

## CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	x
Introduction	xi
1. The Prostituted Muse: Women Writers, 1640–1740	1
Gender and language in feminist writing	3
Women writers and the response to them, 1640–1740	6
Feminism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries	14
Who were the women dramatists?	20
The formation of a female tradition	21
Women's plays, 1640–1737	23
2. Women in the Theatre, 1660–1737	25
Female performers	26
Women in theatre management	31
Women in theatre audiences	33
Conclusions	41
3. Gender and Genre: Men's Images of Women in Comedy, Tragedy and the Sentimental	42
Images of women in tragedy	42
Images of women in comedy	49
The ambivalence of sentimentalism	57
4. Women's Lives and Language in Plays and Other Writings by Men	63
The sexual double standard	70
Female sexuality	74
Women and marriage	76
Women and families	80
Women's friendships	81
5. Unconventional Women in Plays by Male Authors	83

Learned women	82
Women who refuse marriage	85
Amazons and other women in alternative societies	87
Seduced maids, courtesans and prostitutes, and female freebooters	92
Women and rape	95
6. Transvestite Heroines and the Plays in Which They Appear	100
Real-life female transvestites in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries	104
Male transvestites on stage, 1660–1737	105
Female transvestites and sexual stereotypes	106
Some more radical treatments of the female transvestite	110
Conclusion	117
7. Margaret Cavendish and Other Minor Female Dramatists in England, 1642–1700	119
Translators, poets and closet dramatists	121
Women's education and access to men's language: a theme in the plays of Margaret Cavendish	125
Women and marriage in the plays of Margaret Cavendish	130
Masters, mistresses and servants: courtship and marriage in Boothby and others	133
Sexual and social reversals: a theme in some plays by women dramatists	137
Conclusion	142
8. 'My Masculine Part the Poet in Me': Women and Feminism in the Plays of Aphra Behn	143
Feminism in the plays of Aphra Behn	146
Men and women in the plays of Aphra Behn	149
Reversals of sexual role in the plays of Aphra Behn	154
The wrongs of woman: oppression and forced marriage in Behn's plays	159
Sex and the sexual double standard in Behn's plays	161
Unconventional women: learned ladies, prostitutes and courtesans	163
The darkening vision of Behn's later plays	166
Conclusion	167
9. The Female Wits: Images of Women in the Works of Mary Pix, Catharine Trotter and Delariviere Manley	169

Mary Pix: her life and works	171
Convention and contradiction in Pix's images of women	173
Catharine Trotter: her life	181
Trotter's feminism in the non-dramatic writings	182
Feminism and stage-reform in the plays of Catharine Trotter	183
Women in Trotter's plays	187
Delariviere Manley: an introduction	189
Prejudice, sex and the double standard	192
Women and feminism in Manley's plays	195
'Manly' and 'womanly' behaviour and the reversal of sexual roles	197
Conclusions	201
10. 'In Love with Liberty': Women, Whigs and Freedom in the Plays of Susanna Centlivre	202
Susanna Centlivre: her professional and personal life	203
Centlivre and the comedy of intrigue	207
Women in the plays of Centlivre	208
Women and women's language in the plays of Centlivre	218
The theme of liberty in Centlivre's plays	222
Conclusion	228
11. Minor Women Dramatists, 1700–1737	229
Woman-centred drama: Wiseman, Robe and Davys	233
Contradictions and ambiguity: plays by Penelope Aubin and Eliza Haywood	241
Unconventional women: the heroic bluestocking and the female politician	244
Reversals of sexual role: plays by Haywood and others	246
Women's language: a theme in women's plays	250
Conclusions	251
Conclusion	252
Notes	256
List of plays	287
Bibliography	292
Index	300