-1817. Engraving. *Pretty Little Games for Young Ladies and Gentlemen with Pictures of Good Old English Sports and Pastimes*, J.C. Hotten, 1845.

Figure 10. Thomas Rowlandson. *The Curious Wanton*. ~1808-1817. Engraving. *Pretty Little Games for Young Ladies and Gentlemen with Pictures of Good Old English Sports and Pastimes*, J.C. Hotten, 1845.

Figure 11. Thomas Rowlandson. *New Feats of Horsemanship*. ~1808-1817. Engraving. *Pretty Little Games for Young Ladies and Gentlemen with Pictures of Good Old English Sports and Pastimes*, J.C. Hotten, 1845.

Figure 12. Dante Gabriel Rossetti. *Bocca Baciata*. 1859. Oil on canvas.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bocca_Baciata

Figure 13. Augustus Egg. *Misfortune*. 1858. Oil on canvas.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Past_and_Present_\(paintings\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Past_and_Present_(paintings))

Figure 14. Augustus Egg. *Prayer*. 1858. Oil on canvas.

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