Chapter 1

Theories of the Grotesque and Renaissance Discourses on Women

This chapter is divided into two broad sections. The first section, titled ‘Theories of the Grotesque in Art and Literature’ begins with a brief account of the response of Renaissance scholars and artists to the exciting discovery of the fantastic art of the classical period. It notes how the decorations of the ‘margins’ ushered in entirely new ways of representing the body in Renaissance art. The rest of the section traces the history of the term *grotesque* outside the field of visual arts, with special focus on twentieth century theories of the grotesque. The second section, titled, ‘Scripting Women as ‘Naturally Grotesque’: Renaissance Discourses’ attempts to historicize the female grotesque through an examination of Renaissance discourses on women.

I. Theories of the Grotesque in Art and Literature

*From the margins to the centre: the story of Renaissance ‘grotesque’ art*

The emergence of the grotesque in aesthetics is a typical Renaissance phenomenon. A term coined to refer to certain forms of fantastic decorative paintings popular in Nero’s Rome, the grotesque is part of the larger processes of the ‘revival’ of the art of antiquity that marks the Renaissance. Contemporary art historians have pointed out that there are instances of the grotesque not only in medieval art but also during pre-Roman periods. However, these had not attracted the attention of Renaissance artists and scholars who chose to trace the originary moment of the grotesque to its excavation of the *grottos* among the ruins of Nero’s *Domus Aurea*, thus fixing the ‘grotesque’ as a Renaissance re-discovery of a certain style of classical art that was hitherto unknown in western aesthetics. The grotesque came to signify an art form that was simultaneously novel as well as traditional, an innovation that was an imitation of a certain classical style.

Around 1480 antiquarians began excavating an enormous structure in the centre of Rome, which revealed ‘a vast labyrinth of passageways, rooms, and supporting pillars to structures that no longer existed.’\(^1\) These were the ruins of Nero’s *Domus Aurea* or Golden Palace and revealed certain strange images in the margins of the frescos on ceilings and walls, which served as borders framing the human figures and landscape done in classical style. These frescoes were the work of an artist named
Fabullus who had been entrusted by the Emperor Nero with the interior decoration of his palace. The images that were discovered were of beasts with:

- bird-like wings,
- a fish’s tail,
- human forms that fuse with leaf-like patterns weaving plant life,
- mask-like human heads and various mythological figures including centaurs, fauns and satyrs.

Since these designs were found in what had seemed like underground caves or grottos, by common consensus they came to be called grottesche from which the term grotesque was derived. According to the OED, Florio in both his Dictionaries (1598 and 1611) has ‘crotesca’ as an Italian word, explained as ‘antique, fretted, or carved worke’. Indeed, throughout the sixteenth century the term grotesque was limited to the visual arts and often used interchangeably with antique or antic, a term that meant both monstrous and comic. However, in the classical period itself, the grotesque had inspired one of the strongest denunciations in the history of aesthetic criticism: Vitruvius’ *De Architectura* (ca. 27 BC). In this classical treatise Vitruvius regards the fantastic creatures, or exaggerated representations of flora and fauna as unnatural—‘such things neither are, nor can be, nor have been’ and condemns them as them ‘monsters’:

> For how can a reed actually sustain a roof, or a candelabra the ornaments of a bagle, or a soft slender stalk a seated statue, or how can flowers and half statues rise alternatively from roots and stalks

Vitruvius’ categorical condemnation of the new style has to be understood in the context of its violation of the norms of classical aesthetics. This in turn was based on the idea that the universe was created in absolute mathematical harmony as a perfect geometric form and all objects of nature and living creatures replicated this. Frances K. Barasch informs us that it was the fifteenth century scholar, Leon Battista Alberti’s *De re Aedificatoria*, which was largely responsible for disseminating the Vitruvian view among Italian Renaissance scholars and artists. Like Alberti, Cesariano and Giorgi believed that the proportions of a building and its ornaments had to follow certain numerical rules, which had been perfected by the ancient Romans. Alberti, in his *Della Pittura*, (1435) had attempted to extend this notion of perfection or symmetry in forms to painting, thus bringing it into conformity with what he regarded as the ancient principle and practice of all art forms. Hence Alberti
objected to the artists’ attempts to fill all available space with decoration, which he felt was a violation of the norms of composition. This censure serves as Alberti’s critique of the fantastic and extravagant styles that had come to be associated with the grotesque.

Among the Renaissance scholar-artists, Giorgio Vasari was an exception in refusing to toe the Vitruvian line. Vasari recognized the crucial importance of the artist’s freedom to experiment with both form, style and content and advocated daring innovation as opposed to mere imitation of old masters. Vasari’s position on Renaissance grotesque ornamentation is perhaps best expounded in his discussion of Michelangelo’s work in the new Sacristy at San Lorenzo in Florence. He points out that Michelangelo—this is how Michelangelo is referred to by the Renaissance art historian—‘wished to execute the work in imitation of the old Sacristy that Filippo Brunelleschi had built, but with another manner of ornamentation.’ Consequently, the artist executed the ‘beautiful cornices, capitals, bases, doors, tabernacles’ in a manner that was ‘more varied and original’ than that of the old master. Thus Michelangelo, departed from ‘the work regulated by measure, order and rule, which other men did according to a common use and after Vitruvius and the antiquities, to which he would not conform.’ Vasari clearly approves of these stylistic innovations as ‘original’ expressing admiration for Michelangelo’s grotesque irregularity in the following words:

That license has done much to give courage to those who have seen his methods to set themselves to imitate him and new fantasies have since been seen which have more of the grotesque than of reason and rule in their ornamentation.

Vasari further expresses the belief that Michelangelo’s experiments will pave the way for other Renaissance artists to break the ‘bonds and chains by reason of which they had always followed a beaten path in the execution of their works.’ Indeed, as Vasari anticipated, the discovery of the new style of painting generated excitement among sixteenth century Italian artists like Fra Filippo Lippi, Perugino, Signorelli, Domenico Ghirlandaio. Raphael explored the cavernous underground chambers and realized that the designs could be used as marginal decorations. He decided to use them in the Vatican Loggias, the vaulted passageways in the palace of Nicholas III. Raphael conceived and planned a series of four panels to depict the
history of the world as revealed in the Bible, with twelve scenes from the Old Testament and one from the New. He chose to unite the Christian message with the grottesche pagan designs for the margins as ornaments. The semiotic purpose of the art of the fringe or margin was a free play of surplus signifiers and it was thus ideologically quite distinct from that of the centre where the signifier and the signified had to be connected in a coherent and intelligible way.

Though the term ‘grotesque’ was coined during the Renaissance, art historians have observed that throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, manuscript illustrations abound in representation of marvelous hybrid creatures that might easily be identified as grotesque. Frances Barasch points out that the ‘romanesque and gothic phases’ of medieval art have a classical origin. They represent an ‘expression of imaginative freedom that was not permitted in other art forms of the period.’ For contemporary readers, who have not had the privilege of accessing medieval manuscript illustrations, Umberto Eco’s The Name of the Rose has a brilliant section which describes in minute and vivid detail the universe of topsy-turvy depicted in the margins of manuscripts:

Little bird-feet heads, animals with human hands on their back, hirsute pate from which feetsprout, zebra stiped dragons, quadrupeds with serpentine necks twisted in a thousand inextricable knots, monkeys with stags’ horns, sirens in the form of fowl with membranous wings . . . two headed chimeras interlaced with dragonflies with lizard snouts, centaurs, dragons . . . diabolical creatures with endless necks, sequences of anthropomorphic animals and zoo-morphic dwarfs joined, sometimes on the same page, with scenes of rustic life depicted with such impressive vivacity that the figures seemed alive.

Margaret Richert notes that the representations of these fantastic creatures served a moral or ethical purpose of edifying the learned and could thus be accommodated in a didactic schema. However, the artists often went beyond such permissible emblematic codifications and took the license of caricatures, obscenities, and jokes creating a veritable cornucopia. Assessing the stylistic innovations and experiments made by medieval artists, Meyer Schapiro comments:
This art is a boundless reservoir of humour, spirited play, and untamed vitality . . . Free from classical norms, the artist experiments with the human frame as the most flexible, ductile, indefatigably protean self-deforming system in nature.\textsuperscript{16}

St Bernard, the founder of the Cistercian order, had been disturbed by the power of these marginal illustrations as sources of distraction for the monks as early as 1125:

But in the cloister, in the sight of these reading monks, what is the point of such ridiculous monstrosity, the strange kind of shapely shapelessness? Why these unsightly monkeys, why these fierce lions, why the monstrous centaurs, why semi-humans?\textsuperscript{17}

It is evident that the ideological crux of Bernard’s censure is not that artists indulged in depicting what did not exist and that these images could not be fixed to a definite symbolic significance or meaning. Clearly this kind of visual representation, replete with bawdy humour that celebrates bodily functions through exaggerations, could be seen as a form of carnivalesque art, in Mikhail Bakhtin’s sense of the term;\textsuperscript{18} consequently it became a source of great consternation among Church Fathers. In Eco’s novel, Jorge of Burgos, a monk of the Benedictine order, echoes Bernard in giving vent to his own sense of outrage at the artists’ need to create ‘ridiculous grotesques, those monstrous shapes and shapely monsters’ (\textit{The Name of the Rose}, p. 80). He argues that the painter ‘who depicts monsters and portents of nature to reveal the things of God. . . . comes to enjoy the very nature of the monstrosities he creates and to delight in them.’ (p. 80)

Medieval grotesque art with its inversion of order and satirical debunking that evoked laughter could be seen as possessing a powerful potential for distracting and undermining the faith of the pious, and thus threatening the institution of the Church itself. Yet Christianity had its own store of mythical birds and beasts—the phoenix or the unicorn—which had allegorical and symbolic significance. Medieval Europe inherited from antiquity strange and fantastic beasts of classical mythology, like the satyrs, centaurs, sirens and harpies. It was also acquainted with Indian Hindu iconography through classical antiquity.\textsuperscript{19} Partha Mitter argues that the ‘orientalist’ construct of the ‘grotesque’ Indian gods may be traced to the middle ages in Europe:
A particularly influential medieval text called *Marvels of the East*, described, among other wonders, Indian monsters, which it inherited from a diverse classical sources through Pliny, Solinus, and pseudo-Callisthenes.20

Scholars have noted that for the Greeks historians and scholars these creatures were not entirely figments of imagination but were believed ‘to live at a distance, in the East, above all in India.’21 Mitter argues that medieval travellers who came to India were deeply influenced by texts like *Marvels of the East*; these pre-conceived notions derived from texts of antiquity compounded with ignorance about Hindu iconography resulted in their accounts about Indian gods as demons and monsters.

Renaissance engagement with grotesque art was not limited to marginal decorations with purely ornamental purpose. In the paintings of Pieter Bruegel, the Elder, Hieronymus Bosch, Mathis Grünewald, Francisco de Goya and Giuseppe Archimboldo, grotesque moves from the margins to occupy the centre stage. The works of these painters are dominated by figures of human beings with grossly exaggerated physiognomy that bear marked resemblance to beasts or their bodily parts. They belong to a fantastic chimerical world of nightmares and topsy-turvydom. Like the idealized human figures of classical art, which it apparently distorts, its monstrous imagery too places the body in all its material and physical aspects centrally in Renaissance art and aesthetics. According to David Kunzle this world of fantasy is most marked in the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch who is concerned with the contradiction between flesh and the spirit:

Bosch’s beasts and bestial human guardians of hell or executioners of the damned are rendered with elaborate and ferocious specificity. They are derived from the tradition of adynata, especially in their apocalyptic thrust.22

An analysis of the grotesque art of the major Renaissance artists is outside the purview of this thesis; though it is important to mention that grotesque female figures often feature in their paintings. I would like to focus on three paintings which seemed pertinent to my thesis. The first of these is Bruegel’s *Dulle Griet* (1562) painted during the occupation of Netherlands by Spanish soldiers, is perhaps the most famous of these works. Commenting on the central figure of the carnivalesque ‘woman-on-
top’ Natalie Zemon Davis notes that Bruegel’s work, ‘makes a huge, armed, unseeing woman, Mad Meg, the emblem of fiery destruction, of brutal oppression and disorder.’ Kayser points out that, Mad Meg combines the contradictory features of an ‘Amazon and old maid, ravaged and virgin’ and seems to epitomize the gendered representation of several figures of speech like ‘to be up in arms’ or ‘to snatch something from the mouth of hell.’ Originally a demonic creature who was later used as a character in low comedies, the visual representation of Mad Meg is characteristic of carnival’s ambivalent attitude towards women. Bruegel’s painting is a visual depiction of the carnival’s simultaneous celebration of ‘women-on-top’ and a denigration of the kind of female transgression discussed in Chapter 2, ‘Carnival and the Female Grotesque.’

Goya’s Disorderly Desordenado [Proverbios, Plate 7, etching, aquatint, drypoint] is another fascinating visual depiction of female monstrosity. A bizarre hybrid being created through the fusion of two female bodies, Goya’s monster seems to be racked by invisible pain and torture; one of the faces, distorted in a scream, bears the mark of this suffering while the other, with a blurred beastly visage, is hurling angry curses of accusation at another woman. In the background the onlookers gape in awe and horror. Goya’s painting embodies the monstrous woman as a spectacle of ‘strangeness’ and ‘otherness’ that I have explored in Chapter 3 of this thesis: ‘The Female Grotesque as a Spectacle’.

Finally I would like to dwell at some length on Quentin Massys’ Grotesque Old Woman (1525) which seems particularly pertinent to this work on the female grotesque in the Renaissance, in several ways. Quentin Massys (1465-1530) was a Dutch artist, who worked in Antwerp and became a leading painter of his day and a master in the guild in 1491. Though Massys continued in the ‘tradition of great masters of Netherlandish art’ he was aware of the works of his contemporary Italian Renaissance artists, particularly those of Leonardo da Vinci. Massys was well known for his portraits and the satirical quality of his paintings of bankers, tax-collectors and merchants can be traced to the influence of his great contemporary, the Humanist scholar, Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536).

Elements of satire dominate Massys’ Grotesque Old Woman, creating an impression that is markedly sinister. The first thing that strikes the viewer is the peculiarly discomfenting and unsettling quality of the face dominated by a massive
forehead with a prominent bulge in its centre and tapering off to baldness. This is even before one can take in the details of the face’s contours with its folds of loose flesh around the jowls and the neck, the eyes marked by an ambiguous expression oscillating between malevolence and abjection and the prominent protuberance between the snub nose and the thin pursed lips. Smiling faintly, the face appears vaguely simian. But the headgear, made of folds of rich cloth, is spectacular enough to indicate aristocratic lineage. At the same time the presence of huge ear like protuberances jutting out of the head adds to the already apish look of the face. Sections of the temple visible from beneath the massive headgear show sparse brown hair cut in a fashion that one associates with a man. The face could very well pass off as that of an old man but the sight of tightly corseted breasts bulging out from their constriction belies this perception.

Blurring the distinctions between human and animal, between man and woman, Massys’ painting epitomizes a fantastic hybridity which was identified as the hallmark of ‘grotesque’ in the vocabulary of visual arts in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The most striking quality of Massys’ painting is the exaggerated corporeality of the ‘subject’; the eye of the viewer is drawn inexorably to the corpulent shoulders and breasts that seem to burst out of the seams of the apparel. Huge, excessive, abnormal, the old woman is also bizarre, freakish, and monstrous. This last quality in particular created an irresistible urge to use Quentin Massys’ painting as a frontispiece for this thesis. Though I have argued in my introduction that the comic or satiric caricature of ‘grotesque’ women is not the subject of my inquiry, in this particular case the grotesque moves from the domain of the purely descriptive to the symbolic and the conceptual. The associations of the aberrant, deviant and monstrous that the Grotesque Old Woman evokes create potentials for regarding it as a visual embodiment of the female grotesque particularly as it was conceived in the discursive and cultural practices of the Renaissance. This brings me to the final and most fascinating aspect of the painting: the element of theatricality implied in the clothes of the grotesque old woman. The subject’s apparel carries distinct overtones of a ‘costume’ worn for a performance, a masquerade. Dating from c.1525, at least twenty-five years before the earliest English drama was staged, the painting seems to evoke a theatrical practice peculiar to the English Renaissance stage where cross-dressed men performed female character roles. Though of course it is common
knowledge that young boys with comely features and unbroken voices were chosen to play the female leads, students of English Renaissance theatre have always speculated upon the implications of Shakespeare’s grotesque ‘bearded’ weird sisters in *Macbeth*. Could it be that these characters were played by mature, perhaps ageing, men as were the hags in Ben Jonson’s *Masque of Queens*? Moreover, is there not a suggestion of Falstaff masquerading as a woman in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in the *Grotesque Old Woman*? Does the shadow of the masculine ‘monstrous regiment of women’ (the subject of my discussion in Chapter 4: ‘Authority, Power and the Female Grotesque’) fall across Massys’ painting? This idea suggests itself through the masculine physiognomy of the subject and the spectacular royal apparel that s/he wears. Though aware that these are fanciful and speculative exercises, I found it hard to resist indulging in linking the visual to the early modern theatrical practice of female representation through transvestite disguise. The implication of such representational convention is that gender in the early modern culture becomes a performative category—an issue that is at the heart of contemporary Feminist and Queer studies.

The following section makes a brief survey of theories of grotesque outside the domain of visual arts. Beginning with early theories it traces the development of the different and widely divergent notions of the grotesque that characterize twentieth century theories of the grotesque. As a literary theory, the grotesque presents a unique problem: there is a peculiar lack of consensus among the theorists about its constitutive elements, the responses it evokes as well as its generic status. The crux of the matter seems to be the location of the grotesque as a category: is it to be placed within the domain of the comic or of the tragic? Is it meant to evoke laughter and ridicule or fear and strangeness? From its originary moment till the late twentieth century the history of the grotesque is a struggle to fix its meaning and grant it legitimacy within aesthetic discourses and cultural practices.

During the neoclassical period, the grotesque was associated with genres like the burlesque, the farce and the satire placing it within the field of the comic. An entirely different notion of the comic develops in Mikhail Bakhtin’s theory of ‘grotesque realism’ that shifts the field of enquiry to the early modern popular culture of carnivals. Bakhtin advances the idea of the grotesque body, which is distinct from the notions of the body in the classical canon. As opposed to the ‘classical’ body that is closed, monumental and sealed off from the world, the body in ‘grotesque realism’
is an open, porous transgressive entity that is constant touch with the world, through its various orifices. This carnavalesque body celebrates the functions of the material lower bodily stratum. At the other end of the spectrum we have a theorist like Kayser who regards the grotesque not as comic but as terrifying and sinister. It arouses responses of fear and terror in the spectator because it belongs to the estranged world. Kayser’s notion of the grotesque as unfamiliar and alien has marked affinities with the Freudian notions of the unheimlich or the ‘uncanny.’

*Early theories of grotesque*

The first use of the word ‘grotesque’ outside the domain of visual arts occurs in connection with a form of improvised comedy popular in Italy in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, which came to be known as the *commedia dell’arte*. Versions of this theatre popular in France were called *comedie a l’impromptu* and *comedie improvise*. French academics led by Nicolas Boileau referred to these virtuoso histrionic displays as ‘burlesque’ ‘or ‘grotesque’ comedy. The *commedia dell’arte* traced its origin to the ancient *Atellanae* comedies—popular farces, parodies and political satire connected to the ancient city of Atella in the Roman Campagna. However, it gradually moved away from a slavish imitation of the comic plots of Plautus and Terence and began to draw freely upon contemporary social customs in its performances. Since the *commedia dell’arte* did not have play-scripts and was largely improvisatory in nature it required highly skilled professional actors. A unique feature of the *commedia dell’arte* was stock characters like the Harlequin, Columbine, Scaramouche, Pulcinella and Pantaloon; they were common to all presentation irrespective of the plot or argument of the piece and were identified through their distinctive manner of speech, gesture, dress and most importantly through the tight fitting masks that they wore. The grotesque element of *commedia dell’arte* was underscored in the bird like masks, which gave the characters a hybrid human-beast appearance. The *commedia dell’arte* flourished from the sixteenth to the first half of the eighteenth century and had enormous influence throughout Europe. The first defence of the ‘grotesque-comic’ form of *commedia dell’arte* was by the German playwright Justus Moser, an admirer of Henry Fielding and the painter William Hogarth. In 1761 he published a pamphlet called *Harlequin or the Grotesquely Comic*, in which he defended grotesque as an aesthetic category. Moser objected to the limited and prescriptive notions of neoclassical categories of the comic. He argued
that the ancient/ classical dramatists had indulged in hybrid forms of comic like the burlesque, grotesque and farce.

The debate continued in Germany even after the *commedia dell’arte* was officially banned in 1770. The first history of the popular grotesque theatre was by the German scholar Karl Friedrich Flogel, *History of the Grotesque* (1788). Flogel traced the manifestations of the ‘grotesque’ in the low burlesque and farce of classical Greek plays like Aristophanes’ *Birds*, the sixteenth century *commedia dell’arte* and its seventeenth and eighteenth century German and French descendants. Flogel’s critique anticipates twentieth century theories of carnival embodying the joyous and creative spirit of the common people. He proposed as the grotesque’s psychological source the popular ‘tea-kettle’ theory, which held that the sub-literary grotesque expressed an essential need of mankind to find comic relief from the monotony of work by letting off steam through the indulgence of the bawdy bodily activities of carnival festivity.

The late eighteenth century marks a shift in ideas of the grotesque: it is no longer associated with comic burlesque plays or with popular cultural practices. Instead grotesque comes to signify an entirely new notion of aesthetics concerning modes of representation in visual arts and literature. Philosophical inquires into the nature of beauty in art and questions of expression dominate the thinking of the late eighteenth and early and mid nineteenth centuries. Critics have pointed out that it is possible to link the grotesque to notions of the ‘sublime’ in Edmund Burke’s *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origins of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757), and Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of Judgement* (1790). Though Burke would have found such links preposterous, notions of ‘formlessness and ugliness’, which he saw as qualities of the sublime, create scope for tracing a link between the sublime and the grotesque, which is defined by deformity. Kant probably viewed the grotesque as kind of ‘free’ decorative art ‘not bound to represent any object conditioned by a positive idea.’ Friedrich Schlegel in his *Discourse on Poetry* (1800) and various other published fragments drew attention to the elements of opposition intrinsic to the grotesque—a clash between contrasting form and content that produced the dual emotional effects of ludicrousness and terror. Jean Paul Friedrich Richter in *Primer of Aesthetics* (1804) wrote of a ‘destructive humour’ that was comic and metaphysically painful at the same time because it turned the world into something alien. In his *Lectures on Aesthetic* (1835), Georg W Friedrich Hegel
associates the grotesque with both the ‘symbolic’ and the ‘romantic’ kinds of art. ‘Symbolic’ art, which is connected to the ‘primitive’ expressions of spirituality, attempts to represent the supernatural through distorted or unnatural forms; in this art form the grotesque plays a positive role since it is produced from a profound sense of dissatisfaction with natural forms. Hegel’s ideas of the grotesque are developed most fully in his analysis of Indian art, which he regards as forms of ‘fantastic symbolism.’

The typically Romantic conception of grotesque aesthetics may be traced to notions of the sublime in the philosophical discourses of the eighteenth century. Victor Hugo for example regarded ‘the grotesque’ as the credo of its age and connected it with the sublime, ‘As a lens trained on the sublime, as means of contrast, the grotesque, is in our opinion, the richest source that nature can open to art.’ The Romantics laid an emphasis on the elements of terror and nightmare and focused on the psychological operations of the grotesque with its dualities of the ludicrous and the fearsome. The late nineteenth century writer who first admitted the grotesque into serious aesthetic discourse is John Ruskin. Ruskin examined certain sculptures of Venice and developed his notion of the various types of grotesque in a chapter entitled ‘Grotesque Renaissance’ in *Stones of Venice* [1893]:

First then it seems to me that the grotesque is in almost all cases composed of two elements, one ludicrous and the other fearful; that as one or other of these elements prevails the grotesque falls into two branches, sportive grotesque and terrible grotesque; but that we cannot legitimately consider it under these two aspects, because there are hardly any examples which do not in some degree combine both elements.

For Ruskin, these external features depended on the internal state of the artist’s mind: The categories of the grotesque varied according to the approach to play so that artists who play wisely produce the ‘pure’ grotesque, those who play of necessity produce the fanciful and capricious grotesque; those who play inordinately produce the sensual grotesque and those who do not play, thereby producing the terrible grotesque.

Making moral judgment of these works, he determined that the ‘noble’ and ‘true’ types of the comic-demonic grotesque sculpture were those imperfectly carved
out of sincere belief in the Middle Ages; the ‘ignoble’ or ‘false’ grotesques were usually Renaissance works which he perceived as frivolous imitations, artificial, sensual and base. Of Raphael’s work he says:

It may be described as an elaborate and luscious form of nonsense . . . an artistical pottage, composed of nymphs, cupids and satyrs with shreadings of heads and paws of meek wild beasts and nondescript vegetables . . . It is almost impossible to believe the depth to which the human mind can be debased in following this species of the grotesque.35

However, Ruskin does not limit his discussion of the grotesque to architectural and visual aspects only and extends it to the discussion of the works of canonical writers like Dante, Spenser and Milton:

And therefore I think the twenty first and twenty second cantos of Inferno the most perfect portraiturets of the fiendish nature which we possess and at the same time, in their mingling of the extreme of horror . . . with ludicrous actions and images, they present the most perfect instances with which I am acquainted of the terrible grotesque. But the whole of the Inferno is full of this grotesque, as well as the Faerie Queene; and these two poems together with the works of Albrecht Dürer, will enable the reader to study it in its noblest forms.36

The significance of Ruskin’s theory arises from his recognition of the grotesque as meaningful, artistic creation with metaphysical capabilities, and from his acknowledgement of the artist’s capacity to give external form to the interior conflicts between the terrible and the ‘sportive’ aspects of his nature. Wolfgang Kayser makes the fearful and terrible aspect of art central to his thesis on the grotesque as an aesthetic category However, before a discussion of Kayser’s work it is important to take a look at Freud’s essay on ‘The ‘Uncanny.’37 Freud identifies the ‘uncanny’ as that which produces psychic responses of ‘dread and horror’ noting that ‘the word is not always used in a clearly definable sense, so that it tends to coincide with what excites fear in general.38 Freud observes that there is a general lack of any discussion of the uncanny in aesthetic treatises since aesthetic theory is concerned with ‘what is beautiful, attractive and sublime—that is with feelings of a positive nature—and with
the circumstances and objects that call them forth, rather than with the opposite feelings of repulsion and distress. The translator notes though ‘uncanny’ is the preferred English equivalent of ‘unheimlich’ used by Freud, the German term literally translates as ‘unhomely’. Indeed, as Freud’s discussion makes clear:

The German word unheimlich is obviously the opposite of heimlich [homely], heimisch [native]—the opposite of what is familiar; and we are tempted to conclude that what is ‘uncanny’ is frightening precisely because it is not known and familiar.

Significantly, Freud also notes that while one of the meanings of heimlich ‘is familiar and agreeable’ it is also used to mean that which is ‘concealed and kept out of sight.’ Thus Schelling’s use of unheimlich as the ‘name for everything that ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light’ creates a scope of regarding the unheimlich ‘in some ways or other a sub-species of heimlich.’

As is well known, Freud devotes a large section of the essay to a reading of E. T. A. Hoffman’s short story, ‘The Sandman’ (1816), noting that the German psychologist Ernst Jentsch (1867-1919) used this particular story to illustrate the effects of uncanny on the psyche. According to Jentsch the intellectual uncertainty about the status of an object / being—whether it is living or inanimate—produces the effects of the uncanny; in Hoffman’s story Olympia, a beautiful but strangely silent and motionless woman evokes this response. Freud challenges Jentsch’s thesis that Olympia’s identity as an automaton contributes to the effects of uncanny; in his retelling of this fantastic tale the focus shifts to the interiorized psychic world of Nathaniel, a young man who is haunted by his childhood memories of a gruesome tale told by his nurse of a wicked ‘Sand-Man’ who plucks out the eyes of children. Driven by the need to discover the identity of the Sand-Man Nathaniel has the ‘uncanny’ experience of encountering him twice—in the figures of the lawyer Coppelius and the optician Coppola. As he witnesses this phenomena of uncanny ‘doubling’ the panic-stricken Nathaniel interprets the references to ‘eyes’ by Coppelius and Coppola as the threat of the Sand-Man. Suffering from fits of delirium Nathaniel finally commits suicide by jumping from a tower when he spies Coppelius amongst the crowd.
Typically, Freud refers to the myth of Oedipus and reads Nathaniel’s fears about damaging or losing his eyes as the fear of castration; he supports his psychoanalytic interpretation of ‘castration complex’ by stressing that in Hoffman’s story the anxiety about the eyes is related to the boy’s perception of Coppélia / Sand-Man as the person responsible for the death of his father and for disturbing his other emotional ties. However, it seems that Freud’s analysis, based on his thesis of male psychosexual fears, produces a compelling but reductive reading of Hoffman’s story. The sense of ‘uncanny’ in ‘The Sandman’—and Freud does refer to this in passing but refuses to pay much heed to it—lies in its narrative strategy, which blurs the boundaries between the world of reality and that of imagination. More importantly, the ‘uncanny’ in Hoffman’s tale is produced by the power of narrative. It is the nurse’s tale that creates the interpretative and deterministic template of Nathaniel’s life. His anxiety—about the loss of his eyes / male organ—is linked to the primal fear, instilled in him by the story, about the certitude of his horrible fate. This is then transferred and dislocated onto events in his adult life, which becomes a playing out of this destiny in which his eyes will be gouged out by the Sand-Man. Nathaniel’s suicide is both an affirmation of the power of the Sand Man in controlling his life and a desperate attempt to escape its clutches. Hoffman’s story invites the readers to participate in Nathaniel’s belief and investment in the narrated nature of human existence. It is the readers’ belief in the possibility of connecting all events in Nathaniel’s life within a single powerful ‘myth’ of the Sand-Man that creates the sense of unheimlich in Hofmann’s story. The tale produces as events in the ‘real’ world, that which belongs to the realm of the ‘fantasized imaginary.’ Here unheimlich relates to everything that ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light a process of discovery that has its roots in the human psyche’s compulsive need to be engaged in hermeneutic processes.

Though Freud does not mention the term grotesque in his essay it is evident that his essay on ‘The ‘Uncanny’’ lays down the template of grotesque as an aesthetic category with strong psychological effects. The power of the grotesque to affect the human psyche, to create a sense of fear and anxiety through an encounter with an alien world constitutes the central thesis of Kayser’s work on the grotesque.
Grotesque as incongruous and incomprehensible: Kayser and Harpham

Wolfgang Kayser’s work\textsuperscript{46} is one of the most important and influential theoretical studies of the subject in the twentieth century. Kayser argues that the term grotesque should be regarded as an aesthetic category because it refers to ‘the creative process, the work of art itself and its reception.’\textsuperscript{47} Kayser’s work is concerned with an etymological enquiry as well as a historical survey of the usage in criticisms from the sixteenth to the twentieth century. Commenting on Renaissance grotesque paintings Kayser says:

By the word \textit{grottesco} the Renaissance, which used it to designate a specific ornamental style suggested by antiquity, understood not only something playfully gay and carelessly fantastic, but also something \textit{ominous and sinister} [emphases mine] in the face of a world totally different from the familiar one—a world in which the realm of inanimate things is no longer separated from those of plants, animals and human beings, and where the laws of statics, symmetry, and proportion are no longer valid.\textsuperscript{48}

Equally interesting is the link that Kayser establishes between this aspect of grotesque which blurs the distinction between the reality and fantasy and the Italian phrase \textit{sogni dei pittori} which means dreams of painters. Kayser thus seems to suggest that the artist’s unbridled imagination itself is grotesque. He goes on to trace the spread of the new form from Italy to France and Germany which embraces drawing, engraving as well as sculptural decorations. He points out the distinctions between three forms of decorative art, namely the Moresque, the Arabesque and the Grotesque.\textsuperscript{49} Kayser notes that the decisive moment of change in the connotation of the word occurred ‘when the technical term became a ‘significant’ word, an aesthetic category referring to certain creative attitudes, contents, structures as well as to effects upon the beholder.’\textsuperscript{50}

According to Kayser, grotesque lost its sinister overtones in the seventeenth century particularly through the French figurative usage of the word which came to signify silly bizarre, extravagant and was used a synonym of \textit{ridicule, comique} and \textit{burlesque}.\textsuperscript{51} This phenomenon of an exceedingly wide range of meanings with a slant towards the comic and caricatural continued well into the latter half of the eighteenth
century which was the first time that efforts were made to formulate a specific and more serious meaning.\textsuperscript{52} It is in this context that Kayser refers to the work of Christoph Martin Wieland who in 1775 published *Unterredungen mit dem Pfarrer von*** (‘Conversations with the Parson of ***’). For Kayser the importance of Wieland’s work lies in its recognition of the ‘contradictory feelings’ aroused by the grotesque—a simultaneous experience of being amused and appalled; the encounter with the grotesque creates in the viewer the responses ‘of surprise and horror, an agonizing fear in the presence of a world which breaks apart and remains inaccessible.’\textsuperscript{53} Kayser argues that it was in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that the term came to be regarded primarily ‘as an indication of mental responses, or at least as the cause of such responses.’\textsuperscript{54} He asserts that it is not the tangible and measurable forms that determine the status of the grotesque but rather its structure and the psychological response it evokes; it is evident that for Kayser reception is the key to the identification of the work of art as grotesque. However, he also notes that certain forms, motifs and themes are central to most works of art identified as grotesque. Among them belong all forms of ‘monsters’ or demons as well as animals, which create a sense of ominousness. Thus, grotesque art often depict snakes, owls, toads, spiders reptiles, and insects—nocturnal and creeping animals; he notes that amongst these, the bat with its ‘unnatural fusion of organic realms’ is ‘the grotesque animal incarnate.’\textsuperscript{55} Tracing the etymology of the term ‘vermin’—that which is unclean and cannot be sacrificed—Kayser argues that the grotesque animals and insects are those, which are taboo in most cultures. Other objects that constitute this grotesque realm and which haunt the artists’ imagination are strange entwining vines, tools of torture and weapons of mass destruction, various icons of death like skulls and skeletons and ‘human bodies reduced to puppets, marionettes and automata, with their faces frozen into masks.’\textsuperscript{56} Moreover, central to the grotesque is the incongruous fusion of anatomical parts belonging to human beings and animals to create a being that is absurd and bizarre. It is through such fusion that the artist creates an estranged or alienated world of topsy-turvydom in which our familiar natural world is suddenly metamorphosed into the strange and the ominous. From his etymological and historical analysis Kayser develops his theory of the grotesque and identifies its basic tenets as following: \textit{i}) the grotesque is the estranged world; \textit{ii}) it is a play with the absurd and \textit{iii}) an attempt to invoke and subdue the demonic aspects of the world.\textsuperscript{57}
The grotesque is identified through its ability to fuse realms, which we know to be separated; it thus signifies the abolition of the law of status, the loss of identity, the suspension of the category of objects, the destruction of personality and the fragmentation of the historical order. Geoffrey Galt Harpham develops these ideas further in his theoretical formulations of the grotesque. According to Harpham grotesqueries can be recognized by the fact that they do not fit our standard logical, physical and ontological categories of identification through which we make sense of the world. Drawing upon the etymology of the term, he states that grotesque stands ‘at a margin of consciousness between the known and the unknown, the perceived and the unperceived.’ He links this status of in-betweeness to the linguistic condition that eludes satisfactory verbal formulation or inexpressibility. Harpham draws upon the anthropologist Edmund Leach’s theory of taboo and non-things to understand the position of grotesque in the psycho-social mechanism—the system through which we make meaning of the world. For Harpham grotesque is ‘another word for non-thing, especially the strong forms of the ambivalent and the anomalous.’

Interestingly, apart from the attempt to understand grotesque in psychoanalytic and linguistic terms of analysis there is a strong moral and theological thrust in Harpham’s theoretical formulations. He speaks of the grotesque as an antithesis of the soul which he understands as ‘an organizing spiritual principle, the source of structure and order.’ Lacking a structure and order, the grotesque ‘is the material analogue or expression of spiritual corruption or weakness.’ Consequently the representation of the damned in western tradition of visual art is always through a distortion. This deformation aligns it with the grotesque because the fallen have ‘surrendered their structural integrity and formal coherence in the act of transgression.’

However, the most significant theoretical postulation that Harpham makes concerns the idea that the grotesque ‘occupies a gap or an interval: it is the middle of
a narrative of emergent comprehension.' He arrives at this conclusion first by positing that the elements of understanding and perception play a crucial role in creating the sense of the grotesque, stating that, ‘The perception of the grotesque is never a fixed or stable thing, but always a process, a progression.’ In order to illustrate what he means by this process or progression he uses the example of the metamorphosis of Agnello from Canto XXV of Dante’s *Inferno* where the thief is embraced by a six legged worm and gradually through an obscene coupling the two forms merge into a bizarre grotesque creature. For Harpham, had there been no analogue between Agnello and the serpent, no reason or justice for merging than the confusion would be absolute; conversely if Dante perceived this only as a clear case of justice than too there would be ‘no confusion, no sense of the grotesque.’

Harpham draws upon the work of the scientist Thomas Kuhn to connect his theory of grotesque to what in scientific research is understood as a paradigm crisis. The term refers to a position/condition when the older explanatory models or paradigm are discredited/nullified by the accumulation of data concerning discovery of a series of anomalous or ambiguous phenomena but the new paradigm or model that will adequately explain this phenomena has not yet emerged. According to Harpham, ‘The paradigm crisis is the interval of the grotesque writ large.’ The process of experiencing the grotesque as interval actually entails a violent shifting or transition from one interpretation to another and can generate laughter and fantasy, fear and terror, the sense of absurdity, the encounter with the demonic. The experience of grotesque is one where ‘the mind is poised between death and rebirth, insanity and discovery, rubble and revelation.’

The other important connection that Harpham makes is between grotesque and paradox. According to him grotesque shares with paradox the characteristic of asserting both terms of contradiction at once: ‘Because it breaks the rules, paradox can penetrate to new and unexpected realms of experience, discovering relationships syntax generally obscures.’ Harpham uses the language of spiritual experience, of revelation and symbolic enrichment, to suggest that this creates a sense of the profound. He argues that an understanding of paradox creates an experience of being in a preludial condition which dissolves in the act of comprehension.

Drawing upon the writings of late Romantics like Hugo, Harpham points out that though they themselves regarded the grotesque as an epitome of the then modern
art and regarded it as antithetical to the classical sublime, the grotesque may be related to the experience of sublime: ‘A shift of vision, often from the literal to symbolic, and suddenly the deformed is revealed as sublime.’ Thus the roots of Harpham’s ideas of the grotesque as a form of the sublime can be traced to the pre-Romantic and Romantic philosophy discussed earlier. Like Kayser, Harpham too foregrounds incongruity and incomprehension as hallmarks of the experience of grotesque. Both theorists focus on the psychological experience of the grotesque and connect this to an interiorized realm of the individual ego.

In contrast, it is Mikhail Bakhtin’s thesis of ‘grotesque realism’ that constitutes a major break through in twentieth century theories of grotesque. Bakhtin advances an entirely distinct notion of grotesque in the context of the culture of folk laughter and humour of carnivals of the early modern period.

*Bakhtin and grotesque realism: the context of carnival*

Mikhail Bakhtin’s work *Rabelais and his World* has left an indelible mark on the concept of the grotesque. Written during the Stalinist era when there was an official diktat regarding the nature, form and even style of literary production, Bakhtin’s thesis on the grotesque and carnival is a subversive text that attempts to refute and undermine such official control by claiming the power of folk laughter and humour. Bakhtin’s project is to reassess the importance of the work of Rabelais, which according to him, had been viewed rather narrowly by the nineteenth century writers as the ‘rehabilitation of the flesh’ which was a ‘typical manifestation of the Renaissance bourgeois character’ an interest in ‘economic man’ and was a ‘reaction against the ascetic middle ages’. In Bakhtin’s critique:

Actually the images of the material bodily principle in the work of Rabelais . . . are the heritage, only somewhat modified by the Renaissance, of the culture of the folk humour. They are the heritage of that peculiar type of imagery and more broadly speaking of that peculiar aesthetic concept which is characteristic of this folk culture . . . We shall call it conditionally the concept of grotesque realism.

Bakhtin’s ‘grotesque realism’ marks a departure from traditional usages of the term ‘grotesque’. Indeed, Bakhtin’s battle with Schneegans is fought over the question of the relation between grotesque and satire. Bakhtin vehemently refutes
Schneegan’s notions of grotesque as ‘exaggeration of the inappropriate to incredible and monstrous dimensions’ especially as they pertain to the work of Rabelais, primarily because it is linked to satire. He loftily dismisses Schneegans’ views as ‘typical but radically erroneous.’ Rabelais and his World is Bakhtin’s hymn to common man; ‘grotesque realism’ is the means through which he formulates the notion of popular subversion and debunking of authority. Stallybrass and White analyse it thus:

In Bakhtin’s scheme grotesque realism in pre-Capitalist Europe fulfilled three functions at once: it provided an image ideal of and for popular community as a heterogeneous and boundless totality, an imaginary repertoire of festive and comic elements which stood over and against the oppressive language of official culture, provided a materialist metaphysics whereby the grotesque bodied forth the cosmos, social formation and language itself.

For Bakhtin the material bodily principle in grotesque realism is ‘offered in all-popular festive and utopian aspects’ and has to be distinguished from the ‘private egotistic form’ that is contained in the ‘biological individual’ or ‘the ‘bourgeois ego’ and the ‘body and bodily life have here a cosmic and at the same-time an all-people’s character.’ This link of the body and bodily principle with the collective and communal—equated with folk / popular—as opposed to the individual (understood as bourgeois) leads him to assert that this is the reason why ‘all that is bodily becomes grandiose, exaggerated and immeasurable.’ One of the chief modes of this exaggeration is to stress the bodily functions of growth fecundity and abundance and this is joyous and festive in spirit:

This exaggeration has a positive, assertive character. The leading themes of these images of bodily life are fertility, growth and a brimming-over abundance . . . The material bodily principle is a triumphant, festive principle, it is a ‘banquet for all the world.’

According to Bakhtin the most important or the essential principle of grotesque realism is ‘degradation, that is the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract.’ He goes on to explicate the implication of the term ‘degradation’ as applied in grotesque realism:
Degradation here means coming down to earth, the contact with earth as an element that swallows up and gives birth at the same time . . . To degrade also means to concern oneself with the lower stratum of the body, the life of the belly and the reproductive organs; it therefore relates to acts of defecation and copulation, pregnancy and birth; it has not only a destructive, negative aspect but also a regenerating one. To degrade an object does not imply merely hurling into the void of non-existence, into absolute destruction, but to hurl down to the reproductive lower stratum, the zone in which conception and birth takes place. Grotesque realism knows no other lower level; it is the fruitful earth and the womb. It is always conceiving.\textsuperscript{90}

The most important formulation that Bakhtin makes about the grotesque body is its thorough going distinction from the notion of the classical / canonical body in Renaissance discourses. The classical body is a ‘strictly completed finished product’, which is isolated, and ‘fenced off’ from other bodies. More importantly the classical body is one that is smooth and closed; lacking in protuberances and apertures it is created by erasing ‘all signs of its growth and proliferation.’\textsuperscript{91} As opposed to this closed and anesthetized perfect classical body the grotesque body is an open, communicative and transgressive entity:

The stress is laid on those parts of the body that are open to the outside world, that is, the parts through which the world enters the body or emerges from it, or through which the body itself goes out to meet the world. This means the emphasis is on the apertures or the convexities, or on the various ramifications and offshoots: the open moth, the genital organs, the breasts, the phallus, the potbelly, the nose . . . This is the ever unfinished, ever creating body, the link in the chain of genetic development, or more correctly speaking, two links shown at the point where they enter into each other . . . One of the fundamental tendencies of the grotesque image of the body is to show two bodies in one: the one giving birth and dying, the other conceived, generated and born.\textsuperscript{92}

It may be interesting to note that in Bakhtin’s theoretical formulations the ‘unfinished open’ body is a ‘pregnant begetting body or at least a body ready for
conception and fertilization.’ 93 This feminine or maternal attribute is reinforced in what Bakhtin identifies as the fundamental tendencies of the grotesque image namely to show two bodies in one, ‘the one giving birth and dying’ and the ‘other conceived generated and born’. Yet as feminist critics have noted, despite the references to pregnancy and birth, Bakhtin’s theory of grotesque realism presupposes an ungendered, essentialized body.

**Feminist theories of grotesque**

Feminists have noted how in various discourses—aesthetics philosophy and psychology—the grotesque and the monstrous are gendered as female. They argue that such ‘naturalized’ links between the grotesque and the female / feminine is integral to phallocentric patriarchal thinking which makes the grotesque and the monstrous ‘figures of devalued difference’. The imperative for feminist criticism is to challenge, demystify and deconstruct such associations. Twentieth century theorists of the grotesque assume that the category is universal and do not address the gender specificities of the issue. For the purposes of this thesis it is important to ask whether contemporary feminist theories of grotesque throw any new light on the dominant perception of the female body, the behavioral role of woman in patriarchal culture and the related issue of what constitutes the norm of femininity. In other words what is the relation between the grotesque and the female or feminine? Mary Russo and Rosi Braidotti address these and other issues concerning the gendered nature of the grotesque in their works.

Russo begins by noting that discursive formation of the grotesque in the twentieth century may be divided, roughly, into two broad categories: Kayser’s views of the grotesque as strange and ‘uncanny’ and Bakhtin’s idea of ‘grotesque realism.’ 94 The grotesque as strange and alien—closely connected to the Freudian ‘uncanny’—evokes fear and horror. It is connected with the interiorized space of fantasy and ‘related most strongly to the psychic register and to the bodily as cultural pejoration of an inner state.’ The epitome of the gendered figure of the Freudian grotesque is the ‘female hysteric, ungrounded and out of bounds, enacting her pantomime of anguish and rebellion.’ 95 The Bakhtinian notion of the grotesque body is, in contrast, not tied to the individual ‘bourgeois ego’ but is conceptualized as a ‘social body’ and is thus a ‘virile category associated with the active civic world of the public.’ 96 Like Stallybrass and White, Russo stresses that the significance of Bakhtin’s theory of the
grotesque body—open, protruding, irregular and multiple—lies in its potential of social transformation.⁹⁷ In other words, the power of the grotesque body is that it crosses boundaries; it blurs distinctions and invents new forms for itself. If this concept is applied to gender it becomes clear that the grotesque body can be constituted as that which interrupts static categories of gender. The grotesquely gendered body is that which calls attention to normative gender roles while it distorts caricatures and blurs them.

Related to the idea of the grotesque is the notion of the ‘monstrous’ especially as it applies to women. Rosi Braidotti notes that the association of women and monsters and their categorization as forms of aberration have a long history in western philosophical and medical discourses. Aristotle’s views of reproduction posit the male as a norm; hence the birth of a woman is a deviation from this norm.⁹⁸ Produced as abnormal in its originary moment the woman and the monster are both anomalous and deviant. Analysing the implication of such association in the patriarchal phallogocentric culture, Braidotti says:

The association of femininity with monstrosity points to a system of pejoration that is implicit in the binary logic of oppositions that characterizes the phallogocentric discursive order. The monstrous as the negative pole, the pole of pejoration, is structurally analogous to the feminine as that which is other than the norms.⁹⁹ Braidotti’s analysis is significant because it provides an insight into the phallogocentric logic that informs systems of power / knowledge: within the binary mode of thinking it is crucially necessary to produce monsters and ‘bodily female subjects’ as figures of ‘devalued difference’ in order to uphold the production of normative discourse.¹⁰⁰ Thus it follows that misogyny of discourse is not an exception but integral to the ‘system that requires difference as pejoration in order to erect the positivity of the norm.’¹⁰¹

Aesthetic representation and political discourses reinforces the norm that women keep themselves small and unseen. In everyday life too women are continually warned against making spectacles of themselves. As a subversive alternative Russo prefers that women make themselves prodigious and visible, and so disrupt patriarchal cultural expectation of ideal womanly behaviour. She suggests that
for women a way out is to subversively appropriate notions of the grotesque and the monstrous. Russo’s work also draws upon Julia Kristeva’s theory of abjection, which I have discussed in the introduction to this thesis. The female grotesque and the abject woman are related, since the maternal body has long been associated with the grotesque.

Barbara Creed, writing about the 'monstrous feminine' delineates two forms of the phenomenon, one connected with maternity and the other with the \textit{vagina dentata}, or the castrating woman. Creed’s argument is that the whole notion of the monster was constructed in and through gender difference and female sexuality.\textsuperscript{102} Braidotti similarly points out that monstrosity and pregnancy are linked through the notion of the woman’s body as a shape-shifter:

The woman’s body can change shape in pregnancy and bearing; it is therefore capable of defeating the notion of fixed bodily form, of visible, recognizable, clear distinct shapes as that which marks the contours of the body. She is morphologically dubious. The fact that the female body can change shape so drastically is troublesome in the eye of the logocentric economy within which to see is the primary act of knowledge and the gaze the basis of all epistemic awareness.\textsuperscript{103}

Russo likewise notes that the grotto-esque cave, has been compared to the ‘cavernous anatomical female body’. She points out that this is true not only of phallocentric discourses but also of ‘a vein of nonacademic ‘cultural feminism’ that valorizes ‘the earth mother, witch, crone, and vampire, and posits a natural connection between the female body (itself naturalized) and the ‘primal’ elements, especially the earth.\textsuperscript{104} In addition she maintains that the location of the grotesque in art ‘as superficial and to the margins’ suggests ‘a certain construction of the feminine as devalued and disenfranchised.’\textsuperscript{105} Russo recognizes that:

\begin{quote}
\textit{it is an easy and perilous slide from these archaic tropes to misogyny since all the detritus of the body that is separated out and placed with terror and revulsion (predominantly though not exclusively) on the side of the feminine—are down there in that cave of abjection.}\textsuperscript{106}
\end{quote}

The significance of feminist theories of the grotesque lies in the relation that they established between terms like the grotesque and the monstrous especially with
respect to the female body and its behavioral characteristics. The grotesque, as discussed earlier, signifies a hybrid form with animal or human parts woven incongruously. It is evident that the grotesque and the monstrous partake of what may be termed the deviant as opposed to the norm. In contemporary usage ‘grotesque’ has close links with ‘monster’ and ‘freak’. The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary defines a ‘monster’ as ‘compounded from elements of two or more animal forms’ and the freak is ‘a monstrosity of any species.’ All three terms are therefore linked by their lack of clear limit or boundary, and their quality of in-between ness. The monster and the freak and the grotesque are categories that exist outside the domains of what most cultures code as the ‘norm’. Edwin Shur notes that ‘deviance is a designation, a way of characterizing behaviour.’ He argues that deviance as a category does not exist in isolation, but is rather given meaning within a particular context. In other words, deviance like gender is a social construct. Deviance and normality are not autonomous, self-contained categories but partners in a contradictory and shifting relationship. Within the hierarchy of power relations defining the normal and the deviant, ‘It is the perception of a threat that triggers the efforts at systematic devaluation.’

Indeed the notion of the ‘abnormal’ as the deviant or aberrant ‘other’ is crucial to the cultural and political formation of the norm or the ‘self’. In early modern England, people belonging to non-European races were displayed as spectacles of otherness; similarly the madman, the leper, the dwarf and the eunuch were all regarded as deviations of the norm and could become part of freak shows. The witch or hag, was the culture’s iconic image of the deviant or unruly woman; this figure of the demonized ‘other’ was also turned into a bizarre spectacle in the early modern period.

Historically, many subordinate groups have been constituted as deviant by dominant groups and institutions; stigmatizing something or someone as deviant is an attempt to limit the power of the offending party and effectively keeping it under control. This analysis provides a key to understanding patriarchal modes of sustaining the gender/power relations in early modern society. As I have discussed in my introduction to this thesis, the gendered implication of Bakhtin’s notions of the grotesque body is of crucial significance in the discursive formation of the Renaissance woman. In his widely circulated and influential feminist reading of the
early modern patriarchal culture Stallybrass deploys the Bakhtinian category of the carnivalesque body to advance his thesis that writers of sermons and marriage manuals regarded women as *naturally* grotesque.\textsuperscript{111} Significantly, since patriarchal discourse can only construct the gendered/social body by mapping it onto the biological one, body parts acquire both metaphorical and metonymic significance. The conflation of the closed mouth, chastity and the threshold of the house all signify the gendered dimension of the ‘classical’ body,—impenetrable, sealed off from the world and hence a repository of patriarchal ideals of the feminine. In the following section I discuss the discursive formation of the Renaissance woman noting the patriarchal imperative to both categorize and conflate various forms of female transgressions.

**II. Scripting women as ‘naturally grotesque: Renaissance discourses on women**

In 1977, the historian Joan Kelly initiated a radical feminist rethinking on and revaluation of the Renaissance with her now classic essay ‘Did Women Have a Renaissance?’\textsuperscript{112} An erstwhile Burckhardtian Renaissance scholar, Kelly records that her initial ideas on the Renaissance underwent a change through the influence of feminism; thus the genesis of this essay lay in a shift towards a feminist perspective articulated through an apparently simple question, ‘Suppose we look at the Renaissance from the vantage point of women?’\textsuperscript{113} The result was a startling discovery; the very signs of change in Italy between 1350 to 1530—the development of modern states, the rise of mercantile and manufacturing economy, the dissolution of feudal hierarchy and bonds, the revival of Latin learning and humanist education—which were read as the cause and symptom of ‘renaissance’ affected women adversely.\textsuperscript{114} Kelly’s emphatic pronouncement, ‘there was no renaissance for women, at least not during the Renaissance’\textsuperscript{115} directly challenged Burckhardt’s thesis that during the Renaissance in Italy, ‘women stood on a footing of perfect equality with men’ and that ‘the same intellectual and emotional development which perfected the man was demanded for the perfection of the woman.’\textsuperscript{116}

Though later feminist historians have critiqued the methodology that Kelly uses for her analysis it would perhaps not be an exaggeration to state that Kelly’s question laid the foundation for contemporary feminist studies in the Renaissance. Thus Virginia Woolf’s exhortation, way back in 1929, to enterprising women students at Girton and Newnham to rewrite the history of the woman in the Renaissance came
true 50 years after her famous lecture. Over the last thirty years feminist historians, literary scholars, philologists have been engaged in intense labour to produce a veritable cornucopia about women in the Renaissance. So unlike Woolf, who had to rely on her powers of imagination to create the haunting tragic tale of Shakespeare’s sister Judith, contemporary feminist scholars of the Renaissance are acquainted with the writings of talented women humanist scholars and poets like Alessandra Scala, Isotta Nogarola, Maragaret Roper, Gaspara Stampa and Louis Labe. Contemporary feminist research is not limited to valuable knowledge about Renaissance women’s contribution to pedagogy and the arts; thus feminist historians have recovered invaluable material about women’s agency in decisions regarding marriage, (this included the decision to opt out of marriage) in managing female headed households, in wielding considerable economic power (especially as widows) and their prominent roles in trades such as weaving and in the food markets including membership of guilds. Unfortunately, this exciting field of Renaissance feminist historiography is outside the purview of my thesis. Instead I focus on the feminist research of the early modern period that has noted the veritable explosion of the figure of the deviant woman in official as well as popular discourses. The presence of such women testifies to Natalie Zemon Davis’s observation that the ‘female sex was considered the disorderly one par excellence in early Modern Europe.’ Social historians like Lawrence Stone, David Underdown, Keith Wrightson and Barry Ray have characterized the early modern period as a society in transition where earlier social order and hierarchy was under enormous pressure. As David Underdown points out, the early modern period was characterized by a ‘crisis of order’ which can be traced to ‘excessive population growth, inflation land shortage, poverty and vagrancy.’ He links the rise in misogynist / anti-feminist literature of the period to the general anxiety and uncertainty caused by this destabilization. Lynda Boose notes that not only was there an increase of witchcraft trials and other court accusations against women, but crimes and punishments were ‘progressively polarized by gender’ and certain crimes like ‘scolding’ ‘witchcraft’ and ‘whoring’ came to be identified as specifically female offences. Karen Newman observes that ‘the period was fraught with anxiety about rebellious women and particularly their rebellion through language.’ The institution of marriage and family was also perceived to be under threat. Catherine Belsey points out that there was widespread belief that wives had become murderous and the Essex county records for the
Elizabethan period reveal several frightened husbands seeking protection of the courts. These observations about the apparent threat posed by women’s insubordination are based not only on empirical records but on patriarchal discursive constructions of femininity. In the following sections I discuss the implications of such discursive productions of the Renaissance woman and attempt to read Renaissance plays (primarily those of Shakespeare) as problematic negotiations with these discourses.

The early modern discourse on women provides a rich index of the culture’s production of ‘gender’. As a primary field where the difference between the sexes was formulated, the sex/gender system—to borrow Gayle Rubin’s useful term—was also a site of conflict and contradiction. On the one hand Biblical source—‘Male and female created he them’ (Genesis 1.27)—was cited as the authority of the two-sex system whereas medical treatises claimed a single-sex model with women appearing as imperfectly formed or incomplete men. If biological sexual difference could not be relied upon to produce a naturalized gender difference, it meant as Howard puts it ‘that gender difference and hierarchy had to be produced and secured—through ideological interpellation when possible, through force when necessary.’ Patriarchal writings about women’s body and behaviour manifest a need for controlling the female sex which was regarded as ‘unruly’. Since the ideological purpose of early modern patriarchal discourses was to discipline the transgressive female body it thus became imperative to list and categorize forms of deviance. Thus early modern female deviance was clearly a matter of discursive production.

In the next sections, I focus on Renaissance discursive writings about women concentrating on four areas: i) the notion of women in medical writings; ii) the Humanist debate about female education and the fashionable querelle des femmes or the formal debate about the nature of women; iii) the representation of women in pamphlets with special focus on those that discussed the fashion of female cross dressing; iv) questions of women’s place in marriage especially as described in sermons and conduct books. As will be evident in the course of my discussions, there was considerable slippage between the discourses: a sermon against female cross-dressing served as a warning to women about their proper place in marriage. Similarly, the ‘talking woman was everywhere equated with a voracious sexuality that
in turn abetted her avid consumerism: scolds were regularly accused of both extravagance and adultery.\textsuperscript{133}

It is well known that the scold and the witch constitute the two most prominent figures of the transgressive or deviant woman in Renaissance discourses. However, I omit here discussion about witches, witch-practices and beliefs since these are explored in detail in the second section of Chapter 3. Similarly the gendered implications of the somatic significance of the tongue need to be discussed at length and I do so in the final chapter of this thesis. Female authority especially in the context of political rule was regarded as monstrous; though this is briefly alluded to in the formal controversy, detailed discussions of this aspect of the unruly ‘woman on top’ are addressed in the final chapter with special reference to the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

\textit{Medical discourses about women}

Renaissance medicine was a vast compendium of knowledge derived from classical antiquity and middle ages and included editions, as well as commentaries of Aristotle, Hippocratus and Galen. The spectacular developments in experimental anatomy carried on by Andreas Vesalius, Gabriele Falloppio and Realdo Colombo sometimes challenged the received medical opinion about women but were often used to reinforce dominant patriarchal paradigms of women’s unstable, changeable nature and natural weakness and infirmity.\textsuperscript{134}

The vast compendium of Renaissance medical discourses on women could broadly be categorized as follows: \textit{i}) those dealing with nature of women; \textit{ii}) anatomical and physiological difference between male and female; \textit{iii}) discussions about the uterus and various feminine ailments resulting from its malfunctions.

By the end of the sixteenth century the general context of medicine was the Galenist.\textsuperscript{135} In the Galenic system the male body serves as the physiological and anatomical model and the female is its unfinished version. This is evident in the structural homology of the male and female genitals; the female organs are inverted and less developed versions of the male located within rather than outside of the body because of the lack of heat in the female body. Thus female is an unfinished version of the male body, which provides the physiological and anatomical model.\textsuperscript{136} However, by the early seventeenth century, writers like Helkiah Crooke criticized the
Galenic—and by implication the Aristotelian—one-sex model. In *Microcosmographia* (1618), Crooke refuted Galen and stated emphatically that it was erroneous to regard that the female is an imperfect male differing only in the position of the genitals. According to Crooke:

Those things which Galen urgeth concerning the similitude of the parts of generation or their differing only in site and position, many do esteem very absurd. Sure we are that they savour very little of the truth of anatomy,.…. we have showed how little likeness there is betwixt the neck of the womb and the yard, the bottom of it and the cod. Neither is the structure, figure, or magnitude of the testicles one and the same, nor is the distribution and insertion of the spermatic vessels alike.\(^{137}\)

Maclean notes the notion of woman as incomplete man led to the debate whether woman can become a man.\(^ {138}\) The possible origin of hermaphrodites or androgynes was also hotly debated and instead of being regarded as belonging to the mid point of the spectrum between a male and a female the general opinion was that they belonged to the category of unnatural and were aligned to monsters.\(^ {139}\)

Renaissance medical notions about women’s monstrous nature can be traced to its legacy of classical antiquity. In his fourth book of *Generation of Animals* Aristotle described the birth of a female, as opposed to the male, as a type of deformity, albeit necessary, since the female is required for generation, and monstrosities are accidents of nature, which are unnecessary.\(^ {140}\) Thus, as Marie Helen Huet points out, there was a decisive link between the monstrous and the female as deviations from the norm and it was argued that there was a natural propensity on the woman’s part to produce more figures of dissimilarity, defying the rule that a child should resemble its parent.\(^ {141}\) The popular as well as learned belief was that monstrous births occurred due to the disorder of the maternal imagination, the whims and fancies and aberrant desires that women had at the time of conception or during pregnancy. The source of this idea was attributed to a lost text by Empedocles, which stated that the shape of the progeny could be affected by artifacts viewed by the pregnant woman.\(^ {142}\) Women’s imagination especially during procreation was thus regarded as monstrous because the monster child did not carry the mark of paternity as it was naturally supposed to but were an offspring of an imagination that literally
imprinted on progeny a deformed, misshapen resemblance to an object that had not participated in their creation.\textsuperscript{143}

The two possible sources of the word monster are the Latin \textit{monstrare}, which meant to show or display, and the French word \textit{monere} meaning to warn. Thus etymologically monster was a sign that displayed or demonstrated a warning or a portent. Monstrous births were a warning to the world of the pregnant mother’s deviant passions and desires and thus connected to culturally coded constructions of female aberrations of behaviour. Kate Chedzgoy points out that tales of monstrous births were widely circulated in early modern societies and were a way of expressing anxieties about the female reproductive role that was ultimately outside male control and congruently with the impossibility of regulating female sexuality.\textsuperscript{144} Popular ballads and broadsheets were a culture’s way of expressing this anxiety primarily by making the birth of monstrous children an effective code for punishing female transgressive behaviour.

It was believed that women’s bodies were controlled mainly by the differing levels of fluids—menses, milk, ‘female seed’. These made them physiologically as well as psychologically unstable and changeable. The most hotly debated early modern issue of women’s physiology concerned the functioning and the malfunctioning of the uterus or the womb. The open, wandering womb made the female body more vulnerable to external influences, more mutable, ambiguous and less governable by the dictates of reason. The fecund female womb was regarded as an independent entity; if dissatisfied with its normal location, the womb was likely to wander through its owner’s body thus disrupting her physiological and mental functions. Edward Jordan’s \textit{A Brief Discourse of a Disease called the Suffocation of the Mother} (London, 1603) was the most famous and influential medical text which ascribed women’s hysterical fits to the movement of the unruly mobile uterus or womb. The notion of hysteria as a specifically female ailment connected to the ‘mother’ was influential well into the mid-seventeenth century. Nicholas Fontanus’ \textit{The Woman’s Doctor} (1652) was in general agreement with this Galenic explanation about the ascent of the matrix which could push against organs like the heart and create a sensation of choking.\textsuperscript{145} Shakespeare’s \textit{King Lear} draws upon the association of hysterical fits as a specifically feminine ailment in interesting ways. Lear refers to the choking fits caused by an uncontrollable rage as hysteria or the ‘mother’:
O! how this mother swells upwards towards my heart!

_Hysterica passio! Down, thou climbing sorrow!

Thy element is below.

(II. iv. 54-6)

Lear’s words indicate that he traces the experience of sorrow and rage to the womb, whose ‘element is below’. The curious reference to the womb or uterus, has the effect of feminizing the body of the ageing and vulnerable king. The classical, closed, monumental, masculine body of the king is transformed to a grotesque feminized one. In _1 & 2 Henry IV_ there are several references to Falstaff’s body as open, wet and obese—images that produce him as the feminine figure of ‘devalued difference’. The references to his belly as womb coupled with the image of Falstaff as a sow that overwhelms its litter make him the feminized embodiment of carnivalesque ‘grotesque realism’.

The womb was thought to be sensitive to the fluctuations of the moon and to the imagination, the capricious regulator of the female body and psychology, making women more susceptible to sexual impulses, folly and irrationality than men. Before her suicide Cleopatra says ‘I have nothing/Of woman in me. Now from head to foot/I am marble-constant. Now the fleeting moon/No planet is of mine.’ (V. ii. 236-9) It is not only medical treatises that fostered notions of the female body as unruly or naturally grotesque; the humanist debate about the implications of female education are also based on the idea that women’s learning would necessarily disrupt the _natural_ hierarchy of genders. Since education meant a foray into the public ‘masculine’ domain, the educated woman or the learned lady came to be regarded as potentially transgressive.

**Humanist Education and the Formal Controversy about women**

If revival of Latin learning and humanist education be read as the cause and symptom of a historical reawakening or rebirth that took place in Italy and Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries then history testifies that women were not entirely outside its pale. The ‘learned lady’ in the cultures in Europe—women like Isotta and Ginevra Nogarola, Cassandra Fedele, Alessandra Scala, Margaret More were in most cases aristocratic, noble women whose learning was encouraged and praised by humanist educators. However, it is worth noting that humanists like Juan Luis Vives,
Erasmus and Thomas More continually cautioned against the ‘unfeminine’ nature of advanced learning and reinforced women’s containment within traditionally sanctioned roles. Juan Luis Vives’ work *Instructions of a Christian Woman* (1523) may be regarded as the paradigm for the circumscribed notion of woman’s education; Vives stressed that instead of complex matters such as theology and philosophy women should be educated so that they become proper helpmeets of their husbands and pious and good Christians.\(^{147}\) The possibility that the Renaissance aristocratic lady’s learning could turn her into ‘mannish’ and thus upset the gender status quo is hinted in Castiglione’s *The Book of the Courtier*. The encomium on the ideal accomplished Renaissance lady is followed by a remark by Lord Gasper that encapsulates the problematic status of the educated woman:

I wonder then quoth the Lorde Gasper smyling, since yo give women both letters and stayednesse and nobleness of courage, and temperance, ye will no have them also to beare rule in cities, and to make lawes, and to leade armies, and men to stand spinning in the kitchen.\(^{148}\)

Gasper Pallavicino’s facetious remark about having women as governors, lawmakers and military generals is an expression of patriarchal anxiety about reversal of gender roles that might be an unforeseen and unfortunate fall out of the attempt to educate women. Even Thomas More, who took a special interest in the education of his daughters, was equivocal, in his letter to his daughter Margaret, in expressing admiration for her skill in Latin composition. The problem for More was twofold: his daughter’s scholarly competence was manly and active as opposed to her virtuous femininity and secondly it had to be kept for private circulation or else it would compromise her chastity or virtue.\(^{149}\)

Indeed, as Lisa Jardine argues, the response to the education of women was split: on the one hand education in the classics was regarded as a necessary accomplishment for the aristocratic woman, contributing ‘to the moral fibre and fitness to be an active member of a social elite.’, on the other hand there was an equally powerful view that there is ‘something intrinsically indecorous about a woman who transgresses the social code which requires her to observe a modest silence and passivity in public.’\(^{150}\)
Women’s public speech seems to be the locus of patriarchal anxiety. In a letter written to Baptista di Montefeltro, Leonardo Bruni, for example, warns that ‘Rhetoric in all its forms—public discussions, forensic argument, logical fence and the like—lies absolutely outside the province of women.’ Thus an educated woman like Isotta was always already transgressive because her eloquence was seen as virile and Amazon like; making her susceptible to charges of sexual immodesty and social indecorousness.

How do English Renaissance cultural texts respond to the problematic of female learning? Three Shakespearean plays—All’s Well That Ends Well, The Merchant of Venice and Titus Andronicus—have heroines who are learned ladies. The representation of these ‘learned ladies’ provides a rich field of investigation of Renaissance patriarchal attitudes to the question of women as naturally grotesque. In the next chapter I will discuss how in Titus Andronicus Lavinia’s chastity and learning are treated in a contrapuntal mode; the first references to her accomplishments in needlepoint and music occurs as she enters raped and mutilated (II. iv. 43-51) and subsequently her classical learning is grotesquely displayed as she painfully uses her ‘stumps’ to point to the episode of Philomel’s rape in Ovid’s Metamorphosis. Lavinia’s mutilated body becomes a ‘text’ that is to be read and interpreted by Patriarchal authority namely Marcus and Titus. In the following passages I will briefly examine the how Shakespeare’s comedies address the issue of women’s learning.

A feminist deconstructive reading would argue that All’s Well That Ends Well and The Merchant of Venice are organized around the social and cultural problematic posed by women who have knowledge of medicine and law, two fields which are avowedly masculine preserves. At one level, the contribution of the learned heroines is regarded as crucial, formulated in the plays in terms of the demands of the plot: thus Helena’s knowledge of medicine (gained from her father) cures the dying King of France and Portia (disguised as Bellario) admirably uses her legal knowledge to save Antonio’s life through a verbal quibble. However, the culture’s discomfiture with the heroines’ access to knowledge is expressed through their traits of social and sexual transgressiveness at several levels: When Helena claims the unwilling Bertram as her sexual partner she fulfills patriarchal anxiety about the learned woman’s social and sexual disruptiveness. In many texts of the period this anxiety is often expressed
in the perilous slide between a wise woman and a witch. In the first part of All’s Well That Ends Well Helena is the metaphorical woman in breeches, and Portia is literally so in Act IV of The Merchant of Venice. Her male disguise, her knowledge of law (albeit borrowed) and use of rhetorical skills to argue in the public space of the courtroom clearly mark her out as ‘unfeminine’.

However, more importantly both Helena and Portia pose threats to what Gayle Rubin terms the society’s ‘sex/gender system’.

As Karen Newman observes, the ‘sex/gender’ system functioned historically in early modern England, where marriage, among the elite at least, was primarily a commercial transaction and conducted by the bride’s male kin. In these two plays the female protagonists disrupt such systems by asserting themselves as active agents. Their agency derives from their access to and manipulation of knowledge (medicine and law) to gain unusual powers of bargain with men. The linking of this empowerment with matters of sexual forwardness is marked in the case of Helena in All’s Well That Ends Well. The she-doctor clearly uses her knowledge of medicine gained from her father to secure Bertram as her husband. Early in the play Helena confesses to the Countess that this is her motive for visiting Paris to cure the dying King of France (I. iii. 230-3) She is confident of her power to prevail upon the King to give his ward in marriage to her as part of the deal: ‘Then shalt thou give me with thy kingly hand/ What husband I shall command’ (II. i. 193-4).

Towards the end of The Merchant of Venice, Portia controls the events so that it becomes her ‘vantage to exclaim’ (III. ii. 175) on Bassanio. In the courtroom she cleverly manipulates her role to claim as fee the betrothal ring from her husband Bassanio: ‘I will have nothing else but only this/ And now methinks I have a mind to it’ (IV. i. 428-9). Having secured the ring Portia proceeds to underscore the ‘contractual’ nature of her marriage, namely that her husband’s sexual possession of her is contingent upon his possession of the ring. She thus disrupts the ‘sex/gender’ system by asserting the possibility of her sexual agency, the fiction of her ‘liberalness’: ‘For by this ring the doctor lay with me’ (V. i. 259).

How do the plays address the problem of their heroines’ apparent transgressions? In All’s Well That Ends Well Helena has to take recourse to the ‘bed trick’ to ensure her initial claim on Bertram. In other words she has to perform the task that Bertam’s riddling letter about the ‘ring’ sets on her. The play’s closure
leaves much unanswered: What is the kind of husband that Helena takes so much pains to have doubly won? Lisa Jardine suggests that the play makes Helena atone for her initial sexual forwardness through a return to exemplary passivity and the ideal of wifely submission à la the patient Griselda model. Interestingly, *The Merchant of Venice* retains its ambiguity about the sexually unruly ‘women on top’ through its ring episode. However, the disruptive/transgressive potentials of her public performance of learning are harnessed to the play’s larger project of consolidating the power of the Christian Venetian state through the metaphorical ‘killing’ of Shylock. It is of course deeply ironic that the threat posed by the racial ‘other’ can only be addressed by a ‘woman’—always already ‘other’ within patriarchal discourses.

Humanist scholars not only debated on the issue of female learning but also participated in the *querelle des femmes*, the formal controversy about the nature of women. The genre, as it developed in England, was influenced by the work of two continental humanists, Henry Cornelius Agrippa’s *De Nobilitate et praecellentia sexus foeminei* (1509), whose English translation *A Treatise of the Nobility of Womankind* was brought out in 1529, and Baldassare Castiglione’s *Il Cortegiano* (1508-16) translated into English in 1561 as *The Book of the Courtier*. These two books, along with Boccaccio’s *Concerning Famous Women* (1359), translated in 1563, provided a model for the English formal controversy about women. Linda Woodbridge points out that the formal controversy is an erudite affair modeled on Platonic dialogues and uses logic and rhetoric to argue a thesis about the nature of women in general, cataloguing their virtues and faults and use exempla of good and bad women from historical as well as biblical and classical texts to prove their point. The writings create a sense of genuine debate by positing an opponent whose arguments the writer anticipates and refutes. The earliest English text belonging to the genre, Thomas Elyot’s *The Defence of Good Women* (1540), is in the form of arguments between two characters called Candidus and Caninus, the latter being an anti-feminist detractor who ‘speaks like a cur.’ Candidus’ method of discrediting Caninus as a speaker of dubious authority is that his own personal experience of being rejected by women has given him a sour grapes attitude. Moreover, Caninus’ notions of female inconstancy have been derived from poetry, which provides distorted notion of women’s actual nature. That the debate on the nature of women was meant as a serious literary exercise and adhered to Renaissance notions of rhetoric and oratory
derived from classical sources is evident even in works not written by humanist scholars only but a popular writer like Edward Gosynhyll who wrote both for (Mulierum Paen) and against women (The Scole House of Women).

The title of Gosynhyll’s work, as he explains, is based on the idea that women school each other in vicious behaviour, and that theirs is the art of cozening men.\textsuperscript{160} As Woodbridge notes:

The Scole House, like most formal attacks, uses the narration to list women’s faults: Women ‘haue tongue at large, voyce loude & shryl’. Their raucousness grows out of their ‘forwarde wyl’. Women harbor grudges, having an infallible memory for slights. Women are deceitful, given to evasions and duplicity. They are creatures of sense, not reason; rather than listening to the voice of male reason in nay argument, they will ‘tell theyr owne tale to the ende.’\textsuperscript{161}

Women’s deceitfulness is most prominent when it comes to committing adultery because women are promiscuous and ‘farre more lecherous’ than men.\textsuperscript{162} Gosynhyll uses historical and literary examples of notorious women, like Eve, Jezebel, Lot’s Wife, Delilah, and Job’s Wife, to prove his point that women have, since the time of Genesis, been responsible for the undoing of men.\textsuperscript{163}

Some of the anti-feminist lore in Gosynhyll’s work may have been derived from popular jest books and indeed his attempt to present the work as a kind of a joke that men will enjoy tries to highlight the comic intentionality but the text as a whole is structured like the Renaissance formal debate and uses all the pedantic paraphernalia that would ensure it status as a serious piece of literature.\textsuperscript{164} Joseph Swetnam’s The Arraignment of Lewde, idle, forward, and vnconstant women: Or the vanitie of them, chose you whether, was aimed specifically for the entertainment and profit of married and young men but achieved great notoriety and spawned several rebuttals.\textsuperscript{165} Like Gosynhyll, Swetnam too makes an inventory of female vices and faults noting that they are jealous, short tempered, proud, bold, vindictive, and dissembling and allure men to their destruction.\textsuperscript{166} Female garrulousness is particularly harped on:

Divers beasts, and fowles, by nature haue more strength in one part of the body than in another, as the Eagle in the beake, the Vnicorne in the
horne, the Bull in the head . . . the Serpent in his tayle: but a women’s chife strength is in her tongue.’ (pp. 40-41.)

Swetnam quotes classical and biblical authority on female folly and frailty and also gives examples of great men like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Samson, David, Hercules, Holofernes and Adam as irrefutable proofs of how women’s wits and their alluring and deceitful nature has undone men. It is important to point out that this chapter has singled out only one aspect of the querelle des femmes or formal controversy about women, namely how this discourse attempted to denigrate female nature and behaviour. The antifeminist rhetoric of the formal controversy was often echoed in popular pamphlets and ballads, which will be discussed in the following section. This section will refer to the hic mulier debate which found its way in sermons and royal proclamations testifying to the porosity of between popular and formal or official discourses.

The transvestite controversy and denigration of women in popular pamphlets

Like the list of female vices and faults that form the crux of the anti woman treatises in the formal controversy, stereotypes of foolish virgins, shrewish wives, and lustful widows, derived from medieval clerical misogyny, provided the stock-in-trade of the pamphlet literature of the period. Reactionary writers persistently referred to the old commonplaces: that women were proud, lecherous and domineering, vain of appearance and empty of head. As Sandra Clark points out:

Female faults and vices fall into several categories, those resulting from pride, or from lechery or from the desire to emulate men, and a general group created by faults such as obstinacy, contrariousness, inconstancy, spite, ill-temper, cunning, deceit, love of gossip, and inability to keep secret.

Pride and lechery were vices most associate with women; the former led middle class women to ape the manners particularly that of over delicacy associated with upper class ladies. This induced the great love of cosmetics and fine clothes to enhance sexual desirability. Excessive refinement was regarded as a facet of feminine perversity. This is brought out in the description of the wife going off to a fair causing harassment to her husband in the anonymous pamphlet, The Batchelor’s Banquet (1603):
By the way she will ask for twenty things, for milk, because she cannot away with their drink, for pears, plums and cherries: when they come near a town, he must run before to choose out the best Inne: ever and anon she rides, she will of purpose let fall her wand, her maske, her gloves, or something else for him to take up, because she will not have him idle.\textsuperscript{170}

In his pamphlet \textit{The Excellency of Good Women}, 1613, Barnaby Rich creates a satire of the upstart upwardly mobile gentlewoman who insists on having a coach to go to the church though in the past she had traveled many a ‘myle a foote, cannot now crosse the breadth of a streete but she must haue a coach.’\textsuperscript{171} Karen Newman observes that there was a sheer proliferation of consumer goods in seventeenth century London and women were often targeted as the primary consumers by advertisers. In the discourses of the period women’s desire for goods was often linked to her sexual appetite.\textsuperscript{172} According to Newman, the ‘synecdochic representation of feminine desire—sexual or acquisitive’ was the ‘open mouth,’ and hence ‘scolds were regularly accused of both extravagance and adultery.’\textsuperscript{173} Ben Jonson’s play \textit{Epicoene}, creates a vituperative satire on the garrulous city women who gad about the city, spending money on extravaganzas like coaches through its portrayal of the Collegiates. Described as women who belong to ‘an order between courtiers and country madams’ they display ‘most masculine or hermaphroditical authority’ in living away from their husbands and entertaining the ‘Wits and Braveries o’ the times.’(\textit{Epicoene}, I. i. 68-74). Later, Epicoene, promises to join the ladies in their pastimes when she hopes to acquire ‘a coach and horses’ (IV. vi.15-16). The Collegiates are metaphorical ‘women in breeches’ because they usurp male prerogatives and authority; interestingly women did literally dress themselves in men’s apparel in sixteenth and seventeenth century England.

The contemporary phenomenon (first noticed in 1576) generated a debate that was popularly known as the ‘hic mulier’ controversy.\textsuperscript{174} This phenomenon of transvestitism is one of the most telling examples of patriarchal anxieties regarding female transgression. Though the term \textit{hic mulier} was officially recorded as late as 1620,\textsuperscript{175} evidently the phenomenon of ‘mannish women’ who took to wearing men’s apparel of broad brimmed hats with feathers, and French doublet to reveal naked breasts had become popular much earlier and was regarded symbol of the turmoil of
current morality. According to Woodbridge two of the earliest recorded responses to female cross-dressing are by George Gascoigne and Philip Stubbes. Whereas Gascoigne dismissed it as a bizarre outlandish fashion, Stubbs regarded it as a ‘wanton lewd kind of attire’ that expressed how degenerate ‘godly sober women’ had become.\textsuperscript{176}

The point of outrage seemed to be the manner in which this sartorial fashion blurred the most fundamental of ‘natural’ distinctions—that between the sexes. Discourses of the period indicate that this was perceived as a form of monstrosity. In 1588 William Averell wrote of the man-clothed woman:

\begin{quote}
Though theybe in sexe women, yet in attire they appear to be men and are like androgini, who counterfeiting the shape of either kind are in deed neither, neither men nor women but plaine monsters.\textsuperscript{177}
\end{quote}

King James himself objected to the: ‘insolence of our women, and hyr wearing of brode brimmed hats, poinyed doublets, theyr hayre cut shorte or shorne, and some of them stilettos or poniards, and such other trinkets of like moment.\textsuperscript{178}The quotation comes from a letter written by the Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton, 25 January 1620 in which he observed that James had commanded the clergy to specially preach against these things. John Williams in \textit{A Sermon of Apparell} in 1619, declared that God,

\begin{quote}
Divided male and female but the divell hath ioyn’d them . . . that mulier Formosa is now become mulier monstrosa supine . . . half man and half woman.\textsuperscript{179}
\end{quote}

Thomas Gataker in his sermon on \textit{Marriage Duties Briefly Couched Together} uses the masculine woman as example of marital insubordination:

\begin{quote}
As it were a thing prodigious and monstrous in nature for the rib in the body to stand either equall with or above the head so that a mankinde woman or masterly wife is even a monster in nature.\textsuperscript{180}
\end{quote}

Similarly, the author of the \textit{Hic Mulier} pamphlet uses the word deformity and deformed twenty-one times in the eighteen-page essay to describe the woman dressed in male attire.\textsuperscript{181} What is interesting in all these sermons, pamphlets, public proclamations and letters is the recurrence of the word ‘monstrous’. The woman is understood as grotesque and monstrous not because of any corporeal deformity or
incongruity but because she transgresses social codes where donning male attire is seen as acquiring phallic attributes. Blurring of gender categories through female cross-dressing was thus regarded by patriarchy as a serious threat. The hic mulier controversy is an example of how patriarchal anxieties about gender insubordination expressed itself in strikingly similar terms in popular and canonical/serious discourses. The threat posed by cross-dressed or transvestite women led the state and crown to take strict punitive action against them. Women apprehended in men’s clothing—especially those belonging to lower class—were brought to the Alderman’s Court, declared guilty and subjected to various public forms of chastisement. It was the state’s repressive apparatuses that carried out the task of disciplining and punishing the transgressive female subject; women were whipped, pilloried or sent to prisons.182

Discussion of the social phenomenon of female cross-dressing naturally leads to the issue of its theatrical representation. Middleton and Dekker’s *Roaring Girl* provides the most obvious example of the relation between the social phenomenon of the transvestite woman and her stage representation. The play draws upon the real life historical character of Mary Frith, better known as Moll Cutpurse, who dressed in men’s clothes throughout her life. The *Consistory of the London Correction Book* record of 27 January 1612 charges Moll with the offence not only of dressing in man’s apparel but also of unmannerly mannish behaviour noting that she was ‘at a play about 3 quarters of a year since at the ffortune’ and that ‘she sat thee vppon the stage . . . in mans apparel& playd vpon her lute and sange a songe.’183 Mary Beth Rose notes that Middleton and Dekker were ‘attempting to benefit from the from the *au courant* notoriety of the actual Moll in the timing of their play.’184 This is particularly evident in the way Moll’s scandalous presence in the theatre is slyly alluded to as lure for the audience in the Epilogue, which promises a reenactment of the spectacle where ‘The Roaring Girl herself, some few days hence/ Shall on this stage give larger recompense.’ *Roaring Girl* is exceptional in the way it celebrates the cross-dressed Moll’s spiritedness, her desire to be free of patriarchal oppressive structures of marriage and notions of the feminine. Unlike early modern discourses, which read the cross-dressed masculine woman as an unchaste or sexually lascivious whore, the play insists on Moll’s chastity and her consistent refusal to succumb to the lures of heterosexual romance.185

63
As is well known, Shakespeare’s comedies—*Two Gentlemen of Verona, The Merchant of Venice, Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*—have transvestite heroines who display great wit, spunk and vivaciousness. Portia, Viola and Rosalind are central to fables of female empowerment though feminist critics have argued that ‘Shakespeare invites us to smile at the trepidations and posturings’ of his heroines playing at being men. However, feminist engagement with the issue of the cross-dressed heroine is not limited to speculations about the authorial intention of the patriarchal bard. The central question, posed by Howard, is whether the theatre was a part of the ‘cultural apparatus for policing gender boundaries, or did it serve as a site for their further disturbance?’

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Howard argues that the figure of the cross dressed heroine is deployed differently in Shakespeare’s comedies; sometimes they can signal a challenge to the culture’s sex/gender system while a on other occasions they ‘recuperate, countervail the threat the figure posed in the streets of London and in the symbolic economy of the period.’ According to Howard, *Twelfth Night* may be regarded as a recuperative play; despite her masculine disguise Viola herself displays proper ‘feminine’ subjectivity by refusing to play the man’s part. Indeed she is the play’s ‘good woman’—as opposed to the more threatening, economically and sexually independent Olivia—who despite her masculine garb does not aspire to the position of the man. The role of the cross-dressed Rosalind in *As You Like It* is more complex and ambiguous. At one level her saucy masculine role-playing, as Ganymede, is continually undercut by references to her frail femininity; thus the disclosure of her identity coincides with the play’s closure where Rosalind is reinstated in her normative feminine role as Orlando’s wife. However, as Howard argues matters are complicated by Rosalind’s role playing as ‘woman’ during her transvestite disguise; this ‘masquerade’ draws attention to the patriarchal construction of the feminine and shows gender to be an unstable performative category. The association of monstrosity with cross-dressed women occurs in Shakespeare’s *I Henry VI*. Unlike the heroines of comedies whose donning of male attire implies assuming temporary male identities, Joan’s cross dressing does not signify a disguise—she is a woman in male, military garb, and her striking masculine valour aligns her with the figure of the Amazon. The implications of the cross-dressed, transgressive Joan will be discussed at length in Chapter 4 of this thesis.
Like women’s extravagant and unnatural sartorial fashion of dressing up as men, their love of make up was another popular subject of satire and denigration, its comic exaggerations bordering on the grotesque. The author of *Hic Mulier: Or the Manly Woman* (1620) felt that city wives even exceeded whores in their love of painting:

Nay the very Art of painting . . . they haue so cunningly stoln and hidden amongst their husbands hordes of treasure, that they decayed stock of prostitution (hauing little other reuenues) are howerly in bringing their action of Detinue against them.'\(^{191}\)

It was well known that cosmetics, which used ingredients like white lead, sulphur and alum, were dangerous and damaging for the skin; however, this was not the ground for objection against women’s use of make-up. Instead the critics focused on issues of morality, regarding face painting not only as unnatural, but also as a sign of succumbing to the lure of the devil. Inherently lustful, women who indulged in artificial means to enhance their beauty were doubly culpable.\(^{192}\)

The moral outcry against women who used cosmetics is a commonplace in the writings of Gascogne, Nashe, Stubbes, Rich, Averell, Tofte, Swetnam, Dekker and Prynne, who cited host of imposing authorities including St Paul, St Chrysotom, Tertullian, Ambrose, Cyprian and Origen in support of their misogynist positions. *In Christes Tears over Ierusalem*, Nashe argues that all women, descended as they are from Eve, are simultaneously tempted by the devil and become temptresses. His invective against women’s use of cosmetics is expressed through a series of long rhetorical questions:

If not to tempt and be thought worthy to be tempted why dye they and diet they their faces with so many drugges as they doe, as it were to correct God’s workmanship, and reprove him as a bunglar, and one that is not his crafts’ Maister? Why ensparkle they their eyes with spiritualize’d distillations? . . . Why fill they up ages frets with fresh colours?\(^{193}\)

The tone of moral admonition is driven home by comparing the tailor and the painter as modern day devils; by succumbing to the charms of both women become ‘white devils’, painted with white exteriors while their souls remain black.\(^{194}\) Nashe’s
satire acquires the overtones of homiletic sermons in *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem*. Aghast at the deplorable condition of his creation, Christ will order Satan to subject women to gruesome torture and punishment:

> With blacke boyling pitch rough cast over her counterfeite red and white; and whereas she was wont in Asses mylke to bathe her, to engraine her skynmore gentle, plyant delicat and supple, in bubbling scalding lead . . . see thou uncessantly bathe her. With glowing hote yrons, sindge and sucke up that adulterized sinfull beauty, where-with she hath branded herselfe to infelicity. ¹⁹⁵

There are several instances in Jacobean drama where the malcontent’s misogynist stock-in-trade is expressed in the deeply repugnant grotesque image of feminine vanity about beauty and appearance in overtly abusive and satirical terms:

> These in thy face here were deep ruts and foul sloughs, the last progress. There was a lady in France, that having had the smallpox, flayed the skin off her face, to make it more level; and whereas she looked like a nutmeg grater, after she resembled an abortive hedgehog. *(The Duchess of Malfi, II. i. 26-32.)*

The satire on the court lady—expressed through a denigration of her love for make-up—was a mark of the malcontent’s displaced abjection whose roots lay in his loathing of his own powerlessness. The admonition to women in general acquired more serious overtones when it came to addressing wives in marriage manuals.

**Discourses on marriage in conduct books and sermons**

Social historians of the Renaissance have argued that the institution of marriage enjoyed a rise in prestige in England during the period; there was a gradual shift from the emphasis on arranged marriages based on property alliances between kin groups to marriages that favoured the idea of a contract made by the conjugal couple. ¹⁹⁶ Protestant sexual discourses with its valorization of ‘holy matrimony’ played a key role in transforming the medieval attitude which idealized celibacy and asceticism to matrimonial choices based on mutual love, respect and affection. ¹⁹⁷ This definition of marriage as a contract rather than a sacrament and the new and enhanced role of conjugality as domestic partnership where sex and motherhood were honoured gave rise to a plethora of publications on the matter. ¹⁹⁸
In this context it is important to note that the Anglican church wielded immense power as the institution of opinion-forming and thought-control since the Act of 1593 made it imperative of everyone over the age of sixteen to attend the Sunday church service and the preachers were thus assured of a captive audience.\(^{199}\)

This rise of conjugality as a marker of marriage may seem to imply a corresponding rise in the status of women who were now regarded as partners and helpmeets rather than chattels. However, sermons by Puritan fathers like William Whately’s *Bride Bush* (1617) Thomas Gataker’s *Wife Indeed* (1624) and Gouge’s conduct book of *domesticall duties eight treatises* (1622) had a very different story to tell. A majority of the sermonizers followed the Bible (particularly St Paul) in asserting that the husband was to be sole head of household, and the most prominent wifely virtue was that of obedience. According to Cleaver, ‘If she be not subject to her husband, things will go backward, the house will come to ruin’ (p. 88) and Whately noted that the husband was ‘as it were a little God in the family’. He also declared that ‘wiues speciall dutie may fitly be referred to two heads: first, she must acknowledge her inferiorities: secondly, she must carry her selfe as an inferior’ \(^{200}\) Henry Smith linked chastity and the territory of the home and housekeeping through Biblical examples:

> Lastly we call the wife *housewife*, that is housewife, not a street wife like Thamar [Gen.38:14], nor a field wfe like Dinah [Gen.34:1], but a housewife to show that a good wife keeps her house: and therefore Paul biddeth Titus [Tit.2:5] to exhort women that they be chaste and keeping home: presently after chaste, he saith, keeping at home, as though home were chastity’s keeper.\(^{201}\)

Yet, despite such injunctions to subordination, real life situations evidently bespoke the possibility of such harmony being disturbed by the cantankerous wife who railed at her husband. The spectre of the unruly or disobedient wife lurks behind the sermons’ continual harping on the need and the difficulty of maintaining the husband’s authority in the household.

> That house is a misshapen house and . . . a crump-shouldered or hutch backt house, where the husband hath made himselfe an vnderling to his wife, and given away his power and regiment to his inferior.\(^{202}\)
Whately’s treatise has a graphic description of the unmastered wife, who would be ‘willful in cursing, swearing, drunkennesse.’ She would ‘raile vpon her husband with the most violent and intolerable terms . . . out-face him with bold maintaining, that will do as she doth, in despite of him’. He did not even discount the possibility that she might strike him.203

The anonymous The deceyte of women (c.1560) featured on its title page a woodcut of a woman astride her bridled husband, flogging him into obedience.204 Nor was this an exception; there were a number of contemporary ballads about scold who indulged in husband beating; Martin Parker’s A warning for wiues (1629) was about a Katherine Francis:

She oftentimes would beat him sore/ and many a wound she gaue him /
. . . Till she with one inhumane wound/Threw him dead to the ground.205

The widespread fear and threat posed by murderous/murdering wives accounts for the manner in which Alice Arden’s crime of procuring and witnessing the murder of her husband, was ‘cited, presented and re-presented, problematised and reproproblematised’ in several accounts.206 Alice Arden had fallen in love with Mosby, her tailor, according to Holinshed a ‘black swart man’ and had contracted the murder of her husband, a ‘tall and comely person.’207 The description of Mosby and his contrast with the gentlemanly Arden serves as a crucial marker of the irrationality of Alice’s choice and demonstrates the monstrous nature of female lust. The title page of Arden of Faversham proclaimed that this domestic murder tragedy was about ‘the great malice and dissimulation of a wicked woman’ [and] the unsatiable desire of filthie lust’. Alice’s choice thus marked her out as deviant and transgressive.

Women’s refusal to adhere to the social norms in one area was likely to imply general disorderliness and transgression. Polemical writings often fused different images of unruliness or disorder in order to ‘achieve the effect of a nebulous infection, a bleeding’208 into each other. Thus a cross-dressed woman became a literal sign of the ‘wife in breeches’, in other words ‘a woman on top’. The notion of the ‘woman on top’ was often literalized in the visual image of a woman riding a man in popular broadsheets that dealt with the theme of the ‘world upside down’.209 Not only was the cross-dressed woman perceived as a likely husband-beater but, as Jean E
Howard notes, she was often accused of sexual incontinence—of being a whore. 210 As Kay Stanton observes, in the early modern culture, ‘whore’ was a notoriously slippery term and was used in a wide range of abusive and derogatory senses. Thus apart from meaning a professional sex-worker, the term whore could be used for any woman who has sexual relations with a man or men outside marriage, a woman who provokes sexual desire in a man, a woman who attempts to control her sexuality, and most interestingly a woman who has laid claim to professions and territories marked exclusively for men. 211 One could add to this list the connection between shrewishness and wantonness; as Peter Stallybrass notes, ‘A man who was accused of slandering a woman by calling her a ‘whore’ might defend himself by claiming that he meant ‘whore of her tongue’ not ‘whore of her body.’ 212 The term ‘witch’ was similarly not restricted to those who practiced necromancy or sorcery but could be applied to a scold who could be accused of being ‘devilishe of her tongue.’ 213

A striking example of how various categories of female offence can be clubbed together is provided by Leontes in The Winter’s Tale. In his misogynist tirade against Paulina he abuses her as the ‘audacious lady’ (II. iii. 42) a ‘mankind witch’ (II. iii. 68), ‘a most intelligencing bawd’ (II. iii. 69) and ‘A callat / Of boundless tongue’ (II. iii. 91-2) who is also a husband beater (II. iii. 92). The slippage from charges of audacity or boldness of speech to witchcraft and whorishness in Leontes’s invectives against Paulina demonstrate how patriarchal anxiety and dread of the unruly ‘woman-on top’ operates by clubbing together various categories female offence or transgressive behaviour.

In this section I have attempted to explore how Renaissance discourses played a key role in constructing the woman; I have argued that these discourses created the notion of the normal and the deviant in keeping with its patriarchal bias. It is perhaps possible to posit that the potentially disruptive and disorderly or unruly woman was necessary to construct the normative chaste and classically enclosed woman’s body. The discourses which attempted to produce the normative ‘woman’ were doing so by mapping the contours of the unruly or disorderly woman. Feminist research has been forced to note that Renaissance popular and learned discourses on women display a marked patriarchal or phallocentric bias. One of the damaging fallouts of this mode of enquiry is that by situating itself in ‘a patriarchal master narrative’ feminist critique necessarily tends to reinforce the story of Renaissance misogyny. 214 However, a
certain self-conscious awareness of the pitfalls of feminist critique can also prevent a complicity in the sustenance of patriarchal paradigms. Thus even as this thesis notes the misogynist scripting of women in the roles of virago, witch, cross-dressed manly woman and shrew, it attempts a deconstructive reading of the plays. In so doing it brings to the fore the very processes through which the plays produce such misogyny—in other words it demystifies patriarchal ideology.

In the next three chapters, I examine Renaissance theatre’s negotiation with the culture’s fascination and horror of this potentially disruptive woman—the ‘other’ of the culture’s normative ‘self’. I draw attention to the fact that unlike in patriarchal discourses where the female grotesque is primarily ‘a figure of devalued difference,’ Renaissance theatre’s investment in the figure of the ‘other’ also produces the fascinating phenomena of the celebration of the power of the female grotesque. I also note how attributes of the feminine in male characters inevitably turn them into grotesque figures.

Notes

1 Harpham, On the Grotesque, p. 23.
2 Ibid. p. 27.
7 Ibid. pp. 29-30.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid. p. 44.
11 Ibid.


20 Ibid. p. 7.

21 Ibid.


27 Ibid. p. 19.


34 Ibid. Sec. xxv.

35 Ibid. Sec. xxxix.

36 Ibid. Sec. liii.

37 Freud, ‘The ‘Uncanny’’, pp. 929-51

38 Ibid. p. 930.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid. p. 931.

41 Ibid. p. 933.

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid. p. 934.

44 Ibid. p. 935.


46 Kayser, *The Grotesque in Art and Literature*.


48 Ibid. p. 21.

49 Ibid. p. 22.

50 Ibid. p. 179.


53 Ibid. p. 31.

54 Ibid. p. 180.

55 Ibid. p. 183.

56 Ibid.


58 Ibid. p. 185.

59 Harpham, On the Grotesque,

60 Ibid. p. 3.

61 Ibid. p. 3.


63 Harpham, On the Grotesque, p. 4.

64 Ibid. pp. 4-5.

65 Ibid. p. 6.

66 Ibid.

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid. p. 7.

69 Ibid. p. 15.

70 Ibid. p. 14.

71 Ibid. p. 15.


73 Harpham, On the Grotesque, p. 17.

74 Ibid.

75 Ibid. p. 18.

76 Ibid. p. 20.
77 Ibid.

78 Ibid.

79 Ibid.


81 Ibid.


86 Ibid.

87 Ibid.

88 Ibid.

89 Ibid.

90 Ibid. p. 21.

91 Ibid. p. 29.


93 Ibid.


95 Ibid. p. 9.

96 Ibid. p. 8.

97 Ibid. p. 8.

98 Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, p. 79.

99 Ibid. p. 80.

100 Ibid.

101 Ibid.


105 Ibid. p. 6.

106 Ibid. p. 2.


110 Ibid. p. 44.


114 Joan Kelly, ‘Did Women Have a Renaissance?’ p. 21.

115 Ibid.


118 Ibid. pp. 48-50.


124 Davis, ‘Women on Top’, p. 156.


126 Ibid. p. 119.

127 Boose, ‘Scolding Brides and Bridling Scolds’, p. 244.


134 Ian Maclean, ‘The Notion of Woman in Medicine, Anatomy and Physiology’ in Lorna Hutson ed. Feminism and Renaissance Studies, p. 129.

135 Ibid. p. 130.


139 Ibid. p. 140.


142 Ibid. p. 5.

143 Ibid.

144 Ibid. p. 2.


149 Ibid. p. 4.

150 Ibid.


Ibid. p. 7.


Ibid. p. 18.

Ibid. pp. 18-19.

Ibid. p. 27.


Ibid. p. 27.

Ibid. p. 30.

Ibid. p. 31.

Ibid. p. 82.

Ibid. p. 83.

Ibid. p. 84.


Ibid. pp. 177-8.

Ibid. p. 178.

Ibid.


Ibid. p. 134.

Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance*, pp. 139-81.

Ibid. p. 144. Woodbridge points out that the term ‘hic mulier’ was derived from an anonymous work whose full title was *Hic Mulier or the Man–Woman: Being a Medicine to cure the Coltish Disease of the Staggers in the Masculine Feminines of our Times*. The work was registered on 9 February 1620.

Ibid. p. 139.

Ibid.

179 Quoted in Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance*, p. 142

180 Ibid. p. 142

181 Ibid. p. 144.


188 Ibid. p. 430.

189 Ibid. p. 431.

190 Ibid. pp. 434-5.

191 Quoted in Clark, *The Elizabethan Pamphleteers*, p. 179.


194 Ibid. p. 138.

195 Ibid. p. 139.


198 See Linda T Fitz, ‘‘What Says the Married Woman?’: Marriage Theory and Feminism in the English Renaissance’, *Mosaic*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 1979-80, p. 3. Fitz includes in this list,
plays like Heywood’s *How a Man may Choose a Good Wife from a Bad*, Wilkins’ *The Miseries of Informt Marriage*; and also printed sermons by Whately, Gouge and Smith, and books of domestic advice like Coverdale’s *Christen State of Matrimonye*, Becon’s *The Boke of Matrimonye*, Cleaver’s *A Godlie Forme of Householde Government*, Niccholes’ *A Discourse of Marriage and Wiving*.


200 Quoted in Fitz, ‘What Says the Married Woman?’ p. 5.


203 Ibid. p. 15.

204 Ibid. p. 13.

205 Ibid. Fitz refers to other ballads like *The unnatural wife* (1628), *A warning for all desperate Women* (1628) and T Platte’s *Anne Wallens Lamentation, for the Murthering of her husband* (1616) as examples of the popularity of the theme of husband beaters and murderers.

206 Catherine Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy*, p. 129. Belsey notes that the murder was cited in the *Brevial Chronicle*, in the diary of Henry Machyn, and in Stowe’s *Annals of England* and Holinshed’s *Chronicles*.

207 Ibid. p. 131.


212 Quoted in Stallybrass, ‘Patriarchal Territories’, p. 126.