



both as "sculpture" and as marital aids. How can you tell whether they were only used in fertility parades or whether some troglodyte lass was shoving that stony slab up her prehistoric twat after the harvest festival was over? How the fuck do you tell? Huh? How?

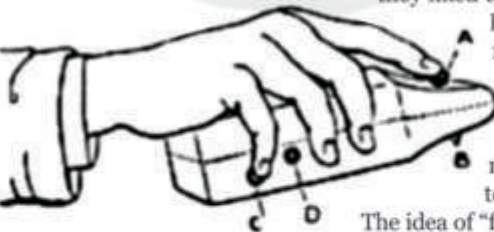
Rumor has it that in the Africa of bygone days, dildos were sculpted from dried camel dung coated in layers of hardened resin. I think you'll agree with me that this is disgusting. But it wasn't until we encounter the ancient Greeks—those *freaks*—that we find the spectacle of dildos being crafted solely for penetration of human orifices.

Starting somewhere around 500 BC, artisans in the Mediterranean coastal city of Miletus began fashioning what they called *olisbos*—leather, stone, or wood surrogate schlongs—specifically for women. Before going off to war, Greek men sometimes gave their wives *olisbos* to stave off the pangs of penile deprivation. And fragments from a third-century B.C. Greek play tell of a young maiden who visits a friend to borrow her *olisbo* and becomes distraught when informed that her friend has already lent it to another lonely lady.

Renaissance Italians added some twists to the dildo template, such as elaborate carvings and the occasional model cast entirely in gold. But as with prior incarnations, these dildos of antiquity were crude, hard, possibly injurious implements that required gobs of olive oil merely to get 'em in.

It was not until the mid-1800s and rubber's vulcanization that mankind entered The Era of the Modern Dildo.

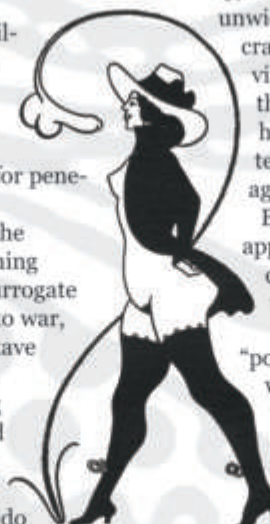
THE ANTIQUE DILDO'S DEATH coincided with the antique vibrator's birth. As early as 1734, the French had invented *le tremousoir*—a hand-held wind-up toy that produced a vibrating motion on one end—for the purpose of curing a widespread medical condition they liked to call "female hysteria."



"THE TREMOUSSOIR" (1734, France):
Widely considered the world's first vibrator, it depended on wind-up action from inserting a key in the hole marked "D." After revving up, you applied "B" to the area requiring "massage."

But it wasn't until the late 1800s that a vibrator industry of absurd proportions emerged amid the clanging steel and smoking rubber of Gilded Age technology.

The idea of "female hysteria"—and I'm not here to argue whether it's just an idea or a LIVING THROBBING THING—



In other words, for a rock-solid 25 centuries—since a few hundred years before Christ up until 1952, when the American Psychiatric Association removed "hysteria" from their list of disorders—physicians took it upon themselves to jack off women to orgasm.

According to some estimates, anywhere from half to three-quarters of an average physician's business in the late 1800s consisted of these anti-hysteria handjobs. Nearly any female complaint would be neatly classified under the "hysteria" umbrella, and thus much jacking was done.

But as we all know, hand jobs can be tiring. In 1869, George Taylor invented the "Manipulator," an unwieldy, steam-powered, hand-and-foot-cranked steel contraption that powered a vibrating ball against which a patient ground their pelvis. The Manipulator cut the average handjob time down from about an hour to ten minutes. Taylor cautioned physicians to protect women against "overindulgence."

By 1900, an estimated one hundred different vibrators had appeared on the market, most of them confined to the physician's lair. They depended on anything from steam power to gas engines to air pressure to good ol' glowin' coal.

The turn of that century brought a new wave of "portable" models. Although the size of power drills, they were mere hand buzzers compared to the torture racks which clambered in doctors' offices. They boasted snappy names such as the "Gyro-Lator," "Vibra-King," "Vibro-Electra," and "Golden-Glo Vitalator." There were even hand-cranked models resembling pepper grinders.

When Hamilton Beach patented a take-home electrical massager in 1902, the vibrator became only the fifth home electrical appliance, following the tea kettle, sewing machine, fan, and toaster. But by 1917, there were more vibrators in American homes than toasters. Vibrator ads buzzed throughout respectable women's magazines of the WWI era. Marketed as "blood circulators" and devices "for anxiety and female tension," they teased female readers with the prospect of "30,000 thrilling, invigorating, penetrating, revitalizing penetrations per minute" and promised that "all the pleasures of youth will throb within you." The 1918 Sears, Roebuck catalogue peddled a vibrator "That Every Woman Appreciates...very useful and satisfactory for home service."

But when silent porno films of the 1920s began showing women using vibrators in a sexual context, advertisers could no longer hide the vibrator's true use behind medicinal mumbo-jumbo. The vibrator was shamed into obscurity until the 1960s and the Sexual Revolution's wackiness. No longer resembling a rusted steel printing press, the typical vibrator today is a slim pink plastic job the size of a baby carrot.

"THE CHATTANOOGA" (1904, U.S.A.):

Steam-powered and nearly five feet tall, this vibrator required two men to shovel coal into a furnace while a physician manipulated a patient's genitals from the other side of a wall using a mechanical arm.

