

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910956927003321
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Titolo	Sex Before Sex : Figuring the Act in Early Modern England
Pubbl/distr/stampa	[Place of publication not identified], : University of Minnesota Press, 2013
ISBN	1-4529-3947-0
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (332 pages)
Disciplina	820.9/353809031
Soggetti	English literature - History and criticism - Early modern, 1500-1700 - England Sex - History - Early modern and Elizabethan, 1500-1600 Sex in literature - History and criticism Intimacy (Psychology) in literature English drama Behavior Literature History, Modern 1601- History, Early Modern 1451-1600 Behavior and Behavior Mechanisms Humanities History History, 16th Century Sexual Behavior History, 17th Century Literature, Modern English Languages & Literatures English Literature
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Bibliographic Level Mode of Issuance: Monograph
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Early Modern Drama? -- Chapter 2: Death and Theory: Or, the Problem of Counterfactual Sex -- Chapter 3: Spectacular Impotence: Or, Things That Hardly Ever Happen in the Critical History of Pornography -- Chapter 4: "Unmanly Passion": Sodomitical Self-Fashioning in John Ford's *The Lover's Melancholy* and Perkin Warbeck -- Chapter 5: The Erotics of Chin Chucking in Seventeenth-Century England -- Chapter 6: Rimming the Renaissance -- Chapter 7: Animal, Vegetable, Sexual: Metaphor in John Donne's "Sappho to Philaenis" and Andrew Marvell's "The Garden" -- Chapter 8: Aping Rape: Animal Ravishment and Sexual Knowledge in Early Modern England -- Chapter 9: The Seduction of Milton's *Lady*: Rape, Psychoanalysis, and the Erotics of Consumption in *Comus* -- Chapter 10: "How Human Life Began": Sexual Reproduction in Book 8 of *Paradise Lost* -- Afterword -- Contributors -- Index -- A -- B -- C -- D -- E -- F -- G -- H -- I -- J -- K -- L -- M -- N -- O -- P -- Q -- R -- S -- T -- U -- V -- W -- Z.

Sommario/riassunto

What is sex exactly? Does everyone agree on a definition? And does that definition hold when considering literary production in other times and places? "Sex before Sex" makes clear that we cannot simply transfer our contemporary notions of what constitutes a sex act into the past and expect them to be true for the people who were then reading literature and watching plays. The contributors confront how our current critical assumptions about definitions of sex restrict our understanding of representations of sexuality in early modern England. Drawing attention to overlooked forms of sexual activity in early modern culture, from anilingus and interspecies sex to OC chin-chuckingOCO and convivial drinking, "Sex before Sex" offers a multifaceted view of what sex looked like before the term entered history. Through incisive interpretations of a wide range of literary texts, including "Romeo and Juliet, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Paradise Lost*," the figure of Lucretia, and pornographic poetry, this collection queries what might constitute sex in the absence of a widely accepted definition and how a historicized concept of sex affects the kinds of arguments that can be made about early modern sexualities.

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