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VENTRILOQUIZED VOICES

Feminist Theory and English Renaissance Texts

Elizabeth D. Harvey

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INTRODUCTION
The voice of gender

This book is a historical and theoretical study of male appropriations of the feminine voice in English texts of the early modern period. Its focus on voice derives both from post-structuralist preoccupations with authorial presence or absence and from Anglo-American and French feminist concerns with gender and language. This double theoretical orientation provides a framework for exploring a number of classical and Renaissance texts that share a common feature: although written by male authors, they are voiced by female characters in a way that seems either to erase the gender of the authorial voice or to thematize the transvestism of this process. This phenomenon, which I call transvestite ventriloquism, accentuates the issues of gender, voice, and authorial property in ways that illuminate both Renaissance conceptions of language and their relation to the gendered subject, and also twentieth-century notions of the author and their link (or lack of connection) to the gendered body.

My use of the term voice refers in the most obvious sense to the metaphors of speaking that appear so pervasively in Renaissance texts. The trope of voice is frequently metonymized in the tongue, or conversely in silence, and it is often embodied in mythical figures associated with voice or rhetoric – the Sibyl, Echo, Philomela, Medusa, the Muse. These figures possess a reflexive dimension, pointing as they do to an author and to the way he (or she) represents and thematizes the conception or production of the text. This subject has been treated evocatively by Jonathan Goldberg (1986) in *Voice Terminal Echo: Postmodernism and English Renaissance Texts*, where he explores the complicated intertextual relationship between voices and text, between character and letter, between authorial voice and the imaging of its origin. In his study, Goldberg notes the frequent registering of "the poet's voice in other voices – particularly in the

voices of women, descendants of Echo and Philomela and Syrinx" (1986: 12), but he does not elaborate on the implications of this crossing of genders. Patricia Parker does consider the gender of voice in *Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender, Property*, in particular, the contiguities between the body of the text and the female body. Arguing that language and rhetoric seem to issue from, or are at least figured in, a dilated feminine body, she claims that the deferral or errancy that characterizes romance as a form is linked to woman's fabled garrulity (1987). Rhetorical amplification, exemplified in the Erasmian notion of *copia*, is thus not only represented by the expanding or opening of a woman's body, but this trope also points to the social dimensions of language, especially the regulation of discourse and its circulation or commodification.

While both Goldberg's and Parker's books have been formative in Renaissance studies and certainly to my own understanding of voice, neither has addressed explicitly the disturbing problem of ventriloquistic cross-dressing that I will examine here. An author's speaking through the voice of the other gender opens up what I argue is a discrepancy in the etymological sense of "sounding differently." Perhaps the best way of describing this space of difference is through an example from drama because, in a sense, drama furnishes the quintessential paradigm for this study, since it is an orchestration of various characterological voices by an "invisible" author. John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* is a particularly apt instance because its thematization of the dramatic and the self-conscious playing of parts calls attention to its meta-dramatic dimensions; both Antonio and the Duchess "play" particular roles in order to preserve the secrecy of their marriage, while Bosola is continually casting himself as different characters and manipulating plots so that he might uncover secrets. The discrepancy between the character and the various roles each enact is registered in the spatialization of voice, in what Ferdinand initially calls "whispering-rooms" (1.2.240), that is, the space behind the visor or mask. The Duchess reinvokes that space, when, as she is being led away to imprisonment, she tells Bosola that if she were a man she "would beat that counterfeit face into thy other" (3.5.116); just before she is strangled, she tells Bosola that any way she dies will take her out of his "whispering" (4.2.212). In other words, voice, especially the hushed voice of gossip, spies, and secrecy, emerges from the disjunction between the face and the masks it wears, and it is in these whispering rooms that the notion of an essential self and its linkage to language is problematized. The

thematization of created voice stands not in opposition to an authentic self or voice, but in opposition to the figure of the actor, who is himself already wearing an invented mask and speaking in another's voice. The whispering room is also the locus of a female sexuality that is made illicit by its propagation in rumor, a promiscuity intimately allied to voice. Of course the disjunction between speaking and gender is intensified in *The Duchess of Malfi* because the Duchess would have been played by a male actor, and the gap that is opened up by this transvestism disturbs the illusion of continuity between the gender of the body and the voice that speaks it.

While the disjunction in drama between the representation of women and their actual cultural circumstances, or between their feminine speech and the male author who produces it (or the male actor who utters it), has been influentially analysed by such critics as Lisa Jardine (1983) and Catherine Belsey (1985), among others, the discrepancy between gender and voice in non-dramatic Renaissance poetry has received little attention.[1] The male impersonation of the feminine voice in non-dramatic writing is usually explained with reference to a *persona*, which, while useful as a distinction, is neither historicized nor gendered as a theory. T.S. Eliot in "The Three Voices in Poetry," to cite an early but paradigmatic instance, describes the germ of sympathy that exists between an author and a fictional voice, an affinity that is, he says, not necessarily restricted by temperament, age, or sex (1957: 93–4). In emphasizing the similitude rather than the difference between the sexes, Eliot tends to collapse the cultural construction of gender as a category that distinguishes and divides; this dissolution absorbs women or feminine voices into a gender-neutral (or male) category, just as the female character's voice tends to become a refracted version of the male author's. Although the idea of the *persona* goes back to Plato and Aristotle, Eliot's reference to Ezra Pound's use of the term links it with voice, making *persona* virtually synonymous with the Eliotic definition of the "third voice," the poet's speaking through a dramatic character (Eliot 1957: 89). Despite Eliot's stress in "The Metaphysical Poets" on the inseparability of thought and feeling (or ideas and the body) for poets writing before the second half of the seventeenth century and the dissociation of sensibility, his notion of voice is a curiously disembodied one for a critic who described Donne and Racine as looking into "the cerebral cortex, the nervous system, and the digestive tracts" (Eliot 1975: 66) for the source of their art. Indeed, as I will be arguing in this book, although much post-structuralist theory has striven to divorce the

author's body (and voice) from his (or her) writing, the constructed voices within the texts I will be considering vigorously reassert their (feminine) bodily origins.

The feminine voice that is represented in early modern texts by male authors speaks because it purportedly issues from a female body that gives it life and currency. Examined within the cultural discourses of the period, woman's voice or tongue – what Richard Brathwaite in *The English Gentlewoman* called "that glibbery member" (Goreau 1984: 38) – is seen to be imbricated with female sexuality, just as silence is "bound up" with sexual continence. I am exploring what we might designate as hysterical texts (in the root sense of that word), works that are intimately connected to the functioning of the uterus. That organ was considered by writers such as Plato, Hippocrates, and Aretaeus of Cappadocia to possess a life of its own and the capacity to migrate within the female body. Even though Galen's writings, which had the greatest impact on Renaissance notions of sexual difference, stress the homology between men and women (woman's sexual organs are exactly like men's except that they are internal instead of external), the interiority and invisibility of the womb gave it a special status. That a woman's sexual organs remained within the claustral space of her body reflected a whole series of physiological "facts": her relative lack of heat, the colder, moister humors that dominate her make-up, menstruation, her physical shape, her higher voice, her propensity to age more quickly, her weaker powers of mind, her imagination (Maclean 1980: 31–41). The medical representation of female physiology overlapped with cultural ideology in ways that make it impossible to dissever one from the other. Our notions of bodies are, after all, constructed primarily through their descriptions in the discourses of medicine and science, representations that are themselves implicated in and serve to perpetuate ideological structures. The intersections of gendered bodies, their linguistic expression, and a particular cultural matrix have much to tell us about the operations of gender in history. Far from being an essentialist project, then, my investigations into the link between female physiology and the feminine voice emphasize the fabricated nature of this connection, and they do so by focusing on the division – rather than the contiguity – between an actual body and its voice. In other words, my attention to transvestite ventriloquism allows me to explore the way male authors create a feminine voice that seems to be – but is not – linked to a whole set of feminine characteristics (a sexualized body,

an emotional make-up, an imagination). Indeed, ventriloquizations of women in the Renaissance achieved the power they did partly because so few women actually wrote and spoke, but the representations of feminine speech that were current in literary and popular accounts, as well as in ventriloquizations, fostered a vision that tended to reinforce women's silence or to marginalize their voices when they did speak or write.

The linkage (or lack of connection) between language and the female body is a frequent and vigorously argued topic in French feminism and in Anglo-American feminist debates. Voice is often used as a powerful metaphor for the rebirth of what has been suppressed by patriarchal culture. As women struggle to repossess a power taken from them, as they challenge patriarchal institutions that have deformed them and limited their potential, the synecdochic expression of that liberation is often localized in the voice. Carol Gilligan's immensely important study of psychology and moral development, *In a Different Voice*, for example, which challenges the androcentrism of traditional psychological models, uses voice as a marker of sexual difference. *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* (Belenky *et al.* 1986) is organized methodologically and thematically around the metaphor of voice, Tillie Olsen's *Silences* charts the impediments to the emergence of voice as a synonym for self and creativity, and, in French feminist theory, Hélène Cixous's (1986) "Sorties" describes femininity in writing as "a privilege of voice" (92). On the one hand, this seems like a natural move, since language provides the currency in society and because voice registers in an immediate way that linguistic power. Yet post-structuralist theory has repeatedly challenged the stability of the categories that appear to lend "voice" its coherence as a metaphor by interrogating notions of subjectivity, the author, the reader, the text, and gender. We can no longer assume that the authorial "voice" resides in the text to which a particular signature is affixed, or that a text is the same for different readers, or that there is a clear correlation between the gender of a body and the gender of a text. The problem in theoretical terms, then, is one of reconciling the imperatives of Anglo-American feminism – with its project of integrating women's experience and women's "voices" into traditional systems of knowledge and understanding – with French feminist theory, with its reliance on deconstruction, marxism, and psychoanalytic paradigms. One stumbling block to this reconciliation is that voice has itself become a monolithic construction that

seems to be construed in the same way whether it is used in twentieth-century arguments about women's epistemology, as the linch-pin for a theory of gynocritics, or as it appears to emerge from the female body in French feminist writings. This integration is further complicated by the intricacies of history; just as "voice" remains constant across different disciplines and cultures, so, too, does it tend to be envisioned as stable over time, seeming the same whether it is represented in the Middle Ages, the eighteenth century, or the twentieth century.

I argue specifically against this apparent transhistoricality of voice, and I seek to make self-conscious the various metaphorical usages of "voice" in feminist theory. This book, therefore, like the instances of voicing it examines, is characterized by doubleness. I move with a kind of transgressive abandon between the historical context of the early modern period and twentieth-century feminist theoretical writings. If history (and the history that shapes literary criticism) is a narrative, constructed from the perspective of a present that is itself governed by cultural factors specific to its own historical moment, then what one chooses to focus on in the past, what elements one privileges and the arguments that emerge from the literary and cultural evidence one fashions or discovers, are largely determined by present preoccupations. My interest in voice, and the female voice in particular, has been made possible by feminist criticism in the first instance, which has recognized the gender of an utterance as crucially determining how it is received and even what it means. Historical reconstructions are always a kind of ventriloquization, then, a matter of making the past seem to speak in the voice that the present gives it. Rather than suppressing this enabling twinship, I foreground it by pairing texts of the early modern period with late twentieth-century considerations of what I claim are analogous issues.

Chapter 1 gathers a series of writings that link voice and cross-dressing. The chapter is framed, on the one hand, by my analysis of Elaine Showalter's theoretical writings on voice, gynocritics, transvestism, and gender, and, on the other, by my explication of Sarah Kofman's ventriloquization of Freud's theories of bisexuality and hysteria. The central portion of the chapter treats two different problems of transvestism in Renaissance texts: a male author's (Spenser) figuration of cross-dressing as a way of expressing the ambivalences of power and desire incumbent upon a male poet writing under the patronage of a female sovereign, and, in the Jacobean context, the problematic of authorship in anonymous texts

about transvestism. The chapter thus begins and ends with feminist writers who explore the question of language, gender, and the possibility of political change that could be effected through language. I start with Showalter because, in her theory of gynocritics, she employs an influential but inadequately theorized notion of voice that is partly inherited from male ventriloquizations of feminine voices; I conclude with Kofman because she redeploys the very strategies of ventriloquism that created this illusory feminine voice as a historical legacy. She makes ventriloquism into a reflexive weapon, using it to argue against Freud's authoritative pronouncements on femininity, and revealing in the process the doubleness of Freudian theory, its simultaneous claim for the purely speculative nature of sexual difference (its reliance on the thesis of bisexuality), and its masculine wish to disavow the "taint" of femininity. All the texts with which I am concerned in this chapter call into question the gender of the voice that speaks and the power (or lack of power) a given (gendered) voice therefore possesses.

In Chapter 2, the most "duplicitous" of the chapters, I address the relationship between hysteria and voice. I begin by looking at Erasmus's ventriloquization of Folly, whose connections with laughter, women, sexuality, and madness link her to a whole series of marginalized discourses. Erasmus's *Praise of Folly* may seem like an odd choice in this consideration of English texts. I have included it first because it provides an example of ventriloquization that had (and continues to have) wide influence. That Erasmus wrote it in England, that its crucial first audience was English, and that it invokes Thomas More both in its title and prefatory epistle makes clear its important connection to the English context. Equally important, the humanism that brought it into being and that it embodies depicts a community that crosses the boundaries of nationality and the vernacular, an intellectual solidarity that is evident in the currency of Latin as the language of humanism. Latin is a privileged language with patriarchal affiliations, and Folly's voice thus sets up a kind of internal tension between the vernacular "mother tongue," what women speak, and the adopted patriarchal linguistic medium of classical learning. *Folly*'s "double" voicing is multiple, then, since it is figured not only in the transvestism of the voice that speaks, but also in the interplay between Latin and Greek and between English and Latin. Multivocality or polyglottism is, of course, one of the characteristics of hysteria as Freud described it, exemplified, for example, in Anna O.'s linguistic disruptions; she

forgets German, her "mother tongue," reading French and Italian, and speaking and understanding English perfectly instead (Freud 1974: 79). The second half of Chapter 2 examines the "trope" of hysteria in Clément's and Cixous's *La jeune née*. Although I contrast this French feminist text with Erasmus's mock encomium, I am also interested in the continuities between the early modern imaging of hysteria and its Freudian and post-Freudian manifestations. Is it possible, as Cixous implicitly claims, to reappropriate the discourses that characterize women as hysterical and employ them as a strategy for change? While Cixous does not ventriloquize in the overt way that Irigaray and Kofman do, she does nevertheless subversively occupy the cultural discourses to which women are relegated, making this phallocentric cultural lexicon the basis for a bisexual language that is designed to dismantle the economy of the proper. Both Folly and Cixous employ a many-tongued voice, one that is mirrored in their violations of textual property, and which, in Cixous's case, becomes the enactment of a feminist intertextuality.

After examining the pathology of the uterus in my consideration of hysteria, I turn in Chapter 3 to its positive, creative powers. My focus is the trope of male birth, which I seek to understand by contextualizing it within the historical debate on midwifery. This chapter brings bodies and voices together in their most overt and complicated alliance, because the poetic (and some of the medical) texts that I examine use the metaphor of pregnancy and birth to image their own textual origins at the same historical moment that birth and the interior of the female body were becoming subject to male medical scrutiny and economic control. This historicization of the metaphor of male birth illuminates the way such male poets as Sidney, Milton, or Donne represent their poetic voices as analogously or metaphorically bound up with female reproduction. In the last section of the chapter, I set John Donne's *Anniversaries* against Julia Kristeva's writings on motherhood. There is a special relevance, I suggest, to the double structure of Kristeva's "Stabat Mater," with its two columns that seem to divide motherhood into the experience of the mother, registered in lyrical fragments, and the historical and theoretical analysis of maternity, represented in the right-hand column. Both Kristeva and Donne rely on the image of the Virgin Mary, a figure that represents the bifurcation of maternity and sexuality; where Donne uses a virginal maternity as the source of his (ventriloquized) voice, Kristeva provides a historical and psychoanalytic explication of the Virgin's contribution to a more general

theory of maternality. My juxtaposition of these texts interrogates motherhood as a discourse or an act that can be owned or appropriated, either by the male midwives and physicians who colonize and eventually medicalize childbirth, or by feminists who seek to repossess the experience of maternity in language.

The fourth chapter, "Ventriloquizing Sappho," also raises questions of literary property. In this case, they coalesce around the figure of Sappho, whose history is fragmented and occluded by the censorship of her writings and her lesbianism, and by the ventriloquism that this silencing enabled. The male poets who speak in her voice appropriate the power of her poetic reputation, while subjecting her either to male disdain within a heterosexual economy (Ovid's Phaon), or the voyeurism implicit in male constructions of lesbianism (Donne's "Sappho to Philaenis"). Although this analysis examines the specific interaction between Sappho and her male ventriloquizers, its ramifications concern the sexual status of the female muse, the relationship between her chastity and her poetic fecundity. Just as Luce Irigaray (in a feminist reworking of Lévi-Strauss) argues that the circulation of women subtends and supports a heterosexual economy, so too does the production and circulation of poetry depend upon the exchange of female representations, whose sexuality is both guarded and displayed in the contest of male poetic rivalry. This chapter concludes by comparing Donne's ventriloquized Sapphic love letter to Luce Irigaray's lyrical "When Our Lips Speak Together," her meditation on the female body and language. Apostrophizing an unnamed woman, Irigaray's speaker interrogates the imprisoning, homogenizing sameness of patriarchal language, replacing it with a transgressive linguistic medium that in turn seeks to dissolve the division between self and other, to fuse women into a new unity that is at once erotic and linguistic.

A central interpretive focus in all of the chapters is my attention to the problem of intertextuality. Intertextuality, as Julia Kristeva defines it, stands for the transposition of one (or several) sign systems to another, a passage that in turn demands a new theorization of enunciation. Kristeva says that "every signifying practice is a field of transpositions of various signifying systems (an intertextuality)," and that the "'place' of enunciation and its denoted 'object' are never single, complete, and identical to themselves, but always plural, shattered, capable of being tabulated" (Kristeva 1984: 59–60). Rather than describing the bounded property of a stable author, as source studies or influence studies do, then, intertextuality focuses on

utterances whose possible sources are illusory points of origin, or whose origins are either infinitely regressive or at least multiple, so that they cannot be identified as belonging either solely to a particular author or even to a particular historical moment. My attention to the intertextual elements of the works I discuss is designed to draw attention to the various authorial and cultural voices that inhabit these texts, voices that undermine the illusory sense of closure and stability sometimes attributed to them. In this respect, ventriloquism and intertexuality overlap, for, in both cases, a putatively single and bounded utterance is destabilized by questions of origin, authorship, and ownership; an intertextual allusion opens a text to other voices and echoes of other texts, just as ventriloquism multiplies authorial voices, interrogating the idea that a single authorial presence speaks or controls an utterance. I return repeatedly to the classical intertexts in Renaissance writing because the presence of these allusions testifies to the often self-conscious construction of Renaissance culture as the inheritor, voice, and disinterrer of the classical past.[2] It is not accidental that the classical author to whom I refer most often is Ovid, for he was manifestly self-reflexive about his use of intertexts, in his parodic rewriting of Virgil in *The Metamorphoses*, in his encyclopedic use of myth, and especially in his densely intertextual and ventriloquized letters from the mythical heroines of the *Heroides*.[3]

My focus on intertexuality is further complicated by gender, a factor central to my readings of the *Heroides* and to the Renaissance rewritings of it. I am particularly interested in what happens to a male-authored text when its intertexts are authored by a woman (such as Ovid's allusions to Sappho), spoken in the feminine voice (Erasmus's references to Virgil's Sibyl), or spoken in a cross-dressed or transvestite voice. In these cases, not only are authorial and textual autonomies transgressed by subtexts, but the stability of gender itself is revealed to be what Judith Butler has recently termed a structure of impersonation (Butler 1991: 21). Just as intertextuality suggests a kind of infinite regress in which there is no original, so too does this transvestism of voice imply that "gender is a kind of imitation for which there is no original" (Butler 1991: 21, italics removed). In other words, what ventriloquistic cross-dressing makes clear is that, while transvestism is seen as a copy of an original (a man dressed as, or speaking as, a woman), when we examine the original, it too turns out not to be original, but a copy of itself. The naturalistic dimensions of heterosexual gender identities are thus imitations, performatively

constituted as reproductions of "phantasmatic idealizations" of what "man" and "woman" are supposed to be in a given culture (Butler 1991: 21).

The texts I have selected as examples of transvestite ventriloquism are representative of particular problems or issues (transvestism, hysteria, maternity, lesbianism) rather than constituting a comprehensive survey of male poets speaking in the feminine voice. I have not, for instance, considered the numerous examples of cross-dressed voices in pastoral, a collection that might include not only Sidney's *Arcadia* and Ralegh's "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd," but also Marvell's "Nymph Complaining for the Death of her Fawn" and, as Rosemary Kegl argues, the silenced voices of Juliana and her contemporaries in the Mower poems (Kegl 1990: 102–5). Ventriloquized voices that speak in a pastoral context call up a representation and vocalization of nature that is both ancient and pervasive; indeed, the violations of nature that Marvell's Mower laments figure an intrusion or intervention between essence and its covering, "between the bark and tree," that recalls the arguments against transvestism in the *Hic Mulier/Haec-Vir* pamphlet debate. The "green seraglio" populated with eunuchs in "The Mower Against Gardens" represents a contaminated sexuality, an ability to reproduce without sex, or, conversely, an adulterated sexuality that is barren. The monstrousness of this vision is akin to ventriloquism (which is, after all, one of the symptoms of demonic possession or witchcraft), in its violation of the principle of correspondence, the ability to correlate a particular tree with a particular fruit, or a specific voice with a body to which it should belong.

Rather than offering a global account of why male writers might wish to speak in a woman's voice, I have anchored my explications in specific historical and generic contexts. The phenomenon has temporally local causes and manifestations, so that Samuel Richardson's ventriloquism in *Pamela* would need to be understood differently from, say, John Updike's use of it in *S.* (although both overlap with the epistolary tradition), or indeed, from its manifestation in the early modern period. There are, nevertheless, linkages across history, as A.S. Byatt's juxtaposition of a study of male ventriloquism and literary haunting in her recent novel, *Possession*, makes clear. Although the initial allusion to male ventriloquism in *Possession* is satiric, referring as it does to an undergraduate essay on the representation of women in the work of a male Victorian poet, the context makes it apparent that meaning depends upon imputations of gender.

The essay is, ironically, judged as a female ventriloquism of a male student's ideas and discounted accordingly (Byatt 1990: 12). The incident hilariously and pathetically anticipates the more sophisticated versions of ventriloquism with which the novel concerns itself: the complex relationships between biographer and subject, between literary critic and poet, between the past and the present, between professors and students, and the rivalrous feuding among members of the international academic community. As the various senses of the novel's title suggest, ventriloquism as a motif is most often invoked in and around issues of authorial property, especially as property intersects with history in the recreation – and often enshrinement – of the past, in the animation of the dead by the living, or in the way the living are "possessed" by the historical figures they study. Thus, although our construal of transvestite ventriloquism needs to be historically and ideologically inflected, its interpretation in a particular context will nevertheless be contingent upon the intersection of three factors: gender, property, and the author. The interrelationships among these elements, while already complex, are further complicated by history, by the temporal gap between interpreter and ventriloquist, and by the historical (and intertextual) distance between ventriloquizer and ventriloquized.

While my study focuses on ventriloquism in order to explore the construction of gender in the early modern period, especially as it overlaps with property and as it implicitly reveals an idea of the author, I also argue that ventriloquism is an appropriation of the feminine voice, and that it reflects and contributes to a larger cultural silencing of women. This argument could sound narrowly essentialist in its reliance on an unstated identity politics: only women can legitimately speak for themselves, because only they have access to their own experience. As Edward Said and Diana Fuss have both asserted, such an adherence to rigid definitions of identity breeds an exclusivity that is designed to silence outsiders (Fuss 1989: 114–16). But my claim that transvestite ventriloquism expresses a cultural suppression of the female voice is not based upon epistemological premises; in other words, I am not asserting that men cannot know what it is to be a woman and therefore should not speak on their behalf (no matter how beneficent their motives are). Rather, I argue that the issue is not epistemological at all, but ethical and political. It is not whether male poets *can* adequately represent the female voice, but the ethics and politics of doing so. Like Fuss, I believe that essentialism and constructionism are mutually implicated; I thus

historicize essentialist definitions of the female voice, adhere to an idea of a constructed and contingent subject, but I also support a tactical essentialism, the belief that even while we recognize the constructed nature of gender, we can still adhere to a conviction that women and men (and their respective voices) are not politically interchangeable.

Although my analysis of transvestite ventriloquism has located its operations in language, the connection between representation and gender transposition is not limited to the linguistic. My cover image expresses in painting many of the issues that have been central to this study. Entitled *Le Silence*, the almost androgynous figure at the center of the womb-like space holds her fingers to her lips in a gesture that mimics the personifications of silence found in Renaissance and Baroque emblem books such as Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* (Reff 1967: 361).[4] The gesture recalls the classical figure of Harpocrates, the Greek god of silence and secrecy, a fitting reminder of the cultural silence of women that subtends and enables male ventriloquizations of their voices. The context of Redon's painting seems to capture the fundamental ambiguity that also haunts the ventriloquized voices I examine in this book. Redon apparently conceived and painted *Le Silence* in 1911, when his wife was extremely ill and just recovering from a major operation. The otherworldliness of the portrait seems to point to an awareness of death's proximity, just as its title suggests that the barrier between life and death is one that cannot be bridged by language.

This sense of crossing is captured in another picture by Redon also painted in 1911. Entitled either *Le Soleil Noire* or *Le Silence*, it portrays two hooded figures, "like Dante and Virgil about to embark on their momentous journey" (Reff 1967: 363). The first title, as well as the eclipsed sun in the painting, may allude to the image of the black sun in Gérard de Nerval's 1853 poem "El Desdichado," (The Disinherited), for in that poem, the disconsolate speaker is imaged as a widower. The narrator depicts himself as having twice crossed the Acheron alive, and it is the power of the Orphic lyre he carries that allows him to traverse from one world to the other (Kristeva 1989: 140–1). Poised between one world and the next, the figures in Redon's painting also seem to embody liminality and a sense of momentous and inexpressible passage. Yet there is another sense of crossing at work as well. The face depicted in my cover image is "unmistakably that of Mme. Redon" (Reff 1967: 366), but the preparatory drawing depicts a male face that looks like Redon

himself. In other words, the painting seems to figure a kind of superimposition or mask, with Redon's own face metaphorically standing beneath the image of his silent wife. It appears from the palimpsestic image that Redon imaginatively occupied his wife's position, as if he – like Orpheus – had crossed the boundary between worlds, or between genders, in order to prepare himself for her passage from the world. The transposition of gender reveals the pathos and emotional investment implicit in this crisis, a sense that actual death might become the spiritual death of melancholia for the widower. The evocativeness of the image, with its array of pictorial and literary intertexts, suggests as well the depth and complexity of discourses buried in the figure of silence.

1

TRAVESTIES OF VOICE

Cross-dressing the tongue

> Nick Greene, I thought, remembering the story I had made about Shakespeare's sister, said that a woman acting put him in mind of a dog dancing. Johnson repeated the phrase two hundred years later of women preaching.
>
> (Virginia Woolf, 1929: 56)

In the introduction to their ground-breaking study of the woman writer in the nineteenth century, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar argue that culture, literary history, and literary theory have combined to exclude women, to make them passive and merely represented rather than active participants in literary creativity. They cite Chaucer's Wife of Bath's famous remark that, if women had written stories instead of men, literature would have been very different, for then wickedness would have been seen to be at least as much a masculine as a feminine characteristic. They compare the Wife of Bath to Anne Elliot in Jane Austen's *Persuasion*, suggesting that both demonstrate "our culture's historical confusion of literary authorship with patriarchal authority" (1979: 11). Later on in their analysis, despite references to Chaucer, the Wife of Bath seems to take on a life of her own, for, unlike other represented feminine characters, she has her own "voice," and repeatedly utters memorable and quotable feminist maxims. Chaucer is described as giving her "a tale of her own," which projects "her subversive version of patriarchal institutions into the story of a furious hag" (1979: 79). "Five centuries later," we are told, "the threat of the hag... still lurks behind the compliant paragon of women's stories"; in the next paragraph, Gilbert and Gubar seamlessly emend "women's stories" to "women writers" (1979: 79), making the conflation

between feminine voice and female author complete. Even though they claim both explicitly and implicitly that male literary experience is fundamentally different from female literary experience, the Wife of Bath appears to transcend these categories, paired as she repeatedly is with female characters created by female authors who similarly articulate their wish to escape from an oppressive system.

What are we to make of this and similar slippages between characterological and authorial voices (Molly Bloom is another instance of a female character who in the writings of some other theorists – such as Hélène Cixous (1980) – comes to stand for the irrepressible female spirit), especially in a feminist criticism that seems increasingly to privilege and take for granted the female voice? To address these and related questions, I want in this book to extend and complexify the relationship between voice and gender by examining in detail the common but largely unremarked phenomenon of what I call transvestite ventriloquism, which the Wife of Bath exemplifies: the use of the feminine voice by a male author in a way that appears to efface originary marks of gender. Is there necessarily a difference between a feminine voice constructed by a female as opposed to a male author? If so, where – or in what – does that difference reside? Is there an essential distinguishing mark (a recognizably distinct female language), or is the difference signalled in its reception by the reader? What difference does it make who is speaking and who fashions a literary "voice"? What are the theoretical and political implications of male authors ventriloquizing the female voice? To start to answer some of these questions, I focus my study on the intersection between ventriloquized texts of the English Renaissance and twentieth-century theoretical works that treat the linkage between gender and voice. This intersection of concerns is possible because of the historical doubling or convergence of attention to gender, language, and essentialism in both historical frames. Just as the Renaissance was preoccupied with clothing as an indicator of sexuality (as well as class), with the relationship between gender and speech, and with the crossing of genders, so, too, is late twentieth-century western culture concerned with issues of essentialism, transvestism, and the link between gender and authorship. The implications of these intersections are complex, engaging as they do the connection between gender and subjectivity, and the connection between language and alterity. The issues they raise are not only epistemological (can one know or speak of experiences of otherness?) but also methodological, ethical, and political.

In this chapter I will address these questions by pairing a series of texts that examine transvestism: I begin by analysing four essays by Elaine Showalter, two of which study transvestism as a trope in critical and theoretical writing. I juxtapose her two earlier essays on gynocritics, "Toward a Feminist Poetics" and "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness," with these essays on transvestism, "Critical Cross-Dressing: Male Feminists and the Woman of the Year" and her introduction to *Speaking of Gender*, "The Rise of Gender," because I am interested not only in the question of essentialism, but also in the fundamental implications of that question for understanding historical constructions of gender and feminist methodology. I am particularly concerned to explore the efficacy of a gynocritical model for Renaissance studies, and I thus examine the presuppositions subtending gynocritics and its methodological limitations. The Renaissance texts I set against gynocritics are preoccupied with transvestism: the *Hic Mulier/Haec-Vir* (1620) pamphlets, the Radigund episode in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, and its Ovidian subtext, Deianira's epistle to Hercules in the *Heroides*. All of these works represent cross-dressing and its relationship to speech, and, in their ventriloquistic dimensions, they thematize issues central to this book: the link between signature and authorial voice and the way this connection is complicated by gender. The male poet's transvestism of voice is, I argue, at once a strategy for confronting the narrowness of the imprisoning bounds of gender definitions, and also (paradoxically) a way of coping with the anxiety generated by the radical instability of gender difference within a particular cultural context. The final section moves from Renaissance figures of the transvestite to Sarah Kofman's (1985) French feminist rereading of Freud's theories of bisexuality, a text in which she repeatedly ventriloquizes Freud's voice as a strategy for illuminating and rebalancing the asymmetry of Freudian bisexuality.

I

Elaine Showalter's 1979 essay "Toward a Feminist Poetics" propounds the binarity that was to shape a decade of Anglo-American feminist criticism and that remains influential in Renaissance studies;[1] on the one hand, she defines a mode of feminist analysis that she calls "feminist critique," which is concerned with woman as reader, and, on the other, a critical mode that centers on woman as writer, which, borrowing from the French, she christens "gynocritics" (1979: 128).

Citing a metaphor originally invoked in a dialogue between Carolyn Heilbrun and Catharine Stimpson, Showalter describes the relationship as typological: feminist critique is aligned with the Old Testament and gynocritics is affiliated with the New Testament. Her gloss on the analogy is that just as feminist critique is focused on "'the sins and errors of the past,'" so, too, is feminist critique intent on revealing the omissions of attention to women or the propagation of stereotypes about them in literature and criticism produced by men. Gynocritics, in contradistinction, is, like the New Testament, "seeking 'the grace of the imagination,'" and it is suffused with the celebratory possibility of arriving in the "promised land of the feminist vision" (1979: 129). Where Heilbrun and Stimpson had insisted on the necessity for both types of feminist criticism, on the interdependence of the righteous, ideologically oriented feminist critique and the liberating "disinterestedness" of gynocritics, Showalter, relying on the evolutionary trajectory that subtends so much of her early criticism, tends to see gynocritics *as* the promised land. This is especially evident in "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness," where she spends less than a page on feminist critique, while the rest of the essay is devoted to establishing an impressive taxonomy of four "schools" of gynocentric feminist criticism. Her metaphors are equally revealing; while all of theory is a wilderness in which feminist "theoretical pioneers" must make their home, feminist criticism without theory was an "empirical orphan in the theoretical storm" (1981: 244). The "firm theoretical ground" that she claims for feminism is gynocritical: it is "genuinely woman centered" and "independent," it relies on female "experience," it avoids androcentric models in favor of gynocentric ones, and it seeks to discover "its own subject, its own system, its own theory, and its own voice" (1981: 247).

Yet as compelling a theoretical model as this was in 1981, as urgently necessary as it was in that political climate, and as alluring as this vision of stable theoretical domesticity is, there are nevertheless difficulties both with Showalter's vision and with the gynocritical model she has bequeathed to so many feminist critics. One of the most disconcerting and disabling features of her theory is her desire for theoretical and ontological stability (evidenced most clearly in her recurrent references to a "permanent home" (1979: 142)). In her dismissal of feminist critique, for example, she expands what had been a latent metaphor; feminist critique, she tells us, concerns the woman as reader or "consumer of male-produced literature" (1979:

128), whereas gynocritics is a more active enterprise, involved as it is with woman as producer. In "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness," she spins out the dangers of the consumer side of this capitalist equation, arguing that "in the free play of the interpretive field, the feminist critique can only compete with alternative readings, all of which have the built-in obsolescence of Buicks, cast away as newer readings take their place" (1981: 246).[2] Not only is feminist critique relegated to the "passive" side of the dichotomy (which would seem, then, to align gynocritics with the active – or masculine – half of this binarism), but its major handicap is the ephemeral nature of its work. It cannot effect real change, because in a market economy that thrives on novelty, it will always be displaced by another, newer reading. The vision of competition that Showalter displays is a kind of nightmare of endless change where neither judgment nor political (or moral) imperatives have any force in arresting an endless succession of readings that exist only to be displaced.

The antidote to this pluralistic world is, in Showalter's view, the establishing of a basic model, making definition out of the plethora of competing visions, arriving at a consensus (1981: 246). The problem is for her chaos, change, multiplicity; the solution must then be stabilizing, unitary, and coherent. The basis becomes female experience, which, unified under the embracing rubric of gynocritics, seems to disarm the threat of change and division. At the end of "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness," she proclaims that the goal some feminists had foreseen in which gender would lose its specificity and texts would become as sexless as angels was a "misperceived" "destination" (1981: 266); instead, we now understand that "the specificity of women's writing" is not "a transient by-product of sexism" but "a fundamental and continually determining reality" (1981: 266). The promised land turns out not to be the "serenely undifferentiated universality of texts," but is instead "the tumultuous and intriguing wilderness of difference itself" (1981: 267). Despite the rhetoric, however, this wilderness and tumult is in fact the theoretical home for which Showalter ardently longs, one that she is prepared to defend against interlopers and unwanted houseguests. Yet its foundations and its walls are even from the beginning infiltrated with complications and intimations of change that will ultimately force Showalter to take refuge in another, more expansive theoretical shelter.

We can see the difficulties in embryonic form in Showalter's early essay, "Toward a Feminist Poetics." There she summarizes her

argument from *A Literature of Their Own*, which outlines the historical emergence of a female voice that is the cornerstone of gynocritics. It is a tripartite evolution, with each stage designated by the label that corresponds to a particular phase of development. The trajectory of change begins in 1840 and extends to the present, but Showalter makes no reference to earlier historical periods, which seem either to be non-existent or to be subsumed into the first category. The first two stages are neatly divided into forty year chunks: the "feminine," which extends from 1840 to 1880, and the "feminist," which covers the decades between 1880 and 1920. The phase from 1920 to the present is called "female," and, like the notion of the promised land or the home, seems to signify arrival, where women no longer depend or protest, but turn rather "to female experience as the source of an autonomous art" (1979: 139). As Showalter herself notes, however, this new-found autonomy can become imprisoning, and, citing Woolf's description of life as a "'semi-transparent envelope,'" she strikes an admonitory note about the danger of converting the space of liberation into a claustrophobically enclosed "Room of One's Own," or, indeed, since she sees the Woolfian envelope as a uterine metaphor, a womb of one's own. No such cautionary tone attends her triumphant evolutionary schema, which is a kind of feminist *bildungsroman*, a narrative of progressive independence, in which women detach themselves from their dependence on and imitation of men, becoming artistically united finally with their biological selves and female experience.

Most telling is her discussion of the so-called "feminine" phase, which is distinguished by women striving to equal male achievement (1979: 137). The characteristic mark of this stage, Showalter tells us, is the use of the male pseudonym, a trend that is so prevalent that Showalter wittily claims to have considered calling feminist criticism concerned with the female writer "georgics" instead of gynocritics (1979: 129). She sees the male pseudonym as a way of coping with "a double literary standard," (1979: 138), but the strategy is much more than practical. Its "disguise" "exerts an irregular pressure on the narrative, affecting tone, diction, structure, characterization" (1979: 138). The nature of this disguise – which is, after all, a kind of literary transvestism – produces a literature that is oblique and subversive, and that requires a particular skill in reading, an ability to look for gaps, silences, a capacity to read between the lines (1979: 138). Although Showalter recognizes the use of the male pseudonym as a historically necessary phenomenon, she is eager to see it supplanted

by the authenticity of the female voice that emerges in later phases, a judgment that is registered in her designations of "feminine" and "female" as differentially evolved historical stages. "Feminine," for Showalter (and other feminist critics) is taken to signify the cultural construction of femininity in relation to masculinity, whereas "female" has been used to describe innate, biological difference. In the relegation of each term to a particular historical slot within a teleological paradigm, the "female" category gets invested with particular value. Showalter elsewhere disparages the method of reading that the feminine "disguise" necessitates, arguing that the "holes in discourse, the blanks and gaps and silences, are not the spaces where female consciousness reveals itself but the blinds of a 'prison-house of language'" (1981: 256). In other words, she privileges female language or voice over the disguised "feminine" voice, which is in turn valorized in relation to silence. The value these designations carry is assigned within a specific historic range, and the privileging of authorial voice is made possible by the historical phenomenon of a burgeoning of female writers and the publication of their works, an historically specific circumstance that is not shared by writers in the early modern period.

Before turning to the issue of transvestism in more detail, I want to digress briefly to consider Showalter's conception of the author, a factor that, I will argue, compromises the value of the gynocritical model for Renaissance studies. In *Sexual/Textual Politics*, Toril Moi offers a critique of Showalter's reading of Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* that reveals Showalter's dependence on traditional humanism. Showalter's chastisement of Woolf's so-called flight into androgyny – her avoidance of her own female experience – reflects a view of history in which "the text become(s) nothing but the 'expression' of this unique individual: all art becomes autobiography, a mere window on the self and the world, with no reality of its own" (Moi 1985: 8). Showalter's reliance on a "seamlessly unified self" (Moi 1985: 8) is evident in her irritation at Woolf's use of multiple perspectives in *A Room of One's Own*, as Moi astutely points out, because the shifting personae frustrate Showalter's search for the authentic "voice" she claims Woolf wants to find (Showalter 1977: 281). While I would certainly agree that *Room* is preoccupied with voice, it is less concerned with the discovery of Woolf's personal artistic voice than it is with the thematization of the historical silencing or disguising of *women's* writing in general. Showalter's emphasis on the revelation of the female humanist self means that she

cannot focus on Woolf's complex and subtle dramatization of this fragmentation of voice. For example, the figures of "Mary Beton," "Mary Seton," and "Mary Carmichael" are never treated by Showalter as anything more than signifiers that stand for particular people, and she is eager to peel away the masks that obscure their identities. "Mary Beton" becomes the persona of the author (which Showalter rapidly conflates with Woolf herself), and Showalter struggles valiantly to assign a determinate identity to the other Marys, making "Mary Seton" Woolf's cousin, Katharine Stephen, while "Mary Carmichael," she says, is probably a "parody or a composite figure" (1977: 283). In fact, "composite" is the very word Woolf uses to describe the representation of woman in fiction, where woman's imaginative importance in literature is inversely correlated to her insignificance in life (Woolf 1929: 45–6). It is thus not surprising that what "identities" we can ascribe to the Marys of *A Room of One's Own* are precisely not reflections of "real" women at all, or at least, their origins are multiplicitous and complicatedly mediated by anonymity and history.

The fragmentation and scattering of the Marys and their voices throughout *Room*, and the way each name gathers specific reference at particular junctures only to emerge later on in different guises, signals the intertextual origin of the Marys and elaborates the parable that lies at the heart of Woolf's essay. Mary Beton, Mary Seton, and Mary Carmichael are three of the four Marys of the eighteenth-century Scottish ballad, "Mary Hamilton" (Child 1965: No. 173), a ballad that seems to have been inspired by an incident in the court of Mary, Queen of Scots (Child 1965: III; 386). The narrative, which, significantly, recapitulates the plot of Shakespeare's sister's story, tells of a young woman, living in the court, who became pregnant, murdered her illegitimate child, and was condemned to die for the offense. The refrain in one variant encapsulates the relationship among the Marys:

> Yestreen Queen Mary had four Maries,
> This night she'll hae but three;
> She had Mary Seaton, and Mary Beaton,
> And Mary Carmichael, and me.
> (Child 1965: 386)

The ballad as a form is, of course, closely associated with multiple voicing, since its origins are obscure, since its relationship to myth and history are both rich and unclear, and since it exists in multiple

variants, for it was transmitted orally and was not codified in writing until the eighteenth century. It stands as the ideal vehicle for Woolf's argument about women writers, because it encodes an anonymous narrative about female social destiny in a form that is oral and that is as transmittable or as suppressible as rumor itself (and rumor is, after all, one of the main agents of Mary Hamilton's demise). The "voice" that narrates the ballad in many of the variants is that of Mary Hamilton herself, a voice that will be silenced by execution (and in the Russian variants, torture as well), but that continues to propagate itself after death in the fictional "voice" of the ballad. Fittingly, Mary Hamilton is the name that is excised from *Room*, but its absence informs the essay and is its subject. The specificity of her name is subverted by her association with the other Marys, for the repetition of the first name accentuates the interchangeability of the four maids-of-honor (and the queen); Mary Hamilton's fate could as easily have been theirs. Mary Hamilton's narrative functions, then, as *A Room of One's Own*'s mute subtext, whose silence is at once amplified and displaced into the narrative of Shakespeare's sister. The hypothetical narrative that Woolf offers of what might have happened if Shakespeare had had a sister is itself a mute ventriloquism, one in which not a word that Shakespeare's sister might have spoken is uttered. Instead, the circumstances of her fabricated life are given as testimony to her tragic silence, a kind of historical dumb show, in which her muteness is ventriloquized and reenacted.

A similar problematization of voice is apparent in my epigraph to this chapter, where Woolf cites Nick Greene – the actor-manager who befriends and impregnates Shakespeare's sister – who remembers Woolf's own narrative (in which he plays a part) and says that a woman acting reminds him of a dog dancing. Woolf's claim that Samuel Johnson repeated the analogy two hundred years later to describe women preachers, playfully subverts pieties about origin, citation, chronology, literary property, and gender, for the source of the remark is now a character Woolf herself invented, which, among other things, makes Johnson a plagiarist. Woolf's recontextualization of the analogy, situated as it is within the literary product of this travesty of nature (a woman writing is like a woman preaching or a dog dancing), makes a difference, for it is ventriloquized (and variously mediated – Woolf, Mary Beton, Nick Greene, Johnson) by a female voice created by a female author. Woolf thus enters this misogynistic epithet from the very perspective that it seeks to erase through its satiric humor, enacting the travesty of nature the analogy

describes. As I will argue at the end of this chapter, this is a strategy that Luce Irigaray (1985b) has called mimicry, and it is the mechanism that both she and Sarah Kofman (1985) use to reread Freud from the point of view of the silenced and disempowered woman of his theories. In the case of Woolf, this practice of subversive miming allows her to read Johnson against himself, exposing Johnson as a ridiculous figure by measuring him against his own narrowness of judgment.

Despite (or perhaps because of) Woolf's thematization of silence in *Room*, it could be argued that the parable of Shakespeare's sister is a kind of founding text for gynocritics. Gilbert and Gubar's volume, *Shakespeare's Sisters: Feminist Essays on Women Poets*, examines the achievements of Shakespeare's "many sisters" (1979: xv), women who wrote poetry even though patriarchal strictures attempted to impose silence on them. I want to emphasize that the gynocritical endeavor is unmistakably a laudable one, both for feminist critics working in the nineteenth century as well as for those whose task is the recovery of the works of female authors writing in the early modern period. The gynocritical imperative is responsible for the recuperation of the reputations of such poets as Lady Mary Wroth and Aemilia Lanier, as well as the discovery and publication of all kinds of previously undervalued writing by women (autobiography, diaries, sermons, letters, pamphlets), and the pressure gynocritics has exerted both on the traditional canon and on the theoretical principles that underlie it is prodigious. But because gynocritics, as it has been propounded and practiced by Showalter (and Gilbert and Gubar), takes nineteenth-century literature as its model, there have been a number of unfortunate repercussions, especially for feminists working in earlier historical periods. First, gynocritics valorizes the female author, construed as a stable, historically verifiable woman. Yet as Woolf herself reminds us, "Anon, who wrote so many poems without signing them, was herself a woman" (1929: 51). The desire to correlate signature with historical personage means that authorial indeterminacy – transvestism of signature, absence of signature, or disguised signature – and the differing status of an author with respect to textual "property" are disregarded, often with the result of flattening or erasing crucial distinctions. The gynocritical privileging of the unitary author also ignores literary collaborations and the richly intertextual character of literary production. Second, although this is not a necessary fruit of gynocritics, because it is a recuperative program, it is inscribed with a competitive urgency, a desire to

provide a canon of female authors as worthy as the existing canon of male authors. Since it is difficult to undertake an authorial and generic challenge simultaneously, gynocritics has often limited itself to traditional genres. Third, perhaps because Anglo-American feminist criticism is so strongly grounded in the nineteenth century, that century tends to furnish the historical paradigm for feminist criticism and theory. As I suggested earlier, Showalter is particularly prone to evolutionary metaphors, as if a disturbing Darwinian subtext were shaping her theories. In Gilbert and Gubar's *Norton Anthology of Literature by Women* we can see the practical effects of the evolutionary pattern: the Middle Ages and the Renaissance are sparsely represented by thirty-eight pages, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are more amply depicted in one hundred and twenty-two pages, and female literary production positively burgeons in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, so that the remaining two thousand plus pages can barely contain the efflorescence. This evolutionary pattern is an instance of what Marguerite Waller – in an analysis of the way the ideological operations of critical discourse sometimes replicate those of the texts under examination, a "rhetorical moebius loop" – has dubbed the "TOOTSIE trope" (1987: 2), and it is to this trope of transvestism and ideological replication that I want now to turn.

Showalter's influential 1983 essay "Critical Cross-Dressing; Male Feminists and the Woman of the Year" was originally presented as a review of a number of books, three of which were male authored and treated feminist theory. The 1982 film, *Tootsie*, starring Dustin Hoffman, serves – in the way the narrative of Shakespeare's sister informs Woolf's essay – as the cautionary exemplum of male feminism and the dangers of transvestism. Showalter's trenchant analysis of the film reveals Hoffman not as the ideal feminist some reviewers claimed he was, but rather as a phallic woman; his cross-dressing becomes "a way of promoting the notion of masculine power while masking it" (1983: 123). Hoffman's masquerade as a woman paradoxically reveals his masculine privilege, and the gap between the feminine disguise and the man who inhabits it is the space in which the film's comedy flourishes (Michael Dorsey's lowering of his "voice" to a male register in order to hail a cab effectively), and the space in which anti-feminism is displayed. That is, Dorothy Michaels is a more interesting and effective character than any of the "real" women in the film, and the dilemma of her transvestism exposes the vulnerabilities of women even as it provides an antidote to the

anxieties such (real) feminine weakness provokes. Hoffman mimes feminine disempowerment, but he always overcomes it, not as a woman, but as the man beneath the disguise. Marguerite Waller has perceptively argued that the spectator's position is masculinized by the film, associating viewers with the unseen, shadowed male figures, and thus effectively erasing the female perspective (1987: 3). Showalter similarly suggests that in the film's unwitting message – that feminism is more palatable and interesting when it comes from a man (1983: 123) – there is a lesson to be learned about the dangers both of transvestite disguise and male feminism.

Showalter goes on to apply this monitory parable to a number of male literary critics who use feminist theory. She sets up a comparison between Jonathan Culler's use of feminism in *On Deconstruction* (1982) and Terry Eagleton's (1982) competitive usurpation of feminism in *The Rape of Clarissa*; her approval of Culler's explication rests primarily on his lack of disguise, for he writes not as a woman, but as a man and a feminist (1983: 126). In contradistinction, Eagleton practices a kind of "rape" of feminist criticism, an appropriation that declines to acknowledge self-reflexively his own (male) subject position. Just as Eagleton sees the rape of Clarissa as an act in which Lovelace recovers the lost phallus, so Showalter reads Eagleton as "possessing" feminist criticism as a way of containing his own anxiety about the so-called effeminacy of writing (as opposed to revolutionary action) (1983: 128). Despite Showalter's endorsement of Culler and of Eagleton's use of feminist theory in his *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, she nevertheless implicitly claims that men and women read differently; she juxtaposes Eagleton's interpretation of the rape of Clarissa with Terry Castle's reading of the rape, arguing that the novel polarizes readers along gender lines, and (with Castle) that rape is a kind of cultural silencing, an interpretation to which "female/feminist readers" are especially responsive. While I would certainly agree with Showalter that many male critics have sought to use feminism to support rather than confound patriarchal domination in literary studies, the theoretical implications of her insights are more problematic. At the end of her essay, she sets French feminist theory against Anglo-American feminism, claiming that the decentering of the human subject, the purported death of the author, and the insignificance of the gender of the signature in *écriture feminine* have made feminism more available for male appropriation (1983: 131). Anglo-American feminism must, on the other hand, continue to stress the importance of women's writing

and the crucial significance of the author's signature as a way of protecting feminism's special province, female writing. The issue she raises is one of canonicity and political change; she fears the cooptation of feminism by male critics and the erasure of the female voice in history.

Showalter's insistence on the propriety of distinct sexual categories ("the question of whether a man or a woman wrote a text is of primary importance" (1983: 131)) carries forward an uneasiness about cross-dressing that is observable in earlier essays. For example, she criticizes even Virginia Woolf's exploration of androgyny in the "tedious high camp of *Orlando*" (1977: 291), and she pronounces in "Toward a Feminist Poetics" that feminist theory "cannot go around forever in men's ill-fitting hand-me-downs, the Annie Hall of English studies, but must, as John Stuart Mill wrote about women's literature in 1869, 'emancipate itself from the accepted models, and guide itself by its own impulses'" (1979: 139). (The irony of invoking a male voice as an authority at precisely this moment of liberation goes unremarked.) While Showalter's anxieties about male feminism have been shared by a number of important and influential feminist theorists (Alice Jardine, Tania Modleski, Nancy Miller, and others), her political concerns about feminism, as I have already argued, take the particular form of an anxiety about instability and chaos, about the crossing of categories, be they sexual or national (the uneasy alliance of French and Anglo-American feminisms). Her conclusion to "Critical Cross-Dressing" is a futuristic vision inspired by the surrealistic cover illustrations to a *Diacritics* special issue on gender, one of which portrays a figure that is ambiguously dressed (a tuxedo and high heels) and headless, while the other depicts various items of female clothing that cover (or discover) the absence of a (sexed) body. For Showalter, these illustrations hint "at the ephemera of gender identities, of gender signatures" (1983: 132), as if her worst fear had come true, and the gender of the author would cease to be important, or worse, verifiable. Her nightmare of the "feminist literary conference of the future" features a woman who mutates, the diacritical woman without a head, and a man wearing a dress, all figures that transgress the categories to which they seem to belong.

I have focused at some length on Showalter's theorization of gynocritics, especially as it is expressed in the metaphorics of domesticity and the home, the authenticity of voice, and the trope of fashion. These metaphors seem to point to Showalter's longing for stability, her dislike of disguise, and her conviction that change is

teleological, that it ultimately arrives at a destination that is more satisfying than its point of origin or departure. Her impatience with disguise – whether of literary identity, or of men masquerading as feminists – suggests a profound belief in the stability of the human subject and of the permanence of gender assignation. Even her response to Terry Eagleton's infuriatingly oblique but interesting allegory about class rather than gender (which is offered as a response to her critique of him in "Critical Cross-Dressing") is couched in terms of sexual difference: men and women have different conversational styles in our culture, and Eagleton's putative failure to engage with her is a symptom of male conversational tyranny (Showalter 1987: 136). It is as if Showalter's view of clothing as disguise or as covering of essential biological difference were also a comment on fashion (and literary critical fashions); if it changes – as Buicks are produced, and become obsolete so that they can be replaced by new ones – it must be lacking permanence and hence value. The desire for ontological stability that informs Showalter's writing on gynocritics has, ironically, made it too inflexible a model to survive change. In many ways, gynocritics recapitulates the monolithic qualities of patriarchy by setting itself up as a private society in which admission is granted only to those who possess the proper anatomical equipment. Its untheorized valorization of voice pays little attention to the definition of what voice is in relation to an author, a signature, a reader, a text, not to mention the complexities of voice within the text. Nor does it consider the way gender and sex change across cultures and time. Male feminism is not, after all, only a phenomenon of the late twentieth century, as is apparent in Gilbert and Gubar's (1979) reference to the Wife of Bath or Showalter's own citation of John Stuart Mill. Does male feminism become more palatable when the author is dead? Or, is it a question of reappropriating a voice, where citation and recontextualization lend it an intertextual "double-voicing," so that the female voice that quotes a male text provides an antidote to its maleness?

To try to answer these questions, I want to turn now to Showalter's discussions of gender and double-voicing. Given her attack on transvestism in "Critical Cross-Dressing," it is somewhat surprising – but not unanticipated – to see Showalter's *volte face* in the introduction to *Speaking of Gender.* There she speaks retrospectively and magisterially about the "rise of gender" as a category of analysis in the 1980s, and her writing is characterized by a new kind of expansiveness and inclusiveness. Instead of collapsing sex and gender

into barely discernible separate categories, she pulls them apart, making sex, gender, and sexuality different from each other. She further problematizes the relationship among these terms by invoking transsexual operations, which, she argues, deconstruct the "natural" linkage among sex, gender, and sexuality, although the intertwining of these categories is even more subtle than Showalter has time to explore. Gynocritics turns out to be a stage rather than an end in itself; she says that in 1981 "it was far too early and dangerous to give up the demanding task of reconstructing women's literary heritage" (1989: 5), but the retrospectiveness and distance of her discussion (produced partly by quoting other critics rather than herself) make it clear that the historical efficacy of gynocritics is a thing of the past. She cites the dangers of ghettoization implicit in gynocritics, arguing that only by examining gender in relation both to men and women can we begin to understand its operations. Myra Jehlen's call to examine women and men's writing in the same historical period in order to reveal the contingency of patriarchal domination was prophetic but premature, she argues, since there was no body of theory upon which to base such a methodology. The major enabling factor for the rise of gender is, according to Showalter, critical attention directed to the marks of gender in male writing, a perspective that makes evident for the first time the historical and cultural contingency of patriarchal privilege. This critical attention is made possible partly by feminist criticism and partly by the new attention to race, class, history, and sexual preference (codified theoretically in "Afro-American" criticism, New Historicism, and gay studies (1989: 7)). This, Showalter tells us, enables men to examine their own position as men, rather than as participants in male feminism, which "looked a lot like the old misogyny dressed up in Woolf's clothing" (1989: 7). Despite this unflattering reference to transvestism, Showalter cites approvingly studies of metaphorical cross-dressing as one of the places in feminist criticism where "gender" first began to appear as a critical category (1989: 5). Her introduction of gender studies into feminist theory marks a new stage, however, where it seems that the binarities of outside and inside, of clothing and what it covers, and of men and women, are deconstructed in favor of a sophisticated sense of the interplay of these elements. Although Showalter's introduction rightly ends on a cautionary note about the dangers of the new (potentially post-feminist) critical community she sees forming around issues of gender (and class, race, and sexual orientation),[3] dangers she had

anticipated in "Critical Cross-Dressing," she also seems eager to affirm a community that is inclusive of difference. Showalter doesn't overtly embrace French theory and the instability of the subject, and she still argues for the moral and political imperative that authors take responsibility for their own subject positions, but it is a theory that, perhaps because of its potential for exploring the shifting boundaries between the specificities of sexual difference – especially as they are inflected by such factors as sexual orientation – offers more flexible possibilities for Renaissance studies.

In "The Rise of Gender," Showalter cites "double-voicing" as a feature of gynocritics. I want to back up for a moment to consider that description, because the idea of double-voiced texts provides a way out of the sometimes constricting bind of gynocritics. She claims that gynocriticism was "'bi-textual'" and "double-voiced" in the sense that female-authored texts are always in dialogue with a matrilineal and a patrilineal heritage (1989: 4–5). She had elaborated this idea in "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness," where, drawing on the writings of Edwin Ardener, a cultural anthropologist,[4] she discussed the overlapping of muted (female) and dominant (male) discourses. Articulated as intersecting circles, "X" describes the sphere of dominant order, whereas "Y" designates the circle of the muted group. There is a crescent of each circle that does not overlap with the other, a separate space that is inaccessible to the other group, and these crescents are valued asymmetrically, depending on their gender. Where the "X" crescent refers to a "zone of male experience alien to women" (1981: 262), which can be known by women even if it cannot be seen, the "Y" crescent stands for a "wild zone" of female experience that is unknowable by men. The basis of the gynocritical project is this wild zone, which is "the address of a genuinely woman-centered criticism, theory, and art, whose shared project is to bring into being the symbolic weight of female consciousness, to make the invisible visible, to make the silent speak" (1981: 263). While Showalter later admits that this zone is a "playful abstraction" and that feminist critics must understand women's writing as a "'double-voiced discourse' that always embodies the social, literary, and cultural heritage of both the muted and the dominant" (1981: 263), it is nevertheless fair to say that her emphasis is more on the "female" crescent that exceeds the overlapping circles than on the intersection of discourses. Even when she invokes a model of literary parentage, she notes the imbalance at work: "a woman writing unavoidably thinks back through her fathers ... only male writers can forget or

mute half their parentage" (1981: 265). As she acknowledges in her later theorization of the problem in "The Rise of Gender," however, the difficult but crucial task for feminist critics is to understand the sexual difference that divides male from female experience as not so much a static division into separate spheres of experience as the relationship between gender and its social construction. The emphasis is thus shifted from a territorialization of difference (what makes men and women distinct) to an analysis of social power and the hierarchization of gender (1989: 4).

Teresa de Lauretis has likewise reminded us that a theoretical focus on sexual difference operates at the expense of other differences that divide women, such as class, race, and sexual preference (1987: 2). The danger of a theory of sexual difference is that it moves rapidly toward effacing historical and cultural specificity, tending toward the metaphorization of Woman that is such a prevalent feature of postmodern (and postfeminist) French philosophy. This displacement of gender on to a textual figure of femininity (de Lauretis 1987: 24) is what Alice Jardine has brilliantly analysed as gynesis, a space coded as feminine or maternal that becomes a locus in which (male) theorists (such as Derrida, Lyotard, and Deleuze) confront the breakdown of the paternal "Master Discourses" of religion, philosophy, science, and history (Jardine 1985: 25–7, 34). She argues that the problem with gynocritics is the impossibility of separating "the two sexes and their imaginations" (1985: 40), and her solution is to elaborate a "new theory and practice of the speaking subject," one that can accommodate the ethical concerns of American feminists and the emphasis on language and process in French feminism. Or, to put it another way, American feminism tends to emphasize the empirical, "external" study of female language, where French feminist theorists concentrate on the internal process of signification, the way the gender of the speaking subject is constructed by language (Jardine 1985: 44–5). Jardine, like de Lauretis, cautions against the reinscription in feminist theory of male narratives of gender (de Lauretis 1987: 25). Unlike Showalter, whose theory of gynocritics emerges from a similar anxiety about being absorbed into the male theory she relies upon, de Lauretis sees the interaction of male gender narratives and feminist theory as inevitable. Her solution is a continual strategy of resistance, a rewriting of cultural narratives, the creation of new spaces of discourse, what she terms – using a cinematic metaphor – the "space-off," the area not visible in the frame but inferable from it (1987: 25). Where gynocritics inevitably

(and sometimes unwittingly) reproduces what it seeks to eradicate, the strategies advanced by feminist theorists like Jardine and de Lauretis (and Showalter in her most recent writing) provide ways of undoing the hegemonic discourses of sexuality and gender.

My focus on voice is thus multiple. I am interested in "double-voicing," not in Showalter's definition of the term as genealogical influence, but in the interaction between an "author" and the constructed voice through which he or she speaks, especially as that intersection crosses genders and is imaged as transvestism. In a sense, I am investigating the historical use of the *Tootsie* trope in the Renaissance, not because I want to unmask men who speak as women, but because the phenomenon of transvestite ventriloquism itself – the gap between the male voice and the female voice it takes on – has much to say about cultural constructions of gender.[5] The crossing of voices encodes what de Lauretis calls the "interstices of institutions," "the chinks and cracks of the power–knowledge" system (1987: 25), a kind of historical "space-off" In male appropriations of feminine voices we can see what is most desired and most feared about women and why male authors might have wished to occupy that cultural space, however contingently and provisionally. That men did so provides a legacy of gynesis, a metaphorization of woman, that has at least partially shaped what gynocritics now identify as the "female voice." To recognize this legacy is not, however, to deny the importance of the gender of the author. On the contrary, I argue that transvestite ventriloquism is asymmetrically disposed in relation to the sexes: it is different for a man to ventriloquize a woman's voice than for a woman to speak in a masculine voice, since gender itself is asymmetrically constructed in relation to power. Far from wishing to sever the links between body and voice, author and text, voice and text, and text and reader, I want to affirm and interrogate them. At the same time, however, I recognize the constructed nature of each of these categories, as well as the historical and cultural contingencies of the ligatures between them.

II

I begin by considering a scene of double transvestism, the moment in Book V of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* when Britomart (a woman dressed as a man) rescues Artegall (a man dressed as a woman) from his shameful enslavement to the Amazon Radigund (a woman who

transgresses the boundaries of her sex). It is important to remember that Renaissance conceptions of the sexes were based on the Galenic principle of homology. That is, the genitals of men and women were considered to be basically the same, except that women's reproductive organs were internal, whereas men's were external to the body. Not only were their sexual organs homologous, but their sexual experience was analogous, since both experienced orgasm, and orgasm was necessary not only for ejaculation but also for conception (Laqueur 1986: 1; Orgel 1989: 13). The distinction between men and women in the Renaissance lies not in an ontological difference, but rather in the way gender is hierarchized within a common physiology. As Thomas Laqueur puts it, "There was still in the sixteenth century, as there had been in classical antiquity, only one canonical body and that body was male" (1990: 63). The difference between men and women was, then, not a matter of kind, but of degree: women are imperfect (men) because they lack the generative heat that would cause their reproductive organs to be extruded (Maclean 1980: 32; Laqueur 1986: 5). Because heat is associated with perfection in Galen's account, the hotter temperature of males produced a more perfect being: "The male grows faster *in utero*, is of darker and harder flesh, more hirsute, more able to sustain extremes of temperature, has larger arteries and veins, a deeper voice, is less prone to disease, more robust, broader, comes to full maturity more slowly and ages less quickly than the colder female" (Maclean 1980: 32). The female's relative coldness, on the other hand, is responsible for menstruation, her high voice, her paler and fattier flesh, her physical shape (broader hips, narrower shoulders), her propensity to reach puberty earlier and to age more quickly (Maclean 1980: 35).

Despite the physiological divergences generated by heat and its lack – differences that are codified medically and ideologically so that they become "natural" – what is striking about Renaissance conceptions of gender is that, because of the anatomical similarities, there exists the dangerous possibility of one sex turning into the other (Orgel 1989: 14). While women were capable of being transformed into men through prodigious activity or excitement, a teleological progression that worked to enhance representations of masculinity, the reversal of this trajectory – where men degenerated into women – was an ignominious and dangerous state that threatened the patriarchal system. What I wish to consider is the way this gender transformation is effected by and represented in clothing. As John

Guillory has argued, "The institution of clothing, while it conceals anatomical difference, may be said to institute sexual difference, as a properly semiological distinction, as socially constructed" (1990: 76). The ideology of clothes meant that writers of the period saw sexual distinctions of dress as naturally rather than culturally prescribed, so not only is biblical authority frequently invoked to underwrite the truth of these sartorial categories, but adulteration of dress is seen as a contamination of essence and nature.[6] In English Renaissance culture, clothing became an external marker of class and occupation (codified in sumptuary laws), as well as gender, and it is therefore not surprising that dress in *The Faerie Queene* becomes a crucial system of identificatory signs, which may or may not register consistency, or accurately project what it also covers. It is this discrepancy between inner and outer with which I am most concerned in the Radigund episode.

Radigund, herself, of course, embodies sexual transgression, not only because she behaves like a man, but also because, as an Amazon, she is associated with a society always situated at the margin of the known world (Montrose 1983: 66): She stands as a borderline figure – part history, part myth – an embodiment in the Renaissance of the unknown. Some of her enigma is linguistic: according to Herodotus, Amazons were known for their ability to master other men's languages, but men were, in contradistinction, unable to learn the Amazonian tongue (Showalter 1981: 254). Spenser's mention of the Amazon river in the Proem to Book 2 situates it in lands only recently colonized. The reference is ostensibly a justification for his creation of the land of Faery (for, although it is not yet known to exist, it too may one day be discovered as a "real" place); yet the allusion to the Amazon (as well as to "fruitfullest *Virginia*" (2:2)) links it to the act of colonization, an overcoming of a foreign people, in Radigund represented as a different and barbaric sexual custom. As an Amazon, Radigund exemplifies simultaneously masculine and feminine traits: she fights like a man and is clearly accustomed to the exercise of power, but her battle-dress is alluringly and femininely ornamented, and she experiences a characteristically female erotic passion. Her behavior is thus ambiguously gendered, and the blend of male and female elements is imaged as irregular, discordant, and anomalous. Rather than enhancing her female status through its inclusion of masculine attributes, she is figured as incompletely assimilated ("halfe like a man" (5.5: 36)), a sexual misfit. The result of this sexual incongruity is perhaps most easily seen as its effects are mirrored in other characters, especially Artegall.

When Artegall first encounters the troop of Amazons leading Sir Turpine (a name cognate with the Latin *turpis* or shame) to the gallow tree for his refusal to submit to the "proude oppression/ Of womens powre" (5.4: 26), Artegall displays no inclinations toward effeminacy. On the contrary, he initially berates Turpine in a series of questions that seem already incriminating; addressing him as a "haplesse man," he asks whether Turpine has "lost" his "selfe" (an absence of identity that is dramatized in Turpine's first appearance, where his bared head and covered face renders him unknowable). The choice of "haplesse" is apt, as Turpine indicates in his application of the epithet to himself, for in addition to the obvious sense of "unfortunate," "hap" also carries the Middle English sense of clothing or covering. That Turpine has refused to put on women's clothing is, of course, what brings him almost to death. Despite Artegall's initial scorn and his implicit indictment of Turpine's presence among the Amazons, it is as if he changes places with Turpine, since, by going to Radegone to avenge this shame on mankind, Artegall suffers a fate even worse than Turpine's by agreeing to dress as a woman. Not only does he clothe himself in their garments, but he also occupies a woman's place, subjects himself to a female ruler, uses feminine wiles to survive, and, finally, allows himself to be rescued by a woman dressed in male armor. The process of this transformation is not, however, immediate. When Artegall originally arrives at the city of Amazons, he engages in fierce battle with its inhabitants, striking Radigund a blow of such force that, had she not warded it off, it would have killed her. The similes used to describe the encounter inscribe a gender hierarchy: Artegall is likened to a "kingly" eagle driving Radigund, a "Goshauke," from her prey (Turpine) (5.4: 42). When night comes, Radigund gathers her followers within the city walls, and Artegall sets up his rich pavilion outside the gates, in a scene that invokes the Petrarchan conceit of the amorous siege. The Petrarchan echo is, in fact, proleptic of the eroticism that will suffuse the single combat between Radigund and Artegall the next day, and it also links Radigund to Spenser's Queen through the activation of the Petrarchan ideology that Elizabeth cultivated in her relations with her courtiers.

The erotic nature of the duel is signalled in the account of Radigund's battle attire, which, while it alludes to the epic hero's preparation for war, also displays a "feminine" preoccupation with ornament. The prelude to the account of Radigund's dressing alerts us to the discrepancy between the combatants' sartorial preparations:

they dressed, "The Knight, as best was seeming for a Knight,/ And th'Amazon, as best it likt her selfe to dight" (5.5: 1). Mimicking their respective concerns for attire, Radigund's dressing is described at length, where Artegall's is given half a line. Radigund's camis of purple silk woven with silver – which is quilted on white satin and trailing with ribbons – and her gold buskins recall the depiction of Belphoebe in Book 2, except that where a harmonious blend of masculine and feminine attributes distinguished Belphoebe's costume,[7] Radigund is motivated by perversion, and she expresses the monstrous, discrepant union of the sexes within her person, divided as she is between presenting herself as a woman in appearance and a man in action. The duel between her and Artegall is initially savage in its fury, but Artegall's strategy is to defend himself, waiting for her to wear herself out: "The more she rag'd, the more he did abide" (5.5: 6). Like a smith, who, seeking to "subdew" metal, waits until the metal is "mollifide with heat" before he beats it with his iron "fledge," (5.5: 7) so Artegall sets upon Radigund once the fire of her rage has softened her. Here we can see an apparent inversion of the Galenic principle in which heat converts women into men, since the hotter Radigund grows, the more capable she is of being defeated by Artegall's male strength. The ostensible parallelism of the simile is misleading, however, because the second half does not accord with the first: "So did Sir *Artegall* upon her lay,/ As if she had an yron anduile beene" (5.5: 8). The double meaning of "lay" – either "to beat down" or "to place in a position of recumbency" – provides an ambiguous pivot point. If Radigund is an anvil – the iron block upon which the metal is hammered – then Artegall, not Radigund, becomes the metal to be beaten and softened, and it is he, not she, who will be mollified. The process of mollification is what this battle (and the entire Radigund episode) is about; the possible etymological connection between the Latin "mulier" (woman) and the verb "mollire," to become soft and flexible, is analogous to the process by which Radigund renders Artegall soft and pliable, and ultimately turns him into a woman. We need, though, to consider the question of agency, which is what the discrepancy at the juncture of the parallelism reveals. Although Radigund does wound Artegall in the thigh, that symbolic castration is made possible by a process of effeminization that is already at work. That is, as Artegall's later behavior in the duel makes clear, he submits freely to Radigund, laying himself across the very anvil that he had destined for her ultimate shaping. The moment of acquiescence is ostensibly when Artegall removes her helmet and

"dis-covers" her face, since it is in that glance that her feminine beauty overpowers (the word Spenser uses is, again, "mollifie" (5.5: 13)) his masculine bellicosity. But we can see that the process of mollification begins much earlier. It is Radigund's martial fury that inspires Artegall's strategy of waiting, and it is, presumably, the action of waiting, a position induced by her activity, that begins the effeminizing transformation. In other words, Radigund's (heated) masculine behavior forces Artegall to occupy the position of the other (woman), and, even when he seems most to be opposing her, he is powerless to choose a masculine site of resistance.

Once the dispositions of power in the battle change, so, too, do the similes. Where the eagle–goshawk pair pointed to a hierarchy of gender, Radigund now becomes a "puttock," a buzzard or kite, attacking a "gentle" bird, a disabled falcon, a divergence of attitude that suggests not only gender (Artegall has mutated from eagle to gentle (female?) falcon) but also class. Ironically, Artegall's aristocratic nature is accentuated through linguistic ornamentation (simile) at the same time that he is stripped of the sartorial markers of rank. Radigund's fierce wrath does not abate until he delivers his shield, and thus "was he ouercome, not ouercome,/ But to her yeelded of his owne accord" (5.5: 17). The sign of his submission is the "warelesse word" of acquiescence that he utters, and where he uses language to signal his yielding, she accepts his humiliation with a warlike gesture of her sword. In a kind of parodic echo of the creation of a knight, Radigund strikes him with the flat of her sword, signalling his "true subjection to her powre." Radigund's creation of a vassal in her "thraldome" ironically reverses Artegall's status; far from making him a knight, it unmakes him. He is then stripped of "all the ornaments of knightly name" and clothed in "womans weedes, that is to manhood shame" (5.5: 20). Thus clad, Radigund leads him to a chamber filled with brave knights similarly attired, all of whom are engaged in spinning and carding.

The narrator invokes the pathos of this metamorphosis through an allusion to Hercules's cross-dressing: "Who had him seene, imagine mote thereby,/ That whylome hath of *Hercules* bene told,/ How for *Iolas* sake he did apply/ His mightie hands, the distaffe vile to hold/ For his huge club" (5.5: 24). Spenser's subtext is ostensibly Hercules's enslavement to Omphale, the Lydian queen who forces him to dress in women's clothing and serve her. As Ovid (1976) recounts it in the *Fasti*, Omphale and Hercules are preparing to celebrate a festival of Bacchus; when they reach the grove and the attendants are preparing

their repast, Omphale and Hercules retire to a nearby cave, where they exchange clothing. Ovid describes in witty detail how Hercules's great waist is too large for Omphale's dainty belt, how his strong wrists break her bracelets, and how his large feet split her delicate shoes. She, in turn, dons the lion's skin and Hercules's quiver of weapons, and, thus arrayed, they sit down to eat. After their meal, they retire to separate but adjacent beds, still dressed in each other's clothes. When they are asleep, Faunus, who is lusting after Omphale, creeps into the dark cave, gropes in one bed, and, feeling the rough lion's skin, recoils. He then comes to the second bed, where the soft drapery beguiles him. As he explores further, Hercules awakens, knocks him on the floor, and everyone laughs at the hilarity of Faunus's mistake. The function of the story, according to Ovid, is to explain why Faunus has ever after insisted that worshippers come naked to his rites, for he has since shunned garments that betray, that conceal what lies beneath them. Although the incident has a comic outcome, its "disguised" homoeroticism is a frequent motif in figurations of transvestism, since, just as cross-dressing transgresses the boundaries of gender, so also can it cross the boundaries of heterosexuality by providing titillating – if brief – sexual encounters between members of the same sex.

While transvestism and the moral have some relation to Artegall's enslavement, it does not explain Spenser's confusion of Omphale with "Iola." The conflation is probably derived from Ovid's other recounting of Hercules's cross-dressing, Deianira's epistle in the *Heroides*.[8] The opening lines of the letter describe a rumor spread to all the Pelasgian cities: that although Hercules has vanquished Oechalia, Iole has placed him under her yoke. Deianira goes on to complain of Hercules's other amorous exploits, but the one for which she reserves her ultimate bitterness is Hercules's subjection to Omphale, who, interestingly, is named only periphrastically (therefore enhancing the possibility of confusion). The epistle is thus framed by its indictment of Iole, who subjugates Hercules erotically, even though he has conquered her people. Within this frame, Deianira recalls the shame Omphale's humiliation of Hercules brought, an ignominy made especially vivid by Deianira's imagining Hercules recounting his heroic deeds even as he is arrayed in the girdle and turban of a woman. At the same time that she lists the heroic labors about which he supposedly tells Omphale, Deianira chastises his speech, urging him to maintain a silence in accord with his feminine attire.

> Haec tu Sidonio potes insignitus amictu
> dicere? non cultu lingua retenta silet?
>
> (These deeds can you recount, gaily arrayed
> in a Sidonian gown? Does not your dress rob
> from your tongue all utterance?)
>
> (Ovid 1977: 114–15)

The irony of Deianira's rebuke is that her own speech is ventriloquized, since Ovid stands behind the vengeful, querulous voice that is supposedly hers. At the same moment that she enjoins Hercules to be silent because of his shameful "womanish" dress, Ovid cross-dresses himself as Deianira, providing the very language that counsels silence. This supposed inscription of the feminine psyche in the *Heroides* – Ovid's liberation of these abandoned and complaining heroines from the representational bondage of a traditional mythology that constrained their expression – reveals itself at junctures like these for the masquerade it is. Ovid's thematization of silence and cross-dressing exposes his own presence as male author, "dressed" in a woman's voice.[9]

Linda Kauffman has persuasively claimed that the *Heroides* are characterized by doubleness. She sees this duplicity at work in the tension between the uniqueness of each heroine's plight and the repetition of their common situation in the collection as a whole, in the simultaneous employment of logic and emotional rhetoric (filiated respectively with the rhetorical exercises *suasoria* and *ethopoiiae*), and, most pertinent for my purposes, in Ovid's subversion of Augustan values through his invention of an epistolary genre that challenges the hegemony of epic (Kauffman 1986: 42, 44, 61). This last insight is a feminist variation on the revisionary thesis advanced by Richard Lanham in *The Motives of Eloquence*, which argued that Ovid's choice of change for the subject matter of the *Metamorphoses*, his intercalation of erotic matter into the Virgilian material in the poem, and his profound skepticism about the stability of individual or Roman identity, interrogate not only epic as a genre but also the values upon which Augustan Rome was built (Lanham 1976: 48–64). Kauffman transposes this insight to the *Heroides* and the issue of gender, asserting that "to write like a woman is to challenge conventional notions of tradition, of origins, of fathers, of paternity, of authority, of identity" (1986: 61). While this statement captures Ovid's strategy perfectly, the fundamental duplicity that makes it work remains unarticulated in Kauffman's account. Ovid

can write from the perspective of the woman precisely *because* he is not himself a woman; he metaphorizes the figure of woman, associating her with a constellation of attributes that are already traditional and will remain so: erotic passion, abandonment, desire that cannot be satisfied, rhetorical skill, especially as expressed in the complaint. The very characteristics that Ovid uses to define these women are also the qualities that render them marginal in Roman society (and in subsequent cultures), and it is the recognition (and perpetuation) of their marginality that makes Ovid's impersonation of them subversive. Ovid, like Hoffman in *Tootsie* or Derrida in *Spurs*, uses the metaphor of woman as a lever for dismantling certain patriarchal values, but, unlike the heroines he ventriloquizes, he simultaneously partakes of the very privilege he seeks to expose.

Yet just as Artegall effeminizes himself at a cost, so too, does Ovid. Kauffman joins Howard Jacobson in speculating that it may have been Ovid's portrait of an "*impius Aeneas*" in Dido's Heroidean letter that provoked Augustus to banish him to the inhospitable shores of the Black Sea (Kauffman 1986: 49). His exile literally puts him in the position of the Heroidean women he depicts, for as Kauffman astutely points out, the *Tristia* are full of the sentiments voiced by the abandoned heroines: longing, despair, and grief at the injustice of their plight (1986: 33). Roland Barthes wrote in *A Lover's Discourse* that the "man who waits and who suffers from his waiting is miraculously feminized" (1978: 14), but it is crucial to recognize that occupying the metaphorical position accorded to Woman (the one who waits) is not the same as becoming a woman. We can see this distinction acted out in violent detail at the end of Deianira's letter, where, even as she writes, she hears a report of Hercules's death throes. She berates herself for her deed, since it is her wedding gift to Hercules of a robe impregnated with the poisoned blood of the satyr Nessus that brings about his agonizing end. As Ovid tells it in the *Metamorphoses*, once the burning poison begins to permeate his skin, Hercules "tries to tear off the deadly tunic; but where it is torn away, it tears the skin with it and, ghastly to relate, it either sticks to his limbs, from which he vainly tries to tear it, or else lays bare his torn muscles and huge bones" (Ovid 1977a: 15). While we might be tempted to read this episode as an allegory of the inseparability of the clothing one wears and one's skin or "essence," therefore suggesting that cross-dressing can permanently transform the sex of the wearer, Hercules's fate portrays an opposite sense. That is, the robe that Deianira sends is masculine clothing, but it is permeated with a

feminine vengefulness; what is revealed as Hercules tries to strip off the poisoned cloth is the masculinity of the body beneath and the male fury of his pain. When at last Hercules lies on his funeral pyre and is consumed by the flames, what is purged are the traces of his (mortal) mother: "no shape of Hercules that could be recognized remained, nor was there anything left which his mother gave" (Ovid 1977a: 21). He retains qualities from his father only, and, like a serpent that sloughs off its old age with its skin, Hercules shines in resplendent glory, acquires heroic stature, and is set among the stars by Jove.

That Hercules can subjugate himself to Omphale, dress in her clothes, and still redeem himself as a quintessentially male hero does not, however, completely undo the threat his effeminacy poses. Like Renaissance writers, Barthes makes passion, especially erotic passion, the property of Woman. Barthes says that Woman "gives shape to absence, elaborates its fictions, for she has time to do so; she weaves and sings; the Spinning Songs express both immobility (by the hum of the Wheel) and absence (far away, rhythms of travel, sea surges, cavalcades)" (1978: 14). Artegall, in his effeminized captivity, perfectly exemplifies this role, since he must wait for Britomart (as warrior) to rescue him. As Barthes notes, spinning, weaving, and waiting are also figures of writing (Penelope embodies this conjunction in *The Odyssey*), and Artegall is by extension linked with Spenser himself. To represent Artegall as imprisoned by a cruel and capricious queen, forced to earn a meagre existence by repetitive and effeminate work, and constrained to negotiate the possessive and unwanted attentions of the Queen (whose communications are distorted by her go-between) provides dangerous parallels with Spenser's own situation, one that he could hardly have portrayed unless veiled in the darkest of allegories. It is customary for critics to note the figuration of Elizabeth in Gloriana, Belphoebe, and, to a more limited extent, in Britomart, and to see Radigund as a perversion of womanhood, but this interpretation does not take into account the complex linkages between them and the Amazon. Radigund recalls Belphoebe in her attire, and, when Britomart engages in battle with Radigund, not only are they described in similes that suggest equality, but, at certain moments, they become virtually indistinguishable. At one point, their names drop out, and each is referred to by the pronoun "she," effecting a syntactic confusion that mirrors the conflation of their identities. That Britomart is herself wounded in the encounter suggests that Radigund is not just a caricature of the masculine woman, but a genuine threat to Britomart. Louis Montrose

argues that, because Britomart is Radigund's double, she incorporates and personifies everything in Britomart that is threatening to Artegall (1983: 76). When Walter Ralegh compared Elizabeth to an Amazon in his *Discoverie of Guiana*, he insinuated that the Queen could free herself from negative associations with the Amazons only if she sanctioned their subjugation (which, of course, would underwrite Ralegh's colonial enterprise) (Montrose 1983: 76), and it is this battle between Amazon figures that Spenser represents in the combat between Radigund and Britomart. In other words, only by setting women against each other can female supremacy be defeated and the "proper," patriarchal order be restored.

After Britomart has successfully vanquished Radigund and freed Artegall from his shameful enslavement, thus enacting "true Iustice" by repealing women's liberty (5.7: 42), we are given a warning of the way female beauty and the love it inspires can "mollify" men. The catalogue of examples includes Samson, Hercules, and Antony; in contrast to them, Artegall will not be restrained by imprisoning love, for nothing can hold him "from suite of his auowed quest,/ Which he had vndertane to *Gloriane*" (5.8: 3). Although he frees himself from Britomart and "her strong request" (5.8: 3), Artegall still labors in the service of Gloriana. Significantly, it is Artegall's voice that Spenser borrows in the proem to Book 5 to address his queen: "Pardon the boldnesse of thy basest thrall,/ That dare discourse of so diuine a read,/ As thy great iustice praysed ouer all:/ The instrument whereof loe here thy *Artegall*" (11). While Spenser was well rewarded by Elizabeth for his poetic offering – receiving a pension of fifty pounds a year after he presented the first three books of *The Faerie Queene* to her – he chose to see his Irish career as a bitter exile and his monetary reward as paltry (Goldberg 1981: 171). Spenser's use of Artegall's voice erases the figure of the poet only to displace it on to the knight of justice in this "most uncompromisingly public" of the books of *The Faerie Queene* (Helgerson 1978: 904). Richard Helgerson, among others, has pointed to the increasing bifurcation of the public and private ideas of the poet in the last two books of the poem, a split between private inspiration and public duty, and an increasing divorce between heroic action and virtue or love (Helgerson 1978: 902–5). Although Spenser's representation of his Queen was multiple and for the most part celebratory, we can read the Radigund episode as depicting the darker aspect of a poet in the service of a female sovereign. Where he subjects her to his veiled, unflattering figurations (her spurned love that is converted to Amazonian misanthropy, her

inability to manage her spies, her personal vanity), he depicts himself (through Artegall) as her effeminized subject. The voice through which Artegall speaks is the instrument that condemns him to servitude (the "warelesse word"), a subjugation that he himself invites, just as Spenser's own career as a poet in search of patronage placed him in the service of a sovereign renowned for her dilatoriness. Above all, Artegall's enslavement to Radigund is characterized by waiting – waiting for her to tire in battle, for her to decide his fate when he is in prison, for Britomart to rescue him – a position that humiliates and effeminizes him. Spenser's cross-dressed voice stands, then, among his other often effusive celebrations of Elizabeth's power and wisdom as a disguised and "silent" complaint, an allegorized portrait of one of the consequences of female rule.[10] Where Ovid in the *Heroides* uses a feminine position as a way of exposing and subverting the values of (male) Augustan Rome, Spenser implicitly condemns transvestism in the Radigund episode as the inevitable consequence of his own role in Elizabethan society, a position that violates nature and demeans men. Ovid borrows the metaphor of Woman and the strategies of eroticism in order to contest patriarchal rule, while Spenser's depiction of Radigund as a ruler distorted by thwarted desire and capricious judgment registers an unease with gynocracy and presents the patriarchal alternative to Amazonian power as liberating.[11]

For my second example of voice and transvestism in the Renaissance, I turn to a different problem. Where with Spenser and Ovid, I read the cross-dressed figures against the authorial "voice," which, while historically and culturally constructed, is nevertheless discernible, the two Jacobean pamphlets on transvestism that I will now consider are anonymous. The circumstances surrounding the publication of *Hic Mulier* and *Haec-Vir* are well known. In January of 1620, John Chamberlain reported in a letter that the Bishop of London had called his clergy together and told them that he had received express orders from King James that they should all condemn in their sermons the recent trend in which women dress like men (Woodbridge 1984: 143). Chamberlain enumerates the details that especially attracted the king's displeasure: in addition to their female insolence, he cites "theyre wearing of brode brimd hats, pointed dublets, theyre haire cut short or shorne, and some of them stillettaes or poinards" (Woodbridge 1984: 143). In February, 1620, a pamphlet entitled *Hic Mulier: Or, The Man–Woman: Being a Medicine to cure the Coltish Disease of the Staggers in the Masculine–Feminines of our Times*

appeared, and its purpose seemed designed, like the diatribes from the pulpit, to remedy the monstrousness of nature that expressed itself in women's "mannish" dress. The declamation – as it calls itself – is an apostrophe to *Hic Mulier*, which opens by defending the false Latin of its title. The oration converts the Man–Woman into a grammatical subject, arguing that women have become masculine in declension and conjugation: in gender, number, case, mood, and tense (1620: Sig. A3). The conflation of women and language accentuates the representational status of the feminine category, since, just as its deformation is expressed in linguistic corruption, so is its remedy ostensibly achievable through a social purification by means of language. Before the speaker begins his rhetorical flagellation, he pauses for a moment to consider the women he does not include in his condemnation, those good women who are the "crownes of natures worke, the complements of mens excellencies, and the Seminaries of propagation." These women "are Castles impregnable, Rivers unsaileble, Seas immoueable, infinit treasures, and inuincible armies" (1620: Sig. A3v), and for them will be reserved praise written with a golden pen on leaves of golden paper. The author exhorts virtuous women to protect themselves by the clothing they wear, which offers an impenetrable shield and closes off all points of access: "shield [your charms] with modest and comely garments... hauing euery window closed with a strong Casement, and euery Loope-hole furnisht with such strong Ordnance, that no unchaste eye may come neere to assayle them" (1620: Sig. B4). The mannish women who are the subject of his declamation, on the other hand, are imaged in their full deformity in order that they might be called "back to the modest comelinesse in which they were" (1620: Sig. A4v). Where the chaste woman uses the shield of her innocence to protect her, the masculine woman wears a weapon, which figures her aggressive (and sexually assertive) nature.[12]

The shape of their transgression is expressed repeatedly as a distortion of the relationship between inside and outside. While the "good" woman is depicted as unknowable, impregnable, and invincible – images that suggest simultaneously containment, inviolability, and stability, and that do not differentiate between bodies, their coverings, or the spaces inside the body (mind, soul, feminine essence) – the speaker's derision specifically targets ornamentation, cosmetics, particular items of dress, and hair styles, and the carrying of weapons. In other words, the terms of abuse contrast the immutable essence of Woman with the historical and cultural

vicissitudes of fashion, thus linking fashion with the dangers of change. Further, these "hermaphrodites" of fashion are criticized both for covering and uncovering their bodies: the modest straight gown has been exchanged for a French doublet, which is unbuttoned "to entice," yet "all of one shape to hide deformitie," and is in addition "extreme short wasted to give a most easy way to every luxurious action" (1620: Sig. A4v). Women use clothes to advertise what is beneath, but what lies under what they wear turns out to be not just sexuality but "deformity," as if female sexuality *were* deformity. The contamination of their feminine nature is represented as disguise, mimicking, and imitation (disguising "the beauty of their creations" "with the glosse of mumming Art"), an "infamie of disguise" whose marks "sticke so deepe on their naked faces, and more naked bodies, that not all the painting in *Rome* ... can conceale them, but every eye discovers them almost as low as their middle" (1620: Sig. Bv). It is as if disguise penetrated the very flesh it covered and then manifested itself as a sign of shame that could be discerned by all eyes. What began as a concealment turns into a transparency of deformity that makes inside and outside once more contiguous. At other points in the pamphlet, however, women's bodies are also as protean as the fashion they wear (they mould "their bodies to euery deformed fashion," [1620: Sig. Bv]), and it is this changeability that is most condemned.

The speaker quotes from Spenser's *Faerie Queene* to support his censure of the masculine woman, citing the lines about the cruelty of women who have shaken off the "shamefast band" with which nature bound them (5.5: 25). The cited lines are the narratorial aside just after Radigund has dressed Artegall in female clothing, and they refer in the first instance to the effeminizing consequences of female power, rather than to the monstrosity of masculine women. In other words, it is the effect on men as much as the act of cross-dressing that is condemned, since transvestism effectively inverts the roles of both sexes. As Linda Woodbridge has observed, however, the clothing the author of *Hic Mulier* describes and the costumes depicted on the frontispiece are precisely not masculine disguises; the difficulty with these images (both pictorial and discursive) is that they are hermaphroditic, for they depict a female body beneath male attire, and they figure women partaking of male privilege and engaging in male pursuits (e.g. the carrying of weapons) (Woodbridge 1984: 145). The fear that is voiced is that costume will become essence, that women will really turn into men, but the threat registered in the disturbing

representations of gender hybridism is a more fundamental threat of ambiguity, of sexual indeterminacy. One aspect of this ambiguity is, of course, the irregularity of erotic exchange, so that a woman may be attracted to a man, only to discover that s/he is a woman (as, for instance, Malecasta's wooing of Britomart), or a man may pursue a woman, only to discover a boy beneath her clothing, thus expressing a cultural fear at the heart of transvestism, "that the basic, essential form of erotic excitement in men is homosexual" (Orgel 1989: 17). Clothing that appropriately expresses the anatomy beneath prevents the breaching of these sexual boundaries, and the speaker thus urges women to do away with their foule disguises and "vizards" (1620: Sig. B3v) and reconceal their female charms modestly from the eye, just as nature hides her treasures in "hidden cauerns of the earth." In keeping with the linguistic analogy with which he begins, the author invokes a textual metaphor: "Let not a wandring and lasciuious thought read in an inticing Index the contents of an unchaste volume" (1620: Sig. B3v). Women, like books, ought to disclose their subject matter only to the engaged reader, not lewdly advertise what is within to every passer-by. What the society most fears – especially a culture rent asunder by epistemological, religious, and economic shifts that undermine its foundational certainties – is displaced onto the female body, where it is contained as the (stable) locus of unknowability. Like Lacanian lack, which is ascribed to Woman in order to secure the fiction of a coherent male subjectivity, the Jacobean female body is burdened with the anxieties of change and ambiguity that disturb its myth of itself as stable and knowable. What transvestism threatens, then, is the possibility of making woman the repository of this fear; while the author speaks of transvestism spreading like the plague (1620: Sig. Bv-B2), the imagery of infection figures a no longer containable anxiety about order and stability that becomes as contagious as the transvestism he actually describes.

Where *Hic Mulier* presents itself as conventional misogynist fare, *Haec-Vir*, the pamphlet that answered *Hic Mulier* one week later, is more difficult to evaluate. Rather than the single-voiced apostrophe to transgressive women of *Hic Mulier*, *Haec-Vir* is a dialogue between the effeminate man and the masculine woman. The dialogue opens with a confusion of identities – as if the fear articulated in *Hic Mulier* had been realized – in which the effeminate man mistakes the mannish woman for a man, and she initially believes him to be a woman. When they discover their mistakes, they introduce themselves, although this clarification has the effect of intensifying the

confusion when Haec-Vir addresses Hic Mulier as a "most courageous counterfet of *Hercules* and his Distaffe" (1620: Sig. A3v). The two cross-dressed figures begin to debate, Haec-Vir reiterating the charges levelled in the first pamphlet, and Hic Mulier demanding the right to reply. The first and most pertinent defense s/he offers is to the accusation of being a "Slave to Nouelty" (1620: Sig. A3v). This defense of fashion and change reads like a manifesto for the liberation of women from the bonds of patriarchy. "For what is the world," s/he asks, "but a very shop and ware-house of change?" (1620: Sig. B). Since the world is nothing but change, why should "poore woman" stand as "a fixed Starre, that shee shall not so much as moue or twinkle in her owne Spheare"? (1620: Sig. B). Such fixity is indeed what is contrary to nature, s/he argues, for everything in nature alters continually. In defense of "her" "naturalnesse," s/he invokes custom, as the contingent process by which a society affirms its particular habits as natural. Her description of custom has a parallel in Louis Althusser's definition of ideology as representing "the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (Althusser 1971: 162). That is, both ideology and custom have the function of constituting individuals as subjects with particular identities, and in the cases s/he cites, the identities are national: just as the English wash their hands before a meal, Romans are accustomed to annointing their arms and legs; as the English sign of mourning is black, Romans signal bereavement by the color white (Sig. B2, B2v). If custom defines national habits, it also codifies gender distinctions within a particular nationality.[13] The common etymological root of custom and costume points to the importance of clothing in registering sexual difference, a linkage that argues for a similar contingency in codes of dress. Where the author of *Hic Mulier* refers to the biblical injunction (*Deuteronomy* 22) that the sexes wear clothing appropriate to their different genders, Hic Mulier argues that practicality (thrift and warmth) ought to govern the selection of attire for men and women alike. Rather than embracing the radical implications of her speech, however, s/he ultimately condemns the contingency of custom ("To conclude, *Custome* is an idiot" (Sig. B2v)), figuring custom or fashion as a capricious, unfaithful, and changeable servant, thus laying the groundwork for the pamphlet's final arguments for the restoration of a traditional gender balance.

Haec-Vir accepts the arguments about custom, but he turns them back upon Hic Mulier by arguing that women do not, in fact, choose their clothes with an eye to practicality, but are governed by the

whims of fashion. He insists that cross-dressing confers not liberty but shame, and women will only be treated well if they behave (and dress) like women: "if you will walke without difference, you shall live without reverence" (Sig. B4v). Hic Mulier proceeds to attack his effeminization of dress, also an effect of fashion (and this is presumably a topical reference to the notoriously effeminate dress and behavior of some of James's courtiers), claiming that women are wearing masculine clothes only because they have been cast off by men (Sig. C2v). Hic Mulier and Haec-Vir then exchange clothes and adjust their Latin names to suit the restored harmony of their respective genders. What are we to make of this capitulation to tradition, especially after Hic Mulier's impassioned speech celebrating change and recognizing the relativity of custom? Linda Woodbridge reads this moment as a harbinger of feminism:

> When Hic Mulier cried "Custom is an idiot," she flung open the door to reveal vistas of freedom and equality. And then her creator, growing alarmed, bustled in and shut it again... Someday it would be opened again, and through it would march Mary Wollstonecraft and Emmeline Pankhurst, Susan B. Anthony and John Stuart Mill, Simone de Beauvoir and Betty Friedan, and all of us who can thank the dubious feminism of the English Renaissance for at least one indisputable battle-cry: *Haec-Vir*'s "We are as free-borne as men".
>
> (1984: 149)

Yet, as Woodbridge recognizes, Hic Mulier's feminist manifesto is dampened by her later capitulation to custom; given that reversal, how are we to read this conversion to propriety in relation to the gender (and the feminist convictions) of the pamphlet's author?[14]

Jonathan Dollimore has recently addressed this movement to contain the transgression of the pamphlet's most challenging statements. He argues that to privilege Hic Mulier's final judgment (if men become masculine, women will become feminine again) over her defense of transvestism "is probably to interpret the pamphlet according to modern and anachronistic notions of authorial intention, character utterance, and textual unity (all three notions privileging what is said finally as being more truthful than what went before)" (Dollimore 1991: 298). He suggests that in fact the final, conservative gesture of the pamphlet "still partakes of the same fundamental challenge to gender division" as the preceding statements because it acknowledges that sexual difference can be main-

tained by means of cross-dressing. To do so is, of course, to undermine the idea that sexual difference is a function of divine or natural law rather than social custom. Thus, according to Dollimore, Hic Mulier's seeming capitulation ironically incorporates the original challenge (1991: 298).

Haec-Vir's argument for equality rests on a claim that both sexes should have access to and delight in the mutability that is Nature's essence. Such encomia on variety were not uncommon in the Renaissance, of course, especially when change was associated with women. We can think here of John Donne's "Confined Love," his elegies "Change," "The Anagram," and "Variety," or Ben Jonson's ventriloquized "Another. In Defence of Their Inconstancy. A Song." Jonson's poem, spoken in the voice of "womankind" maintains that women's "proper virtue is to range" (Jonson 1975: 138). The changeability the speaker ascribes to her sex turns out to be sexual variety of a confined sort, the "frequent varying of the deed." Jonson's cross-dressed voice thus imputes to women all that is most feared and most desired, domesticating the threat of mutability by converting it to a kind of natural (and infinite) sexual inventiveness. That change is identified as a particularly feminine attribute is rendered especially plausible when it is articulated in a feminine voice, since the mutation of voice (masculine to feminine) becomes an "invisible" feature of the poem, masking the patriarchal origin of the utterance by cross-dressing it so that it appears to emanate from the female body. Yet we cannot read *Haec-Vir*'s defense of change, as we can Jonson's, against a male authorial voice that stands behind it, because the pamphlet is anonymous. The sex of the author is not only indeterminate, but that indeterminacy is thematized, I would argue, in the transvestism of the voices in it. Although the speakers do revert to their "true" genders at the end, the pamphlet opens by dramatizing the undecidability of sexual identity. Speech, clothing, behavior, and social status are determined in relation to an attribution of gender, and, while it is impossible to suspend one's judgment about the gender of a voice (or an author), the transvestism of the interlocutors in *Haec-Vir* insists that we consider the mutually constitutive nature of gender construction, the sexual orientations on which they depend, and the contingent nature of these gender identifications. It is crucial, then, that we read *Haec-Vir* as anonymous, for, in its refusal to present itself as the property of a (proper) name, it forces us to recognize the role custom plays in fashioning gender, and dressing the voice that speaks it.

III

So far, I have considered transvestite ventriloquism from the perspective of male appropriations of feminine voices, or of anonymous authors using transvestite voices. I want to conclude this chapter by looking briefly at one instance of a woman ventriloquizing a male voice, the French feminist philosopher Sarah Kofman, who borrows Freud's voice in *The Enigma of Woman: Woman in Freud's Writings*. The epigraph to Part One of the book provides a useful introduction to its argument and a gloss on the title: Kofman quotes a line from Derrida's *Glas* that defines the enigma as "'the structure of the veil suspended between contraries'" (1985: 9). While Woman is ostensibly the enigma that Kofman sets out to anatomize, it quickly becomes apparent that Woman is inseparable from the enigmatic nature attributed to her both by tradition and by Freud. Far from being able to answer the riddle of what woman *is*, Kofman is concerned to investigate the "veil" of misunderstanding and obfuscation that is suspended between the sexes, a veil that both is and is not Woman. A central focus of Kofman's investigation is Freud's theory of bisexuality. Bisexuality, like psychoanalytic discourse itself, becomes a double-edged "weapon" in the "internecine" war within psychoanalysis, a struggle between Freud and women analysts (and feminists) over the "woman question" (Kofman 1985: 11–13). Where feminists have repeatedly challenged the androcentric bias of Freudian psychoanalysis, charging that Freud's claim to scientific objectivity is compromised when he considers femininity because he is a man, the thesis of bisexuality functions as an implicit defense that is rooted at the heart of psychoanalytic theory. That is, Freud's claim that both sexes contain elements of the other in them – which is developed with respect to women in his 1933 lecture, "Femininity" – allows Freud to imply that he is not simply a man, for he contains feminine elements within himself. The theory of bisexuality seems to dismantle the fixed, metaphysical binarities of the sexes, displacing that stability in favor of a more speculative and constructed opposition (Kofman 1985: 15). But, as Kofman brilliantly demonstrates, while Freud celebrates the universality of bisexuality, he also uses it against his female colleagues, imputing an unflattering masculinity (if not homosexuality) to their intelligence, with all the attendant implications of pathology and arrested development. Yet he never applies the thesis directly to himself, never exposes his own femininity, and this curious reluctance functions, Kofman argues, "to

disguise his silent disavowal of his own femininity, his paranoia" (1985: 15).

The "double-edged" weapon of bisexuality would thus seem to make psychoanalysis invulnerable to feminist incursions into its territories. Kofman's feminist strategy for undoing the protective, self-confirming androcentrism of psychoanalytic discourse is to employ exactly the same duplicities of argumentation that Freud uses, except that she turns them back on Freud in order to deconstruct theories that have remained implacably hostile to feminism, creating in the process a "space" for feminist speech.

The central tool in her endeavor is ventriloquism, an infiltration of the Freudian voice, a metaphoric occupation of the Freudian mind. Her text is made up of a variation of voices: her own analysis (which predominates), her quotation of Freud's works – which is suitably indicated with diacritical marks and off-set text – and her occasional assumption of Freud's voice, usually announced by "I, Freud," followed by a passage spoken by Freud/Kofman. These moments are clearly much more than paraphrase; they constitute a double-voiced text, in which Kofman speaks through Freud, reshaping his words through her own interpretation of them, and manipulating his speech so that he seems to be engaged in passionate debate with her. For example, in one such passage, she ventriloquizes his resolution to guard psychoanalysis against women by turning the discourse back upon them:

> I, Freud, Truth, I speak, and Truth will soon be able to resist all pressures, all more or less hysterical "feminist" demands; for, O, women, if you seek to use psychoanalysis against me, I shall be much better prepared to turn it back against you, even while I pretend to be granting you some concessions, agreeing to some compromises in order to put an end to the battle of the sexes between us, and to reestablish among male and female psychoanalysts a "polite agreement": in my lordly fashion I freely grant you that "pure femininity" and "pure masculinity" are purely theoretical constructions and that the content of such speculative constructions is uncertain. I am prepared to grant, too, that most men fall far short of the masculine ideal, for "all human individuals, as a result of their bisexual disposition and of cross-inheritance, combine in themselves both masculine and feminine characteristics" ("Consequences," p. 258).
>
> (Kofman 1985: 13)

The passage is doubled against itself, for we can hear Kofman's value judgments shaping Freud's tone ("in my lordly fashion"), and her direct quotation from "Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction Between the Sexes" at the end imbues it with irony, coming as the words do from a woman's perspective. It is one thing for Freud to recognize that most men fall far short of the masculine ideal, and another for Kofman to say the same thing. Further, Freud's enactment of bisexuality is decidedly asymmetrical because the masculine is obviously the privileged term. Kofman enters the discourse at the exact point where Freud erects a theory that will supposedly render psychoanalysis invulnerable to "hysterical" feminist demands, turning Freud's "weapon" on himself by forcing him to accept the consequences of the theoretical constructions of "pure" masculinity and femininity.

Since Kofman holds Freud to his thesis of bisexuality, she can read his writings on women not as an attempt to describe an eternal essence, but as a process of understanding how the differentiation between the sexes came about. Freud postulates three paths by which the little girl becomes a woman (the normal path, the neurotic or hysterical path, and the path of masculine overcompensation, in which the woman refuses her feminine "destiny") (Kofman 1985: 123). That these divergences exist at all suggests the gap between anatomical endowment and psychical organization, and the complicated process by which a girl becomes a woman signals her greater predisposition to hysteria. Hysteria, like (and of course closely related to) bisexuality, is a condition of doubleness, somatically expressed in the hysteric's simultaneous holding of her dress to her body (the female response) and her attempt to pull it away (the male response) (Kofman: 1985: 123). Just as the hysteric seeks to cover and uncover her body at the same time, so, too, does hysteria conceal and reveal simultaneously (Kofman 1985: 123). Kofman argues that the way Freud uses his thesis of bisexuality "mimics" the behavior of the hysteric, because he reveals the presence of both sexes in each one, even as he conceals his own femininity, a strategy that allows him to break down the metaphysical opposition between masculinity and femininity, while maintaining the privilege of masculinity (1985: 123). Hysteria predisposes women to silence, forcing them to express somatically what they cannot utter in language. This silence is the enigma or riddle that the psychotherapist seeks to discover, and the true hysteric is she who becomes complicitous with her analyst, confessing her secret. He, in turn, becomes the hysteric's accomplice

by guaranteeing to change her name if he publishes her case history, thus preserving her anonymity (even as he displays it) (Kofman 1985: 44–5). But if Freud is complicit with the hysteric, or even, at certain points, mimics her behavior, so, too, is Kofman. The ventriloquized Freudian voice in *The Enigma of Woman* is a hysterical voice, a bisexual voice, and its function is to represent Freud's insight about the speculative, provisional nature of the masculine/feminine opposition. The strategy partakes of what Luce Irigaray has called mimicry, the deliberate assumption of the feminine role, which has the capacity "to convert a form of subordination into an affirmation, and thus to begin to thwart it" (Irigaray 1985b: 76).[15] It is by self-reflexively occupying the very attributes that cause psychoanalysis to relegate the feminine to the inferior, the neurotic, and the hysterical that Kofman can challenge Freudian dogma. At the end of her reading of Freud, she observes that, in becoming obsessed with a fixed idea of woman, he immobilizes her, "imprisons her in her 'nature' as in a real yoke of iron," opposing that fixity to the "flexibility and plasticity" of man (Kofman 1985: 222).

While the sexual hierarchy that produces this paralysis is a function of anatomical difference that stems from an origin of similarity (bisexuality), the differences quickly efface what the sexes share. Just as the Freudian standard of comparison is the penis (to which the female "penis," the clitoris, is invidiously compared), so is the Renaissance standard the male body, with its sexual organs externally displayed. The inferiority of the female body, with its internalized reproductive system, is as apparent to the eye as the lack of a penis is in Freudian theory. Despite the emphasis on bodies in Freud, however, the discourses of transvestism and psychoanalysis both make it clear that bodies are as historically constructed as the clothing that covers them. Transvestism and hysterical or bisexual discourses alike allow us to see in the crossing of genders where and how the boundaries between the sexes have been set, and it is at these junctures that the gender system is most vulnerable. While there is nothing inherently subversive about transvestite ventriloquism – indeed, as we have seen, it can be used to affirm phallocratic rule – it has the radical potential to expose the contingency of gender, opening cultural discourse to the "voices" it otherwise marginalizes and silences.

CODA

I have referred recurrently in this book to a genre that I have not named explicitly: the complaint. It could be argued that the complaint, particularly the complaint voiced by the seduced and abandoned woman, which descends ultimately from Ovid's *Heroides* and which flourished so pervasively in Renaissance (especially Tudor) England, is *the* paradigmatic ventriloquized text.[1] If one considers the feminine complaints, which range from Churchyard's "The Tragedy of Shore's Wife," Daniel's "The Complaint of Rosamond," some of the letters in Drayton's *England's Heroicall Epistles* and his "Matilda" to Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece*, *A Lover's Complaint*, Donne's "Sappho to Philaenis," and Marvell's "The Nymph Complaining on the Death of her Fawn," it becomes clear that there is a profound affinity between the representation of the abandoned woman and male constructions of the feminine voice. In his study of the abandoned woman as a figure in poetry, Lawrence Lipking has suggested that abandonment is a feminine condition ("When a man is abandoned, in fact, he feels like a woman"), and while both male and female authors have contributed to the tradition, "almost every great male poet has written at least one poem in the voice of an abandoned woman" (Lipking 1988: xix–xxi). While Lipking does not emphasize the ventriloquized nature of the complaint (indeed, his study sometimes replicates the historical appropriations of the feminine voice that he analyses, especially in his final chapter, "Aristotle's Sister"), it is precisely its cross-dressed and fabricated nature that makes its depiction so revealing of gender construction. In the Renaissance complaint, in its Ovidian model, and in many subsequent variations on the genre, the complaint is deeply implicated in female sexuality and its consequences.

Feminine abandonment and the complaint that gives it articulation

are rooted in an erotics that registers the discrepant power relations between the sexes. Because chastity is powerfully correlated with silence in the early modern period, the complaint inscribes a particular orientation towards sexuality, couched as it is so often is in a feminine voice that warns of the consequences of seduction or rape, that implicitly or explicitly counsels chastity, or that forecasts the bitter aftermath of erotic pleasure. Its ventriloquized status gives it a special force, since it seems to be spoken by its victim, but is almost always in the Renaissance the vehicle of a patriarchal didacticism, a way of controlling female desire and promulgating a particular version of female sexuality, one that relies on or responds to a forceful, sometimes violent male sexuality. Its passionately static nature, and its repetitive, often formulaic rhetoric depict a kind of cultural imprisonment of feminine erotic experience, and the very excesses of its expression seem confounded by the narrowness of experiential possibility.[2]

The complaint furnishes such a pervasive representation of the feminine voice that its querulous tone and exiled condition has come to define a version of woman. In fact, the complaint provides a poetic articulation of the metaphysical condition that Luce Irigaray has termed *déréliction*, a state of abandonment, like that of Ariadne on Naxos, "left without hope, without help, without refuge" (Whitford 1991: 78). As Margaret Whitford explains, where "the fundamental ontological category for men is *habiter* (dwelling)," whether in "grottoes, huts, women, towns, language, concepts, theories," women's ontological status is dereliction, abandonment, a state that prevents their emergence as subjects (Whitford 1989: 112). Irigaray argues that language is one of the fundamental dwelling places in culture, a "house of language which for men even constitutes a substitute for his home in a body," but because "woman is used to construct it," "it is not available to her" (Whitford 1989: 112). While Irigaray is describing a metaphysical plight, whose remedy is really the creation of a female symbolic. I want to apply her term here in a much more limited sense.

Throughout this book I have juxtaposed early modern ventriloquizations of the feminine voice and twentieth-century feminist theorizations of voice. What I have sought to show is the continuity between historical appropriations and representations of feminine speaking and the characteristics recent feminists have attributed to woman's voice. Far from describing the unchanging, essential qualities of women's speech, however, I have argued that our

interpretations of a female or feminine voice need to take into account the gender of who is speaking. Ventriloquism, as it is employed by writers of the early modern period, is a powerful strategy of silencing, of speaking on behalf of another, of disrupting the boundaries of a propertied utterance. Just as it has been used in patriarchal culture to mute or shape feminine speaking, feminists, particularly French feminists, are reappropriating ventriloquism to infiltrate, interrogate, and dismantle a language and a cultural lexicon that has confined women to a marginal and metaphoric status. In a sense, Irigaray's diagnosis of women's dereliction is a way of occupying the state of abandonment accorded to women by philosophical, mythological, and poetic discourses, an occupation that may well be a mimetic reversal of that condition of exile.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION: THE VOICE OF GENDER

1 One exception is Gail Reitenbach's (1990) "'Maydes are simple, some men say': Thomas Campion's Female Persona Poems," which analyses Campion's ventriloquized poems both with respect to their status as song and in relation to critical discussion of the dramatic monologue.
2 For an extensive discussion of the relationship between literary imitation and the imagery of rebirth, see Greene (1982).
3 Richard Lanham sees the Renaissance obsession with Ovid as a function of its valorization of the rhetorical mode – as opposed to the "serious" mode. The rhetorical mode privileges language, contingency, and the social, and both its educational system, which is based on imitation, and its practice of composition produce texts that seem to dramatize or at least thematize their relationship to earlier texts. See Lanham on the rhetorical mode (1976: 1–35) and on Ovid's relation to Virgil (1976: 48–64). Jacobson (1974), Verducci (1985), and Brownlee (1990) discuss the intertextual nature of the *Heroides*.
4 I am grateful to Victor Chan for bibliographic guidance and for his insights into this image.

1 TRAVESTIES OF VOICE: CROSS-DRESSING THE TONGUE

1 Elaine V. Beilin's (1987) *Redeeming Eve: Women Writers of the English Renaissance*, *Her Own Life: Autobiographical Writings by Seventeenth-Century Englishwomen* (1989), Katharina M. Wilson's (1987) collection, *Women Writers of the Renaissance and Reformation*, Ann Rosalind Jones's influential essays on the female Renaissance lyric, such as "Surprising Fame: Renaissance Gender Ideologies and Women's Lyric" (in *The Poetics of Gender*), the recent collection of essays from *English Literary Renaissance*, *Women in the Renaissance*, and (although covering a slightly later period) Elaine Hobby's *Virtue of Necessity: English Women's Writing 1649–88*, are examples of this important kind of gynocritical study. The influential volume *Rewriting the Renaissance:*

The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe devotes its third section to "The Works of Women: Some Exceptions to the Rule of Patriarchy," and *The Renaissance Englishwoman in Print: Counterbalancing the Canon* features a number of essays on female Renaissance authors, as well as a bibliography of women writers from 1500–1640. Ann Rosalind Jones's recent study, *The Currency of Eros* (1990), provides both a critique of the gynocritical paradigm as advanced by Showalter and a theoretically powerful rationale for studying female writers. Jones invokes a model of cultural negotiation that is based on a Gramscian definition of hegemony, which sets up a dialogue or series of negotiations between dominant groups or institutions and less powerful groups (Jones 1990: 2–3). Where Showalter's gynocritical paradigm reinscribes a stable, individual subject, Jones's analyses are richly historicized and contextualized within class, institutional, and discursive frameworks.

2 As Tania Modleski has argued in "Feminism and the Power of Interpretation: Some Critical Readings," feminism and pluralism would seem to be antithetical, since pluralism emphasizes the "sovereignty of the individual subject and his right and ability to choose among any number of viable alternatives" (1986: 122), and feminism emphasizes the constraints on interpretation. Showalter seems to criticize the freedom of choice implicit in pluralism at the same time that she retains the stability of the female subject for her gynocritical project.

3 For an insightful treatment of postfeminism in theory and film, see Modleski's *Feminism Without Women: Culture and Criticism in a "Postfeminist" Age*. Modleski also discusses Showalter's introduction to *Speaking of Gender*, giving it a darker reading than I do, for she claims that Showalter marginalizes feminism, making it into a conduit to gender studies (1991: 5). Her focus on Showalter's text as a symptom of a larger postfeminist trend allows her to foreground what is certainly a disturbing feature, a sense that feminism has now become a stage, and that gender studies may be the new promised land. Nevertheless, there is nothing inherent in gender studies, or in Showalter's description of it, that is incompatible with feminism or a focus on women; I am not advocating gender studies as a replacement for feminism, but rather as a way of enlarging a gynocritical theory that relies on humanist theories of the stable subject.

4 When Showalter first introduces him, she identifies him as a member of a husband and wife team, who are engaged in the joint project of trying "to outline a model of women's culture" (1981: 261). Thereafter, she refers only to two essays written by Edwin Ardener.

5 Although I am interested in structures of doubleness, I am not advocating a system of binarities. Rather, ventriloquistic speaking has closer affinities with Marjorie Garber's designation of transvestism as the "third," "a mode of articulation, a way of describing a space of possibility. Three puts in question the idea of one; of identity, self-sufficiency, self-knowledge" (Garber 1992: 11). Ventriloquism may also be loosely related to Emile Benveniste's description of the "middle voice." Whereas grammatical voice customarily defines "diathesis," the

position or arrangement of the subject in the verb, and whereas verbs are usually distinguished by active or passive voice (who speaks and who is spoken), in the historical Indo-European, there was a third designation, the middle voice (Benveniste 1971: 145). Benveniste argues that, in the active voice, the subject performs an action in which s/he is not located, while, in the middle voice, the process centers on the subject, "the subject being inside the process" (Benveniste 1971: 148) (e.g. speaking, being born). One crucial distinction, then, is agency, since agency is curiously suspended in the middle voice, the subject being neither the instigator of the action nor the recipient of it. I would claim that ventriloquism occupies a similarly suspended state with respect to agency. See also Goldberg's discussion of the middle voice (Goldberg 1986: 8–9).

6 See especially Phillip Stubbes's *Anatomie of Abuses* for examples of this rhetoric. For two recent treatments of transvestism, see Stephen Greenblatt's "Fiction and Friction" and Marjorie Garber's *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing & Cultural Anxiety*.

7 Louis Montrose notes that Belphoebe is compared both to Diana and also to Penthesilea, but the Amazonian allusion is invoked only to be mastered ("that famous Queene/ Of *Amazons*, whom *Pyrrhus* did destroy" (21.3.31)) (1983: 77), whereas Radigund flourishes unchecked by men.

8 For an account of the history of this error, and for an analysis of Spenser's and Sidney's treatments of it, see Victor Skretkowicz, "Hercules in Sidney and Spenser."

9 The thematizing of speech is apparent in the narrative of Hercules's birth, where a jealous Juno keeps her legs crossed and her fingers interlocked so that Alcmena cannot be delivered of her child. Galanthis, a servant, realizes what is happening and tricks Juno into loosening her hands and legs, thus allowing Hercules to be born. As a revenge on Galanthis for her part, Juno transforms her into a weasel, and in return for using her deceitful voice to aid her mistress, Galanthis is condemned to give birth through her mouth (Ovid 1977a: 25). While it is Hercules who is associated with eloquence in the Renaissance, it is worth noticing both how his nativity is associated with speech, and how a woman is punished with a birth process analogous to speech.

10 For the debate on whether women were suited to rule, see Benson (1985), Jordan (1987), Phillips (1941), and Roberts (1990).

11 Josephine A. Roberts (1990) provides an analysis of Radigund in relation to the debates about women's ability to rule and the dangers of gynocracy. She argues that the figure of Radigund needs to be read in context, and that the critical tendency to see in Radigund Spenser's disparagement of female rule must be qualified by his more positive portrayal of Britomart's inherent (but never actualized) ability to govern (1990: 192). While I agree with Roberts in general about Spenser's representation of women and political power, I claim that the Radigund episode nevertheless appears to carry both a burden of personal bitterness and an admonition, a chastising of the transgression of private affection into political action.

12 For a fuller discussion of the significance of weapons, see Sandra Clark

(1985: 170–1) and Linda Woodbridge's analysis of the pacifism of the Jacobean court (1984: 144, 168).

13 For an excellent transposition of Althusser's definition of ideology to gender, see de Lauretis (1987: 6–11).

14 The relationship between the author's sex and the pamphlets from the debate on women (especially Swetnam's and his respondents') has been addressed by Henderson and McManus. While their attention is focused primarily on female pseudonyms and their use, rather than anonymous pamphlets, their arguments still have relevance here. Arguing that men use female pen names when there is some benefit to be derived (such as their incursion into a generic territory dominated by women – like the Gothic romance), they assert that in the Renaissance, "a female name on a defense treatise was an anomaly which would enhance neither the prestige nor the sales of the work" (1985: 21). Henderson and McManus go on to notice that there is ample precedent for men to write defenses of women under their own names or anonymously, and that the "consistency of tone, the attitude toward men, and the passionate conviction" of the pamphlets they examine (which have female signatures affixed to them) "support their authors' claims to be women" (1985: 21). Although I sympathize with this position, the sincerity and passion of the speaker hardly seems like a standard by which to judge the gender of the author, and, furthermore, this formula doesn't explain the complicated question of authorship in *Haec-Vir*.

15 Given the similarities between their strategies (although not their interpretations), Kofman's attack on Irigaray throughout *The Enigma of Woman* provides a disturbing subtext. Even though Kofman is astute about recording Freud's own revisions of his writings – which themselves argue for the provisionality of textual truth – and even though she enters Freud's voice with impunity when she ventriloquizes him, she nevertheless berates Irigaray for using the French rather than the German text of "Femininity." She argues that "going back to the German text is not a matter of trying to 'save' Freud at all costs... but only of manifesting the minimal intellectual honesty that consists in criticizing an author in terms of what he has said rather than what someone has managed to have him say" (Kofman 1985: 14).

2 FOLLY AND HYSTERIA: DUPLICITIES OF SPEECH

1 See *A short, yet, sound commentarie; written on that woorthie worke called; The Prouerbs of Salomon* (Anon 1589: Sig. C3) and John Marbeck, *A Booke of Notes and Commonplaces* (1581: 503). Terence Cave's analysis of Erasmus's *Lingua* and his reading of Folly's voice brilliantly reveal the duplicity at work in Renaissance ideas of the tongue. Cave also emphasizes Erasmus's recognition of the alimentary and sexual functions of the tongue, a depiction that aligns Folly herself with the synecdoche of the tongue, and as I go on to argue, female speech with the body (Cave 1979: 164–7).

2 For a concise formulation of this position, see Derrida's (1973) essay "The Voice That Keeps Silence" in *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs* and Christopher Norris's (1982) explication of phonocentrism in *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice*.

3 The style of this utterance is what Clarence Miller has called "casual-sophistical" (1988: 280). Claiming that there are three styles which correspond roughly to the tripartite structure of *Folly*, Miller observes that the casual-sophistical style predominates in the first section, and its stylistic features are rhetorical questions, parentheses, and afterthoughts – all characteristics that would enhance the supposedly extemporaneous nature of Folly's speech.

4 Sister Geraldine Thompson notes this slippage, for instance (1973: 66), as does Miller (Erasmus 1979: xii).

5 For a theoretical analysis of the linkage between laughter, the mother, and the infant, see Kristeva's "Place Names" (1980: 280–6) and her comments on laughter as a rupture in the symbolic in *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1984: 222–5). In both cases, laughter is linked to the drives, to the "riant, porous boundary" (1980: 284) between child and mother, and hence to the chora. Laughter stands for Kristeva as, among other things, a vocalization that precedes and then co-exists with language, a semiotic disposition that begins as "riant spaciousness" (1980: 283). Laughter is thus associated with the imaginary or the semiotic, the maternal body, and the drives, and it reemerges in the symbolic as an irruption that carries traces of this semiotic disruption, of a non-linguistic but expressive vocalization. The affinities between Kristeva's description of the semiotic (and laughter), the maternal, and the artistic and Erasmus's characterization of those touched by madness or ecstasy are striking.

6 It is also true that, against this double-voiced discourse of disguise, Erasmus sets up a nostalgic, utopian vision of unitariness. He images a golden age when there was no need for multiple languages or grammar or rhetoric, a time before the madness that motivates scientific or geographical exploration was born. It is in this context that he speaks of a Nature that loathes disguise and hates artifice (Erasmus 1979: 51–2). While this portrait of Nature seems antithetical to Erasmus's insistence on illusion, it is akin to Folly's depiction of herself as always recognizable and unchanging. As desirable as this correspondence between appearance and being is, Erasmus implicitly argues that it is not attainable through nostalgic return, but, paradoxically, only through the doublenesses of human folly, language, and history.

7 Robert Burton offers a similar account in *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, which he names the melancholy of Maids, Nuns, and Widows (Burton 1977, 1: 414). In his *Disputations Touching the Generation of Animals*, William Harvey sees the uterus as an organ of desire, which, if not satisfied by marriage, will produce hysterical passions that may become so intense that the woman will seem to be moonstruck or possessed by an evil demon (Harvey 1981: 44). He notes that, in some cases of hysteria, the afflicted women suffered prolapses of the uterus, and that this had a positive effect, since the uterus could be chilled by the external air, and

and skilful. I heare also, that there was another *Sapho* in *Lesbus*: which was a stronge whore, and an arrant strumpet" (quoted in *Works of John Lyly*, 1967, 2: 365). Twentieth-century critics, such as Robinson (1924) have expressed their disbelief that anyone as licentious as Sappho was reputed to have been could have written such exquisite poetry.

17 Michel Foucault (1986) examines this dialogue in some detail. He does not comment on the discussion of lesbianism, however, but focuses instead on the opposition between heterosexual love and male homosexuality.

18 Thomas Docherty has a perceptive discussion of women in Donne's poetry in terms of the metaphor of colonization (1986: 51–87), an idea that has been compellingly articulated by Hélène Cixous in "The Laugh of the Medusa," where she suggests that woman has been constructed as the "dark continent" (1981: 47).

19 Thomas Docherty refers to a passage in *Measure for Measure*, where fish become a metaphor for female genitals (1986: 236), and this sense may underwrite the erotic fantasy of "The Bait," where the fish amorously swim to the woman, happier to catch her than she it. Donne uses a similar image in a verse epistle to Sir Henry Wotton, where he recommends that Wotton behave "as/ Fishes glide, leaving no print where they pass,/ Nor making sound" (Milgate 1967: 56–7).

20 Dryden 1964: 333. Grierson notes that "Sappho to Philaenis" is very probably the source of Dryden's metaphor (1912: 2: 91).

21 Lee Patterson has explored this linkage in relation to Chaucer's Wife of Bath, a discussion to which my own formulation is indebted (1983: 656–95). For a more extended treatment, see Patricia Parker's (1987) analysis of the anatomical and rhetorical aspects of dilation.

22 See especially Joseph Swetnam's comments on speech and sexuality (1615), Linda Woodbridge's analysis of the pamphlet literature (1984), Henderson and McManus's treatment of the gender controversy (1985), and Lisa Jardine's examination of the specific ligature of eroticism and female speech in her chapter on the figure of the shrew (1983).

23 Gloss of the Geneva Bible to Ecclesiastes xiii, 18. Quoted in Milton 1957: 569. J.J.M. Tobin refers to the hyena's traditional attributes of bisexuality, capacity for mimicry, and uncleanness, as well as its association with Circean enchantment (1977: 89–90).

24 Ian Maclean provides a detailed summary of the tradition that associates women with these qualities (1980). He locates one origin for the tradition in Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics*, where these particular virtues appear to be regarded as involuntary and hence "imperfect," effectively "exclud[ing] [women] from Aristotle's moral universe" (1980: 51).

25 See Goldberg (1986) for a theoretical meditation on the problematic of voice in Renaissance texts.

26 I am indebted to Gordon Braden for calling my attention to this verse letter.

27 In "Fiction and Friction" Stephen Greenblatt analyses two instances of transvestism and supposed lesbianism in France. In the first instance, an incident reported by Montaigne, a woman dresses as a man, marries a woman, but is then discovered to be a transvestite. Condemned for using

"'illicit devices to supply her defect in sex'" (Greenblatt 1988: 66), she is convicted and executed. In the second case, a servant dressed as a woman claims to be a man, but the sex of the man is disputed. The couple is accused of sodomy, and the "man" is charged with being a "tribade," who has "abused" his female lover with his unnaturally enlarged clitoris (Greenblatt 1988: 73–4). In both cases, the supposed lesbianism seems to have been condemned because prosthetic devices were employed. In T.W.'s letter, however, the lesbian union seems to be chaste precisely because its eroticism involves "tickling" and "rubbing" (the etymology of tribade is, of course, from the Gk. *tribas*, "rubbing"), rather than penetration.

28 Jane Gallop argues that in French, *lèvres* always refers (also) to the mouth, and that the application of *lèvres* to the vulva (*les lèvres de la vulve*) is necessarily figurative (Gallop 1988: 98).

29 Elaine Scarry has drawn attention to Donne's extraordinary emphasis on touch, which she argues is his model for the senses (Scarry 1988: 88). While this is true, his sense of touch is often mediated or supplemented by vision.

30 Irigaray's idea of female language has been condemned by feminists like Toril Moi (1985) because it was seen to be essentialist (since it emanated from a supposedly essential female body). Both Diana Fuss (1989) and Margaret Whitford (1991) have challenged this reading in ways that have far-reaching implications for future Anglo-American readings of French feminists texts. My own reading emphasizes the dimension of mimicry at work in Irigaray's texts; by providing a historical context for her metaphor (the two lips, the double mouths), I argue that she is subversively employing a traditionally patriarchal definition of women.

CODA

1 For an analysis of Tudor complaints as a genre, see Dubrow (1986).

2 For an account of a female poet using the model of Ovid's *Heroides* subversively, that is, occupying the same position to which Ovid's ventriloquism has assigned her, see Ann Rosalind Jones's discussion of Isabella Whitney (Jones 1990: 43–57).