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Raul Galoppe
Montclair State University

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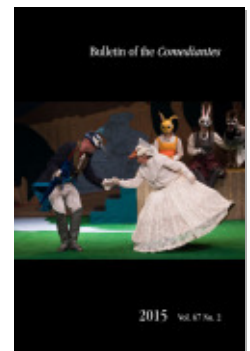
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Raúl A. Galoppe, David Dalton

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(Un)Faithful Renditions: Gender Dynamics in an Adaptation of *Don Gil de las calzas verdes*

Raúl A. Galoppe
Montclair State University

David Dalton
University of Virginia

Introduction



Recent stage versions of Tirso de Molina's *Don Gil de las calzas verdes* have departed from traditional cape-and-sword approaches and experimented, more or less explicitly, with psychological traits and gender ambiguities. Interestingly, these departures from canonical staging seem to occur more frequently among productions in English, as if translations served the liberating purpose of releasing tensions between texts and their original contexts, hence facilitating the process of adaptation.¹

The balance between translation and adaptation is reflected in the way in which we prioritize theater over drama, i.e., in how the emphasis on performance over the written words is balanced.² Since the means of translation are not intrinsic to the text but come from external sources (Barbe 335), it is imperative to assess the product's function before deciding on the methodological approach to its rendition. Drama implies that the text is to be read like a novel or a poem; therefore the translation should prioritize the original text and remain as philologically faithful as possible. On the other hand, if the text is to be performed on a stage, then its translation is part of an ulterior adaptation that also includes other elements present in a theatrical production, elements that play an important role in the translator's choices. After all, as translation theoretician Hans Sahl ingeniously states, "translating is staging a play in another language" (qtd. in Pavis 33), and in every theatrical production, even in its original language, what we see on stage is a translation/adaptation of the written text.

In the case of foreign plays, two important elements are added: linguistic and cultural differences. Since the use of clarifying footnotes of some sort hardly has a place in live performances, these differences must be incorporated into

the translation by means of adaptations that will provide meaningful alternatives for the target audiences. Barbara Godard highlights the strong affinities existing between theatrical dialogue and the discourses of a society. When this dialogue is translated, translators are limited and restrained by both linguistic and cultural differences as well as untranslatable representations between source and target. Solving these gaps entails a decision-making process never exempt from ideological bias. Indeed, these solutions are embedded in “demands for relevance and pertinence to the doxa of the target culture in the selection of a text and in the determination of specific translation strategies” (Godard 333).

This essay examines the process of adaptation for an upcoming New York production of *Don Gil de las calzas verdes*, subject of an ASTR Targeted Research Areas Grant. The idea of adapting *Don Gil* came to us after the successful rendition of Lope de Vega’s *The Dog in the Manger* adapted and directed by Dave Dalton, one of the writers of this article. As Jeff Lewonczyk documents, the 2006 off-off-Broadway rendition of *Dog* brought the Golden Age play into a contemporary context and attracted a renewed interest in Spanish classical theater among an English-speaking young audience in New York. It also signaled the beginning of our collaboration.

As is always the case with shared artistic endeavors, the demarcation of intellectual property becomes blurred and untraceable. In our case, the beginning of our collaboration was precise and should be acknowledged here. The adaptation of *Don Gil* is credited to Dave Dalton. Raúl Galoppe suggested the play first and joined the project later on out of sheer enthusiasm at the prospect of disseminating Tirso’s work among non-specialists in New York City. Thus the preliminary roles were quite easily assigned according to our fields of expertise. While one was to envision, produce, and direct a first draft of the translated/adapted text (Dalton), the other was to provide linguistic and cultural background as well as critical and theoretical frameworks, both in Tirso’s *comedias* and in suitable translation approaches (Galoppe). Once we started, these two areas of expertise began to overlap, and we feel that our common point of view is well served by the shared voice of this article.

Our new version of *Don Gil*, tentatively entitled *Love’s a Bitch*, is founded on the premise that adaptation entails legitimate transpositions, creative and interpretative acts of appropriation, and extended intertextual engagements with the adapted work (Hutcheon 6-9). We approach the material in terms of story and playability, as a paraphrase of the original, with the intention to foreground common human traits such as desire, jealousy, and deception in ways understandable and palatable for a contemporary general public unaware of early-modern Spanish conventions. The adaptation emphasizes animation within the new text by focusing on the most intriguing aspects of the original and eliminating characters and subplots less critical to the forward movement of the play. Another important emphasis of the adaptation is assuring a significant arc

for each remaining character, a result of clear desire and natural conflict in the pursuit of those desires. To achieve this purpose, *Love* engages with postfeminist and queer narratives, a strategy that serves the double purpose of reflecting on the source while bringing more familiar analogies to the foreground. The use of gender confusion, for example, though inspired by Baroque tradition, extends here to contemporary tribulations about same-sex desire and erotic triangulation. Don Juan's sexual ambiguity in our version, for example, reflects a set of signifiers familiar to contemporary audiences. This twist in the plot exposes an *other* triangulation of desire. It parodies the lesbian triangle involving Juana, Inés, and Clara, and it inverts the heteronormative triangle of Juana, Inés, and Juan by exposing hidden layers of homosocial behavior. These tensions are sustained throughout the play and reach their climax with the appearance of multiple Don Gils, all in green breeches, under Inés's balcony. Quintessentially Baroque and quintessentially queer as marks of desire, the green breeches acquire here a signification not present in previous versions of the play.

Attuned to postmodern trends in criticism that challenge monolithic views of authorship, text, and period accuracy, *Love* successfully uses feminist and same-sex desire as an imperative way of "translating" social anxieties from early-modern times to the present day. By resorting to transposition, appropriation, and commentary as crucial elements of adaptation, we make a case for translations that free themselves from text constraints while remaining loyal to their sources.

The three sections that follow explore fundamental aspects of our project: firstly, we take a close look to the original via a survey of relevant criticism and an analysis of the changes in reception through time; secondly, we forward a brief discussion of current theoretical approaches to adaptation that helped us make decisions and sustain them amid outbreaks of doubt or indecisiveness; and finally, we offer a detailed outline of the creative process central to our work, both as a record of and testimonial to the methods employed in the upcoming production of *Love's a Bitch*.

Approaching the Play

First performed in 1615, *Don Gil de las calzas verdes* stands as the most recognizable work indisputably written by Tirso de Molina. Perhaps its appeal is founded in the multiplicity of possibilities, both structural and semantic, that the play allows. The plot presents the adventures of Doña Juana, who embarks on a road trip chasing an ungrateful lover, Don Martín. In order to do so, obviously she must dress in a man's attire. Doña Juana, nonetheless, goes even further and creates an exceptionally attractive persona, Don Gil, who wears green clothes and nonchalantly seduces women and intrigues men with his delicate, yet bizarre charms.

The sexual dynamics in the play have attracted a lot of attention embedded in different scholarly perspectives through the decades.³ We propose a queer approach to Tirso's *comedia* that breaks away from the binaries of gender and sex, whether straight, lesbian, or gay, which have so far permeated most critical considerations. By definition, "queer theater is grounded in and expressive of unorthodox sexuality or gender identity, antiestablishment and confrontational in tone, experimental and unconventional in format, with stronger links to performance art and what the Germans call *Kleinkunst*, that is revue, cabaret, and variety, than to traditional forms of drama" (Senelick 21). Also, and perhaps more importantly, queer resists theatrical performances anchored in the dualism of male or female bodies even when the final intention is to deceive the audience by resorting to gender confusion. One of the premises derived from queer theory that serves this approach to theatre well is the reclassification of sex as an elusive category. As Anne Fausto-Sterling convincingly argues,

Our bodies are too complex to provide clear-cut answers about sexual difference. The more we look for a simple basis for "sex," the more it becomes clear that "sex" is not a pure physical category. What bodily signals and functions we define as male or female come already entangled in our ideas about gender. (8)

As a preamble to Fausto-Sterling's argument, Lacanian logic explains why "sex," together with "gender," belong in the realm of social constructions. In order for "sex" to be sex, raw and instinctual, it should be placed in the Real, the category that—as we know—resists all possible formulations. The moment we label sex as "sex," we are positioning it in the Symbolic and thus attributing to it characteristics that are socially constructed and biased, as we do with "gender." The internal sexual functions may be Real-driven and independent of our volition but sexual desire and performance—the first one unconscious, the second one mimetic—are clearly engendered in the Imaginary and executed in the Symbolic. In other words, sex cannot be removed from a *jouissance* that is psychological rather than biological. Because of this, sex is the ultimate manifestation of desire, and it always circumvents gender when aiming at and, at the same time, misrecognizing its object.

In that sense, desire is queer and, in his own right, Tirso embodies characteristics that meet the definition of "queer" not only as a playwright but in his private life as well. As a playwright, he created a universe of characters motivated by a never-ending desire striving to subvert the Law. As a man, his life is a puzzle waiting to be deciphered. According to Daniel Eisenberg, his sexuality "cries for examination" (11), his plays showcase a rich variety of non-normative desire, and his conflicting dualities between his religious and artistic personas, while clear exponents of Baroque contradiction, stand as symbols

of nonconformity and resistance to the political and social Establishment. If his plays caused great turmoil and anxiety in his own time—to the point of being silenced as a playwright under penalty of facing excommunication—today they are still vehicles for new discussions attuned to twenty-first-century disquisitions in terms of sexuality and performance.

But even if we acknowledge a Barthesian death of the author and overlook the playwright altogether, a close look at the main characters in *Don Gil*, regardless of their sex, exposes them as agencies of desire metonymically attached to the “green breeches,” which appear as masked manifestations of their inner selves. Don Gil is an oxymoron, an impossibility of contradictory nature and yet, as soon as “of the Green Breeches” serves as a qualifier, the impossible name becomes an irresistible force that everybody not only desires to possess, but to embody. Queer desire is present as a logic that problematizes the preconceived Baroque contradictions and redirects them to contemporary intersections and affiliations often overlooked as a possibility for human subjectivity.

Scholarship around this area has been rich and diverse, and certainly has had an impact on the changes occurring on stage. It is worth mentioning here the production by the Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico, adapted and directed by Eduardo Vasco, which played in Almagro and Madrid in 2006 and two years later in Buenos Aires and Montevideo. In adapting the play, Vasco opted to cut the original text considerably. He omitted or simplified many mythological names and references that no longer resonate with present-day audiences. He also avoided repetitions and forms that now are culturally obsolete. Like the text, the other theatrical elements subordinate themselves to the creative vision of the play as a whole. Analyzed separately, the musical arrangements, the sensual costumes, and the pictorial scenery could be considered reductive or anachronistic, and yet, as an ensemble, all these elements produce a unique effect that demands coalescence and synthesis from the public. The result is an organic production that integrates text, music, costumes and scenery in a postmodern collaborative way.⁴

Along the same lines, only now boasting an outstanding new English translation by Sean O'Brien, a 2013 production of *Don Gil*, part of the Spanish Golden Age Season at the Ustinov Studio in Bath, UK, embraces queer discourses of gender and desire that transcend geographic or cultural boundaries and translate well in present-day domestic narratives.⁵ This textual latitude enjoyed by translations allows for cultural transpositions that may serve as updated commentaries or analogues of the original text. The dialogue between scholarship and performance proves here as steady as the crossings between languages and cultures. In the case of translations, however, there is always a surplus that permeates into the fabric of the target language. Perhaps what pervades into the English renditions of Spanish *comedias* is what Michael

Billington calls a British peculiarity in the use of drama as a form of national inquiry due to theatre's "unstoppable urge to take the moral temperature of the nation" (4) and use the classics as pretexts to expose and critique urgent cultural affairs affecting collective consciousness. Perhaps these pretexts are informed by decades of postmodern Anglo-American scholarship that managed to extrapolate the Spanish *Comedia* from its cultural embodiment and infuse it with the possibility of alternative cultural codes.

So what are the pre-texts in *Don Gil de las calzas verdes* which, taken into account, may lead the way into possible adaptations? The permanent conflict between the personas embodied by the playwright Tirso and the Mercedarian friar Gabriel Téllez serves as an intricate starting point with multiple possibilities. This off-center duality incites the search for other asymmetries in the play involving bodies of desire that metonymically refer to architectonic representations of conflicting spaces, such as center and periphery, which account for complex relations between the Court, the Church, and a sense of privilege for those who belong or pretend to belong (see García Santo-Tomás 25, 35-38). According to Jelena Sánchez, Doña Juana's transvestism is not so much an allegory for sexual identity—as Matthew Stroud suggests—but "the incomparably ironic performance of the construction of gender itself through the portrayal of an oscillating masculine ideal, ... an effeminate masculinity [denoting] ... anxiety over male vulnerability and subsequent feminization ... fueled by the imminent loss of Spanish imperial power" (141).

A unique characteristic of Doña Juana's transvestism, stretching way out of the convention of the period, is the versatility of her sexuality. Whether we see it as undressing, unmasking, or coming out, the triad made up of Doña Juana, Don Gil, and Doña Elvira—three versions of the same body—stands as a fluid representation of sexual self-construction with a political intent. This phenomenon is intensified when physical contiguity, both geographical and psychological, comes into play. Doña Juana not only moves from Valladolid to Madrid, and in Madrid to the house next to Doña Inés's, but also moves in and out of Don Gil and Doña Elvira's sexualities in a never-ending game of seduction and overlap. Any, if not all of these elements, provides experimental ground for translations and adaptations that rely more on meaningful thematic correspondence between source and target texts than on the univocal equivalence of situations and words.

Whether as an exploration of human desire and fluid sexuality, as an analysis of body politics in tension with the politics of the body (or both), or as a metaphoric view of the city as a sociopolitical body, the play offers multiple opportunities when it comes to delineating dramatic approaches that will speak to contemporary audiences even if they are unaware of Spanish baroque.

The Purpose of Adaptation

If literary translations bear the necessary task of globalizing the realm of literature and its intercultural reach, when circumscribed to the performing arts they become indistinguishable from adaptations. The translative aspect, then, is what fosters worldwide distribution, but its inherent adaptive property, we believe, is what keeps universal theater alive. As Linda Hutcheon has argued, adaptation entails “[1] an acknowledged transposition of a recognizable other work or works; [2] a creative and an interpretative act of appropriation/salvaging; [3] an extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work” (8).

Unlike other universal classics from France, Germany, and Russia, the Spanish *Comedia* remains relatively unknown in New York City (the only exceptions being—perhaps—Tirso’s *Don Juan*, Calderón’s *Life Is a Dream*, and to a lesser extent, Lope de Vega’s *Fuenteovejuna*). An unfair omission, this lack of Spanish representation on English-speaking stages is due—among other factors—to the difficult task of approaching texts that fail to capture and sustain the attention of an uninitiated or unspecialized audience, even though the dramatic value of these texts is highly regarded by translators, comparative philologists, and theater specialists. Therefore, the minuscule canon of Spanish classical theater in translation is considered exotic at best and bears the misrepresenting label of “light entertainment.” In most people’s eyes, it solely encompasses fast-paced action leading to cape-and-sword resolutions of outdated and sexist tribulations around honor in a frame of order lost-order restored contingencies. Those who specialize in the field know exceedingly well that this stereotype hinders a more thorough approach to the genre. It is true that recent and not-so-recent critical research, paradoxically from Anglo-Saxon schools, has found renewed interests in *comedias* and studied them as vehicles for social transgressions, psychoanalytic expressions, feminist and gender concerns, and even queer representations. It is only logical that such trends, sooner rather than later, reach out to inform other creative fields, such as translation and adaptation. Our transposition of *Don Gil* springs from postmodern trends in criticism that challenge monolithic views of authorship, text, and period accuracy. Faithfulness to the original is subordinate to the directorial commitment to twenty-first-century New York stages. We stand with Jonathan Miller’s idea regarding the preservation of artworks in general and classical theater in particular. He believes that, in order to endure, a dramatic text “must necessarily undergo change with the passage of time, and that this change is best inflicted upon the work deliberately rather than, as it were, by default, which tended to happen before a director appeared on the scene” (27). Miller picks up on the idea of the past as “a foreign country” (44), referring to the impossibility of bringing back an original production to the present, and therefore the only possibility of preserving a play being to disregard the

“custodial authority of what would count as a canonical version of the master’s original work” and let works “at liberty . . . undergo the wildest possible reaches of depredation” because “through the risks of ravaging and degradation . . . the immortality is guaranteed” (36).

Reshaping seventeenth-century Spanish drama for that purpose, we believe, helps prolong the life of the text exactly where this life was meant to take place: on a stage in front of an audience. According to Spanish director Eduardo Vasco, one of the possible reasons of a twelve-year absence of *Don Gil* from Spanish stages is the complexity of its production, especially for private companies, due to the large cast (Díaz Sande 2). If adaptation is a sound solution to this problem, at least in the context of the Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico, adaptation also entails the negotiation between the artistic director’s new vision of the play and the *maestro de verso*’s custody of the original text (González Puche 2).⁶ When the material to be adapted comes from a translated source, the reference to the so-called “original text” is mediated by one of many versions tacitly proposed by the translator. Such mediation offers the adaptor/director the needed flexibility to add another layer of creativity to the project. Instead of being bound by words, as may happen in the original language, the emphasis now shifts to the play’s thematic nodes, i.e. cause-effect exchanges that move the action forward while still representing the characters faithfully. This liberating effect in theater translation is best explained, perhaps, by the postulates of Hans Vermeer’s *Skopostheorie*. A modern functionalist approach to translation, it reflects the communicative purpose of the translational action, which presupposes the existence of the free will of the actant and a choice between different forms of behavior. The translator’s choice is always adaptive and based on the communicative purpose that the creative team wants to achieve with the translation, whether this purpose be to convince the audience of certain ideas or to share an aesthetic or emotional experience. In any case, it always implies a search for meaningful equivalences between source and target (Nord 45).

In the case of our appropriation of *Don Gil*, our communicative purpose was to explore the characters’ longings not so much as accurate representations of Baroque transactions but, rather, as mirrors of present-day social anxieties. Therefore, we displaced the play’s foci of dramatic interest in order to represent contemporary manifestations of gendered identities in permanent tension with unconscious desire. This was achieved by revitalizing stale formulae, merging characters, dropping scenes, and placing emphasis on key aspects of the storyline. In Tirso’s times, gender confusion functioned as a convention and inspired profuse and diverse interpretations. Women in men’s attire can be easily decoded as agents of protest and transgression, though the meaning of such behavior, as viewed at that time, still remains the center of much controversy. Not all critics agree, though, on the extent of feminism or

protofeminism present in Tirso's plays. It is fair to say, however, that "in the early modern era passing oneself off as a man was a real and viable option for women who had fallen into bad times and were struggling to overcome their difficult circumstances" (Dekker 1-2). Different playwrights manipulated this historic fact into the plots to make it serve their political or aesthetic agendas. Accordingly, the concept of reinterpretation precedes the final product and remains a dynamic part prone to change as the contextual conditions mutate in time and space. In other words, there is no authoritative "original" to which the translator owes blind faithfulness but rather, as Walter Benjamin puts it, the translator must engage with the original text and help us see it in different ways (77) for, in Bassnett's words, translation is "an act of both inter-cultural and inter-temporal communication" (9). The translated play becomes an intertextual vehicle that allows participants at both ends of the creative process to relate in a dialogical way.

To achieve this purpose, we resorted to a palimpsestic engagement with other narratives.⁷ This strategy serves a double purpose: it reflects on the source, while it brings more familiar analogies to the foreground. In order to remain faithful to the source, the director/adaptor needed to explore considerable departures from the 1615 original. After all, a good translation does not necessarily produce a word-for-word imitation of the original but a new intertextual transposition that produces an equivalent effect. Revisiting theme and scope allows the translation to address new audiences from other periods and geographies. In our adaptation, gender and social identities and their dynamics remain untouched, speaking meaningfully to contemporary New York audiences.

Radiography of the Process

In our case, the approach to the material comes always from the practitioner's perspective, where direction and adaptation merge. Our main concern is the connection between the story and its playability. In other words, crossroad decisions as an adaptor are influenced by the need to create work as a director. As we documented earlier in this article, our first attempt at the Spanish Golden Age was with Lope de Vega's *The Dog in the Manger*, brought into a contemporary context and so providing an entry point for audiences through humorous, outlandish, and irreverent staging techniques.

Capitalizing on this experience and using the same strategies, we entered the world of Tirso's *Don Gil*, aware of the challenge as well as the possibilities. The story of Doña Juana, a woman abandoned by her lover who steals his fraudulent identity, follows him to disrupt his marrying plans and, along the way, makes everyone fall in love with her, has all the ingredients for screwball comedy. The protagonist's aggression and creativity, and the dynamic mechanisms that they

provoke amongst the other characters, provide a fascinating ground to explore desire, sexuality, and the vicissitudes of human interactions under the lens of non-binary gender identities.

If all the elements in the play may resonate successfully with new audiences, we believe that the original title is problematic. As Charles Briffa and Rose Marie Caruana note, if “literary translation is a journey from one culture to another” then “the translated title functions as a bridge between the two cultures” that provides the needed continuity between source and target texts “heralding the point of departure and focusing attention on the point of arrival” (11). The authors list four approaches to translating titles: transference (loan titles with original orthography), naturalization (naturalized loan titles), literality (literal titles), and swift (alternative titles) (5). The fourth approach is the one that interests us because it favors content-related continuity, thereby providing multi-layered renditions (11).⁸

Experimenting with the title, we tried *Don Jethro and His Green Jeans* first.⁹ We contemplated *Don Gilbert and His Green Breeches* but opted for *Don Gil of the Green Breeches* at that time and used Inés’s early conversation with her father to clarify the contrast in the name. In a more recent redrafting of the play still in progress, we changed the title again to *Love’s a Bitch*.

Consistent with the title scrutiny are the three premises on which we base our adaptation of *Don Gil* (henceforth *Love’s a Bitch*):

- 1) Every character should have an arc (i.e. each should express a strong desire that triggers their motivations and whose pursuit defines everyone’s actions for the entire play).
- 2) All efforts will be focused toward fulfilling the comedic potential of the original.
- 3) The creative process will acknowledge and address questions that a contemporary audience would have about the original play.

Character Arc

Based on the belief that less is more, and driven by the imperative of accommodating the play within the possibilities of our company, we decided to eliminate the less intriguing characters, those who do not struggle to achieve something. We knew the play narrative would be stronger if carried out by characters with an arc, so we eliminated those who lacked it. Only six characters stayed in the new version: Doña Juana, Doña Inés, Doña Clara, Don Martín, Don Juan, and Caramanchel. By eliminating the *barbas*, figures of paternal authority, we expected to switch the action away from power relations and subversion of power and into peer relations triggered by desire.

In previous approaches to the play, the main emphasis fell on Doña Juana impersonating Don Gil and creating confusion with her male attire, as if the

clothes alone bore the power to change perception in the other characters. Our version explores desire rooted in the fluidity of subjectivity beyond a gendered body defined by clothes. A character's attire may help reveal the body underneath but the attraction is preconceived and remains fixed while gender flows in multiple directions.

The garden scene in Act 1 provides the ground to explore this concept. The attraction of the other characters for Doña Juana impersonating Don Gil with green breeches exemplifies different agencies of desire. In Lacanian terms, Don Gil in green becomes a signifier, and, as such, it represents the different subjects for another signifier (Lacan 207). Specifically for Inés, it represents a soft man with feminine attributes, an ideal partner who completes her narcissistically within a heteronormative configuration involving two females. In the case of Clara, represented as a lesbian, her desire circumvents the object camouflaged as a man and hits a homoerotic target in the body underneath the clothes. Finally, Juan's reaction to the green signifier is of queer confusion as he questions his desire at the level of the disguise that lies on the surface as the first frontier of gender. In short, the garden scene sets the dynamics of gender in motion as it introduces a constellation of anxieties produced by contemporary negotiations of urban subjectivities.

If the elimination of the secondary and less intriguing characters allowed us to delve further into the psychology of the remaining ones from multiple perspectives, an unavoidable problem was solving the plot holes that were created as a consequence of the cuts. Quintana, for example, fulfills a fundamental role when he delivers the letters on behalf of his lady, Doña Juana. Without him, Juana becomes her own agent and takes care of the situation with no other help than her own ingenuity and versatility. In our version, she impersonates a nun from the convent she allegedly entered in dishonor. Playing the nun with "a message" allows Juana's character to add another layer of complexity to the farcical deception she concocted from the beginning. As is often the case in artistic endeavors, ideas that develop out of sheer necessity during workshop productions prove to be excellent additions to the original.

Comedic Potential

Tirso de Molina's comic art and craft has been studied in the last forty years by David H. Darst, Linda Elizabeth Haughton, P. R. K. Halkhoree, and Jane Albrecht, among many other scholars, all of whom agree that the humorous possibilities of *Don Gil de las calzas verdes* arise from the boisterous situations generated by the characters. In the garden scene, for example, the comedic effect comes from the instant attraction of Doña Inés and Doña Clara for Don Gil, and the jealousy this generates in Don Juan. This tripartite structure of desire (Inés), jealousy (Juan), and desire (Clara) is expanded further in our version by applying the Rule of Three, a pattern of set-up, anticipation, and punch line that

comedians exploit to produce a joke. Consequently Inés establishes the set-up, Clara reinforces it, and Juan provides the third element, the one that breaks our expectations and produces the comic effect. The following chart presents both approaches:

	<i>Don Gil of the Breeches Green</i> Tr. Browning and Minelli	<i>Love's a Bitch</i> Adapt. Dalton	
D	Inés: (<i>aside</i>) A graceful gentleman! How well he moves! How fair of face he is!	Inés: (<i>Aside.</i>) My God! I've never seen a man so fair. (13)	1
J	Juan: (<i>aside</i>) O heavens, no! Doña Inés, is she now staring at this man? She is! How fast my envy of him grows. (670-74) (1, 221)	Clara: (<i>Aside.</i>) He is pure grace. I never knew a man could be so beautiful! (<i>Having stopped the musicians, who seem confused, Juan advances on Juana.</i>)	2
D	Clara: (<i>aside</i>) Don Gil, that gem! My heart belongs to him! (773) (1, 224)	Juan: (<i>Aside.</i>) I can't stand it! Doña Inés can scarcely hide her fascination with this man! He's only just met her, and I'm already burning with jealousy! (<i>Aloud.</i>) Sir, I demand you answer for this intrusion. (<i>Juan grabs Juana roughly by her shoulders and turns her to face him.</i>) Juana: Forgive me sir, if I've offended you. (<i>Juana offers her hand to Juan, who takes it as the musicians begin to play again. Juan looks into her eyes.</i>) Juan: (<i>Aside.</i>) My God, he is an angel! I'm burning, but not with jealousy! (<i>Confused.</i>) This man has set my heart on fire! (14)	3

D=desire; J=jealousy.

1=set-up is established; 2=set-up is reinforced; 3=the third element of surprise and absurdity breaks the pattern and creates the joke.

Gender confusion here, though inspired by Baroque tradition, extends into contemporary tribulations about same-sex desire and erotic triangulation. The path that the adaptation follows, from transposition to commentary, according to Debora Cartmell's template, opens the door for Don Juan's sexual ambiguity with a set of signifiers in familiar terms for contemporary audiences:¹⁰

JUAN. *(Aside.)* What's happening to me? I was afraid Don Gil would take Inés away from me, but instead this man's every move, every feature of his delicate face commands *my* heart. No! Inés is the one I love. (16)¹¹

Don Juan's tribulations escalate to a revealing soliloquy that exposes the ambivalence of his actions. Besides creating an arc for the character, this adds another layer of complexity to the original pattern of desire and jealousy as it breaks the univocal tension between them:

JUAN. *(Aside.)* They say that Cupid is a child, but I say he's an impudent little shit! How can this be happening to me? I will conquer this imp who plays such a nasty trick on me. My only choice is to let Inés think I'm jealous. I will play that this Gil is my rival, and if he continues to prick at me, to drive me at such foolishness, then I cannot be responsible for the violence of my actions. (18)

This twist in the plot discloses an other-triangulation of desire. It parodies the lesbian triangle involving Juana, Inés, and Clara and it inverts the heteronormative triangle of Juana, Inés and Juan by exposing hidden layers of homosocial behavior. These tensions are sustained throughout the play and reach their climax with the appearance of multiple Don Gils, all in green breeches, under Inés's balcony. In that scene, Martín confuses Juan with his lover's soul and reciprocates his homoerotic attraction, this time disguised as Neoplatonic desire:

MARTIN. Spirit, have mercy on me! What else could you want from me? You can see my suffering! You loved me once. Let your love for me stop this torment! I couldn't save you. I couldn't save the child. I'll just... I'll do anything; just leave me the name "Don Gil." If you have any mercy,

leave me that, and let me use it to wed
Inés before I die. (67)

It is important to note the use of the green breeches and the name “Don Gil” as a mask that veils sexual difference and exposes desire beyond the social constraints attached to sex and its practices. By hiding identities in an explicit way, a mask adds confusion and generates desire by defying us to sort out the confusion it creates. Quintessentially Baroque and quintessentially queer, the green breeches as masks of desire serve as crucial elements in exploiting comedic situations as they break away from compulsory hetero-normalizations of the play.

Contemporary Reception

One of the most disconcerting elements in the original *Don Gil de las calzas verdes* that preoccupies critics and directors alike is its resolution and ending. Why on earth would a woman like Juana want to marry a man like Martín? If her initial motivation may be justified under the motto “Love is blind,” her final decision is difficult to defend. After all, characters should grow and change after a moment of anagnorisis. That is what theater is all about. As the adaptation was taking shape, one objective guiding the creative process was to acknowledge and address questions that a contemporary audience would have about the original play. Instead of expecting the audience to bridge the gap of cultural and historical differences in front of them—something reserved for specialists, not necessarily for theatergoers—our strategy was to intrigue them with such differences. Regarding people’s capacity to appreciate a play when they are unfamiliar with its emblematic, allegorical or iconographic references, Miller believes that “the great works always deliver a very large part of what is valuable in them without having to know very much other than [one’s] own heart” (39). A contemporary focus on the “green” signifier inherent in the breeches, not necessarily present in the original, paved the way for a climax and resolution attuned to the wider audience we had in mind.

Originally in Act 3, multiple characters claim to be Don Gil before the eyes of a disconcerted Caramanchel on the ground and an astonished Doña Inés, who is witnessing the romp from her balcony. However only two Gils, Don Martín and Doña Juana, are dressed in green. Our version emphasizes the semiotic value of the green breeches not only as indicators of desire but also as liberating elements capable of freeing the subject from social and sexual constraints. The four pretenders—Juan, Martín, Clara, and Juana—simultaneously on stage, all in green and fighting for their lives, produce a monochrome doppelgänger effect that equates queer desire for cross-dressing with a desire for freedom. All characters in green breeches, male and female, are crossing into a queer zone beyond gender binaries, which the audience may decode not as a Baroque

convention but as gender subversion, affirmation of unconventional lifestyles or a rebellious act against the established social norm.

The climax in the original is produced when the scene escalates to a noisy argument between Don Juan and Doña Juana over who is the real Don Gil. While Juana's attack is verbal, it is Quintana who translates her words into action by drawing his sword against Don Juan and wounding him. In our version, all four Don Gils use their swords against each other and wound their opponents in the confrontation. The fight is interrupted by Inés who screams offstage and then enters the scene carrying the torn, muddy dress of Doña Elvira, whom she presumes dead, killed by Don Martín. The dress, now an empty shell, a reminder of gender mutability and loss, forces the characters to reflect their motivations. Amid a swirl of accusations and name-callings, Juana as Don Gil draws her sword again against Martín; however, this time he disarms her and is about to strike her down were it not for the other characters' intervention and a squad of guards who enter the scene followed by Caramanchel.

But no happy ending is reserved for Doña Juana. Upon revealing her true identity all opinions turn against her, and two guards restrain her and tie her up. The only way to escape her predicament is to accept that her crimes were motivated by her lost honor and to marry Don Martín in order to restore it. Juana and the audience know, however, that this is not true, at least not any more. So many vicissitudes had made her grow into an emancipated human being capable of love beyond the constraints of gender and sexuality. And yet, social convention forces her back into heteronormativity as punishment.

The awkwardness of the conventional ending is shaped as a question to the audience: Should order be restored and heteronormativity reimposed? The answer to these questions lies in the cycle of tragedy and comedy proposed by Matthew Stroud. This cycle "rather than being optimistic and regenerative, from tragedy to comedy, ... is rather a trajectory from the happiness promised to single people if they marry to the tragedy that awaits them in marriage because of the failure of the symbolic to keep its promise" (167). Going beyond this, we see this broken promise as the impossibility of heteronormativity encompassing the spectrum of human desire, as all the characters in the adapted play clearly demonstrate.

Notes

1. Available translations of *Don Gil* include Browning and Minelli (1991), Gordon Minter (1991), Laurence Boswell with Deirdre McKenna (1992), and Sean O'Brien (2013). Each one represents a unique contribution to facilitating its performance in English-speaking countries. In Spanish, Eduardo Vasco's version of the play (2006) also envisions the text as an integrated element within a theatrical production.

2. We refer to "drama" as written text in the form of a play script and to "theater" as the production of such script on stage. Sirkku Aaltonen draws a distinction between drama translation, i.e. texts to be read rather than performed, and theatre translation, which produces "performance texts" (4).

3. For different scholarly approaches to sexuality in *Don Gil*, see Galoppe 145-47, Sánchez 122-25, and Bayliss 318-19.

4. Eduardo Vasco's creative team for his version of *Don Gil de las calzas verdes* includes Alicia Lázaro, Lorenzo Caprile, and Carolina González in charge of the music, the costume and the scenic designs respectively. For a complete list of the play's production team, see Téllez (Vasco) 107.

5. Quintana is presented as a queer character, which changes the dynamics of his ininteraction with Doña Juana and, more decisively, with Don Martín when he reports the "death" of his mistress in childbirth at the beginning of Act 3. Later on in the play, when confronted by Don Juan, Don Martín confuses him with the wandering soul of Doña Juana and, disregarding the sex of his opponent, passionately kisses him in a queer pronouncement that dislocates sexual attraction from conventional binaries.

6. According to Jonathan Miller, "[when we execute] custodial authority of what would count as a canonical version of the master's original work, [the] withered appearance" of the final product exposes the futility of the effort (36).

7. Don Juan's sexual confusion, for example, hints at "King's Dilemma" the musical number from *Victor/Victoria* (Bricusse 1995), in which King Marchand, a heterosexual gangster from Chicago struggles to assess his sexuality based on his attraction to Victor, a female impersonator, without knowing that Victor is really a woman pretending to be a gay man.

8. The cognitive approach to Type 4 title translation, as stated by Briffa and Caruana, "proceeds on the idea that translators (as readers) generate mental representations based on textual triggers to arrive in a creative way at a relevant interpretation. ... Translation is a cooperative activity, and the target title is thus viewed as arising out of the embodied interaction between translator and text" (8).

9. The reason behind changing the name of the main character to Jethro was to reflect the rusticity suggested by the original, including some loosely based allophonic faithfulness. It was one way of dealing with the untranslatable contrast between the noble "Don" and the rustic "Gil," a subterfuge pinned to the play from the title itself.

10. Debora Cartmell lists three categories of adaptation with decreasing levels of faithfulness to the original text: "transposition," "commentary," and "analogy" (24). Our version adds a "commentary," which can be read as what Julie Sanders calls "a political act" (97).

11. As an intercultural reference to the Broadway version of Blake Edwards's *Victor/Victoria*, Don Juan's lines evoke King Marchand's struggle between his desire for another man and his socially learned concept of manhood and male behavior (see n7).

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