Research Questions

Are new words and phrases generated to describe female-to-male cross-dressing, or are old words and phrases adapted?

Objects: Dekker/Middleton’s “The Roaring Girle,” 1611

Audience: scholars of the early modern period; drama scholars; gender studies scholars

Photo courtesy of the Folger Shakespeare Library. Retrieved from LUNA.
Descriptor Categories

- Supernatural references
- Positive connotations
- Negative connotations
- Bodily/sexual references
- Foreign references (particularly Dutch)
- Animal imagery
Tools Used

- XML
- EEBO-TCP Keywords in Context
- EEBO-TCP NGram Search
- CQPweb at Lancaster
- LUNA Digital Images at Folger
- Hamnet at Folger
- Voyant word correlations
- Voyant line graph features
- XPath
- Word Tree
XML Tagging with Descriptor Categories
Supernatural References

Creature (including plural form), bewitched, monster, mermaid, fantastical, and devil (including plural form)
Negative Connotations

Kicking, strange, mad, wicked, unnatural, drab, impudent
Positive Connotations

Safe, brave, invincible, virtuous, civil, noble, bold, lofty, cunning
Bodily/Sexual References
Shape, loose, flesh, masculine, doxy, disguised (past tense only)
Word Correlations to “Moll”

Creature/s (77%)
Eel (59%)
Flesh (51%)
Masculine (45%)
Descriptor Distribution

1. Jack Dapper's Descriptions of Moll
2. Laxton's Descriptions of Moll
3. Moll's Descriptions of Herself
4. Trapdoor's Descriptions of Moll
5. Sebastian's Descriptions of Moll
6. Alexander's Descriptions of Moll
Sebastian's Descriptions of Moll

- Supernatural: 35.00%
- Positive: 20.00%
- Negative: 25.00%
- Bodily: 15.00%
- Foreign: 0.00%
- Animals: 5.00%
Categorical Distribution
Bodily

- Sebastian: 20%
- Alexander: 15%
- Moll: 5%
- Goshawk: 10%
- Trapdoor: 25%
- Mistress Openwork: 5%
- Laxton: 5%
- Omnes: 5%
- Master Gallipot: 5%
- Tearcat: 5%
Words and their Peak Popularity

Note: Strange, loose, and flesh are the only words most popular at the time of *The Roaring Girle*'s publication
Data Interpretation

- We are able to categorize the terms used to describe Moll and her cross-dressing

- With these categories, we are able to discern whether or not various describing words were previously in use or were newly-created to encompass the cross-dressing

- We can learn where certain terms are used within the play, and if they are used in close proximity to other terms

- We can characterize the speech of certain characters based on the words they used to describe Moll
Future Research

● How can we compare Moll's language when she is dressed as a man versus as a woman? In other words, does Moll always speak the same way, or does her gender presentation affect her speech?

● How can we compare Moll to other female cross-dressers in early modern drama?

● Do other female cross-dressers experience these kinds of descriptors as well?

● Do visual representations of cross-dressing match these language descriptions?