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Utterly Confused Categories: Gender Non-Conformity in Late Medieval and Early Modern Western Europe

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UTTERLY CONFUSED CATEGORIES: GENDER NON-CONFORMITY IN LATE MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN WESTERN EUROPE

by

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis argues that gender non-conforming individuals in the late medieval and early modern periods were influenced by cultural examples of "deviant" gender behavior including cross-dressers, religious figures, women with male characteristics, literature, and popular entertainment. The thesis also argues that the fragmented approach historians have previously taken when examining the lives of gender non-conforming individuals has been inadequate and could be improved by envisioning the individuals not as individual anomalies or aberrations, but as participants in a long cultural tradition of gender non-conformity and transgression throughout western Europe.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Thomas Csordas is correct when he writes that "the body is not an *object* to be studied in relation to culture, but is to be considered as the *subject* of culture, or in other words as the existential ground of culture,"[1] but the sentiment can be taken a step further. The *gendered* body can only be considered as a subject of culture, and is thus governed by the cultural constructs around it. Gender cannot exist without culture and neither can gender non-conformity—one cannot truly break the rules without knowing what they are. Throughout the late medieval and early modern periods, an unknowable number of individuals lived lives that broke the rules of their respective cultures by failing or refusing to conform to gender norms. During this era gender and sex were conceived of as aspects of the self that were tightly wound together in a variety of permutations which were then understood by medical practitioners, religious authorities, and lay people in different and sometimes conflicting ways.

Late medieval and early modern people were not unfamiliar with the idea that culture was influenced by the actions and identities of individuals. When Eleanor/John Rykener was interrogated in London in 1394 for wearing women's clothing, the question asked was not *why* she did it, but rather who taught her *how* to do it?[2] Although she gave them a name, it is entirely possible that Rykener and others like her were equally influenced by a culture that celebrated certain forms of gender transgression and repudiated others in very public ways that had cultural and sometimes legal repercussions.

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[1] Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub, "Introduction: The Guarded Body," in *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, ed. Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub (New York: Routledge, 1991), 1.

[2] David Lorenzo Boyd and Ruth Mazo Karras, "The Interrogation of a Male Transvestite Prostitute in Fourteenth-Century London," *GLQ: a Journal of Gay and Lesbian Studies* 4, no. 1 (1995): 479.

In this thesis, I seek to make two arguments, one historical and one pertaining to history as a field. The first is that gender non-conforming individuals in late medieval and early modern western Europe did not occur in a vacuum, but instead were a part of a rich transnational and transtemporal tradition of gender transgression that was woven into the cultural fabric of religion, popular culture, and medicine. While it is impossible to say how much exposure the average late medieval or early modern European had to ideas like hermaphrodism and gender transformation, a picture can be created through evidence found in medical literature, religious texts, and recorded contemporary anecdotes. It is difficult to know how wide-spread any text or oral account was. Some stories are easier to identify as ubiquitous because they were recorded by contemporaneous authors, but in other cases it is more complicated and it becomes necessary to use other methods of verification if they are available. At times all that can be known is that a text existed, which means that there was a chance it was read. Class differences, locality, literacy levels, and temporal differences had varying degrees of influence on the level of exposure and knowledge particular individuals possessed, as well as on the chances that they believed in the possibility of things like gender transformation.

I also seek to assert that the known examples of gender non-conforming individuals demonstrate that they were more than simply anomalous episodes in European history. Gender non-conforming individuals have traditionally been examined as interesting aberrations, footnotes to other historical endeavors. In the conclusion of his book *Ambiguous Gender in Early Modern Spain and Portugal: Inquisitors, Doctors, and the Transgression of Gender Norms*, however, François Soyer attests that his work is "far

more than a simple collection of unusual, or even peculiar, episodes..."[3] but is instead a piece of the puzzle when it comes to the historian's understanding of gender norms. This thesis agrees with Soyer and seeks to demonstrate that rather than approaching gender non-conforming individuals as anomalous transgressors, historians should make attempts to examine the gender non-conforming individuals of the late medieval and early modern periods as individuals who were part of a larger, transtemporal and transnational cultural group. Historians have filled books with analysis of same-sex relationships and actions,[4] cross-dressing both on the stage and off, what it meant to be masculine and what it meant to be feminine, but as a field we have shied away from delving into the cracks in the binary to see what we can find underneath. I am calling for a change in the way gender non-conforming individuals are analyzed by historians and for further work to be done in archives and primary documents in order to uncover more gender non-conforming individuals, should they exist.

Terminology

Time Period

I have chosen the period between 1300 and 1720 as my time of focus. Before 1300, the existing sources for this topic are scant, and the analysis would have had to focus almost exclusively on fictional texts. After 1720 it can be argued that the European cultural landscape changed because of the effects of global conquests and the early

[3] François Soyer, *Ambiguous Gender in Early Modern Spain and Portugal: Inquisitors, Doctors and the Transgression of Gender Norms* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 288.

[4] The work done on sexuality is admirable, but as always, gender does not equal sexuality and should be examined as its own entity rather than simply as a canvas on which issues of sexuality are displayed.

Enlightenment. Medicine had changed by this point, as had attitudes towards gender roles.

Gender Non-Conformity

Gender non-conformity is an umbrella term that can be used to describe a wide range of behaviors and individuals. In general, it refers to any behavior or individual that does not adhere to gender-normative ideals, like someone who cross-dresses or a woman with more than socially acceptable body hair. It indicates that a particular individual or behavior is presenting in a manner that is contrary to the socially prescribed norm for the gender category to which the individual is presumed to belong.

In the context of this thesis, gender non-conforming has a more specific meaning. I use the term to identify individuals who lived for an extended period of time as a gender other than the one to which they had been socially assigned. This definition excludes women who cross-dressed in order to follow lovers at sea or on the battlefield or out of a sense of patriotism, men and boys who donned female attire for the stage, and individuals like Joan of Arc who adopted gender transgressing clothing but never claimed to be anything other than their socially assigned gender. I thus differentiate between gender non-conforming and gender transgressing; the latter can refer to any behavior or individual who acts in a way that is contrary to the gender ideology of their assigned gender in their location geographically and temporally without leaving their gender behind completely.

Additionally, I utilize the word ambiguous throughout this thesis to denote instances in which bodies were perceived to be ambiguous by authorities, particularly medical

authorities. It is worth noting that the bodies themselves were not actually ambiguous or unintelligible but simply did not fit into the extant binary framework. The bodies were very clear in their presentation—it was a failure to understand the presentations that led to charges of ambiguity.

Pronouns

The use of pronouns is a complicated issue. The English language does not officially recognize non-gendered or gender neutral pronouns,[5] making discussions of individuals who are not clearly either male or female a tricky endeavor. There are few satisfactory solutions to this problem at present. The use of "they" as a gender neutral pronoun in gaining prominence in contemporary times, but can complicate textual understanding. Assigning a gender to an individual strips that person of autonomy, regardless of temporal location. I have adopted another modern gender neutral pronoun for use in this thesis, ze/hir.[6] While this is clearly anachronistic, I am unwilling to place individuals into a binary position that they might have strenuously disagreed with. In some instances, the individuals themselves have made evident which pronouns they prefer through repeated use of one or the other binary options when referring to themselves. When possible, these self-selected pronouns are used, but this information is unfortunately rarely available.

Intersex vs. Hermaphrodite, Cross-dressing vs. ?

[5] An issue that gender historians would do very well to tackle would be finding a consistent set of gender neutral terms for discussing non-binary individuals or individuals whose gender identity is unclear. A uniform set of pronouns would make scholarship much more accessible.

[6] An example of this usage: "*Ze* was a soldier who called *hirself*..." While these pronouns also come with problems (namely the fact that hir has feminine connotations when used in the context of medieval studies,) they are the most commonly used pronouns within contemporary queer communities and are thus the most contextually relevant options.

Pronouns are not the only area in which anachronism appears in this thesis. The term "hermaphrodite" has extremely derogatory connotations today, but was widely used in the past to describe a medical condition. What would have been diagnosed as that condition in the past is today understood as both a medical condition and an identity, intersex. Where applicable, I have chosen to use the modern term to describe the bodies of actual people when I cannot find evidence of them referring to themselves in another manner and there is evidence that their bodies were in fact non-binary. In all other instances I have chosen to use "hermaphrodite" because of the cultural and medical connotations it had for those individuals at the time in which they were living, and because it is the term that they themselves would have been the most familiar with.

It is additionally important to note that for many of the individuals discussed in this thesis it is impossible to know the ways in which their body conformed or did not conform to the prescribed sex/gender binary. Occasionally their bodies are described in documents like court testimony or medical notes, but these are neither definitive nor necessarily accurate. In some ways the physical make-up of their bodies is irrelevant, even when talking explicitly about bodies, because it is fundamentally unknowable and does not always lend itself to nuanced analysis. Conflicting accounts sometimes exist about the state of a single body which only serves to underscore the challenges posed by attempting to sex bodies that were complex and difficult to know centuries ago, just as they are in the present.

Cross-dressing,[7] too, is an example of anachronistic term that will be found here. Women who cross-dressed were often called "whores" in courts of law,[8] a term that for obvious reasons has little practical application in the context of this thesis. Individuals who were arrested for cross-dressing were also often accused of transgressing against God or witchcraft, but there are no consistently used terms to describe what would be seen very clearly today as cross-dressing. Given the lack of cohesive contemporary language with which to work, it is useful to use a modern term in order to group those actions together under a single concept.

For the purposes of this thesis, cross-dressing refers to the deliberate act of wearing clothing other than those to which an individual has been socially assigned *for a specific purpose*. By this, I mean that cross-dressing is used to refer to women who donned male garb in order to seek better economic opportunities or to follow lovers, to men who wore female clothing in the context of festivals, and both male and female actors who often cross-dressed within their profession. Cross-dressers are individuals who did not intend to live permanently as a gender other than the one they had been assigned at birth.

Structure of Thesis

Medical and Legal Theories

In order to provide context, Chapter 2 of this thesis gives an overview of medical knowledge and theories about bodies, sex, and gender in this era, as well as a brief

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[7] In the chapter itself I explain why I am choosing cross-dressing over "transvestism."

[8] "Whore" was a multi-purpose word generally used towards any woman of ill-repute. Ruth Mazo Karras has noted an instance in which a woman was accused of "being a thief of geese and hens...and for being nothing more than a common whore" in ""Because the Other is a Poor Woman She Shall be Called His Wench": Gender, Sexuality and Social Status in Late Medieval England", *Gender and Difference in the Middle Ages*, ed. Sharon Farmer and Carol Braun Pasternack.

examination of some available legal opinions on the same topics. Anatomists and surgeons made attempts in the early modern period to use science and medical knowledge of the body as ways to classify the unclassifiable and predict the unpredictable. In some cases they did so in an officially sanctioned capacity, as when the Inquisitional tribunals of Spain and Portugal had doctors and surgeons who performed physical examinations in order to corroborate the claims made by prisoners in cases where there was a question of gender ambiguity or possible hermaphroditism.[9]

Hermaphrodites

Chapter 3 examines the figure of the hermaphrodite and its recurrent presence throughout this era. I discuss medical and legal opinions, the hermaphrodite as a symbol in popular culture, and ways in which the body of the hermaphrodite was used as a political symbol and as a method of satirical critique, particularly in France. The chapter ends with an analysis of some cases in which an individual was found to be intersex or was suspected of being so and the consequences that were experienced by those individuals.

Bodily Transformation

Chapter 4 examines bodily transformation, which was a source of anxiety for many late medieval and early modern authorities. It is something that is difficult to predict and is uncontrollable. Social order depended upon categories that could be easily ascertained and thus governed appropriately, and bodies that did not conform to the available categories were problematic. Bodies that changed but remained in their correct position socially were more tolerable than unruly bodies that refused to conform to one

[9]Soyer, *Ambiguous Gender,* 1.

classification or another. Those bodies were sources of interest and revulsion and were subject to attempts to place them in a "correct" category as well as to punishment for failure to do so. For late medieval and early modern Europeans, transformation of the body, particularly transformation brought about by illness or divine intervention, was a reminder of the constant state of flux that all were held in. It was a sign of unpredictability and instability. These concerns were transnational and transtemporal throughout this era, although they were expressed and conceived of in different ways and sometimes occurred for different reasons. In this chapter I examine gender transformation as it appeared in medical theories, in popular culture, and contemporary life.

Cross Dressing

Much has already been written about cross-dressing in this era, although the analysis has largely focused either on women or on men in the context of the Elizabethan stage. Chapter 5 looks at cross-dressing through legal and religious lenses as well as through public opinion. It analyzes popular culture, including theatrical cross-dressing and female cross-dressing in the service of love or nationalism, although these are not the primary focus simply because of the huge amount of material already written on those particular topics. I examine Catalina de Erauso as a case study, allowing for an analysis of the Lieutenant Nun as both a typical cross-dresser and a completely atypical one.

Women with Masculine Characteristics

Chapter 6 discusses a form of gender transgression that is often less visible than some other options, women who remained women while embodying masculine characteristics. These range from excessive amounts of body hair and phalluses to less

physical traits such as personality attributes and behaviors. These non-physical attributes can leave less visible impacts on the historical narrative because the women who exhibited them did not typically transgress to the point where they faced any sort of legal punishment or retribution, but they can still be understood as gender transgressors.

Conclusion

The thesis concludes with a call to historians to continue searching for gender non-conforming individuals in the historical record and to refrain from sidelining them when they are found. I have also included my compilation of individuals that I deem to be gender non-conforming as well as a map of their approximate locations in an attempt to demonstrate the wide-ranging nature of gender non-conformity as a phenomenon, both geographically and through time.

Literature Review

There are a variety of scholarly works that tackle gender non-conformity in a multitude of ways. They vary in their scope and approach, but most investigate at most one or two aspects or individuals, often within a broader context. Many incorporate queer or feminist theory into their works and use these as a basis for understanding and analyzing the individuals that they study. The works that exist about gender non-conforming individuals can be difficult to categorize, if only because they often address multiple topics and rely heavily on interpretations that include intersectionality. Intersectionality is vital to any examination of gender non-conforming individuals and their worlds but it complicates the extraction of specific aspects to interrogate individually.

The loose categories chosen for this thesis can be found in other works on gender non-conforming individuals. Anne Fausto-Sterling's *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality* fits neatly into a conversation about bodies and medicine, for example, while other studies are less readily fit into any one group due to their inclusion of multiple topics woven together. Because of this, the categories used within both this review and within the thesis as a whole are imperfect and have extremely permeable boundaries. In order to lay a framework, this section aims to provide a limited overview of queer theory, with an analysis of a few key concepts of queer theory as well as a discussion of some key queer theorists.

Queer theory is a subfield of critical theory, which is in turn a field of study that focuses on the critique of society and culture through the lenses of the social sciences and humanities. In particular, queer theory is the critical reading of society and history as it pertains to "queerness." In *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography* David M. Halperin states that "queer is by definition *whatever* is at odds with the normal, with the legitimate, the dominant. It is an identity without an essence. 'Queer' then, demarcates not a positivity but a positionality vis-á-vis the normative."[10] Queerness originally referred to sexuality, but soon came to encompass gender and gender performance and expression, as well as many other concepts.

Queer theory, then, is the study and exploration of queerness as a legitimate expression of identity as well as a lens through which the world is able to be understood. It explores notions of gender, sex, and sexuality as social constructs and rejects an

[10] David M. Halperin, *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 62.

essentialist view of gender. Queer theory is about finding non-normative identities in existing texts and narratives wherever they may be and then exploring, deconstructing, and analyzing them.

While he did not coin the term, Michel Foucault is essential in the scholarship of queer theory. His works have arguably formed the base on which multitudes of other scholars have formulated queer theory, either by building on the foundations he laid or by seeking to deviate from that initial conversation. Foucault "wished to demonstrate how we use institutions and practices to impose order on our society by imposing order on ourselves through the device of individual identity."[11]

In other words, a Foucaultian understanding of gender and sexuality, and more broadly, humanity, has to do with deconstruction, picking apart institutions and practices to find out how they are put together and what makes them tick. He produced a three-volume collection of work entitled *History of Sexuality* which offers "the most obvious exploration of practices of order for queer theorists"[12] and creates a philosophical and theoretical framework for deconstruction that ultimately became essential to queer theory.

In crafting that framework, Foucault argued that "homosexuality is necessarily a modern formation because, while there were previously same-sex sex acts, there was no corresponding category of identification"[13], thereby making the argument that is common for historians who ascribe to queer theory—that it is anachronistic to refer to individuals

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[11] William B. Turner, *A Genealogy of Queer Theory* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), 40.

[12] Ibid., 46.

[13] Annamarie Jagose, *Queer Theory: An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 10.

using terms that were developed after those individuals lived. All assertions of identity are potentially problematic. He made several other arguments that remain fundamental to queer theory, particularly by "emphasizing that sexuality is not an essentially personal attribute but an available cultural category—and that it is the effect of power rather than simply its object."[14] Foucault posited that sexuality was a discursive production rather than a natural condition, and queer theory has expanded that to include gender as well.

Judith Butler furthered that expansion with her seminal works *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* and *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Butler introduced the concept of "performativity" to the conversation, the idea that gender, sexuality, and notions of "masculine" and "feminine" are elaborate performances. Gender is a "cultural fiction"[15] according to Butler, "the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural form of being."[16] They are performances put on by every single human in every society around the globe, and for the most part the performers have no idea they are playing a role. These performances are not pre-meditated, but they are carefully maintained by way of the performers learning socially accepted behaviors for their gender and sexual orientation.

In order to understand those performances, both contemporary and historical, a historian must first understand the context in which those performances are occurring. If gender is, as Butler suggests, "open to intervention and resignification,"[17] then it has been

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[14] Ibid., 79.
[15] Ibid., 84.
[16] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 33.
[17] Ibid.

so throughout history, and historians, as the self-proclaimed tellers of the tale of "change over time," can identify the ways in which gender has been performed differently in various places and times.

Butler argues against the notion that gender performativity is simply a matter of choosing which gender an individual will be at any given moment.[18] Performativity can be a conscious, active choice, but it concerns the way in which individuals present their gender rather than which gender they are presenting. This is all said at the risk of appearing to claim that performativity is all about choices in clothing or other external markers. To reduce performativity to such matters is to misread the works of Butler, particularly *Gender Trouble*.[19] Instead, performativity regards all the little ways gender is experienced and expressed throughout a person's life.

Putting "male" and "female" in opposition to one another is a way of acknowledging and participating in a binary system. As William Turner has noted, "identity categories and nouns convey meaning according to a structure of binary oppositions, with one term of any pair valued more highly than the other."[20] History is littered with examples of binary thinking. Queer theorists reject binaries, arguing that in order to subvert any sort of normative gender or sexuality, one must first break away from the binary system and recognize that there are instead a multitude of other options—and that those options are not necessarily in opposition to one another. Male and female do not need to be an inherent dichotomy.

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[18] Judith Butler, "Critically Queer," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 1, no. 1 (1993): 22.
[19] Jagose, *Queer Theory*, 89.
[20] Turner, *A Genealogy of Queer Theory*, 32.

Many historians who have written about gender non-conforming individuals have done so by examining and analyzing the ways in which their bodies are described by various sources, including courts and medical professionals. Anne Fausto-Sterling's seminal work *Sexing the Body* is an important example. Although some of her ideas, such as the seven-genders model,[21] have been rejected, much of the history and analysis of historical, scientific, and medical knowledge regarding gender non-conforming individuals and binary defying bodies is still relevant and useful. Fausto-Sterling posits that individuals and bodies that could not or did not conform to accepted binary standards were unruly and heretical.[22] She points to the early modern period as one in which there was great unrest and upheaval when it came to conceptions of sex and gender[23] and suggests that the focus on identification and classification that accompanied the Enlightenment had a distinct impact on how bodies were categorized and created an environment in which nuanced interpretations of gender had very little place.

Sexing the Body examines non-conforming bodies from the pre-modern to the modern, with a special focus on intersex and hermaphroditic bodies. Two case studies in particular draw attention to the uneasiness that marked the interactions between early modern authorities and non-conforming individuals and bodies—that of Marie/Marin le Marcis, who was charged with sodomy and cross-dressing in France in 1601, and that of Daniel Burghammer, an Italian soldier who gave birth in the same year.[24] Marie/Marin le

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[21] The seven genders model is a later version of her five genders model, in which Fausto-Sterling explores the idea of a gender model that recognizes multiple different sexes and genders in order to more fully acknowledge the biological variation that can occur between human bodies.

[22] Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 8.

[23] Ibid., 7.

[24] Ibid., 35.

Marcis was initially sentenced to death by the French court who tried him[25] after he had begun wearing men's clothing and registered to marry the woman he lived with. The sentence was later changed on the condition that he wear women's clothing until the age of twenty-five. Because Marie/Marin le Marcis had lived as a female-presenting person for twenty-one years the French court was unable to recognize him as male. Daniel Burghammer shocked the city of Piedra and his army regiment when he gave birth to a baby girl.[26] When questioned, Burghammer confessed to being half male and half female. The Church declared the birth to be a miracle, but granted a divorce to his wife on the grounds that the ability to give birth was incompatible with marriage as a man. In both of these cases the bodies of the individuals mattered more to authorities than their actions. Le Marcis could not live as a man because his body was understood to be female. Burghammer could either be a married man or a woman capable of birth—but not both.

Much of *Sexing the Body* is concerned with the dismantling of binary modes of thought as they pertain to bodies and gender. Dualisms and binaries obscure what they aim to categorize and clarify because they ultimately limit analysis.[27] Fausto-Sterling points out that the Western world has been ill-equipped to grapple with non-dichotomous gender for some time—while gender as a continuum is not a new phenomenon,[28] most

[25] I have chosen to use male pronouns when discussing Marie/Marin, because the actions that he took that led to his arrest suggest that he wanted to live as a man. I have also chosen to use them regarding Daniel Burghammer as he appears to have chosen to live as a man despite having the ability to live as either gender.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid., 21.

[28] Ibid., 33.

European languages reject the notion that there are options beyond "male" and "female" for gender[29] and struggle to categorize bodies that do not fit the binary.

While Fausto-Sterling's book is excellent, it does not limit itself to the late medieval and early modern periods, and in fact spends most of its time discussing modern medicine and intersex bodies. Other books focus more pointedly on earlier periods. One of the best overviews on the topic of gendered bodies in the late medieval and early modern periods comes from *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science, and Culture* published in 1994 by Joan Cadden. Cadden's book is a thematic account of how people and societies have perceived biological sex and the differences between men, women, and others. The text explores the idea that as the concept of "sex" developed, so too did the concept of that which could be deemed "unnatural". The gender binary helped medieval theologians and authorities to structure and typify their world, while at the same time it served to "underscore the problematic character of individuals and acts that did not fit neatly into it."[30]

Cadden weaves medical history, gender theory and history, and philosophy together into a tapestry of analysis that is beneficial to understanding the worlds in which late medieval and early modern gender non-conforming individuals lived and died. The book does not focus exclusively on gender non-conforming individuals and behaviors, but does spend a decent amount of time on the subject. Much of that time is particularly devoted to an analysis of the ways in which hermaphrodites and gender non-conforming bodies

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[29] Ibid., 30.

[30] Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science, and Culture* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 202.

unsettled the perceptions of gender dichotomies held by medieval people.[31] Cadden uses the example of St. Wilgefortis—a saint who was able to avoid an undesirable marriage by sprouting an unexpected beard and mustache—to highlight the tension that bodily non-conformity could create within the understandings of sex and gender held by learned religious and lay persons.[32]

Because Cadden is much more focused on the biological concept of sex than on the cultural construct of gender, much of her analysis of non-conforming bodies is centered on hermaphrodites. The exception to this is Joan of Arc, who is possibly the best known gender non-conforming individual of the era. Like many other authors, Cadden does not spend much time on Joan. So much has been written about her elsewhere that it frequently feels redundant when authors explore her story. Cadden instead uses Joan as an example of how the "extraordinary stories"[33] of gender non-conforming individuals could be disruptive in the lives of everyday people.

While both Cadden and Fausto-Sterling focus on the broader picture and discuss gender non-conformity and bodies in somewhat abstract ways while using examples, other scholars have taken the approach of using specific case studies to examine the whole. *Ambiguous Gender in Early Modern Spain and Portugal: Inquisitors, Doctors, and the Transgression of Gender Norms* by François Soyer covers four individuals between 1649 and 1744 who were tried within Spanish and Portuguese courts for gender transgressions. As the title suggests, much of the text explores the ways in which both the religious establishment and the medical community interacted with gender non-

[31] Ibid., 203.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages*, 212.

conforming individuals and their bodies. The four individuals are Francisco Roca, a gender transgressing individual who married a woman, Father Pedro Furtado, a priest who was accused of having female genitalia, Joseph "Josepha" Martins, a person who lived as a man but who was accused of being a "she-man (machofemina)",[34] and Maria Duran, a nun who was accused of making a pact with the Devil in order to obtain a functioning penis.[35] Many other individuals are described in passing, and all of the individuals are given deep analysis—an exceptional amount of detail is provided regarding each. All of the individuals are known through court documents from the Inquisition, and Soyer is quick to remind the reader that these individuals are but a small sample of the greater number of gender non-conforming individuals that might have existed in the area at the time.

Ambiguous Gender in Early Modern Spain and Portugal is concise, well written, and displays the upmost respect for the individuals about whom Soyer writes about, viewing them as whole humans rather than specimens to be examined like freaks. There is new terminology introduced—ambiguous gender—which could be the basis for some unified language for the field, which is desperately needed. It is one of very few academic works to survey gender non-conforming individuals as part of a group, rather than simply as anomalous figures within a single culture. This is no doubt aided by the relative geographical closeness of the individuals involved. Soyer makes primary use of Inquisitorial documents as the sources for his work and does his due diligence in examining the ways in which using those particular records impact the messages relayed by the text.

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[34] Soyer, *Ambiguous Gender,* 184.
[35] Ibid., 214.

While Cadden's book is often focused on the ways in which gender non-conformity caused tension between ecclesiastical and medical or secular authorities, Soyer's is much more concerned with the ways in which those two powers worked together to understand gender non-conforming individuals and to react to them in ways they deemed appropriate. Many of the individuals claimed to have undergone some form of physical transformation to explain their non-conforming bodies or behavior. Soyer is careful to remind the reader that "Whilst a modern reader may well be tempted to react with skepticism and discount such claims as outlandish and manifestly false, it is worth noting that [gender non-conforming people] may have been making a genuine reference to a range of rare anatomical abnormalities in the development of sexual organs."[36] This is an important point. It is impossible to know for certain about the biological aspects of the individuals in question—all we have to go on are medical reports, Inquisitorial documents, and self-reporting on the part of the gender non-conforming individuals, and none of those are foolproof. Soyer reminds the reader that dismissing claims as unrealistic out of hand is counterproductive to an understanding of the documents.

Moving beyond bodies to the realm of marriage, families, and sexual relations does not necessarily mean moving beyond claims that can be difficult to parse out as "true" or not. One of the most renowned gender non-conforming individuals of the early modern period is Catalina de Erauso,[37] otherwise known as both Fransisco de Loyola and Alonso Díaz Ramírez de Guzmán. Sherry Velasco's *The Lieutenant Nun: Transgenderism, Lesbian Desire, and Catalina de Erauso* considers depictions of the famous transgressor

[36] Ibid., 94.

[37] I break with multiple scholars here by referring to Catalina with male pronouns. Given that he returned time and again to male garb and male professions, I feel it is much more appropriate than attempting to pin female pronouns on him.

from the seventeenth century to the twentieth. Velasco particularly considers the way in which de Erauso's presumed same-sex attraction has been perceived over time. She argues that de Erauso's same-sex attractions and actions formed the base on which her acceptance from both official and public sources could be built.[38]

De Erauso's situation is unusual, but not singular. Multiple gender non-conforming and gender transgressing individuals managed to evade punishment and even gain official permissions for their non-conforming actions. De Erauso took things a bit further than most by obtaining a soldier's pension from King Philip IV and an official dispensation from Pope Urban VIII.[39] Although de Erauso could be examined from a multitude of viewpoints, the one most relevant to Velasco is same-sex desire. Perhaps it is for this reason that Velasco chooses to use female pronouns throughout her discussion of de Erauso's life. Oddly, Velasco has a brief section on the ways in which other scholars have assigned pronouns to de Erauso[40] but opts to use female pronouns throughout because of the way in which de Erauso is presented as a "cultural icon."[41] One suspects that female pronouns felt more appropriate as Velasco is arguing that de Erauso experienced and pursued same-sex desire, an argument that falls apart if de Erauso is not presented as female.

Velasco's primary preoccupation throughout the text is with de Erauso's status and perceived status as a same-sex desiring person. His "transgenderism" is certainly addressed, but often as a corollary to the discussion of his sexual desires and actions.

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[38] Sherry Velasco, *The Lieutenant Nun: Transgenderism, Lesbian Desire, and Catalina de Erauso* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), xi.

[39] Ibid., 2.

[40] Ibid., 6.

[41] Ibid., 8.

Velasco certainly does not go so far as to suggest that de Erauso's gender-bending activities were brought about by the catalyst of same-sex attraction, but the notion is not dismissed either. Despite some odd vocabulary choices (such as the use of the term "transgenderism,") overall *The Lieutenant Nun* is a solid text when it comes to same-sex desire, but is less useful as a tool with which to discuss de Erauso's gender non-conformity, simply because the premise of the book is firmly attached to the idea that de Erauso was female.

Mark Albert Johnston's *Beard Fetish in Early Modern England* also primarily discusses female subjects, but in this case the women have external markers that are primarily associated with male-bodied individuals. *Beard Fetish* analyses the significance of beards to early modern English people as they appeared in media and on people. While the individuals Johnston puts forth were not gender transgressing purposely, bearded women nevertheless unsettled assumptions of masculinity and femininity. Johnston notes that beards had significance as markers of age, power, and masculinity, making their presence on the faces of female-bodied individuals unnerving. Multiple married bearded women are mentioned throughout the book, some happily and others out of necessity.

Bearded women were often regarded as monstrous and were frequently exhibited in public or were attached to courts as entertainment, like dwarves and jesters.[42] In this particular capacity, gender non-conforming women were a commodity to be consumed, often handled by their husbands as an attraction for the public. Diary entries are used as sources to demonstrate the prolonged public appeal of bearded women.[43] Beards are also

[42] Mark Albert Johnston, *Beard Fetish in Early Modern England: Sex, Gender, and Registers of Value* (Surrey; Burlington: Ashgate, 2011), 199.
[43] Ibid.

discussed in the context of sexual humor, with the "beard below" signifying female sexuality.[44] This particular beard symbolism is important in the context of gender non-conforming individuals—beards above and beards below were both symbols of sexuality and adulthood.

Johnston notes that a facial beard on a female-bodied person was interpreted as a symbol of "unchecked female insubordination, the dire consequences resulting from male failure to tame the wild animalism and monstrous appetites of the female beard below."[45] He masterfully ties together the various strands of sexuality, subordination, gender non-conformity, and both public expectation and popular humor in a way that serves to demonstrate the very unsettling effects bearded women had on the gendered landscape.

Sex and Punishment: Four Thousand Years of Judging Desire by Eric Berkowitz covers an immense amount of ground in terms of the scope it takes, both in terms of time and in terms of geography. He, too, comments on the gendered landscape, although his viewpoint is focused on sexual relationships and the ways they impacted and were impacted by the laws and cultures in which they operated. Much of the conversation regarding gender non-conforming individuals in this book is couched in terms of same-sex acts. In fact, Berkowitz manages to discuss several gender non-conforming individuals—including Katharina Hetzeldorfer and John/Eleanor Rykener—without an in depth analysis into the possible gendered aspects at play.[46] Such individuals are summarily lumped into the category of "cross-dresser" and their actions are discussed as part of an analysis of same-sex acts and punishments. An individual who declared that he

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[44] Ibid., 159.
[45] Ibid., 163.
[46] Eric Berkowitz, *Sex and Punishment: Four Thousand Years of Judging Desire* (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2012), 164.

would rather be hanged than return to life as a woman is discussed in terms of "male sexual prerogatives."[47]

For Berkowitz, the presence of a dildo signifies a same-sex sexual relationship and does not seem to warrant further analysis. This is not to say that nothing can be gained from his discussion—his treatments of the "transvestite prostitutes" John/Eleanor Rykener and Rolandino/a Ronchaia go into more detail than many other sources—but his analysis is focused on the surface of these stories and does not view these individuals in a way that probes the politics and complications of gender ambiguity and non-conformity. For Berkowitz, questions of gender seem to have easy answers based on biology and clothing.

Clothing can play a significant role in the analysis of gender non-conforming individuals in some cases, as can their professions or modes of work. Dress and work were often important parts of a gender non-conforming person's life and allowed them to "pass" undetected by authorities. At times, historians discuss the profession of a gender non-conforming individual explicitly, as do Ruth Mazo Karras and David Lorenzo Boyd in their 1995 "The Interrogation of a Male Transvestite Prostitute in Fourteenth Century London." The article describes the testimony of John/Eleanor Rykener after her[48] arrest in which she confesses to wearing women's clothing and working as a prostitute, primarily for members of the clergy. Karras and Boyd use the short article to discuss the specifics of Rykener's case, but also to describe the difficulty in obtaining information in instances regarding people like Rykener.

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[47] Ibid., 165.

[48] This is one of those cases that is very difficult to parse out, but I have chosen to go with female pronouns. Rykener readily switched between male and female depending on the situation, but had chosen particularly feminine modes of employment.

Rykener disclosed that she had been living as a woman for some time, and that she had at one point been working as an embroidress.[49] By examining Rykener in the light of the very gendered jobs that she procured—both prostitution and embroidery—Karras and Boyd highlight the ways in which occupation served as outward markers of gender that were easily read by other members of the community.

While employment and dress are explicit topics of "The Interrogation of a Male Transvestite Prostitute," other texts talk about modes of employment and dress as part of a larger picture. Employment is mentioned frequently in *Inquisitorial Inquiries: Brief Lives of Secret Jews and Other Heretics* by Richard L. Kagan and Abigail Dyer, but it is clearly not the focus. The book is concerned with the Spanish Inquisition, but has one chapter regarding a gender non-conforming individual, Eleno/a de Céspedes. The chapter is rich and nuanced, containing analysis of many aspects of Céspedes's life. Kagan and Dyer discuss their language and pronoun choices, settling on male for Céspedes because of his testimony regarding himself.[50]

The chapter includes the authors' translations of the primary documents and a short biography of the life of Eleno/a de Céspedes. It is an excellent window into some of the strategies gender non-conforming individuals used to protect themselves and a useful primer on "passing" activities—work and clothing included. Eleno/a de Céspedes could be said to have appropriated maleness via the clothing and especially the occupations he chose to use, including soldier and surgeon.[51] De Céspedes's reactions and answers to the

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[49] Karras and Boyd, "The Interrogation of a Male Transvestite Prostitute," 459.

[50] I find the reasons that Kagan and Dyer give for using male pronouns very compelling, and have chosen to follow suit.

[51] Richard L. Kagan and Abigail Dyer, *Inquisitorial Inquiries: Brief Lives of Secret Jews and Other Heretics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 69.

Inquisition's inquiries are recorded, giving us a remarkable primary source that is quite unusual. He most likely chose to filter some of his responses in a way that would appease those questioning him—and we only have what they, in turn, decided was worth writing down—but there is still a picture that forms which lends itself to analysis and gap-filling.

Kagan and Dyer discuss de Céspedes's clothing and employment activities as semi-choices. In order to pass as male, the clothing he wore and the jobs that he did needed to correlate to the gender he wished to present. Other authors have discussed clothing in particular as an explicit choice, as in the case of James Ludvig Frankki and his recent work on the knight Ulrich von Liechtenstein. Frankki's book, entitled *Transvestism in the Middle Ages: the Venusfahrt of Ulrich von Liechtenstein*, explores the cross-dressing of a knight as an expression of erotic desire.[52] Frankki builds on the 1910 sexology study "Die Transvestiten: Eine Untersuchung über den erotischen Verkleidungsrieb mit umfangreichem casuistischen und historischen Material"[53] by Magnus Hirschfeld for his discussion of the erotics of cross-dressing.[54] Evidence for the claim that von Liechtenstein cross-dressed for erotic pleasure is gathered from the text *Ulrich von Liechtenstien: Frauendienst*—purportedly von Liechtenstien's own account of his journey through Austria, Bohemia, Carinthia, Friuli, Lombardy, and Styria while dressed as the Lady Venus as part of a chivalric quest[55]—and comparisons between medieval and modern day examples of cross-dressing.[56]

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[52] James Ludvig Frankki, *Transvestism in the Middle Ages: The Venusfahrt of Ulrich von Liechtenstein* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2014), 9.
[53] [Transvestites: the erotic drive to cross dress.]
[54] Frankki, *Transvestism in the Middle Ages*, 15.
[55] Ibid., 1.
[56] Ibid., 23.

Frankki is not the first to suggest that cross-dressing in the Middle Ages might have had some of the same fetishistic connotations as it does today, but he is more direct about his claims than others have been in the past. His reliance on psychological theory from over a century ago is strange, as there have been multiple studies done on the topic in the intervening years that would provide more current theory on which to build. Unfortunately his choice in this matter is not explained, which detracts from some of his analysis. Much of his analysis is focused on literary figures throughout medieval history and little distinction is made between cross-dressing individuals and those who are potentially gender non-conforming in other ways. Despite these issues, it is a novel approach and interesting addition to the gender non-conforming conversation.

When discussions of cross-dressing in medieval Europe happen, it is difficult if not impossible to exclude elements of both religion and magic. There are a remarkable number of gender-bending, cross-dressing, and gender non-conforming saints and tales of transformation via either the grace of God or some form of magic. The volume *Gender and Christianity in Medieval Europe: New Perspectives* edited by Lisa M. Bitel and Felice Lifshitz contains multiple chapters that address ways in which gender and the Church impacted one another. Jacqueline Murray's article "One Flesh, Two Sexes, Three Genders?" addresses both the ways in which historians have changed their understanding of medieval gender over time and an in-depth analysis of the ways in which gender was understood by medieval people.

Particularly of interest is Murray's analysis of the argument that a variety of religious people constituted a third gender. She finds it compelling and offers as evidence conflicting medieval teachings regarding gender, as well as hagiographical evidence from

multiple gender non-conforming saints.[57] The fact that medieval people believed that gender was mutable allowed for spaces in which other genders could exist.[58] Murray goes on to posit that chastity fit into those spaces as a sexual orientation—and also as a gender.[59] The argument of chastity as a gender relies on the belief that sexual orientation and gender are distinctly connected in such a way that sexual orientation can predict gender and vice versa, a point that is not well supported and up for debate. Ultimately, Murray's basic argument—that the one flesh model put forth by Christianity allowed for greater gender variation—is compelling and useful to analysis of gender non-conformity.

Crystal Lynn Lubinsky's *Removing Masculine Layers to Reveal a Holy Womanhood* is a book with a more direct focus. It is primarily concerned with the "female monk legends"[60] and discusses a great deal of gender theory as it pertains to gender non-conformity and medieval Christianity. Motivations for medieval hagiographers are discussed, especially the interpretation that gender non-conforming female saints allowed male authors to praise holy women within parameters that were still explicitly masculine.[61] Crystal Lubinsky is less concerned with the myths of the saints themselves and more interested in what those myths would have meant for the people who wrote and consumed them. This is a more nuanced approach to these gender-bending saints and one that produces a different result than an analysis of the myths themselves. The symbolisms

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[57] Jacqueline Murray, "One Flesh, Two Sexes, Three Genders?" in *Gender and Christianity in Medieval Europe: New Perspectives*, ed. Lisa M. Bitel and Felice Lifschitz (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 41.

[58] Ibid., 49.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Crystal Lynn Lubinsky, *Removing Masculine Layers to Reveal a Holy Womanhood* (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers n.v., 2013), 19.

[61] Ibid., 79.

of gender-bending saints trading feminine names for masculine ones,[62] of social masculinity as exhibited by formerly female saints,[63] and of transvestism as reversal[64] are explored in great detail.

This book contains the kind of broad analysis that is badly needed throughout the field. The theoretical conversations that Lubinsky wants her readers to engage in is the kind of conversation that could benefit all aspects of the study of medieval and early modern gender non-conformity, not just gender-bending and transforming saints. If the field can continue to expand in this direction, there are many more opportunities for rich examinations of the ways in which gender non-conforming individuals affected and were affected by the worlds around them. Perhaps books like *Removing Masculine Layers* can help to demolish some of the roadblocks in the way of creating a unified field.

There are some significant gaps in the literature when it comes to gender non-conforming individuals in the late medieval and early modern periods. One of the largest issues that stands in the way of creating a unified field is the distinct lack of an agreed-upon and easily accessible lexicon with which to discuss them. "Cross-dresser," "transvestite," and "gender non-conforming" are terms that have much overlap while having distinct meanings and connotations. While "gender non-conforming" is arguably a decent umbrella term, it leaves those who were not cross-dressers or transvestites but something else entirely with no specific term to describe them. This problem is exacerbated by the difficulties that are inherent in applying gendered pronouns to individuals who were gender non-conforming in some way. Some historians such as

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[62] Ibid., 116.
[63] Ibid., 148.
[64] Ibid., 92.

Kagan and Dyer are careful to explain their choices in pronoun usage—a practice that should be standard when work is being done in the realm of gender non-conforming individuals.

Other gaps include comparative texts that examine similarities and shared experiences among gender non-conforming individuals across Europe, across time, and across social class. *Ambiguous Gender in Early Modern Spain and Portugal* made important strides in that direction with its focus on gender non-conforming individuals who all resided within the Iberian peninsula during a hundred year span, but as yet few others have made the leap from looking at individuals to a bigger picture. On a positive note, many scholars have made enormous strides in the last ten years in terms of quality analysis and nuanced attentions paid to the intricacies of gender. The hope is that this thesis can at least begin to contribute to the field as it grows in these new and exciting ways.

Chapter 2: Medical and Legal Theories

A basic understanding of the ways bodies were defined medically and legally in this era is a useful tool of analysis. In order to understand what authorities found to be anomalous, one must first understand what was presumed to be normal for both men and women, the ways in which men and women were presumed to be different on a physical level, and how those differences were created and maintained. Along with an understanding of medical theories, it can also be beneficial to have an idea of how legal boundaries were delineated between the sexes and how the courts determined what was masculine and what was feminine in order to locate that which conformed the "wrong" gender or to neither. During the late medieval and early modern periods, both medical and legal theory had significant impact on the lives of gender non-conforming and gender transgressing individuals across western Europe.

It can be difficult to parse out the various medical theories from this era because they are contradictory and inconsistent, often within the same text. Competing ideas can be found side by side with no indication that the author saw any friction between them. Theories were also changing as more ancient texts were translated and the first dissections of human corpses were undertaken at the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries in northern Italy.[65] As the information gathered from these new sources made its way around Europe, it often found itself in conflict with pre-existing theories, which were not discarded, however, but were instead augmented. Writers in both eras, but particularly medieval writers, regularly borrowed from sources

[65] Danielle Jacquart and Claude Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 35.

without citing them,[66] sometimes copying them word for word, which can make ascertaining the origin of a particular medical belief difficult.

Medical Theories

Gender and sex were not conceived of as separate entities, but neither were they entirely the same thing—instead, they were both in a constant state of flux. Bodies themselves were found in an array of forms from the clearly identifiable to the perplexingly ambiguous. It fell to physicians, anatomists, surgeons, and other quasi-medical professionals to document, describe, and explain the many ways in which bodies could deviate from the standard male/female dichotomy as well as to divide the natural from the unnatural. Their theories regarding the formation of the body and the differences between male and female had far reaching implications for gender non-conforming individuals.

In the majority of cases the medical theories of this era were based on the writings of philosophers and physicians of the past, including Aristotle, Galen, and Hippocrates.[67] Although Galenic notions were more prominent during the medieval era[68] while Aristotelian and Hippocratic thought often dominated the conversation in the early modern,[69] many practitioners and theorists had a "mix and match" attitude towards the works of all three as well as other various ancient and medieval sources, adopting whatever was most useful to them and the argument they were making at the time. There was also a mixing of audiences at this time as medical theories were becoming more

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[66] Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference*, 13.
[67] Ibid., 15.
[68] Jacquart and Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine*, 7.
[69] Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park, "The Hermaphrodite and the Orders of Nature: Sexual Ambiguity in Early Modern France," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 1, no. 4 (1995), 420.

accessible to the common people and were even sometimes written for them. Between the late fourteenth and early sixteenth centuries[70] the growing literate audience for books encouraged surgeons and physicians like Jaques Duval and Ambroise Paré to publish medical texts about hermaphrodites and medical anomalies that were almost pornographic in nature to appeal to the public.[71]

Hippocrates and his followers were concerned with the idea of balance and its maintenance within the body.[72] His was a system of non-hierarchical polarities that was later adopted by Galen and various medieval theorists.[73] Hippocratic theory declared that conception was created by the joining of male (active) seed and female (passive) seed.[74] Both mother and father carried strong and weak seed,[75] the mixing of which resulted in different sexes and characteristics. By the medieval period, much of Hippocrates' work was filtered through Galen and thus changed from the original text.

As Danielle Jacquart and Claude Thomasset have asserted, medieval Galenism was also a deviation from the original.[76] Much of this difference is found in language choices, with original Galenism concerned with the location and form of an organ and medieval commentators more concerned with function. One commentator noted that the abdominal part now known as the great omentum, for example, was called *epiploon* by Galen while contemporary surgeons called it *mappa ventris*.[77] This interest in function was a reoccurring theme in medieval medicine. Galen was the "intellectual master" of medicine

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[70] Katie Normington, *Gender and Medieval Drama* (Woodbridge; Rochester: D.S. Brewer, 2004), 9.
[71] Daston and Park, "The Hermaphrodite and the Orders of Nature," 424.
[72] Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference*, 16.
[73] Ibid., 17.
[74] Kathleen Long, "Jacques Duval on Hermaphrodites," in *High Anxiety: Masculinity in Crisis in Early Modern France* ed. Kathleen Long (Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 2001), 129.
[75] Ibid., 130.
[76] Jacquart and Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine*, 7.
[77] Ibid., 17.

in the Middle Ages, having developed further the theory of humors first proposed by Hippocrates.[78] Galenic theory was responsible for the belief in two sperms, produced in both men and women by the veins and arteries. [79] He also stressed the importance of the difference between left and right in the testis and womb:

> Hence it is clear that the left testis in the male and the left uterus in the female receive blood still uncleansed, full of residues, watery and serous, and so it happens that the temperaments of the instruments themselves that receive become different. For just as pure blood is warmer than blood full of residues, so too the instruments on the right side, nourished with pure blood, become warmer than those on the left.[80]

He defended this idea of female sperm to critics by commenting that female sperm was useful, noting "Besides contributing to the generation of the animal, the female semen is also useful in the following ways: it provides no small usefulness in inciting the female to the sexual act and in opening wide the neck of the uteri during coitus."[81] When it came to the construction of bodies, Galen was of the opinion that the male body was the standard and that the female body was an inverted version of the male.[82] This "one-sex" model found the ways in which female genitals corresponded to male ones, with ovaries corresponding to testicles, uterus to scrotum, and vagina to penis.[83]

In contrast to Galen, Aristotelian theory held that men and women were intrinsically different—what has since been called the "two-sex" model—and that intersex conditions

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[78] Ibid., 48.
[79] Ibid., 50.
[80] Ibid., 51.
[81] Ibid., 62.
[82] Katherine Crawford, *European Sexualities 1400-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 105.
[83] Katharine Park, "The Rediscovery of the Clitoris" in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*, ed. David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York: Routledge, 1997), 178.

were caused by an excess of material provided by the mother.[84] His theories also contended that sperm was only created by men:

> Indeed, it is impossible that any creature should produce two seminal secretions at once, and as the secretion in females which answers to semen in males is the menstrual fluid, it obviously follows that the female does not contribute any semen to generation; for if there were semen, there would be no menstrual fluid...

Responding to critics of this theory, he wrote:

> There are some who think that the female contributes semen during coition because women sometimes derive pleasure from it comparable to that of the male and also produce a fluid secretion. This fluid, however, is not seminal; it is peculiar to the part from which it comes in each several individual.

According to Aristotle, these secretions are not found in women of a masculine nature. [85]

These theories shifted and changed over time in the conversations among an elite sub-set of society that included physicians, surgeons, anatomists, and theorists who enjoyed elevated social, educational, and economic status. During the seventeenth century, authority began shifting from those relying on these ancient ideas and towards surgeons who placed greater reliance on their own observations.[86] The application of these ideas and theories had an impact on the bodies of individuals of all genders, not just on those who were gender non-conforming.

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[84] Long, "Jacques Duval on Hermaphrodites," 128.
[85] Jacquart and Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine*, 61.
[86] Long, "Jacques Duval on Hermaphrodites", 107.

G.K. Paster has stated that the average individual in this era would have seen the body as "a semipermeable, irrigated container in which humors moved sluggishly."[87] These four humors of the body—blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile—corresponded with four characteristics—dry, wet, hot, and cold.[88] These humors and characteristics also corresponded with four personality types—sanguine, choleric, melancholic, or phlegmatic,[89] and four organs—heart, spleen, liver, and brain.[90] The balance of the humors was called complexion, which led to the differing iterations of male and female that appeared while also controlling many other aspects of the body. Blood kept the body warm and moist, yellow bile burned off that which was excessive, black bile created appetite and melancholy, and phlegm kept the body from overheating.[91] Heat was also an aspect of complexion. Although Hippocrates had declared women hotter than men,[92] by the medieval era it was firmly established that women were cold and moist and men were hot and dry. The female body was inherently colder than that of males,[93] but this heat, according to some fourteenth-century texts, was not meant to be interpreted as a literal, physical heat, because some women felt more warm than some men. Other texts declared that men were unilaterally warmer than women.[94] Women's relative coldness was also responsible for their smoothness, softness, and weakness.[95]

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[87] Mitchell Greenberg, "Molière's Body Politic," in *High Anxiety: Masculinity in Crisis in Early Modern France*, ed. Kathleen Long (Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 2001), 142.

[88] Sarah Toulalan and Kate Fisher, *The Routledge History of Sex and the Body: 1500 to the Present* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2013), 26.

[89] Jacquart and Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine*, 49.

[90] Crawford, *European Sexualities*, 101.

[91] Jacquart and Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine*, 49.

[92] Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference*, 17.

[93] Crawford, *European Sexualities*, 104.

[94] Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference*, 171.

[95] Ibid., 172.

Humoral and heat balance were the keys to health in all of the theories of the era.[96] This balance was created by making changes to the body. If the temperature of an individual was incorrect for their gender, there were a variety of fixes. In order to cool women, it was suggested that "they must forbear strong Meats and Labour, and the Courses must be forced, and by Bleeding and Purging and the like, the habit of the Body must be rendered cold and moist."[97] In this way it was possible to keep the body within the proper gender binary while restoring health.

Alongside the humoral system, and regardless of whether they accepted the "one-sex" or "two-sex" model, both medical professionals and common people both generally believed in a binary gender system, with male on one side and female on the other. Their definitions of male and female relied on certain characteristics of the body or behavior, and those who lacked those clear characteristics were problematic. "Male" and "female" were solid categories with very little room for deviation, and individuals were tasked with maintaining the boundaries of their body through medical interventions and personal actions.

Men became "perfectly male" only after they had demonstrated the capability to reproduce,[98] creating a situation in which the ultimate sign of masculinity was a fully functional penis.[99] In support of this ideal, Ambroise Paré declared that eunuchs were more female than male, saying "The Nature of Eunuches is to be referred to that of weomen, as who may seeme to have degenerated into a womanish nature, by deficiency

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[96] Crawford, *European Sexualities*, 103.

[97] Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, "Fetishizing Gender" in *The Body in Parts: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, ed. Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub (New York: Routledge, 1991), 87.

[98] Long, "Jacques Duval," 108.

[99] Ibid., 111.

of heate; their smooth body and soft and shirle voyce doe very much assimulate weomen."[100] Jacques Duval noted that eunuchs demonstrated reduced intellect and morals, and only rarely could "one find a eunuch of good behavior and sound judgment."[101]

Duval also declared that the penis created heat within the body and that its power of reproduction meant that it was more important to bodily function than the heart, which merely enabled the life of the person possessing it.[102] The testicles, for their part, also provided heat despite their cold temperature.[103] Greater heat was the source of beards in men and the source of their greater perfection. [104] As Joan Cadden has written, "Once again the completeness of the real man is contrasted with the insufficiency of women, children, and eunuchs."[105] Red beards, on the other hand, may have called masculinity in to question as red hair was seen as a sign of unmanly character.[106]

Women were regarded as the weaker sex in all medical theories. They were also inextricably linked to sin; in his treatise on hermaphrodism Duval listed an extensive list of names for female genitals followed by a listing of authoritative sources that linked them to hell.[107] There were an abundance of physical traits that indicated femininity, and thus inferiority. Straight eyebrows, for example, implied both femininity and wickedness.[108] Women's bodies were envisioned as

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[100] Jones and Stallybrass, "Fetishizing Gender," 83.
[101] Long, "Jacques Duval," 117.
[102] Ibid., 117.
[103] Ibid., 119.
[104] Cadden, *Meaning of Sex Differences*, 171.
[105] Ibid., 181.
[106] Edward Behrend-Martínez, "Manhood and the Neutered Body in Early Modern Spain," *Journal of Social History* 38, no. 4 (2005): 1076.
[107] Long, "Jacques Duval," 120.
[108] Cadden, *Meaning of Sex Differences*, 167.

ungoverned, "leaky" vessels,[109] and they were known to be more lustful than men, as Jaquart and Thomasset state:

> The traditional question: "Why does woman, although she is of a colder and moister nature than man, feel a more burning desire?"... [is answered] women experienced a pleasure that was greater in quantity, but lesser in quality and intensity, than men's...instability and lack of satisfaction were consequences of the weakness that affected the female faculty of judgment.[110]

Kathleen Long has noted that during this period, the female anatomy remained "something of a mystery" to men of medicine. [111] One element of this mystery was the womb. Women were largely viewed as "disorderly beings governed by their womb[s],"[112] and uteruses were presumed to be free-floating within the body. Duval declared that the female body was specifically formed to maintain this particular organ.[113] The Italian professor of surgery, physician, and anatomist Mondino de' Luzzi declared that the womb "has an important link with almost all the members in the upper parts of the body: with the heart and the liver, by means of the veins and arteries; with the brain via the many nerves."[114] The womb defined women and demonstrated the superiority of the male body.

Another mysterious element of female anatomy was the clitoris. Katherine Park has made the argument that due to the multiple 'discoveries' of the clitoris by a variety of late medieval and early modern anatomists—including Charles Estienne in 1545, Gabriele Falloppia in 1550, and Realdo Colombo 1559—women were viewed as "necessarily

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[109] Greenberg, "Molière's Body Politic," 143.
[110] Jacquart and Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine*, 81.
[111] Long, "Jacques Duval," 108.
[112] Ibid., 114.
[113] Ibid., 122.
[114] Jacquart and Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine*, 43.

hermaphroditic."[115] Ambroise Paré wrote that women with enlarged clitorises could stimulate them "like the male penis" and thus have intercourse with other women while their clueless husbands were otherwise engaged.[116] Paré was chastised by the Parisian Faculty of Medicine for including this fact in his *Des monstres et prodiges* because it was written in the vernacular and thus accessible to an impressionable female audience.[117]

The clitoris was a source of much consternation for male medical authorities[118] because of its link to female sexuality. Because women were more lustful than men, Duval declared that they could be controlled by male contact with the clitoris,[119] but women who possessed large clitorises were both "indecent"[120] and at risk of sexual contact with other women. In fact, Duval told his readers, "[i]n Egypt [enlarged clitorises are] common to almost all girls, from whom it is necessary to cut this little rod, when they are ready to marry, for fear that if it rises up during coitus, it will prevent pleasure as much for the women who have them, as for their husbands."[121] The Italian physician Giovanni Marinello echoed the beliefs of many when he stated that some women have:

> a shameful part, of a substance part carnal and part nervous, which resembles the virile member, so small that it is not always recognized but in a few women, and of those, it often shows itself to be so large and to grow so much that is presents like a virile member, and thus a few women abuse themselves unhappily.[122]

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[115]Toulalan and Fisher, *Sex and the Body*, 28.
[116] Park, "The Rediscovery of the Clitoris," 171.
[117] Ibid., 172.
[118] Long, "Jacques Duval", 120.
[119] Ibid., 121.
[120] Ibid., 120.
[121] Ibid. 121.
[122] Crawford, *European Sexualities*, 109.

Even after the clitoris was rediscovered, it was not allowed to be present on "normal" women, only those who transgressed the sexual norms and the boundaries of their gender.

The Galenic "one-sex" model held that women's bodies were the same as men, just *mas occasionatus*[123]—monstrous, incomplete or imperfect. Women's internal organs were inverted mirror images of male external ones. Paré wrote "women have as much hidden within the body as men have exposed outside; leaving aside, only, that women don't have so much heat, nor the ability to push out what by the coldness of their temperament is held as if bound to the interior."[124]

Helkiah Crooke's *Mikrokosmographia* accepts the one-sex model at various points in the text, at times explicitly endorsing the idea that women were incomplete men with lines like "the Testicles in Men are larger, and of a hotter nature then in Women...; heat abounding in men thrusts them forth of the body, whereas in women they remain within, because their dull and sluggish heat is not sufficient to thrust them out."[125] In the one-sex model it was generally accepted that men could not degenerate into women because Nature always moved towards perfection, not away from it, although Juan Huarte de San Juan disagreed, arguing that men had the capacity to become women when it was the will

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[123] Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference,* 133.

[124] Ambroise Paré, "Memorable Stories About Women Who Have Degenerated Into Men," in *The Literature of Lesbianism: A Historical Anthology from Ariosto to Stonewall*, ed. Terry Castle (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 32.

[125] Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 21.

of Nature.[126] Some theorists were unwilling to declare women to be simply imperfect men, however. Marinello wrote in 1563 that:

> the body of the women was neither mutilated nor imperfect... One must believe that God, who is the author and conductor of nature and who created all living things, not at all gave less in matter or in natural power in the creation of the body of woman as in that of man...the body of the woman is no less complete and perfect than that of the man, being accompanied by all the parts necessary for generation.[127]

The "one-sex model" had an influence on ideas regarding the formation of male and female bodies as well as the formation of those bodies that differed from the binary norm.[128] Sherry Velasco has suggested that this understanding of bodies led to the widespread belief that men who transgressed gender and sexual boundaries were initially destined by Nature to be women, but had taken a metaphorical "wrong turn" in the womb.[129]

Alongside the "one-sex" model, the "two-sex" model could also be found in the medical discourse in the early Renaissance and beyond.[130] It was Aristotelian in nature and followed the idea of "true sex", meaning that all individuals were either male or female with no middle ground existing at all. The French anatomy professor Jean Riolan wrote:

> The male genitals are different from the female genitals in species,... and their temperament is also dissimilar. For men are hotter than women; thus a single person cannot have both the genitals and temperaments of both man and woman together, so as to be able to use both—insomuch as the male is defined by Aristotle as that which can engender in another, and the female, as that which receives from the outside to engender in herself. Furthermore, the two principles

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[126] Soyer, *Ambiguous Gender*, 23.
[127] Crawford, *European Sexualities*, 108.
[128] Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference*, 14.
[129] Soyer, *Ambiguous Gender*, 23.
[130] Kathleen P. Long, *Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub, 2006), 29.

> of human generation are different and cannot be supplied by the same person: the woman contributes matter, and the man gives the active and shaping seed of the child.[131]

The French physician André du Laurens defended this model of dichotomous sexes in his 1593 *Historia Anatomica Humani Corporis*.[132] This view did not allow for an entity that could be understood as a "true hermaphrodite" to exist, as any given individual was either male or female. The middle ground was filled with ambiguity, but even those individuals were identified as one or the other depending on their "dominant" sexual characteristics. In support of this view, Martín del Río wrote in echo of du Laurens: "... how false is the medical doctrine that takes the inverted male to be hidden in the body of the woman. The genital organs of one and the other are fundamentally different, not only in their position, but in their number, form, and structure."[133]

The "one-sex model" was once presumed to have gradually lost ground to the "two sex model" over the early modern period, but this idea has been called into question by many historians who point to multiple instances of conflicting evidence.[134] Katherine Park has written that a single model of any kind is ultimately an impossibility because of the complex nature of medical thought and writing in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[135] What is more likely is that multiple theories co-existed and both contradicted and complimented one another.

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[131] Park, "The Rediscovery of the Clitoris," 181.
[132] Richard Cleminson and Francisco Vázquez García, *Sex, Identity and Hermaphrodites in Iberia, 1500-1800* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013), 14.
[133] Cleminson and García, *Sex, Identity and Hermaphrodites,* 15.
[134] Toulalan and Fisher, *Sex and the Body*, 27.
[135] Park, "The Rediscovery of the Clitoris," 174.

As Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass have noted, in the Renaissance there was no single "privileged discourse" such as biology[136] that established a concrete method of distinguishing the male body from the female body.[137] Duval asserted that the external signs of gender did not always match internal markers of sex and recognized that various non-biological forces such as clothing or behavior could impact the presentation of gender.[138] For Duval, sexual difference is delineated by "common and frequent usage,"[139] and Divine will was also sometimes thought to be the reason for the separation of the sexes.[140]

Although non-biological forces were understood to play a role, medical authorities were also interested in decoding the components that decided the sex of a child before birth. In the Galenic/Hippocratic tradition, the sex of an infant was determined by the varying degrees of strength of the male and female seed as well as by the location within the uterus that the fetus claimed.[141] Weaker seed would result in a girl, while strong seed would lead to the birth of a boy,[142] and the relatively greater heat of the right womb and testicle, when compared to their left-hand counterparts was more suited to produce male offspring.[143] Aristotelian thought held that the sex of the infant was determined by a combination of the male seed and the heat of the heart.[144] In the early fifteenth century the physician Jacopo of Forlì posited that complexion, disposition, and physique were the

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[136] Jones and Stallybrass note that biology did indeed become the "privileged discourse" by the nineteenth century.

[137] Jones and Stallybrass, "Fetishizing Gender," 80.

[138] Long, "Jacques Duval," 109.

[139] Ibid., 125.

[140] Francisco Vázquez García and Richard Cleminson, "Subjectivities in Transition: Gender and Sexual Identities in Cases of "Sex Change" and "Hermaphrodism" in Spain, c. 1500-1800," *History of Science* 48, no. 1 (2010): 16.

[141] Daston and Park, "The Hermaphrodite and the Orders of Nature," 421.

[142] Long, "Jacques Duval," 130.

[143] Jacquart and Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine*, 51.

[144] Daston and Park, "The Hermaphrodite and the Orders of Nature," 421.

elements that determined sex, with complexion holding the most important role. Complexion was the predominant factor in deciding the sex of an infant, but it could be complemented by differences in the other categories: an individual could be cool and moist, making them female, but have ways of moving or speaking that were distinctly masculine. [145]

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, medical theorists developed the idea that the womb contained "seven cells of the human figure, stamped in the manner of coins."[146] An influx of semen would settle into the cells and those on the right would produce a male child, those on the left a female, and those that settled in the middle cell a hermaphrodite.[147] The cells were also responsible in instances of multiple births when "portions of the seed" were scattered and received in several different cavities.[148] In one version of her story, St. Wilgefortis the bearded female saint was originally one of septuplets, who according to the seven-cell theory, exhibited both masculine and feminine physical traits because she was produced in a middle cell.[149] This womb configuration allowed for a "sexual continuum" without a solid division between male and female, an arrangement that was founded in Galenic tradition.[150] Mondino de' Luzzi declared that the cells were "merely kinds of hollow cavity existing in the womb so that the sperm may coagulate with the menstrual blood."[151] Some rejected the seven-cell theory outright, however, including the professor of anatomy and botany Caspar Bauhin

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[145] Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference,* 203.
[146] Ibid., 93.
[147] Ibid., 131.
[148] Paré, "Memorable Stories," 25
[149] Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference,* 203.
[150] Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body*, 34.
[151] Jacquart and Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine*, 42.

who called it "utter nonsense"[152] based on his own observations during dissections. Paré declared those that believed in the seven-cell theory to be "completely ignorant of anatomy" and that the theory was "contrary to sense and observation."[153] The 1545 *Birth of Mankind* also soundly rejected the theory.[154]

The seven-cell theory was closely related to the commonly held belief that heat was a major factor in determining sex. Heat was associated with maleness, and cold with femaleness, so the heat of the right side of the womb allowed maleness to thrive, and fetuses that developed towards the center were liable to be womanly men, manly women, or hermaphrodites.[155] According to Juan Huarte de San Juan, females could become males in the womb if there was a rise in the mother's body temperature, while a drop in temperature would result in a man who behaved effeminately.[156] In his book on anatomy *Mikrokosmographia*, Helkiah Crooke discussed the role of heat on the conception of hermaphrodites in a section titled "Of Monsters and Hermaphrodites."[157] Hermaphrodites and other monsters occurred because of several agents, of which "the Second Agent is the Heat or place of Conception. Heat having a fiery mobility or quick motion, formeth sundry shapes of Bodies and worketh the Matter into divers fashions."[158] Duval believed that the seed that created female progeny came exclusively from the left testicle.[159] Gendered appearance was another characteristic decided in the womb. Duval stated "...when more sperm comes from the body of the man than from that of the woman, that

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[152] Long, *Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe*, 63.
[153] Paré, "Memorable Stories," 25.
[154] Jones and Stallybrass, "Fetishizing Gender," 81.
[155] Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference*, 201.
[156] Soyer, *Ambiguous Gender*, 23.
[157] Helkiah Crooke, *Mikrokosmographia a Description of the Body of Man: Together with the Controversies and Figures Thereto Belonging*, (British Library, 1651), http://eebo.chadwyck.com, 219.
[158] Ibid., 220.
[159] Long, "Jacques Duval," 119.

part is better formed and resembles the father, but when more comes from the mother, this body is more beautiful, and resembles more the mother, and not at all the father..."[160]

Jacopo of Forlì and a few other writers were something of an anomaly in this era. At the beginning of the fifteenth century Jacopo argued that a fetus could have masculine genitalia but exhibit feminine characteristics in every other respect, including aspects of behavior.[161] This what we might call "proto-performativity" view demonstrates the difficulties that could arise when trying to create and maintain completely binary categories.

These discussions of the nature of sex and the formation of men, women, and hermaphrodites were a significant feature of conversations about bodies and the nature of the "natural" self among physicians, surgeons, and anatomists. Following Focault's observations, many of these conversations focused on the abnormal in order to define the normal.[162] Such discussions were significant for common people because medical professionals, particularly physicians and surgeons, were often called upon to lend their expert opinions in cases of bodily ambiguity or doubts about an individual's gender.[163] This was true during the Spanish Inquisition, when physicians performed physical examinations of the bodies of prisoners whose gender was unclear to the Inquisitors.[164] These physical examinations could determine the fate of the individual in question—if their claims stood up under scrutiny, they could perhaps be exonerated. For example, in

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[160] Ibid., 130.
[161] Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference*, 203.
[162] Edward Behrend-Martínez, "Manhood and the Neutered Body," 1076.
[163] Park, "The Rediscovery of the Clitoris," 174.
[164] Soyer, *Ambiguous Gender*, 1.

1580 Estefania of Valdaracete, Spain was allowed to change his name to Esteban[165] after a physical examination by a doctor determined that he was a "hermafodita" rather than a woman behaving like a man. Esteban was freed, all charges were dropped, and he subsequently married a woman and went on to hold unspecified government offices.[166]

Esteban was fortunate in a way that many gender non-conforming individuals were not, in that he was allowed not only to live as he wished but also to marry and continue a life unencumbered by the issues that could accompany an ambiguous, incorrect, or unresolved diagnosis. Gender non-conforming individuals were at the mercy of the courts as well as of the medical professionals that examined them. The official opinions of physicians and surgeons could have lasting, sometimes deadly effects for the individuals that were subject to them.

Legal Theory

The theories that medical professionals debated and advocated became the basis for laws and legal decisions that had potentially harmful or deadly consequences for those individuals who fell outside the gender norms. Along with medical theory, legal theory about gender and sexuality, and the laws and legal decisions based on these, shaped the lives of both those defined as "normal" and those who fell outside the gender norms. These varied between countries. In France, women could be accused of sodomy, while in England the charge was levied only at men.[167] Same-sex activities between women in Spain were only punishable by death in instances where "instruments" were used.[168]

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[165] Esteban's story is discussed further in the Hermaphrodites chapter of this thesis.
[166] Soyer, *Ambiguous Gender*, 54.
[167] Jones and Stallybrass, "Fetishizing Gender," 89.
[168] Crawford, *European Sexualities*, 157.

Legally, intersex individuals in France were often classified as women with enlarged clitorises. Despite this distinction, they were granted the right to serve as witnesses and were also allowed to leave bequests and inherit.[169] Eunuchs were not allowed to marry, nor could they hold positions in the Church.[170] In Spain, masculinity was most often defined by virility and the ability to produce semen, [171] and marriages were not considered entirely valid without male penetration and ejaculation.[172]

Many legal rulings about gender concerned attempts to regulate female sexuality. One court when attempting to grapple with a woman with an enlarged clitoris simply forbade her from ever using it.[173] A legal case between two women who worked side by side in the fields in early fifteenth-century France painted one woman as an innocent, feminine victim and the other as a mannish, sexually aggressive predator.[174]

Physicians examined bodies to corroborate claims made about sexual and gender issues. For example, a team of two physicians and three surgeons examined an individual in Renaissance Italy to determine the veracity of his claims that injury had made normal intercourse or masturbation impossible, so that he had been forced to give into "the temptation of a goat."[175] In this particular case the medical team validated his claims and the man was given a reduced sentence of beating, branding, and the removal of a hand

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[169] Jones and Stallybrass, "Fetishizing Gender," 90.
[170] Ibid., 91.
[171] Behrend-Martínez, "Manhood and the Neutered Body," 1076.
[172] Ibid., 1077.
[173] Long, "Jacques Duval," 120.
[174] Helmut Puff, "Same-Sex Possibilities," in *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, ed. Judith M. Bennett and Ruth Mazo Karras (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 391.
[175] Guido Ruggiero, *The Boundaries of Eros: Sex Crime and Sexuality in Renaissance Venice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 116.

instead of the normal sentence of death.[176] In Spain, doctors were frequently witnesses in cases of legal separation due to impotence.[177]

A misdiagnosis could ruin a life, leading to imprisonment, death, or other punishments with far-reaching effects. Marguerite Malaure of Toulouse, France, for example, was misdiagnosed in 1683 as a hermaphrodite and was subsequently forced to live as a man and change her name to "Arnaud." She was forced to seek legal recourse in order to reclaim her female identity, a process that took years. In the meantime, she had no choice but to live as a man.[178] Even an acknowledgement of abnormality was not a surefire way to escape punishment. For example, Rolandino/a Ronchaia of Venice referred to himself as male during court proceedings but had breasts[179] and body more readily understood by the public as female than male. He had made attempts to adopt a male role despite public perception that he was more feminine than masculine, but eventually these attempts failed after his wife left him for his impotence. Ronchaia moved to Padua and began living as a woman and working as a prostitute, which led to his arrest. Although the court was curious about his bodily ambiguity it was not enough for Ronchaia to avoid a death sentence for sodomy.[180]

The very famous case of Marie/Marin le Marcis[181] concerned a chambermaid from Rouen who was sentenced to death after visual inspections by two separate teams of doctors found that he did not have the hidden penis he claimed to possess, thus making

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[176] Ibid., 117.

[177] Edward J. Behrend-Martínez, *Unfit for Marriage: Impotent Spouses on Trial in the Basque Region of Spain, 1650-1750* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2007), 16.

[178] Soyer, *Ambiguous Gender*, 51.

[179] Ronchaia referred to himself as male during his court proceedings. While this is not definitive proof that he viewed himself as male, I will refer to him as such accordingly.

[180] Ruggiero, *The Boundaries of Eros*, 136.

[181] Marin's story is discussed further in the Hermaphrodites chapter of this thesis.

his relationship with a young woman a same-sex one. Le Marcis appealed to the Parliament of Rouen in order to escape death and was subsequently examined by a medical commission that was comprised of six physicians, two surgeons, and two midwives. Even that failed to produce the results le Marcis sought, and he was ultimately only saved when one of the doctors, Jacques Duval, filed a dissenting opinion.[182] Duval intended for the treatise he wrote about the case to be used as a "legal manual" for medical professionals who were called upon to use their knowledge in cases of unknown or ambiguous gender.[183] Other cases had different outcomes. Juan/a de Leyda of Salinillas, Spain was "denied any claim to a gender" in 1711 and forbidden to marry, have sex with anyone of any gender, enter church service, or even to ever leave Salinillas on the orders of the court after zi was examined by a court doctor.[184] Despite the denial of gender by the doctor, the court did assign Juan/a a male gender and changed hir baptismal record to reflect this.[185] Thomas/ine Hall's case in late sixteenth-century England and Virginia had an unusual outcome: zi was ordered to "freeze [hirself] in perpetual androgyny" by wearing men's clothing with hir head "attired in a cyse" and an apron.[186]

Conclusion

Foucault's description of sodomy as "that utterly confused category"[187] could also be applied to the categories of male and female in this era. Attempts by courts to define the boundaries of gender also serve to highlight the spaces that existed between the two

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[182] Park, "The Rediscovery of the Clitoris," 179.
[183] Long, "Jacques Duval," 114.
[184] Behrend-Martínez, *Unfit for Marriage*, 125.
[185] Ibid., 126.
[186] Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England, 1500-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 84.
[187] Crawford, *European Sexualities*, 155.

binary options available. The medical and legal theories of this era varied widely in the ways that they defined male and female, creating a variety of cracks into which non-binary individuals could easily slip. By declaring what the male and female bodies were, medical professionals implicitly created a category that was "other" into which everyone who did not follow the definitions was placed.

The medical theories of the day were overlapping and contradictory in many instances, while decisions by the courts could at times, as in the case of Thomas/ine Hall, seem completely arbitrary. However, the decisions and theories created by both sets of professionals defined the rules of gender in tangible, observable ways and separated the natural from the monstrous. For late medieval and early modern individuals of all social classes and education levels, nothing embodied the monstrous quite as well as the figure of the hermaphrodite.

Chapter 3: Hermaphrodites

Much of late medieval and early modern discourse about ambiguous gender and sex centered on the figure of the hermaphrodite, the most obvious and visible form of unruly body. Although individuals who were found to be or suspected of being intersex were no more common in this era than they are in our own, hermaphrodites have been described as "ubiquitous" within medieval and early modern texts.[188] Intersex individuals appeared in anatomy books and medical treatises as well as in poems, plays, political works, satires, alchemical treatises, and popular folklore in numbers that were, as François Soyer has commented "out of all proportion"[189] to reality. Kathleen Long has referred to the hermaphrodite as "an obsessively present" icon throughout multiple and varied aspects of early modern life throughout all of Europe and particularly in France.[190] Some of this has to do with the symbolic nature of the hermaphroditic body and what it meant in various scenarios.

In the late medieval period, learned discourse regarding hermaphrodites largely occurred between surgeons as they were seen as surgical challenges.[191] In popular culture, discussions of hermaphrodites and sexually ambiguous bodies were viewed them as a mystical and mythical force. This is not to suggest that the hermaphrodite was an accepted or welcomed figure, but was viewed with suspicion and caution. The German

[188] Daston and Park, "The Hermaphrodite and the Orders of Nature," 419.
[189] Soyer, *Ambiguous Gender*, 50.
[190] Long, *Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe*, 5.
[191] Daston and Park, "The Hermaphrodite and the Orders of Nature," 422.

theologian and philosopher Albertus Magnus went so far as to say that the body of the hermaphrodite belonged to a liar—someone whose body misled those who viewed it.[192]

In sixteenth century France the hermaphrodite came to symbolize both the divisions and solutions to those divisions for a country divided against itself in a multitude of ways. The hermaphrodite became associated with the New World, the Reformation, and the rise of empirical science,[193] and the presence of the hermaphroditic body as such a versatile symbol meant that it was used in discourse of all varieties.

By the early seventeenth century, the classification of hermaphrodites had moved from the realm of the mystical firmly to that of the medical and the natural, which suggests an increased intolerance towards and growing pathologizing of bodily ambiguity and the threat it posed to society. Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park have stated that in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries hermaphrodites came to be "lodged within new explanatory frameworks, and linked with new fields of gender associations."[194] No longer a trait that was a harmless curiosity or a supernatural monstrosity, hermaphroditism had become an undesirable defect that required diagnosis and monitoring, a situation demonstrated by the legal restrictions placed on intersex individuals[195] and the often deadly medical processes used to assign them a solid, unshifting category.[196] When discussing the monster of Ravenna, for example, Ambroise

[192] Ibid., 423.
[193] Long, *Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe*, *2*.
[194] Daston and Park, "The Hermaphrodite and the Orders of Nature," 419.
[195] Long, *Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe*, 20.
[196] Ibid.*,* 30.

Paré "tries to distance any political or allegorical reading of hermaphrodites from descriptions of the natural causes and manifestations of hermaphrodism."[197]

Renaissance sources associated and conflated hermaphrodism with other problematic gender and sexuality categories and behaviors like cross-dressing and same-sex sexual activity.[198] When used as a political symbol in Henri III's France, the hermaphrodite became inextricably linked to bisexuality and other forms of ambiguity. Social order depended upon strong boundaries, and symbolic hermaphrodites represented the fear associated with the erosion of those.[199] The French poet Agrippa d'Aubigné captured this fear in verse:

> From aborted monsters, Nature's bastards
> Our fathers predicted some evil disaster,
> The change of empire or emperor,
> ... The chimera with three bodies, three vices in one.
> So the sin in common with Sodom,
> Promises us similar punishments.[200]

Long has written extensively on the early modern hermaphrodite and notes: "Seen as the ground against which "normal" identity is delineated, these monsters also problematize the notion of human identity by their effacement of boundaries between animal and man and between male and female."[201] Anxiety about hermaphrodites was equally anxiety about the "other" and about the dissolution of boundaries between human and non-human, male and female, and between order and chaos.

Medical and Legal Theories

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[197] Ibid., 37.
[198] Ibid., 26.
[199] Ibid., 212.
[200] Ibid., 213.
[201] Ibid., 20.

Categorization of the hermaphrodite was a challenging but necessary task for the maintenance of social order. The decision to declare an individual a hermaphrodite or one of the two available sexes was not solely juridical in nature, as Foucault claimed, nor was it a simple matter of biology and medical examination as Lorraine Daston, Katherine Park, and others have contended.[202] Instead, it was a complicated mix of the two that varied depending on the time and place in which the decision was made. Medical examinations were made in order to support judicial decisions and to provide proof of claims made by the individuals in question, and the judicial system sometimes stepped in to provide solutions when no answers could be found by a physical examination. As the early modern period progressed, the medical examinations became more and more important to the legal classification of hermaphroditic individuals and to the creation of concrete boundaries between what was male and what was female.

The one-sex method of understanding human anatomy held that all humans were to some extent hermaphroditic, while the two-sex understanding left no room for hermaphroditic bodies at all because of their inability to fall into a binary dichotomy. The French barber-surgeon Ambroise Paré, a proponent of the one-sex theory but on the cusp of advocating for the two-sex,[203] developed a classification system that allowed for four types of hermaphrodites—the male hermaphrodite who has viable male genitalia and non-functioning female genitalia, the female hermaphrodite who has functional female genitals and non-viable male genitalia, the male-female hermaphrodite who possesses a

[202] Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park, "Hermaphrodites in Renaissance France," *Critical Matrix* 1.5 no. 1, (1985): 3.

[203] Long, *Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe*, 44.

set of functional genitalia of both kinds, and the neutral hermaphrodite who possesses both kinds of genitals but is devoid of function in either of them.[204]

Paré was unusual in his toleration of hermaphrodites compared to his contemporaries and embodies the Foucaultian view of the period, suggesting that hermaphrodites be allowed to determine their own sex based on their genitals[205] and that this decision ought to be accepted by any medical professionals that might examine their body.[206] "For Paré, that which is monstrous is not necessarily unnatural."[207] Also in the realm of the monstrous-yet-natural were the multitudes of animals that were considered to be hermaphroditic. Some, like the hyena, were presumed to exist only as hermaphrodites or to change sex over time. Goats were noted for their tendency to give birth to hermaphrodites with frequency, and occasions of hermaphroditic birth were reported with hares, dogs, and a variety of ungulates.[208]

Intersex bodies confounded attempts to create and enforce a gender binary. Classification systems like Paré's were an attempt to fold hermaphrodites in to the existing categories despite their stubborn refusal to naturally conform. This particular system of identifying and labeling hermaphrodites was not embraced by all thinkers, however, and other systems sprang up to accommodate the needs of those who were in the business of category creation. Many of Paré's ideas come from Claude de Tesserant

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[204] Johnston, *Beard Fetish in Early Modern England*, 239.

[205] It cannot be stressed enough that this was a fairly atypical view, and was not, as far as I can tell, generally in practice.

[206] Long, *Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe*,. 46.

[207] Ibid., 42.

[208] Ibid., 72.

and his pamphlets created for a popular audience, demonstrating the influence ideas released into the public sphere could have on scholarly discourse.[209]

A variety of "cures" for intersex conditions existed in the form of surgery. The Swiss physician Caspar Bauhin wrote of the removal of penises, testicles, and vulva and suggested that too-small vagina openings could be made larger by dilation or perforation. If that was not sufficient, the cervix or uterus could be dilated for similar results. Bauhin does caution readers that these procedures should only be undertaken by skilled and clever surgeons and admits that the attempt he himself made resulted in the death of the patient. [210] Despite the risks, surgical solutions were sometimes sought by hermaphrodites themselves, or by their parents when the individuals were still children.[211] In some cases, surgical options were offered as part of legal proceedings, as in the case of a woman from Anjou, France[212] who was told by the court that her husbands' petition of annulment would be denied if she submitted to surgery to remove her penis or clitoris.[213]

Early modern law depended on binaries, and hermaphrodites complicated things in the court system.[214] Contrary to the perhaps wishful thinking of Foucault, the late medieval or early modern hermaphrodite was not generally permitted to choose their gender. Individuals deemed hermaphroditic were subject to a variety of laws and regulations regarding what they could and could not do that were often dependent on the gender classification they were assigned by the courts. They could not hold positions as

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[209] Ibid., 45.
[210] Ibid., 69.
[211] Daston and Park, "Hermaphrodites in Renaissance France," 3.
[212] Ibid., 7.
[213] The woman refused, and presumably the husbands' petition was accepted.
[214] Ruth Gilbert, *Early Modern Hermaphrodites: Sex and Other Stories* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 41.

rectors of universities or become lawyers or judges. Those judged to be female hermaphrodites were unable to serve as witnesses in trials. Opinions on inheritance rights varied, although female hermaphrodites were generally out of luck.[215] In many cases the middle ground between sexes was impossible to accept as an option because sex was such an important legal category,[216] and backsliding of any sort into behaviors of the former gender after a legal decision had been reached was not tolerated.[217]

Some legal musings about the status and rights of hermaphrodites were theoretical in nature rather than practical. The 1632 text *The Lawes Resolutions of Womens Rights* set forth a hypothetical situation in which a court would have to grapple with a hermaphrodite's uneasy gendered status. Ruth Gilbert describes the problem thusly: "if, in one scenario, a man died leaving three hermaphroditic children would there be a rightful heir? In the other scenario a man again died; this time leaving an eldest hermaphrodite child and two unmarried daughters. Who then would be the rightful heir?"[218] These instances, however unlikely, were challenges to legal systems that made rules for a binary world.

The workaround established by the author of *The Lawes Resolutions* was the same one found by other legal authorities—assign a dominant gender and move forward from there. The English jurist Edward Coke wrote as much in 1628: "Every heire is either male, or female, or an hermaphradite, that is both male and female. And an hermaphradite (which is also called Androgynus) shall bee heire, either as male or

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[215] Long, *Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe*, 70.
[216] Daston and Park, "The Hermaphrodite and the Orders of Nature," 425.
[217] Ibid., 7.
[218] Gilbert, *Early Modern Hermaphrodites*, 42.

female, according to that kinde of sexe which doth prevaile..."[219] In practice, however, such assignments were more difficult than the legal theorists might have anticipated.

The legal limbo created by a person's status as a hermaphrodite could wreck havoc on a life. It could also create legal cases which became well documented by medical and legal professionals. One such case was that of Marie/Marin le Marcis.[220] Le Marcis was raised as a woman until around puberty, when he began having intercourse with women and claiming to be a man. Because neither the court nor the medical teams could come to a consensus about which gender le Marcis physically was and legally should be, the court ordered le Marcis to continue living and dressing as a woman until a decision was reached—a process which took four years.[221]

Jacques Duval was a famous seventeenth century surgeon who was invaluable to the court during the case and was in fact able to "prove" le Marcis's status as a man after a physical examination in which Duval located what he described as a small, interior penis.[222] Duval's record of the trial is extensive and his involvement on the medical team that examined le Marcis was the deciding factor in the court's ruling, which ultimately spared his life.[223]

Eventually, le Marcis won the right to live as a man and went on to become a tailor and grow a beard—a physical marker of his masculinity.[224] It is important to note that while Duval declared le Marcis a man, he did so in order to satisfy the demands of the

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[219] Ibid., 42.
[220] Male pronouns will be used for le Marcis as he stated himself that he was a man.
[221] Johnston, *Beard Fetish in Early Modern England*, 242.
[222] Crawford, *European Sexualities*, 127.
[223] Ibid.
[224] Johnston, *Beard Fetish in Early Modern England*, 242.

court. In his later report he refused to concretely designate le Marcis as either gender, a stance that was highly unusual for the period.[225] Le Marcis's tale is retold in many histories, in part because of the extensive documentation of the trial, which suggests that it would have been known to at least some of the populace, including the medical community. Although other cases were not as widely discussed as the le Marcis trial, they did occur.

Declaring oneself a hermaphrodite was a defensive response to charges of sodomy or same-sex coital interactions, although not often an effective one. When Eleno de Céspedes was charged with sodomy and sorcery by the Inquisition, he predicated his defense on the fact that he was a hermaphrodite and thus capable of gender fluidity.[226] De Céspedes had been arrested after a letter was sent to the governor which declared that some knew him as a man and others knew him as both a man and a woman, a discrepancy that was problematic seeing as de Céspedes had recently married a woman.[227] He initially told the court that he was a man, but soon changed his tune and announced himself a hermaphrodite during interrogation with the declaration: "In reality I am and was a hermaphrodite. I have and had two natures, one of a man and the other of a woman."[228] He clarified this statement further within a letter to the Inquisition in which he stated:

> I have never pretended to be a man in order to marry a woman as some have impugned. What has happened is that in this world we have often heard of people who are androgynous, or who, by another name, are also called hermaphrodites who have two sexes. I am and have been a hermaphrodite, and at the time I married [María del Caño] the masculine

[225] Long, *Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe*, 82.
[226] Kagan, and Dyer, *Inquisitorial Inquiries*, 37.
[227] Ibid., 45.
[228] Ibid., 46.

> sex prevailed in me. I was naturally a man and had all the necessary parts of a man in order to marry...I have naturally been a man and a woman, and though this may be a prodigious and rare thing that is not often seen, hermaphrodites, as I am and have been, are not unnatural...[229]

It is impossible to say whether or not de Céspedes was an individual with an intersex condition, although Richard L. Kagan and Abigail Dyer posit that he was perceived by those examining him as biologically female and that his male anatomy was a fiction produced by bribes to members of the Madrid and Toledo medical communities,[230] including Francisco Díaz, surgeon to Felipe II.[231] What can be gleaned from de Céspedes's letter in particular is that hermaphrodites were "often" heard of and were understood well enough by de Céspedes to produce a convincing argument as to their naturalness. It is possible that de Céspedes possessed more knowledge than the average citizen of anatomical anomalies due to his eleven years of employment as a surgeon.[232]

The Hermaphrodite in Politics and Popular Culture

Hermaphrodites were used as political symbols in this era. Their ability to possess seemingly opposite characteristics in a single body made them useful metaphors for people and even nations divided, as did the feelings of disgust and wonder that they produced in observers. They could be used to demonstrate the moral failings of a populace or to mock a political target. In the sixteenth-century Thomas Artus used the hermaphrodite as a metaphor in attacks on King Henri III of France in his *Description de l'Isle des Hermaphrodites*. The narrator of the tale witnesses shocking social customs among peoples he encounters while travelling. Meant as a Protestant response to the

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[229]Ibid.
[230] Ibid., 43.
[231] García and Climenson, "Subjectivities in Transition," 5.
[232]Kagan, and Dyer, *Inquisitorial Inquiries,* 42.

excesses and perceived moral failings of Henri's court, the individuals in the story are a race of libertines. As Ann Jones and Peter Stallybrass write:

> In practice, the courtiers are bisexuals, permitted by local custom to make love to men and women both, in churches or any other convenient place; they are driven by mutual rivalry rather than any bodily precondition to dress in the splendid fabrics and fast-changing styles that Artus characterizes as "female fashion."[233]

The hermaphrodite in this interpretation becomes a symbol of excess and a corrupt society, devoid of morality. This particular reading of the hermaphroditic body is also found in George Sandy's commentary on Ovid. He quotes Strabo the historian:

> "In *Caria* is the fountaine of *Salmacis*, I knowe not how infamous for making the drinker effeminate: since luxury neither proceeds from the quality of the ayre nor water, but rather from riches and intemperance." The Carians therefore addicted to sloath and filthy delights were called *Hermaphrodties*; not in that [they were] of both sexes but for defiling themselves with either.[234]

Hermaphrodism, then, became a personality trait in this particular interpretation. Individuals might become one if they did not temper their lives with morality.

Henri III was not the only French monarch to have this sort of political commentary aimed at him. During the reign of Charles IX and his mother, Catherine de Medicis, Claude Tesserant wrote an account that included the story of conjoined twins who were also hermaphroditic. This birth of these unlikely siblings coupled with the births of monsters elsewhere in Europe led to civil unrest and plague.[235] Additionally, Tesserant writes about the Roman emperors Nero and Heliogabalus, known in this era for their immorality and gender ambiguity. Tesserant goes so far as to say that Nero "wanted to be

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[233] Jones and Stallybrass, "Fetishizing Gender," 92.
[234] Ibid., 95.
[235] Long, *Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe*, 192.

an Androgyne, male and female, in his own body, if not naturally, because Nature had denied him this, at least in the moral turpitude of his life."[236] Charles IX is accused of abandoning his masculinity and becoming an "androgyne" like Nero, with all of the attached political unrest that comes with that name.

Other examples of the hermaphrodite as political symbol are found in Martin Luther's attack on the Church. Luther called the pope and his followers "hermaphrodites and sodomites,"[237] thereby emphasizing that their behaviors went against not just common decency, but against God and Nature herself. These connotations made the hermaphrodite a very useful symbol for use in political attacks, which often also used the hermaphrodite to make charges of masculine deficiency on the part of the target.[238]

A hermaphrodite could purportedly come into being from the sinful acts of humanity, as seen in the widespread tale of the monster of Ravenna, supposedly born in 1512, a creature mixed both in sex and species. Various political meanings were attached to the monstrosity, including papal corruption and clerical abuse. Illustrations of the monster demonstrate a wide range of depictions although the majority does include the hermaphroditic aspect.[239] Pierre Boaistuau, who wrote of the monster in 1560 as part of a critique of Pope Julius II, recorded:

> ... there was born at Ravenna itself (which is one of the most ancient cities in Italy), a monster who was born with a horn on its head, two wings, and one foot similar to that of a bird of prey, and one eye on its knee, double as to its sex, participating in both male and female natures, it had on its stomach the sign of a Y and the sign of the cross, and yet it had no arms... the horn was the symbol of pride and ambition: the wings,

[236] Ibid., 194.
[237] Soyer, *Ambiguous Gender*, 50.
[238] Long, *Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe*, 38.
[239] Ibid., 32.

> lightness and inconstancy: the lack of arms, the lack of good works: by the raptor's foot, pillage, usury, and avarice: by the eye that was on the knee, the attraction to earthly matters: by the two sexes, Sodomy: and that because of all these sins that reigned at this time in Italy, this country was thus afflicted by wars.[240]

The monster is filled to the very brim with symbolism, and its hermaphroditic nature is interpreted as a warning regarding the sinful behaviors of both the populace and the pope. As Long reminds us, though, sodomy at this point in time was such a nebulous term that covered a vast range of "unnatural" behaviors,[241] which meant that the moralizing nature of the monster had a far reach. Its body serves to chastise sinners while justifying French aggression towards Italy.[242]

Attacks on the pope aside, religious attitudes towards hermaphrodites were primarily neutral or positive. Arguments were made by theologians to the effect that hermaphrodites could not be monsters or unnatural because they had been created by God.[243] Although they might have represented both genders, religious thought dictated that clear gender distinctions be drawn when it came to the sacraments and membership in the clergy. It was necessary to baptize hermaphrodites as one sex or the other according to dominant genitalia or arbitrary assignment,[244] and they were not permitted to enter holy orders even if they were declared predominantly male.[245]

During the Renaissance, some people believed that Adam himself had been hermaphroditic before the fall, a view recorded by Leone Ebro in 1535 when he wrote "...

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[240] Ibid., 34.
[241] Ibid., 35.
[242] Ibid., 36.
[243] Ibid., 19.
[244] Ibid., 69.
[245] Ibid., 70.

that Adam, that is the first man, whom God created on the sixth day of the Creation, being a human individual, combined in himself male and female without division..."[246] This belief was strongly condemned by the Church itself, but persisted nonetheless,[247] even appearing in Jaques Duval's treatise on hermaphrodites.[248] Ultimately, until the early seventeenth-century the hermaphrodite was a sign from God that demanded interpretation, at which point hermaphrodism became a physiological phenomenon above all else.[249]

Tales of hermaphrodites were found in the secular world as well. A sixteenth-century French story about an unfaithful wife includes a scene in which she tells her cuckolded husband that her lover is in fact a hermaphrodite in disguise.[250] Ben Jonson, the English playwright, used hermaphrodites to attack women in his play *Epicoene*. The "hermaphriditicall Collegiates" of the play are revealed to be women who are seeking "extravagant entertainment and multiple adultery" rather than the education they claim to be after.[251]

Pamphlets that were aimed at a large popular audience and focused on sensationalist tales often published accounts of monstrous births in both humans and animals, which included hermaphroditic people and creatures.[252] Jacques Duval recounted the tale of a woman who died while giving birth to 364 hermaphroditic children,[253] a claim that seems necessarily spurious to the modern reader but fit neatly into a world view in which

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[246] Ibid., 8.
[247] Ibid., 67.
[248] Long, "Jaques Duval," 127.
[249] Jenny C, Mann, "How to Look at a Hermaphrodite in Early Modern England," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 46, no. 1(2006): 70.
[250] Daston, "Hermaphrodites in Renaissance France," 10.
[251] Jones and Stallybrass, "Fetishizing Gender," 104.
[252] Soyer, *Ambiguous Gender*, 25.
[253] Long, *Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe*, 98.

monstrous occasions and people were very real possibilities. The birth of a hermaphroditic child or baby animal was often interpreted as a portent.[254] The alchemist Paracelus wrote about these portents in his book *Concerning the Signature of Natural Things*:

> So also there are born hermaphrodites, androgyni, men, that is to say, possessing both pudenda, male as well as female, and sometimes lacking both. Of monstrous signs like this I have noted many, both in males and females, all of which are to be regarded as monstrous signs of secret sins in the parents... These are signs of vices, and rarely denote anything good.[255]

This focus on the negative possibilities embodied by hermaphrodites is an example of the widespread fear and distrust of anything that might not be what it appears to be, also found in conversations about cross-dressing and gender transformation. Anxieties about gender fraud were linked to hermaphrodism, as the distinction between ambiguity and fraud was not always clear.[256] Tellingly, the prophet Tiresias is found in the circle of Hell reserved for those who have committed fraud in Dante's *Inferno*, presumably for false prophecy. However, his prophecy is not mentioned. Instead, Dante focuses on the fact that Tiresias was said to have changed from male to female and then back again,[257] implying that this gender change is also a form of fraud that deserves eternal punishment.

Poetry and hermaphrodism were often linked, as the dual body was such a rich source of symbolism. The court poets under Henri III embraced the use of those symbols in their

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[254] Ibid., 37.
[255] Long, *Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe*, 121.
[256] Ibid., 66.
[257] Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference*, 213.

works.[258] Théodore Agrippa d'Aubigné often incorporated hermaphroditic imagery without using the word itself. In one poem he writes:

> Just as love unites the difference
> Of body and soul, it is he alone who can
> Unite two other bodies in one, when he wishes,
> When from two spirits he is born.[259]

As poetic imagery, the hermaphroditic body is powerful. The mixing of not only soul but body as well is at once both erotic and romantic. It is also mystical, as demonstrated in this poem by Pierre le Loyer:

> My mother, pregnant with me, one day wanted to learn
> From the gods what I would be: A son, said Apollo,
> A daughter, said Mars, neither, said Juno:
> I was a hermaphrodite when she gave birth to me.[260]

Invoking the gods, Loyer makes the hermaphrodite the result of heavenly interference. Hermaphrodism was not simply a symbol in poetry, but poets themselves, especially female poets, were occasionally accused of hermaphrodism, generally as a criticism of their works. The popular French poet Louise Labé was accused of the somewhat ambiguous sin of "double hermaphrodism" after she wrote as the god Hermes in her poem "Elégie 2."[261] The English poet Mary Wroth was the target of this same sort of criticism. A critic declared her to be "Hermaphrodite in show, in deed a monster,"[262] an interesting distinction given that hermaphrodites themselves were often included in the "monster" category.

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[258] Long, *Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe*, 163.
[259] Ibid., 167.
[260] Ibid., 182.
[261] Jones and Stallybrass, "Fetishizing Gender," 101.
[262] Ibid., 102.

Hermaphrodites were recurrent imagery found within the world of alchemy, where gold (Sol) and silver (Luna) were sometimes depicted as male and female hermaphroditic, incestuous siblings, called *rebis*.[263] In alchemy the worlds of Christianity, Gnostic beliefs, ancient beliefs, and scientific exploration collided, sometimes in unsettled ways. An example of this uneasy union can be found in this passage written by the alchemist known as Paracelsus in the Renaissance:

> We know that there are only two stones, the white and the red. There are also two matters of the Stone, Sol and Luna, formed together in a proper marriage, both natural and artificial. Now, as we see that the man or the woman, without the seed of both, cannot generate, in the same way our man, Sol, and his wife, Luna, cannot conceive, or do anything in the way of generation, without the seed and the sperm of both. Hence the philosophers fathered that a third thing was necessary, namely, the animated seed of both, the man and the woman, without which they judged that the whole of their work was fruitless and in vain. Such a sperm is Mercury, which, by the natural conjunctions of both bodies, Sol and Luna, receives their nature into itself in union. Then at length, and not before, the work is fit for congress, ingress, and generation, by the masculine and feminine power and virtue. Hence the philosophers have said that this same Mercury is composed of body, spirit, and soul, and that it has assumed the nature and property of all elements. Therefore, with their most powerful genius and intellect, they asserted their Stone to be animal. They even called it their Adam, who carries his own invisible Eve hidden in his body, from that moment in which they were united by the power of the Supreme God, the maker of all creatures... Summarily, then, the matter of the Philosophers' Stone is none other than a fiery and perfect Mercury extracted by Nature and Art; that is, the artificially prepared and true hermaphrodite Adam...

Paracelsus was well known in his own day, and his contemporaries would have read these works. Some of them went on to repeat some of the notions mentioned in this text,

[263] Long, *Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe*, 111.

particularly the idea that Adam was a hermaphroditic being because he contained Eve within his body. [264]

Hermaphrodites in Inquisition Records

Along with imagined hermaphrodites in medical and legal theory and popular literature, instances of actual intersex bodies or ambiguous genitalia can be found in the records of the Spanish Inquisition. These allow for a look into the lives of those individuals and into the ways in which they were viewed by their communities.

In 1580 the officials of Valdaracete, Spain replied in detail to a questionnaire sent out by Philip II. The questionnaire was, among other things, meant to serve as a means to report any events that had been unusual or notable in the region, and was sent all over Castile. The officials of Valdaracete dutifully responded that they had a *hermafrodita* living in their midst, born in 1496. This individual was now known as Esteban, although he had once been Estefanía because for quite some time, everyone, including his family, believed he was a girl. As a girl, Esteban displayed physical talents that amazed his contemporaries. He was noted for his unfeminine behavior and strength, including his ability "to play with a ball with such skill and will that in her time no boy could equal her."

Eventually all of this unfeminine activity attracted the attention of authorities. Esteban was ordered to appear before the Chancery Court in Grenada, where a physical examination was undertaken. He was declared a hermaphrodite, and a masculine-dominated one at that. Soyer draws attention to the way the officials recording Esteban's

[264] Ibid., 117.

story for the king signal his gender transformation via a sudden switch in pronouns in the narrative:

> Taking this into consideration, she was ordered to choose the type of clothing in which she wished to live and go about. She chose that of a man and later he married with another woman and they lived married according to the rites of the church. He was a man of medium stature with a clean-shaven face and sturdy limbs. He was a fencing instructor in Granada and in that town he was so skillful that no man could defeat him in a competition.[265]

After his death, the officials noted that the extraordinary happened: Esteban's wife mourned the death of her husband, while his mother mourned the death of her daughter.[266]

There is a sort of civic pride attached to the story of Esteban for the officials of Valdaracete. They were willing to share the tale, but they were also invested in the creation of a narrative in which Esteban is a source of glory rather than shame. This pride comes as a surprise because in general, intersex individuals seem to have been a source of shame and derision, and the subject of gossip. An example of this reaction can be found in the case of Juan Díaz Donoso, an ordained priest living in western Spain in the 1630s.[267] He was investigated by the Inquisition on suspicion of being a hermaphrodite, a particularly weighty charge as Donoso was a member of the clergy. To this end, the inquisitors were specifically instructed to ask him if he was a hermaphrodite, and, if so, if

[265] Soyer, *Ambiguous Gender*, 54.
[266] García and Cleminson, "Subjectivities in Transition," 4.
[267] Soyer, *Ambiguous Gender*, 67.

he had a dispensation from the pope, as well as what sexual organs were most prominent for him at the time of his ordination.[268]

The hermaphrodite priest/ess was the source of much consternation for the inquisitors, but also for the parishioners who were unsure of what to do with the situation. Donoso had engaged in sexual intercourse with several men of the village after informing them that he was in fact not a man at all. Were they all now guilty of sodomy? This question was relevant to the inquisitors as well, because sodomy fell outside their jurisdiction, but far more worrisome was the idea that Donoso had led his parishioners to believe that women could become priests through his ambiguous gender and his claims to a dual gender.[269]

Witnesses were called who provided accounts of their interactions with the priest. One individual reported that "the priest told him that he was a woman. To this the witness replied "How can this be" for he had a beard and celebrated masses. The priest replied that he had many remedies that caused his beard to grow." Apparently convinced, the individual then proceeded to have sex with Donoso "as if with a woman."[270] Another witness declared that "One day Juan Díaz Donoso told him he had a bull from His Holiness in Rome permitting him to choose the status of man or woman."[271] Such a dispensation is not entirely unthinkable; in that same century another dispensation was given to the "Lieutenant Nun" so that he could continue to live as his chosen gender. Donoso repeated the claim that he had been given this privilege with another witness, stating:

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[268] Ibid., 69.
[269] Ibid., 73.
[270] Ibid., 76.
[271] Ibid., 80.

> I am a woman and possess a privilege from His Holiness [the Pope] permitting me to marry or chose the social status that I wish to have.
>
> The witness replied: "How can you be an ordained priest if you are also a woman?"
>
> Juan Díaz replied: "when I was ordained I had a miniscule penis but, fortunately, this has disappeared and now I only possess a vagina."
>
> To this the witness replied: "I cannot believe such a thing, which is impossible!"
>
> Juan Díaz Donoso replied: "Well then, wait as I will fetch the privilege that I received from His Holiness allowing me to do what I just said."
>
> [Donoso] got up and opened a black steel chest and got out of it a book like that of the Acts with an embellished binding and the witness could not recall how many pages it contained but its size was that of a [book printed in] the quarto format. At the beginning were three printed pictures and the witness stated that one of these represented the High Pontiff and the other two were representations of the Apostles.[272]

Unfortunately, the results of this particular case are unknown to historians at the present time.[273] It is important nonetheless because it suggests that knowledge of hermaphrodites was widespread among the general populace, who were eager to share the gossip with one another. Whether Donoso's body was intersex or not, there was clearly significant belief that it was. The outcome of his trial is unknown, but it could have been in a range of possibilities. Many intersex individuals were executed, like the unfortunate Antide Collas who was burned at the stake in France in 1599.[274] A few were looked upon with favor by their communities and thus protected, however, as seen in the case of Esteban.

Conclusion

In many ways the body of the hermaphrodite was a blank slate onto which a multitude of meanings and purposes could be drawn, from miraculous expressions of the wonders of nature and God to the physical manifestation of sin or social unrest and

[272] Ibid., 87.
[273] Ibid., 91.
[274] Ibid., 50.

change. No wonder, then, that the hermaphrodite became so ubiquitous and was the focus of so much interest, fear, and commentary. It was a malleable symbol that could be used in a plethora of situations.

While cross-dressing was the most visible form of gender non-conformity, hermaphrodism was the most visible example in political discourse, where cross-dressing also made an appearance. Hermaphrodism was everywhere, regardless of the fact that actual intersex individuals were not. Intersex individuals in this era were as uncommon then as they are today, but if historians were to judge from the amount of times they appear in books, plays, pamphlets, engravings, poems, and medical treatises, among other things, it would be easy to estimate that their numbers were far higher. It seems highly improbable that an individual could go their entire life without ever being exposed to at least the concept of hermaphrodism.

As bodies that defied a binary understanding, hermaphrodites complicated and confounded medical understandings of what made men and women. Regardless, they were forced into that binary by legal systems that sought to inscribe order on bodies that appeared lawless. Their presence in religious rhetoric and political conversations encouraged further visibility, which meant that those few individuals who were indeed intersex were recognizable to the medical professionals that examined them, if not to themselves and their neighbors.

Although not as present in popular culture as the hermaphrodite, the idea of bodily transformation was nonetheless also a part of the cultural and medical landscapes. Hermaphrodism was occasionally present in tales of transformation, such as when an

individual who was thought to be one gender was declared to be a hermaphrodite instead, or an intersex person was found to in fact be one gender or the other. Like hermaphrodites, individuals who changed from one gender to another occupied an in-between space that threatened the boundaries so important to social order and are the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Bodily Transformation

Throughout the late medieval and early modern periods, some medical professionals and laypeople believed in bodily transformation from female-to-male—and sometimes male-to-female. Because the body and gender were tightly wound together, when the body changed gender followed suit. Bodies themselves were found in an array of forms from the clearly identifiable to the ambiguous, and changed naturally throughout the lives of the people who possessed them, although gender transformation was not a typical change that the average person would expect to experience. Nevertheless, transformation of the body from one sex to another appeared in popular entertainment, folklore, and practical advice.

The act of a body quickly changing from one form to another both fascinated and repulsed people and often served as a symbol of other forms of change, be it political, social, or religious. Theories as to what caused gender transformation and how transformation happened were the subject of debate by medical and religious professionals across Europe. Transformation was a central plot device of countless folktales, plays, and other stories, making it a part of the entertainment landscape and increasing its accessibility as an idea to the general public. Stories of contemporary transformations spread via popular medical texts and news pamphlets as well as by word of mouth. Most of these were about female-to male-transformation, with only a few about male-to-female, as most authorities were convinced that it was not possible for men to change into women for a variety of reasons.

Transformation Theories

Opinions about transformation varied across Europe. In England, George Sandys wrote in his 1632 translation of Ovid's *Metamorphosis* that bodily transformation was believed possible for common people without divine intervention. "Women if we give credit to histories either ancient of moderne, (whereof wee shall treat in the transformation of *Iphis*) have often been changed into men," he writes, "but never man into woman."[275] The English anatomist John Banister asked rhetorically, "Shall it be counted as a fable that toucheth the transformation of one kinde into another, as the Male into the Female and so contrariwise?"[276] No, he says, because Pliny "him selfe to have sene a woman chaunged into man, in the day Of mariage, he playniy avoucheth. [277] These transformations were jarring and could theoretically happen to anyone, as long as that "anyone" was a woman. Women were thus advised to avoid certain activities that might increase their heat or cause a violent change in their physical make-up like the emergence of a penis. The transformations were understood in a variety of ways, from natural occurrences to monstrous events or marvels.[278] On the possibility of gender transmutations the English anatomist Helkiah Crooke wrote "The trueth of this appeareth by manifold stories of such women, whose more active and operative heate hath thrust out their Testicles, and of women made them men."[279] He followed this up with a series of stories previously recounted by others in which women turned into men such as: "in Vasconia, a man of above sixty years of age, grey, strong and hairy, who had been a woman until the age of 15 years or till within 15 years of threescore, yet at length by

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[275] George Sandys, *Ouids Metamorphosis Englished, mythologiz'd, and represented in figures. An essay to the translation of Virgil's AEneis. By G. S.* (Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, 1632), http://eebo.chadwyck.com, 103.

[276] Johnston, *Beard Fetish in Early Modern England,* 174.

[277] Ibid.

[278] Cleminson and García, *Sex, Identity and Hermaphrodites,* 12.

[279] Toulalan and Fisher, *Sex and the Body*, 61.

accident of a fall, the Ligaments (saith my Author) being broken, her privities came outward, and she changed her sexe."[280] Unlike many other anatomists, however, Crooke did not believe these stories, and declared that inverting male genitals would not make them female, nor would the reverse. It is more likely, he said, that these individuals were hermaphrodites all along.[281]

In France, the anatomist Jacques Duval shared some of Crooke's skepticism, but believed that gender transformation could occur in one direction only, that of female to male. The other way around would be impossible because "Men... never lose their virile nature or regress toward the female sex, since all thing tend toward perfection and do not degenerate into that which is less than perfect. Therefore the nature of man is more perfect than that of a woman."[282] Juan Huarte de San Juan, a sixteenth-century Spanish physician and psychologist, was of a different opinion, stating that "if Nature, having made a perfect male, wants to change him into a female, it merely has to turn his reproductive organs back inside the body."[283]

Some physicians and theologians, like the Italian Franciscan Ludovico Maria Sinistrari, thought that tales of transformation were exaggerated, and that individuals who were supposed to have changed from women to men were in fact the victims of poor anatomy comprehension and inadequate medical knowledge. He wrote "In the aforesaid girls, no scrotum appeared with its tackles, no beard with a manly voice, nor did the cleft in the female cuntus disappear either: but, the latter remaining constant, the clitoris alone broke out, and people believed it was a man's yard, it looked so like one." He went on to

[280] Crooke, *Mikrokosmographia*, 184.
[281] Toulalan and Fisher, *Sex and the Body*, 62.
[282] Johnston, *Beard Fetish in Early Modern England,* 243.
[283] Soyer, *Ambiguous Gender*, 23.

declare that in tales of transformation where the former women grew beards or begat children, the individuals were in fact "androgynuses" who had switched from female to male as their prevailing sex. [284]

Bodily transformation occasionally featured in religious texts. The Gnostic text *The Gospel of Thomas* has a portion in which Jesus declares that he will transform Mary Magdalene into a man "so that she also may become a living spirit like you males. For every woman who has become male will enter into the kingdom of heaven."[285] Even orthodox authors such as St. Jerome wrote things like "As long as woman is for birth and children, she is different from man as body is from soul. But if she wishes to serve Christ more than the world, then she will cease to be a woman and will be called a man,"[286] which seems to be arguing that nuns rescinded their status as women when they entered the convent.

Theological arguments were made as to the feasibility of natural transformation and the spiritual nature of the changes. The Spanish Jesuit and demonologist Martín del Rio posited in his 1599 *Disquisitionum magicarum libri sex* that physical sex changes had the potential to occur naturally and were thus subject to demonic manipulation because demons had the ability to impact and manipulate the natural world. Conversely, the Italian theologian and philosopher Tommaso Campanella argued in his *Quaestiones physiologicae* that the transformations were always natural and thus could not be seen or

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[284] Sherry Valesco, *Lesbians in Early Modern Spain* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2011), 31.

[285] Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub, *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, ed. Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub (New York: Routledge, 1991), 85.

[286] Ibid., 86.

understood as diabolical, as demons did not hold sway over that which was natural.[287] The *Malleus Maleficarum* discussed transformations that could be caused by witches. Although they were not explicitly gender changes, these changes involved male genitals and their disappearance, leading to a kind of gender panic. "And what, then," the author writes "is to be thought of those witches who in this way sometimes collect male organs in great numbers, as many as twenty or thirty members together, and put them in a bird's nest, or shut them up in a box, where they move themselves like living members, and eat oats and corn...?"[288] While witches might not be able to change a man into a woman, she could remove that which defined his masculinity through transformation. These conflicting ideas were part of the wide variety of opinions in regards to gender transformation in the eyes of the Church.

Saints in particular were particularly susceptible to gender change. Sometimes the change was largely symbolic, such as in the case of Saint Perpetua. According to hagiographic Perpetua was to be martyred for her Christian beliefs by the Romans, and in the days leading up to her death by beast in the arena she has a series of four visions. In the fourth, Perpetua envisions herself in the amphitheatre, where she is surprised to be faced not by beasts, but by an Egyptian with a sword. In an instant: "My clothes were stripped off, and suddenly I was a man."[289] No one else in the vision seems to notice the change, and it is not mentioned again in the account, but the account itself was repeated throughout the late medieval period with those of other saints. At other times the changes

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[287] Soyer, *Ambiguous Gender*, 292.

[288] Heinrich Institoris and Jakob Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, trans. Montague Sommers (London: Pushkin, 1948), 108.

[289] Elizabeth Castelli, ""I Will Make Mary Male": Pieties of the Body and Gender Transformation of Christian Women in Late Antiquity" in *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, ed. Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub (New York: Routledge, 1991), 41.

were explicitly physical in nature. St. Paula of Avila, also known as Barbata, sought to avoid a marriage and prayed to Christ for disfigurement. [290] This was granted to her in the form of a "beard... on her chin and moustaches on her lip."[291]

Transformation on the Page and Stage

Like bearded saints, characters in fiction who underwent transformation were often well received by late medieval and early modern audiences. In literature, transformation was often the end result of extended cross-dressing and gender subterfuge on the part of a character. A trope within both romances and comedies, it served to capitalize on fears of gender instability while reinscribing heteronormativity on any same-sex relationships that might have developed. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* was translated in 1626 by George Sandys, who included commentary in the text on the believability of a woman becoming a man by pointing to contemporary examples of transformation.[292]

Most if not all bodily gender transformations in literature centered on female bodies becoming male bodies. The genre of *chanson de geste*, historical romances written in French verse, contains some examples of transformation, as in the text *Tristan de Nanteuil*. Similar to another text from the same cultural and geographical context, *Yde ed Olive*, *Tristan de Nanteuil* is a text in which a cross-dressed woman embarks upon a romance with another woman which ultimately results in both transformation and subsequent procreation. Francesca Canadé Sautman has argued that both texts lend

[290] Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, *Forgetful of Their Sex: Female Sanctity and Society, CA. 500-1100* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 152.
[291] Johnston, *Beard Fetish in Early Modern England*, 179.
[292] Epstein and Straub, *Body Guards*, 86.

themselves to the "possibility of a queer history", and that *Tristan de Nanteuil* blurs categories more through gender ambiguity and change than through transvestism.[293]

Tristan de Nanteuil was written in the early fourteenth century and concerns a woman, Blanchandine, who has disguised herself as a man in order to avoid detection by her relatives. In this guise, she attracts the affections of a Saracen princess whom she subsequently marries. In order to avoid public exposure and death, Blanchandine prays to God for help and is offered the option of transformation. [294] She readily accepts this proposition and heteronormative order is restored, reaffirming the idea of woman as an imperfect being. There is a great deal of gendered symbolism throughout the story, most notably that of a doe transformed into a buck and a buck that disrupts what would have been the reveal of Blanchandine's female sex.

In the *Casamiento entre do Damas*, the beautiful princess Doña Gertrudis falls in love with and subsequently marries a woman with whom she lives for four years. When rumors begin to circulate as to the nature of the marriage, Doña Gertrudis begins to search for a solution to their same-sex problem. She is then knocked over by a unicorn, causing her to first form a cross upon her breast and then to transform into a man.[295] This supernatural component to transformation was common throughout plays and literary work, with transformation frequently occurring because of gods or the spirit of Nature.

An English example of this phenomenon is found in *Gallathea*, a play written by the English playwright John Lyly in 1585 and, as the first printed edition notes, performed

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[293] Francesca Canadé Sautman ,"What Can They Possibly Do Together?: Queer Epic Performances in *Tristan de Nanteuil*" in *Same Sex Love and Desire Among Women in the Middle Ages,* ed. Francesca Canadé Sautman and Pamela Sheingorn (New York:Palgrave, 2001), 200.

[294] Ibid., 208.

[295] Cleminson and García, *Sex, Identity and Hermaphrodites,* 36.

before Queen Elizabeth I on January 1 of 1588.[296] The first known printed edition appeared in 1592. *Gallathea* is similar to the other pieces discussed here—it concerns two women, Gallathea and Phyllida, who disguise themselves as men and have to grapple with the inevitable romantic feelings they feel for one another. As in other tales, one of the women is transformed into a man by the gods, but here *Gallathea* takes a noticeable departure from the traditional plot, as I will discuss in more detail below. Lyly's unique prose style, an ornate and mannered style termed Euphuism from another of Lyly's works, contributes to the complex and unusual turn the play takes.

Themes of classicism and sexual purity are present throughout the play, which opens with both a mention of Neptune and the pronouncement that he demands a virgin sacrifice every five years. Gallathea and Phyllida are both the daughters of shepherds who have disguised them as boys in order to keep them from the terrible fate that would befall them were their 'virgin innocence' to be discovered. Throughout the play both Gallathea and Phyllida call constant attention to their chasteness as well as to the fact that they recognize the problematic nature of their disguises, as demonstrated by the interaction between Phyllida and her father, Melebeus, in 1.3:

> PHYLLIDA. Whatsoever you command I will not refuse, because you command nothing but my safety and your happiness. But how shall I be disguised?
>
> MELEBEUS. In man's apparel.
>
> PHYLLIDA. It will neither become my body nor my mind.
>
> MELEBEUS. Why, Phyllida?

[296] John Lyly and Anne Begor Lancanshire, *Gallathea and Midas* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1969), xi.

> PHYLLIDA. For then I must keep company with boys, and commit follies unseemly for my sex, or keep company with girls and be thought more wanton than becometh me. Besides, I shall be ashamed of my long hose and short coat, and so unwarily blab out something by blushing at everything. (1.3. 10-22)

Phyllida and Gallathea meet in the second act, whereupon their discomfort and mutual deceit is used for comedic effect. They are joined by the goddess Diana, who is engaged in the masculine activity of hunting. Diana is also deceived by the disguises, while both Phyllida and Gallathea are attracted by the beauty of the other during this scene. Enter Cupid and Neptune, who see through the disguises and comment on the folly of mortals who think such things can trick all the gods. This causes Cupid to plot to plant a seed of love in the hearts of the women as well as Diana and her attendants, presumably for the amusement of himself and Neptune. The women have adopted their fathers' names in order to further their disguise and they begin to pine for one another. Gallathea in particular chastises herself for adopting not just the clothing of a boy, but the thoughts of one as well:

> GALLATHEA. How now, Gallathea, miserable Gallathea, that having put on the apparel of a boy thou canst not also put on the mind!... Why did Nature to him, a boy, give a face so fair, or to me, a virgin, a fortune so hard? I will now use for the distaff the bow, and play at quoits abroad that was wont to sew in my sampler at home. (2.4. 1-11)

Her frustration is mirrored by Phyllida:

> PHYLLIDA: Poor Phyllida, curse the time of thy birth and rareness of thy beauty, the unaptness of thy apparel and the untamedness of thy affections. Art thou no sooner in the habit of a boy but thou must be enamored of a boy? What shalt thou do when what best liketh thee most discontenteth thee? (2.5. 1-5)

Phyllida and Gallathea lament their circumstances but begin to test the waters around one another with clumsy flirting. While this is clearly meant to be a comedic devise, it is difficult to avoid the subtext of same-sex attraction that lurks just below the surface. Both women drop hints about their true natures, which leads to suspicion:

> PHYLLIDA. Suppose I were a virgin (I blush in supposing myself one), and that under the habit of a boy were the person of a maid: if I should utter my affection with sighs, manifest my sweet love by my salt tears, and prove my loyalty unspotted and my griefs intolerable, would not then that fair face pity this true heart?
>
> GALLATHEA. Admit that I were as you would have me suppose that you are, and that I should with entreaties, prayers, oaths, bribes, and whatever can be invented in love, desire your favor, would you not yield?
>
> PYLLIDA. Tush, you come in with "admit."
>
> GALLATHEA. And you with "suppose."
>
> PYHLLIDA. [aside] What doubtful speeches be these! I fear me he is as I am, a maiden.
>
> GALLATHEA. [aside] What dread riseth in my mind! I fear the boy be as I am, a maiden.(3.2.17-30)

Their suspicious aroused, the women realize that they have an entirely new problem on their hands. If they are both women, then there can be no satisfactory solution, and if one of them is a woman and the other a man, then to confess would mean that the revealed woman might be sacrificed:

> PHYLLIDA. And may it not be that her father practiced the same deceit with her that my father hath with me, and knowing her to be fair, feared she should be unfortunate? If it be so, Phyllida, how desperate is thy case! If it be not, how doubtful! For if she be a maiden, there is no hope of my love; if a boy, a hazard. I will after him or her, and lead a melancholy life, that look for a miserable death. (4.4. 38-43)

Phyllida does not offer forth the option that she might not be attracted to Gallathea as a woman. She resigns herself to a life of mourning for a relationship that could not be for reasons of gender incompatibility. Her same-sex attraction is no longer couched solely in the realm of comedy but is now also a serious problem for which there seems to be no remedy.

The play closes with a reveal before Neptune. The women realize the truth of the situation and are overcome with grief—they are both women, and yet the attraction still lingers:

> MELEBEUS. This is my daughter, my sweet Phyllida.
>
> TITYRUS. And this is my fair Gallathea.
>
> GALLATHEA. Unfortunate Gallathea, if this be Phyllida!
>
> PHYLLIDA. Accursed Phyllida, if that be Gallathea!
>
> GALLATHEA. And wast thou all this while enamored of Phyllida, that sweet Phyllida?
>
> PHYLLIDA. And couldst thou dote upon the face of a maiden, thyself being one, on the face of fair Gallathea?
>
> NEPTUNE. Do you both, being maidens, love one another? (5.3. 110-119)

The women do not state outright that they do, but this is heavily implied. The goddess Diana instructs them to abandon their "fond, fond affections" as Nature demands, to which they respond:

> GALLATHEA. I will never love any but Phyllida. Her love is engraven in my heart with her eyes.
>
> PHYLLIDA. Nor I any but Gallathea, whose faith is imprinted in my thoughts by her words.

> NEPTUNE. An idle choice, strange and foolish, for one virgin to dote on another, and to imagine a constant faith where there can be no cause for affection. How like you this, Venus? (5.3. 127-133)

At this point transformation enters the picture. Venus, goddess of love, has final say over the outcome of the relationship, and declares:

> VENUS. I like well and allow it. They shall both be possessed of their wishes, for never shall it be said that Nature or Fortune shall overthrow love and faith. Is your loves unspotted, begun with truth, continued with constancy, and not to be altered till death? (5.3. 134-138)

Venus's assent demonstrates a complex moment. If the audience is unaware that there will be a transformation to follow, it appears that she is giving implicit support to a same-sex pairing. If they are aware, Venus's words nod to the idea that a transformation is not necessarily natural but also that it is something that can supersede nature. The women respond favorably to her questioning:

> GALLATHEA. Die, Gallathea, if thy love not be so.
>
> PHYLLIDA. Accursed be thou, Phyllida, if they love be not so.
>
> DIANA: Suppose all this, Venus; what then? (5.3. 139-141.)

And here the crux of the issue is thrust to the forefront. Diana asks the question that has been laying heavily over the whole scene—what now? If a same-sex relationship is an impossibility, then it seems as though there is no way forward, whether Venus approves or not. Fortunately, Venus is prepared:

> VENUS. Then shall it be seen that I can turn one of them to be a man, and that I will.
>
> DIANA. Is it possible?

> VENUS. What is to love or the mistress of love unpossible? Was it not Venus that did the like to Iphis and Ianthes? How say ye, are ye agreed, one to be a boy presently?
>
> PHYLLIDA. I am content, so I may embrace Gallathea.
>
> GALLATHEA. I wish it, so I may enjoy Phyllida. (5.3. 148-149)

With that, Venus transforms one of the women. Unlike other plays that feature transformation, however, *Gallathea* does not reveal to the spectators who has become a man. In other plays this was done on-stage as a way to reinscribe heteronormativity and quiet anxieties about gender, which makes it all the more curious that Lyly did not choose to end the play in that manner. Other aspects of his script were interesting as well—Phyllida and Gallathea both decline to ask their fathers for permission to change gender. Both fathers protest, and yet the change occurs anyway.

This dismissal of masculine authority is important for several reasons. Not only is it a literal challenge of patriarchal authority, but it is also a demonstration that perhaps the gender transformation has already begun. At the beginning of the play both Gallathea and Phyllida are dutiful daughters who obey their fathers even when the order to dress as males makes them uneasy. At the end when they have decided to move forward with their unconventional relationship, neither of them takes into account the wishes of her father. This move away from acceptable feminine behavior passes without remark, suggesting that while their physical forms are still female, they have begun to be conceived of as male and are thus awarded the autonomy that goes along with it.

Gallathea is unique because the transformation itself could not be verified by the audience. All other contemporary plays that feature gender transformation or even cross-dressing were careful to have a reveal in which order was restored, as seen in a multitude

of Shakespeare's plays. Instead, Lyly had the change occur after the play's conclusion, thereby signifying that the transformation itself was less than imperative for the conclusion of the tale. By contrast, other aspects of *Gallathea* are frequently found in plays in which transformation features, particularly the mention of a classical, mythical couple who were brought together by a gender change of their own. Lyly chose to have Venus call to mind Iphis and Ianthe from *Metamorphoses*, indicating that his courtly audience would have been familiar enough with the story to understand the reference.

Turning from England to Spain, in Cristóbal de Villalón's *El Crótalon de Crisóforo Gnofoso* a disguised woman is once again the object of affection for a woman who does not realize her beloved's true identity. When the deceit is uncovered, the lover Melisa is distraught.[297] Like Gallathea and Phyllida, Melisa is unable to shake her attraction to Julio/Julia and describes it as unnatural: "not even among animals can one expect such love from a female." Melisa dreams that her lover is transformed in the night:

> Secluded in a room, the women went to bed together... and Melisa sighted with such desire that needs to satisfy its appetite... and then she dreamed that heaven had allowed Julieta to turn into a man... and Melisa's soul was so eager that it seemed that she could actually see what she was dreaming. And so when she woke up she wanted to confirm it by touching it with her own hand and she saw that her dream had been an illusion. [298]

In Melisa's heterocentric world, her relationship with Julieta can only have a meaningful and pleasurable physical component if her lover is miraculously granted a penis. Unable to deny her affection for Julieta, Melisa turns to transformation as the cure for this insurmountable problem. This desire for transformation in a lover or friend is found in other early modern Spanish texts as well, such as the poem "El sueño de la viuda

[297] Valesco, *Lesbians in Early Modern Spain*, 146.
[298] Ibid., 147.

de Aragón," in which a servant magically acquires a penis, much to the delight of her employer.[299]

These tales of transformation make same-sex interactions "acceptable" by interjecting a male locus of attention in the form of a phallus. They also reveal ways in which transformation was understood. In *El Crótalon*, Melisa is seduced by Julieta's twin who tells her that he is Julieta and that his grandmother had used magic in order to transform his sex. Julieta's change is complete—she becomes a man in Melisa's dream and again in the form of her twin.[300] Other transformations simply allow for women to gain male sexual organs without leaving their gender behind. These fictional tales use an element of fantasy to both titillate and to distance the transformation from reality.

Contemporary Examples

For some authors, transformation was a very real phenomenon that could be observed in the natural world. Indeed, Huarte de San Juan wrote that no one should be shocked by tales of transformation because "besides having been related as true by many ancient writers, it happened not long ago in Spain."[301] The French surgeon Ambroise Paré recorded a collection of four contemporary transformation stories in 1573 entitled *Memorable stories about women who have degenerated into men*.(An equivalent document for male-to-female transformation has not yet been found.) Paré's document did not record anything that he himself had witnessed, however, but rather largely relied on the tales of others. He writes:

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[299] Ibid., 148.
[300] Ibid., 149.
[301] Ibid., 27.

> Amatus Lusitanus tells that there was, in a burg named Esgueira, a girl called Marie Pacheca, who, arriving at the time of life when girls begin their monthlies, instead of the above-mentioned monthlies, a male member came out of her, which was formerly hidden within, and hence she changed from female to male; for which reason she was clothed in men's clothes and her name was changed from Marie to Manuel.

Paré also recorded that Marie/Manuel became a trader in India and returned to Portugal to marry. Neither Lusitanus nor Paré knew if Marie/Manuel and his wife had children, but it was recorded that he was never able to grow a beard—an external marker of masculinity. *Memorable stories* also records the story of a sixty year old man in Reims who "people had taken to be a girl until he was fourteen; but while disporting himself and frolicking, having gone to bed with a chambermaid, his male genital parts came to be developed." It includes the tale of Germain Garnier who was sometimes called Germain Marie because "until he was fifteen years of age, he had been held to be a girl, given the fact that no mark of masculinity was visible in him, and furthermore that along with the girls he even dressed like a woman."[302] These stories vary in their source. One was collected from a text, one was a story told to Paré by an acquaintance, one was collected from the works of Pliny, and one—that of Germain Garnier—was recorded because Paré claimed to have met the individual in question after the transformation. There is evidence to suggest that Garnier's story of transformation was well known locally. Michel de Montaigne recorded in his journal in 1581 that a popular song "sung by all the girls of the place" warned girls against taking large steps and leaps lest they become men like Marie.[303]

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[302] Paré, "Memorable Stories," 77.

[303] Michel de Montaigne, "The Journal of Montaigne's Travels in Italy by Way of Switzerland and Germany" in *The Literature of Lesbianism: A Historical Anthology from Ariosto to Stonewall*, ed. Terry Castle (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 81.

Montaigne's comments suggest that stories of recent gender transformations could become part of folklore. One of these was the story of Magdalena Muñoz, a Spanish woman, whose story was circulated in a tabloid style pamphlet. Muñoz's father despaired of her ever finding a husband due to her excessively masculine features and sent her to a convent. In 1617 at the age of 34 she suffered a painful groin injury which resulted in the appearance of a penis as well as the quick development of facial hair and a deep voice.[304] At this point the pamphlet switches pronouns,[305] as Magdalena changed his name to Gaspar and became his father's heir. Gaspar became a soldier and was stationed in the Italian Peninsula until his death in 1638, and was subject to the curious inquiries of those around him, with one reporting that "[w]e saw the male genitalia with our own eyes and we touched it with our hands."[306] The pamphlet in which the story was published was circulated throughout Granada, Seville, and even made its way to Lima, Peru, giving it a wide and varied audience.[307] Muñoz's story gave rise to a popular couplet in the region where these events are said to have happened, evidence that this transformation was known by the local populace:[308]

> *Monja de Coronada,*
> *Bien os podéis alabar,*
> *Ya que Doña Magdalena,*
> *Se convirtió en Don Gaspar.*[309]

Contemporary cases of transformation were reported all over Europe. In a series of lectures delivered in a barber-surgeon's hall between 1632 and 1634, Alexander Read

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[304] Valesco, *Lesbians in Early Modern Spain*, 29.
[305] Ibid., 28.
[306] Ibid., 163.
[307] Ibid., 29.
[308] Soyer, *Ambiguous Gender*, 55.
[309] The nun of Coronada/who you can all praise/was Doña Magdalena/and has turned(converted) into Don Gaspar.

declared "in women their courses being stopped, vapors ascend to the chin, from whence a beard doth bud out. As Hippoc[rates]... doth report of *Phaetusa* the wife of *Phytheus*, who got a beard by reason of her husbands absence from her." Thomas Alen wrote about Anna Wilde, a girl who was exhibited in London to demonstrate her hermaphroditic nature. Anna was born and raised as a girl, but "suddenly" developed a penis at the age of 13, followed by simultaneous menstruation and growth of facial hair at 16.[310] Antonio de Torquemada wrote in his 1570 *Jardin de flores curiosas* that a girl had "come to the age when she should start menstruation, but instead a male member began to grow and came out from where it was hidden. Therefore, being a woman, she became a man, and so they dressed her in men's clothing."[311] Transformations like this were unambiguous, and despite their rarity fell into a neat, binary understanding of gender. Torquemada's subject was a woman first, and then a man; her[312] venture into the space in-between was so short that it did not warrant examination. Not all cases of transformation were so neat and orderly, however, particularly when bodies that were ambiguous to begin with were involved.

One of these was the previously mentioned case of Eleno de Céspedes, born a slave in Spain, who claimed not only to be a hermaphrodite but also to have experienced physical transformation more than once. Céspedes was initially understood to be female and married a man, but her experience of giving birth was so violent and forceful that it caused male genitals to appear.[313] He then married a woman and was arrested by the

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[310] Johnston, *Beard Fetish in Early Modern England,* 247.

[311] Valesco, *Lesbians in Early Modern Spain*, 27.

[312] Because I have no information on this individual other than that which Torquemada provides, I have opted to use her gender as it was originally presented and to follow the pronoun usage of Torquemada himself.

[313] García and Climenson, "Subjectivities in Transition," 5.

Inquisition on charges of bigamy. The second transformation was during his imprisonment when his aforementioned male genitals began to decay, causing Eleno to employ the skills and knowledge that he had gained as a surgeon's apprentice to remove the physical markers of his maleness until they disappeared altogether.[314] The Inquisitors discussed this remarkable series of transformations as they investigated the shifting nature of his gender. The parallels between the shifting genders and the shifting narratives suggest that Céspedes viewed his gender as malleable, something to be changed and worked with in order to survive in the way he wished.

Céspedes' transformation was understood as a physical event, as were the transformations of Pacheca, Garnier, Muñoz, and Wilde. While physical trauma or changes in bodily function like the onset of menstruation are the most common reasons cited as the causes of transformation, it was possible for mental function to bring on such a change. The Spanish Inquisitor Tomás de Torquemada wrote of an individual who was in an unhappy marriage, and "out of envy or some other reason"[315] stole male clothing and began travelling and working as a man. This eventually led to a physical transformation caused by "her intense imagination from seeing herself dressed as a man,"[316] and a marriage to a woman.

Many of the stories collected about bodily transformation record in detail how the transformation actually physically occurred. For example, in his explanation of Germain Garnier's story, Paré describes how Garnier leapt over a ditch while chasing a pig and:

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[314] Ibid., 6.
[315] Velasco, *Lesbians in Early Modern Spain*, 27.
[316] Ibid., 28.

> at that very moment the genitalia and the male rod came to be developed in him, having ruptured the ligaments by which previously they had been held enclosed and locked in (which did not happen to him without pain), and, weeping, he returned from the spot to his mother's house, saying that his guts had fallen out of his belly...[317]

This physical description gives insight into how men such as Paré who were familiar with physiology understood the aspects of transformation that had to play out on the body itself.

As mentioned earlier, bodily transformation could also theoretically be brought about intentionally by human action. Late Renaissance authors often wrote about the Roman emperor Heliogabalus and his surgical attempts to become a woman.[318] Caspar Bauhin shared the story of an Ethiopian woman, born a hermaphrodite, who sought a surgical sex change in order to live fully as a woman but was denied this because of the physical risk involved.[319] An example from the Portugese academic João Rodrigues de Castello Branco, otherwise known as Amatus Lusitanus, can be found in the first *centuria* of his *Curationum medicinalium.* There, Lusitanus recounts the case of a child who lived between the sexes for the first few years of hir life because the parents would not allow for a surgical procedure to cure hir of the apparent intersex condition.[320]

When Jerónimo de Huerta published an annotated translation of Pliny's *Natural History* in 1599, he wrote about Eleno de Céspedes as an example of how surgery could be used to simulate transformation in order to deceive authorities. In 1676, Fray Antonio de Fuentelapeña wrote of him as well, stating that Céspedes and his case were most cited

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[317] Paré, "Memorable Stories," 78.
[318] Long, *Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe*, 25.
[319] Ibid., 66.
[320] Cleminson and García, *Sex, Identity and Hermaphrodites,* 92.

as examples when debates about natural transformation arose.[321] These fears of fraud are present in many tales of transformation; when a perceived hoax was discovered in the form of a cross-dressed individual or a gender non-conforming person whose body did not match their gender expression, the ensuing reaction was often violent.

Transformation of the body from one gender to the other was clearly a possibility that was on the minds of many medical professionals and common people, regardless of whether or not they believed it was possible. It was present in a multitude of different media where it demonstrated that gender was not a fixed state of being. Transformation stories, whether they were in medical texts, plays, or somewhere else, demonstrated to those who heard them that the body could be changed and gender could be malleable. This malleability was present in other forms of gender transgression and non-conformity. Given that people in this era saw a significant link between the clothing a person was wearing and their gender, it could be said that cross-dressing, the subject of my next chapter, was a form of transformation as well.

[321] Velasco, *Lesbians in Early Modern Spain*, 82.

Chapter 5: Cross-Dressing

Cross-dressing, the act of donning the clothing of the "opposite" gender, is quite possibly the most visible form of gender non-conformity in the historical record. It can be found in fiction and in numerous contemporary accounts, in laws and in religion. It may have been the most visible form of gender non-conformity for late medieval and early modern people as well because of its legitimization within certain popular pastimes like carnival and theatre. Although at times officially sanctioned, cross-dressing was deemed a dangerous activity by medieval observers because it posed a threat to the natural order and might incite the populace to emulate such behaviors. [322]

The term cross-dressing will be used in this chapter alongside the often used "transvestism," but all attempts to use cross-dressing will be made because of the implications transvestism has as a sexually charged word in common parlance. Although the words when taken literally mean the exact same thing, cross-dressing is more neutral and takes a less clinical approach to the act. While cross-dressing generally means men's clothes worn by a woman and vice-versa, here it also refers to wearing clothes other than the ones an individual has been socially assigned. This distinction must be drawn because the gender identities of some of the individuals in this chapter are uncertain or ambiguous.

For the purposes of this thesis, cross-dressing refers to both short-term activities like wearing clothing other than those which have been socially assigned while in the role of an actor or for carnival, and donning such clothing for extended periods of time, often for

[322] Ad Puter, "Transvestite Knights in Medieval Life and Literature" in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997), 281.

a particular purpose. Many gender non-conforming individuals engaged in cross-dressing in some form, but not all cross-dressers were gender non-conforming, particularly those who did so in the course of socially sanctioned activities like acting or carnival. Those individuals might have been wearing clothing that did not match their socially assigned gender, but they did it in such a way that would have been recognized by their contemporaries as not falling outside the realm of normal.

It should be acknowledged that this chapter owes a significant debt to Rudolf Dekker and Lotte van de Pol's *The Tradition of Female Transvestism in Early Modern Europe*. Dekker and van de Pol have contributed immeasurably to the field of gender history, and their work on female cross-dressers in the Netherlands in the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries is the closest example of what I believe the field needs when analyzing gender non-conforming individuals. Their invaluable and exhaustive study makes a wonderful blueprint for future scholarship.

Cross-dressing is a complex topic in this era, if only because the responses to it vary so wildly from source to source. What earns one instance of cross-dressing condemnation and punishment earns another sainthood or a dispensation from the Pope. Legal and religious views were inconsistent, as were depictions within literature and popular culture. The huge number of actual instances of cross-dressing that have been documented reveal that it was a widespread phenomenon across most of Western Europe.

Legal and religious rhetoric

The legality of cross-dressing varied transtemporally and transnationally. Sumptuary laws were enacted throughout Europe to police socio-economic status and gender as well

as other social markers by restricting clothing and fabric types as well as forms of ornamentation and recreation.[323] In seventeenth-century France cross-dressing was expressly against the sumptuary laws, while in seventeenth-century England, cross-dressing between genders[324] was condemned by moralists but not actually illegal.[325] No Dutch legal literature prescribed punishments for cross-dressing despite the large number of cross-dressing cases prosecuted.[326] In Spain, edicts banning female transvestism were issued in 1608, 1615, 1641, 1653, 1672, and again in 1675,[327] which suggests that the women of Spain were actively flouting the rules of both their gender and the state.

Many of the concerns about cross-dressing revolved around fears of gender fraud. It was of particular concern because the boundaries between male and female were strictly delineated by clothing and other visual markers of gender. Dekker and van de Pol write: "A sailor, in trousers, smoking a pipe, with short and loose hair, would not easily be thought of as anything but a man."[328] In the case of Trijn Jurriaens, a forger and general miscreant, cross-dressing was involved in both the crime and the punishment, with Jurriaens sentenced to wear male clothing in prison.[329] Trijn was considered a gender fraud because zi used the guise of masculinity to gain access to legal rights zi did not have when living as a woman. Questions of legitimacy and legal ability could come up when cross-dressing was involved. In the Netherlands, handbooks for notaries tackled the

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[323] Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 25.

[324] Cross-dressing between *classes* was explicitly illegal.

[325] Jones and Stallybrass, "Fetishizing Gender," 89.

[326] Rudolph Dekker and Lotte van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism in Early Modern Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 76.

[327]Soyer, *Ambiguous Gender*, 20.

[328] Dekker and van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism*, 23.

[329] Ibid., 77.

seemingly unusual problems that might arise if a male witness was actually a cross-dressed woman.[330]

Sometimes cross-dressing was brought up in a trial within a list of other crimes or as evidence of wanton behavior when cross-dressing itself was not illegal. In 1701 Isabe Bunkens[331] was tried not only for cross-dressing and living as a man, but also for marrying two different women and murdering his landlady in order to use her head in a magic potion.[332] Dekker and van de Pol have argued that the reason few Dutch cross-dressers were prosecuted simply for cross-dressing is that when cross-dressing was the only infraction, the individual was generally left alone.[333] In England, cross-dressing was often addressed in trials as evidence of whoring and prostitution rather than as a crime on its own.[334]

Occasionally, cross-dressed women and gender non-conformers were given legitimization by royalty. Catalina de Erauso was given a pension by King Philip IV and later in the seventeenth century Stadhouder Willem III, otherwise known as King William of England, awarded monetary rewards to more than one cross-dressed individual in both the Netherlands and England.[335] Queen Elizabeth I was rumored to have cross-dressed herself; in 1588 she was described as an "androgynous martial maiden" while inspiring her troops against the Spanish Armada.[336]

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[330] Ibid., 100.

[331] Male pronouns will be used, as I believe Isabe saw himself as male given his dedication to living as such.

[332] Dekker and van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism*, 44.

[333] Ibid., 75.

[334] Judith M. Bennett and Sharon McSheffrey, "Early, Erotic, and Alien: Women Dressed as Men in Late Medieval London," *History Workshop Journal* 77, no. 1 (2014): 2.

[335] Dekker and van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism*, 96.

[336] Garber, *Vested Interests*, 28.

Women who chose to wear clothing socially designated for men did so for a variety of reasons and might have received a wide range of reactions to such an act. From the Church, women were given conflicting examples, for while Deuteronomy 22:5 states that "the woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination before the Lord thy God,"[337] a longstanding tradition of cross-dressing female saints and holy women existed within religious mythologies and literatures.

Disguised female saints were presented to the faithful as positive role models, particularly for women. Cross-dressing in the context of sainthood did not infringe upon male dominion because the saints were always still under male authority, but this may have been lost on parishioners who focused instead on the cross-dressing.[338] One person who certainly misinterpreted the message was the Prussian Anastasius Lagrantinus Rosenstengel.[339] Rosenstengel[340] was questioned about hir cross-dressing and asked if zi was aware it was forbidden. Zi responded: "Of course [I] knew that God had forbidden women to wear men's clothing, but this applied to married women only, not to maidens."[341]

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[337] Vern L. Bullough, "Cross Dressing and Gender Role Change in the Middle Ages," in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996), 224.

[338] Valerie R. Hotchkiss, *Clothes Make the Man: Female Cross Dressing in Medieval Europe* (New York: Garland, 1996), 30.

[339] "A Lesbian Execution in Germany, 1721," trans. Bridgitte Eriksson *The Gay Past: A Collection of Historical Essays*, eds. Salvatore J. Licata and Robert P. Peterson (New York: Harrington Park Press, 1985), 28.

[340] Although Rosenstengel is often referred to in the literature as Catharina Lincken or Catharina Margaretha Linck, I believe hir male name and gender neutral pronouns are more appropriate given the multiple gender changes zi made throughout hir life.

[341] Dekker and van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism*, 44.

The best known example of female cross-dressing in the context of religion from this era is undoubtedly Joan of Arc.[342] The "emblem of her heresy"[343] was her preference for male clothing as well as her refusal to remain in her skirts when punished. Throughout her trial Joan's cross-dressing was a key factor in her condemnation, with more than thirty mentions of it in the trial's list of accusations and admonishments. A witness stated that "people said that the sole cause of her condemnation was that she had resumed male clothes..."[344] There are several different stories in the list as to why Joan took up male garb: she was commanded to by her saints, she chose it herself, or she was explicitly commanded by God himself.[345] In her confession, which was written in French and translated into Latin, Joan admitted to "breaking the divine law, Holy Scriptures, and the canon laws... against the decency of nature" with her adoption of male garb.[346]After this admission Joan was imprisoned and dressed in female attire, but she soon relapsed and began wearing male clothing once again.[347]

Although Joan's story is one of the best known and is often presented as an anomaly, she is not alone. There are a multitude of cross-dressed saints that Joan and others might have looked to as examples. All of the saints and holy women appear to follow a similar pattern, as described by Dekker and van de Pol: "They broke with their female past; they quarreled with their families; they refused to obey their parents; and they rejected their

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[342] Arguably, Joan of Arc is the most famous individual to come out of the Middle Ages in any context, religious or not. For more on this, see *Fresh Verdicts on Joan of Arc* edited by Bonnie Wheeler and Charles T. Wood.

[343] Susan Schibanoff, "True Lies: Transvestism and Idolatry in the Trial of Joan of Arc," *Fresh Verdicts on Joan of Arc*, eds. Bonnie Wheeler and Charles T. Wood (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996), 31.

[344] Ibid., 33.

[345] Ibid., 35.

[346] Ibid., 37.

[347] Ibid., 38.

sexuality."[348] One such saint, St. Margaret, sought to preserve her virginity and so ran away, disguised, on her wedding night and became a monk at a monastery, calling herself Brother Pelagius. Pelagius was put through trials by the devil and was believed to have made a nun pregnant which caused banishment to a cave. She piously endured all of her trials and only revealed herself as a woman in a letter to the abbot on her deathbed.[349] These "holy transvestites"[350] were examples of gender non-conformity that was socially acceptable and sometimes even encouraged.

Not all religious rhetoric about cross-dressing could be interpreted as condoning, however. Joan of Arc is a prime example of a religious figure who inspired both negative and positive rhetoric because of her cross-dressing while serving her divine purpose.[351] In the early seventeenth century the English preachers John Williams and Thomas Gataker both resoundingly condemned women who followed the popular fashion of the day and chose more androgynous clothes.[352] In 1632 a Dutch clergyman called for the execution of a woman who had been caught cross-dressing, a punishment that was unusually severe for the crime.[353] Women were not the sole targets of these moralizing efforts. The English academic and churchman Dr. John Rainolds wrote "Beware of beautifull boyes transformed into women by putting on their raiment, their feature, lookes, and facions" in the latter half of the sixteenth century. He cautioned against the wearing of female clothes by men and boys because "a womens garment being put on a man doeth vehemently

[348] Dekker and van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism*, 45.
[349] Schibanoff, "True Lies," 39.
[350] Ibid., 42.
[351] Dekker and van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism*, 43.
[352] Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination*, 23.
[353] Dekker and van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism*, 91.

touch and moue him with the remembrance and imagination of a woman; and the imagination of a thing desirable doth stirr up the desire."[354]

Did saints' cross-dressing give sanction to women who wished to follow their example? They were certainly visible models.[355] Joan of Arc repeated the pattern of the saints, as did Antoinette Bourignon when she dressed as a monk and fled from an arranged marriage.[356] Susan Schibanoff argues that some "transvestite saints" were culturally sanctioned because they passed completely for male, rather than retaining some visible aspect of their femininity. Schibanoff implies that failing to pass male and presenting instead as a woman in male clothing is what led to the death of Joan of Arc.[357] I disagree with Schibanoff on this point. I argue that cross-dressed saints were acceptable because they adopted male characteristics and dress but never appropriated male authority or power. Women and gender non-conforming individuals like Joan of Arc were threatening not because they did not "pass" but because they appropriated masculine authority and patriarchal power, thereby upsetting what was seen as the natural order.

Cross-dressing in popular culture

Cross-dressing was highly visible in popular culture in a variety of media. Dekker and van de Pol report that female cross-dressers in particular were found in novels, fictionalized biographies, and memoirs as well as in pictorial displays and theatrical

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[354] Garber, *Vested Interests*, 29.
[355] Dekker and van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism*, 45.
[356] Ibid., 46.
[357] Schibanoff, "True Lies," 42.

productions.[358] Different people used cross-dressing as a form of entertainment or as a tool for satire for a variety of reasons and with sometimes vastly different purposes. As the early modern period progressed, cross-dressing and gender non-conforming individuals sometimes enjoyed a sort of celebrity status, although this was often borne of notoriety and did not exempt the individual from harsh social criticism and occasional legal retribution.

As part of celebrations, cross-dressing could be used for comedic effect. The 1316 *Spiegel Historiael* mentions an instance of men cross-dressed at a chivalric feast,[359] and summer festivals in England during the sixteenth-century called for the role of Maid Marion to be played by a boy in order to elicit laughs through gender inversion.[360] In France, the role of Misrule, an unruly woman, was generally played by men during festivals,[361] while England had the rebellious "Lady Skimmington."[362] Comedic cross-dressing was also present elsewhere: within medieval literature, a common trope was men cross-dressing in order to gain access to women or a specific woman, often with humorous results .[363]

At the end of the seventeenth-century, François-Timoléon de Choisy wrote the fictional *Histoire de la marquise-marquise de Banneville* and the possibly factual *Mémoires de l'abbé de Choisy habillé en femme*. The first was a love story about two cross-dressed gender non-conforming individuals who meet, fall in love, and marry; the

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[358] Dekker and van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism*, 2.
[359] Puter, "Transvestite Knights," 284.
[360] Bennett and McSheffrey, "Early, Erotic, and Alien," 7.
[361] Lisa Brocklebank, "Rebellious Voices: The Unofficial Discourse of Cross-dressing in d'Aulnoy, de Murat, and Perrault," *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (2000): 130.
[362] Normington, *Gender and Medieval Drama*, 61.
[363] Puter, "Transvestite Knights," 292.

second is purported by Choisy to be his autobiography.[364] In his autobiography, Choisy describes a few episodic instances of cross-dressing that lasted for extended periods of time. In the first episode Choisy leaves Paris for Bourges and becomes the "comtesse des Barres" and has a series of adventures, many of them sexual in nature. In the second, Choisy adopts the persona of "Madame de Sancy" and lives openly as a cross-dressed man until gambling debts force him to sell his house.[365]

In *Histoire,* Choisy adopts a female persona as the narrator, stating "Nowadays it is the fashion for women to display their wit in print, and I have no wish to be behind the times." In the tale, a boy is raised by his mother to be a girl, which is unknown even to the child herself until she is grown and falls in love with a man. She decides to marry the man anyway, and in a twist, what might have been a same-sex relationship is revealed to in fact be heteronormative in nature when the husband reveals himself to be a cross-dressed woman. After the discovery, both decide to continue living as the genders they are accustomed to, thereby maintaining a double cross-dressed marriage. [366]

On the other side of the gender divide, French texts such as *Turnoiement as dames* and *Roman de Fauvel* suggested that armor would serve as the perfect disguise for women who wanted to live undetected as men.[367] The fourteenth-century Italian writer Giovanni Boccaccio's *De claris mulieribus* includes the story of Semiramis, who is forced to disguise herself as her own son in order to rule the kingdom after her husband is

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[364] Lewis C. Seifert, *Manning the Margins: Masculinity and Writing in Seventeenth-Century France* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 207.

[365] Ibid., 214.

[366] Brocklebank, "Rebellious Voices," 130.

[367] E. Jane Burns, "Refashioning Courtly Love: Lancelot as Ladies' Man or Lady/Man?" in *Constructing Medieval Sexuality*, eds. Karma Lochrie, Peggy McCracken, and James A. Schultz (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 114.

killed. In this guise "she achieved many things which would have been great and noble for even the strongest of men."[368] These texts alternately praised and condemned the women they described.

The Spanish Golden Age brought a windfall of theatrical productions that explored gender transgressions by exploiting the public anxiety over cross-dressing and same-sex acts. Male cross-dressing was of particular concern because of growing concern that men both at court and in the general public were becoming increasingly effeminate.[369] Most of these texts centered on cross-dressed women, despite the fact that the anxiety of the public was primarily focused on the dangers of men becoming more womanish. One such play was "Don Gil de las calzas verdes," written by Tirso de Molina and staged for the first time in 1615. In the play, a woman scorned adopts the name of her former lover, dons green breeches, and sets off to find the man while assuming his name. [370] Like nearly every other play with a cross-dressing protagonist, the play is resolved by everyone resuming their proper gender roles and clothes.

There were several examples of this anxiety about gender roles on display outside of the Iberian peninsula as well. Dekker and van de Pol have found that "of more than three hundred plays first preformed in London between 1660 and 1700, eighty-nine contained roles in which actresses donned male clothes."[371] This does not include male actors dressed as women, which would certainly raise the number considerably. In the English playwright Thomas Heywood's *The Brazen Age* a well known figure, Hercules, takes on the trappings of womanhood as he "spins, cards and doth charwork", activities meant

[368] Schibanoff, "True Lies", 47.
[369] Soyer, *Ambiguous Gender*, 19.
[370] Ibid., 2.
[371] Dekker and van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism*, 94.

exclusively for women.[372] Many times, the cross-dressing was utilized for comedic effect, as in the Dutch comedy *Nieuwsgierig Aagje* wherein a drunk woman is dressed in men's clothing.[373]

In the 1608 Thomas Middleton play "A Mad World My Masters," a character dons half male and half female attire and mocks fashion trends that lean towards cross-dressing.[374] In the play, Follywit seeks to profit from his grandfather, a rich knight. In service to this plan, Follywit and his associates commandeer the bottom half of a dress. A comedic rebuke of womankind follows:

> FOLLYWIT. Come, come, thou shalt see a woman quickly made up here.
>
> MAWWORM. But that's against kind, Capitan, for they are always long a-making ready.
>
> FOLLYWIT. And is not most they do against kind, I prithee? To lie with their horse-keeper, is that not against kind? To wear half-moons made of another's hair, is that not against kind? To drink down a man, she that should set him up, pray, is not that monstrously against kind, now? (50; 3.3)

Mawworm agrees, but is not yet satisfied that the plan is a solid one. He asks what Follywit will wear on his upper body, as they have only absconded with a skirt. Follywit scornfully reminds Mawworm that the current fashion does not require that he make any changes:

> FOLLYWIT: Why, the doublet serves as well as the best, and is most in fashion. We're all male to th' middle, mankind from the beaver to th' bum. 'Tis an Amazonian time: you shall have women shortly tread their husbands." (50; 3.3)

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[372] Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination*, 96.
[373] Dekker and van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism*, 94.
[374] Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination*, 23.

Because cross-dressing, or at least clothing ambiguity, is in fashion, Follywit is able to complete his disguise with a minimum of effort. He is a woman quickly made with just a few changes, but he is also part man. Here, Follywit implies that women who follow this new fashion are crossing the dividing line between women and men—they might be women, but they cannot lay full claim to that identifier. Ambiguity abounds when cross-dressing is the norm.

The contemporaneous Moll Cutpurse was a gender non-conforming individual in early seventeenth-century England who inspired the play "The Roaring Girl," which fictionalized her transgressions of both class and gender. The character paled in comparison to the real thing. Moll Cutpurse, otherwise known as Mary Frith, was a notorious blasphemer and drunk who hung around in bad company. At a performance of the play at the Fortune theatre, Moll made an appearance where she proceeded to shock those present:

> ...in man's apparel and in her boots and with a sword by her side, she told the company there present that she thought many of them were of the opinion that she was a man but if any of them would come to her lodging they should find that she is a woman and some other immodest and lascivious speeches she also used at that time. And also sat there upon the stage in the public view of all the people there present; in man's apparel, and played upon her lute and sang a song.[375]

Moll was the subject of a few ballads and popular songs, as were other cross-dressed women and gender non-conformers. The fact that cross-dressing occurred with some frequency in popular entertainment was "both a proof and a means of the perpetuation of the tradition."[376] Dekker and van de Pol have stated in light of the sensational nature of

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[375] Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, And Subordination*, 9.
[376] Dekker and van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism*, 39.

the discovery of a cross-dressed woman, it is likely that many of these songs served as sources of news as well as entertainment.[377] The veracity of these songs is up for debate, however, as they were most likely embellished and changed, or the individuals mentioned may have simply been invented.

The ballads often focused particularly on the more salacious aspects of cross-dressing and the same-sex relationships that were sometimes part of this. One written about Willem Adriaens and his marriage to Hilletje Jans in 1632 delighted in the absurdity of sex without a penis:

> For when the bride made free
> To feel if there might be
> cock and balls, said she,
> 'T' is most rare
> I perceive them not, yea, nothing there,
> How may I then assay
> My heat with thee thus to allay
> In the nuptial bed where we two lay[?][378]

Others were condemnations of the cross-dressers:

> In appearance and in dress
> An indignity to her sex[.][379]

Sometimes, though, the ballads expressed admiration at the bravery of cross-dressed sailors or soldiers. In a song about a Dutch female sailor who fought off an attempted rape by Spaniards after her discovery, it was written:

> Thus the Admiral Supreme
> And Gentlemen did speak
> Thou didst not our praises seek
> But worthy we do find thee

[377] Ibid., 85.
[378] Ibid., 86.
[379] Ibid., 89.

Hadst though killed them with thy blade
Even without needs be
Thou hadst thy virtue thus preserved
And art a stalward, dapper maid
And herewith we commend thee[.][380]

The cross-dressed female warrior was a motif that was not just popular in ballads and chapbooks, the entertainment of the lower classes. She also made appearances in what Dianne Dugaw calls "polite" literature, like novels and epic poems.[381] The first Dutch novel that included female cross-dressing as a theme was published in 1624, a century before novels with cross-dressed female protagonists as the primary theme became a very popular genre in its own right. Between the years 1600 and 1815 twenty-five different works were published that were either novels or fictional autobiographies on this theme. The subject was not limited to the Netherlands and was found across Europe, and its popularity as a topic had much to do with the fact that "it is well known that the strangest occurrences may happen to those whose sex and clothing are incompatible."[382] Cross-dressing women were found in romances like *Orlando Furioso, The Fairie Queene*,[383] and men were found in tales like Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*.[384]

Even novels and poems that did not have cross-dressing or female warriors as the center focus dabbled in the topos. Although written at the beginning of the fourteenth-century, *Amadis de Gaule* was quite popular during the sixteenth. The novel, which has been described as a "work of paradigmatic importance for the entire Romance tradition,"

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[380] Ibid., 88.
[381] Dianne Dugaw, *Warrior Women and Popular Balladry 1650-1850* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), xv.
[382] Dekker and van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism*, 92.
[383] Sandra Clark, "*Hic Mulier, Haec Vir*, and the Controversy Over Masculine Women," *Studies in Philology* 82, no. 2 (1985): 159n5.
[384] Vern L. Bullough and Bonnie Bullough, *Cross Dressing, Sex, and Gender* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 87.

has an episode in which two cross-dressed women perform a series of heroic and courageous acts and are deemed such beautiful men that queens, duchesses, and princesses can't help but fall in love with them. [385]

Cross-dressing in novels was not restricted to female warriors. Cross-dressed men were found far more in fiction than they were in life. The hero of the Italian romance *The Honor of Chivalrie* escapes by donning a female disguise. The disguise was exceedingly effective, and "...he became so fair that he damsels not a little wondered to see him so beautiful." That work gained a wider audience after it was translated into English, while in the sequel to *Amadis de Gaule*, the male hero adopts the clothing of a slave girl and is described as exceedingly beautiful as well.[386] These novels always reinscribed heteronormative values in their conclusions, but they dabbled in homoeroticism in the interim.

In the early seventeenth-century, public debate about gender transgression erupted in England. In 1620 the pamphlets *Hic Mulier; or, The Man Woman* and *Haec-Vir; or, The Womanish-Man* were published. The pamphlets were in conversation with one another, the second one having been written in response to the first, and addressed clothing trends among both men and women.[387] For women, those trends meant short hair, boots, an "indecently" short French doublet, knee-length skirts, and hats with "wanton" feathers. Although it is difficult to know how much of this rhetoric was based on real events as opposed to pure sensationalism, Anthony Fletcher notes that "[h]ow many women

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[385] Winfried Schleiner, "Cross-Dressing, Gender Errors, and Sexual Taboos in Renaissance Literature" in *Gender Reversals and Gender Cultures: Anthropological and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Sabrina P. Ramet (London; New York: Routledge, 1996), 97.

[386] Ibid.

[387] Susan Gushee O'Malley, "*Custome Is an Idiot": Jacobean Pamphlet Literature on Women* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 251.

practiced it is much less important than the fact that it occurred at all and the reaction that it provoked."[388] Susan Gushee O'Malley argues that these pamphlets might have been more accessible to the average female reader than other forms of publication, leading to a wider audience.[389] It is not unlikely that pamphlet readers would encounter cross-dressing in other pamphlets as well; both George Gasciongne's *Steele Glas* and Phillip Stubbes's *Anatomie of Abuses* mention the subject.[390]

Hic Mulier is a condemnation of women who dress in clothing either reserved for men or that is androgynous in nature, written by an anonymous author. The author contends that women who have adopted the popular fashion are monstrous affronts to decency and completely shameless as well as deceptive. However, women who are modest and chaste, who marry and bear children, are praiseworthy and good; to do otherwise is to be "deformed."[391] Women who act like men are unnatural and offend God, because they "have made [themselves] stranger things then ever *Noahs* Arke unladed, or *Nyle* ingendred." In order to stop this tide of mannish women, the author calls on the fathers and husbands of the women to stop funding "these deformities."[392]

Haec Vir was published a week after *Hic Mulier*, also by an anonymous author, and focuses on an imagined conversation between Hic Mulier and Haec Vir. Haec Vir admonishes Hic Mulier for her masculine clothing and weapons and for flaunting her sexuality. Hic Mulier, Haec Vir contends, appears as she is against God and against tradition. Hic Mulier responds that traditions vary significantly between nations and that

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[388] Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination*, 24.
[389] O'Malley, "*Custome Is an Idiot*," 3.
[390] Ibid., 252.
[391] Ibid., 253.
[392] Ibid., 254.

simply following custom is foolish; custom, Hic Mulier says, "is an Idiot."[393] Haec Vir responds that Hic Mulier negates her own argument, because by adopting male dress she is demonstrating that she too follows customs, changing though they may be. Besides that, the adoption of male clothes by women is explicitly condemned by the Bible. Hic Mulier answers Haec Vir's argument by pointing out his own gender-based follies that cause him to "curle, frizelle and powder his hair" as well as to don ruffs and French bodices.

The discussion between Haec Vir and Hic Mulier ends with both sides agreeing to adopt their prescribed gender roles and trade clothes. They change their names to Haec Mulier and Hic Vir, assigning the correct Latin grammar. Although *Haec Vir* contains a spirited defense of cross-dressing for women, as well as an argument for women's rights, in the end the "natural order" is restored. "Henceforth," the newly christened Hic Vir states, "we will live nobly like our selves, ever sober, ever discreet, ever worthy; true men, and true women." [394]

Contemporary cross-dressing

The cases of actual cross-dressing in this period that are known to historians are dominated by women and gender non-conformers. Whether or not they were purposefully emulating the lives of female saints or other influences, many women and gender non-conforming individuals took up trousers as a way to escape detection by authorities. The most common reasons that women took up male garb are that they sought economic stability or to join the army or the navy as companions to their male partners or to search

[393] Ibid., 255.
[394] Ibid., 257.

for errant ones. Less common reasons included freedom from gendered expectations for women or to provide cover for secret relationships or marriages with both men and women.[395]

Although cross-dressing among male-bodied individuals appears to have been far less common, it did occur but often for very different reasons than for women. Men had less to gain from gender inversion and gender non-conformity than did women, as doing so meant giving up privilege and power, regardless of class status. Men were also allowed to cross-dress in the context of socially sanctioned shared cultural experiences, like the stage and carnival. Cross-dressing and gender inversion could be used by both men and women as a form of subversion and resistance to authority. Rioters in Kent and Essex at the beginning of the fifteenth century cross-dressed as "Queen of the Faeries," while supporters of Katherine of Aragon cross-dressed as women to attempt a kidnap of Anne Boleyn in 1531.[396]When these subversions occurred within the context of socially sanctioned communal activities, gender non-conformity could be a source of power for those who were nearer the bottom rungs of the class ladder.[397]

It can be difficult to ascertain the reasons that individuals began cross-dressing. Some of the stated motivations behind taking up male clothing included the will of God and out of necessity wrought by poverty.[398] Sometimes an individual revealed their motivations in an autobiography or during their trial, but there is no way of knowing if

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[395] Randolph Trumbach, "London's Sapphists: From Three Sexes to Four Genders in the Making of Modern Culture" in *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, eds. Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub (New York: Routledge, 1991), 123.

[396] Normington, *Gender and Medieval Drama*, 61.

[397] Garrett P.J. Epp, "Outlaw Masculinities" in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997), 330.

[398] Dekker and van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism*, 26.

the reasons given in an attempt to rationalize their decision to others were their true motivations.[399] Such radical transformations of the self were likely not undertaken lightly in the cases of long-term cross-dressing; even short term acts often carried with them the possibility of severe consequences that required some forethought.

The act of donning male clothing and living as a man was not always a permanent endeavor. It was useful for travelling long distances, both in terms of comfort and safety from highway robbery, and in one instance helped a woman to avoid creditors after the death of her husband. [400] There were times, however, when cross-dressing women were discovered within days or even hours of donning their trousers for the first time.[401] Additionally, there were times when short-term cross-dressing by women was acceptable or even desirable, such as during festivals.[402] Sometimes these short-term excursions turned into extended adventures or even as the excuse some gender non-conforming individuals needed to begin living as the gender they chose.[403]

It is unusual that a man would cross-dress for an extended period as men had far more economic opportunities available to them than did women. A single woman seeking a way to support herself and stay out of destitution had very few options, and those that existed were often less than desirable, such as prostitution. Dekker and van de Pol suggest that impoverished women turned to cross-dressing because of the knowledge that

[399] Ibid., 25.
[400] Ibid., 8.
[401] Ibid., 19.
[402] Ibid., 6.
[403] Ibid., 7.

other women had done so successfully.[404] It was also occasionally suggested to women by others as an option, often as a way out of poverty or to escape punishment.[405]

There are some accounts that depict women who cross-dressed to appeal to men sexually, but cross-dressing was simultaneously associated in the public mind with same-sex behavior, sometimes bolstered by observable evidence. Long before the Jacobean gender crisis, one of the best known cases of the late medieval era occurred. John/Eleanor Rykener, a fourteenth-century trappist and prostitute, was arrested and questioned. She was apprehended while performing what authorities interpreted as a same-sex act.[406] Similarly, Francisco Roca was arrested for same-sex activities in which he took on a female persona and wore women's clothing.[407] In late medieval Italy, prostitutes were often cited for cross-dressing and Venetian courtesans were depicted wearing breeches under their skirts in books of fashion.[408] A Dutch source mentions a prostitute in Amsterdam who met clients dressed as a boy, while another reports a story in which a man is offered a young manservant by a procuress. Upon closer inspection, the "manservant" is actually a girl.[409] Randolph Trumbach writes that "the appeal of such women lay in the beholder's knowledge that they were women."[410] Although it may have been exaggeration, the pamphleteers of London declared that some women had adopted a fashion with doublets "all unbuttoned to entice" and bared breasts.[411] John Calvin preached against these women, stating that "such disguisings are but inticements of

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[404] Ibid., 32.
[405] Ibid., 39.
[406] Bennett and McSheffry, "Early, Erotic, And Alien," 2.
[407] Cristian Berco, *Sexual Hierarchies, Public Status: Men, Sodomy, and Society in Spain's Golden Age* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 30.
[408] Bennett and McSheffrey, "Early, Erotic, and Alien," 4.
[409] Dekker and van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism*, 7.
[410] Trumbach, "London's Sapphists," 115.
[411] Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination*, 24.

baudry, as experience prooveth,"[412] and in the civil courts of England, cross-dressed women were generally charged with whoring.[413]

In their extensive study of cross-dressing in the Netherlands, Dekker and Van de Pol identified one hundred and nineteen "women living as men" between 1550 and 1839.[414] Eighty-three of them had at one point worked as sailors or marines.[415] The tight quarters and reduced privacy of a ship might explain why so many of these individuals are documented—as with many gender non-conforming individuals found in this thesis, knowledge of them has only survived in the historical record because they were found out or exposed.

Some of the women who found themselves at sea or on the battlefield in male dress did so in order to stay with a loved one. This was apparently a common problem: in 1712 the captain of a ship bound for the Indies "caused two sentries to stand on the poop continually, by day and by night, and until they reached the sea, against the boarding of [a particular woman] and others who might wish to conceal [themselves]." In this particular instance the captain's precautions were ineffective, as the woman managed to conceal herself anyway in men's clothing in order to be with her husband and was not discovered until they were already at sea. Although such excursions at sea did not often end well—Maeyken Blomme was discovered in 1611 while traveling in disguise to be with her husband and wound up mad and imprisoned[416]—at times courts and captains were sympathetic and found disguise in service of such noble goals to be "reasonable and

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[412] O'Malley, *"Custome Is an Idiot,"* 252.
[413] Bennett and McSheffrey, "Early, Erotic, and Alien," 2.
[414] Dekker and Van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism*, xi.
[415] Ibid., 9.
[416] Ibid., 28.

acceptable."[417] This particular motive was much more common in the context of sea travel than it was in the context of the army.

Individuals who were uncovered on the battlefield or at sea faced both admiration and punishment. The Dutch statesman Nicolaas Witsen expressed this contradiction when he wrote:

> I could also tell you how I myself have discovered women in soldier's clothing in our armies and made them change their dress. During my days in the army a girl in the cavalry was caught plundering and suffered herself to be hung without making her sex known. This the sergeant on duty told me; he had her undressed after she had died and felt sorry about it. And are such women not also Amazons?[418]

In 1580 a woman from Chaumont-en-Bassigni, France began living as a man and began working as a weaver in a different, but nearby, village. He[419] became established, eventually marrying a local woman, but was recognized from someone from his old town. This led to his arrest, trial, and eventual execution. Although his cross-dressing was problematic, it was his use of a dildo that led to his death.[420] He demonstrates succinctly how some cross-dressing individuals with female bodies could be praised while others were punished. Those who continued female gendered normative behavior while dressed as men were more likely to be met with lenience than those female-bodied individuals who appropriated male power or symbols of male power, like a phallus.[421] However, not all appropriations were phallic in nature. In 1519 three separate women in England cut

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[417] Ibid., 29.
[418] Ibid., xv.
[419] This individual clearly made a concerted effort to live and be perceived as male and so will be referred to as such.
[420] Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination*, 84.
[421] Crawford, *European Sexualities*, 145.

their hair short; in 1510 another English woman was said to have cut her hair "like a friar."[422]

If Spain had a crisis of male effeminacy, England had a crisis of female ambiguity. In 1712 Joseph Addison, the English poet and playwright condemned women who wore "amphibious dress" and that was "absolutely necessary to keep up the partition between the two sexes."[423] Cross-dressing or ambiguously dressed women, even if they did not alter their other behaviors in any gendered way, were a threat to the binary system. Much earlier, in 1583, the English pamphleteer Philip Stubbes published *The Anatomy of Abuses* in which he lamented the state of contemporary apparel:

> Our apparel was given us as a sign distinctive to discern betwixt sex and sex and therefore one to wear the apparel of another sex is to participate with the same and to adulterate the verity of his own kind. Wherefore these women may not improperly be called hermaphrodites, that is monsters of both kinds, half women, half men.[424]

The Puritan William Prynne commented specifically on hairstyles, writing:

> Yett notwithstanding as our Englishe ruffians are metamorphosed in their deformed, frizlled lockes and hayre, so our Englishe gentle-women, as yf they all intended to turn men outright, and weare the breeches, or to be Popish nunnes, are nowe growne so farr past shame, past modesty, grace, and nature, as to clipp their hayre like men, with lockes and foretoppes.[425]

The issue of ambiguous dress reached such heights that King James I instructed the clergy to "inveigh vehemently in their sermons against women wearing broad-brimmed

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[422] Bennett and Shannon McSheffrey, "Early, Erotic, and Alien," 1.
[423] Trumbach, "London's Sapphists," 117.
[424] Fletecher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination*, 23.
[425] Garber, *Vested Interests*, 30.

hats, painted doublets, short hair, and even some of them poniards, and if pulpit admonitions fail, another course will be taken."[426]

Not all cross-dressing occurred on an individual level. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth-centuries, molly[427] houses began to appear across London.[428] Molly houses were clubs for men who not only cross-dressed but also enacted fake marriages and childbirths within the clubs themselves. Many of the men took female names as well as feminine mannerisms, and a few of them dressed and lived as women beyond the walls of the physical club.[429] In the Netherlands, the equivalent of a molly house was called a lolhysen,[430] and they may have existed in other forms elsewhere. In England, at least, the molly houses attracted enough attention to warrant raids in 1698 and 1707.[431] In general, however, cross-dressing was a solitary act. In 1502, Nase de Poorter cross-dressed in Bruges to live with her lover; and in 1510 Bruges was home to Glaudyne Malengin[432] who, like Joan of Arc, was unwilling to give up his male clothing.[433] These individuals cross-dressed without the framework of a social activity, but carried out the act anyway.

The popularity of accounts regarding cross-dressed women, particularly soldiers, provides historians with a wealth of content. Texts were published examining the lives of cross-dressed women. The 1639 *On the Excellence of Women* by the doctor Johannes van

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[426] Ibid., 31.

[427] "Molly" had previously been a term for female prostitutes but morphed into a term for effeminate men.

[428] Crawford, *European Sexualities*, 189.

[429] Randolph Trumbach, "The Birth of the Queen: Sodomy and the Emergence of Gender Equality in Modern Culture, 1660-1750" in *Hidden From History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, eds. Martin B. Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncy (New York: New American Library, 1989), 139.

[430] Crawford, *European Sexualities*, 203.

[431] Ibid., 205.

[432] I will refer to Glaudyne Malengin as male because of his commitment to retaining masculine markers, even during his trial.

[433] Bennett and McSheffrey, "Early, Erotic, and Alien," 4.

Beverwijk celebrated such women, as did other seventeenth-century works,[434] while the biography of the Italian Catarina Vizzani was translated into English, gaining it a wider audience.[435] Mary/Moll Frith appeared in a play, a jest-book, and a "moralizing life-story," all of which added to her considerable fame.[436] Not all of these accounts concerned contemporary women; the English playwright Thomas Heywood compiled a collection of stories about women, one of which was the tale of an ancient Athenian woman who defied the law and disguised herself as a man in order to become a surgeon.[437]

Conclusion

The tradition of cross-dressing was alive and well in this period of European history although it never became socially sanctioned or institutionalized.[438] It was most often associated with women, but men and gender non-conforming individuals participated in it as well. Dekker and van de Pol conclude that: "All these songs, novels, and other expressions of the theme certainly influenced real-life transvestism. Oral tradition and written texts must have provided the initial idea, and gave the women models to follow."[439] It is impossible to know if outside influences "must" have been the catalysts that sent women and non-conformers down the path of cross-dressing, but the sheer amount of material was so great that it seems highly unlikely that individuals who began cross-dressing had never run into it in popular media, in church, or elsewhere.

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[434] Dekker and van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism*, 90.
[435] Ibid., 93.
[436] Clark, *Hic Mulier, Haec Vir*, 162.
[437] Schleiner, "Cross-Dressing, Gender Errors, and Sexual Taboos," 92.
[438] Dekker and van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism*, 40.
[439] Ibid., 101.

Individuals who cross-dressed were overwhelmingly female or gender non-conforming, complicating the gender landscape of medieval and early modern Europe in a way that other forms of gender transgression and gender non-conformity were unable to do. Cross-dressing legends, like Joan of Arc, or celebrities, like Moll Frith, assisted in increasing the access people had to examples of non-conformity. Cross-dressing was especially useful as a tool of satire or critique in popular culture, where it also served to demonstrate popular anxiety about gender roles and ideologies. Critics of cross-dressing or ambiguous dress were also critics of social change and of the world appearing "upside down." Individuals who cross-dressed did so for innumerable reasons, and it would be foolish to assume that all cross-dressers were doing so in order to escape undesirable situations. Cross-dressing, it seems, was a viable and visible choice that was available to people, and it was one that was just as often voluntary as it was a necessity.

Chapter 6: Women with Masculine Characteristics

While cross-dressing blurred gender lines, other forms of gender non-conformity merely stretched the categories without leaving them behind. This sort of non-conformity was found much more in women than in men, mostly for reasons of social acceptability. Women who adopted or exhibited male characteristics were often seen as making attempts to better themselves, while men who demonstrated female characteristics upset the social order in ways that could not be accepted. While cross-dressing is the most visible form of non-conformity in the historical record, it is likely that women with male characteristics were in fact the most common examples of gender transgression.

Women with male characteristics fell roughly into two categories: those who exhibited physical characteristics more commonly associated with male bodies, and those who exhibited personality traits or behaviors that were deemed more masculine. Physical characteristics were more likely to be met with condemnation, while behavioral characteristics were likely to be met with either condemnation or approval, depending on the time, place, and particular characteristic. It is this category that seems most likely to have been the most common form of gender non-conformity, because non-physical characteristics could theoretically be adopted and discarded at will, while physical characteristics were impossible to or created extreme social disruptions, sometimes both of these at the same time.

Masculine physical characteristics could take a variety of forms, from excessive body hair to non-biological[440] phalluses. Women who embodied those characteristics either by

[440] Other terms that might be used for these objects, like "false," imply that they were somehow less than real to the individuals who possessed them, which may or may not have been the case.

nature or by choice were frequently scrutinized and often the targets of ridicule or legal action. Bearded and "wild" women were found on a sliding scale of acceptability, while appropriation of the phallus for any reason, but particularly for sexual purposes, was always rejected. Non-physical characteristics could take the form of sexual and romantic forwardness, or personality traits like anger or courage. Both physical and non-physical appropriation were highly visible in this era in a multitude of forms.

Physical Characteristics

The visage of the bearded woman was a potential threat to both masculine authority and femininity, and she assumed many forms: saint, witch, monster, entertainer. She was a source of fascination and revulsion for many, and a highly visible figure given her range of manifestations. Beards were a signifier of both masculinity and power, and were meaningfully absent from the faces of women and boys, both of whom were subordinated in the social order. Unlike boys, who could expect to rise to the higher echelons of the power hierarchy both literally and symbolically through the acquisition of facial hair, women were in theory never able to do so. Bearded women were thus frightening indeed.

On the less threatening end of the bearded woman scale were bearded female saints. Mark Albert Johnston argues that these saints, particularly Saint Wilgefortis,[441] were familiar to laypeople in pre-reformation early modern England. Saint Wilgefortis,[442] known also as Liberata and Uncumber[443] among other names, is arguably one of the best known bearded female saints and was popular in England, particularly with women as

[441] Johnston, *Beard Fetish in Early Modern England,* 179.
[442] For an examination of the origin of St. Wilgefortis via mistaken identity, see Wiesner-Hanks, *The Marvelous Hairy Girls*, 39.
[443] Schulenburg, *Forgetful of Their Sex*, 152.

well as in southern Germany, Austria, and Switzerland.[444] There are several iterations of her story which all contain some of the same elements—the young virgin Wilgefortis, princess of Portugal, prayed for disfigurement in order to escape marriage and was rewarded with the growth of a beard and mustache. Her father pushed forward with the marriage and was foiled by Wilgefortis revealing her facial hair to her intended, who rescinded his offer of marriage. In retaliation for this devout disobedience, Wilgefortis was crucified by her father in the manner of Christ.[445]

Other female saints grew beards via natural causes as a result of their faith. Saint Galla was informed by a physician that her 'passionate' or warm nature would lead to the growth of a beard if she did not remarry following the death of her spouse.[446] Pope Gregory the Great wrote of Galla "And that is what happened. But the saintly woman was not disturbed by this external disfigurement. She loved the beauty of her mystical spouse..."[447] Interestingly, these physical transformations in the service of a higher power were fairly unproblematic for the Church so long as the transformation conferred masculine traits on women.

Mark Johnston makes a salient point when he notes that female saints who grew facial hair did so often as a direct result of defiance or rejection of male authority.[448] This rejection was only tolerable because while the women rejected the authority of their suitors, husbands, and fathers, they subordinated themselves to God and the Church,

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[444] Merry Wiesner-Hanks, *The Marvelous Hairy Girls: The Gonzales Sisters and Their Worlds* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 41.

[445] Schulenburg, *Forgetful of Their Sex,* 152.

[446] Lisa M. Bitel and Felice Lifshitz, *Gender and Christianity in Medieval Europe: New Perspectives,* eds. Lisa M. Bitel and Felice Lifshitz (Philadelphia, University of Philadelphia Press, 2008), 46.

[447] Schulenburg, *Forgetful of Their Sex,* 152.

[448] Johnston, *Beard Fetish in Early Modern England,* 179.

often by an explicit marriage to Christ. Some, like Wilgefortis in her iteration as Uncumber, were still dangerous because of the implicit suggestion they provided to women regarding autonomy. Sir Thomas More highlighted the danger by writing "women hath therfore chaunged her name, and instede of saynt wylgeforte call her saynt Uncumber, bycawse they teken that.. she wyll not fayle to uncumber them of theyr husbondis."[449] Despite these problematic aspects of bearded saints, however, they were nonetheless generally regarded favorably.

Almost diametrically opposed to the bearded saint was the witch, who early modern peoples commonly thought to be bearded.[450] Unlike the bearded saints, witches were outside of masculine control and were unruly examples of the monstrous. The beards of the witches perplexed and defied classification, representing both female masculinity and the risk of power loss for men.[451] While the classic *Malleus Maleficarum* does not explicitly either endorse or deny the idea that witches possessed beards, it does suggest that would-be witch finders would be wise to shave the hair of a witch from "every part of her body."[452] *A Treatise of Witchcraft* by Alexander Roberts, published in the seventeenth-century, includes an anecdote about a bearded witch and some cheese:

> At euery seuerall time of buying Cheese he was grieuously afflicted, being thrice, and at the last, either she or a spirit in her likenesse did appeare vnto him, and whisked about his face (as he lay in bed) a wet cloath of a very loathsome sauour; after which hee did see one cloathed in russet with a little bush beard...[453]

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[449] Ibid., 181.

[450] Mark Albert Johnston, "Bearded Women in Early Modern England," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 47, no. 1 (2007): 20.

[451] Johnston, *Beard Fetish in Early Modern England*, 188.

[452] Ibid., 189.

[453] Alexander Roberts, *A Treatise of Witchcraft* (1620), www.gutenberg.org, 58.

Although perceived as a very real threat, the bearded witch was most common in the world of fiction. Witches in the form of male actors dressed as bearded women stalked the Elizabethan stage.[454] Perhaps the most famous example of bearded women comes from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, where the "weyard" sisters subvert the natural order with both their countenance and their acts, causing Banquo to declare: "You should be women, and yet your beards forbid me to interpret that you are."[455] In *The Honest Man's Fortune,* the characters Longaville and Dubois decide against opening up a brothel for women on the grounds that "The bauds would all turn witches to revenge themselves upon us; and the women that come to us for disguises must wear beards, And they say that's the token of a witch."[456] A 1631 translation of the Spanish play *La Celestina* called *The Spanish bawd, represented in Celestina: of, The tragicke-comedy of Calisto and Melibea* the titular Celestina is introduced as "an old bearded woman, called Celestina; a witch, subtill as the diuell, and well practis'd in all the rogueries and villanies that the world can affoord."[457] The bearded witch can be nothing but an evil, malevolent creature, a far cry from the piety of the bearded saint.

While bearded female saints were known and praised,[458] actual late medieval and early modern bearded women were unlikely to have been greeted with the same sort of response. Johnston notes that female beardedness was generally conceived of as a metaphorical signifier of female subversion of male domination, but on occasion

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[454] Johnston, *Beard Fetish in Early Modern England,* 192.
[455] Will Fisher, "The Renaissance Beard: Masculinity in Early Modern England," *Renaissance Quarterly* 54 no. 1, (2001): 172.
[456] Johnston, *Beard Fetish in Early Modern England*, 187.
[457] Ibid., 196.
[458] Johnston, "Bearded Women in Early Modern England," 18.

manifested itself as literal facial hair.[459] During the mid-sixteenth century in England, bearded women could be both unnatural monsters that subverted the natural order and natural wonders that had value as marketable commodities.[460] A diary entry by John Evelyn from September 15, 1657 records his fascination with a bearded woman that he had gone to see both recently and twenty years earlier when she was still a child.[461] This twenty year span between viewings demonstrate a prolonged public fascination with non-conforming bodies as curiosities and forms of entertainment. During the show the woman was at least partially exposed as evidenced by Evelyn's comments to the effect that he had seen her breasts and back. Such exposure would have enhanced the "profound contradiction"[462] of someone in possession of both male and female physical markers. Such contradictions could be a source of discomfort, but they could also be a source of entertainment. The diarist Samuel Pepys recorded his experience with a bearded woman named Ursula Dyan in 1668 and declared himself "pleased mightily" by the combination of her manly beard and her voice, which he compared to that of a little girl.[463]

The same woman seen by John Evelyn in 1657 was also seen at a French fair in 1644 by Elie Brackenhoffer, who recorded the incident in his journal. He noted that the twenty-four year old had been traveling the country since the age of four or five as an exhibit. As if to reinscribe femininity on an ambiguous body, Brackenhoffer assures the reader that "She is a true woman, and not a hermaphrodite." The woman, who known as Barbara

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[459] Ibid., 2.
[460] Johnston, *Beard Fetish in Early Modern England*, 198.
[461] Ibid., 199.
[462] Johnston, "Bearded women in Early Modern England," 6.
[463] Ibid., 15.

Urslerin, Barbara Van Beck, Urslerin, and Ursler, [464] was depicted in at least one engraving and travelled extensively from Augsburg, Germany to England, France, Italy, Demark, and Belgium. All of this travel indicates that Barbara Urslerin was seen by many people in her thirty years of European tour, thereby exposing those who viewed her to an ambiguous body. [465] The famous bearded female dwarf Helena António had served the Queen of Poland during her reign from 1588 to 1631, ensuring that her face and its accompanying beard was seen by multitudes at court.[466]

False beards were a staple of early modern English theatre, where they were worn by men and boys to play a variety of parts. Will Fisher believes that prosthetic beards were used with regularity and demonstrates that they could be purchased or rented from a wide range of sources. Little is said regarding the authentic nature of these false beards, although multiple edicts against the wearing of false beards in public in Rouen, France suggest that perhaps the beards were convincing enough to cause confusion. [467] Prosthetic facial hair which allowed boys to impersonate men might also have allowed female-presenting individuals to pass as men undetected, particularly because facial hair was such a crucial aspect of masculinity.

It is clear that masculine markers such as excessive body or facial hair on bodies that read as female were deeply unsettling—at times their humanity itself was called into question, as when John Bulwer wrote "Woman by Nature is smoothe and delicate: and if

[464] Kathryn A. Hoffman, "Of Monkey Girls and a Hog-Faced Gentlewoman: Marvel in Fairy Tales, Fairgrounds, and Cabinets of Curiosities," *Marvels and Tales* 19, no.1 (2005): 73.
[465] Ibid., 74.
[466] Soyer, *Ambiguous Gender*, 133.
[467] Fisher, "The Renaissance Beard," 165.

she have many haires she is a monster."[468] While beardlessness served as a "visual manifestation of the smooth-cheeked individual's deference or subordination,"[469] the presence of a beard usually demarked the wearer as the possessor of socioeconomic privilege by means of age and gender, something that was not generally associated with women. Bearded women were "lustful and manly"[470] according to one medieval text, while an early modern one proclaimed that beards were a "token of manly nature."[471] Indeed, those men who shaved their chins were guilty of appearing as though they wished to be "lesse man."[472] It was unnatural for "tender" women to exhibit such outward symbols of manhood. John Evelyn expressed this view succinctly when he wrote "[T]he long and prolixer Beard was ever a mark of Gravity and Wisdom in Men; but a *Woman* with an hairy Chin, was saluted as a Monster, by a Peal of Stones at her."[473] An early modern English proverb advised "greet... a bearded woman three miles off," while another admonished: "Salute no red haired Man, nor Barded Woman, neerer than thirtie Foot off, with three Stones in thy Hands for to defend thee in a Need... such Men be false, and such Women Witches."[474]

Despite these concerns, beards were present in conversations about women in early modern England, although they were not beards of the face. The anonymous poem "The Ballad of the Beard" published in 1660 sheds light on what sort of beards women were allowed:

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[468] Johnston, "Bearded Women in Early Modern England," 13.
[469] Ibid., 1.
[470] Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages,* 205.
[471] Fisher, "The Renaissance beard," 167.
[472] Ibid., 168.
[473] Johnston, *Beard Fetish in Early Modern England,* 159.
[474] Morris Palmer Tilley, *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: A Collection of Proverbs Found in English Literature and the Dictionaries of the Period* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950), 412.

I have also seen on a woman's chin
A hair or two to grow,
But, alas, the face it is too cold a place,
Then look for a beard below.[475]

Female beards were safe when they manifested themselves as pubic hair. It was when they dared to make their presence known on the face that they became a problem. In many ways beards were the one of the most important markers of masculinity, distinguishing men from women and boys from men.[476] As specifically male gendered bodily attributes, they were unsettling and dangerous when found on a clearly identifiable female body. It is important to note that the presence of a beard on the chin of a woman-identified individual did not make that person a man—it made her a monster.

Similar to bearded women were women and girls who possessed body hair that exceeded the normative amount for women, both fictional and real. The tale of "Babiole" is an early modern French fairy tale in which a princess is turned into a monkey soon after birth and becomes a figure of both revulsion and curiosity to her mother and the people of the world, who come in droves to see her. Her monstrousness is noted in the text by her mother, who exclaims "What will become of me, what shame will be upon me, all my subjects will believe that I made a monster..."[477] Too hairy to be female, Babiole must be a monster or a creature instead.

Equally hairy as Babiole were the "wild women," who lived in the forests and caves just out of sight of early modern peoples. They could be either saintly or monstrous and were well known, as they and their masculine counterparts, the "wild men" were found:

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[475] Johnston, "Bearded Women in Early Modern England," 3.
[476] Fisher, "The Renaissance beard," 155.
[477] Hoffman, "Of Monkey Girls," 69.

> in stories told to children, epics and romances recited at court and read by the fireside, and books of saints' lives. They were shown in sculpture, paintings, stained glass, tapestries, and on dishes, chests, drain downspouts, and playing cards. They were in the margins of books, on choir stalls in churches, and on cathedral doors.[478]

Their visual presence was virtually inescapable, meaning that literacy was in no way a requirement in order to come in contact with the idea of the wild women. Depictions of them became more positive as the sixteenth-century progressed, as they were often portrayed as nursing children or doing other activities that clearly displayed their femininity.[479]

Although wild women were mythical beings, there were exceptions to this rule. In the sixteenth-century, the very non-fictional Gonzales sisters were covered in hair and considered curiosities. Their portraits were painted multiple times, and they were the focus of intense interest.[480] Just as positive depictions of wild women showed them in very feminine activities, the Gonzales sisters were tutored in explicitly feminine pastimes like the harpsichord, and dressed in overtly feminine ways. [481] The Gonzales sisters were displayed widely in person and in various text and artistic mediums, and made impacts on the court of Henry II and beyond.[482]

Both masculinity and femininity were defined by specific bodily attributes and gendered actions which could often be appropriated in the service of gender non-conformity. Beards were not the only clear identifier of gender—the act of urinating while standing upright rather than sitting or squatting was strongly associated with

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[478] Wiesner-Hanks, *The Marvelous Hairy Girls*, 34.
[479] Ibid., 42.
[480] Ibid., 3.
[481] Hoffman, "Of Monkey Girls," 70.
[482] Wiesner-Hanks, *The Marvelous Hairy Girls*, xi.

manliness[483] and was thus an important consideration for gender non-conforming individuals who were female-bodied. A variety of prosthetic phalluses existed for men who had been wounded in battle or had otherwise lost their ability to urinate standing up, and these could be used to create a realistic illusion. Various medical treatises advocated for the use of brass tubes, silver pipes, and other "artificiall Yard[s]"[484] to enable erect urination, and those items might have been available to or replicable by gender non-conforming individuals. A popular Dutch song mentioned a non-conforming sailor:

> She pissed through a horn pipe
> Just as a young man might.[485]

As Patricia Simons writes, gender non-conforming individuals "relied on their own ingenuity but sometimes deployed medical technology" in order to be seen as men. Simons states that "surgical devices like pipes or quills used on female or male patients and illustrated in a range of medical literature, some in the vernacular, provided women with ideas and artifacts." Literacy was not even a requirement—the instruments themselves were on display by barber-surgeons and the illustrations in the literature required no translation. Surgical manuals were also sources of inspiration, and most of those were in the vernacular as well. [486]

Many women and gender non-conforming individuals did not need to purchase or otherwise obtain medical devices, as they engineered items for themselves. An example of this is found in the case of the gender non-conforming individual Katherina

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[483] Patricia Simons, "Manliness and the Visual Semiotics of Bodily Fluids in Early Modern Culture," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 39, no. 2, (2009): 332.
[484] Ibid., 336.
[485] Dekker and van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism*, 16.
[486] Simons, "Manliness and the Visual Semiotics," 339.

Hetzeldorfer.[487] In 1477, Hetzeldorfer was on trial in the German imperial city of Speyer for a crime that was never given a name in the trial documents.[488] He had appropriated a male role and been living with a woman whom he initially claimed was his sister, but eventually admitted was his lover. Hetzeldorfer also admitted that he had made sexual advances towards two other women in the city, both of whom gave evidence against him in his trial.[489] During the trial, special attention was paid to the "instrument" that Hetzeldorfer had constructed and used in sexual encounters with women, with both Hetzeldorfer himself and multiple witnesses describing it.[490]

The object in question was a red leather phallus with cotton stuffed into the tip and a wooden stick inside. Hetzeldorfer "made a hole through the wooden stick, put a string through, and tied it round, and therewith she had her roguery..."[491] Else Muter, one of the witnesses who had been the object of one of Hetzeldorfer's seduction attempts, told the court that "she grabbed it and felt that it was a huge thing, as big as half an arm" and that when it came to actual sexual interaction, "[Hetzeldorfer's] semen is so much that it is beyond measure, that one could grab it with a full hand."[492] Regardless of the authenticity of the claim, it is clear that Hetzeldorfer's phallus assisted in his attempts to live as a man, sexual encounters and all. Unfortunately for Hetzeldorfer, the literal appropriation

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[487] I will use masculine pronouns for Hetzeldorfer as he made great efforts to be read as a man.

[488] Helmut Puff, "Female Sodomy: The Trial of Katherina Hetzeldorfer (1477)," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30, no. 1, (2000): 42.

[489] Ibid., 43.

[490] Ibid., 44.

[491] "The Trial of Katherina Hetzeldorfer" Stadtarchiv Speyer, 1 a 704/II. fols. 12r-14r. Trans. Helmut Puff.

[492] Ibid.

of a phallus and the perceived assumption of a male identity led to his public execution by drowning, a method that was generally used only for women.[493]

Hetzeldorfer was not the only individual to create his or her own phallus. In 1717, Anastasius Lagrantinus Rosenstengel[494] married a woman who was unaware of hir biological status. Rosenstengel had:

> made a penis of stuffed leather with two stuffed testicles made from pig's bladder attached to it and had tied it to [hir] pubes with a leather strap. When [zi] went to bed with [hir] alleged wife [zi] actually put this leather object into the other's body and in this way had actually accomplished intercourse.

Hir wife was not the only person to have witnessed this leather contraption. Rosenstengel testified that when zi was a soldier, zi had hired "many a woman" with whom zi used hir phallus.[495] Additionally,

> The defendant had made the leather insturment [hirself] while [zi] was with the Hanoverian soldiers, and, using [hir] ingenuity, [zi] had used it with several girls when [zi] was a soldier. Since [zi] had to act like all the other soldiers, [zi] caressed many a widow as well, who touched the leather penis and played with it and yet and not realized what it was...

Unfortunately for Rosenstengel, the marriage did not end happily. Hir wife's mother was suspicious that Rosenstengel was actually a woman and:

> together with a woman named Peterson, attacked [hir], took [hir] sword, ripped open [hir] pants, examined [hir], and discovered that [zi] was indeed not a man but a woman. They also tore the leather instrument from [hir] body, [as well as] the leather-covered horn through which [zi] urinated and [which zi had] kept fastened against [hir] nude body. When the defendant had, nevertheless, insisted that [zi] was a man, they had

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[493] Puff, "Female Sodomy," 44.

[494] Also known as Catharina Lincken.

[495] "The Trial of Catharina Margaretha Linck and Catharina Margaretha Mülhahn," trans. Bridgitte Eriksson *The Gay Past: A Collection of Historical Essays*, eds. Salvatore J. Licata and Robert P. Peterson (New York: Harrington Park Press, 1985), 31.

> spread open [hir] vulva and found not the slightest sign of anything masculine.[496]

Rosenstengel was eventually executed for sodomy because of these charges.

The idea of female-bodied individuals possessing phalluses was simultaneously enticing, horrifying, and entertaining. Gender non-conforming individuals who were female bodied were at their most threatening when they were in possession of those physical attributes that resisted the label "woman," but they were also easy to satirize or use for comedic purposes when such an obvious anatomical difference was involved.

Behavioral Characteristics

One did not have to make physical changes to be accused of or identified with male characteristics. Although his phallus was the most telling aspect of his masculinity, Katherina Hetzeldorfer expressed many non-physical characteristics that were read as "manly" by witnesses. During the trial, witnesses described Hetzeldorfer as "being like a man in both physique and behavior, a sexually aggressive character and a potent lover."[497] He is depicted as someone who was the active, not passive, partner in sexual liaisons, something that was assumed to be a role enacted by men. Else Muter made this point clear when she said "that she did not know anything other than that men should be granted such roguery," indicating that Hetzeldorfer's actions only made sense within a binary framework in which actors stayed on their own sides. Hetzeldorfter, it seems, "whored like a man" which allowed him to be read like a man.[498]

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[496] Ibid., 33.
[497] Puff, "Female Sodomy," 43.
[498] Ibid., 44.

Not all masculine traits were sexual in nature. They could be personality traits that were considered unfeminine, which could be either deeply unsettling or supremely entertaining. The concept of masculine personality and behavioral traits exhibiting themselves in women was a ground rich with potentials for satire. In the late fifteenth century, the playwright Gil de Armesto y Castro wrote the inverted reality play *Entremés famoso de los maricones galanteados*, a satire that capitalized on the Spanish fears surrounding gender roles and inversions. In the play, women take male roles and male clothing while they aggressively pursue their male love interests.[499] In the same vein, the satirical *The Discovery of a New World*, first written in Latin in 1605 and translated into English in 1609, takes aim at women who behaved in ways the author, Joseph Hall, found absurd.

The book itself is a sort of travel satire that capitalized on the many discoveries that were occurring around the time of its publishing and the travel narratives of the time. The narrator sets off on a tour of newly discovered nations: Tenter-belly, Fooliana, and Shee-landt, or Viraginia, among others. Shee-landt is an upside-down land where the gender roles are severely reversed. The narrator takes the reader on a journey around the country, pointing out the differences between Shee-landt and the norms of Europe.

Shee-landt is located in South America and bordered by its enemy, the country of Letcheritania, and close to the island nation of Ile Hermaphrodite. It has several different provinces of "seuerall conditions, habites, and languages." The narrator declares Tattlingen to be the best of all these areas, as it "hath many faire cities in it, as *Pratlingople, Tales-Borne,* & *Lypswagg*, through the last of which there runneth a great

[499] Cristian Berco, *Sexual Hierarchies, Public Status*, 34.

riuer called *Slauer*..."[500] The narrator is captured by the denizens of Tattlingen and taken to their principal city, Gossipingoa, where he is imprisoned. Upon release, he is made to take an oath to obey the laws of the country so that he can observe their strange customs. [501] They run their own elected government[502] and are all "their husbands maisters",[503] and all of their time is spent at playhouses or taverns rather than in their homes.[504]

Here, "women weare britches, and long beards, and the men goe with their chinnes all naked, in kirtles and peticoates; spinning and carding wooll, whilest their wiues discharge the maine affaires of the state."[505] The narrator does his best to conceal his distaste for the customs of the country, despite being shocked by the "beastly sight" of a sword and buckler in the hands of a woman.[506] He can scarcely contain his astonishment at the existence of "*Proffessitrixes* of the *Noble Science*" who keep free schools for the girls of the nation.[507] The reader is asked to keep the existence of Shee-landt from the women of England, because if those women hear of its wonders: "all will away, wee should not haue one big belly left to lay the foundation for a future afe by[.]"[508] Through this text, the author simultaneously notes the absurdity of women with male attributes and the foolish nature of women who confine themselves to the expectations of their own gender.

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[500] Joseph Hall, *The Discovery of a New World (Mundus Alter et Idem)*, trans. John Healey (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937), 64.
[501] Ibid., 66.
[502] Ibid., 67.
[503] Ibid., 68.
[504] Ibid., 70.
[505] Ibid., 72.
[506] Ibid., 73.
[507] Ibid., 74.
[508] Ibid., 69.

Comments about the foolish attributes of women that those with masculine traits strove to overcome were found in many forms of literature. The protagonist of the 1672 French play *La fille savant* outlines the distinction between men and women in an attempt to explain her masculine dress and actions by saying: "please realize that the softness and idleness of women have given me such an aversion to my sex, that being unable to change it, I try, at least, to disguise it by my clothes and my actions." An English play written in 1706, *The Recruiting Officer,* has an athletic female heroine who complains that she grows weary of the limitations of her sex. [509] In theory, women who made efforts to overcome their feminine nature were by default adopting a masculine nature instead.

The "female warrior" trope is one that was well known throughout late medieval and early modern Europe. The figure, whether fictional, mythical, or contemporary was found in popular culture ranging from ballads to the stage.[510] In seventeenth-century France, the homes of upper class women were sometimes decorated with motifs of Amazons and other warrior women.[511]

While female warriors may not often have impacted the outcome of military engagements often, they were quite important as cultural figures.[512] In general, these women warriors were cross-dressed and thus evaded detection. Culturally, the role of the female warrior is an intriguing concept. She was able to appropriate a very physical

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[509] John A. Lynn II, *Women, Armies, and Warfare in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 164.

[510] Carolyn D. Williams, "Women Behaving Well: Early Modern Images of Female Courage" in *Presenting Gender: Changing Sex in Early-Modern Culture*, ed. Chris Mounsey (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2001), 50.

[511] Lynn, *Women, Armies and Warfare*, 167.

[512] Ibid., 164.

symbol of male power, the sword, and pass among men undetected, complicating the conceptions of gender roles.[513]

One of the most common traits associated with women and gender non-conforming individuals who entered military service disguised as men was bravery. Nicolaas Witsen wrote "I spoke to you of Amazons before... but I could give you many examples of women on our own ships who did men's service and were exceptionally brave."[514] The figure of the Amazon was one that was often used to describe women who fought in a masculine manner and adopted masculine traits. The comparison was made in 1622 regarding the actions of women during the siege of Montpellier:

> [O]ne named Mourete... performed an act of an Amazon, for having encountered a man armed with cuirass and helmet, she killed him with a sword that she had and withdrew from the fight only when two wounds in the head and the thigh forced her to retire. Another girl killed an enemy soldier with her own dagger.[515]

The seventeenth-century experienced an unusual explosion of contemporary warrior women who essentially became celebrities. Many of these women fought in situations that were easy for the general population to mythologize and celebrate; the Comtesse de Saint-Baslement, Alberte-Barbe d'Ernecourt, led her tenants against raiders that were attacking the estate while her husband was at war, as did Catherine Meurdrac de La Guette. During the Fronde in France, Anne-Marie-Louise d'Orleans became a rebel leader.[516]

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[513] Ibid., 165.
[514] Dekker and van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism*, xv.
[515] Lynn, *Women, Armies, and Warfare*, 204.
[516] Ibid., 167.

These and other warrior women might have been influenced by popular ballads; they were certainly the subjects of some, or sources of inspiration for fictional accounts. A 1640 English ballad entitled *The Valiant Commander, with his Resolute Lady* celebrates the courage of women who march off to war:

> She took a Musquet then,
> and a sword by her side
> In disguise like a man
> her valour so she try'd
> And with her true-love she,
> march'd forth courageously
> And made away with speed
> quite through the enemy[.][517]

A Dutch ballad expresses similar sentiments:

> Her valour was acclaimed by all
> And the Council did agree
> That these two might be
> By the marriage vow united
> And to remain thus undivided
> And so in the hangman's stead
> The priest was called
> And the two were wed.[518]

In the second ballad, the reinscribing of heteronormative gender roles is very clear; the threat of punishment is abated by the woman leaving her role of warrior to take up the role of wife and homemaker, thus restoring the natural order. Not all of the ballads were about fictional women. Mary Ambree was an Englishwoman who became known for her bravery in battle at the siege of Ghent in 1584. At least one ballad was written about her exploits.[519]

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[517] Ibid., 168.
[518] Ibid., 169.
[519] O'Malley, "*Custome Is an Idiot*," 279.

Masculine traits in women were often admirable when they were "display[s] of masculine virtue"[520] that did not result in an appropriation of masculine authority. The women who so bravely defended their lands while their husbands were at war did not retain their roles after their husbands returned; the heroines of ballads often wound up married to a fellow soldier and retired from their life of adventure and masculine action.

Although courage was often lauded in women, there were some who found courage in women to be negative or unsettling. The author of a 1615 collection of anecdotes about cross-dressing women wrote that while he admired the courage of female soldiers, he also found them absurd, using the Bible as a source to back up his claim. Another seventeenth-century author wrote "Such women are in no way praiseworthy who deny their sex so that they may follow the war in men's clothing, fine though their deeds may have been." [521]

A single individual could inspire both admiration and condemnation. Catalina de Erauso is one of the best known examples of this dichotomous judgment. Erauso was a gender non-conforming individual who escaped from a Spanish convent in 1600. While his account, purportedly written by himself, makes it clear that Erauso saw himself as a man, contemporaries saw him as a woman who adopted particularly masculine characteristics. Through that lens, it is possible to examine how masculine behavioral and personality characteristics that were exhibited by someone socially assigned to the category "woman" were perceived by early modern individuals. Erauso lived in both Spain and the New World, where he presented himself as Lieutenant Diaz for twenty

[520] Lynn, *Women, Armies, and Warfare*, 205.
[521] Dekker and van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism*, 91.

years. Upon returning to Spain he was, surprisingly, given a dispensation from the Pope to continue living as a man, after which he returned to the New World where he reportedly lived the rest of his days as a cart driver named Antonio.[522,523]

Erauso's exploits as laid forth in his memoir read like a laundry list of masculine behaviors and activities, both desirable and unfortunate. He was a soldier, an adventurer in the New World, a fighter of duels (one of which caused the death of his brother,) a gambler, a llama herder,[524] a deputy sheriff of sorts,[525] a sought-after partner for women, and a general rabble-rouser.[526] His temper was quick,[527] leading to a somewhat astonishing number of deaths, and he often mocked the men who he defeated in duels. When he does express feminine characteristics, he is often quick to attach a disclaimer to them; when he cries after an escape and the death of his companion, he assures the reader that it was "for what I think was the first time in my life."[528] He was the subject of a play that came out soon after he was revealed to the public in 1626 entitled *La monja alférez, comedia famosa*. The play focused extensively on his penchant for women, gambling, and fighting.[529]

Although Erauso mentions on the first page of his memoir that he is a woman,[530] it is a point not often mentioned in the memoir itself. It is mentioned when it is relevant—when some scrape he is in is made that much more perilous by the threat of discovery—

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[522] Crawford, *European Sexualities*, 144.
[523] From this point forward Erauso will be referred to by his preferred name, Antonio de Erauso.
[524] Catalina de Erauso, *Lieutenant Nun: Memoir of a Basque Transvestite in the New World*, trans. Michele Stepto and Gabriel Stepto (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 39.
[525] Ibid., 48.
[526] Stepto and Stepto, *Lieutenant Nun*, xxvi.
[527] Ibid., xxviii.
[528] De Erauso, *Lieutenant Nun*, 27.
[529] Lynn, *Women, Armies, and Warfare*, 178.
[530] De Erauso, *Lieutenant Nun*, 3.

but the majority of the book is primarily an account of his daring exploits. He claims responsibility and guilt for most of the situations in which he finds himself, with the exception of one particular instance, of which he said "I got myself into another serious mess, undeserved to tell the truth, because this time around I was entirely blameless—whatever you may have heard,"[531] painting a picture of himself as an unrelenting—but honest—rogue.

When Erauso finally admits to a bishop that he has the body of a woman, it is in a way that emphasizes his masculine exploits: "I left the convent for such and such a reason, went to such and such a place, undressed myself and dressed myself up again, cut my hair, traveled here and there, embarked, disembarked, hustled, killed, maimed, wreaked havoc, and roamed about..."[532] Although he resumes his former identity for a time, Erauso is followed constantly by his reputation as a gender non-conformer, even back to the Old World. He relates his frustration about this: "I left Cádiz for Seville, where I spent fifteen days, lying as low as possible and fleeing from the swarms of people that turned up everywhere, trying to catch a glimpse of me in men's clothing."[533]

This "woman" with masculine characteristics was a huge source of fascination to the general populace. Erauso's fame was partly due to his donning of male clothing, but it was primarily due to his simultaneous donning of a male identity, one that conforms to a legitimate form of masculinity that can be easily recognized. The clothing becomes a visual representation of this identity. The identity is further legitimized by a sizeable pension from the king, recognition of Erauso's service to the Crown in the form of

[531] Ibid., 51.
[532] Ibid., 64.
[533] Ibid., 73.

military service.[534] The final, and arguably most important, legitimization of Erauso's masculine identity is the dispensation to continue living as a man that he receives from Pope Urban VIII. This confirmation of identity is a turning point in the life of Erauso:

> I kissed the feet of the Blessed Pope Urban the Eighth, and told him in brief and as well as I could the story of my life and travesl, the fact that I was a woman, and that I had kept my virginity. His Holiness seemed amazed to hear such things, and graciously gave me leave to pursue my life in men's clothing, all the while reminding me it was my duty to lead and honest existence from that day forward...[535]

After his dispensation, it appears that the legal world at least recognized Erauso as a man. An account by Captain Juan Pérez de Aguirre from 1640 concerning the Erauso estate states that:

> he couldn't remember where they others were said to have died, but it was common knowledge that they were all dead, all excepting a brother of theirs called Don Antonio de Erauso, alias Alférez Monja, with whom he had spoken to at this same time, in the city of Veracruz, and who had confirmed the deaths of the four brothers.[536]

Some in the general population were willing to recognize Erauso's identity, although this may have been out of a feeling of curiosity and wonder rather than an actual acceptance. Erauso is able to travel based on his fame: "My fame had spread abroad, and it was remarkable to see the throng that followed me about—famous people, princes, bishops, cardinals. Indeed, wherever I went, people's doors were open, and in the six weeks I spent in Rome, scarcely a day went by when I did not dine with princes."[537] Quite a change for a former nun and brigand.

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[534] Ibid., 74.
[535] Ibid., 78.
[536] Stepto and Stepto, *Lieutenant Nun*, xliii.
[537] De Erauso, *Lieutenant Nun*, 79.

Others were not so sure about his newly acquired status. The only other account of Erauso that is known comes from a Capuchin friar in 1693, detailing a 1645 meeting with Erauso. He said that:

> she had a mule pack with which she, along with some slaves, carried stuff all over, and that on those mules and with the help of those slaves, she transported goods to Mexico; that she was the King's subject and known as a person of much courage and skill; that she went in men's clothing, and wore a sword and dagger ornamented in silver. She seemed to be about fifty years old, of strong build, somewhat stout, swarthy of complexion and with a few hairs on her chin.[538]

The friar, although not convinced that Antonio was male, nonetheless described him with masculine-identified traits of both personality and physical stature.

Erauso's story is somewhat bizarre, and seems in some ways to be absurdly anachronistic. That an obviously gender non-conforming individual could find such acceptance and permission rather than the expected condemnation and punishment in the seventeenth-century seems almost beyond belief. In some ways, though, Erauso exemplifies the experiences of multiple other gender non-conforming folks. He is able to avoid punishment by preserving his virginity, thus maintaining the one aspect of his femininity that most concerned the authorities who had power over him. His masculine traits are largely represented as positives: courage, tenacity, and self-reliance. The fact that his multiple murders are overlooked by the Pope and others has nothing to do with his gender identity.

Conclusion

[538] Stepto and Stepto, *Lieutenant Nun*, xliii.

The body itself is one of the most readily identifiable markers of sex and often gender that a person can exhibit. Examples of bodies that were ambiguous or failed to conform to a binary understanding were often much discussed and frequently displayed, be they bearded women or hermaphroditic individuals. These examples of physical non-conformity were arguably accessible to the general public and contributed to an atmosphere in which non-conforming bodies were, while still alien, a part of the social fabric and thus in no way impossible. Hairy girls and women in particular were present "from fairs to courts, in handbills distributed in public squares, paintings put on walls of curiosity cabinets, engravings in works of zoology and medicine, travel memoirs, and a fairy tale."[539] The individuals themselves became part of the cultural landscape and were, in some cases, able to survive because of it. Women or gender non-conforming individuals who displayed masculine personality traits and characteristics were more likely to find a place in society that was, if not celebrated, at least tolerated.

For those gender non-conforming individuals who did not wish to be public spectacles or who wished to avoid persecution, it was important to be able to present bodies and bodily functions that were clearly identifiable. Objects like false phalluses were useful tools in the attempt to create a convincing body that would not arouse suspicious, allowing women and gender non-conforming individuals to go through life as men undetected by their neighbors and the law. Even those who were deliberately in the public eye regularly made efforts to conform to binary understandings of gender so as to not disturb the status quo and to remain viewed by the public as strange but innocuous anomalies. In order for bearded women to be read as "real" women, they by necessity

[539] Hoffman, "Of Monkey Girls," 74.

over-emphasized their femininity in the public eye by performing their femaleness in ways that were easily read. Male characteristics on a female body could be overcome or compensated for, but not without effort.

Non-physical masculine attributes were both more common and more tolerable in most cases. Cross-dressed female soldiers might exhibit unfeminine bravery, but they did so in a way that was admirable. These characteristics became threatening only when they, too, began to challenge the dominant paradigm, as when Hetzeldorfer behaved in a masculine manner when it came to pursuing women and engaging in sexual behaviors. So long as masculine behaviors did not cross into this realm of appropriation, they were possible for women and gender non-conformers without excessive retribution.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

As this thesis has demonstrated, gender transgression was a highly visible part of the social fabrics of late medieval and early modern western Europe, creating an environment that allowed for the development of gender non-conformity. Medical observations and theories about the body helped to create physical boundaries around what was "male" and "female" which in turn created in-between space for bodies that did not conform to either standard, raising awareness that the binary system was flawed in some way. Legal systems contributed to this by drawing social boundaries around physical bodies and attempting to find ways in which all people could be categorized as either male or female. The continued presence of cases that were exceptions to this binary system of designation created legal in-between spaces to match those created by medical professionals. The concept of the hermaphrodite is the perfect example of those in-between spaces in practice.

Tales of bodily transformation abounded in this era, in diverse sources that ranged from treatises written by medical professionals to culturally significant anecdotes recorded in many types of texts. The body was an unstable object, unpredictable and in need of external control. Gender was not a constant, as evidenced by the number of people who donned clothing that was designated for genders that were not their own. Clearly, it was not inconceivable that an individual could change who they were from a gendered perspective through either bodily transformation or the transformation of their external markers.

I believe the fields of both gender and European history could greatly benefit from an approach that views gender non-conforming individuals not as anomalies, but as people who fit into a larger pattern and tradition. The closest to this approach that I have found is Dekker and van de Pol's *The Tradition of Female Transvestism*, but they only look at female cross-dressers in the Netherlands. The scope must be broadened. Not only were female cross-dressers part of a "deeply rooted tradition"[540]—so were male cross-dressers, bearded women, female actors, and gender non-conforming individuals who sought to live life as a gender other than the one to which they had been socially assigned.

In their study of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Dutch female cross-dressing, Rudolf Dekker and Lotte van de Pol clearly identified one of the largest issues a project of this type faces. All history can be affected by a lack of sources, but when individuals like gender non-conformers are deliberately trying to pass and avoid detection, it becomes much harder to find them within the record. Dekker and van de Pol wrote: "we do not know how many cross-dressers left no trail behind them in written source-material. We can make a guess that this especially concerns those women who transformed themselves so successfully that they were never unmasked." This sentiment applies to gender non-conforming individuals and gender transgressors across the board, not just female cross-dressers. Of those who are found, "it is impossible to know how representative they are, and we can only guess that there is an overrepresentation of failure..." [541] While we may not always be able to find gender non-conforming individuals in the historical record, however, we can see their fingerprints all over

[540] Dekker and van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism*, 1.
[541] Ibid., 3.

popular culture that celebrated, mocked, and recoiled from gender transgression, and we can confidently state that those same expressions found in popular culture in turn impacted the lives of actual gender non-conforming individuals.

During the course of the research for this thesis, I have identified thirty-six individuals that fit my narrow parameters to qualify as "gender non-conforming," found in the table below. They lived for extended periods of time as genders other than the ones to which they had been socially, and in some cases legally, assigned and adopted clothing and professions to match. They ranged from Sweden to the Iberian peninsula and occasionally moved between the Old World and the New. Although most of them would qualify as members of the "overrepresentation of failure," a few—notably Thomas/ine Hall and Antonio de Erauso—could arguably be said to represent the ways in which gender non-conformers could become successful.

This search for gender non-conforming individuals has been limited in a number of ways. All of the sources used to locate them have been written in or translated into English, and many have been secondary sources. In order to more fully search for the presence of such individuals, it will be necessary to make extensive use of archival sources. It is a task that is entirely too large for a single body of work and impossible for a single historian, given the broad range of temporal and geographical locations and the number of possible languages involved. Additionally, this research could benefit greatly from the inclusion of eastern European sources and a greater focus on northern Europe as well. Russia and Sweden have both proven to be promising in this regard, and further investigation will no doubt yield favorable results.

Gender has never been a static, binary institution, and recent scholarship has begun to explore the possibilities this fact creates for the understanding and analysis of European history. By acknowledging the many-faceted aspects of gender as they have been presented throughout human history, historians can better understand the nuanced nature of human interaction and better identify patterns of behavior through time. The gender non-conforming and gender transgressing individuals of late medieval and early modern western Europe were not mere idiosyncrasies but were instead individuals acting within the parameters of time-honored and well-trodden paths they found between the officially prescribed gender options. Doubtless there were far more gender non-conforming individuals than will ever be identified in the historical record, but it is imperative that historians begin to recognize their presence and unsettle binary assumptions.


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Year	Location	Name(s)	Additional Notes	#
1354	Venice Italy	Rolandino/a Ronchaia		1
1394	London, Oxford, Burford Beaconsfield England	John/Eleanor Rykener		2, 3, 4, 5
1425	London England	John Tirell	Arrested in women's clothing.	6
1477	Speyer Germany	Katharina Hetzeldorfer	Executed, used a dildo.	7
1496	Valdaracete Spain	Estefanía/Esteban		8
1510	Bruges Belgium	Glaudyne Malengin	Refused to give up male clothing after arrest.	9
1535	Fontaines France	Name unknown	Recorded by Henri Estienne, executed.	10
1537	Grenzach Germany	Name unknown	Drowned in the Rhine.	35
1547	Freiburg im Breisgau Germany	Agatha Dietschi/Hans Kaiser/ Schnitter Hensli	Possessed a "phallic instrument."	36
1556	London England	Robert Chetwyn		11
1557	Lisbon Portugal	António/Vitoria		12
1580	Vitry-le François, Montier-en-Der France	Marie	Recorded by Montaigne, used a dildo and married a woman.	13, 14
1585	Seville Spain	Francisco Galindo		15
1587	Toledo Spain	Elena/o de Céspedes	Born in 1545 as a slave.	16
1600	San Sebastián Spain	Catalina/Antonio de Erauso/ Alonso Díaz Ramírez de Guzmán / Francisco de Loyola		17
1601	Piadena Italy	Daniel Burghammer		18
1601	Rouen France	Marie/Marin le Marcis	Gender transformation	19
1605	Úbeda Spain	Magdalena/Gaspar Muñoz	Gender transformation	20
1606	The Netherlands	Maeijken/Abraham Joosten, Pieter Verbrugh		-

1624	Paris France	Francois Timoléon de Choisy		21
1625	Amsterdam The Netherlands	Trijnte Sijmons/ Sijmon Poort	Shoe maker, stone mason, and soldier.	22
1629	London England	Thomas/ine Hall		23
1629	The Netherlands	Anna Jans/Jan Jansz		-
1632	The Netherlands	Barbara Pieters/Willem Adriaens		-
1663	The Netherlands	Annetje Barents/Klaas Barends		-
1675	Harderwijk The Netherlands	Anne Jacobs	Court ordered to dress as a man, as she "was more a man than a woman."	24
1679	Stockholm Sweden	Lisbetha Olsdotter/Mats Ersson		25
1686	Toulouse France	Marguerite/Arnaud Malaure	Assigned by courts to live as a man, lived as a woman and sought to regain her female identity.	26
1701	Hamburg Germany	Anna Ilsabe Buncke/ Heinrich Buncke	Involved in a murder.	27
1703	Amsterdam The Netherlands	Jan Snoeck	Born in Brussels, Belgium	28
1705	Stockholm Sweden	Maria/Maja Johansdotter, Magnus Johansson		29
1711	Salinillas Spain	Juan/a de Leyda	Denied claim to either gender	30
1713	Kalmar Sweden	Ulricka Eleonora Stålhammar/Vilhelm Edstedt		31
1717	Halberstadt Germany	Catharina Lincken/Anastasius Lagrantinus Rosentengl, Caspar Beuerlein	Married a woman, executed, used a dildo.	32
1719	London England	Constantine Boone		33
1720	London England	Sarah/John Ketson		34

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