

AMY L. TIGNER

---

## The Spanish Actress's Art: Improvisation, Transvestism, and Disruption in Tirso's *El vergonzoso en palacio*

In the past two decades, feminist scholarship has demonstrated the magnitude and variety of women's participation as theatrical performers in early modern Europe, particularly in England, France, and Italy.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, scholarship has examined how actresses in Spain interrogated their gendered place in society. Until recently, however, little of this criticism has been available in English, with the notable exception of that of Melveena McKendrick who asserts that 'the wholesale emergence of female actors on the Spanish stage ... at the end of the sixteenth century was a remarkable development, the impact of which, it seems to me, has never been adequately registered'.<sup>2</sup> In conversation with this growing body of criticism and to consider further this 'remarkable development', my essay investigates how the introduction of women onto the early modern Spanish stage disrupted patriarchal norms, since actresses often dressed, acted, and spoke as men, engaged in extemporaneous speech, and because female audiences responded loudly and insistently in the theatre. As Sidney Donnell contends, 'Times were changing and very unstable in Spain during the 1500s and 1600s, and transvestite dramas serve to mark the uneven paradigm shifts taking place in the cultural milieu'.<sup>3</sup> Donnell specifically identifies transvestite drama as the marker of cultural instability, but I suggest that the very presence of women on stage and the actresses' particular linguistic skills also indicate subtle power negotiations within the culture. Unlike the majority of women who faced the confinement of private life, actresses had access to a public forum and discourse due to the nature of theatre itself.<sup>4</sup> Actresses led public lives and had public voices, even as they might portray the private lives of women on stage and speak lines written by male playwrights. In a culture that was, as José R. Cartagena Calderón argues, increasingly preoccupied with masculinity, Spanish actresses participated in a masculine discourse through the conventions of cross-dressing and the practice of extemporization, introduced by Italian Commedia dell'Arte

troupes in the 1570s.<sup>5</sup> The particular linguistic and physical acting skills Spanish actresses acquired gave women an authority and agency usually reserved for men. Even the practice of segregating the audience by gender — placing women in the enclosed space of the *cazuela* — far from contained the women; instead this gendered space enabled a powerful female voice, distinct from that of the general audience. I turn to Tirso de Molina's *El vergonzoso en palacio* [The Shy Man at Court], a play that features both female transvestism and monologues that suggest extemporaneous speech, as a case-study to consider how women used the space of the theatre to negotiate their place in the world and to explore the limits and possibilities of gender.<sup>6</sup>

### **Actresses and Performance: from Commedia to Comedia**

Before discussing the play, however, I will consider how Italian Commedia dell'Arte actresses influenced the women's acting techniques in Spain's *comedia nueva*. The appearance of women in the Italian Commedia dell'Arte, as Kathleen McGill argues, drastically changed performance practices and the types of drama: 'Whereas prior to the participation of women, male troupes generally performed simple farces, women performers, according to the report of their contemporary audiences, demonstrated a facility for eloquent dialogue which surpassed that of the poets'.<sup>7</sup> Many highly educated and verbally astute courtesans became actresses, and their facility with oral language assisted the development of improvisation in the commedia. Indeed actresses were known for their extemporaneous speeches and their enthralling sense of physical comedy. The best-known instance of an improvised set-piece is Isabella Andreini's *La pazzia d'Isabella*, in which Isabella performs madness as a mixing of languages and the recovery from madness as linguistic eloquence. The scene also includes Isabella imitating the many commedia roles, particularly men's roles. In his *Diario*, Giuseppe Pavoni recorded one of Isabella's performances at the Medici wedding in 1589:

how on finding herself deserted and her honor compromised [Isabella] abandoned herself to grief and passion, went out of her senses, [and] like a mad creature roamed the city ... speaking now in Spanish, now in Greek, now in Italian and in many other languages, but always irrationally ... [Then she began] to imitate the ways of speaking ... of Pantalone, Gratiano, Zanni, [etc.] — in such a natural manner, and with so many fine emphases, that no words can express the quality and skill of this woman. Finally, by the fiction of magic art and certain

waters she was given to drink, Isabella was brought to her senses and here, with elegant and learned style explicating the passions and ordeals suffered by those who fall into love's snares, she brought the comedy to its close, demonstrating by her acting of this madness the sound health and cultivation of her own intellect.<sup>8</sup>

The knowledge and facility in foreign languages, eloquence in Italian, and skill in imitation illustrate the artistry actresses brought to their performance. Without Isabella and her particular talents *La pazzia d'Isabella* would not exist. Peter Parolin contends that 'Actresses may not have been the center of every play, but in the Italian theater, the advent of actresses did bring about a new cultural, economic and representational centrality for women'.<sup>9</sup> This new 'representational centrality' began in the 1560s, a time that coincides with the introduction of improvisation into Italian theatrical practice, and, as McGill posits, these new players with their verbal and rhetorical practices excelled in extemporaneous theatrical speech.<sup>10</sup>

Only a few years after the emergence of women on the Italian stage, commedia troupes began to travel and perform in Spain. In 1574, Alberto Naseli, also known as Ganassa, arrived in Madrid, where he performed the character Harlequin to packed houses, luring the audiences away from native performances.<sup>11</sup> Ganassa's success prompted the arrival of other Italian troupes from the late 1570s onward, yet their success relied upon their women players. According to McKendrick, the Italian commedia 'almost certainly introduced the idea of using professional actresses. Lope de Rueda's wife was a dancer, but there is no evidence that she ever acted'.<sup>12</sup> The importance of women in the Italian troupes caused them to challenge the Council of Castile's 1586 ban on the public appearance of women on the stage. In 1587, the Italian company *Los Confidentes* applied to the royal counselor Pedro Puertocarrero for a licence permitting their actresses, Angela Salomona, Angela Martinelli, and Silvia Roncagli to play on the stage. The company argued, 'las comedias que traen para representar no se podrán hacer sin que las mujeres que en su compañía traen las representen' [the comedies that they were to perform could not be done without the women of the company who play the parts].<sup>13</sup> Fortunately for the company, Puertocarrero granted the licence, thereby setting a legal precedent for female performers in Spain. *Los Confidentes'* fight demonstrates the centrality of women in the performances — that their facility in improvisation and their technical skills were key for the plays' success. Plots or scenes might also have relied on the actresses' gender. Given the nature of the commedia, Angela Salomona,

Angela Marinelli, or Silvia Roncagli likely had scenes similar to Isabella's *La pazzia d'Isabella* and possibly cross-dressed in the comic plots, just as Isabella imitated the *maschere*, both male and female. For *Los Confidentes*, without the actresses theatre would not be possible.

Yet one might ask, why did the company not simply find local boy actors to fill in for the female roles? Boys had played female parts in Italy prior to the introduction of women on the stage, though the roles were small and generic: 'The plays written for these all-male casts generally held to the convention that wives and romantic heroines should appear as little as possible during a performance'.<sup>14</sup> Boys also appeared on the Spanish stage and likely had some talent for transvestite roles. Boys could be well-trained, and if we cross the channel to look at the professional boy actors in England, both in the children's troupes (particularly at Blackfriars) and in the regular companies, we can see that these young actors were highly trained in the arts of singing, dancing, and acting. For McKendrick, women on the stage were simply more realistic: 'the conflation of female role and female player endowed the characters on stage with an illusion of reality which the participation of boy actors could never have achieved'.<sup>15</sup> Yet the choice is also aesthetic, for in the theatre 'reality' is not always the desired effect. Part of the interest of the boy player for both Shakespeare and Jonson, for example, is the joke of cross cross-dressing. A boy plays a girl then gets dressed up as a boy. In the Italian commedia and subsequently in the Spanish *comedia*, the choice and joke of cross-dressing takes on another aesthetic, for many scenes call for women to wear men's clothes. In fact, the plots in Italian and Spanish plays often depend on the cross-dressed women, just as Ben Jonson's plot in *Epicene* requires cross-gendered casting, in this case a boy playing a woman. Ursula K. Heise notes how the social and legal conventions of gender depiction on the stage are diametrically opposed in England and Spain: 'Strikingly, even during this initial period of indecision the issue of transvestism is a legal problem that occupies and is regulated by Spain's highest legislative authorities — as opposed to England, where the exclusion of women from the stage rests on pure social convention, not official decree'.<sup>16</sup> The 1587 licence that legislated gender on the stage in Spain has no English equivalent. The Spanish injunction not only allowed women to appear on stage, but it also forbade boy actors to play female roles and actresses to dress like men.

In as far as women were not to dress as men, the Spanish injunction was almost certainly ignored because so many plot devices call on women disguised as men and because later legislation continued to decree similar

sartorial restraints. During the late 1590s the Spanish theatres were closed completely; however, in 1600 an edict permitted playhouses to reopen but again imposed limitations on the actresses. The 1600 law became more explicit about female clothing, stipulating that women were not to dress as men and were only to wear long skirts. In addition, actresses were not to violate sumptuary laws in their street clothes, a move that seems to indicate the potential danger of women crossing not only gender but class lines, as they might have entered the street in aristocratic clothing. The *consulta* making recommendations about the theatre advised that having women on the stage was preferable to having boys dressed in female attire; however, it stipulated that if boys were to perform female roles, they should not be permitted to wear make-up. Interestingly, while the *consulta* seems aware that companies used boys in female roles, the real concern was about the use of make-up. Perhaps the members of the *consulta* were anxious that with the use of make-up the boys would in fact paint themselves as women, and that their cross-dressing would also cause untenable desire in the men of the audience. In 1608 and 1615 again, enjoinders appeared against women wearing male apparel and boys appearing on the stage as females.<sup>17</sup> Heise posits that Spain's legal edicts against boys wearing make-up and finally their complete removal from playing women's roles 'must in large part be due to the long Spanish history of violent repression of homoerotic tendencies, intensified at precisely this historical juncture by increased inquisitorial prosecution'.<sup>18</sup> All of these injunctions attempt to control the unruly theatre by controlling dress, yet the continuous need for renewed legislation indicates persistent transvestism in the theatres. Once women were legally allowed to act, authorities apparently had much more difficulty in controlling what precisely occurred on the stage.

Women's legal right to be on the stage influenced the nature of the theatre itself: the writing of scripts, the methods of playacting, and finally the audience's interaction with the plays and players. Spanish *comedia nueva* did not rely on improvisation in the same way that the *Commedia dell'Arte* did; nevertheless, the dramatists incorporated the *commedia* scenarios, which depended upon female performers. Many of these roles written for women are theatrically demanding, requiring technical facility on the part of the actresses. And, as I argue below, some of the evidence of female performance that exists in the plays themselves may indeed point to the practice of extemporaneous performance by women players. The nature of the Spanish theatre companies influenced the female roles, many of which included monologues

or monologic dialogues similar to the improvisational set-pieces performed by Italian actresses. Further, the familial structure of the Spanish companies, which was in part prescribed by a 1600 edict specifying that women members had to be married, ensured the prominence of women and the kinds of roles they played in the *comedia nueva*. As McKendrick posits, 'Leading ladies (often actor-managers' wives) had to be given appropriately prominent roles, which goes some way to explaining the dominant role played by women in so many *comedias*'.<sup>19</sup> On the one hand, the actresses had to subscribe to the patriarchal marriage laws in order to practice their craft; on the other hand, because leading ladies had a great deal of power within the structure of the theatre company, they were also likely given more licence to show off their skills, including the verbal extemporaneity that constituted a freedom of voice.<sup>20</sup> Much like Shakespeare who had to make sure that he had sufficiently good roles for the shareholders in the company, Spanish playwrights wrote good scenes for principal actresses who were also politically important in the companies.<sup>21</sup> According to Maite Pascual Bonis, Spanish 'Actresses were better trained than men as they were expected to have more skills: they had to sing, dance and recite'.<sup>22</sup> Lead actresses consistently were paid more than their male counterparts to compensate for their greater level of skill.<sup>23</sup> In *Lo fingido verdadero*, a play that depicts the life of San Ginés, a Roman actor who converted to Christianity, Lope de Vega comments on life in the theatre — though anachronistically on Lope's own era rather than that of ancient Rome — and specifies the necessity of women on the Spanish stage: 'Como te va de mugeres, / que sin ellas todo es nada' [That's how it goes for you concerning women / without them all is nothing].<sup>24</sup>

As this particular play included both music and improvisation, the comment may suggest women's roles in both aspects of the Spanish stage. Given the prominence of women in many of Lope's plays, we might consider that Lope regarded women as theatrical necessities. Lope loved employing actresses in the role of the transvestite heroine: as he notes in his manifesto *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias en este tiempo*, 'suele / el disfraz varonil agradar mucho' [the transvestite woman gives much pleasure to the audience].<sup>25</sup> Lope included *el disfraz varonil*, the cross-dressed woman, in nearly a fourth of his extant plays: 113 of his 460 plays. Tirso de Molina, Lope's great acolyte, featured twenty-one cross-dressed women in his eighty-four plays.<sup>26</sup>

The talent of actresses in Spain also drew the attention of spectators, especially those from England who were not accustomed to seeing women on the stage. In 1623, when Charles, prince of Wales, visited the Spanish court

to arrange a marriage with the infanta, Richard Wynn, a member of the prince's entourage, recorded his impressions of a Spanish play:

The Players themselves consist of Men and Women. The Men are indifferent Actors, but the Women are very good, and become themselves far better than any that I saw act those Parts, and far handsomer than any Woman I saw. To say the truth, they are the onely cause their Playes are so much frequented.<sup>27</sup>

Wynn was impressed with the quality of the women's artistry, articulating that the women carried the show and were responsible for its success. Revealing that he had never seen 'those parts' performed so well may indicate that he, as an Englishman, normally saw the female roles played by boys, who could not perform the roles as convincingly as actual women. As a member of the court, however, Wynn may have witnessed women players in English court masques, so that the difference in quality may have to do with the skills of professional versus amateur actresses. The women of the English court, furthermore, did not speak in the masques; rather they often stood as silent, stately statues, taking an active part only in the dances.<sup>28</sup> Wynn's comments seem to confirm that Spanish dramatists highlighted, in particular, the virtuosity of the actresses in their plays, which would have included their facility with language, their comic timing, their tragic pathos, and of course their artifice in acting as men. Given the prevalence of the transvestite roles in Spanish plays, Wynn possibly also witnessed *el disfraz varonil*. For an Englishman, this sight alone would have counted as a great novelty.

Some of the appeal for the audience in these scenes of cross-dressing is the eroticization of the women, yet male clothes also enabled the actresses' freedom of action, physically and socially. Women's normal dress would have covered the body nearly entirely, encasing it in a kind of cage: 'the obligatory corset (*corpiño*) flattened her breasts and stiffened her torso; the ruff (*gorguera*) kept her neck and throat not only absent from view but upright and rigid; her skirt, held in shape by the farthingale underneath (*verdugado*), turned the lower half of her body into a still cone; her high-platform shoes (*chapines*) rendered her steps small and slow'.<sup>29</sup> Since Wynn praised the actresses not only for their skill but also their beauty, he may have been viewing more of the women's bodies than one would normally see in the street. The heavily structured dress would have been replaced in the cross-dressing scenarios by form-fitting pants, revealing the woman's ankles, legs, and buttocks. Clearly, male clothing on the stage allowed the audience to view the

actress's body in a provocative way, but it held something for the actress too: she would be less bound by her clothing.

Male dress makes the women objects of desire for their male audience, but also erotic is the sense of women performing for men in general, exposing themselves for all to see and at some level to possess — at least visually. Dawn Smith comments: 'Such effects were regularly reproved by zealous church authorities, constantly alert to possible lapses in moral decorum as a reason for censoring or even closing the theatres'.<sup>30</sup> In 1589, Pedro de Rivadeneira complained that the women who perform are usually beautiful and lascivious and have sold their honesty, and that their movements and gestures, their smooth voices, and their costumes and finery — in the manner of sirens — transform men to beasts.<sup>31</sup> For de Rivadeneira, performance has the literal power to turn men to beasts. The problem then is not what happens morally to women, the performers, but to men in the audience. The transformation is not from woman to man, but from man to animal. Men experience the transgressive performative inversion because of the perceived availability of the actresses and the spectacle of appealing costume that warrants authoritative control. This moralist, then, appears to police the actions of men — not women. The actresses' effect on the male audience is feared, thus revealing the kind of power that the actresses held within the world of theatrical spectacle. As José Manuel González Fernández de Sevilla has suggested, 'When female characters don male clothes, they change not only in physical appearance but also in the roles they play as the result of their change of costume, moving from passivity to independence'.<sup>32</sup> This independence is indeed a kind of agency in and of itself, manifested in the many plots the female characters devise and in their ability to speak their minds. In particular, the women in Tirso de Molina's plays are known for their intelligence and creative stratagems.<sup>33</sup> Tirso's *El vergonzoso en palacio* is especially interesting when considering the place of the actress in the *Siglo de Oro* theatre because it has two very strong women's roles, both of which have long speeches that appear to permit improvisation, and because one of the characters, Serafina, appears the majority of the time in a pants role.

### **Tirso and the Actress's Art**

Fray Gabriel Téllez, a Mercedarian monk, wrote *El vergonzoso en palacio* under the pseudonym Tirso de Molina around 1605–6. The play was not published, however, until 1621 in *Los cigarrales de Toledo* [The Country

Houses of Toledo], a framed miscellany in which a group of aristocrats entertain one another with plays and poetry, in the tradition of *The Decameron*. Although this play does not appear in print until the 1620s, it was quite possibly performed prior to its publication date. As such, the 1621 version may be as much a record of past performances as it is of Tirso's original writing of the play, similar to the way in which the 1623 Shakespeare Folio incorporates changes that occurred during the production process. As the play includes long monologues and one-person dialogues similar to the commedia set-pieces, I believe we should think about Tirso's soliloquies as evidence of improvisation. The written speeches could represent a record of how a particular actress performed the soliloquies, or the lines could also be a kind of guide for the actress with the expectation that she would create her own words following the basic prescribed structure. McKendrick notes that 'It is striking how many of the longest and most memorable speeches in the *comedia* canon are made by women, speeches which reveal more of what it was and felt like to be a woman in that society than a library of history books'.<sup>34</sup> And in these monologues, Spanish *comediantes* followed their Italian predecessors in making the long speeches their own through improvisation. *El vergonzoso* does include soliloquies for men, but the preponderance of great speeches is given to the female characters; thus, the women have the most demanding theatrical tasks and are most likely to have modified the speeches through their own exposition.

What actress originated the female lead role of Serafina in *El vergonzoso* is unclear, but it could have been the famous Inés de Lara y Arnalte, who was active throughout the beginning of the seventeenth century in La Rioja and Castilla, or Josefa Vaca, who played another Serafina in Lope de Vega's play *El poder en el discreto* in 1623, or perhaps the legendary Jerónima de Burgos, who was known for her pants roles.<sup>35</sup> Though such identifications are only speculative, we can surmise by the demands of the role, that the *comediante* who played her had to have virtuoso talents, including the ability to change quickly from accent to accent, character to character, and gender to gender. Such a performance imitates the improvisational techniques for which Italian actresses were particularly famous. In the commedia, 'Women entertainers also would have been knowledgeable about other, less literary forms of lyric. ... Particularly significant to the discourse of the commedia was the *contrasto*, a lyric, sometimes comic dialogue between two persons, usually lovers'.<sup>36</sup> In Serafina's play-within-a-play (*La portuguesa cruel* or *The Cruel Portuguese Woman*), she, like the commedia actresses, performs the *contrasto*.

Indeed, the role is reminiscent of *La pazzia d'Isabella*, with its myriad characters, languages, and accents. The character Serafina, furthermore, enacts her part dressed as a man, and as a *disfraz varonil* she interrogates what it means to act, in particular what it means to embody another gender.

Serafina reveals that the occasion for her to appear as a man is Carnival, a permissible time for women to dress in male attire. Stuart Clark discusses the tradition of gender inversion during the medieval and early modern Carnival: 'Such festive occasions shared a calendrical license to disorderly behaviour or "misrule" based on the temporary but complete reversal of customary priorities of status and value. ... [One recurring idea] was the exchange of sex roles involved in the image of the "woman on top" or in transvestism'.<sup>37</sup> In act 2, Serafina discloses to her maid, Juana, that she will use carnivalesque inversion to her own advantage:

Fiestas de Carnestolendas  
todas paran en disfraces.  
Deséome entretener  
de este modo; no te asombre  
que apetezca el traje de hombre,  
ya que no lo puedo ser.

[At the Carnival of Celebrations / every woman ends up in disguise. / I  
desire to amuse myself in this way; / it should not surprise you / that the  
clothing of a man attracts me / since it is that which I cannot be.]

(2.733–8)

Serafina explains that since it is Carnival all the women dress as men, but Serafina's desire to be a man seems to go beyond the inversion available at Mardi Gras. As Donnel notes, 'Gender reversals ... were highly disruptive to men's control over women as well as to hierarchical relations between men under patriarchy'.<sup>38</sup> Serafina's negative framing of her situation, 'ya que no lo puedo ser', reveals her own desire to escape the confines of the female sphere, in which her father and eventually husband control her social and legal life, and disturbs the relationship between men that her marriage might seal. Rejecting Don Antonio as a suitor, Serafina is also a *mujer esquiva* (a disdainful woman who refuses the idea of getting married and having to be subservient to any man) for whom dressing as a man at Carnival entitles her temporary access to a world of action and freedom.<sup>39</sup> For Serafina, acting in her own play, dressed as a man, provides a kind of reality not normally

available for a woman of her station. 'With her clothes and acting', María M. Carrión asserts, 'the transvestite articulates a sustained conflict between sumptuary objects, laws, and the subjects that own them and wear them'.<sup>40</sup> Skirting the confines of sumptuary laws and the culture that demands strict gender identification, the play permits the transvestite Serafina, and the actress who played her, to be the agent of action, normally the purview of men in a masculinist society. In the theatre, costume enables the performance of gender that leads Serafina to a desired existence. As Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass argue, 'Clothing as "habit" implies a cultural way of life'.<sup>41</sup> In Serafina's case, wearing '*el traje de hombre*' — that is the habit of a man — she begins to act as a man, culturally a different way of life than that of a woman.

Appropriately, Serafina, the character who most believes in the transformative power of costume and theatre, is the mouthpiece for Tirso's rhetorical defence of theatre, echoing the sentiment in Lope de Vega's *Arte nuevo*.<sup>42</sup> The theatre itself, Tirso proclaims through Serafina, enables a full spectrum of feelings and, perhaps more significantly, of actions:

¿Qué fiesta o juego se halla  
que no le ofrezcan los versos?

.....

Para el alegre, ¿no hay risa?  
Para el triste, ¿no hay triseza?  
Para el agudo, ¿agudeza?

.....

De la vida es un traslado,  
sustento de los discretos,  
dama del entendimiento,  
de los sentidos banquete.

[What celebrations or game can be found / that the verses do not offer?  
/ ... / For the happy person, is there not laughter? / For the melancholic,  
is there not sadness? / For the witty person, cleverness? / ... / The play  
is an imitation of life, / sustenance for the discriminating, / a lady of  
understanding, / a banquet for the senses.]

(2.749–50, 759–61, 773–6)

For Serafina (and Tirso), drama affects every emotional and sensual level. The audience and also the actress can see and experience all desires and

imaginings, the actress perhaps even as audience for her own performance. Her performance allows her to view herself in a particularly desirable way, at least for the duration of the play. The role of Serafina functions as a proxy for the actress who plays her: like Serafina, who dons the costume of a man and then plays all the roles in the play, the actress portraying Serafina playing a male role experiences a similar kind of freedom from what she could normally do as a Spanish woman confined by strict societal rules.

The very existence of the professional actress, then, upset the codes of gendered behaviour that limited women; the position of the actress enabled some Spanish women to express (and other women in the audience to experience vicariously) possibilities that were typically unavailable to women in the culture. As Dymphna Callaghan argues about early modern England, ‘Women’s exercise of agency is not to be found in the precepts of patriarchy itself, that is within the orthodox dicta of the system of male property ownership, male political power, and social hierarchy, but rather in the contradictions, gaps, and “wobble room” of patriarchal order.’<sup>43</sup> We see in Serafina’s rehearsal of *La portuguesa cruel* (a condensed version of Lope’s *La portuguesa y dicha del forastero*) a representation of this ‘wobble room’, since Serafina has agency within the world of her own play. As a play-within-a-play, *La portuguesa cruel* reflects Tirso’s larger play and even arguably the playing situation for women in the Spanish theatre, in which women can act as men and have an active role in society. Serafina’s rehearsal showcases how Tirso’s defence celebrates the women in an active role, as the play-within-the-play becomes the ‘*traslado*’ or imitation of life.<sup>44</sup> As Laura Bass writes, ‘Teasing the boundaries of sexuality, pushing the limits of gender, the rehearsal scene explores the dangerous potency of theatrical fabrication in the most literal of senses.’<sup>45</sup> This play-within-a-play gives us insight into the nature of performance in Spanish *comedia nueva* and the actress’s experience on the Spanish stage, since it permits the restricted woman — both literally in her clothes and figuratively by society — to imitate the active man. Such agency on the stage did in fact mirror real life: as in the famous example of Catalina de Erauso (known as the lieutenant nun) who in the late sixteenth century escaped the life of the convent, reinvented herself as a soldier and a man, and adventured to the New World, where she was known under three different aliases.<sup>46</sup>

Much like Catalina, Serafina in the guise of a man transforms herself into many different characters in *La portuguesa cruel*, a play that allows the actress to display her full range of theatrical skills in both word and gesture. The play begins with Prince Pinabelo, who is in love with Celia, going into the

woods to fight his rival, the count. Playing Pinabelo, Serafina uses her maid Juana as both audience of and participant in her performance. First Serafina positions Juana as the count; Serafina, as the prince, becomes so involved in her role that she nearly runs her maid through with a sword, and Juana has to remind her that she is not the real count. Next, Serafina plays a love scene — this time placing Juana in the character of Celia, the object of her desire. Here she is so swept up that she embraces Juana, as if she were truly Celia, and Serafina were truly Pinabelo. Juana is amazed that Serafina can play the role of the lover so convincingly, since she is not in love herself. What Juana does not question, though, is that Serafina can play a man so persuasively. In fact, Serafina is so convincing that Juana says she herself could fall in love with Serafina as Pinabelo. Finally, Serafina, in a grand finale, plays all of the roles in the drama, moving from one character to the next, just as Isabella Andreini had played all of the *maschere* in the commedia. In the excerpt below, Serafina stages a fight, playing both the prince and those with whom he fights:

la capa del sufrimiento  
 [Rebózase].  
 me rebozaré, que así  
 podré llegar encubierto,  
 y arrimarme a este rincón  
 como mis merecimientos.  
 Avellanas y tostones  
 dan a todos. ¡Hola! ¡Ah, necios!  
 Llegad, tomaré un puñado.  
 —¿Yo necio? Mentís. —¿Yo miento?  
 Tomad. — ¿A mi bofetón?  
 [Dase un bofetón].  
 Muera. — Téngase. ¿Qué est esto?  
 [Echa mano].  
 —No fue nada. —Seamos amigos.  
 —Yo lo soy. —Yo serlo quiero.  
 [Envaina]

[With the cloak of suffering / (*Dons a cloak*). / I will cover myself, so that / I can enter covertly / and sit in this corner / as is my right. / Hazelnuts and toasted chickpeas / for everyone. 'Hey there, you idiots' / Come here. I'll take a handful. / — 'I'm an idiot? You lie!' / — 'I, a liar?' / — 'Take that!'

/ — ‘You punch me?’ / (*Throw a punch*). / ‘Die’. — / ‘Take that!’ / ‘What is this?’ / (*Draws her sword*). / ‘It is nothing’. / — ‘Let’s be friends’ / So I am’. / — ‘So I would like to be’. / (*Sheathes her sword*)] (2.990–1002)

Serafina enacts both the prince and the village folk, back and forth, changing vocal tones and accents, while madly punching and drawing her sword upon herself in quick comic exchange sure to leave the audience in gales of laughter. Later in the scene she takes on the roles of the priest, the count, Celia, and the prince who breaks up the clandestine wedding in the village. In the guise of a man, Serafina (and the actress playing her) becomes a multitude of different identities, significantly taking her out of the confined life (and restrictive clothing) of a woman. Beyond the narrative necessity of cross-dressing, the actress could only perform the role dressed in male clothing, given the amount of stage-action.

Not only does the scenario permit both actress and character physical freedoms, but, I argue, it also invites impromptu speech precisely because it calls on such a wide range of skills. Although other scenes in the play do offer similar possibilities of improvisation (most notably Magdalena’s feigned sleep-talking scene), the extemporaneous quality of this scene relies on the physical action afforded by freedoms of transvestism. Further, improvisation in this scene is possible because it does not involve another actor’s lines. As long as the actress finishes in a particular place, her fellow actress would know when to resume the plot. Serafina and Juana’s reactions also intimate the extemporaneous acting style, both getting lost in the moment. We might imagine that the *comediante* playing Serafina might alter the script each production so that the play would be continuously spontaneous. Once Juana stops her, essentially pulling her back to the scripted scene, Serafina admits to getting carried away with the acting:

Encendíme, te prometo,  
como Alejandro lo hacía,  
llevado del instrumento  
que aquel músico famoso  
le tocaba.

[I was excited, I promise you, / just as Alexander did it, / carried away by the music / that that famous musician / played for him.] (2.1040–44)

Curiously, Serafina uses the example of Alexander who is excited by someone else’s performance, rather than his own (as Serafina is). In the habit of a

man, Serafina creates a split self, one part doing the acting while the other is carried away with watching (herself) in an active role usually unavailable to women. Even as actor, Serafina also associates herself with the audience: she is an Alexander listening to rather than playing the music. Serafina imitates a man of action, while maintaining awareness at some level that she is a woman, watching herself as a man. As in *La pazzia d'Isabella*, Serafina loses herself in the 'madness' of the character who is overcome by love. In acting the part of Serafina, the actress also had to act out the many characters that Serafina performs. The actress needed to possess sufficient virtuosity to move from Pinabelo to the various villagers then back to Serafina, so that she, like Isabella, 'demonstrated by her acting of this madness the sound health and cultivation of her own intellect'.<sup>47</sup>

### The Performance of Audience

Learning from Serafina the power of theatre, Don Antonio, who loves Serafina and has been secretly watching her performance in the garden, transforms her from performer to audience.<sup>48</sup> Also spying on Serafina from the bushes is a painter whom Antonio had commissioned to depict Serafina dressed as a man, with the colour of her costume changed in the painting from black to blue and gold. With portrait under arm, Don Antonio finally confronts Serafina to make his feelings known to her, but she rejects him outright. Upon leaving, Antonio throws the portrait down at her feet. She, surprised, says:

¡Un retrato!  
 Es un hombre, y me parece  
 que me parece de modo  
 que es mi semejanze en todo. .  
 Cuánto el espejo me ofrece  
 miro aquí: como en cristal  
 bruñido mi imagen propia  
 aquí la pintura copia  
 ya un hombre es su original.

[A painting! / It is a man, and I think / that he resembles me in style so  
 like myself / that he is my look-alike in all senses. / Oh how much the  
 mirror bestows upon me: / I see here, as if in burnished glass, / my own  
 image; / here is a copy of a painting, / yet a man is its original.]

(3.809–17)

When Serafina picks up the painting, she immediately falls in love with the self-reflective image, but she muses about the strangeness of a painting affecting her when men of flesh and blood have not. What is attractive to her is the fact that the painting is so like herself. Yet Serafina does not recognize the painting as herself *vestida de hombre*, even though Juana has given her numerous clues that she was being painted. Costume is so convincing in determining gender that Serafina cannot see through her own disguise once the painter has made slight alterations in colour. Serafina's love for the figure of the cross-dressed actress may indeed indicate that the scene functions as Tirso's celebration of the *disfraz varonil* and the power of theatrical disguise.

In essence, Tirso transfers the male audience's erotic response to the transvestite actress. Though Serafina remains the object of the audience's gaze, she now becomes a gazer at herself, erotically intrigued by the beautiful face and delicate body swathed in male attire. Ironically, the only image that can remove her *esquivez* [disdain] is a replicated image of herself. She becomes the model for her own ideal man: Serafina is a masculinized woman, but the portrait of, and for, her is the feminized man. In *Twelfth Night*, as Stephen Orgel sees it, Olivia desires the 'boy/girl/eunuch Cesario/Sebastian, "maid and man" — [when] she might, after all, have been paired off instead with the one "real" man in the play, the fighter-pirate — and lover of boys — Antonio'.<sup>49</sup> But unlike Shakespeare's Antonio, who ends up unpaired at the end of the play, Tirso's Don Antonio slyly appropriates the guise of Serafina's own cross-dressed self to achieve his amorous designs. From the beginning, Serafina dresses as a man because she cannot be one, but in the end it turns out that she becomes a man enough for her to fall in love with herself. If resemblance is the cause of love, then theatre is also the cause of love; for Serafina, only theatre or theatrical performance will allow her to fall in love. Her play-acting becomes that which drives the larger narrative of the play in the Serafina/Antonio plot.

Antonio's coup de théâtre involves acting as well. Once Antonio has seduced Serafina with a portrait of herself, she demands to know who is the man painted in the picture. Antonio invents the character of Don Dionís, who he says is in exile from the court. When Serafina asks to meet him, Antonio replies that since Don Dionís is in hiding he can only come under the cover of night, but Antonio agrees to bring him to her garden that very evening. That night Antonio arrives, playing both himself and Dionís (much like Serafina had played many roles in *La portuguesa cruel*). Not only must Antonio learn to imitate the character Serafina had created with her own

image, but he must also apply her technique of playing more than one character. In this instance, Tirso seems to be approaching the playing situation on the English stage, where the joke is that boys are playing women playing boys. Here, the male Antonio must impersonate a woman impersonating a man. With his theatrical virtuosity, Antonio successfully gains entrance into Serafina's chamber. Serafina declares '¡Qué deste modo / fuerce amor a una mujer!' [How in this way, love conquers a woman!] (3.1322–3), indicating that she can be won only through theatrical presentation. This performance situates her as audience, as if she becomes the audience of the character she herself invented. The eventual association of Serafina with the audience is a way of re-inscribing her into the gender norms; whereas before when she was viewing the portrait, she was figured as male audience, gazing at the transvestite actress, here she is positioned as female audience.

If we begin to think about the female audience in the Spanish theatres, we can also see how Serafina does not in fact lose her agency when she moves from actor to audience, but perhaps quite the opposite. Like the female Spanish audience, Serafina becomes demanding in her desire to be entertained, an attitude that in itself represents a particular kind of power. In Spanish theatres or *corrales*, the house is three-sided, divided by general seating, multi-level private boxes, and two segregated spaces, one for clerics — the *tertulia* — and one for women — the *cazuela* (literally 'stewpot'). In the boxes, or *apostentos*, upper-class men and women would sit together, and many noblewomen attended the theatre and even had their names on some of the *apostentos*.<sup>50</sup> Any non-noble woman who would go to the theatre would be enclosed in the upper or lower *cazuelas*, which were guarded from the rest of the audience's view by means of a grill. In the *corrales*, the women also had their own passageway that led from the *cazuela* to the street and eventually a law officer (*apretador*) who would ensure that men did not bother the women.<sup>51</sup> The historical record shows that men tried to gain entrance to the *cazuela* precisely by cross-dressing, thereby mimicking the actresses on the stage: a police regulation from 1630 proclaims that 'Men are to keep away from the "cazuela", and if any man is discovered there dressed as a woman, "which has happened", he must be punished rigorously'.<sup>52</sup> When Don Antonio gains entrance into Serafina's chamber, he resembles these men who used deceit and disguise to gain entrance into the *cazuela*.

Like the women in the *cazuela*, Serafina as female audience member is not so easily contained as the play might suggest. Jean Howard has argued 'that in the [English] public theater, where men and women alike were both

spectacles and spectators, desired and desiring, I doubt that only women's chastity or women's reputations were at risk ... the very practice of play-going put women in positions potentially unsettling to patriarchal control'.<sup>53</sup> In the Spanish *corrales*, the female audience wielded a kind of power over the actors, especially as the *cazuela* was front and centre of the stage. 'The anxious cultural response to women at the theater suggests the transformative power attending audience membership: far from being the most passive aspect of the theatrical experience, audience membership encourages and enables agency', as Peter Parolin contends.<sup>54</sup> In the mid-seventeenth century, Ann, lady Fanshawe, wife of the English ambassador to Spain, attests to the popularity of women attending plays, noting in her memoir that Spanish ladies 'delight much in ... stage plays'.<sup>55</sup> In the Spanish *corrales*, the *cazuela* represented a kind of freedom away from the influence of society. For example, in Zabaleta's *El día de la fiesta por la tarde*, 'four sumptuously dressed women with covered faces and underskirts "que chispean oro" (320) — out on a spree one imagines — bribe the *apretador* to allow them into the already packed *cazuela*'.<sup>56</sup> Women in the *cazuela* were free from the men of the audience and therefore were able to demand entertainment that suited them. The women in the *cazuela* had a great deal of power over the performers, as they would rattle keys against the railing or blow whistles if they disapproved of the performance. According to one of the *loas* [sung prologues] written for Roque de Figueroa: 'damas que en aquea jaula / nos dais con pitos y llaves' [ladies who are in this cage / you treat us with whistles and keys].<sup>57</sup> To express their desires as audience, the women use keys, the symbols of household, the primary social and economic unit and the centre of female power within Spanish culture. According to Allyson Poska, 'Women's domestic power derives from a variety of sources, the most important of which is access to and control of economic resources ... Women's domestic power that allows them to interact on a relatively egalitarian basis with their husbands and other family members may have implications for relationships and decisions made outside of the home'.<sup>58</sup> The power of the audience generally, but specifically the powerful voice of the *cazuela*, is at heart an economic one, for the theatre must gratify the audience to continue practicing its art. Pleasing the demanding key-wielding *cazuelanas* may be one reason that so many plays feature cross-dressed women who have the freedom to enact their own designs.

Women's performance in the audience box is also analogous to the performance of women on the stage. Just as legislation attempts to keep the

actresses contained on the stage by insisting they be married to other performers, the *cazuela* attempts to withhold them from the male audience, yet the women find ways of making their demands known and obeyed. For Serafina, the play ends with her discovery that no Don Dionís has been in her room, only Don Antonio. As she has been compromised, she now must marry the man whom she had earlier refused. Though the play ends with their intended marriage, Don Antonio may have gotten more than he bargained for. Don Antonio has made Serafina into a captive audience, but in her position as audience she may turn into a key-jangling *mujer de cazuela*, attempting to disrupt the social structures.<sup>59</sup> The traditional ending of this play (and its many counterparts) may have appeared to restore the gender norms, yet, as McKendrick has argued, ‘Sharper minds, however, would have grasped the fact that what the speech of women in these plays invokes is . . . something all the more dangerous for being more plausible — self-expression, choice, respect, justice and restitution within the system, something which it was largely within men’s capacity to give them’.<sup>60</sup> So the conventional ending may have pleased some, but the more canny would have seen the destabilization of the social order by women who acted as men throughout the course of the play. From the point of view of temporality, the ending lasts only a moment, but women have agency throughout the entirety of the play and perhaps beyond. The plays themselves, then, give actresses and female audiences scope to challenge patriarchal hierarchy with voice, dress, and action.

## Notes

---

While a graduate student at Stanford, I wrote the first version of this essay for a class taught by William B. Worthen at UC Berkeley; for ease of transmission, I uploaded it to the web but neglected to take the site down in a timely fashion. In the meantime, a paper-mill designed to sell students papers stole the essay. Unfortunately, the early version of this paper still exists in their holdings, but both versions are my own original work.

For their helpful suggestions, I am indebted to: William B. Worthen, Allison Carruth, Amy Austin, the anonymous readers of *Early Theatre*, and especially Peter Parolin.

- 1 Pamela Allen Brown, and Peter Parolin (eds), *Women Players in England, 1500–1600: Beyond the All-Male Stage* (Aldershot, 2005). See also, Clare McManus, *Women on the Renaissance Stage: Anna of Denmark and Female Masquing in the Stuart Court*

- 1590–1619 (Manchester and New York, 2002). For information about women players in France, see Virginia Scott, *Women on Stage in Early Modern France: 1540–1750* (Cambridge, 2010).
- 2 Melveena McKendrick, 'Breaking the Silence: Women and the Word in the *Comedia*', *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos* 29.1 (2004), 16. For scholarship about Spanish actresses, see Rina Walthaus and Marguérite Corporal (eds), *Heroines of the Golden StAge: Women and Drama in Spain and England 1500–1700*, Teatro Del Siglo de Oro (Kassel, 2008). Melveena McKendrick, *Woman and Society in the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age: A Study of the Mujer Varonil* (Cambridge, 1974). McKendrick, *Theatre in Spain 1490–1700* (Cambridge, 1989). Maite Pascual Bonis, 'Women as Actresses and Theatre Managers in Early Modern Pamplona', *Heroines of the Golden StAge*, 69–87; Teresa Ferrer, 'La Incorporación de la Mujer a la Empresa Teatral: Actrices, Autoras y Compañías en el Siglo de Oro', Francisco Domínguez Matito and J. Bravo Vega (eds), *Calderón entre veras y burlas: actas de las II y III Jornadas de Teatro Clásico de la Universidad de La Rioja: 7, 8 y 9 de abril de 1999 y 17, 18 y 19 de mayo de 2000* (Logroño, 2002), 139–60; Evangelina Rodríguez Cuadros, *La técnica del actor español en el barroco: hipótesis y documentos* (Madrid, 1998); Maite Pascual Bonis, *Teatro, fiesta y Sociedad en Pamplona de 1600 a 1746. Estudio y Documentos* (Madrid, 2001); María del Carmen Alarcón Román, 'Nuns and Actresses: The Performance of Dramatic Works in the Convent of the Trinitarias Descalzas of Madrid by Sister Francisca of Santa Teresa (1654–1709)', *Heroines of the Golden StAge*, 88–110. María Carrión, *Subject Stages: Marriage, Theatre and the Law in Early Modern Spain* (Toronto, 2010), especially chapter 3.
  - 3 Sidney Donnell, *Feminizing the Enemy: Imperial Spain, Transvestite Drama, and the Crisis of Masculinity* (Lewisburg, PA, 2003), 31.
  - 4 Kathleen B. Jones, 'On Authority: Or, Why Women Are Not Entitled to Speak', Irene Diamond and Lee Quinby (eds), *Feminism & Foucault* (Boston, 1988), 120. See also Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Public Man / Private Woman* (Princeton, 1982).
  - 5 José R. Cartagena Calderón, *Masculinidades en obras: el drama de la hombría en la España imperial* (Newark, DE, 2008).
  - 6 All quotations in Spanish are taken from Tirso de Molina, *El vergonzoso en palacio*, ed. Everett W. Hesse, sixth ed. (Madrid, 1987). All translations are my own, in consultation with Amy Austin.
  - 7 Kathleen McGill, 'Women and Performance: The Development of Improvisation by the Sixteenth-Century Commedia dell'Arte', *Theatre Journal* 43.1 (1991), 61.
  - 8 Quoted in Kenneth Richards and Laura Richards, *The Commedia dell'Arte: A Documentary History* (Oxford and New York, 1990), 74–5. For more information about Andreini, see also Anne MacNeil, *Music and Women of the Commedia dell'Arte in*

- the Late Sixteenth Century* (Oxford, 2003); Frances Barasch, 'Italian Actresses in Shakespeare's World: Vittoria and Isabella', *Shakespeare Bulletin* 19.3 (2001); Louise George Clubb, *Italian Drama in Shakespeare's Time* (New Haven and London, 1989).
- 9 Peter Parolin, "A Strange Fury Entered My House": Italian Actresses and Female Performance in *Volpone*, *Renaissance Drama* n.s. 29 (1998), 116.
  - 10 McGill, 'Women and Performance'. See also, Jane Tylus, 'Women at the Windows: "Commedia dell'Arte" and Theatrical Practice in Early Modern Italy', *Theatre Journal* 49. 3 (1997).
  - 11 See McKendrick, *Theatre in Spain*, 46–50; Othón Arróniz, *La influencia italiana en el nacimiento de la comedia española* (Madrid, 1969); N.D. Shergold, 'Ganassa and the "Commedia dell'Arte" in Sixteenth-century Spain', *Modern Language Review* 51.3 (1956).
  - 12 McKendrick, *Theatre in Spain*, 49. For more information about Spanish theatre before women appeared as actresses on the stage, see Donnell, *Feminizing the Enemy*, especially part one.
  - 13 Quoted in Arróniz, *La influencia italiana en el nacimiento de la comedia española*, 275.
  - 14 M.A. Katritzky, *Women, Medicine and Theatre 1500–1750: Literary Mountebanks and Performing Quacks* (Aldershot, 2007), 231.
  - 15 McKendrick, 'Breaking the Silence', 17.
  - 16 Ursula K. Heise, 'Transvestism and the Stage Controversy in Spain and England, 1580–1680', *Theatre Journal* 44.3 (1992), 359.
  - 17 For more information on legislation see Hugo Albert Rennert, *The Spanish Stage in the Time of Lope de Vega* (New York, 1909), 516–23; N.D. Shergold, *A History of the Spanish Stage: From the Medieval Times to the End of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1967), 516–31.
  - 18 Heise, 'Transvestism and the Stage Controversy', 366.
  - 19 McKendrick, *Theatre in Spain*, 75.
  - 20 See Carrión, *Subject Stages*, 65; Dopico Georgina Black, *Perfect Wives, Other Women: Adultery and Inquisition in Early Modern Spain* (Durham, 2001).
  - 21 For a good discussion of how Shakespeare wrote for specific members of the King's Men, see James Shapiro, *Contested Will: Who Wrote Shakespeare?* (New York, 2010), 228–30.
  - 22 Pascual Bonis, 'Women as Actresses and Theatre Managers', 80.
  - 23 Josef Oehrlein, *El actor en el teatro español del Siglo de Oro*, trans. Miguel Ángel Vega (Madrid, 1993), 193–4, 224.
  - 24 Quoted in Shergold, *A History of the Spanish Stage*, 217.

- 25 Federico Sánchez Escribano, and Alberto Porqueras Mayo, *Preceptiva dramática española del Renacimiento y el Barroco* (Madrid, 1972).
- 26 The statistics come from Anita K. Stoll, 'Cross-Dressing in Tirso's *El amor médico* [Love, the Doctor] and *El Aquiles* [Achilles]', Anita K. Stoll and Dawn L. Smith (eds), *Gender, Identity, and Representation in Spain's Golden Age* (Cranbury, NJ, London, and Mississauga, ON, 2000), 86.
- 27 Sir Richard Wynn, *A Brief Relation of What Was Observed by the Prince's Servants in Their Journey into Spain, in the Year 1623*, ed. Damaso Lopez Garcia (Santander, 1996), 100–1. For more information, see Alexander Samson, "'The colour of the country': English Travellers in Spain, 1604–1625', *Studies in Travel Writing* 13.2 (2009).
- 28 For more information on women and the Stuart masques see McManus, *Women on the Renaissance Stage*; Sophie Tomlinson, *Women on the Stage in Stuart Drama* (Cambridge, 2005); and Barbara Ravelhofer, *The Early Stuart Maque: Dance, Costume, and Music* (Oxford, 2006).
- 29 Laura R. Bass, 'Costume and the *Comedia*: Dressing Up *El vergonzoso en palacio* in the Classroom', Laura R. Bass and Margaret R. Greer (eds), *Approaches to Teaching Early Modern Spanish Drama* (New York, 2006), 66.
- 30 Dawn L. Smith, '*El vergonzoso en palacio*: A Play for Actors', Henry W. Sullivan and Raúl A. Galoppe (eds), *Tirso de Molina: His Originality Then and Now* (Ottawa, 1996), 93.
- 31 Paraphrased from the Spanish, which can be found in Shergold, *A History of the Spanish Stage*, 523 n 1.
- 32 José Manuel González Fernández de Sevilla, 'Beyond Shakespeare and Calderón: Female Subversion in the Plays of Tirso, Webster and Middleton', *Heroines of the Golden StAge*.
- 33 For a discussion of Tirso's heroines, see McKendrick, *Theatre in Spain*, 115–27.
- 34 McKendrick, 'Breaking the Silence', 19.
- 35 Francisco Domínguez Matito, 'Noticias sobre actrices y (algunos actores) en los patios de comedia de La Rioja (1610–1694)', Juan Antonio Martínez Berbel and Roberto Castilla Pérez (eds), *Las mujeres en la sociedad española del Siglo de Oro: ficción teatral y realidad histórica* (Granada, 1998), 200. For information about Josefa Vaca and Jerónima de Burgo, see Rennert, *The Spanish Stage in the Time of Lope de Vega*, 371. Donald McGrady, 'Notes on Jerónima de Burgos in the Life and Work of Lope de Vega', *Hispanic Review* 40.4 (1972); Ivan Cañadas, *Public Theater in Golden Age Madrid and Tudor-Stuart London: Class, Gender and Festive Community* (Aldershot, 2005), 47, 51.
- 36 McGill, 'Women and Performance', 63.

- 37 Stuart Clark, 'Inversion, Misrule and the Meaning of Witchcraft', *Past and Present* 87 (1980), 101.
- 38 Donnell, *Feminizing the Enemy*, 31.
- 39 See McKendrick, *Woman and Society*, particularly 142–73.
- 40 Carrión, *Subject Stages*, 126.
- 41 Peter Stallybrass and Ann Rosalind Jones, 'Fetishizing the Glove in Renaissance Europe', *Critical Inquiry* 28.1 (2001), 117.
- 42 See Ruth Kennedy, *Studies in Tirso, I: The Dramatist and his Competitors, 1620–26* (Chapel Hill, 1974), 174–87.
- 43 Dympna Callaghan, 'Introduction', in Dympna Callaghan (ed.), *The Impact of Feminism in English Renaissance Studies* (Basingstoke and New York, 2007), 10.
- 44 For a full comparison with Lope's play, see Kennedy, *Studies in Tirso, I*, 172 n 1.
- 45 Laura R. Bass, *The Drama of the Portrait: Theatre and Visual Culture in Early Modern Spain* (University Park, PA, 2008), 50. Also, see Bass for a fascinating reading of the play juxtaposed with Spanish portraiture of the period.
- 46 For more information about Catalina de Erauso, see Catalina de Erauso, Michele Stepto, and Gabriel Stepto, *Lieutenant Nun: Memoir of a Basque Transvestite in the New World* (Boston, 1996). See also Sherry Velasco, *Lesbians in Early Modern Spain* (Nashville, 2011), chapter four, and Carrión, *Subject Stages*, 131–4.
- 47 Quoted in Richards and Richards, *The Commedia dell'Arte: A Documentary History*, 75.
- 48 For a discussion about the multiple levels of audience in the play, see Henry Sullivan, *Tirso de Molina and the Drama of the Counter Reformation* (Amsterdam, 1976), particularly 135–41. See also Francisco Ayala, 'Erotismo y juego teatral en Tirso', *Insula* 19.214 (1964); Joaquin Casaldueiro, 'Sentido y forma de *El vergonzoso en palacio*', *Nueva revista de filología española* 15 (1961).
- 49 Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge, 1996), 81.
- 50 Shergold, *A History of the Spanish Stage*, 535.
- 51 For more about the *corrales* and the *cazuela*, see McKendrick, *Theatre in Spain*, especially 182–3.
- 52 Shergold, *A History of the Spanish Stage*, 391.
- 53 Jean Howard, 'Women as Spectators, Spectacles, and Paying Customers', David Scott Kastan, and Peter Stallybrass (eds), *Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretations of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama* (New York, 1991), 73.
- 54 Parolin, "A Strange Fury", 118.
- 55 Ann Fanshawe, *The Memoirs of Ann Lady Fanshawe* (London, 1907), 168.
- 56 McKendrick, 'Breaking the Silence', 23.

- 57 Quoted in Shergold, *A History of the Spanish Stage*, 537.
- 58 Allyson M. Poska, *Women and Authority in Early Modern Spain: The Peasants of Galicia* (Oxford, 2006), 10, 11.
- 59 For more about marriage in Spanish drama, see Gabriela Carrión, *Staging Marriage in Early Modern Spain: Conjugal Doctrine in Lope, Cervantes, and Caldeón* (Lewisburg, 2011). Carrión, *Subject Stages*.
- 60 McKendrick, 'Breaking the Silence', 21.