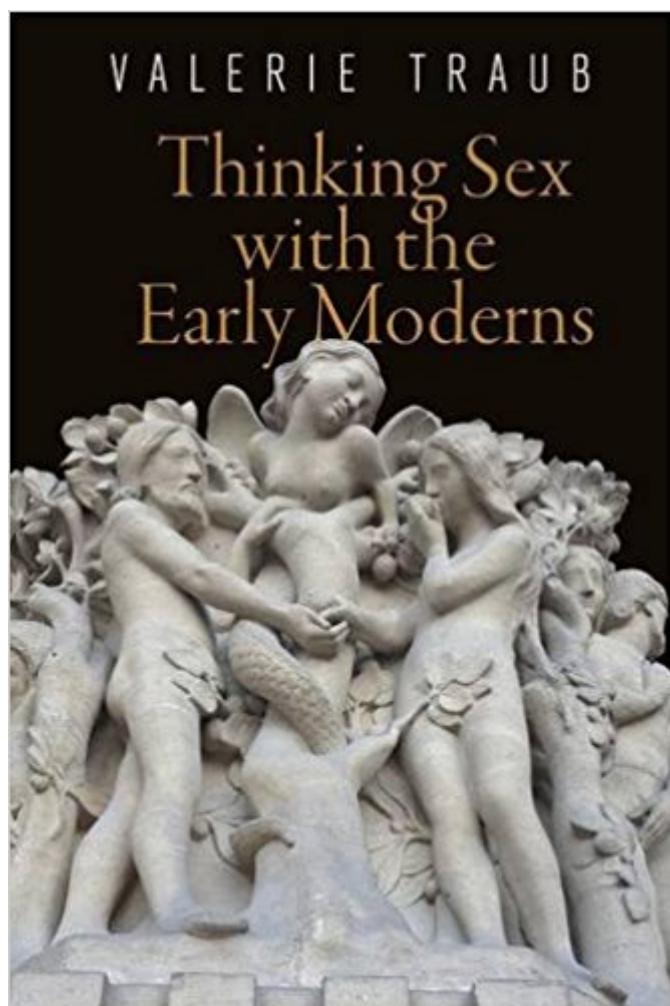


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# Thinking Sex With The Early Moderns (Haney Foundation Series)



## Synopsis

What do we know about early modern sex, and how do we know it? How, when, and why does sex become history? In *Thinking Sex with the Early Moderns*, Valerie Traub addresses these questions and, in doing so, reorients the ways in which historians and literary critics, feminists and queer theorists approach sexuality and its history. Her answers offer interdisciplinary strategies for confronting the difficulties of making sexual knowledge. Based on the premise that producing sexual knowledge is difficult because sex itself is often inscrutable, *Thinking Sex with the Early Moderns* leverages the notions of opacity and impasse to explore barriers to knowledge about sex in the past. Traub argues that the obstacles in making sexual history can illuminate the difficulty of knowing sexuality. She also argues that these impediments themselves can be adopted as a guiding principle of historiography: sex may be good to think with, not because it permits us access but because it doesn't.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Valerie Traub's brilliant book 'thinks sex' at once with the early moderns and with the late postmoderns—ourselves. Taking on the field's toughest conundrums, from the challenges of queer temporality to the imperatives of lesbian visibility, *Thinking Sex* charts exciting new terrain at the critical intersection of theory and history. This is both vintage Traub and Traub at the height of her powers, a milestone in queer, feminist, and early modern studies alike."—Susan S.

Lanser, author of *The Sexuality of History*"Thinking Sex with the Early Moderns is a brilliant, original, and substantial take on queer studies that corrects misinterpretations within the field and integrates gender and lesbian issues into queer studies. Valerie Traub possesses an amazing command of the critical literature and historiography of the early modern period and queer studies, and brings a fresh and insightful perspective to widely known works such as Shakespeare's sonnets as well as more obscure sources."  
•Anna Clark, University of Minnesota"A queer feminist meditation on what it might mean to know sex historically, *Thinking Sex with the Early Moderns* is also demandingly contemporary. Bending an impressive weight of interdisciplinary scholarship to sometimes counterintuitive ends, Traub demonstrates the difficult necessity of engaging conceptual impasses about sexual epistemologies and methodologies without presuming to work through them. As her readers have come to expect, she is both rigorous and subtle, her line of thought often working fiercely against the force of ingrained historical, literary critical and queer theoretical habits. One of this book's greatest accomplishments is its production of sexual knowledge as a less assured, more precarious thing than it is commonly thought."  
•Annamarie Jagose, author of *Orgasmology*"In this intricately argued and pathbreaking study Valerie Traub moves deftly between sexual cultures in the past and present to pose new questions about the making of sexual knowledge. Each chapter of this book brims with a critical flair that will exhilarate and persuade."  
•Laura Doan, author of *Disturbing Practices: History, Sexuality, and Women's Experience of Modern War*"Valerie Traub pointedly argues the ongoing urgency of gender as a relevant, even primal, category in the making of knowledge—sexual, historical, or otherwise. Traub is especially well-situated to make this case, given her extraordinary record of achievement unearthing the historical terms of sexual imagination and existence in the English Renaissance and beyond. A must read for scholars working on the history of sexuality, from early modern to more contemporary domains."  
•Laurie Shannon, Northwestern University

Valerie Traub is Adrienne Rich Distinguished University Professor of English and Women's Studies at the University of Michigan. She is author of *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England* and *Desire and Anxiety: Circulations of Sexuality in Shakespearean Drama*.

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