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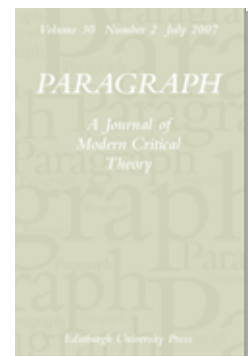
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# What Butler Saw: Cross-Dressing and Spectatorship in Seventeenth-Century France

Joseph Harris

## *Introduction*

For the past fifteen years or so, Judith Butler's theories have been both contentious and profoundly influential in our understanding of sex and gender. Her most striking claim, laid out at the end of *Gender Trouble*, is that gender has no essence, but is instead constituted through a repeated and performative 'citation' of pre-existing models of gender. In typical post-structuralist fashion, Butler develops this theory by examining how the exception reveals the conditions that govern the norm; accordingly, she shows how cross-dressing and other marginal forms of gender play can reveal gender in its entirety to be constructed and performative. For Butler, apparently dissonant forms of gender performance have the potential to transgress and subvert sexual norms by revealing all gender to be a copy without an original: '*in imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself—as well as its contingency*'.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, Butler's theories are open to a number of criticisms, which I intend to interrogate here by reassessing her thought in the light of three seventeenth-century poems about cross-dressing. Above all, Butler's theories are profoundly ahistorical; although not in itself a criticism, this does mean that she can tell us little about the particular ways in which sex and gender might be constructed in different historical or geographical contexts. My own research, for example, has demonstrated that the significance of cross-dressing can rarely be reduced to a matter of gender alone; indeed, cross-dressing can even become reified as a third term, quasi-independent of the two conventional genders.<sup>2</sup>

Yet these problems of ahistoricity can be most helpfully explored through a second lacuna in Butler's thought: the role of the spectator. Crucially, as Nicholas Hammond stresses, Butler's exploration of cross-dressing 'does not examine the importance of the body as

spectacle'.<sup>3</sup> For my analysis, the crux lies in Butler's paradoxical claim that drag 'implicitly reveals' the imitative structure of gender. After all, a revelation that remains implicit is no revelation at all; must one thus already be a follower of Butler to discern cross-dressing as subversive? Butler's ahistoricity and her underexploration of spectatorship thus appear as different sides of the same coin; by neglecting the role of the literal spectator, she overlooks how this spectator's particular cultural-historical context might attenuate or even counteract the supposedly subversive potential of cross-dressing.

When Butler figures heterosexuality 'as both a compulsory system and an intrinsic comedy, a constant parody of itself' (122), her use of the term 'comedy' casts society's repeated attempts to approximate its own gender norms as a form of theatre. However, although the theatre provides an obvious metaphor for gender performance, drama is not necessarily the best genre through which to explore cross-dressing. Rather than *discussing* cross-dressing, theatre *presents* it as a spectacle for the empirical spectator; it is thus to genres which do not stage the body itself that we must turn for accounts of cross-dressing as a visual experience. Yet early-modern prose works rarely offer a sustained meditation on cross-dressing, which they invariably inscribe into some form of narrative which aims to motivate both the initial assumption of the costume and its eventual abandonment. As a result, I have chosen to focus here on the rare occurrences of cross-dressing in seventeenth-century French poetry. As one might expect, lyric poetry can offer a more leisurely, contemplative stance towards its subject matter than dramatic and prose narratives; furthermore, the rarity of cross-dressing as a poetic conceit means that fewer conventions govern its appearance in verse.

#### *Vincent Voiture*

The title of Voiture's 'Stances sur sa maîtresse rencontrée en habit de garçon, un soir de Carnaval' (Stanzas on his mistress met dressed as a boy, one day during Carnival) sets up the basic situation around which the poet wittily evokes the erotic pleasures of gender performance.<sup>4</sup> Voiture's pose throughout the poem is one of feigned ignorance; indeed, only the title specifies the true sex of the beautiful 'boy' who has so captivated the poet's heart. Otherwise, Voiture expresses his emotions in a suggestive, fancifully *faux-naïf* manner. Nowhere in the poem does Voiture state that the beautiful 'boy' and the girl who succeeds him are one and the same person; instead, he suggests this

through a proliferation of brief allusions to the themes of disguise, resemblance and gender confusion. The poem thus operates within the semantic field of disguise rather than addressing the theme directly.

Voiture's account of his mistress's male costume thus works on two levels. On the one hand, he makes it clear throughout the poem that the 'boy' is a woman, and the reader enjoys the pleasure of recognition and of the extended verbal conceits to which the costume gives rise. On the other hand, Voiture stages a narrative in which his naïve protagonist persona misinterprets the situation, being taken in by what is not even intended as a disguise — after all, the mistress's costume is donned not in order to deceive others, but for the sake of carnival. This nominal justification of the male attire is not the only narrative element of this poem, however; indeed, Voiture's poem fancifully proposes another narrative to explain events. The premise of the poem is straightforward; while waiting for his mistress, the poet spies and falls in love with a beautiful 'boy' who steals both his heart and 'les clefs de mon ame' (l. 86) (the keys to my soul). Abandoned by the 'boy', the poet now turns his affections to a girl who resembles him in so many respects — face, stature, voice, bearing, laughter, and so forth — that 'sous l'habit d'un garçon,/Je l'aurois prise pour luy-mesme' (ll. 101–2) (were she dressed as a boy, I would have mistaken her for him). In a witty exchange of original and copy, Voiture thus casts the girl as a copy of the 'original' boy.

We are of course invited to understand that this girl is in fact the true identity of the 'boy' Voiture so desires; however, Voiture deploys a delicate eroticism by blurring sexual boundaries in his playful account of events. At the end of the poem, Voiture finally redeploys the 'theft' motif so as to suggest an erotic bond between himself and the girl. His heart stolen by the beautiful 'boy', the poet convinces himself that the 'boy' and girl are partners in crime, one the thief and the other his 'receleuse' (l. 120) (fence). 'Mais', insists Voiture to Cupid in the final two lines of the poem, 'j'espere tout retrouver,/Si tu permets que je la fouille' (ll. 137–8) (I hope to recover everything, if you let me frisk her). The metaphorically stolen heart opens up the rhetorical possibility of a body search; romantic love gives way to eroticism as metaphor gives way to physicality.

However, although the poem might seem to end a similar note to numerous comedies, where identity and heterosexuality are restored by the abandonment of the cross-dressed disguise, this is not the case. Significantly, if teasingly, Voiture never states outright that

his ‘new’ female love, the accomplice of the beautiful thief, is the same person as his ‘former’ mistress, ‘la belle/Qui depuis deux ans m’ensorcelle’ (ll. 19–20) (the beauty who has bewitched me for two years). Nevertheless, it would seem that his ‘former’ mistress has not been as bewitching as he initially claims, since the poet is still in possession of his heart when the ‘boy’ steals it. Indeed, since it is only by adopting a male identity that the mistress can possess his heart—and then pass it back to her female self—then this illusory male identity actually becomes the prototype of the poet’s desire. Furthermore, by knowingly casting the mistress, ‘boy’, and the final girl as three separate characters and by coyly refusing to articulate their shared identity, Voiture suggests that the mistress (who does not initially possess his heart) and the girl (who does) are indeed different people. In Voiture’s poem, the conjunction of cross-dressing and desire thus destabilizes not only sexual identity, but also identity more generally. The mistress’s temporary disguise reinvigorates the relationship with a charge both erotic and romantic, and this is figured, albeit tacitly, as a change in her very being.

We must remember, of course, that Voiture—like the other two poets I shall explore, and particularly Tristan l’Hermite—is knowingly playing with the reader. This is not a truthful account of an individual’s encounter with an individual of unclear or indeterminate sex; indeed, Voiture is himself playing an ironic game, light-heartedly strewing clues about the figure’s true sexual identity throughout the poem for the reader’s benefit and pleasure. In a sense Voiture too is in disguise; he feigns deceit at his lover’s male guise, although his performance is just as transparent to the reader as his mistress’s performance is to him. By verbally mimicking his mistress’s physical disguise, Voiture thus performatively recreates in the reader the effect of the disguise on him. For both the poetic persona and Voiture’s reader, the pleasure is one of recognition—that of the woman’s true identity despite the costume she wears or the disingenuous account of her appearance. Rather than challenging categories of gender or identity, then, the poem’s light-hearted and *faux-naïf* stance prevents any sustained engagement with the proliferation of gender signals. The girl’s physical and verbal disguises are pleasurably transparent for both poetic persona and reader, while the body search evoked by the final lines promises to ground her identity back in her physically female body.

*Denis Sanguin de Saint-Pavin*

Saint-Pavin's untitled sonnet also alludes to the erotic pleasures of gender confusion, but in a manner both vaguer in its language and more specific in its reference.<sup>5</sup> As in Voiture's poem, the cross-dressing has a nominal narrative justification. A young girl, Caliste, dresses as a page to 'venir voir' (come and see) the poet. The poet accepts her, and ends by claiming that

(...) pour la sauver du soupçon  
Je la traitai comme une fille  
Qui voulait passer pour garçon. (ll. 12–14)  
(to save her from suspicion I treated her like a girl  
who wanted to be taken for a boy)

As Kathleen Collins argues, 'Saint Pavin suggests the dual purpose of Caliste's visit with the *double entendre* "voir"', and indeed the poet 'uses the lady's charms as implied testimony for the pleasures of sodomy' (182). This sexual reading of course relies in part on Saint-Pavin's reputation as the 'Roi de Sodome' (King of Sodom), a reputation certainly justified by much of Saint-Pavin's poetic output. The girl is presumably aware of the poet's reputation, as she fears that she would be refused entry dressed as a girl. Significantly, this knowledge of the poet's sexual preference thus casts Caliste as the possibly importunate suitor, and the poet himself in the traditionally more 'feminine' role of the desired object. This sense of role reversal is suggested further by Saint-Pavin's treatment of the rhyme scheme: of the feminine rhymes in the two quatrains, the first three ('frisée', curly-haired; 'déguisée', disguised; 'avisée', cunning) refer to the girl, whereas the last ('refusée', refused) refers to the poet's own door. Given the allusions to sodomy in the final lines, it is not innocent that the doorway—the entrance to the poet's private space—is associated, through the feminine rhymes, with the girl whose body, through being penetrated, will come to provide the occasion for this very symbolism. It is significant, furthermore, that the poet allows entry only to a man, or to one posing as a man; the girl briefly usurps this homosocial prerogative with her transvestite disguise in a manner which in turn symbolically feminizes the male poet's private space.

The final lines, however, give another twist to this role-reversal. The allusion to his intercourse with the girl repeats and displaces her initial penetration of his private space with his of hers. This reading of sex roles and their reversal in the twin contexts of cross-dressing

and homosexuality is further compounded when one considers the typical figuring of passive homosexual activity as 'feminine'. A role traditionally perceived as that of a man posing as a woman is chiasmatically recast by Saint-Pavin with a girl passing as a boy. Indeed, the poem suggests how dressing as a boy allows Caliste to be both penetrator (of the house) and penetrated (sexually), thus associating both positions and, in so doing, potentially eclipsing 'the feminine' into a more general 'maleness'.

Both *Voiture* and *Saint-Pavin* thus suggest the erotic charge that female-to-male cross-dressing can hold for the male viewer, whatever his professed sexual preference. In both cases, furthermore, the young women take the initiative in sexual matters; both assume a degree of agency through their male disguise, although this agency is tightly circumscribed as it is directed solely towards their male suitor and entails no social aspirations. The poems suggest that the visual impact of the cross-dressed young woman is erotic as it invites the viewer/poet's complicity; although not deceived themselves, both *Voiture* and *Saint-Pavin* put on an act of being duped — either for the reader (*Voiture*) or for the girl herself (*Saint-Pavin*) — which is just as transparent as their partners' disguises. Both poems combine erotic role-play with a deliberate refusal of conventional categories of gender and sexuality. Particularly for *Voiture*, the apparent playfulness of the girl's disguise lends a touch of innocence to the practices and allows a range of non-standard sexual attitudes to be adopted with relative impunity; provocatively, for example, he dismisses the flames with which God punished Gomorrah as far less 'vehement' than the fires of his own love (ll. 10–11). Most importantly, even though both poems end with the prospect (realised or desired) of a final uncovering of the female body, this projected revelation will not definitively re-establish traditional gender norms. In both poems, it is suggested, the girl's adopted male identity continues to underpin and structure the poet's desire for her even when all pretence of a disguise has been abandoned. In different ways, then, both *Saint-Pavin's* new category of the 'girl who wants to be taken for a boy' and the reinvigoration of *Voiture's* desire for his mistress through her male attire suggest something similar. What is most erotic for the two poets is not simply the girl's juxtaposition of differently-gendered elements but, perhaps more significantly, her failed approximation of the presumed masculine 'original' which her disguise evokes.

*Tristan l'Hermite*

Whereas Voiture and Saint-Pavin limit themselves to describing acts of cross-dressing conducted by others, no actual cross-dressing takes place in Tristan l'Hermite's 'L'Amour travesti en habit de fille' (Cupid disguised in girl's clothing).<sup>6</sup> Instead, as the title suggests, the cross-dresser here is not a genuine, embodied individual, but rather the allegorical figure of Cupid himself. Furthermore, just as Voiture wittily makes the true identity of his 'boy' and 'girl' apparent to the reader, the literal 'tenor' of the extended metaphorical act of cross-dressing in Tristan's poem soon becomes apparent. Unlike Voiture and Saint-Pavin, Tristan fancifully projects cross-dressing onto a situation where there is literally none, recasting a genuine woman as a cross-dressed male.

The scene takes place, it appears, in a church, where the poet spots the cross-dressed Cupid who, 'sans arc et sans flambeau' (l. 2) (without bow or torch), has evidently abandoned his conventional attributes as part of his disguise. Seeing him kneeling at an altar, the poet is astounded by Cupid's beauty and concludes that he has infiltrated the gathering in order to cause amorous havoc. The poem thus picks up on a narrative tradition of men dressing as women for purposes of seduction—the most famous examples being found in Sidney's *Arcadia* and d'Urfé's *L'Astrée*. However, while Pyrocles and Céladon attempt to win the favours of women, here it is the male poet who is initially 'charmé' (charmed) by Love's appearance (l. 6). Curiously, although he initially claims that Cupid's very charms are what make his female disguise unsuccessful—'on pouvoit fort aysement/Découvrir son déguisement' (ll. 13–14) (one could easily see through his disguise)—he soon feels compelled to warn all those present of the dangerous presence of Love in their midst and to exclaim 'Amour passe, gare les traits[!]' (l. 34) (Love is passing; watch out for his arrows!). Yet the poet is silent, apparently fearing that Love will seize his torch and singe 'mon [*sic*] poils gris' (ll. 37–8) (my grey hair) if he speaks up against him. Surprisingly, then, although the flaming torch was initially presented (along with the bow) as a detachable attribute abandoned for the sake of the disguise, it nonetheless seems to remain at Cupid's disposal as a non-expropriable attribute of masculinity.

That said, another explanation for the poet's silence is suggested. As we have seen, it is clear that Tristan intends the cross-dressed Cupid to be read as a figure for a beautiful woman. Tristan fancifully reads and recasts the physical presence of the woman as a thinly disguised embodiment of Love it- or himself. The desirable woman is recast not



as the object of love, but as the allegorized embodiment of Love itself, an embodiment which — because of the conventional personification of Love as a youthful male figure — also effects a reversal of gender. In other words, the whole poem is structured around a poetic conceit which is projected onto a relatively unremarkable situation — the sudden recognition of the charms of an attractive woman. The poem thus sets up an implicit contrast between real life and the poetic conceit which embroiders upon it, replacing the central figure with an allegorical one disguised as the central figure herself. Yet this poetic conceit is not simply projected backwards onto the past situation; rather, Tristan stresses that even at the time he felt an urge to warn others of Love's presence in their midst. His final reluctance to do so, however, serves to maintain the implicit contrast between reality and conceit. In other words, while the poem as a whole charts the threatened irruption of heterosexual desire into a social group, the very warning that would express this would itself constitute an irruption of a different kind — that of the poetic persona's private allegory into the real world.

#### *Butler and desire*

It is significant, I believe, that the three poems discussed here all associate cross-dressing with the question of desire. To different extents, all three poetic personae are sexually attracted to the cross-dressed woman (or, in Tristan's case, to the woman imagined as Cupid cross-dressed), and it could be argued that the ultimately heterosexual nature of this desire attenuates the various gender transgressions otherwise evoked by her sexual ambiguity. This is, at least, in keeping with the period as a whole, in which the cross-dressed woman seemed to hold a great erotic fascination, particularly in the theatre.<sup>7</sup> Voiture's and Saint-Pavin's poems in particular bear witness to the sexual attractiveness of the cross-dressed woman to men of very different sexual persuasions.

This focus on sexuality takes us back to Butler, whose first and most sustained analysis of the spectatorship of dissonant gender identities likewise takes place in the context of desire. As I hope to suggest, however, this emphasis on desire actually threatens to compromise Butler's own attempts to figure gender play as subversive. In order to demonstrate how butch/femme lesbian relationships can appropriate and constructively reconfigure the heterosexual patterns that they might seem to imitate passively, Butler suggests that the 'masculinity'

of the butch, 'if that it can be called, is always brought into relief against a culturally intelligible "female body"'. It is precisely this dissonant juxtaposition and the sexual tension that its transgression generates that constitute the object of desire' (123). She proposes a similar reasoning for other juxtapositions of gender and sexual identity: the woman whose preferred object of desire is femininity against a male body, for instance. Reluctant to give ontological status to any manifestation of sexual desire (be this 'straight', 'gay', 'lesbian', or whatever), Butler thus opens the way towards a plurality of possible sexual object-choices.

So far, Butler's theories are in line with her sexual politics. Yet it is curious, given the general thrust of her argument, that in her most sustained engagement with the spectatorship of cross-dressed performances, Butler actually avoids having to account for the potentially threatening or subversive potential of the transgressive individual. By situating spectatorship only in the context of desire, Butler recuperates the transgressiveness of conflicting gender codes in the name of an erotics of viewing. Suggesting that the lesbian femme might desire the destabilization of both masculinity and femaleness 'as they come into erotic interplay' (123), Butler elides the subversive potential of the butch by casting her spectator as one who responds to her transgression not by radically reassessing her own gender norms and prejudices, but, rather, by becoming sexually aroused. By this I do not mean that sexual arousal is either unproblematically objectifying and domesticating, or, conversely, unproblematically apolitical. Yet Butler's stress on the potential sexual attractiveness of the sexually dissonant body suggests that any supposedly subversive 'redeployment' of gender codes may always have already been anticipated, codified, and indeed eroticized by the viewer in such a way that its capacity to shock and to destabilize is diminished. Furthermore, Butler's examples suggest that whatever the actual ontological status of biological sex, it is maintained in fantasy by her spectators as the recognisable ground of sexual identity onto which a gender is imposed.

At the very point where we might expect her to offer an account of how gender play functions in practice as a phenomenon to be seen and interpreted, Butler thus curiously steps back, turning instead to sexual desire as an implicit means of closing off the potentially multifarious resignifying potential of gender play. Now, since the seventeenth-century poems also explore the spectacle of cross-dressing from the perspective of desire, one might be tempted to conclude that Butler's stance, far from being anachronistic (as I earlier suggested)

is in fact bound up in exactly the same terms as the early modern period and suffers the same conceptual limitations. However, as becomes clear, it is in fact the seventeenth-century texts which go beyond Butler's own arguments in their engagement with desire, spectatorship and gender play. This is not simply because the spectators Butler discusses reinstate — perhaps against her own intentions — the body as fantasized ground of identity for their own erotic play, while the seventeenth-century poems move away from the literal body, playfully evoking the collapse of gender categories. More importantly, the poems go further than Butler by setting up cross-dressing as a site of tensions, even struggles, between conflicting interpretations.

In none of the three poems is the potentially subversive effect (or for that reason the 'meaning') of the cross-dressing under the simple control of the cross-dresser him- or herself. For a start, neither Voiture's mistress nor Saint-Pavin's Caliste dresses as a man with subversive intent. Instead, each of the poems presents something of a tension between the poet/spectator and the cross-dressed figure over what the act of cross-dressing actually means. This tension is most apparent, of course, when Tristan creatively refigures an unsuspecting woman as a cross-dressed male, although it also recurs in the other two poems. Under the guise of playing along with the two girls' disguises, both Voiture and Saint-Pavin actively rework and reinterpret them, creating either new identity categories (Saint-Pavin) or even new identities (Voiture) unsought by the cross-dressers themselves.

Although Caliste is the cross-dresser in Saint-Pavin's poem, it is not simply her gender performance which defines her identity; indeed, Saint-Pavin allocates himself a greater role in determining her identity than she has herself. After all, Saint-Pavin insists, he is the agent who treats her in a certain manner rather than being the passive spectator of the image she wishes to present. Instead of being taken as a boy, Caliste is treated as a girl who wishes to be taken as a boy. On the face of it, this example echoes that of the *femme* Butler cites who 'likes her boys to be girls' (123), especially as in both cases the desired woman's biological femaleness nonetheless plays an essential, even defining, role. However, Saint-Pavin articulates more fully what remains only implicit in Butler's account. After all, however appropriate it may be on a literal level, Saint-Pavin's recasting of Caliste's identity suggests a lack of indulgence on his part for her disguise. Indeed, by creating the new sexual category of the 'girl who wants to pass as a boy' — a category which mirrors Caliste's actual situation rather than how she wishes to appear — Saint-Pavin dislodges this new sexual identity from

the very girl who already embodies it.<sup>8</sup> In other words, Saint-Pavin not only makes a point of seeing through Caliste's disguise, but even suggests that the identity that remains once the disguise is seen through can itself only be conferred thanks to his treatment of her.

As this example suggests, then, an apparently playful or subversive attitude towards gender does not always operate against the interests of patriarchy. Indeed, Saint-Pavin physically imposes his new gender category onto Caliste in a sexual act which restores his patriarchal role as the penetrator rather than the one whose private space has been symbolically penetrated and feminized by the cross-dressed girl. In fact, depending on the 'assez avisée' (quite cunning) girl's intentions in visiting him in the first place, Saint-Pavin's concluding lines may even harbour more unsavoury suggestions that she was coerced into sodomy rather than being able to provoke the poet into conventional vaginal intercourse with her. In any case, the concluding tercets emphatically wrest agency from the enterprising young girl to the poet himself.

Voiture, on the other hand, is far more playfully indulgent of his mistress's cross-dressing, treating her as a genuine boy rather than as a woman transparently dressed as a man. As we have seen, he also attempts to parallel in poetry the visual impression of his mistress's carnivalesque drag. Yet even Voiture's more indulgent stance implicitly stresses the body's role as the bedrock of sexual identity. This sense of sexual identity being grounded in the body is both shared and denied by Tristan's poem, which wilfully misreads a genuine woman as a male figure whose true identity, it stresses, is readily recognisable to all. All three of these poems are thus characterized by a somewhat light-hearted and ironic stance towards their subject-matter which problematizes any attempt to discern the actual impact of the cross-dresser's physical (or, in Tristan's case, imagined) presence.

I have elsewhere argued that seventeenth-century France frequently attempted to attenuate the transgressive potential of cross-dressing by inscribing it into narratives.<sup>9</sup> This tendency to understand cross-dressing in terms of narrative is present in all three of these poems, each of which offers some nominal causal justification for the cross-dressing and two of which end with (the prospect of) a genuine heterosexual union — albeit of a somewhat more corporeal kind than the weddings that typically restore sexual order in comedies and tragicomedies. Yet these attempts to 'domesticate' cross-dressing might take place even outside imaginative literature. In her research on gay drag,

Carole-Anne Tyler argues that even theoretical or critical accounts of cross-dressing might, like fictional narratives, constitute an attempt 'to close down the open, polyvalent signifiers of drag' and thereby to fix meaning.<sup>10</sup> If this is indeed the case, then we might see Butler's own theory as falling into the same trap as much seventeenth-century French culture. Butler, after all, invokes spectators who, through their very willingness to have their gender assumptions challenged and subverted, testify to their erotic investment in the ultimate fixity of sex and gender, masculinity and femininity. By taking place on an imaginary level rather than a literal one, gender subversion thus offers itself as essentially an erotic thrill rather than the grounds for a political practice. While often retaining a similar attachment to the body as the eroticized ground of sexual identity, however, the French poets use desire not to close off their analysis but as a springboard for a more lively and playfully subtle engagement with cross-dressing's signifying practices.

## NOTES

- 1 Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York and London, Routledge, 1990), 137 (Butler's italics).
- 2 See my *Hidden Agendas: Cross-Dressing in Seventeenth-Century France* (Tübingen, Narr, 2005). Marjorie Garber proposes something similar in her seminal study, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York and London, Routledge, 1992).
- 3 Nicholas Hammond, 'All Dressed Up. . . : L'Abbé de Choisy and the Theatricality of Subversion', *Seventeenth-Century French Studies* 21 (1999), 165–72 (168).
- 4 Vincent Voiture, 'Stances sur sa maistresse rencontrée en habit de garçon, un soir de Carnaval' in *Poésies*, edited by H. Lafay, 2 vols (Paris, Didier, 1971), I, 33–9.
- 5 Saint-Pavin, untitled sonnet, cited in Kathleen Collins, 'Pleasure's Artful Garb: Poetic Strategies of Denis Sanguin de Saint-Pavin (1595–1670)', *Continuum* 3 (1991), 171–89 (181–2).
- 6 Tristan L'Hermite, 'L'Amour travesti en habit de fille, pour Mademoiselle de B.' in *Les Vers héroïques*, edited by Catherine M. Grisé (Geneva, Droz, 1967), 296–7.
- 7 See Jan Clarke, 'Female Cross-Dressing on the Paris Stage, 1673–1715', *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 35:3 (July 1999), 238–50, for more on the sexual attractiveness of cross-dressed women.
- 8 Indeed, his very use of 'comme' suggests that even this new sexual category is one which can at best be approximated. In a similar vein, Butler sees

the term 'like' as undermining the apparent confidence of being made to feel 'like a natural woman' in the Aretha Franklin song. See 'Imitation and Gender Insubordination' in *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, edited by Diana Fuss (New York and London, Routledge, 1991), 13–31 (27–8).

9 Harris, *Hidden Agendas*, 99–125.

10 Carole-Anne Tyler, 'Boys Will be Girls: The Politics of Gay Drag' in *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, 32–70 (33).