

Christina Luckyj. *'A moving Rhetoricke': Gender and Silence in Early Modern England*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002. viii + 198 pp. \$69.95. Review by ELISA OH, BOSTON UNIVERSITY.

In *'A moving Rhetoricke': Gender and Silence in Early Modern England*, Christina Luckyj posits that silence for both men and women in early modern texts is more complicated than the simple binaries that critics usually read into it; in fact, she shows that silence is a highly unstable site of various competing cultural discourses. With a new historicist attention to letters, pamphlets, sermons, advice literature, and dramatic texts, she aims to destabilize modern critics' complacent assumptions about early modern silence and gender, such as the "silence-chastity-obedience" equation, by demonstrating the multiple, simultaneous, and often paradoxical meanings that moments of silence can contain. Luckyj devotes a chapter to tracing the different constructions of silence in the history of Western philosophy, with special attention to how early modern writers appropriated and reinterpreted the classical rhetorical tradition. She divides instances of silence into a spectrum of meanings including eloquence, impotence, Stoic strength of character, wisdom, plenitude, lack, open rebellion or defiance, bestiality, chaos, ignorance, androgyny (i.e., containing both traditionally male and female qualities), and, for women, an "inscrutable" space of private subjectivity that is beyond the definition and control of male-dominated language.

After establishing these categories of early modern discourses of silence, Luckyj shows how they are manifested in dramatic texts and how silent characters can embody more than one discourse of silence and gender at the same time. She illustrates the multivalency of silence—ultimately to the point of unreadability—by demonstrating the proliferation of contradictory meanings silences can contain in canonical dramatic texts. According to Luckyj's close readings, *Richard II* deploys silence as both rhetorical impotence and eloquence, Hieronimo's silence embodies madness, chaos, death, grief, Stoic self-containment, and subversive political resistance to coercion, and Lavinia's enforced silence contains monstrous un-

chastity, and shame *or* guilt. Similarly, Cordelia exhibits a resistance to one stable definition by choosing a silence that encompasses both submissive filial love *and* subversive disobedience, and the “seeming” of the Player Queen in *Hamlet* becomes overdetermined because it could signify either the acting gestures recommended by the dumb show stage directions or a calculated deception. Luckyj reads Coriolanus’s famous silence as at once eloquence, resistance to social exchange, effeminate defeat, and stoic masculinity, while Volunnia’s equally complex and indeterminate silence can be seen as feigned submission, pride, and/or self-sufficiency. For male writers, the overdetermined silence of women characters came to stand for a detachment from the classical “silence-as-eloquence” trope and to signal a “turn away from rhetorical culture”(115). Luckyj claims, however, that this indeterminacy of feminine silence was empowering for women writers interested in representing the depth and complexity of female subjectivity.

Luckyj’s final chapter applies this idea of a multivalent and inscrutable subjectivity in silence to the works of women writers, claiming that they exploited the many definitions that could be read into their silences, such as power, erotic desire, defiance, and superior moral wisdom to men and their words. Anne Askew’s silences under interrogation are thus both signs of good, submissive womanhood and radical resistance to male authority. In the silences of female characters in Wroth’s *Urania*, Luckyj reads both conventional and subversive representations of gender, often paradoxically present at the same time. For example, Pamphilia serves to deconstruct gendered binaries with her silences: she advocates both discreet and indiscreet meanings for her silence in love, that is, a quiet comportment coupled with a freely acknowledged and cherished inner life full of erotic energy. Luckyj sees Pamphilia’s love expressed in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* as “exist[ing] in a silent, non-discursive space”(144). Mariam and especially Graphina in Cary’s *Tragedy of Mariam* are used to illustrate the conflation of “Stoical, Christian, and gendered paradigms of silence” (149) and the ultimately “heroic, overdetermined, and unassimilable” quality of silent women.

In her epilogue, Luckyj claims that early modern ideas about silence were changing: “silence came increasingly to signify an impermeable and autonomous space resistant to discursive expression or interpretation and opposed to masculine rhetoric . . . silence when detached from eloquence was associated primarily with women” (165). To illustrate this assertion, she contrasts male and female authors’ use of Philomela in their poetry. Male writers like Sidney and Shakespeare use the figure of Philomela as the singing instrument of the male poet’s inspiration, but for women writers like Lanyer and Wroth, the silenced Philomela functions as “a cogent protest against masculinist rhetorical convention” (173). In conclusion, Luckyj makes a basic distinction between male and female uses of silence, asserting that “if men could appropriate feminine silence to their own rhetorical agenda, women could inhabit the space of silence to resist such appropriation” (174).

Luckyj’s work opens up a valuable new field of inquiry in early modern gender studies: the history of the rhetoric—and “anti-rhetoric”—of silence, a theoretically rich “extraverbal” discourse. In relation to female silence, however, Luckyj dismisses too quickly the role of silence as an early modern cultural signifier of virtue. Though it is true that female silences can also be read as erotically and politically disobedient, Luckyj does not acknowledge how frequently feminine virtue is the intended or ostensible reason for female silence in early modern texts. For example, Hermia apologizes for speaking in public about her choice of husband in the first scene of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*: “I do entreat your Grace to pardon me./I know not by what power I am made bold,/Nor how it may concern my modesty/In such a presence here to plead my thoughts.” Many other similar elaborate modesty topoi denote an intense cultural anxiety about female speech and foreground pervasive conventional attitudes about the apparent chastity of female silence. Finally, Luckyj ends her analysis of silence and gender by demonstrating how early modern women used silence to escape the patriarchal confines of language into something like Irigaray’s indeterminate feminine plurality. However, Luckyj never fully establishes what is empowering or desirable about being be-

yond discursive meaning. Certainly the silent women succeed in establishing a space that is beyond stable definition, but this “escape” from rhetoric and discourse itself also effectively exiles them from the realm of social circulation in which they are understood, albeit in terms of the dominant discourse, and contribute to the production and negotiation of meaning. Luckyj’s provocative work invites scholars to investigate the complex implications of silences—both theoretical and cultural—and should prompt questions about whether multivalent silences also inform other early modern cultural discourses such as treason, Protestant spirituality, witchcraft, race, and class.

Marie le Jars de Gournay. *Apology for the Woman Writing and Other Works*. Edited and translated by Richard Hillman and Colette Quesnel. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002. xxi + 176 pp. \$49 cloth, \$17 paper. Reviewed by ALISA PLANT, TULANE UNIVERSITY.

Marie le Jars de Gournay is perhaps best remembered today for being Montaigne’s self-proclaimed “adoptive daughter,” who published the first definitive edition of the *Essays* (1595) after his death in 1592. For the remainder of her life, she worked to fulfill “her self-appointed role as custodian of Montaigne’s intellectual legacy” (7-8). Yet Gournay was prolific in her own right, publishing in a wide range of genres up to her own death in 1645. Splendidly edited and translated by Richard Hillman and Colette Quesnel, *Apology for the Woman Writing and Other Works* brings together four relatively short works: “The Promenade of Monsieur de Montaigne,” “The Equality of Men and Women,” “The Ladies’ Complaint,” and “Apology for the Woman Writing.” The result is a volume that will not only help to strengthen Gournay’s literary reputation—long moribund, and revived only in the twentieth century—but will also contribute to a greater understanding of intellectual life in seventeenth-century France.

As the title piece indicates, Gournay was acutely aware of the inferior status that her gender conferred upon her. The eldest daugh-