§. *Hic Mulier; or, The Man-Woman:*
Being a Medicine
to cure the Coltish Disease of the Staggers
in the Masculine-Feminines of our Times,
Expressed in a brief Declamation:
*Non omnes possimus omnes.*
1620

*Hic Mulier:* How now? Break Priscian's head at the first encounter? But two words, and they false Latin? Pardon me, good Signor Construction, for I will not answer thee as the Pope did, that I will do it in despite of the Grammar. But I will maintain, if it be not the truest Latin in our Kingdom, yet it is the commonest. For since the days of Adam women were never so Masculine: Masculine in their genders and whole generations, from the Mother to the youngest daughter; Masculine in Number, from one to multitudes; Masculine in Case, even from the head to the foot; Masculine in Mood, from bold speech to impudent action; and Masculine in Tense, for without redress they were, are, and will be still most Masculine, most mankind, and most monstrous. Are all women then turned Masculine? No, God forbid, there are a world full of holy thoughts, modest carriage, and severe chastity. To these let me fall on my knees and say, "You, oh you women, you good women, you that are in the fullness of perfection, you that are the crowns of nature's work, the complements of men's excellences, and the Seminaries of propagation; you that maintain the world, support mankind, and give life to society; you that, armed with

1. "We cannot all be everybody." This is a clever variation on Vergil, *Eclogue* 8.63 ("non omnia possimus omnes," "we cannot all do everything"), underlining the author's contention that women who dress like men are really trying to *become* men. "The Staggers" is a disease of horses and other animals which causes reeling and falling.
2. Deliberately incorrect Latin for "this woman," coupling the masculine form of the adjective with the feminine noun ("this mannish woman").
3. Priscian was a sixth-century A.D. Roman grammarian; "to break his head" was to violate his rules of grammar.
4. A series of puns on the root meaning of the grammatical terms *gender*, *number*, *case*, *mood*, and *tense* (at this time the word *case* could refer to clothing).
5. Seed plots, nurseries.
the infinite power of Virtue, are Castles impregnable, Rivers unsailable, Sea's immovable, infinite treasures, and invincible armies; that are helpers most trusty, Sentinels most careful, signs deceitless, plain ways fail-less, true guides dangerless, Balms that instantly cure, and honors that never perish. Oh do not look to find your names in this Declaration, but with all honor and reverence do I speak to you. You are Seneca's Graces, women, good women, modest women, true women — ever young because ever virtuous, ever chaste, ever glorious. When I write of you, I will write with a golden pen on leaves of golden paper; now I write with a rough quill and black ink on iron sheets the iron deeds of an iron generation."

Come, then, you Masculine women, for you are my Subject, you that have made Admiration an Ass and fooled him with a deformity never before dreamed of; that have made yourselves stranger things than ever Noah's Ark unloaded or Nile engendered; whom to name, he that named all things might study an Age to give you a right attribute; whose like are not found in any Antiquary's study, in any Seaman's travel, nor in any Painter's cunning. You that are stranger than strange-ness itself; whom Wise men wonder at, Boys shout at, and Goblins themselves start at; you that are the gilt dirt which embroiders Playhouses, the painted Statues which adorn Carochoes, and the perfumed Carrion that bad men feed on in Brothels: 'tis of you I entreat and of your monstrous deformity. You that have made your bodies like antic Bosscadge or Crotesco work, not half man/half woman, half fish/half flesh, half beast/half Monster, but all Odious, all Devil; that have cast off the ornaments of your sexes to put on the garments of Shame; that have laid by the bashfulness of your natures to gather the impudence of Harlots; that have buried silence to revive slander; that are all things but that which you should be, and nothing less than friends to virtue and goodness; that have made the foundation of your highest detested work from the lowest despised creatures that Record can give testimony of: the one cut from the Commonwealth at the Gallows; the other is well known. From the first you got the false armory of yellow Starch (for to wear yellow on white or white upon yellow is by the rules of Heraldry baseness, bastardy, and indignity), the folly of imitation, the deceitfulness of flattery, and the grossest baseness of all base-ness, to do whatever a greater power will command you. From the other you have taken the monstrousness of your deformity in apparel, exchanging the modest attire of the comely Hood, Cowl, Coif, handsome Dress or Kerchief, to the cloudy Ruffianly broad-brimmed Hat and wanton Feather; the modest upper parts of a concealing straight gown, to the loose, lascivious civil embracement of a French doublet, being all unbuttoned to entice, all of one shape to hide deformity, and extreme short waist'd to give a most easy way to every luxurious action; the glory of a fair large hair, to the shame of most ruffianly short locks; the side, thick gathered, and close guarding Safeguards to the

6. In his treatise On Benefits (de Beneficiis), Seneca, an ancient Roman moral philosopher and playwright, presented the mythological Graces (three beautiful virgins depicted dancing hand in hand) as symbols of kindness and gratitude.

7. According to Ovid’s Metamorphoses, some strange and monstrous creatures emerged from the slime left by the receding waters after the great flood, creatures similar to those thought to be produced in the mud of the Nile's annual floods.

8. Stately coaches.

9. Treat.

10. Bosscadge is a decorative design imitating branches and foliage; Crotesco is painting or sculpture that fantastically combines human and animal forms interwoven with foliage and flowers.

11. Anything rather than.

12. Some background is necessary to understand this reference to a scandal that rocked English society in the early seventeenth century. The scandal revolved around Lady Frances Howard who, although married to the earl of Essex while both were still children, had by January 1613 embarked on an affair with Robert Carr, earl of Somerset and the king's favorite. Somerset's political and personal mentor, the writer Sir Thomas Overbury, convinced of the fundamental wickedness of Lady Frances, determined to end the relationship, but Somerset was deeply inflamed with his mistress and broke with Overbury over the issue. Both King James and his queen detested Overbury for his intrusive arrogance, and in April 1613 James found an excuse to have him imprisoned in the Tower. In September 1613 Lady Frances succeeded in obtaining an annulment of her marriage to Essex on grounds of his supposed impotence, and three months later, with the king's blessing, she married Robert Carr at Whitehall in a lavish ceremony. In September of the same year Sir Thomas Overbury had died in the Tower, but not until the summer of 1615 did the fact emerge that he had been murdered by Lady Frances with the help of her close friend Mrs. Anne Turner. History leaves no doubt as to the guilt of the two women, for eventually all who had assisted them confessed freely. Mrs. Turner, a dressmaker who had introduced the fashion of the yellow ruff and cuffs into the court (a fashion that James despised), was sentenced to be hung. Lady Frances was also sentenced to death, but her sentence was commuted by James and after a term of imprisonment she was pardoned. The author of Hic Mulier links the crime of these two women with their mode of dress. James insisted that Mrs. Turner, "the one cut from the Commonwealth at the Gallows," go to her death wearing a dress, cuffs, and a ruff that had been stained with yellow, although Lady Frances may not have worn all the masculine fashions attributed to her by the author, we know from a famous portrait in the National Gallery that she wore ruffs with extremely low-cut, revealing gowns.

13. Long outer petticoats.
short, weak, thin, loose, and ever hand-entertaining short bases; for Needles, Swords; for Prayerbooks, bawdy legs; for modest gestures, giantlike behaviors; and for women's modesty, all Mimic and apish incivility. These are your founders, from these you took your copies, and, without amendment, with these you shall come to perdition.

Sophocles, being asked why he presented no women in his Tragedies but good ones and Euripides none but bad ones, answered he presented women as they should be, but Euripides, women as they were. These "Mermaids or rather Mer-Monsters" who dress bizarrely in men's fashions probably never practiced "comeliness or modesty." Although they may associate with or be related to persons of gentle birth, they themselves are "but rags of Gentry," torn from better pieces for their foul stains. Some are not even descended from gentry but are rather "the stinking vapors drawn from dunghills"; these people may exist on the fringes of good society for a time, but eventually they will fall back "to the place from whence they came, and there rot and consume unpitied and unremembered."

And questionless it is true that such were the first beginners of these last deformities, for from any purer blood would have issued a purer birth; there would have been some spark of virtue, some excuse for imitation. But this deformity hath no agreement with goodness, nor no difference against the weakest reason. It is all base, all barbarous: base, in respect it offends man in the example and God in the most unnatural use; barbarous, in that it is exorbitant from Nature and an Antithesis to kind, going astray with ill-favored affectation both in attire, in speech, in manners, and, it is to be feared, in the whole courses and stories of their actions. What can be more barbarous than with the gloss of mumming Art to disguise the beauty of their creations? To mould their bodies to every deformed fashion, their tongues to vile and horrible profanations, and their hands to ruffianly and uncivil actions? To have their gestures as piebald and as motley-variably as their disguises, their souls fuller of infirmities than a horse or a prostitute, and their minds languishing in those infirmities? If this be not barbarous, make the rude Scythian, the untamed Moor, the naked Indian, or the wild Irish, Lords and Rulers of well-governed Cities.

But rests this deformity then only in the baser, in none but such as are the beggary of desert, that have in them nothing but skittishness and peevishness, that are living graves, unwelcome Sinks, quartan Fevers for intolerable cumber, and the extreme injury and wrong of nature? Are these and none else guilty of this high Treason to God and nature?

Oh yes, a world of other—many known great, thought good, wished happy, much loved and most admired—are so foully branded with this infamy of disguise. And the marks stick so deep on their naked faces and more naked bodies that not all the painting in Rome or Fauna can conceal them, but every eye discovers them almost as low as their middles.

It is an infection that emulates the plague and throws itself amongst women of all degrees, all deserts, and all ages; from the Capitol to the Cottage are some spots or swellings of this disease. Yet evermore the greater the person is, the greater is the rage of this sickness; and the more they have to support the eminence of their Fortunes, the more they bestow in the augmentation of their deformities. Not only such as will not work to get bread will find time to weave herself points to truss her loose Breeches; and she that hath pawned her credit to get a Hat will sell her Smock to buy a Feather; she that hath given kisses to have her hair shorn will give her honesty to have her upper parts put into a French doublet. To conclude, she that will give her body to have her body deformed will not stick to give her soul to have her mind satisfied.

But such as are able to buy all at their own charges, they swim in the excess of these vanities and will be manlike not only from the head to the waist, but to the very foot and in every condition: man in body by
attire, man in behavior by rude complement, 23 man in nature by aptness to anger, man in action by pursuing revenge, man in wearing weapons, man in using weapons, and, in brief, so much man in all things that they are neither men nor women, but just good for nothing.

[Neither great birth nor great beauty nor great wealth can save these foolish women from "one particle of disgrace." To support this point, the author includes two stanzas by the poet S. T. O.; 24 the speaker in the poem attests that he would love a virtuous woman above one of high birth, beauty, or wealth.]

Remember how your Maker made for our first Parents coats—not one coat, but a coat for the man and a coat for the woman, coats of several fashions, several forms, and for several uses—the man’s coat fit for his labor, the woman’s fit for her modesty. 25 And will you lose the model left by this great Workmaster of Heaven?

The long hair of a woman is the ornament of her sex, and bashful shamefastness her chief honor; the long hair of a man, the wizard 26 for a thievish or murderous disposition. And will you cut off that beauty to wear the other’s villainy? The Vestals 27 in Rome wore comely garments of one piece from the neck to the heel; and the Sword players, 28 motley doublets with gaudy points. The first begot reverence; the latter, laughter. And will you lose that honor for the other’s scorn? The weapon of a virtuous woman was her tears, which every good man pitted and every valiant man honored; the weapon of a cruel man is his sword, which neither Law allows nor reason defends. And will you leave the excellent shield of innocence for this deformed instrument of disgrace? Even for goodness’ sake, that can ever pay her own with her own merits, look to your reputations, which are undermined with your own Follies, and do not become the idle Sisters of foolish Don Quixote, 29 to believe every vain Fable which you read or to think you may be attired like Bradamant, who was often taken for Ricardetto, her brother; that you may fight like Marfiza and win husbands with conquest; or ride astride like Claridiana and make Giants fall at your stirrups. 30 The Morals 31 will give you better meanings, which if you shun and take the gross imitations, the first will deprive you of all good society; the second, of noble affections; and the third, of all beloved modesty. You shall lose all the charms of women’s natural perfections, have no presence to win respect, no beauty to enchant men’s hearts, nor no bashfulness to excuse the vilest imputations.

The fairest face covered with a foul wizard begets nothing but afright or scorn, and the noblest person in an ignoble disguise attains to nothing but reproach and scandal. Away then with these disguises and foul wizards, those unnatural paintings and immodest discoveries! Keep those parts concealed from the eyes that may not be touched with the hands; let not a wandering and lascivious thought read in an enticing Index the contents of an unchaste volume. Imitate nature, and, as she hath placed on the surface and superficies of the earth all things needful for man’s sustenance and necessary use (as Herbs, Plants, Fruits, Corn and suchlike) but locked up close in the hidden caverns of the earth all things which appertain to his delight and pleasure (as gold, silver, rich Minerals, and precious Stones), so do you discover 32 unto men all things that are fit for them to understand from you (as bashfulness in your cheeks, chastity in your eyes, wisdom in your words, sweetness in your conversation, and severe modesty in the whole structure or frame of your universal composition). But for those things which belong to this wanton and lascivious delight and pleasure (as eyes wandering, lips billing, tongue enticing, bare breasts seducing, and naked arms embracing), oh, hide them, for shame hide them in the closest prisons of your strictest government! Shield them with modest and comely garments, such as are warm and wholesome, having every window closed with a strong Casement and every Loophole furnished with such strong Ordinance that no unchaste eye may come near to assail them, no lascivious tongue woo a forbidden passage, nor

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23. Personal quality or accomplishment.
24. The stanzas are from “A Wife” by Sir Thomas Overbury, probably written in an effort to dissuade his friend Robert Carr from marrying the divorced Frances Howard (see note 12 above).
25. In fact the passage in Genesis 3:1 does not differentiate clothing by sex: “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them.”
27. Virgin priestesses who tended the sacred fire of the goddess Vest in ancient Rome.
28. Probably Roman gladiators.
29. The hero of Miguel de Cervantes’s satiric romance who tries to act out all the fantasies of chivalry.
30. These are heroines of romances who play masculine roles. In the romantic epic Orlando Furioso by the Italian poet Ariosto, Bradamant is a brave and virtuous woman who engages in feats of knighthood, and Marfiza is a pagan warrior.
31. Allegories (the author advises women to view these female figures as symbols rather than as literal role models).
32. Reveal.
no profane hand touch relics so pure and religious. Guard them about
with Counterscarps of Innocence, Trenches of humane Reason, and
impregnable walls of sacred Divinity, not with Antic disguise and
Mimic fantasticalness, where every window stands open like the Sub-
ura, and every window a Courtesan with an instrument, like so many
Sirens, to enchant the weak passenger to shipwreck and destruction.
Thus shall you be yourselves again and live the most excellent crea-
tures upon earth, things past example, past all imitation.

Remember that God in your first creation did not form you of slime
and earth like man, but of a more pure and refined metal, a substance
much more worthy: you in whom are all the harmonies of life, the
perfection of Symmetry, the true and curious consent of the most fairest
colors and the wealthy Gardens which fill the world with living Plants.
Do but you receive virtuous Inmates (as what Palaces are more rich to
receive heavenly messengers?) and you shall draw men's souls unto
you with that severe, devout, and holy adoration, that you shall never
want praise, never love, never reverence.

But now methinks I hear the witty offending great Ones reply in ex-
cuse of their deformities: "What, is there no difference among women?
No distinction of places, no respect of Honors, nor no regard of blood
or alliance? Must but a bare pair of shears pass between Noble and
ignoble, between the generous spirit and the base Mechanic? Shall
we be all coheirs of one honor, one estate, and one habit? Oh Men,
you are then too tyrannous and not only injure Nature but also break
the Laws and customs of the wisest Princes. Are not Bishops known by
their Miters, Princes by their Crowns, Judges by their Robes, and
Knights by their spurs? But poor Women have nothing, how great
soever they be, to divide themselves from the enticing shows or mov-
ing Images which do furnish most shops in the City. What is it that
either the Laws have allowed to the greatest Ladies, custom found
convenient, or their bloods or places challenged, which hath not been
engrossed into the City with as great greediness and pretense of true

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33. The exterior slopes of a ditch. In this somewhat confused metaphor, female sex-
uality is compared to precious metals to be buried, shameful evils to be imprisoned,
and the contents of a besieged city to be defended—all by the proper clothing.
34. A poor district abounding in prostitutes in ancient Rome.
35. A member of the lower classes; a manual worker.
36. Noblewomen (the "offending great Ones") defend their masculine style of dress
as a response to the fact that there is no distinction of attire to separate high- and low-
born women; women of the mercantile classes in the City of London constantly ape
their betters' fashions and carry them to ridiculous extremes. Hence the nobility in-
vented this style of dress to bring contempt on their lower-class imitators.
37. A sexual metaphor—their outlandish costumes are the offspring ("concep-
tions") of adultery with foreign styles of dress and gross imitations of court styles.
38. A fifth-century B.C. philosopher who laughed at the pretensions of his time.
39. The coloring of the face with cosmetics.
40. An action at law to recover something wrongfully detained by the defendant; in
other words, prostitutes are suing these women for wrongful use of their stock in trade,
cosmetics.
41. Public celebrations and tournaments especially frequented by the upper classes.
42. Containers for a tailor's discarded material.
43. Here the term freeman apparently designates a freeborn individual who is not a
member of the gentry.
wives and their children in one month than hath been worn in Court, Suburbs, or County since the unfortunate beginning of the first devilish invention.

"Let therefore the powerful Statue of apparel" but lift up his Battle-Ax and crush the offenders in pieces, so as everyone may be known by the true badge of their blood or Fortune. And then these Chimeras' of deformity will be sent back to hell and there burn to Cinders in the flames of their own malice."

Thus, methinks, I hear the best of offenders argue, nor can I blame a high blood to swell when it is coupled and counterchecked with baseness and corruption. Yet this shows an anger passing near akin to envy and alludes much to the saying of an excellent Poet:

Women never
Love beauty in their Sex, but envy ever.

They have Caesar’s ambition and desire to be one and alone, but yet to offend themselves to grieve others is a revenge dissonant to Reason. And, as Euripides saith, a woman of that malicious nature is a fierce Beast and most pernicious to the Commonwealth, for she hath power by example to do it a world of injury.

[A woman’s disposition should be gentle; her thoughts, according to a poet cited by the author, should be “attended with remorse.” In contrast to the ideal woman, those who indulge in the new fashion have given “a shameless liberty to every loose passion.” In their attempt to control the men who should rule them, they endanger their personal fortunes and reputations as well as those of their families and their sex. The author includes a stanza by Edmund Spenser from the Book of Justice of The Faerie Queene:

Such is the cruelty of womenkind,
When they have shaken off the shamefast band
With which wise Nature did them strongly bind
T’obey the hest’s* of man’s well ruling hand,

47. Book 5, canto 5, stanza 25. The stanza describes the tyranny of the Amazon queen Radigund over Artegaill, the hero of the Book of Justice. As a symbol of Artegaill’s enslavement, Radigund forces him to wear women’s clothing and to spend his time spinning and carding. The relationship causes both of them misery, for Radigund is secretly in love with Artegaill but cannot bring herself “to serve the lowly vassal of her might.” The last line of the stanza cited refers, of course, to Queen Elizabeth, regarded by most Elizabethan thinkers as a legitimate exception to the ideal of female submission.

48. Pride or insolence.

49. Traditional founder of the constitution of ancient Sparta.

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by examples than precepts, had hanging in their houses in fair painted tablets all the Virtues and Vices that were in those days reigning with their rewards and punishments. Oh, have you but in your houses the fashions of all attires constantly and without change held and still followed through all the parts of Christendom! Let them but see the modest Dutch, the stately Italian, the rich Spaniard, and the courtly French with the rest according to their climates, and they will blush that in a full fourth part of the world there cannot be found one piece of a Character to compare or liken with the absurdity of their Masculine Invention. Nay, they shall see that their naked Countryman, which had liberty with his Shears to cut from every Nation of the World one piece or patch to make up his garment, yet amongst them all could not find this Miscellany or mixture of deformities which, only by those which whilst they retained any spark of womanhood were both loved and admired, is loosely, indiscrately, wantonly, and most unchastely invented.

And therefore, to knit up this imperfect Declamation, let every Female-Masculine that by her ill examples is guilty of Lust or Imitation cast off her deformities and clothe herself in the rich garments which the Poet bestows upon her in these Verses following:

Those Virtues that in women merit praise
Are sober shows without, chaste thoughts within,
True Faith and due obedience to their mate,
And of their children honest care to take.
§. Haec Vir; or, The Womanish Man:
Being an Answer to a late Book entitled
Hic Mulier, Expressed in a brief Dialogue between
Haec Vir, the Womanish Man, and
Hic Mulier, the Man-Woman.
1620

Haec Vir: Most redoubted and worthy Sir (for less than a Knight I
cannot take you), you are most happily given unto mine embrace.
Hic Mulier: Is she mad or doth she mock me? Most rare and ex-
cellent Lady, I am the servant of your virtues and desire to be employed in
your service.
Haec Vir: Pity of patience, what doth he behold in me, to take me
for a woman? Valiant and magnanimous Sir, I shall desire to build the
Tower of my Fortune upon no stronger foundation than the benefit of
your grace and favor.
Hic Mulier: Oh, proud ever to be your Servant.
Haec Vir: No, the Servant of your Servant.
Hic Mulier: The Title of your friendship, good Lady, is above my
merit.
Haec Vir: You make me rich beyond expression. But fair Knight, the
truth is I am a Man and desire but the obligation of your friendship.
Hic Mulier: It is ready to be sealed and delivered to your use. Yet I
would have you understand I am a Woman.
Haec Vir: Are you a Woman?
Hic Mulier: Are you a Man? O Juno Lucina, help me!
Haec Vir: Yes, I am.
Hic Mulier: Your name, most tender piece of Masculine.
Haec Vir: Haec Vir, no stranger either in Court, City, or Country.

4. For one of his misdeeds, the strongman hero Hercules was condemned to serve for
one year as the slave of Omphale, queen of Lydia. To humiliate him, he was dressed in
women's clothes and made to sit spinning and weaving with the female slaves (a distaff
is an implement used in spinning).
5. Impartial.
6. Which.
7. Your doublet (or the fabric from which it was made) was purchased in Birchenlane
(a lane in London which boasted many drapers' shops); your nether-skirt (underskirt)
was purchased in the parish of St. Thomas the Apostle (an area associated with hosiers).
8. You obtained your hat in Bridewell (an area in London near the famous prison of
that name) and the feather for your hat in the Blackfriars area ("block" is a pun refer-
ring both to the wood on which criminals were beheaded and the wood on which hats
were formed). The insult is heightened by the fact that prostitutes were imprisoned in
Bridewell.
9. The yellow ruff, an object of scorn and ridicule at the court of King James, was
made popular in England by Anne Turner, who was executed in 1615 for her part in the
murder of Sir Thomas Overbury. James insisted that Mrs. Turner wear her yellow ruff to
the gallows. Mulled Sack, a kind of hot, spiced wine, is also the title of another pamphlet
purporting to answer Hic Mulier (Mulled Sack; or, The Apology of Hic Mulier to the
late Declaration against her, 1620); moreover, "the sack" was a method of execution
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Brinseggham (the one for a base sale Boot, the other for a beastly Leaden gilt Spur); and, to conclude, all Hell, all Damnation for a shorn, powdered, borrowed Hair; a naked, lascivious, bawdy Bosom; a Leadenhall Dagger; a Highway Pistol; and a mind and behavior suitable or exceeding every repeated deformity. To be brief, I can but in those few lines delineate your proportion for the paraphrase or compartment to set out your ugliness to the greatest extent of wonder. I can but refer you to your Godchild that carries your own name—I mean the Book of Hic Mulier. There you shall see your character and feel your shame with that palpable plainness, that no Egyptian darkness can be more gross and terrible.

Hic Mulier: My most tender piece of man’s flesh, leave this lightning and thunder and come roundly to the matter; draw mine accusation into heads, and then let me answer.

Haec Vir: Then thus. In that Book you are arraigned and found guilty, first, of Baseness, in making yourself a slave to novelty and the poor invention of every weak Brain that hath but an embroidered outside; next, of unnaturalness, to forsake the Creation of God and Customs of the Kingdom to be pieced and patched up by a French Tailor, an Italian Babymaker, and a Dutch Soldier beat from the Army for the ill example of Ruffianly behavior; then of Shamefulness, in casting off all modest softness and civility to run through every desert and wilderness of men’s opinions like careless untamed Heifers or wild Savages; lastly, of foolishness, in having no moderation or temper either in passions or affections, but turning all into perturbations and sicknesses of the soul, laugh away the preciousness of your Time and at involving drowning in a sack. Garrat, while probably a real person, is also a pun on garrat, the Spanish method of capital punishment by strangulation. Thus the “Scarf able to put a Soldier out of countenance” is the garrat—a reference both to the stick twisted to effect the execution and to the weapon carried by Hic Mulier.

Bedlam was an institution for the insane in London; Hic Mulier apparently bought her boots “on sale” near this asylum. This may also contain a reference to “the boot,” an instrument of torture used to extract confessions. Brinseggham may possibly be Birmingham.

11. I will sketch the outline of your ugliness; it must remain for others to fill in the details (a “paraphrase” is an amplification of a passage or a commentary on a text).
12. In Renaissance England, comparing someone’s dark complexion to that of an Egyptian was a way of calling him shamefully ugly.
13. Hic Mulier’s style of attire is not only irreverent, it is also foreign; a “Babymaker” is probably a maker of dolls.

last die with the flattering sweet malice of an incurable consumption. Thus Baseness, Unnaturalness, Shamefulness, Foolishness are the main Hatchments or Coat-Armors which you have taken as rich spoils to adorn you in the deformity of your apparel; which, if you can execute, I can pity and thank Proserpina for thy wit, though no good man can allow of the Reasons.

Hic Mulier: Well then, to the purpose. First, you say I am Base, in being a Slave to Novelty. What slavery can there be in freedom of election, or what baseness to crown my delights with those pleasures which are most suitable to mine affections? Bondage or Slavery is a restraint from those actions which the mind of its own accord doth most willingly desire, to perform the intents and purposes of another's disposition, and that not by manumissio or sweetness of entreaty, but by the force of authority and strength of compulsion. Now for me to follow change according to the limitation of mine own will and pleasure, there cannot be a greater freedom. Nor do I in my delight of change otherwise than as the whole world doth, or as becometh a daughter of the world to do. For what is the world but a very shop or warehouse of change? Sometimes Winter, sometimes Summer; day and night; they hold sometimes Riches, sometimes Poverty; sometimes Health, sometimes Sickness; now Pleasure, presently Anguish; now Honor, then contempt; and, to conclude, there is nothing but change, which doth surround and mix with all our Fortunes. And will you have poor woman such a fixed Star that she shall not so much as move or twinkle in her own Sphere? That were true Slavery indeed and a Baseness beyond the chains of the worst servitude! Nature to everything she hath created hath given a singular delight in change: as to Herbs, Plants, and Trees a time to wither and shed their leaves, a time to bud and bring forth their leaves, and a time for their Fruits and Flowers; to worms and creeping things a time to hide themselves in the pores and hollows of the earth, and a time to come abroad and suck the dew; to Beasts liberty to choose their food, liberty to delight in their food, and liberty to feed and grow fat with their food; the Birds have the air to fly in, the waters to bathe in, and the earth to feed on;

15. Panels bearing the coat of arms of a man who has recently died, displayed before his house.
16. Daughter of the goddess Demeter/Ceres, she was carried off by Hades and became queen of the underworld for part of each year.
17. Original text reads “not but” by mansuetude.”
but to man both these and all things else to alter, frame, and fashion, according as his will and delight shall rule him. Again, who will rob the eye of the variety of objects, the ear of the delight of sounds, the nose of smells, the tongue of tastes, and the hand of feeling? And shall only woman, excellent woman, so much better in that she is something purer, be only deprived of this benefit? Shall she be the Bondslave of Time, the Handmaid of opinion, or the strict observer of every frosty or cold benumbed imagination? It were a cruelty beyond the Rack or Strappado.  

But you will say it is not Change, but Novelty, from which you deter us, a thing that doth avert the good and erect the evil, prefer the faithless and confound desert, that with the change of Opinions breeds the change of States, and with continual alterations thrusts headlong forward both Ruin and Subversion. Alas, soft Sir, what can you christen by that new imagined Title, when the words of a wise man are, “That what was done, is but done again; all things do change, and under the cope of Heaven there is no new thing.” So that whatsoever we do or imitate, it is neither slavish, Base, nor a breeder of Novelty.

Next, you condemn me of Unnaturalness in forsaking my creation and contenting custom. How do I forsake my creation, that do all the rights and offices due to my Creation? I was created free, born free, and live free; what lets me then so to spin out my time that I may die free? To alter creation were to walk on my hands with my heels upward, to feed myself with my feet, or to forsake the sweet sound of sweet words for the hissing noise of the Serpent. But I walk with a face erect, with a body clothed, with a mind busied, and with a heart full of reasonable and devout cegotations, only offensive in attire, inasmuch as it is a Stranger to the curiosity of the present times and an enemy to Custom. Are we then bound to be the Flatterers of Time or the dependents on Custom? Oh miserable servitude, chained only to Baseness and Folly, for than custom, nothing is more absurd, nothing more foolish.

It was a custom amongst the Romans that, as we wash our hands before meals, so they with curious and sweet ointments anointed all their arms and legs quite over, and by succession of time grew from these ungents to baths of rich perfumed and compound waters in which they bathed their whole bodies, holding it the greatest disgrace that might be to use or touch any natural water, as appears by these Verses:

She shines with ointments to make hair to fall,
Or with sour Chalk she overcovers all.
(Martial)

It was a custom amongst the Ancients to lie upon stately and soft beds when either they delivered Embassies or entered into any serious discourse or argument, as appears by these Verses:

Father Aeneas thus gan say; From stately Couch whereon he lay.
(Virgil, Aeneid)

Cato Junior held it for a custom never to eat meat but sitting on the ground; the Venetians kiss one another ever at the first meeting; and even at this day it is a general received custom amongst our English that when we meet or overtake any man in our travel or journeying, to examine him whether he rides, how far, to what purpose, and where he lodgeth. Nay, and with that unmanly boldness of inquisition that it is a certain ground of a most insufficient quarrel not to receive a full satisfaction of those demands which go far astray from good manners or comely civility. And will you have us to marry ourselves to these Mimic and most fantastic customs? It is a fashion or custom with us to mourn in Black; yet the Aegean and Roman Ladies ever mourned in White and, if we will tie the action upon the signification of colors, I see not but we may mourn in Green, Blue, Red, or any simple color used in Heraldry. For us to salute strangers with a kiss is counted but civility, but with foreign Nations immodesty; for

21. Martial was an ancient Roman poet known for his biting and often scurrilous epigrams. Although the Romans copiously rubbed oils on their bodies, they did infrequently bathe in plain water; in fact, this line (6.93.9) appears in a poem highly critical of the hygiene of the lady in question.
22. Spoke. Virgil's Aeneid was the great national epic of ancient Rome; this is a translation of Aeneid 2.2.
23. Marcus Porcius Cato the Younger, the conservative Roman statesman of the first century B.C.
24. Actually, black was associated with mourning in Greece and Rome, although there was no mandate or fixed period for its wearing.
THE CONTROVERSY

you to cut the hair of your upper lips, familiar here in England, everywhere else almost thought unmanly. To ride on Sidesaddles at first was counted here abominable pride, etc. I might instance in a thousand things that only Custom and not Reason hath approved. To conclude, Custom is an Idiot, and whosoever dependeth wholly upon him without the discourse of Reason will take from him his pied coat and become a slave indeed to contempt and censure.

But you say we are barbarous and shameless and cast off all softness to run wild through a wilderness of opinions. In this you express more cruelty than in all the rest. Because I stand not with my hands on my belly like a baby at Bartholomew Fair that move not my whole body when I should, but only stir my head like Jack of the Clockhouse which hath no joints; 21 that am not dumb when wantons court me, as if, Aslike, I were ready for all burdens; or because I weep not when injury grips me, like a worried Deer in the fangs of many Curs, am I therefore barbarous or shameless? He is much injurious that so baptized us. We are as freeborn as Men, have as free election and as free spirits; we are compounded of like parts and may with like liberty make benefit of our Creations. My countenance shall smile on the worthy and frown on the ignoble; I will hear the Wise and be deaf to Idiots; give counsel to my friend, but be dumb to flatterers. I have hands that shall be liberal to reward desert, feet that shall move swiftly to do good offices, and thoughts that shall ever accompany freedom and severity. If this be barbarous, let me leave the City and live with creatures of like simplicity.

To conclude, you say we are all guilty of most infinite folly and indiscretion. I confess that Discretion is the true salt which seasoneth every excellence, either in Man or Woman, and without it nothing is well, nothing is worthy; that want 26 disgraceth our actions, staineth our Virtues, and indeed makes us most profane and irreligious. Yet it is ever found in excess, as in too much or too little. And of which of these are we guilty? Do we wear too many clothes or too few? If too many, we should oppress Nature; if too few, we should bring sickness to

25. The baby dolls sold at the stalls of Bartholomew Fair, a huge annual fair held in August in the suburbs west of London, were apparently designed with the doll's hands resting on its abdomen; they resembled Jack of the Clockhouse, a male figure which struck the bell of a clock, in that only their heads moved.

26. Lack (of discretion).
THE CONTROVERSY

acuseth, or that I see you refuse the potion and are as grievously infected, blame me not then a little to stagger. And till you will be pleased to be cleansed of that leprosy which I see apparent in you, give me leave to doubt whether mine infection be so contagious as your blind severity would make it.

Therefore, to take your proportion in a few lines, my dear Feminine-Masculine, tell me what Charter, prescription, or right of claim you have to those things you make our absolute inheritance? Why do you curl, frizzle, and powder your hairs, bestowing more hours and time in dividing look from lock, and hair from hair, in giving every thread his posture, and every curl his true sense and circumference, than ever Caesar did in marshaling his Army, either at Pharsalia, in Spain, or Britain? Why do you rob us of our Ruffs, of our Earrings, Carcanets, and Mamillions, of our Fans and Feathers, our Bucks, and French bodies, nay, of our Masks, Hoods, Shadows, and Shapinas? Not so much as the very Art of Painting, but you have so greedily engrossed it that were it not for that little fantastical sharpen-pointed dagger that hangs at your chins, and the cross hilt which guards your upper lip, hardly would there be any difference between the fair Mistress and the foolish Servant. But is this the uttermost of our Spoil? Fie, you have gone a world further and even ravished from us our speech, our actions, sports, and recreations. Goodness leave me, if I have not heard a Man court his Mistress with the same words that Venus did Adonis, or as near as the Book could instruct him. Where are the tilts and tourneys and lofty Galliards that were danced in the days of old, when men capered in the air like wanton

Haec Vir

kids on the tops of Mountains and turned above ground as if they had been compact of Fire or a purer element? Tut, all's forsaken, all's vanished.

[Hic Mulier claims that men have stolen women's pastimes, especially shuttlecock, which had been "a very Emblem of us and our lighter despised fortunes." Having relinquished the arms that "would shake all Christendom with the brandish," men now languish in "softness, dullness, and effeminate niceness."] To see one of your gender either show himself in the midst of his pride or riches at a Playhouse or public assembly: how, before he dare enter, with the Jacob's Staff of his own eyes and his Page's, he takes a full survey of himself from the highest spring in his feather to the lowest spangle that shines in his shoe-string; how he prunes and picks himself like a Hawk set a weathering, calls every several garment to Aurora's confession, making them utter both their mortal great stains and their venial and lesser blemishes, though the mote be much less than an Atom. Then to see him pluck and tug everything into the form of the newest received fashion, and by Dürer's rules make his leg answerable to his neck, his thigh proportional with his middle, his foot with his hand, and a world of such idle, disdained apparel. To see him thus patched up with Symmetry, make himself complete and even as a circle and, lastly, cast himself amongst the eyes of the people as an object of wonder with more niceness than a Virgin goes to the sheets of her first Lover, would make patience herself mad with anger and cry with the Poet:

O Hominum mores, O gens, O Tempora dura,
Quantus in urbe Dolor; Quantus in Orbe Dolus!

Now since according to your own Inference, even by the Laws of Nature, by the rules of Religion, and the Customs of all civil Nations, it is necessary there be a distinct and special difference between Man and Woman, both in their habit and behaviors, what could we poor weak women do less (being far too weak by force to fetch back those

29. Begin to doubt or waver (probably also a reference to the pamphlet Hic Mulier, which accuses the masculine women of being afflicted with the disease of the staggers).
30. Ornamental collars or necklaces usually set with gold and jewels.
31. Items of clothing that covered the breasts.
32. The coloring of the face with cosmetics.
33. The book is doubtless Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis, a popular narrative poem which had been reprinted in nine successive quartos by 1616. In this erotic Ovidian poem Venus woos the bashful Adonis with conventional feminine wiles, including sighs, tears, and considerable self-pity. The goddess of love stresses her physical charms, pointing out to Adonis that her "flesh is soft and plump" and offering to "like a fairy, trip upon the green" if he will but respond to her entreaties.
34. Lively dances in triple time for two dancers.
35. An instrument for measuring height and distance.
36. "O morals of men, O race, O harsh times! How much anguish in the city; how much treachery in the world!"
spoils you have unjustly taken from us), than to gather up those garments you have proudly cast away and therewith to clothe both our bodies and our minds.

[Hic Mulier asserts that women adopted masculine clothing and behavior reluctantly, only to preserve “those manly things which you have forsaken.” To prove that men were dressing in an effeminate manner long before women assumed masculine dress, she recites two stanzas by the Italian poet Ariosto 43 describing a bejeweled man who “was himself in nothing but in name.” Because the “deformity” of the effeminate man has a longer history than that of the masculine woman, it will be more difficult to eradicate; men must return to traditional dress and behavior, however, before women can be expected to do so.]

Cast then from you our ornaments and put on your own armor; be men in shape, men in show, men in words, men in actions, men in counsel, men in example. Then will we love and serve you; then will we hear and obey you; then will we like rich Jewels hang at your ears to take our Instructions, like true friends follow you through all dangers, and like careful leeches pour oil into your wounds. Then shall you find delight in our words, pleasure in our faces, faith in our hearts, chastity in our thoughts, and sweetness both in our inward and outward inclinations. Comeliness shall be then our study, fear our Armor, and modesty our practice. Then shall we be all your most excellent thoughts can desire and having nothing in us less than 45 impudence and deformity.

Haec Vir: Enough. You have both raised mine eyelids, cleared my sight, and made my heart entertain both shame and delight in an instant—shame in my Follies past, delight in our Noble and worthy Conversion. Away then from me these light vanities, the only Ensigns of a weak and soft nature, and come you grave and solid pieces which arm a man with Fortitude and Resolution: you are too rough and stubborn for a woman’s wearing. We will here change our attires, as we have changed our minds, and with our attires, our names. I will no more be Haec Vir, but Hic Vir; nor you Hic Mulier, but Haec Mulier. From henceforth deformity shall pack to Hell, and if at any time he

43. Lodovico Ariosto was an Italian Renaissance poet best known for his long narrative poem Orlando Furioso.
44. Physicians.
45. Anything in us rather than.