

All Things Come From Eggs

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The first image in our series linking art with reproductive science is the frontispiece of William Harvey's 1651 treatise, *Exercitationes de Generatione Animalium*. It shows the god Zeus opening an egg-shaped structure inscribed with the words "Ex Ovo Omnia" (all things come from eggs). This one concept underlies all natural conception, IVF, and contraceptive technologies.

William Harvey was personal physician to Charles I and perhaps the first "ovist." His detractors, the "spermists" argued vehemently that the male "seed" was the source of an organism, planting itself in the soil provided by the menstrual blood. Both were right and both were wrong.

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Figure 1.



Figure 2.

