a rich, elaborate tapestry of ideas, gathering together many fascinating strands of solid research on early modern political uses of monsters, the grotesque, and monstrous births.

James Grantham Turner. *Schooling Sex: Libertine Literature and Erotic Education in Italy, France, and England 1534–1685.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. xxviii + 408 pp. $80.00. Review by TOM LUXON, DARTMOUTH UNIVERSITY.

"Why is the cunt masculine and the prick feminine?" roughly translates a Johannes Secundus epigram on the gendering of genitalia and language that serves as the primary epigraph to this, the third volume in James Grantham Turner's decades-long effort to write the literary and intellectual history of carnal knowledge. The first volume was *One Flesh: Paradisal Marriage and Sexual Relations in the Age of Milton* (Oxford, 1987, 1993) and the second *Libertines and Radicals in Early Modern London: Sexuiality, Politics and Literary Culture, 1630–1685* (Cambridge, 2001). This epigram, or translations and interpretations of it, gets repeated at frequent intervals throughout this long and learned book (6-7, 55, 116-17, 153, 172, 175 fig. 9, 186, 190, 257, 272-73, 291, 296, 307, 311-12 fig.15, 323-25). From epigraph to conclusion, this wee paradox serves as a major motive in a dazzlingly elaborate survey of the early modern "hard-core" canon, ranging from Pietro Aretino and the Florentine courtesan Tullia d'Aragona to the English libertine poet John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester and genteel porn consumer, Samuel Pepys. Erotic philosophers and libertine pornographers persistently cast sexuality, seriously and sarcastically, as an academic discipline, a schooling of the body and the mind, or, defying simplistic versions of Platonic dualism, a schooling of the mind through the body, a sensually-grounded education not entirely unrelated to Comenian theories of education.

The titles alone of the works Turner treats illustrate this point: Ferrante Pallavicino's *Retorica delle puttane*, Antonio Rocco's *Alcibiade fanciullo a scola*, *L'Escole des filles ou La philosophie des dames*, *Aretino's Library*, *The Whore's Rhetorick*, and *L'Academie des dames.* Part One

of *Schooling Sex* performs a thorough investigation of the erotic education trope in hard-core libertarian literature. All the anxieties and fascinations (mostly male) surrounding the erotics (homo-normative and hetero-normative) of education, women's education, the constructedness and maintenance of masculinity, the place of the senses in learning, the performance of pleasure, its deceptions, and threats find articulation, willing or unwilling, in the various versions of the schooling sex trope.

Part Two of *Schooling Sex* turns attention to the reception–translation, adaptation, reading, and responses–of the hard-core libertine canon, mostly in England. Pepys claims that he bought and read the "mighty lewd book," *L'Escole des filles*, in order "to inform himself" of matters he regarded as disgraceful and shameful; nevertheless he also confesses that his "prick" was made to "stand all the while" he read and even "una vez to decharger" (2). Turner returns throughout the book to this particularly graphic image of the coincidence of erotics and education. Reading Wycherly's *The Country Wife* as a deliberate response to and even adaptation of *L'Escole des filles* makes perfect sense, foregrounding what Turner calls the "phallic epistemology" that runs throughout the play, as well as its debt to the hard-core canon in Italian and French. Likewise, Turner situates the libertine verses of Rochester and John Oldham squarely in this tradition where they no longer are made to appear quite so special, weird and exceptional.

I have said that the book is dazzling in its learning and its range. I say this with admiration, but it is also worth repeating as a warning. Most of Turner's readers will not have read most of the French and Italian titles he treats. And this will be true of the more obscure, anonymous and pseudonymous English translations and versions. When he treats texts more widely familiar, Turner's analyses often betray stubborn errors. For example, Turner confidently repeats the claim from his earlier *One Flesh* that Milton imagines Adam and Eve with "a full sexual life in Eden" (14) even though such a reading has been seriously challenged more than once (myself in *Milton Studies* 40 and Kent Lenhof in *Milton Quarterly* 34.3). Turner takes no notice of these challenges

and continues to insist, without argument, that Milton's panegyric to wedded love in book four of *Paradise Lost* is "uttered over the copulating bodies of Adam and Eve in Eden and [is] thus unmistakably sexual" (49). Elsewhere he implies that Milton would have equated the "best substance" (from *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* 1.10) of a man's body, his sperm, with "the precious life-blood of a master spirit" (from *Areopagitica*) as if Milton's monism regarded the "soul as mortal and the sperm as 'the best substance' of body and soul combined" (102). Milton, I am convinced, would have been appalled at such an equation, and I suspect Turner thinks so too, and that's why he quotes these phrases without Milton's careful hedge: "as some think." Turner also imagines a Milton who "wistfully admired the male libertines" who practiced frequent sex before marriage and so made more successful first marriages than sober modest gentlemen (*DDD* 1.3). Turner knows that Milton was busy arguing that modest men like him deserved another chance after a bad match, not wistfully admiring those "who have liv'd most loosely by reason of their bold accustoming" indulging "their wild affections unsettling at will." If he takes such obvious hermeneutic liberties with texts we know well, perhaps he's just as free with those we do not. Such caution may apply even more to Turner's readings of *The School of Venus*, an English translation of *L'Escole des filles* that appears to have made quite a stir in the 1680s, but not a single copy of which survives (226).

Sometimes Turner indulges in the less than scholarly pleasure of allowing his own language to slide off into pornographic puns: "In Aloisia Sigea's letter from the Elysian Fields, written later as the preface for a six-dialogue version, the identical language of salt and charm appears in the mouth of the pseudo-author herself, applied not merely to the coming attraction but to the entire work" (180). However amusing to some (including me, I confess), such liberties encourage one's suspicion that Turner sometimes simply reads what he wants to see.

That said, this is easily the fullest and best treatment of the subject to date. *Schooling Sex* makes generic and historical sense out of one of the most under-studied intellectual currents and many

of the most misunderstood artifacts of early modern culture. The book successfully initiates a new sub-discipline in the field and it does so with a scholarly breadth unlikely to be equaled soon. We'll be arguing, fruitfully I am sure, with this book for a long time.

Ina Habermann. *Staging Slander and Gender in Early Modern England.* Hants: Ashgate, 2003. 202 pp. $79.95. Review by NANCY M. BUNKER, MACON STATE COLLEGE.

Breaking new ground in the critical debate regarding slander and defamation, Ina Habermann's *Staging Slander and Gender in Early Modern England* addresses the signifying structures in which slander is embedded. She explores linguistic and rhetorical systems, social and legal practices, literary and creative conventions, as well as religious and physical/sexual/gendered intricacies while never losing sight of the aesthetics of slander (13). Habermann's chapters masterfully situate juridical texts alongside literary material and show slander's existence as a symbolic practice, a practice which in turn contributes to a historical and cultural phenomenon.

Her study traces slander's trajectory from "negative fashioning of others" (1), spoken with "malicious intent," to the "assumed or recognized" defamation that eventually "becomes a public event" (2) and lodges itself within community relations. Habermann's "slander triangle" of accuser, victim, and audience (2) creates a "theatricality" for connecting "othering with constructions of selfhood" (3). She argues that drama, a privileged site for examining slander, performs as equity in society, a force that mitigates between the general legal applications regarding human action and the particular individual discretions necessary in certain situations (5). Regardless of equity's fairness and "common denominator" properties, "dramatic bad faith" encroaches because of "language and its susceptibility to slander" (7). Habermann's "slandered heroine" (135) labors within blatant and negatively gendered discourse; however, she notes the emergence of a new type of tragic or tragicomic heroine.