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Submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy (English)

Discipline of English and Creative Writing

The University of Adelaide

March 2013
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Figure 1: Henry Bennet, First Earl of Arlington, after Sir Peter Lely (c1665–1670).................1
Abstract

This thesis investigates discourses of shame, sexuality, disease, and the commoditised body in seventeenth-century England. I examine literary and non-literary sources relating to corporal interpretability and the exchange of human flesh in two areas: prostitution and plastic surgery. I consider the relationship between these exchanges and the individual’s access to social capital, and explicitly examine the role of shame in facilitating or hindering the trades. Through close readings of fictional and archival prostitution texts (especially *The London Jilt*), I examine representations of sexual and other bodily exchanges as fraught commodity transactions. In conjunction with this, I consider in detail the transplantation of purchased flesh allegedly involved in rhinoplasty, which also posited a shameful commodification of the body. The reconstruction of the nose was most prominently detailed by the Bolognese surgeon Gaspare Tagliacozzi in *De curtorum chirurgia per insitionem* (Venice: 1597), and he became synonymous with the highly controversial operation. Histories of plastic surgery currently state that after Tagliacozzi’s death in 1599, his procedure disappeared from medical knowledge. I demonstrate that this was simply not the case, and provide a thorough book history of an English translation of *De curtorum chirurgia* that was published in London in 1687 and 1696. In order to account for rhinoplasty’s stigmatization, I examine its association with syphilis and the shame associated with that disease, and the manner in which it was thought to enable the patient to ‘pass’ as healthy. I also trace the popular narrative around Tagliacozzi that suggested he would purchase the skin required for his graft from “the brawny part of [a] porter’s bum”, and that it would shrivel and die when its donor
did.¹ This discourse provides an as yet unexamined archive through which to understand early modern England’s relationship with the commodification of living human bodies.

Declaration of Originality

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution to Emily Cock and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

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Emily Cock

March 2013
Acknowledgements

I can only offer my very sincere thanks to my supervisors, Dr Heather Kerr and Dr Lucy Potter, for their invaluable support, guidance and advice in all aspects of this project.

I would like to thank the staff of the Barr Smith Library at the University of Adelaide for their ongoing assistance, and the special collections staff at the Universities of Aberdeen, Glasgow, and Edinburgh, and the British and Wellcome Libraries. I am also grateful to the internship program at Brepols Publishers for facilitating my archival research.

The thesis is given with love to my parents, who have always provided unflinching support: to Dad, who taught me to love stories, and to Mum, who taught me to love books.

My special thanks go to my sister, Kirsty, who has held the main charge of keeping me sane and enduring my ‘interesting’ discoveries. And to the friends, family, coworkers and fellow postgrads who have borne with my many inappropriately-timed remarks on syphilis, flogging, and prosthetic genitals.
Note on the Text

I have retained original spelling in all quotations. I have silently modernised the use of “u/v/w” and “i/j”, and long-s has been printed as “s”.