FEMINIST CRITICISM OF SHAKESPEARE: A DIAGNOSIS AND PROGNOSIS

By

MONA MAHMOUD SAMI MOHAMED MANSOUR
(Ph.D. UNIVERSITY OF KENT AT CANTERBURY)

There has been an outburst of feminist criticism of Shakespeare during the 1980's and 1990's. This feminist approach has proved to be one of the most lively, productive and influential aspects of Shakespeare criticism throughout these two decades. The aim of this paper is twofold: to provide a diagnosis and prognosis of this phenomenon. The diagnostic process includes a comprehensive account of the main tendencies, methods, principles and politics at work within the field of feminist criticism of Shakespeare by relating this field to the wider context of feminist literary criticism. It also identifies the problematic areas that have faced feminist critics in general and feminist critics of Shakespeare in particular. As for the prognostic phase, it raises some general questions about the future course of feminist criticism of Shakespeare. It puts forward some suggestions as to the issues that could be further investigated and the guidelines that could be followed to address them.

It seems appropriate to start in 1980 with the publication of The Woman's Part[1], the first anthology of specifically feminist criticism of Shakespeare. In 1981, Elizabeth Abel edited a special issue of Critical Inquiry on rather more general issues of feminism and literature under the title Writing and Sexual Difference.[2] Both these volumes contain not only individual examples of feminist criticism, but also manifestoes, general statements and proposals as to what feminist criticism is mainly concerned about and what it is capable of achieving. The Woman's Part also includes a selective bibliography of what by 1980 could then be identified as the early feminist

---

[1]Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz, Gayle Greene and Carol Thomas Neely, eds., The Woman's Part. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980).

[2]Elizabeth Abel, ed., Critical Inquiry, vol. 8, no. 2, (Winter, 1981). This issue with the addition of some critical responses, was reprinted as a book entitled Writing and Sexual Difference, ed. Elizabeth Abel, (Brighton: Harvester, 1982). All subsequent page references will be from this book version.

approaches to Shakespeare's works.[3] Although both these two books consciously adopt a feminist perspective, they are different in their basic attitude towards literary traditions created by male authors. On the one hand, the contributors to The Woman's Part presume that Shakespeare's works are a suitable focus for feminist critical analysis. On the other hand, the contributors to Writing and Sexual Difference reject any discussion of Shakespeare's texts and consider it marginal to feminist concerns.

Indeed one of the fundamental debates among feminist critics is the validity of criticizing powerful male-authored literary canons such as Shakespeare or Milton. According to Abel, feminist criticism should move from the primitive stage of identifying the misogyny of male-authored texts and cataloguing the problems of male-created stereotypes of femininity to a more advanced and radical focus on feminist readings of texts by female authors.[4] This woman-centered approach has become a dominant trend within Anglo-American feminist criticism. In her influential article on feminist literary theory, "Towards a Feminist Poetics"(1979),[5] Elain Showalter distinguishes between a "feminist critique" with its concern about the woman as reader of works of male authors, and what she calls "gynocritics" with its concern about the woman as writer of literary texts. Showalter seems to be suspicious about the "feminist critique" because it is a

---

[3]For a more comprehensive bibliography, see Philip C. Kolin, Shakespeare and Feminist Criticism: an Annotated Bibliography and Commentary, (New York. Garland, 1991).

[4]Id., pp. 1-2

[5]Elaine Showalter, "Towards a Feminist Poetics", Women Writing and Writing about Women, ed., Mary Jacobus, (London: Croom Helm, 1979), pp. 22-41. Showalter repeats the same themes in "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness"(1981) in Elizabeth Abel, ed., Writing and Sexual Difference, op. cit., pp. 9-36

"historically grounded inquiry which probes the ideological assumptions of literary phenomena".[6]

> One of the problems of the feminist critique is that it is male-oriented. If we study stereotypes of women, the sexism of male critics, and the limited roles women play in literary history, we are not learning what women have felt and experienced, but only what men have thought women should be.[7]

At the same time, she is clearly excited about "gynocritics" which emphasizes the "psychodynamics of female creativity":

> Gynocritics begins at the point when we free ourselves from the linear absolutes of male literary history, stop trying to fit women between the lines of the male tradition, and focus instead on the newly visible world of female culture.[8]

Arguments against the exclusive focus on the female tradition in literature and the creation of a separate canon of women's writing have stressed the disadvantages of isolationism in women's studies. For example, Myra Jehlen deplores the feminist tendency to create "an alternative context, a sort of female enclave apart from the universe of masculinist assumptions".[9] Her conviction is that feminists should continue to challenge the dominant male culture by examining the

---

[6]Elaine Showalter, "Towards a Feminist Poetics", op. cit., p. 25

[7]Id., p. 27

[8]Id., p. 28

[9]Myra Jehlen, "Archimedes and the Paradox of Feminist Criticism", Signs, vol. 6, no. 4, (Summer, 1981), p. 576

traditional patriarchal canons in literature from a woman's perspective. She even warns feminist critics against the temptation of rebuilding a ghetto where women studies will proliferate while having little impact on "the universe of male discourse".[10] However, Jehlen's argument for the separation of aesthetics and politics in an attempt to achieve objectivity in reading, seems to undermine her emphasis on the political need to "engage the dominant intellectual system directly" with a view of changing the universal male perspective in criticism.[11] Jehlen's wish to distinguish between aesthetic and political reading is also reductive in its attempt to solve the problem of how to approach literary canons which have been acknowledged as aesthetically valuable but politically distasteful.[12] Jehlen's assumption that literary texts can be read objectively, is another contentious issue. What feminist critics must avoid is a form of inverted sexism where a simplistic notion of a universal male consciousness is displaced by yet another, albeit a female one. As for, Jehlen's method of "radical comparativism", which she uses to compare Henry James' A Portrait of a Lady with Edith Wharton's House of Mirth, it does not prove practical for feminist Shakespeare critics since there were hardly any comparable women dramatists in this early period.

Arguments in favour of conducting studies of canonical male authors challenge the assumption that there is a direct and definite relationship between the sex of the author and the literary text. In her exploration of the relations between women, femininity, feminism and the production of texts, Helene Cixous indicates:

---

[10]Id. P. 577

[11]Ibid.

[12]See Toril Moi, Sexual/Textual Politics, (London: Methuen, 1985), pp. 80-86.

> Great care must be taken in working on feminine writing not to get trapped by names: to be signed with a woman's name doesn't necessarily make a piece of writing feminine. It could quite well be masculine writing, and conversely, the fact that a piece of writing is signed with a man's name does not in itself exclude femininity. It's rare, but you can sometimes find femininity in writings signed by men: it does happen.[13]

In her essay, "Notorious Signs, Feminist criticism and Literary Tradition", Adrienne Munich also challenges over-simplistic notions that neatly equate authorship with gender perspective.[14] Moreover, she argues that feminist criticism itself has sometimes reinforced male-authored texts and that it is this two-sexed culture that has ultimately produced gendered polarities which inform all its writings. With particular reference to the Book of Genesis, Don Quixote, and the Oresteia, she claims that the traditional canon "may not be as masculinist as some femnist criticism has assumed". In fact, some "critical discourse has tended to be more misogynist than the texts it examines".[15] Consequently, she attacks the assumption that feminist critics should limit themselves to female-authored texts. According to Munich, rejecting the work of male writers would be reinforcing "a primitive taboo forbidding women to approach sacred objects".[16] Feminist critics of Shakespeare find these issues of great relevance.

---

[13]Helene Cixous, "Le Sexe ou la tete?" (1976), tr. Annette Kuhn, "Castration or Decapitation?", Signs, vol. 7, no. 1, (1981), p. 52

[14]Adrienne Munich, "Notorious Signs, Feminist Criticism and Literary Tradition", in Gayle Greene and Coppelia Kahn, eds., Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism, (London: Methuen, 1985), pp. 238-259.

[15]Id., p. 251

[16]Id. p. 243

They build up on current theories in critical practice, which question issues of meaning and interpretation and how they are generated from the interaction between the individual reader and the text. They also draw on the cultural materialist approach that sees art and the act of interpretation as reinforcing existing sexual politics. The mythic value of the Shakespeare canon is also seen within a cultural hierarchy that is artificially imposed. Evidently, male critics have noted the potential of feminist criticism to revise the Shakespeare canon and not just to reinstate the work of women writers and create a female literary tradition with which they can identify. For example, Lawrence Lipking observes, "something peculiar has been happening lately to the classics. Some of them now seem less heroic, and some of them less funny".[17] On the whole, feminist criticism poignantly questions the criteria of aesthetic value in its re-estimation of the true worth of so-called classical masterpieces.

In addition to the aesthetic and political arguments that emphasize the importance of the feminist critique of canonical male authors, one cannot overlook an element of careerism involved especially on the part of feminist critics of Shakespeare. Most of them seem to have been reluctant to throw away their hard-won expertise in Shakespeare studies in order to devote themselves entirely to the study of women writers. Showalter speaks of a "divided consciousness" in

> the struggle between "the professor, who wants to study major works by major writers and to meditate impersonally between these works and the readings of other professors, and the minority, the woman who wants connections between [her] life and [her] work and who is

---

[17] Lawrence Lipking, "Aristotle's Sister: A Poetics of Abandonment, Critical Inquiry, vol. 10, no. 1, (September 1983), p. 79

> committed to a revolution of consciousness that would make [her] concerns those of the majority [18]

Carolyn Swift also observes that as a feminist critic of Shakespeare, she has become a "tenured full professor" while her peers who are specialized in women studies are often teaching part-time. With reference to whether feminist critics should study and teach Shakespeare, she explains.

> We recognize that we do not want to deprive ourselves of the pleasure of teaching the playwright who, with good reason, is esteemed the greatest in English. Furthermore, we would then be leaving a powerful academic field to colleagues who, even with the best of intentions, may not satisfy the needs of female students any more than earlier professors did.[19]

Whether feminist critics choose to appropriate or confront Shakespeare, personal investment is undeniable. The fact remains that feminist criticism wields political significance and cultural authority through its association with Shakespeare as a cultural icon who has acquired mythic proportions that transcend the limitations of national identity.

Shakespeare also proves to be more susceptible to women's appropriation than other canonical male writers like Milton for example. According to Virginia Woolf, Shakespeare is her prime example of the great artist's androgynous mind, contrasting with the

---

[18] Elaine Showalter, "Towards a Feminist Poetics", op. cit., p. 41

[19] Carolyn Swift, "Towards a Feminist Renaissance: Woman-Centering Shakespeare's Tragedies", Women's Re-Visions of Shakespeare, ed. Marianne Novy. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), p. 212

excessive masculinity of writers like Milton, Kipling, Jonson, and Wordsworth. She specifically refers to Milton as the "bogey" beyond which literate women must look in order not to shut out the view.[20] Indeed, for most feminist critics, it is difficult to appropriate Milton to their cause or even reveal that the text itself is less misogynistic than the critical discourse that has centered on it.[21] However, it is still possible to reread Paradise Lost within the limitations of its own historical context that should be distanced and dislocated from the present. The subtlety of the language can be emphasized in order to show how it has affected the Western cultural construction of masculinity. The male-biased attitudes that have become deeply ingrained in modern Western thought can also be exposed to show how they in turn consolidate the power and sublimity of the text.

The fact that Shakespeare is less overtly misogynistic than Milton has turned out to be a source of inspiration for feminist critics who have emphasized what they see as the positive and enlightened aspects of his works. Thus, they claim that, unlike his contemporaries, Shakespeare holds more progressive views about women and that he wittily questions the limitations of conventional gender definitions. These "Apologist" or "Revisionist" critics hail Shakespeare as a proto-feminist by demonstrating how his female characters are not the crude stereotypes that take sex roles and expectations forgranted. In this sense, Shakespeare's plays are interpreted as subtly exposing the culturally and politically imposed artificiality underlying conventional sexual politics, which emphasize

---

[20] Virginia Woolf, A Room of One's Own, 1929 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 117

[21] See Sandra M. Gilbert, "Patriarchal Poetry and Women Readers: Reflections on Milton's Bogey", 1978, PMLA 93, pp. 368-382. To compare between contemporary feminist critics' response to Shakespeare and Milton, see an anthology of feminist essays on Milton, Milton and the Idea of Woman, ed., Julia Walker, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988).

male supremacy and female subordination as normative or instinctive. By closely examining Shakespeare's female protagonists, feminist critics point out that characters like Gertrude, Ophelia, Desdemona and Cordelia do have an existence and importance beyond the limited perception of them by Hamlet, Othello or Lear. However, it is the conventional male criticism that has always prompted the study of these women characters through the eyes of the hero or only in as far as they can illuminate certain aspects in the hero's psychological make-up. Feminist critics reasonably argue that women characters often appear on stage without the hero and that they are sometime seen in relation to other women. Hence the hero's view of them is superficial and unreliable. Alternatively, feminist critics of Shakespeare have thoroughly explored and foregrounded the importance of relations between women in the plays. The extent to which they confide in and support each other discloses a female sub-culture that is separate from the male world because it is capable of operating in terms of different values and attitudes. For example, women's conception of friendship can be rather complex. They can become friends in surprising circumstances such as when the plot makes them rivals for the love of the same man. Julia's sympathy for Silvia in The Two Gentlemen of Verona and Viola's for Olivia in Twelfth Night are two cases in point. Women can also conspire together to outwit a man just at the crucial moment when he thinks he is triumphing over one of them by forcing her to bed such as in Measure for Measure and All's Well That Ends Well.

Feminist studies in this area have indicated that it is not just a male critical legacy of Shakespeare's works that has perpetuated the misleading image of the patriarchal Bard. There is also a whole tradition of theatrical representation that has endorsed the stereotyping and marginalizing of women characters beyond textual requirements. An inspiring essay entitled, "Playing the Woman's Part: Feminist

Criticism and Shakespearean Performance"[22] considers the ways in which feminist film theorists have revealed how cinematic representation constructs the female as the object of the male spectator's gaze.[23] It then raises parallel questions for theatrical and specifically Shakespearean representation: to what extent and through what strategies does Shakespearean performance also construct female characters for the spectator's eye? The suggestion is that objectifying and eroticising many female characters on stage is a manifestation of male sexual anxieties rather than a truthful dramatization of the role. In a later full-length study entitled, Women's Worlds in Shakespeare's Plays, Irene Dash studies how criticism and staging interact synergistically as well as responding to contemporaneous cultural, political, and technological developments. By analyzing promptbooks, inserted stage directions, production notes and printed acting versions of Shakespeare's plays, she demonstrates how various actor-managers and directors throughout theatrical history have exposed a personal and universal bias in their interpretation of the roles of the women characters. Thus, through the use of cutting, rearrangement and rewriting as well as through editorial and critical comment, Shakespeare's female characters have often been converted into whatever was seen as properly womanly at any given time. The book also opens other possibilities in order to extend the feminist critique of Shakespeare to contemporary theatrical practice.[24]

---

[22]Lorraine Helms, "Playing the Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism and Shakespearean Performance", Theatre Journal, vol.41, no.2, (May 1989), pp. 190-200.

[23]See Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", Screen, vol. 16, no. 3, (Autumn 1975), pp. 6-18 and Annette Kuhn, The Power of the Image: Essays on Representation and Sexuality, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985)

[24]Irene Dash, Women's Worlds in Shakespeare's Plays, (London: Associated University Press, 1997)

Feminist studies that have exclusively focused on the positive aspects of the female characters in Shakespeare's plays are pioneering and insightful in the way they foreground many issues that have hitherto been overlooked and unknown. However, they are often subject to the same kind of criticism directed against feminist criticism in general, which is that they are too partisan and subjective. In effect, they are compensating for the bias in a critical tradition that has tended to emphasize male characters, male themes and male fantasies. Ironically, these accusations are the same pitfalls of feminist criticism that is devoted to the study of female authors only. It is necessary for feminist critics to note how far Shakespeare's female characters are ultimately restricted by the patriarchal structures that inevitably dominate their lives. Female friendships, no matter how strong they may be, are regularly supplanted by marriage. Moreover, Helena and Hermia provide a counter-example of women who do not develop a sisterly solidarity but instead behave according to the male stereotype which assumes that all women are naturally rivals for the attention of men. When women have passionate and intimate relationships, it is assumed to be an adolescent phase that they must outgrow, whereas men can continue to have strong ties with each other after they are married.[25] Apparently, powerful women like Rosalind and Portia have to renounce their authority when they become wives. Rosalind furthermore reduces herself to the status of a male possession when she says to both her father and husband, "To you I give myself, for I am yours" (As You Like It, V, iv,104). As for Portia, she describes herself untruthfully as "an unlesson'd girl" unworthy of Bassanio (The Merchant of Venice, III, ii,159). An apologist feminist critic like Marianne Novy justifies these situations by underlining the importance of "mutuality" in Shakespeare's conception of marriage. She argues that marriage allows women, though theoretically inferior

---

[25] Peter Erickson explores this imbalance in Patriarchal Structures in Shakespeare's Drama. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

to men under patriarchy, to be accepted in practice as real partners.[26] However, other critics, including myself, find this defense not entirely convincing.[27]

At least feminist criticism acknowledges some of these areas as problematic and addresses them in explicit ways. There have been many reassessments of characters that have long been recognized as problems. These characters include Katherina in The Taming of the Shrew, Isabella in Measure for Measure, Gertrude in Hamlet as well as Cleopatra, Cressida and Lady Macbeth. Some episodes especially endings of certain plays have also been set down as problematic. Kathleen McLuskie is probably justified in identifying part of the problem in terms of the pleasure induced from comedy and tragedy as dramatic forms. She indicates that it may be easier for feminists to challenge or deny the pleasure of comedy in their struggle to withhold their assent from the social approval of sexist humour, but it may be more difficult to deny the "emotional, moral and aesthetic satisfaction afforded by tragedy".[28] The test-case here seems to be the ending of King Lear. According to McLuskie, when Lear enters with his daughter dead in his arms, "the most stony-hearted feminist could not withhold her pity even though it is called forth at the expense of her resistance to the patriarchal relations which it endorses".[29] Peter

---

[26]See Marianne Novy, Love's Argument: Gender Relations in Shakespeare, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).

[27]See below, pp. 13-16

[28]Kathleen McLuskie, "The Patriarchal Bard: Feminist Criticism and Shakespeare: *King Lear* and *Measure for Measure*", Political Shakespeare, eds. Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), p. 98

[29]Ibid.

Erickson similarly attributes to Shakespeare patriarchal values and asserts that Lear at the end gets exactly what he wants from Cordelia:

> Upon her re-entry to the play, she obliges Lear in the role of the good, comforting mother, to which he had originally assigned her (and in which she contrasts so strikingly with the "bad mothers", Goneril and Regan).... Her [Cordelia's] husband having been conveniently suppressed, she is both maternal and virginal, nurturing and non-threatening. However, this appropriation of Cordelia is not an act of love but a violation of it that echoes and repeats Lear's ritual possessiveness in the opening scene.[30]

The emphasis on entertainment value gives rise to the question of the legitimacy of feminist criticism to diminish or even destroy the kind of pleasure that the audience have traditionally derived from Shakespearean plays. Wayne Booth calls it the "scandal" of the feminist critique whereby "I find that my pleasure in some parts of the text has now been somewhat diminished by my critical act".[31] McLuskie speculates on such feminist productions that could be based on a feminist critique with special reference to Measure for Measure and King Lear. However, she rejects them because they require too radical a revision of the texts whose dynamics are based on male terms.[32] Ann Thompson equally rejects Michael Bogdanov's production of The Taming of the Shrew for the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1978. The production took an outright feminist line by

---

[30]Peter Erickson, op. cit., pp. 112-114

[31]Wayne Booth, "Freedom of Interpretation: Bakhtin and the Challenge of Feminist Criticism", Critical Inquiry, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Sept. 1982), p. 68

[32]Kathleen McLuskie, op. cit., pp.97-98

playing against the traditional meaning of the text. According to Thompson, the production was "not enjoyable in a straightforward way" even though she believes that the audience ought not to be encouraged to experience the text as "simply rollicking good fun" [33]

Another objection to such feminist readings is that they could be imposing modern interpretations on old texts. One response to such an accusation is that it is illusory to suppose that one can approach any text without considering its modern relevance. This is not to deny the importance of the historical context in which the plays were written and produced. Indeed, it is by relating the socio-political and theatrical conditions of Shakespeare's time to our contemporary society that one can get a better understanding and a wider perspective of the relationship between the sexes. However, feminist critics who adopt a historical approach are forced to recognize the complex and often contradictory discourse of historical documentation itself. Moreover, they have to contend with the highly problematic relationship between literature and history or art and life. The plays are both aesthetic or fictional creations as well as historical or social illustrations. Therefore, historical data cannot simply be imported into the plays or derived from them. Most historical feminist critics of Shakespeare would agree that Shakespeare's portrayal of women in his plays is unique and unprecedented, thereby reinforcing their preferred image of him as the comparatively liberal thinker. These critics would also agree that the position of women and the general attitude towards sex roles was beginning to change in the Renaissance, but they disagree about the extent and direction of that change.

In Shakespeare and the Nature of Women, Juliet Dusinberre contends that women in the Renaissance gained greater authority and freedom because of the humanism of the period which encouraged

---

[33] Ann Thompson, ed., The Taming of the Shrew, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 40

improved education of women, as well as Puritanism which advocated the idea of marriage for companionship. She argues that the increased interest in women's roles and marital relationships is accordingly reflected in Shakespeare's plays, which are "feminist in sympathy".[34] She even concludes that in his creation of strong, complex female characters, Shakespeare not only questioned conventional stereotypes of women, but also "saw men and women as equal".[35] Catherine Belsey also proclaims that "the contest for the meaning of the family in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries...momentarily unfixed the existing system of differences". In this sense, Shakespeare's plays represented only a temporary disruption of the sexual stereotyping which subsequently prevailed again.[36] In sharp contradiction to the previous two assessments of the status of women in history and in drama, there is Lisa Jardine's book, Still Harping on Daughters. Jardine sees the drama as a reaction to, not a reflection of, social realities, a misogynist response to the unexpressed worries of patriarchy about the great social changes of the period.[37] According to Jardine, strong female characters in the drama of the time are not exemplary or liberating but are satiric creations or cautionary warnings that are contained or chastised by the drama. They are set up only to be suppressed. Shakespeare's plays reflect this misogyny: his representation of strong women reflects patriarchal anxieties and

---

[34]Juliet Dusinberre, Shakespeare and the Nature of Women, (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1975), p. 5

[35]Id., p. 308

[36]Catherine Belsey, "Disrupting Sexual Difference: Meaning and Gender in the Comedies", Alternative Shakespeare, ed., John Drakakis, (London: Methuen, 1985), p. 190

[37]Lisa Jardine, Still Harping on Daughters: Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare, (Brighton: Harvester, 1983), p. 6

his admirable heroines fit the "saving stereotypes" which the period created of chaste, sacrificing and patient women.[38]

The fact that Dusinberre, Belsey and Jardine rely on the same investigations conducted by social historians such as Lawrence Stone and Keith Wrightson, shows the complexity of this historical approach. Stone describes the rise of what he calls "companionate marriage" in this period.[39] Yet Stone himself is not sure that the dissenting tradition really promoted the liberation of women. He points out that with its new emphasis on the individual reading of the Bible, Protestantism further favoured men who were more likely to be literate than women. Therefore, in practice, Protestantism gave husbands more power than ever before as they took on the role of the priest in the family.[40] The same controversy is discussed in Wrightson's research, English Society 1580-1680.[41] Although feminist historical critics employ similar material and start out with similar aims, they construct different (sometimes contradictory) theses encompassing the period, drama and Shakespeare.

Feminist historical critics also examine Shakespeare's plays in relation to the theatrical conditions in which he worked. As McLuskie points out, the plays were "the product of an entertainment industry which, as far as we know, had no women shareholders, actors, writers

---

[38]Id., pp. 184-193

[39]This concept lies behind Marriane Novy's emphasis on "mutuality" discussed above, p. 10

[40]Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800, (London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1977), pp. 154-155

[41]Keith Wrightson, English Society 1580-1680, (London: Hutchinson, 1982), Chapter 4.

or stage hands".[42] Feminist critics have explored the convention whereby male actors played female roles, a convention which questions the whole meaning of sexual identity.[43] On the one hand, the male disguise of the female heroines could be interpreted as an undermining of sexual difference and therefore a challenge to patriarchal values. Analyzing the epilogue to As You Like It from this perspective, Belsey asks, "Who is speaking?" when the boy actor playing Rosalind addresses the audience. Belsey concludes that "a male actor *and* a female character is speaking" and that this convention allows Shakespeare to leave the issue of sexuality open and unresolved.[44] On the other hand, this theatrical convention is sometimes interpreted as a further celebration of patriarchy. Thus Peter Erickson sees this epilogue as,

> a further twist of logic which defuses and reduces the threat of female power. Rosalind is no one to be frightened of since she is male after all... In revealing the self-sufficient male acting company, the epilogue also offers the counter image of male bonds based on the exclusion of women.[45]

However, an alternative to either appropriating this all-male theatrical convention towards a feminist cause or denouncing it as sexist is to consider Shakespeare's plays as entertainment for a heterosexual audience both in his time and in contemporary theatre. It has been

---

[42]Kathleen McLuskie, op. cit., p. 92

[43]Discussions of the boy actor include Lisa Jardine, op. cit., pp. 9-36 and Phyllis Rackin, "Androgyny, Mimesis, and the Marriage of the Boy Heroine on the English Renaissance Stage", PMLA 102:1, (1987)

[44]Catherine Belsey, op. cit., p. 181

[45]Peter Erickson, op. cit., pp. 34-35

pointed out that women did make up a considerable number of the audience in Shakespearean England.[46] Lorraine Helms considers the modern effect of some of the textual strategies and stage practices that were originally designed to feminize the boy actor. By contrast, the subsequent presence of the female body and the female voice must confront these strategies upon which Shakespeare's construction of gender is based.[47]

In her essay, "Representing Ophelia: Women, Madness, and the Responsibilities of Feminist Criticism", Elaine Showalter pioneers a different kind of historical approach.[48] She makes a study of what she calls "the Ophelia myth" since "the representation of Ophelia changes independently of theories of the meaning of the play or the Prince, for it depends on attitudes towards women and madness".[49] She thus goes beyond the minimal information offered by the dramatic text and traces the representation of Ophelia in painting, psychiatry and literature as well as on the stage. Showalter explores the ways in which Ophelia has become an archetype of female melancholy or madness, which is seen as necessarily sexual in origin and erotic in expression. She also examines the influence of Ophelia's status as icon in literature and psychotherapy. This kind of feminist criticism which elucidates the subtle ways in which traditions and cultural preconceptions develop from and around canonical classical texts like

---

[46] See Ann Jennalie Cook, The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London: 1576-1642, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981)

[47] Lorraine Helms, op. cit., pp. 190-200

[48] Elaine Showalter, "Representing Ophelia: Women, Madness, and the Responsibilities of Feminist Criticism", Shakespeare and the Question of Theory. eds., Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman, (New York: Methuen, 1985)

[49] Id., pp. 91-92

Shakespeare's works, is an area of great potential. It would be interesting to conduct other studies of a Cleopatra or a Cordelia myth.

An equally important feminist approach to Shakespeare in one based on psychoanalysis. In "Sexuality in the Reading of Shakespeare: Hamlet and Measure for Measure", Jacqueline Rose shows how "psychoanalytic and literary criticism share with the literature they address a terrain of language, fantasy and sexuality - a terrain in which the woman occupies a crucial, but difficult, place".[50] Characters like Gertrude in Hamlet and Isabella in Measure for Measure have often been accused by both psychoanalytic and literary critics for the failure of the plays on the aesthetic and sexual levels. Most critical commentaries have emphasized the problem of these two plays in terms of too much sexuality on the part of Gertrude and too little on the part of Isabella. Whether it is sexual excess or deficiency, the woman in both plays is accused of causing a "disorder" and provoking "a crisis which overturns the sexual identity of the central male character of the drama". Her failure in her duty to hold male sexual desire in place, leads to his crime.[51] Rose uses T.S. Eliot's critique of Hamlet as exemplary of this repressive kind of literary criticism in which "what is felt as inscrutable, unmanageable or even horrible for an aesthetic theory which will only allow into its definition what can be controlled or managed by art, is nothing other than femininity itself".[52] She indicates that "much recent literary theory can be seen as an attempt to undo the ferocious effects" of this

---

[50] Jacqueline Rose, "Sexuality in the Reading of Shakespeare: *Hamlet* and *Measure for Measure*", Alternative Shakespeare, ed., John Drakakis, op. cit., p.95

[51] Id., p. 97

[52] Id., p. 101

tradition which "siphons off or distracts attention from the difficulty of language itself" by focusing on the woman.[53]

Within what has now become a considerable body of feminist criticism from the psychoanalytical perspective, there are a number of essays that are concerned with exploring the importance of ideals of violence in the psychosexual analysis of Shakespeare's male characters. For example, Janet Adelman analyzes the importance of structures of psychological dependence in accounting for Coriolanus' phallic aggression[54]. Similarly, Coppelia Kahn describes the feud in Romeo and Juliet as a deadly passage from boyhood to manhood in a patriarchal society which is ultimately self-destructive in its promotion of masculinity at the price of life itself.[55] These essays build on feminist psychoanalysis which places motherhood at the centre of male psychological development. Hence, Khan explains: "the critical threat to identity is not, as Freud maintains, castration, but engulfment by the mother... men first know women as the matrix of all satisfaction from which they must struggle to differentiate themselves".[56] Thus, critics suggest how structures of male dominance grow out of and mask fears of female power and of male feminization and powerlessness. Such studies of Shakespeare's plays also make extensive use of psychoanalytic insights into male

---

[53]Id., p. 102

[54]Janet Adelman, "'Anger's My Meat'": Feeding, Dependency, and Aggression in Coriolanus", Representing Shakespeare: New Psychoanalytical Essays, eds., Murray M. Schwartz and Coppelia Kahn, (London: John Hopkins University Press, 1980), pp. 129-149

[55]Coppelia Kahn, "Coming of Age in Verona", The Woman's Part, eds., Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz, Gayle Greene and Carol Thomas Neely, op. cit., pp. 171-193

[56]Coppelia Kahn, "Man's Estate", Masculine Identity in Shakespeare, (Berkeley: California University Press, 1981), p. 11

ambivalence towards female sexuality: men's inability to reconcile tender affection with sexual desire, and their constant vacillation between idealization and degradation of women. However, the problem with this line of feminist criticism of Shakespeare is its preoccupation with the masculine identity rather than the feminine experience. Khan herself expresses worries about the appropriateness of this reading strategy for a feminist critic.

> To read Shakespearean tragedy or any other patriarchal literature as the account of specifically masculine dilemmas of self-definition, it might seem, is to privilege male experience and allow its voice to speak for women as well, accepting just those assumptions which we as feminists are at pains to challenge.[57]

Nonetheless, Kahn shows how this limitation can be turned into an advantage if the aim of such feminist studies is foregrounded:

> The crucial difference... between the feminist reader in pursuit of the maternal subtext and Maynard Mack or A.C. Bradley is that they take it for granted that the male experience portrayed in Shakespearean tragedy is universal, while the feminist reader consciously notes the gender perspective of this genre, and tries to learn from it about the working myths of patriarchal culture.[58]

Another strand of psychoanalytical criticism traces changes in gender relations through Shakespeare's use of different genres. Most feminist critics have suggested that Shakespeare's comedies, with their

---

[57] Coppelia Kahn, "Excavating *Those Dim Minoan Regions*: Maternal Subtexts in Patriarchal Literature", Diacritics, (Summer 1982), p. 41

[58] Ibid.

affirmation of wit and flexibility, validate women's strengths while the tragedies emphasize male struggles and ultimately victimize women.[59] Marilyn French interprets this notable inconsistency in terms of a debate between male and female principles where the male principle stands for violence, competitiveness and the power to kill while the female stands for the power to nurture and give birth.[60] This is an area where feminist critics often disagree on account of what McLuskie identifies as the "essentialism" of such studies that are typified by French. According to McLuskie,

> feminism thus involves defining certain characteristics as feminine and admiring them as a better way to survive in the world. In order to assert the moral connection between the mimetic world of Shakespeare's plays and the real world of the audience, the characters have to be seen as representative men and women and the categories male and female are essential unchanging, definable in modern, commonsense terms.... [This] essentialism...is part of a trend in liberal feminism which sees the feminist struggle as concerned with reordering the values ascribed to men and women without fundamentally changing the material circumstances in which their relationships function. It presents feminism as a set of social attitudes rather than as a project for fundamental social change.[61]

---

[59] See Linda Bamber, Comic Women, Tragic Men: A Study of Gender and Genre in Shakespeare. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982). Carol Thomas Neely, Broken Nuptials in Shakespeare's Plays. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985). Marilyn L. Williamson, The Patriarchy of Shakespeare's Comedies. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1986) and Peter Erickson, op. cit.

[60] Marilyn French, Shakespeare's Division of Experience. (London: Jonathan Cape, 1982).

[61] Kathleen McLuskie, op.cit., pp. 89-90

Lisa Jardine is similarly dismissive of Bamber's mimetic, essentialist model of feminist criticism. Jardine furthermore suggests that feminism should question inherited cultural definitions of sexual identity as endorsed by Shakespeare's drama, instead of simply attributing objectivity and universality to Shakespeare's depiction of men and women in his plays. According to Jardine, this procedure of appropriating Shakespeare usually implies a denigration of feminism.[62]

A rather complex mode of feminist psychoanalytical criticism of Shakespeare draws on the work of Jacques Lacan and Jacques Derrida and their feminist counterparts, Julia Kristeva, Helene Cixous and Luce Irigaray.[63] Unlike the traditional character-based studies, this kind of criticism foregrounds the use of language and notions of textuality in its exploration of the sexual politics underlying Shakespeare's plays. For example, in his essay, "The Turn of the Shrew", Joel Fineman explains how what he terms "the subversive discourse of woman" in The Taming of the Shrew finally comes to endorse male authority.[64] He then relates his findings to a wider question that is often posed by feminist critics: "is it possible to voice a language, whether of man or of woman, that does not speak, sooner or later, self-consciously or unconsciously, for the order and authority of man?"[65] Fineman's approach is original in the way he explores the thematic limitations of the play in the light of the theoretical debates

---

[62] Lisa Jardine, op. cit., pp. 5-8

[63] For an introductory account of French feminist theory, see Toril Moi, op. cit., pp. 89-173

[64] Joel Fineman, "The Turn of the Shrew", Shakespeare and the Question of Theory, op. cit., pp. 138-159

[65] Id., p. 138

within psychoanalysis, especially the feminist deconstructive reading of Lacan.

Another application of feminist psychoanalytical techniques to the textual interpretation of Shakespeare's plays is one adopted by Madelon Gohlke in her essay, "'I wooed thee with my sword': Shakespeare's Tragic Paradigms".[66] She examines the tragedies by analyzing their system of metaphors. The premise of her work is that, "it is metaphor that allows us to sub-read, to read on the margins of discourse, to analyze what is latent or implicit in the structures of consciousness or of a text".[67] With special emphasis on sexual metaphors, Gohlke shows the way in which "vehicle consistently outdistances tenor". That is to say, metaphor is a "highly charged imagistic expression" whose implications reveal more than the writer or character consciously intended.[68] Of particular interest to the critic is the extent to which the language of love in the tragedies is infused with metaphors of violence against women, thereby disclosing a constant fear on the part of the hero of becoming feminized. In Shakespeare, Meaning and Metaphor, Ann Thompson also reveals an interesting ideological dimension in Shakespeare's use of printing metaphors, which she observes are often associated with questions of authority, ownership and legitimacy. Thompson elaborates on the assumption that people are generally regarded as "books" which can be "read" by others, indicating that the contents of the book where a woman is concerned are primarily concerned with her sexual innocence or guilt. From a male perspective, the sexual act itself is equivalent to the printing process in which a man uses a woman as an

---

[66] Madelon Gohlke, "'I wooed thee with my sword': Shakespeare's Tragic Paradigms", The Woman's Part, op. cit., pp. 150-170

[67] Id., p. 150

[68] Id., p. 151

instrument or a "press" to reproduce copies of himself. The implication is that marriage is mainly about acquiring "copyright" in the woman's body.[69]

A key question is posed by Gohlke: "What then, in psychoanalytic terms, would constitute the beginnings of feminist discourse?" Her conclusion might seem for some feminists as rather simplistic in its comforting sense of closure. However, in my experience, it does represent the acceptable face of feminist criticism for a number of male and female critics. She thus concludes:

> That each sex should take itself as the norm is perhaps part of the Ptolemaic universe of children which must undergo several stages of decentering before maturity. Not to undergo this process of decentering is to elaborate structures of dominance and submission in which dominance becomes the mask of weakness and submission a subversive strategy in the mutual struggle for power. For a woman to read herself obliquely through the patriarchal discourse as "other" is to assent to this structure. For a critic, male or female, to read this discourse as representative of the true nature of masculinity or femininity is to accept this structure. For a feminist critic to deconstruct this discourse is simultaneously to recognize her own historicity and to engage in the process of the unconscious by which she begins to affirm her own reality.[70]

---

[69] Ann Thompson, Shakespeare, Meaning and Metaphor, (Brighton: Harvester, 1988). See especially chapter 5.

[70] Madelon Gohlke, op. cit., pp. 166-167

In Shakespeare and the Question of Theory, several other essays adopt this same approach which consciously integrates recent literary theory within feminist criticism of Shakespeare.[71] However, not all feminist critics welcome this mode as potentially liberating the way Jacqueline Rose suggests.[72] Showalter certainly has her own reservations, which she outlines as follows:

> The new sciences of the text based on linguistics, computers, genetic structuralism, deconstructionism, neo-formalism and deformalism, affective stylistics and psychoaesthetics, have offered literary critics the opportunity to demonstrate that the work they do is as manly and aggressive as nuclear physics - not intuitive, expressive and feminine, but strenuous, rigorous, impersonal and virile.[73]

The paradox of Showalter's position is that in her rejection of literary theory because it is a highly intellectual and "manly" style of discourse, she endorses an essentialist vision of femininity and feminine discourse as being non-discursive, irrational, intuitive and subjective. She therefore seems to be asserting these gender stereotypes rather than deconstructing the binary oppositions of masculine and feminine. Showalter's approach echoes similar efforts on the part of Irigaray and Cixous to establish a theory of femininity and to define a distinct feminine discourse. Moi pertinently criticizes such attempts as falling into what she terms as "the essentialist trap". In spite of certain divergences, these endeavours are "doomed to

---

[71] Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman, eds., Shakespeare and the Question of Theory, op. cit.

[72] See above, p. 17

[73] Elaine Showalter, "Towards a Feminist Poetics", op. cit., p. 38

become another enactment of the inexorable logic of the Same". This is the patriarchal logic whose concept of power is centralized and monolithic.[74] An alternative to that is not only to transform the existing power structure, but also to transform the very concept of power itself. Towards this end it is necessary for feminist criticism to redefine its attitude to other current trends in literary criticism. More infusion with other critical theories should be considered in order to avoid the isolation of feminist readings to an all-woman ghetto.

On the whole, feminist criticism has made a positive impact on Shakespearean studies. It has shown how the meanings of the texts have been determined by generations of critics, directors, editors, and even teachers. By showing the possibility of other interpretations where women readers are concerned, feminist critics have emphasized that meaning is essentially historically and culturally constructed and not embedded in the text. They have thus challenged the political authority and cultural significance of Shakespeare's plays whose meanings are often inscribed as "timeless" or "universal" ironically by both liberals and conservatives in their attempt to reinforce contradictory views of an "eternal" human nature.

However, further work is still required on the part of feminist critics in order to encompass the whole of the Shakespeare canon. So far, some of the earliest plays such as Titus Andronicus, Henry V, or Henry VI have largely been neglected or at least not given the same critical focus as other tragedies and comedies. Similarly, Shakespeare's sonnets have yet to be explored in some detail from a feminist perspective. Nevertheless, the narrative poems have been given some attention. For example, Nancy Vickers and Katharine Maus both examine structures of female domination and male anxiety

---

[74] Toril Moi, op. cit., pp. 142-143

in the rhetorical manoeuvres of The Rape of Lucrece.[75] Vickers remarks that Tarquin is not inflamed by the sight of Lucrece's beauty but by her husband's verbal description of her during an "all-male boasting-about-women session". Furthermore, the poem ends with the men, her husband and father, rhetorically competing with each other over the right to claim possession of her body and to avenge her. The underlying concept is that rape is perceived primarily as an offense against the property or honour of men. Vickers thus wonders whether "there is a woman in this text explicitly dedicated to the celebration of a woman".[76]

Shakespeare feminist critics must also assume their responsibilities with relevance to the editing and production of the plays. Few feminists have undertaken the task of editing especially for the revised Oxford, Cambridge and Arden editions and hence the little impact of feminist criticism on the reader. Ann Thompson's Cambridge edition of The Taming of the Shrew in 1984 is one example which shows the real power of the editor in her editing of the Notes and Commentary on the meaning of the text. Otherwise, many editions of the 80's and 90's hardly make note of feminist criticism. As for theatrical presentation, most productions tend to follow the traditional interpretation of the plays. Despite the feminist studies of the effect of performance on defining the meaning, and the various ways of challenging this tradition of female stereotyping, little has been put to practice.

---

[75]Nancy Vickers, "'The blazon of sweet beauty's best': Shakespeare's *Lucrece*", Shakespeare and the Question of Theory, op. cit., pp. 95-115 and Katharine Maus, "Taking Tropes Seriously: Language and Violence in Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece*", The Matter of Difference: Materialist Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare, ed., Valerie Wayne, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 56-68

[76]Nancy Vickers, op. cit., p. 112

An equally important undertaking for feminist critics at this point of proliferation is to uncover their roots in a literary tradition of feminist criticism of Shakespeare and to identify their relation to it. This endeavour has partly been addressed in the anthology, Women's Re-Visions of Shakespeare.[77] The book traces the responses of famous literary figures such as Emily Dickinson, Virginia Woolf, George Eliot and Adrienne Rich towards Shakespeare himself as well as his women characters. The documentary style of the essays and the commentary of its critics emphasize a tradition of women writers who in their identification with Shakespeare also express some critical distance. In her recent book, Engaging with Shakespeare: Responses of George Eliot and Other Women Novelists, Marianne Novy explores in great depth the references to Shakespeare and his works mainly in the writing of George Eliot.[78] Novy's ultimate aim is to show how Shakespeare was appropriated and redefined critically and culturally through a complex process that includes displacement of subject and writer, a transposition of contexts and a manoeuvring of cultural terms. On the whole, it would be interesting to have similar Re-Visions of other writers like Jane Austen and Charlotte Bronte in an attempt to render this project more comprehensive.

Finally, a great challenge for feminist critics of Shakespeare is in the field of education. So far there has been little impact of feminist criticism on the teaching of Shakespeare in schools, colleges and universities. For example, Jeanne Addison Roberts expresses her worries about the way educational systems "institutionalize for secondary school students a painfully constricted view of possible

---

[77] Marianne Novy, ed., Women's Re-Visions of Shakespeare, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990)

[78] Marianne Novy, Engaging with Shakespeare: Responses of George Eliot and Other Women Novelists. (University of Iowa: Amazon Books, 1998).

female roles".[79] Of course, feminism as a general political project seems to be working in advance of feminist criticism in abolishing all forms of sexual discrimination. However, political reform seems to be independent of academic proceedings in which interaction between teacher and student is crucial in changing conventional sexist attitudes, scrutinizing current female roles and ultimately shaping tradition. Indeed, Carolyn Swift speaks of a "feminist renaissance" in which "feminist teachers and students transform authority to female uses".[80] It is therefore essential for a feminist perspective to filter through and inform all levels of education. There is an urgent need to develop distinctly feminist strategies of teaching Shakespeare. So far this issue has been recognized but only within the wider context of cultural materialism and its general concern about the subtle use of Shakespeare in education in order to forward an existing social order which exploits people and discriminates against them on grounds of race, class and gender. For example, Alan Sinfield shows how Shakespeare's iconic and mythic status is culturally constructed and reproduced in a way which discourages the true individual response of students towards the texts and diverts their attention from the manoeuvres of literary criticism. Sinfield also demonstrates how the meanings of Shakespeare's texts are politically institutionalized through a complex system of GCE examination questions for which students must be prepared and around which a whole apparatus of study aids and school editions has sprung up.[81]

---

[79] Jeanne Addison Roberts, "Making a Woman and Other Institutionalized Diversions", Shakespeare Quarterly, vol. 37 (1986), p. 367

[80] Natalie Strong & Carolyn Swift, "Towards a Feminist Renaissance: Woman-Centering Shakespeare's Tragedies", Women's Re-Visions of Shakespeare, op. cit., p.225

[81] Alan Sinfield, "Give an account of Shakespeare and Education, showing why you think they are effective and what you have appreciated about them. Support your comments with precise references.", Political Shakespeare, op. cit., pp.134-157

At some point it will be necessary for feminist criticism of Shakespeare to address the crucial questions of post-feminism: What do women really want? Is the perfect independence of women to be desired?[82] Feminist readings of Shakespeare have been pushing against cultural restrictions and questioning gender assumptions in an attempt to authorize women. However, as Carol Thomas Neely points out, certain aspects of Shakespeare have proved most difficult to incorporate or revise namely, his representation of the father-daughter relationships and his limited representation of female sexuality which excludes much of the range of female desire.[83] Such problematic areas in the Shakespeare canon would have to be considered within the context of post-feminism.

* * * * *

[82] Theodora Penny Martin, The Sound of Our Own Voices, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987), p. 108. See also Danielle Crittenden, What Our Mothers Didn't Tell Us: Why Happiness Eludes the Modern Woman, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999).

[83] Carol Thomas Neely, "Remembering Shakespeare, Revising Ourselves", Women's Re-Visions of Shakespeare, op. cit., pp. 247-248

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Abel, Elizabeth, ed., Writing and Sexual Difference. (Brighton: Harvester, 1982).

Bamber, Linda, Comic Women, Tragic Men: A Study of Gender and Genre in Shakespeare, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982).

Booth, Wayne, "Freedom of Interpretation: Bakhtin and the Challenge of Feminist Criticism", Critical Inquiry, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Sept. 1982), pp. 45-76.

Cixous, Helene, "Le Sexe ou la tete?" (1976), tr. Annette Kuhn, "Castration or Decapitation?", Signs, vol. 7, no. 1, (1981), pp. 41-55.

Cook, Ann Jennalie, The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London: 1576-1642, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

Crittenden, Danielle, What Our Mothers Didn't Tell Us: Why Happiness Eludes the Modern Woman, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999).

Dash, Irene, Women's Worlds in Shakespeare's Plays, (London: Associated University Press, 1997).

Dollimore, Jonathan and Alan Sinfield, eds., Political Shakespeare, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985).

Drakakis, John, ed., Alternative Shakespeare, (London: Methuen, 1985).

Dusinberre, Juliet, Shakespeare and the Nature of Women, (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1975).

Erickson, Peter, Patriarchal Structures in Shakespeare's Drama, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

French, Marilyn, Shakespeare's Division of Experience, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1982).

Gilbert, Sandra M., "Patriarchal Poetry and Women Readers: Reflections on Milton's Bogey", 1978, PMLA 93, pp. 368-382.

Greene, Gayle and Coppelia Kahn, eds., Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism, (London: Methuen, 1985).

Hall, Kim F., "Uses for a Dead White Male: Shakespeare, Feminism, and Diversity", New Theatre Quarterly, vol. 11, no. 41, (Feb. 1995), pp. 55-61.

Helms, Lorraine, "Playing the Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism and Shakespearean Performance", Theatre Journal, vol.41, no.2, (May 1989), pp. 190-200.

Jacobus, Mary, ed., Women Writing and Writing about Women, (London: Croom Helm, 1979).

Jardine, Lisa, Still Harping on Daughters: Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare, (Brighton: Harvester, 1983).

Jehlen, Myra, "Archimedes and the Paradox of Feminist Criticism", Signs, vol. 6, no. 4, (Summer, 1981), pp. 575-601.

Kahn, Coppelia, "Excavating *Those Dim Minoan Regions*: Maternal Subtexts in Patriarchal Literature", Diacritics, (Summer 1982), pp. 32-41.

_____, Masculine Identity in Shakespeare, (Berkeley: California University Press, 1981).

Kolin, Philip C., Shakespeare and Feminist Criticism: an Annotated Bibliography and Commentary, (New York: Garland, 1991).

Kuhn, Annette, The Power of the Image: Essays on Representation and Sexuality, (London: Routlege and Kegan Paul, 1985).

Lenz, Carolyn Ruth Swift, Gayle Greene and Carol Thomas Neely, eds., The Woman's Part, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980).

Lipking, Lawrence, "Aristotle's Sister: A Poetics of Abandonment, Critical Inquiry, vol. 10, no. 1, (September 1983), pp. 61-81.

Martin, Theodora Penny, The Sound of Our Own Voices, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987).

Moi, Toril, Sexual/Textual Politics, (London: Methuen, 1985).

Mulvey, Laura, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", Screen, vol. 16, no. 3, (Autumn 1975), pp. 6-18.

Neely, Carol Thomas, Broken Nuptials in Shakespeare's Plays, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

Novy, Marianne, ed., Women's Re-Visions of Shakespeare, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990).

_____, Love's Argument: Gender Relations in Shakespeare, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).

_____, "Demythologizing Shakespeare", Women's Studies, vol. 9, no. 1-2, (1981), pp. 17-27.

_____, Engaging with Shakespeare: Responses of George Eliot and Other Women Novelists, (University of Iowa: Amazon Books, 1998).

Parker, Patricia and Geoffrey Hartman, eds., Shakespeare and the Question of Theory, (New York: Methuen, 1985).

Rackin, Phyllis, "Androgyny, Mimesis, and the Marriage of the Boy Heroine on the English Renaissance Stage", PMLA 102:1, (1987), pp. 29-41.

Roberts, Jeanne Addison, "Making a Woman and Other Institutionalized Diversions", Shakespeare Quarterly, vol. 37 (1986), pp. 366-378.

Schwartz, Murray M. and Coppelia Kahn, eds., Representing Shakespeare: New Psychoanalytical Essays, (London: John Hopkins University Press, 1980).

Stone, Lawrence, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800, (London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1977).

Thompson, Ann, ed., The Taming of the Shrew, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

_____, Shakespeare, Meaning and Metaphor, (Brighton: Harvester, 1988).

Walker, Julia, ed., Milton and the Idea of Woman, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988).

Wayne, Valerie, ed., The Matter of Difference: Materialist Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1991).

Williamson, Marilyn L., The Patriarchy of Shakespeare's Comedies, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1986).

Woolf, Virginia, A Room of One's Own, 1929 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

Wrightson, Keith, English Society 1580-1680, (London: Hutchinson, 1982).