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Authorship and Publication
in the
English Renaissance

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argument that falls along the lines of what has been dubbed as the "containment theory" associated with some brands of new historicism, McCoy suggests that Gascoigne's career dramatizes the gradual effacement of personal and poetic autonomy within the Elizabethan court ("'Poëmana cas-trata'"). But if we read the second publication as evidence of Gascoigne's poetic impotence, we fail to take into account the possibility that Gascoigne had some measure of control in stylizing his own career. In other words, part of our evidence for his submission is the rhetoric of humility that he self-consciously fashions as a means of constructing an authorial identity not yet fully articulated within his culture. Although writers were certainly subject to social ridicule and economic hardship as well as limited by manuscript notions of writing, they could exploit that position for political advantage. Why otherwise would Spenser subscribe to a stigma of print? Both Spenser and Gascoigne depend on the very conception of the writer that they criticize in order to shape a place for themselves and their professions. From their literary pseudomorphs, they become men in print. The role of lover/poet is a necessary stance for them to assume and renounce; and the palinode is a necessary means for both *establishing* themselves as poets who can prove their worth on inherited terms and *refashioning* those very terms by reshaping the poet's relationship to his public text.

Those Complaining Women

Like Gascoigne and Spenser, Samuel Daniel reshaped and introduced a new authorial career by developing a literary pseudomorph that he could supersede, but Daniel used a different strategy to revise poetic authority in Elizabethan England. In particular, he devised a pseudomorphic form by yoking the genres of sonnet sequence and complaint poem rather than by concealing his authorial identity in a conspicuously edited debut text. When Daniel published *Delia* with the appended *Complaint of Rosamond*, he offered a model for other writers to use in scripting textual and social authority. It is first important to point out that in writing this complaint, Daniel was extending a popular literary trend. Following a tradition marked by Boccaccio and *The Mirror for Magistrates*, writers in the 1580s and 1590s saw a renewed interest in the genre of the complaint poem, a verse that told of an illustrious victim's fall from greatness. *The Mirror* (1559), first published as the joint enterprise of a group of writers headed by William Baldwin, went through numerous editions until its final publication in 1610. This book consisted of a continuously expanding array of monologues voiced by historic male leaders, a pattern disrupted by the 1563 edition's inclusion of Jane Shore as a female complaint speaker. This apparent encroachment ushered in a literary trend. Female characters

began to serve as the principal speakers in the complaint poems at the end of the century. Writing the complaint of the fallen woman became a literary craze; as Hallett Smith notes, "it was in the last decade of the century that the story of the sinning woman developed into a fad."²³ Ballads about such figures as Rosamond Clifford (mistress of Henry II) and Jane Shore (mistress of Edward IV) flooded the market. Thomas Deloney's *Garland of Good Will*, Anthony Chute's *Beauty Dishonored*, Michael Drayton's *Maidie*, Thomas Lodge's *Complaint of Elstred*, Thomas Middleton's *Ghost of Lucrece*, and Shakespeare's *A Lover's Complaint* testify to the popularity of this tradition. These works formed a distinct and self-identifying body of literature. Shakespeare draws from this tradition in *The Rape of Lucrece*, for instance, although he situates the heroine's rhetorical complaint in a story of rape and political revolution. Indeed, the plight of infamous women became so popular that Giles Fletcher felt he had to justify his complaint poem about Richard III simply because his subject was male. Fletcher describes himself as engaged in a tennis match with fortune, which allows him to ridicule those poets who

Like silly boates in shallowe rivers tost,
Looing their paymes, and lacking still their wage,
To write of women, and of womens falles,
Who are too light, for to be fortunes halles.

As Fletcher charges that women's misfortunes are simply "too light" a subject matter for serious poets, he unwittingly testifies to the popularity of this body of writing.²⁴

Female complaint poems are highly conventional. They tell of a legendary figure who returns from the dead to recount her misfortunes through an extended monologue, one that wavers in tone between vindication, shame, and vengeance. The choice of this form signaled a writer's affiliation with Ovid, whose *Heroides* offered the classic text of lamenting and forlorn

²³Hallett Smith, "A Woman Killed With Kindness," *PMLA* 53 (1938): 145. For an interesting discussion of the genre of the female complaint in a postmodern context, see Lauren Berlant, "The Female Complaint," *Social Text* 19/20 (Fall 1988): 237-59. Berlant sees this form as marking a moment in which postmodern feminism grapples with the problem of difference within its ranks. She also explores the form's usefulness for articulating disenfranchisement and the concomitant problem of cultural appropriation of that articulation. Her work charts how the female complaint shaped American romance, feminism, and contemporary pop culture; and it throws into relief some of the strategies Renaissance writers used in negotiating an authorial identity by producing the voice of the discontented woman.

²⁴Giles Fletcher, *Delia, or Poemes of Love vnderunto* is added the *Rising to the Crowne of Richard the Third*, STC 11095 (1593?), reprinted in *The English Works of Giles Fletcher, the Elder*, ed. Lloyd E. Berry (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), 124.

heroines. But these Renaissance complaints are not grounded through reference to Ovid, nor do they simply reproduce Ovidian heroines. For in these works, the female speaker is not simply portrayed as a lamenting and powerless paramour pleading to win back an unfaithful lover or to offer herself as an example of sin and frailty. Instead, she moves in a complicated fashion between justification and penitence. The female character thus acts as a more complex literary figure than in the *Heroïdes*, and through that complication she voices issues crucial to poetic authority itself.

Ballads about sinning women not only proliferated, but also became the site of male rivalry, competition, and debate as these textual women strangely began to quarrel and compete among themselves. Rosamond, for instance, scoffs that in Churchyard's representation, Jane Shore "passes for a Saint," while Rosamond herself, who is more deserving, rests in infamy.²⁵ Churchyard responds by reissuing his complaint text: "because Rosamond is so excellently sette forth . . . I have somewhat beautified my Shore's wife, not in any kind of emulation, but to make the world know my device in age is as rife and reddie, as my disposition and knowledge was in youth."²⁶ In his text, Jane Shore disagrees with her author by scorning Rosamond's claim to beauty, claiming that she is not so "excellently set forth." Drayton's complaining Matilda criticizes "looser wantons" such as Elstred and Jane as unworthy of literary immortalization at all, charging that Daniel's Rosamond, in particular, has flawed her poet's craft: "Though all the world bewitched with his ryme, / Yet all his skill cannot excuse her crime."²⁷ In the public at large, Thomas Nashe and Gabriel Harvey characteristically fought over *whose* Jane Shore was superior. Writing the text of female "experience," therefore, provided the structural ground for asserting poetic mastery. These complaining women generated a discursive site for literary competition and authorization. In one sense, writing such a complaint constituted a poetic dare: to "stellify" a whore, as Drayton says, to vindicate a concubine. The triumph of these poems, while somewhat bizarrely connected to both the immorality and beauty of their speaking subjects, finally rested on the writer's ability to garner sympathy for a woman's injustices and misfortunes and thus to criticize one of the courtly poet's favorite stances as ardent wooer.

When Daniel published *The Complaint of Rosamond*, which was appended

²⁵Samuel Daniel, *The Complaint of Rosamond* (1592), reprinted in *Samuel Daniel: Poems and A Defence of Ryme*, ed. Arthur Sprague (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930), 11, 22-28.

²⁶Thomas Churchyard, *Churchyards Challenge*, STC 5220 (1593), sig. T^v.

²⁷Michael Drayton, *Matilda*, in *The Works of Michael Drayton*, ed. J. William Hebel, 5 vols. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1931-1941), 1: 214.

to his sonnet sequence *Delia* (1592), he not only contributed to this growing body of literature, but he also initiated a publishing trend, a way of textually framing the well-worn form. While this first grouping may have been inspired by the physical conditions of publication—the necessity to "make up" the text by including a shorter work at the end—its subsequent popularity and the way in which Daniel positions the poems to reflect and comment on each other creates a paradigm for their interconnection. A year later, Thomas Lodge's *Phyllis* (1593) greeted the public eye trailed by the story of the complaining Elstred. A decade before *Delia*'s publication, Henry Constable's *Diana* (1584) had concluded with "diverse poems by various honorable personages." Fifteen years after *Delia*, the chosen model for concluding Shakespeare's 1609 *Sonnets* was the echoing female complaint text *A Lover's Complaint*.²⁸

I want to suggest that the dialogue between sonnet sequence and complaint poem generates a literary pseudomorph that functions like Spenser's and Gascoigne's doubled debut texts. Here the woman's voice absorbs the role of the pseudomorphic editor in carving out a particular poetic role for the writer. In short, the sonnet sequence/complaint combination stages the writer's emergence into the public through two primary means: by blending genres (having one poetic form comment on another) and by dislocating gender (assuming the female voice). In constructing this text, Daniel can be said to "cross-dress," following the Achillean gesture of taking on a female disguise—which was, in W.L.'s account, really the assumption of a literary genre. This disguise functions as the legitimating ground for articulating literary authority.

We remember that Daniel's *Delia* emerged bearing protestations of authorial reluctance. It made its way into print, Daniel assures us in his confessional preface, only because the poems had appeared incorrectly as part of the 1591 *Astrophel and Stella*. *Delia* thus became public, as did *The Faerie Queene* and *The Posies*, through a pre-text. Because it was published with Sidney's work, *Delia* was indebted to *Astrophel and Stella* in ways that exceeded mere literary influence. This collision of textual voices provided Daniel with an excuse to republish a corrected and reauthorized text, all done, of course, in the service of humility; his "private passions" could not dare to be confused with those of the masterful Sidney. Complaining that

²⁸Daniel's text became a model for other types of appended texts as well. Giles Fletcher's *Licia* (1593?) is followed by the story of Richard III's rise to the Crown; Richard Lynche's *Diella* (1596) concludes with "The amorous poem of Don Diego and Gyneura"; and Spenser's *Amoretti* (1595) is closed by the *Ephthalation*. It can be argued that these texts played an important formal role in providing closure to the widely heralded anticlosure of the sonnet sequence, a form that rests on frustrated desire and incomplection.

he was "betraide by the indiscretion of a greechie Printer," Daniel went public with his signed work, writing to remedy the dishonor given to Sidney's name (*Poems*, 9). His status as an author, then, was born from an act of impersonation, whether manipulated by him or not.

Daniel's presentation of himself as an unwilling author disappears in the 1594 edition of his sonnets, which includes *Cleopatra*. Here he criticizes the frivolity of the sonnet genre, boasting that he has been lifted from "low repose / . . . tragicke notes to frame." Discarding the lowly form of his "humble song," Daniel now ascends the ladder of literary genre to labor for posterity. We recognize the narrative of authorial progression that was put forth by W.L.'s mythological analogy and Gascoigne's prefatorial confession, a progression that is charted here spatially as an ascension from a "low" or base state into the more rarified realm of tragedy. Daniel's potent and more serious literary voice can be heard because of the groundwork laid by his humble and reluctant public disclosure. Acting out the inherited ladder of the Virgilian progression of forms, I argue, not only evidenced his genteel modesty, but also glossed the stigma associated with print. Daniel's stylization of his career ensures that the reader in the marketplace sees that the writer has abandoned, rather than fallen into, a position of "low repose."

In order to understand the success of this ascension, we must first look to the book that announced Daniel publicly, the 1592 *Delia* that was issued with an echoing verse in the tradition of the Propertian and Ovidian female complaint poem. Daniel opens his complaint by telling us that it has been written at the demand of Rosamond, the fallen mistress of Henry II, who has returned from the dead to ask the poet to bewail her loss and vindicate her reputation. When Propertius's Cynthia returns from the dead, she asks him to burn his books and rewrite her identity through a new verse, one that she willingly dictates.²⁹ In Daniel's complaint, the woman speaks from the dead in a way that positions her not only as the mistress of Henry II, but also specifically as a fictional character within Daniel's work, one who knows his other fictions and is aware of the dilemmas he faces as a Renaissance writer. She emerges as a self-conscious reader of the sonnets that precede her in the text. Initially, the fallen woman reaffirms the logic of the sonnet text as she validates the poet's role as amorous pursuer and the sonnet speaker's own coded language.³⁰ Rosamond seemingly legitimates the Petrarchan poet's wants and desires when she

²⁹Propertius, *The Poems*, ed. and trans. W. C. Shepherd (New York: Penguin Books, 1985), bk. 4.7. I want to thank Helen Deutsch for calling this poem to my attention.

³⁰The sonnet speaker's insistent representation of himself as a writer and of writing as an integral part of the process of courtship forges a solid cultural link between poet and Petrarchan lover.

incorporates his goals and ambitions within her own project. She explains that only the sympathy of lovers can rescue her from her imprisonment in purgatorial limbo and deliver her safely to the life thereafter. Rosamond is in dire need of a poet's skills; "No Muse suggests the pitee of my case," she laments, "Each penne dooth overpasse my just complaint" (23). In keeping with the pattern established by Churchyard in *The Mirror for Magistrates*, the ghostly woman introduces her author as a man already read, one worthy of the fame he will accrue by this publication. But Rosamond appeals to Daniel not only because of his talents, but also because of the emotional loss and unfulfilled desire he displays in the sonnets. She thus sets up an apparent reciprocity: she needs the sighs of lovers to redeem her, while Daniel desperately seeks Delia's pity. The common remedy—Delia's sympathy—becomes the ground on which Rosamond suggests their identification:

Thy joyes depending on a woman grace,
So move thy minde a woefull womans case.

Delia may happe to deuygne to read our story,
And offer up her sigh among the rest.
(41-44)

Indeed, Rosamond clearly says that it is precisely Daniel's precarious position as a lover that makes him a better mediator for her story; he has, after all, shown himself to be sensitive to women's graces. The female speaker and the Petrarchan lover thus have the compatible goal of winning Delia's heart. "She must have her praise, thy pen her thanks," the character bargains with her writer (735). Daniel accepts this task, acknowledging that Rosamond's "griefes were worthy to be knowne," but qualifying his approval of his female subject by suggesting that her arguments are somewhat questionable.³¹ Instead, Daniel is primarily interested in Rosamond's laments because they displace his own woes. By "telling hers, [I] might hap forget mine owne," the narrator admits (63). Yoking "hers" and "mine owne" implies the peculiar identity of sorrows that Rosamond suggests when she deems the text "our" story, for here Daniel acknowledges that his act of writing the female complaint allows him to suppress or

³¹In keeping with the way in which Jane Shore is introduced in the 1563 edition of *The Mirror for Magistrates*, the opening lines of Rosamond ostensibly affirm women's speech, even as they question its appropriateness. See the preface to Jane Shore's complaint in *The Mirror for Magistrates*, ed. Lily B. Campbell (1938; reprint, New York: Barnes and Noble, 1960), 371-73.

reveal his own interests.³² In this sense, Rosamond's complaint reinforces the poetic function named by the sonnet text that precedes her story.

Although Rosamond initially suggests a collaborative project with her author, one in which she and the poet labor together to win Delia's good graces, it soon becomes evident that her agenda runs counter to that of the sonnet speaker's. By the course of her story, Rosamond critiques the poet's role as lover by discrediting the language of seduction that can produce fallen women. She becomes, in essence, a double for Delia, the mistress who supposedly receives the love sonnets. By urging other women not to be seduced by slippery rhetoric, she exposes the power dynamic within the sequence, making visible the logical consequence of succumbing to male desire. In doing so, she functions as a voice of commentary like E.K. and Gascoigne's "editor," one who turns the sonnet sequence into a more multivocal text governed, in part, by its appended reader.

Rosamond thus functions as a mechanism through which her writer can distance himself from his demonstrated poetics of love. Through his female complaint text, Daniel ruptures the identification set up in *Delia* between author and lover. Following on the heels of the sonnet sequence, the complaining woman's words allow the poet to prove himself on grounds other than the Petrarchan stage of love. In *The Shepherdes Calender*, Cuddie accomplishes the same task when he praises the moral and didactic functions of the poet and thus implicitly criticizes Colin's shortcomings. Gascoigne's "prodigal" narrative allows him to levy a similar critique of wasteful poetic indulgence. The female complaint speaker criticizes the limitations and dangers of poetry that operates within the eroticized sphere of literary amateurism; at the same time she creates a manuscript-identified, multivocal text that bears all the class privileges associated with that medium. Capitalizing on the tension created by the interstices of these two combined works, the poet colonizes the voice of Rosamond as a means of scripting himself as the restorer of fallen womanhood.

After her initial appeal to Daniel as a lover, Rosamond validates his new authorial role by contrasting the tremendous power of Daniel's poetic monument to the "little lasting" architectural one built by her ineffectual kingly lover (707). According to Rosamond, Henry II had promised to build a monument to memorialize his mistress: "I will cause posterity shall know,"

³²This identity is curiously formed within the texture of the language as the two texts exhibit a series of verbal echoes. When Rosamond describes her submission to the king as the time when "dreadfull black, had disposse'd the cleere," for instance, she echoes the sonnet writer/lover's description of his state of self-dispossession (431). Rosamond's description of the labyrinthine palace Henry built to imprison her also reflects tellingly on Daniel's description of love as "his throughs maze" (Sonnet 17).

he states, "How faire thou wert above all women kind" (689–90). But Rosamond complains that this marble and brass structure is "little lasting" because it does not serve to memorialize her beauty properly. A more durable edifice can be found in Daniel's verse, as she exclaims to the poet:

And were it not thy favourable lynes,
Recedified the wracke of my decayes;
And that thy accents willingly assignes,
Some farther date, and give me longer daies,
Fewe in this age had knowne my beauties praise
But thus renewd, my fame redeemes some time,
Till other ages shall neglect thy rime.
(715–21)

Rosamond craftily forges a connection between her fame and her poet's. In applauding Daniel's favorable "accents" and urging that they be read, Rosamond reinvests herself in Daniel's new poetic role; for his text can do what her kingly lover within the story could not—project her beauty into posterity. Her inscriptions of Daniel's authorial role thus index his shift in poetic persona from lover to didactic writer. First validating his Petrarchan goal of attaining female sympathy, and then critiquing the language of courtly love on which his stance as lover rests, Rosamond finally compiments his poetic skill in moralizing historical wrongs. Henry's failed efforts become the foil to Daniel's successful creations.

Rosamond establishes herself as a reader not only of the sonnets, but also of her author's career. She solicits Daniel specifically because of his poetic skill; therefore, she demands that the reader rethink the place of the famed poems that she follows. In suggesting that "Delia may hap to read our story," she acknowledges the success of the previous work and implicitly applauds Daniel's talents in singing of his own loss and desire. The peculiarity of Rosamond's remarks lies in the fact that both *Delia* and *Rosamond* were published simultaneously. Daniel could not yet be a well-established love poet. Instead, by interpreting Daniel's training as a lover to be beneficial to her narrative, Rosamond creates a privileged place for the sonnets that she overtly criticizes. In short, she makes the sequence into a pre-text like the *Calender* or the *Flowers*, which is designed to give way to a more serious literary endeavor. Daniel's status as unfulfilled lover and as consummate artisan becomes the ground for qualifying him as the author of her more serious and tragic tale. Like E.K., Rosamond inscribes her author as famous, and thus he enters the public world, as does Im-merito, as if he has already been read. He is known through his connection to Sidney and the acknowledgments of the infamous fallen woman who comments appreciatively but critically on his oeuvre. If *Delia* emerged

from the pre-text of *Astrophel and Stella*, it also acts as a pre-text for the female complaint.

Daniel's sophisticated construction of authority was imitated by other writers. Thomas Lodge's publication of the *Complaint of Elstred* with the sonnet sequence *Phyllis* follows the structure that Daniel established. While lamenting his own complaint, the poet encounters a vision of two women, Elstred and her daughter, who testify to their unfortunate fall from power. First mistress of Humber and then captured as a spoil of battle by Locrinus, Elstred provokes a political fracas that ends in Locrinus's overthrow and the death of herself and her daughter. The two women's spirits return to inscribe the story of their illustrious and sinful lives for posterity.³³

Lodge's complaint poem, like Daniel's, alternately blurs and distinguishes between the malleable roles of poet, lover, and fallen woman. The text opens with a series of doublings, as the speaker's complaints blend into those of the "woeful vision" he discovers. The fact that there are two women complaining within this already doubled frame creates a network of echoes and reverberations. One effect of this mirror device is that an identity is forged between the principal characters and the writer himself, all of whom suffer from torturous woes. But Elstred ruptures that identity in the course of her tale when she undermines male language and the power of women in the machinations of courtship and chivalric exploit. When Elstred condemns her lover's "honny speech / Delivered by a trick Herculean tongue" (71), for instance, her words refer back to the playful rhetoric found in the poems of seduction in *Phyllis*. The authority of the poet/narrator is thus qualified by, or held in tension with, the authority of the complaining woman.

As in Rosamond's text, Elstred's condemnation of the duplicity of courtly love is accompanied by a meditation on the importance of marking events through writing. Both works thus critique the discourse of love in order to make room for the poet to redeem his own profession. Elstred narrates how she and her daughter are transformed into historical texts justified by their didactic purpose; they present "the Annals of mishap / Wherein woe-tempted men may read theyr fortune" (83). Elstred thus offers herself as a negative moral example that can, she states, "teach successions to avoyde my fall" (59). The poet's new role—as the moral choric voice pronouncing on sin and tragedy, rather than as a seducer—is thus announced and demonstrated in the complaint text. As the women evaporate into ghosts, they become ephemeral poetic visions whose durability is deter-

³³Thomas Lodge, *Complaint of Elstred*, in *The Complete Works of Thomas Lodge*, vols. 5–8 in the Hunterian Club Series (Glasgow: Robert Anderson, 1883), 5:59–84.

mined by the writer's more lasting poem. Lodge relies on the narrative of betrayal as a means of establishing a poetic vocation independent from that of the Petrarchan seducer, and he juxtaposes the transient laments on love with the lasting power of writing. After being enmeshed in the language of courtly love, Lodge emerges as someone able to fashion the moral "Annals of mishap" caused, in part, by the problems of erotic desire.

The publication of Shakespeare's *A Lover's Complaint* with the 1609 *Sonnets* also performs this operation of distantiation/authorization, but it goes to thematize the text's own doubleness more extensively. While it is difficult to sort out whether Shakespeare had any part in the decision to print these two genres together, we do know that he reaped the benefits of this publication because its effect was to validate a new authorial identity. As in the other poems, this text makes audible the woman's voice as she criticizes the practices of seduction, indicting the "deep brained sonnets" of the false Petrarchan lover. In *A Lover's Complaint*, however, the doubling of poet and vision occurs on multiple levels.

From off a hill whose concave womb reworded
A plaintive story from a sist'ring vale
My spirits t'attend this double voice accorded,
And down I laid to list the sad-tun'd tale.

(1–4)

The image of doubleness is here built into the physical environment as the speaker listens to the echoes from the valley around him. The "tale" that he hears is not the complaint, as we might expect, but the "sist'ring" echoes produced from this "womb." This already doubled voice proliferates when the woman tells her story to the religious man. The reader, like the speaker, eavesdrops on a highly mediated tale surrounded by echoes against the backdrop of the weeping and reflective river. The complaining woman creates another embedded layer of dialogue when she gives voice to her seducer's words within her own story. The text then abounds with "re"s—things told again, filtered, repeated, reverberating. As in Daniel's text, replication and echo become the techniques through which the Petrarchan poet and female auditor are associated and dissociated as complaining publishers. And again this complaint adds a layer of voices to the sonnet book that renders the work more plural and multivocal.

In the complaint/sonnet texts, authorial identity is shaped through the artful dialogue that strategically generates the role of the author through a simulated dispersal of speaking voices. The authority of the work is split between many doubles, as *Elstred* and *A Lover's Complaint* vivify in their exaggerations of this bifurcation. The complaint text allows the writer to

gather these splintered layers together in a way that renders the author a more central and legitimate figure. In other words, the poet ironically emerges from his impersonation of discredited voices, an impersonation that, again ironically, simulates the privileged forms of manuscript writing. The female respondent becomes one of the doubles that the writer uses, like the role of editor or presenter of the work, to introduce his own authority through masquerade. The fallen woman's critique becomes a central part of the architecture of poetic authority, as it establishes an acceptable idiom through which the new poet can be presented and formally contained.

"Re-dressing" Authorial and Sexual Shame

The patterns of authorial emergence that I have described are frequently cast in a language that relies on sexual difference. W.L., for instance, tropes the class tensions surrounding publication as a heroic scene of cross-dressing, and Daniel and Lodge each devise authority by taking on the voice of a fallen woman. We remember that Gascoigne merely created what seemed to be an anthology when generating his public persona. A careful examination of Gascoigne's own descriptions of his career, however, reveals that he narrated the poetic progression and authorial emergence produced from that anthology in gendered terms. In his prefatorial apology to the Reverend Divines in *The Posies*, for instance, Gascoigne explains that his revised text is "gelded" of all lascivious matter.³⁴ When promising a sexual purification of his work, a chastening of its taint of lust, Gascoigne associates masculinity with the previous illicit and scandalous text.

In *The Steele Glass*, Gascoigne further articulates the progression of his career in gendered terms. Here he suggests that as "Philomene" he has been subject to violation from a slanderous public and from hostile censoring authorities. He opens the text with an invocation to the infamous Nightingale,

. . . whose happy noble hart,
No dole can daunt, nor feareful force affright,
Whose chereful voice, doth comfort saddest wights,
When she hir self, hath little cause to sing,
Whom lovers love, because she plaines their greves,
She wraies their woes and yet relieves their payne.
(*Works*, 2:143, lines 1–6)

³⁴Likewise, the printer of George Pettie's *A petite Pallace of Pettie his pleasure* (1576) figures his editorial practices as "gelding." STC 19819, ed. Herbert Hartman (London: Oxford University Press, 1938).

Gascoigne's words inadvertently point to the tumultuous connection between the woes of lovers and writers because Philomela is a paradoxical emblem of both silence and speech. The narrator, in fact, calls on Philomela precisely for aid in writing his own verse, for she offers both poets and lovers an indispensable vehicle for expressing themselves cathartically: "she wraies their woes, and yet relieves their payne." Gascoigne suggests that he learns from this bird "to sing a song, in spight of [his critics] despite" (143). He furthers this analogy, in fact, by stating that he feels more than mere sympathy for the raped bird; instead, he fully identifies with the female subject position. Like Philomela, Gascoigne has been ravished by a Teresius-like public, subject to the harsh rape and silencing of Vain Delight and Slander. The raped woman's voice is used to articulate the cultural pressures that could suppress the authorized poet and to grant the homeopathic relief they need.³⁵ Gascoigne thus registers the healthy amount of anxiety that the Elizabethan writer necessarily had in betraying his woes to a powerful public body.

Casting himself as a hermaphroditic combination of male writer and female subject, Gascoigne becomes Satyra who, like Philomela, sings to reprove wretchedness. If he initially portrays himself as victim to implicitly masculine forms of power, his text later playfully but forcefully comments on this strange shift in gender:

I am not he whom slaunderous tongues have tolde,
(False tongues in dede, & craftie subtle braines)
To be the man, which ment a common spoye
Of loving dames, whose cares wold heare my words
Or trust the tales devised by my pen.
I n'am a man, as som do thinke I am,
(Laugh nol good Lord) I am in dede a dame,
Or at the least, a right Hermaphroditic.
(2:144, lines 46–53)

³⁵Shakespeare's raped Lucrece also voices the shared problems of writing, ignominy, and violation. In *Lucrece*, a poem indebted to the complaint form, Shakespeare interestingly describes rape in terms that conflate writing, silencing, sheepfolds, echoes, and imprisonment: Tarquin uses Lucrece's nightgown to "pen her piteous clamors in her head" (line 681). Of course, Lucrece was a more ambiguous figure morally than Rosamond or Jane Shore for Renaissance readers. She was, for instance, held up as an emblem of modesty. In *As You Like It*, when Orlando assembles the body of his beloved by collecting attributes from mythological figures, he appropriates Lucrece's modesty. She is also an exemplum of female behavior in Thomas Salter's *A Mirror made for all Mothers, Matrones and Maidens* (1574), which