

James Bond with a fertility problem can be almost impossible to imagine. Why?

It is simply because society's picture of a fertile, virile man is one who has loads of sex. People draw a very close link between fertility and your sexual capacity.

Fertility and statues with enormous nobs

Fertility has always been a very important part of society. Just about every ancient society had fertility rites and festivals to ensure that their race of people continued into the next generation. The Mesopotamians are believed to have made fertility charms out of clay dolls, smeared with actual menstrual blood. In Indian culture, it is symbols of elephants and peacocks that summon fertility. The Aztecs threw warriors into the fire to appease gods of fertility. But it's not limited to school history book folklore. It's also something that we see whenever you go to a Pacific island country and decide that the worst possible souvenir that you can buy for your workmates is a little wooden statue with an enormous nob. Based on these cultural icons, either ancient civilisations had a fixation with fertility, or a serious case of penis envy.

Is our society today, with all its technological brilliance, so different? Some people would be horrified to think that you could compare our culture today with the ancient Aztecs. But you may be surprised at the evidence that is there even in today's society. Fertility is held in very high esteem nowadays in that our world is built around families, children and regeneration.

We celebrate the humble penis in our language. How do you describe a great hero - either on the battlefield or in the sporting arena? 'He's got balls'. It's easy to see phallic symbols in our society - just ask the nearest feminist who will gladly point them out to you.

Having children is also a mark of being a man. Many times a prospective father has been slapped on the back for his good work in getting his partner pregnant. Who knows whether he was fuelled up on scotch for his 30-second shot at manhood? He's a hero. Sometimes you'll hear the phrase 'at least you're not shooting blanks mate'.

Aha.

If fathering a child carries such a mantle of being a super stud, logically it would follow that if you can't father a child, you are less of a man than a guy who can.

If you're struggling to conceive and there's the slightest doubt that you can become a father, it can bring into question the individual man's 'manhood'. This can particularly be the case if you're the one