

LIBERTINISM AND BAROQUE PERFORMATIVITY IN THE 17th CENTURY

In *Sodom or the Quintessence of Debauchery*, a Restoration closet drama attributed to John Wilmot, Second Earl of Rochester (1647-1680) and posthumously published in 1684, Bolloxian, King of Sodom, prescribes sodomy as the sole acceptable sexual practice. This simple and straightforward pornographic joke serves as the starting point of a burlesque and satirical parable in which Rochester reveals the libidinous nature state reigning at the court of Charles II, while at the same time radically and unequivocally appealing to the reader's imagination. *Sodom* is only one of many early modern examples in which intellectual criticism and free-thinking go hand in hand with an erotic and sometimes pornographically grotesque universe in which, through its baroque extravaganza, the distinction between the real and the fictional, between the private and the public disintegrates. This symposium focuses on the 17th-century libertine (sub)culture that seeks to combine the critique of everything public and political with a visual regime that lavishly indulges in the sensuous experience of baroque theatricality.

Monday November 15th 2010: Seminar with Jeremy Webster (Ohio University) and Kirk Combe (Denison University)

Tuesday November 16th 2010. International mini-symposium and workshop: keynotes by Jeremy Webster, Kirk Combe and Christian Biet (Paris Ovest La Défense, IUF) followed by a workshop chaired by Jürgen Pieters (Ghent University) with contributions by Inger Leemans (VU Amsterdam), Klaas Tindemans (Rits) and Paolo Fasoli (CUNY).