



‘Strange Habits’

Clothes, Climes, and the Environment in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries

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The Other Mary? The significance of Mary Fitzallard’s disguises against the masculinity of Moll Cutpurse

The infamous Moll Cutpurse of *The Roaring Girl* represents the power of a violent woman in men’s clothing; however her boldness overshadows the remarkable use of gender representation and disguise by Mary Fitzallard. Mary uses clothing to gain agency in a society attempting to ignore her. This paper examines Mary Fitzallard, the crossdressing counterpart to the infamous Moll Cutpurse in Middleton and Dekker’s *The Roaring Girl*. Overshadowed by the abrasively masculine Moll, Mary Fitzallard’s relationship with crossdressing, her body, and her engagement with masculinity and disguise has been largely overlooked. While drawing on work that touches on Mary by Lloyd Edward Kermode and Alicia Tomasian, this paper searches for deeper engagement with her motives and position in an iconic play. A more traditionally disguised crossdresser, Mary uses her disguise to reassert her agency through the appropriation of masculine identity and uniquely moves in and out of multiple disguises in order to manipulate her surroundings. By considering her lover, Sebastian, his attraction to her male form, the replacement of Mary with Moll, and Mary’s place among a larger cohort of comedic crossdressed heroines in disguise, this work re-focuses the significance of Mary’s impact on the role of masculinity and the feminine body in *The Roaring Girl*.