

ESSAYS & STUDIES 1994



FEMINIST LINGUISTICS IN LITERARY CRITICISM



Edited by Katie Wales
for the English Association

Essays and Studies 1994

**Feminist Linguistics in
Literary Criticism**

**Edited by
Katie Wales**

for the English Association

D. S. BREWER

ESSAYS AND STUDIES 1994
IS VOLUME FORTY-SEVEN IN THE NEW SERIES
OF ESSAYS AND STUDIES COLLECTED ON BEHALF OF
THE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION
ISSN 0071-1357

© The English Association

All Rights Reserved

Unauthorised publication contravenes applicable laws

First published 1994
D. S. Brewer, Cambridge
Reprinted 1998

ISBN 0 85991 411 9

D. S. Brewer is an imprint of Boydell & Brewer Ltd
PO Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 3DF, UK
and of Boydell & Brewer Inc.
PO Box 41026, Rochester NY 14604-4126, USA

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
Feminist Linguistics in Literary Criticism. –
(Essays & Studies 1994, ISSN
0071-1357: Vol.47)
I. Wales, Katie II. Series
801.95
ISBN 0-85991-441-9

The Library of Congress has cataloged this serial publication:
Catalog card number 36-8431

This publication is printed on acid-free paper

Printed in Great Britain by
Antony Rowe Ltd, Chippenham, Wiltshire

Essays and Studies 1994

The English Association

The object of the English Association is to promote the knowledge and appreciation of English language and literature.

The Association pursues these aims by creating opportunities of co-operation among all those interested in English; by furthering the recognition of English as essential in education; by discussing methods of English teaching; by holding lectures, conferences, and other meetings; by publishing a journal, books, and leaflets; and by forming local branches overseas and at home.

Publications

The Year's Work in English Studies. An annual bibliography. Published by Blackwell (U.S.A.: Humanities Press).

Essays and Studies. An annual volume of essays by various scholars assembled by the collector covering usually a wide range of subjects and authors from the medieval to the modern. Published by D. S. Brewer.

English. The journal of the Association, *English* is published three times a year by the Association.

Newsletter. A *Newsletter* is published three times a year giving information about forthcoming publications, conferences, and other matters of interest.

Benefits of Membership

Institutional Membership

Full members receive copies of *The Year's Work in English Studies*, *Essays and Studies*, *English* (three issues) and three *Newsletters*.

Ordinary Membership covers *English* (three issues) and three *Newsletters*.

Schools Membership includes two copies of each issue of *English*, one copy of *Essays and Studies*, three *Newsletters*, and preferential booking and rates for various conferences held by the Association.

Individual Membership

Individuals take out Basic Membership, which entitles them to buy all regular publications of the English Association at a discounted price, and attend Association gatherings.

For further details write to The Secretary, The English Association, The Vicarage, Priory Gardens, London W4 1TT.

Introduction: *Feminist Linguistics in Literary Criticism*

KATIE WALES

... each/ speaker of the so-called common language feels/ the ice-
flow split, the drift apart/ as if powerless ...

(Adrienne Rich)

THE DIVERSE CONTRIBUTIONS to this collection of seven essays are yet all united by a common aim. They present an original and close analysis of a 'literary' text, or range of texts, by applying the methodology or framework of linguistic (grammatical, lexical, pragmatic, discourse) theories, in order to address directly questions and ideas that have been raised in feminist literary theory, criticism and linguistics about gender and style. The volume is not, therefore, yet another anthology of (previously published) feminist literary criticism: rather, it is meant to complement such collections. For it tries to show how feminist literary theory should be put to the practical test, as it were, under the scrutiny of relevant linguistic insights. The result is a kind of feminist stylistics, a field which has only recently begun to develop, and which has considerable potential in the future.¹

The volume is decidedly eclectic: it ranges in the texts analysed from Shakespeare's *As You Like it* to present-day pop songs; in feminist theory from France (Cixous, Kristeva, Irigaray) the United States (Showalter, Spender) and Britain (Cameron, Coates); and in linguistic models from politeness theory (Brown and Levinson) to transitivity (Halliday). The collection, therefore, very markedly illustrates the 'cross-fertilization' of disciplines and ideas, the lack of which is

¹ Feminist stylistics, and indeed, feminist linguistics, is not mentioned in the survey of feminist criticism by Janet Todd, 'Briefings Number 1: Feminist Criticism', *The European English Messenger*, 1, no. 2 (Spring 1992), pp. 20–25. Similarly, the survey article on 'Language and Gender' by Janet Holmes, *Language Teaching*, 24, no. 4 (October 1991), pp. 207–20, with 250 references, only refers to sociolinguistic studies.

lamented by Cameron (1990) in feminist criticism.² It is also, very importantly, refreshingly clear of the jargon that tends to pervade both literary and linguistic theory of all kinds. The issues to be tackled, and the 'tools' to be applied, are clearly explained in each chapter for those readers who may not be familiar with them.

There have been several attempts to classify varieties of feminist literary criticism (notably Showalter, 1981),³ and also feminist linguistics (notably Cameron, 1985);⁴ this collection of essays, by reason of its diversity, is therefore difficult to pigeon-hole, like feminist stylistics itself. The analysis of male-authored texts (Shakespeare and Walter de la Mare) in the two contributions by Clara Calvo and Louise Sylvester respectively might be said to belong to 'feminist critique' (Showalter, 1981), except that Calvo is not directly concerned with Shakespeare's 'sexism' or 'sexual politics'; and Sylvester also looks at the comparable fairy tales of Eleanor Farjeon, and so concerns herself with gender difference. Shan Wareing and Sara Mills in their contributions are certainly concerned with questions of sexual politics and the representation of women in popular culture, but the texts involved are mostly written or composed/ performed by women. The remaining three essays, however could certainly be classified as Showalter's 'gynocriticism', since they are precisely concerned with female-authored texts written within a feminist context and consciousness: Lesley Jeffries writing on a range of modern feminist poetry, Marion Lomax on feminist fiction, and Anne Varty on feminist drama. The male perspective is not entirely absent from these chapters (nor the others), since their linguistic models are predominantly male-authored (Grice, Halliday, Quirk et al.). *C'est la vie*. . . . Nonetheless, the fact that the contributors themselves are all women, even if it is because female academics rather than male are the most interested in feminist stylistics and literary criticism at the moment, means that the presence of a masculine authority appears muted.

² Deborah Cameron, ed., *The Feminist Critique of Language: A Reader* (Macmillan, London, 1990), p. 27.

³ Elaine Showalter, 'Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness', *Critical Inquiry* (Winter, 1981), reprinted in E. Abel, ed., *Writing and Sexual Difference* (Harvester, Brighton, 1982).

⁴ Deborah Cameron, *Feminism and Linguistic Theory* (Macmillan, London, 1985).

And, as Eagleton says (1991): 'Men must learn to be silent. This is probably very painful for them'.⁵

Although in this Introduction I do not propose to provide yet another history of the development of either feminist literary criticism/ theory or feminist linguistics, nonetheless I think it is important to identify some of the underlying issues that are the recurring preoccupations of the contributors, and to which they attempt to provide answers. The volume is not meant to be definitive, merely explorative. The essays present plausible interpretations within their own modest limits, sometimes open-ended, because much further research needs to be done. One of the major problems in feminist criticism is that a great deal is said about style and language and gender, but often in broad generalizations. A linguistic-stylistic approach aims to clarify the issues, and test generalizations with concrete evidence from analyses.

One major concern in recent feminist literary theory, as Mills et al. state (1989), is the complex question of gender difference(s) in writing.⁶ Potential gender differences in speaking, and language generally, are also an important issue in sociolinguistics and feminist linguistics. The subject is of long-standing interest and very complex; moreover as Coates (1987) emphasizes, befogged with myths and stereotypical assumptions, which still have to be tested in large-scale practical investigations.⁷ Moreover, historically at least, the two strands of writing and speaking differences have been considerably confused, and this inheritance has tended to skew early feminist linguistic writing such as Lakoff's (1975) and even possibly *écriture féminine*, as we shall see.⁸ So the influential chapter on women's language in Otto Jespersen's *Language* published seventy years ago in 1922, written from the ideological perspectives of male speech as 'norm' and with positive value, proclaims that women have less extensive vocabularies than men; favour intensifiers like *so* and *such* and vague words like *nice* and *lovely*.⁹ Lakoff accepts these comments without question, but

⁵ Mary Eagleton, ed., *Feminist Literary Criticism* (Longman, London, 1991), p. 5.

⁶ Sara Mills, Lynne Pearce, Sue Spaul and Elaine Millard, *Feminist Readings/ Feminists Reading* (Harvester Wheatsheaf, London, 1989), p. 4.

⁷ Jennifer Coates, *Women, Men and Language* (Longman, London, 1987).

⁸ Robin Lakoff, *Language and Women's Place* (Harper & Row, New York, 1975).

⁹ Otto Jespersen, *Language* (Allen & Unwin, London). Reprinted in Cameron, ed., op. cit. (1990).

much research needs still to be done on this subject.¹⁰ In this volume Sylvester takes up the challenge declared by Showalter (1981) to address 'lexical ranges' by comparing the precise and similar lexical fields of two writers writing within the same genre at the same period.

Jespersen also states that women use less complex sentence structures, preferring a string of *and*-clauses. Whether Jespersen has speech or writing in mind for this 'feminine period' he does not make clear; nor does he provide any concrete evidence. Co-ordination rather than sub-ordination is a characteristic feature of the speech styles of both sexes; but it is very likely that Jespersen was relying on literature for his generalizations, more precisely, the literary representations of women speaking (Mrs Nickleby, Flora Finching, The Wife of Bath), as rendered by mostly male writers from Chaucer onwards. Behind this 'loose' and hyperbolic style lurk also stereotypical assumptions about female garrulity and scatter-brainedness. Further implications of this, and also of Jespersen's statements, I shall return to below.

By coincidence, in the 1920s also, the subject of the differences between men and women's styles of writing rather than speaking, were being aired by Virginia Woolf, whose criticism generally has been extremely influential on feminist literary criticism. Her statements on gender differences in writing have been frequently quoted; but they are prone to the same generalizing tendency as Jespersen's, and, like any such statements, are in dire need of being empirically tested.

As Lesley Jeffries says in this volume (pp. 21–48), as a reader of texts about women and their relationship with language, 'I want to know what Woolf means by "the woman's sentence" in discussing Dorothy Richardson's work' (1923):

She has invented, or if she has not invented, developed and applied to her own uses, a sentence which we might call the psychological sentence of the feminine gender. It is of a more elastic fibre than the old, capable of stretching to the extreme, of suspending the frailest particles, of enveloping the vaguest shapes.¹¹

¹⁰ And, whether lexical choices are empirically tested or not, one wonders, as Simpson (1993) does, how these particular words of Jespersen's cited would have been evaluated if they were identified as characteristically 'male' usage (Paul Simpson, *Language, Ideology and Point of View* (Routledge, London, 1993), p. 162).

¹¹ From a review of *Revolving Lights* (TLS 19.5.23), reprinted in Cameron, ed., op. cit., (1990), pp. 72–3.

Jeffries herself suggests that appositional structures, a characteristic feature of contemporary feminist poetry, might be regarded as an illustration of this 'elastic fibre'. Both she and Louise Sylvester also quote from the famous passage in *A Room of One's Own* (1929), where, after lamenting the lack of a 'common sentence' ready for the female novelist to use, Woolf describes the style she finds typical of nineteenth-century writers like Thackeray, Balzac and Dickens and then states:

That is a man's sentence; behind it one can see Johnson, Gibbon and the rest. It was a sentence that was unsuited for a woman's use . . .¹²

Irritatingly, Woolf does not specify the kind of sentence that was suited for a woman's use; but, as Sylvester indicates, it is likely to be non-periodic. This could either mean 'loose' in the rhetorical sense of favouring right-branching structures (main clause plus subordinate clause(s)) as against the left-branching structures of the periodic sentence (the main clause delayed until the end: harder to process); or 'loose' in the sense of favouring co-ordination rather than subordination, with implicit as well as explicit co-ordination. Certainly, appositional structures could be put in this latter category.

There are some significant (and rather complex) caveats to make about Woolf's statements. Her own prose style as the 1920s progressed, like the work of Richardson whom she admires, was attempting to capture the relatively 'new' domain in the novel of internal mental perspective and focalization, and of trying to represent, moreover, the new domain of female subjectivity, the 'flow' of a woman character's thoughts, her idiosyncratic mind-set and her feelings, her 'world-view'. For this a looser, non-periodic style would be more appropriate, but to some extent applies whether a character is male or female. As Woolf says in her review of 1923 cited above, 'Miss Richardson has fashioned her sentence consciously, in order that it may descend to the depths and investigate the crannies of Miriam Henderson's consciousness'. Indeed, the phrase 'stream-of-consciousness' was first applied to Richardson's work, by May Sinclair in *The Egoist* in 1918. But Woolf also vaguely states: 'Other writers of the opposite sex have used sentences of this description and stretched them to the

¹² Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (1929); this edition Grafton Books, London, 1989, p. 73.

extreme.' One traditional literary way of representing thought processes was through the indirect symbolization of rambling speech: so Hardy suggests (1990) that both Woolf and Richardson were influenced by Shakespeare and Dickens' talkative women, the very writers whom Jespersen may have had in mind.¹³ Thus, as Hardy says, we have a woman's imitation of a man's imitation of a woman's talkativeness. But Woolf may also have had James Joyce in mind, whose *Ulysses* had been published in 1922. He certainly pushed language to an 'extreme', and his extended representation of the thoughts of Molly Bloom has long been regarded by critics (some female) as a stylistic tour de force. The possible influence of male writers on Woolf and Richardson certainly complicates the issue of gender differences in writing, at least if 'gender' is simply equated with 'sex': gender style as a construct or a position I shall return to below. In Joyce's case, however, there is the distinct possibility that his own work was influenced by Richardson's (her *Pointed Roofs*, the first part of *Pilgrimage*, had appeared in 1915), although this was never openly acknowledged. The other main caveat concerns Woolf's notion (1929) that the sentences inherited from Johnson and Gibbon, etc. were unsuited to women's use, and the implication that they were better off with a non-periodic style. In one light, her comments are not far removed from Jespersen's, and what might lie behind both sets of generalizations is the social and cultural fact, as Hardy notes (1990), that generations of intelligent women had been deprived of education, and particularly a classical education, which would have schooled them in rhetorical stylistic and structural techniques and an impersonal, authoritative mode of writing. Much feminist criticism has now traced the pattern of women's literacy and education, and the implications of the lack of both for their access to the 'high' genres of poetry, epic and drama, as well as the 'public' spheres of law, government, religion, etc., and the corresponding discourses of 'power'. A sense of 'exile', of 'alienation' from such domains comes over indeed in *A Room of One's Own*, and generic questions and explorations have become a fruitful area of study: women's traditional access to the 'marginalized' or 'private' writing of diaries and letters, for example.

Generic features and conventions themselves, it has to be said, present a problem for stylistic research into gender differences (see

¹³ Barbara Hardy, 'The Talkative Woman', in Sally Minogue, ed., *Problems for Feminist Criticism* (Routledge, London, 1990), pp. 20 and 33.

below); but there are still interesting questions to ponder about the traditional demarcation of genres. So Louise Sylvester's tentative conclusions in this volume about the styles of Walter de la Mare and Eleanor Farjeon in the genre of 'fairy tales', could be seen to highlight both the problem of the deterministic power of conventions, and the possibility that de la Mare is 'appropriating' a genre that is traditionally associated with the private and domestic sphere of a female 'teller'. Alienation has become an important general issue in feminist criticism, both literary and linguistic. Feminist linguists following Spender (1980) have suggested that the 'common language' (Adrienne Rich) between men and women has been traditionally appropriated by men, and women subordinated or even excluded altogether, silenced.¹⁴

The 'silent woman', as the work of Coates and Cameron reveals, is an enduring image rendered desirable to centuries of men, who have believed that not only are women talkative, but talk too much, and like children, should be seen and not heard. The image finds persistent embodiment in drama, where the speaking voice and speech acts are foregrounded: Jonson's *Epicoene*, or *The Silent Woman*, for instance; and, very viciously, in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, with the maiming of Lavinia. This physical, literal, 'taking the words out of one's mouth', is, as Anne Varty reveals in this volume, the preoccupation of Timberlake Wertenbaker's play *The Love of the Nightingale* (1988), itself based on the classical myth where Philomele is similarly maimed. Silence is thus a symbol of oppression, of powerlessness, as Varty further demonstrates.¹⁵

The so-called 'common language' described above, therefore, largely reflect the preoccupations, the perceptions, the world-view and ideological perspective of men. As Lesley Jeffries' chapter reveals the poetry of Adrienne Rich and others tries to find a voice, a new language for the embodiment of female experience, within a genre that has traditionally been the 'high' province of the male voice. The search for a new or authentic language is also the concern of many contemporary women novelists, such as Keri Hulme and Margaret Attwood, as Marion Lomax demonstrates in her chapter.

As Lomax also indicates, the search for a women's liberating

¹⁴ Dale Spender, *Man Made Language* (Routledge, London, 1980).

¹⁵ See also Catherine Belsey's chapter, 'Silence and Speech' in her *The Subject of Tragedy* (Methuen, London, 1985). Silence, it has to be said, can be in some contexts a symbol of defiance, of subversion.

language and style has been the long-time concern of French feminists in particular, who have popularized the term *écriture féminine*. Again, Woolf's own voice, 'The book has somehow to be adapted to the body' (*A Room of One's Own*, p. 74) appears to be echoed in French feminist theory, in sentiments like Irigaray (1977), who states: 'The question of language is closely allied to that of feminine sexuality . . . I raise the question of . . . a language that would be adequate for the body, sex and the imagination . . . of the woman . . .'¹⁶ Only in such a language, and a language which is rhythmic, pluralistic, indeterminate, flowing and ecstatic, can women's experience(s), according to Irigaray, Kristeva and Cixous, be adequately expressed, and apparently 'fixed' meanings be unsettled and disrupted.

Clearly, there are several problems with this kind of stylistic characterization. Granted that it might be difficult for women to find a stylistic 'space' that is not occupied by men, what emerges is a kind of definition that is still marked by the presence of men, in that they provide the 'norm' for the resulting anti-norm. If men's style is 'rational', women's must therefore be 'emotional', even 'irrational'; if 'logical', then women's must be 'illogical', and so on. And while it may be praiseworthy to turn negative attributions into positive (a trend also followed in feminist sociolinguistics) the resulting discourse can still give the impression of reinforcing all the stereotypical images of women's discourse and style that have been referred to earlier.

More broadly, there has been a turning away in French (-influenced) criticism, following the direction of post-modernism, from the assumption that stylistic differences reflect sexual or biological, rather than 'gender' differences. As Easthope and McGowan put it (1992), identity becomes an effect rather than simply an origin of linguistic practice.¹⁷ And so, as the work of Kristeva reveals, *l'écriture féminine* can be regarded as a discourse construct open to both men and women; and related earlier styles, e.g. that of modernism and symbolist poetry (by male writers) appropriated to this mode, as well as the styles of Derrida and Lacan. One problem is that until social perspectives change, and the balance of 'power' shifts (see below), *écriture féminine* will always be seen to lack the voice of authority. And one irony, of course, is that many women writers can be seen to have

¹⁶ Luce Irigaray, 'Women's Exile', *Ideology and Consciousness*, 1 (1977), quoted Debbie Cameron, op. cit. (1985), p. 128.

¹⁷ Antony Easthope and Kate McGowan, eds., *A Critical and Cultural Theory Reader* (Open University Press, Buckingham, 1992), p. 68.

only succeeded traditionally in their careers by 'code-switching', adopting *l'écriture masculine*, the dominant literary mode, even assuming male writing 'identities'. And even at the present moment, it has to be said that for many women still, social and cultural forces strongly influence gender positions, in terms of opposition and difference, in spoken and written discourses.

Interestingly, the study by sociolinguists and discourse analysts of one social force, that of 'power', is proving to have significant consequences for the discussion of gender differences, to the extent also, however, that this particular perspective is now being cross-cut by others, such as education, race and class. Traditionally denied positions of high status and the corresponding 'high' styles of prestige as indicated earlier, many women in conversational interaction between the sexes reveal linguistic features of 'subordination': more hesitations, pauses and hedges; with particular functions of tag-questions and modal verbs, for example. As Varty reveals in her chapter, silence plays a part here: women listening to men talking, not speaking out of turn, or interrupting; generally, being very accommodating. Accommodation can also take the form of marked politeness and of the continual need to save the addressee's 'face'.

Educated women, of course, like the contributors to this volume, may not see themselves as doing what has been termed the 'shitwork' of mixed-sex conversation, and have undoubtedly appropriated, along with the complex or periodic sentence, the discourse strategies of power for themselves. But the power struggle is not just a matter of prestige and/or education: any group of people, of either sex will reveal differences of status, according to age, occupation, degree of friendship, culture and situation, etc. Far too many generalizations are made on the basis of sexual differences only, and on the basis of restricted evidence: e.g. that women are more 'co-operative' in their conversational style with each other, and that men are more 'competitive'.

The fact, nonetheless, that women talking to each other has become the subject of recent research in feminist sociolinguistics (somewhat unfortunately labelled 'gossip')¹⁸ has interesting implications for feminist stylistics, since it could be fruitfully interwoven with the exploration in literary criticism since the 1980s of the tradition of

¹⁸ See Deborah Jones, 'Gossip: notes on women's oral culture', in C. Kramarae, ed., *The Voices and Words of Women and Men* (Pergamon Press, Oxford, 1980).

'romantic friendship' between women.¹⁹ In this volume, Clara Calvo's analysis of the strategies of the conversational exchanges and shifts in the dynamics of intimacy between Rosalind and Celia in *As You Like It* suggests useful possibilities for further research, even within the context of Shakespeare's own work. In this play, romantic friendship precedes heterosexual love and is so foregrounded, even though Celia's loving influence must be superseded by Orlando's at the close.

Of course, Shakespeare's women were portrayed by male actors, and often, like Rosalind, assumed male 'disguise'; but even if we were not convinced that Celia and Rosalind's discourses were plausibly 'feminine', they do still illustrate the point made above that certain strategies and styles of speech may well indeed be open to both sexes according to various social and contextual factors. And of course, we are also confronted here with the general issue of the representation of women in male-authored fiction referred to at the beginning of this introduction, an aspect of 'feminist critique'.

The two essays which conclude this volume by Shan Wareing and Sara Mills highlight the issue of images of women in fiction and popular culture, and the problems raised and conclusions to be reached when texts or discourses are written, composed or performed by women. Despite thirty years of feminist awareness and consciousness raising, social stereotypes still abound in literature, which has the power to create myths as well as to represent them. (It has to be said, of course, that some social practices outside literature are still very conservative and unfavourable to many women.) Both essays reveal, through the application of Halliday's systemic grammar to the analysis of particular texts, the strong gender socialization in our society, and the striking binary contrast of activity (male) and passivity (female) that permeates, for example, the facts and fictions of sex and love.

However, as Mills implies, it is one thing to present the problem, another to explain it. The myths or stereotypes of romance may well be in part borrowed from male-authored and male-perspectived popular fiction, since they are strikingly similar (the passive lover, virgin bride, perfect wife and mother, etc.); but they are also myths we all live by, to the extent that they are part of our 'reality' and vocabulary. So too the clichés of pop songs pass into our lives, and the clichés of everyday life pass into our pop songs. It is no wonder, then, that

¹⁹ See, for example, Lillian Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men; Romantic Friendship and Love between Women from the Renaissance to the Present* (Morrow, New York, 1981).

popular women's romances have attracted plentiful, yet diverse critical views: for some readers, for instance, the 'passive' woman is a fantasy figure, far removed from the present-day reality, like the 'happy ever after' conclusion where marriage and children are the desirable (and only) goal. But for others this conclusion is still socially valid, and they collude in a belief-system where 'Mr Right' exists, or where the dominance of the male is taken for granted or devoutly wished for. Yet, as Mills concludes, analysts may well fail to appreciate the contradictions at the heart of any apparently simple ideology. So, too ready to assume an 'active' (positive)/ 'passive' (negative) dichotomy, we may not appreciate that the popularity of romance fiction for many women is precisely because the (passive) female has the power to attract and to 'tame' the (active) wild male, to 'convert' him to love, to 'capture' him: other metaphors associated with the ideology of romance.

In the genre of romance, and pulp-fiction generally, there is much further exploration needed, following Wareing, of the similarities and differences in ideologies and lexical and semantic fields between novels and stories written for men and those for women readers.²⁰ In this area, as in other areas, the contributions to this volume stimulate ideas for further research. With close attention paid to a variety of texts, sub-genres and sub-cultures, of different historical periods, feminist linguistics and stylistics in literary criticism of the future can lead the way to a deconstruction and reassessment of the monolithic concepts of 'feminine', and also, 'masculine' styles. And, using sociolinguistic insights, they can lead the way also to a fresh consideration of the whole space occupied by all writers regardless of their sex. Only then will writers, and speakers, feel truly comfortable with the idea of a 'common language', advocated nearly seventy years ago by Woolf again, in *A Room of One's Own*.²¹

²⁰ A start has been made in Walter Nash, *Language in Popular Fiction* (Longman, London, 1990).

²¹ I should like to thank the British Academy/ Leverhulme Trust for their support during the preparation of this Introduction by the award of a Senior Research Fellowship until October 1993.

Contents

Introduction: Feminist Linguistics in Literary Criticism <i>Katie Wales</i>	vii
GENDERED WRITING AND THE WRITER'S STYLISTIC IDENTITY <i>Marion Lomax</i>	1
LANGUAGE IN COMMON: APPPOSITION IN CONTEMPORARY POETRY BY WOMEN <i>Lesley Jeffries</i>	21
WOMEN, MEN AND WORDS: LEXICAL CHOICES IN TWO FAIRY TALES OF THE 1920s <i>Louise Sylvester</i>	51
FROM QUEENS TO CONVICTS: STATUS, SEX AND LANGUAGE IN CONTEMPORARY BRITISH WOMEN'S DRAMA <i>Anne Varty</i>	65
IN DEFENCE OF CELIA: DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND WOMEN'S DISCOURSE IN AS YOU LIKE IT <i>Clara Calvo</i>	91
AND THEN HE KISSED HER: THE RECLAMATION OF FEMALE CHARACTERS TO SUBMISSIVE ROLES IN CONTEMPORARY FICTION <i>Shan Wareing</i>	117
CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF A FEMINIST KIND: TRANSITIVITY ANALYSIS AND POP LYRICS <i>Sara Mills</i>	137
Notes on Contributors	157