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“¿Y sois hombre o sois mujer?”: Sex and Gender in Tirso’s Don Gil de las calzas verdes

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When Henry Sullivan opened the question of the insight that the writings of Jacques Lacan could bring to the comedia, he came somewhat early on to Tirso’s magisterial comedia de enredo [comedy of intrigue and deception], Don Gil de las calzas verdes. As with most things Lacanian, his paper, “The Sexual Ambiguities of Tirso de Molina’s Don Gil de las calzas verdes,” is not easily accessible, having been published in the Proceedings of the Third Annual Golden Age Drama Symposium in El Paso, Texas. It is an important contribution to Tirsonian studies, however, and he identifies three themes that bring Lacan to bear on the text: “1) the fictionality of identity, 2) the role of desire in the subversion of convention, and 3) the arbitrariness of secondary gender distinctions between the sexes.” It is the first and third assertions that are of interest here, especially as they relate to Juana’s identities and the reactions of other characters to her.

The primary motivation for the play comes from disturbances in the Imaginary registers of both Martín and Juana. Martín fell in love with Juana and, in order to have sex with her, promised to marry her. Believing him, she said yes, but he was unwilling to submit his desire to the mediation of marriage (the Symbolic) by actually giving her the word he promised her. Her reaction to his egoistic treatment of her is to become his rival and seek revenge against him (Don Gil 1767). By insisting on the satisfaction of her egoistic demands for Martín to honor his promise to her, she is partaking of the fundamental rivalry, the fight to the death, that constitutes the human world. The fact that she does not end up killing him but marrying him does not alter the comic dénouement in the Imaginary. Both love and revenge are manifestations of moi [ego] illusions of unity and fulfillment (unlike Hesse and McCrary’s
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early assertion that they are in some way opposite motivations\(^5\). Indeed, this rivalry is made manifest in that both become suitors of Inés, rivals for her affection.

A close relationship exists between Juana's motivation in the Imaginary (either destruction of her rival or fulfillment of her love) and her goal in the Symbolic (marriage). Of course, the Imaginary and the Symbolic are never completely separated, and sexuality, in particular, takes place on both slopes. While the Symbolic appears to totalize the system of the world, sexual relations always imply the capture of the image of the other in the Imaginary.\(^6\) At the same time, one's sexuality is always tied to the Symbolic process: a sexual position is achieved only through the symbolization of the man or the woman.\(^7\) For Ragland-Sullivan, there is an important difference in the importance of each to the different sexes: "man takes his sexual pleasure in woman principally on the Imaginary slope, while she finds hers in him on the Symbolic plane,"\(^8\) an assertion that has particular relevance to Martín (who looks for satisfaction in the jouissance [pleasure] offered by sex and money) and Juana (who seeks hers in marriage).

Masculinity and femininity, then, are functions of the Symbolic; they are one's response to the Law, the Name-of-the-Father. There is, quite simply, no necessary link between one's anatomical sex and one's object choice or sexual identification.\(^9\) Sexuality is strictly an ordering, a legislative contract that all human beings are required to enter into if they are to become participating members of human society. The choosing of the phallic function is not dependent on anatomy—there are phallic women and feminine men, and the secondary characteristics associated with each sex are completely arbitrary.\(^10\) While it is a commonplace to say that men are not always masculine and women are not always feminine, in the comedia this disjunction between sex and gender produces an amazing fluidity, especially in the identity of women. Without the Symbolic one is amorphous, or rather, polymorphous, which recalls Juana's amazing ability to change who she is.

Juana has three personifications: Don Gil (dressed as a man as we first see her in act 1); Doña Elvira (dressed as a woman—even in the clothes of Doña Inés); and Doña Juana (also dressed as a woman). She shifts among these identities with great ease (see, for example, 1135–37). As testimony to the power of the Symbolic, the only indication that the other characters seem to have regarding her identity is her clothing. Except for Caramanchel and Martín, all those around her accept at face value her apparent sexuality (Juana
or Gil) and her personal identity (Juana, Gil, or Elvira). On some level, she is not just Juana in disguise; she is Gil and Elvira as well (1930).

At first glance, it is surprising that the other characters, both men and women, seem not to know that Juana dressed up as Gil is a woman in disguise (see 254, 792–93, 911–12, 2015). Two reasons appear to obtain: the fluid nature of pre-Symbolic sexual identity in general, and the importance of engaño a los ojos [deception to the eyes]. Although much of the enredo [intrigue] of the play is the result of deliberate disguise on the parts of Juana, Martín, and others, it should also be noted that the very foundation of interpersonal discourse is misunderstanding.11 The enormous fluidity of identity and sexuality demonstrated by Juana complements the others' inability to distinguish between appearance and reality. If reality itself is unstable, then what hope can one ever have of reaching a kind of totalized truth? It is no wonder that Inés calls this new suitor, “Don Gil el falso” [Don Gil the false] (2403); he is false in his not being the right Gil, in not being Gil at all, and in not even being a man, in addition to the further accusation that he is false in his inconstancy in love.

Caramanchel, as the gracioso who fits least easily within the boundaries of the Symbolic stage society that rules Juana, Inés, and Martín, has suspicions about his new master, but they are clearly not of the either-or type. Sullivan says that Caramanchel is never completely fooled by Juana, but that implies that he “knows” the truth.12 I would rather characterize his reaction as one in which he is perfectly willing to accept that there is more than one kind of male or female. Because Juana doesn't have a beard (2224) and has a voz tiplada [soprano voice] (536), he makes a number of puns on capón (¿capón y con cosquillas? [a ticklish capon?] 743; also, 2868). When Juana-Gil says he/she is in love with Juana-Elvira, Caramanchel asks if (s)he has the teeth to eat her (1692–93). Unlike Martín, who at least created the surname “de Albornoz,” Juana as Don Gil is castrated as to his/her name because (s)he has no patronym, no Name-of-the-Father, as Caramanchel links the two concepts:

Capón sois hasta en el nombre;  
pués si en ello se repara  
las barbas son en la cara  
lo mismo que el sobrenombre.

(519–22)
[You are a capon even in your name; 
for if one looks into it 
a beard on the face 
is the same as a surname (name-of-the-father).]

Even when he finally sees Juana in feminine clothing, despite his 
previous suspicion, Caramanchel at first doesn't believe his eyes. 
Yet, he doesn't force her into either role ("¿De día Gil, de noche 
Gila?" [Gil by day, Gila by night?] 2689). Although Juana is unwil-
ing to reveal to him just yet that she is also Gil, he calls her 
_hembrimacho_ [a combination of _hembra_, female, and _macho_, male] 
(1699), _amo o ama_ [master or mistress] (2701), _amo hermafrodita_ 
[hermaphrodite master] (724, 2707), saying that it is forbidden to 
have fish and meat together (another eating metaphor, 2708–9). This 
Juana as Gil is a _capón_, a castrated man, but she is also a phallic 
woman. She is not yet enrolled in a fixed way in either category of 
the Symbolic (man or woman) because Martín has abandoned her, 
left her to suffer in the Imaginary without benefit of the mediation 
of the Symbolic. As a result, however, she possesses remarkable 
fluidity in her identity. She can be man, woman, not-man (but not 
woman), not-woman (but not man), or even not a person (but a soul, 
as we shall see). 13

In a recent collection of essays, Everett Hesse includes the 
relationship between Juana and Inés under the heading, "El amor 
homosexual." 14 While he notes that Juana does not want a homo-
sexual relationship with Inés, the fact that he would see homosex-
uality in this scene indicates that he is taking the situation on the 
level of the anatomical body: Juana is a woman, so any love interest 
between her and Inés is _de facto_ homosexual. 15 In fact, if there is 
any homosexuality in this play, it is that of Inés or Clara. 16 Trans-
vestism does not change one's sexual orientation; Juana never 
experiences passion for a woman. But Inés does, at least on one 
level:

_Ya por el don Gil me muero; 
que es un brinquito el don Gil._

(862–63)

[Now I am dying for Don Gil; 
Don Gil is a sweetie.]

Clara also falls for Juana-Gil (911–12), and the two women even 
have a half-hearted argument over which one gets to marry "him" 
(1000–7). Yet, this happens only when the woman (Juana) is
dressed as a man. It is not the anatomy with which they fall in love; indeed, as Sullivan has pointed out,17 biological sexual experience is simply not visible in the comedia—it takes place before or after the action or off-stage. Instead, they are captivated in the Imaginary by the trappings of masculinity which are defined as such in the Symbolic. Inés is not in love with Juana as a man or a body. She is not blind to Juana-Gil's lack of beard, but neither does it cause her concern; she calls it an encanto [enchantment] (2407), recognizing in the process the fictional nature of both Juana's identity and gender characteristics in general. Instead, Inés is in love with Juana's clothes. When confronted with Martín-Gil, she says that she is not in love with him, but with the one in the green breeches, to which Pedro responds, "Amor de calzas, ¿quién le ha visto?" [Who ever heard of being in love with breeches?] and Martín says he will start wearing green from then on (1011–14).

As a woman, Inés is both like Juana (seeking Imaginary satisfaction through the Symbolic mediation of marriage, although she does not have sex with her suitors out of wedlock) and quite different. She is extraordinarily fickle; at various times she declares her love for Juan (644–45) and for Juana as Gil (862–63), and she finally agrees to marry Martín (2531–34). In her own words, "quiero / ser mudable" [I want to be fickle] (1177–78). Her father's reaction is interesting:

Mucho me espanto
de que des palabra ya
de casarte. ¿Tiempo tanto
has que dilato el ponerte
en estado?

[653–58]
[I am alarmed
that you should give your word
to marry. Have I tarried
so long in placing you
in a proper state?]

As her father, it is his responsibility to impose himself on her Imaginary desires, to lead her into the fold of human community, to mediate her desire. At the same time, money is not insignificant to this plot. Pedro wants to marry Inés to Martín-Gil because he believes that the young man is rich (538ff., 680–83). Likewise, Martín wants to marry Inés because of the promise of money. Inés, in a much more direct way than Juana, is depicted as woman-as-
exchange-object, interesting only for her use-value in increasing the
estate of the men who control her.

Early on, Juana, upon seeing Inés, remarks that she is quite
beautiful (with Caramanchel chiming in that Juana-Gil is more
beautiful, 774–75), stating, “por ella estoy perdido” [I am lost for
her] (776). There are at least three ways to take this sentence. The
first reading is Gil’s, the superficial reading that he has “lost”
himself in love for Inés. Not only is this a well-worn topos of the
comedia, but it also reflects the Lacanian notion, already men­tio­ned,
that love involves the capture of one’s Imaginary by the
other (thus losing even the appearance of self-control—which one
never had in any case). The second is from Juana’s point of view. It
is because of Inés that Martín is now in Madrid rather than in
Valladolid doing his duty by marrying Juana. Juana is “lost” (as a
woman and as a man) as long as Martín does not provide her with
the empowering mediation she can get only from the Symbolic.

The third reading is ours, and it comes from the discrepancy
between the masculine perdido [lost] and the fact that Juana (and
the actress who played her) were female. The use of gender-specific
language is quintessentially Symbolic; this assignment of a mas­cu­line or feminine adjective ending is reminiscent of Lacan’s exam­ple
of the two doors, one marked “Ladies” and one marked “Gen­
tlemen” to underscore the importance of language (the letter) for
identity and sex difference. Whether a woman considers herself a
man or a woman, she is completely engaged in the question of her
Symbolic signification. Of course, much of the humor of the play
comes from the fact that we know that Juana-Gil should not be
using the masculine form while the other characters are unaware.
Because this is fiction, because we know what is going on, we are
willing to allow the slip. Still, we must be cautious because we never
know what is going on at all, there is no necessary link between sex
and gender, and at some level the Symbolic of everyday life is as
fictional as the events in this play. As Mitchell points out, language
is itself indicative of the misunderstanding of human existence. In
this play (and maybe in life?), Juana can be perdido or perdida, but
she is always and in every case “lost.”

Martín is an important member of these doubled and redoubled
love triangles, and he is interesting for two primary reasons apart
from his jilting of Juana as the prime motivation of the plot. First is
his use of the disguise of Don Gil (although at first he does not wear
calzas verdes [green breeches]), an invention of his father, Andrés
de Guzmán (538ff.). It was his creation of false signification that was
usurped so easily by Juana. Second is Martín’s suspicion about
Juana’s identity. After all, the man had sex with her; we might expect him to be better able to identify her. Sometime between acts 1 and 2, Juana has learned that Martín suspects the truth, that the other Gil is she (1146–50). His doubts do not solve the mystery, but lead one instead to a consideration of the use of letters in the play.

Martín-Gil presents a letter to Pedro in order to begin his suit of Inés (and he receives another letter from home in act 2, 1621). When Juana suspects that Martín suspects that she as Gil is truly Juana, she has another false letter sent to him saying that she is pregnant in a convent in Valladolid (1146–66; 1444–61; 1625–28). While Martín gave Juana his word that he would marry her (1304), at least according to Juana-Elvira, Juana uses letters to make his word mean something. Just as we saw above with gender-specificity (perdido), language is again the tool of the Symbolic. By giving her his word he goes beyond the Imaginary (unsatisfied lust or love) to the promise of fulfillment through mediated desire.21 Act 2 comes to a head when Juana uses the letters sent to Martín from Valladolid that Caramanchel found but did not return (1707–11). She uses these (purloined) letters to steal money promised to Martín and to convince Inés and her father that her story is true (1865–68), in the process giving Martín a new name, Miguel (1294ff., 1780ff., 1963ff.). So important is the possession of the letter that Pedro approves of Juana-Gil’s story based on a lie supported by the purloined letter and gives his blessing to the marriage while accusing Martín, whom he now calls Miguel, of being the thief (1966–72). Curiously, Inés, in relating this to her father, changes “Miguel”’s last name from Ribera to Cisneros, thus underscoring the fluidity in his identity (as “Don Gil de Albornoz,” as Martín de Guzmán, as Miguel de Ribera, as Miguel de Cisneros). Thus the man who promised Juana his name (and in the process of doing the same for Inés) is at once Gil, Martín, and Miguel—which name does he promise?

Juana-Gil writes another letter, this time to Elvira, saying that Inés disgusts “him,” and declaring his love for Elvira (2270–79). Caramanchel shows the letter to Inés (for some strange reason), and Inés realizes her role as exchange object:

¡Válgame Dios! ¿Ya empalago?
¿Manjar soy que satisfago antes que me pruebe el gusto?
¿Tan bueno es el de su Elvira que su apetito provoca?

(2285–89)
[May God help me! Am I boring him? 
Am I something to eat that satisfies 
before he even tastes me? 
Is Elvira so good 
that she whets his appetite?]

Not only does this continue the food and eating metaphors, but it also brings up the question of satisfaction. The satisfaction of a demand by an appetizer only increases the hunger for the fulfillment of one's desires. Inés is quite right that she cannot satisfy Gil (for many reasons), but she is wrong in thinking that Elvira can (for even more reasons). Her reaction is to tell Juan to kill Gil for having jilted her.

As the action is approaching its climax, Diego confronts Martín with Quintana's accusation (by means of another letter in Juana’s handwriting) that Martín killed Juana in Alcorcón. When Martín protests, Diego reproaches him for defending himself:

_Diego._ ¿Qué importa, tirano aleve, 
que niegues lo que esta carta 
afirma de tus traiciones? 
_Martín._ La letra es de doña Juana.

(3131–34)

[Diego. What does it matter, perfidious tyrant 
that you deny what this letter 
affirms about your treason? 
_Martín._ The letter (the handwriting) is Doña Juana's.].

When Martín asks how he could have killed her since she was in San Quirce, Diego replies:

_Porque finges letras falsas 
del modo que el nombre finges._

(3148–49)

[Because you counterfeit false letters 
the same way you counterfeit your name.]

Here we have a concrete example of the power of the letter, the signifier, over the signified, and the linking of the letter, the name, and (false) identity. Don Martín is who he is only because he has that name, carries that letter. Certainly that was the case with his disguise as Gil early on. Juana was able to usurp his role with Inés because she, too, could produce _letras falsas_ [false letters] that
would result in a *nombre fingido* [counterfeit name]. Is she not, in this sense, somewhat like an analyst who substitutes one signifier for another in the chain of repetition (Martín-Juan, Martín-Inés), arriving finally at the cure?23

Elvira, too, participates in a love triangle with Juana and Inés is jealous of Elvira. Juana, as Elvira, explains that she purposefully imitated “Gil” (1391–92), even though no one seems to notice this resemblance, except perhaps Martín. The two ironies of this situation are, of course, that Elvira is Gil is Juana, and that Inés doesn’t seem to care anyway. She is not in the least concerned by the physical similarities among the three. Elvira does not love Gil, she says, but she would have if she hadn’t loved someone who loved badly (1399–1405). The interview with Inés ends with the egoistic gloating of Juana and her ability to fool these others:

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Ya esta boba está en la trampa.
Ya soy hombre, ya mujer,
yá don Gil, ya doña Elvira;
mas si amo, ¿qué no seré?
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(1438–41)

[Now the fool is in the trap.
I am now a man, now a woman,
now Don Gil, now Doña Elvira;
but if I love, what will I not be?]

Juana (as Gil) tells Caramanchel that she is in love with Elvira:

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Yo he estado
todo este tiempo escondido
en una casa que ha sido
mi cielo, porque he alcanzado
la mejor mujer en ella
de Madrid.
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(1686–91)

[I have been
hidden this entire time
in a house that has been
my heaven, because I have been with
the best woman in Madrid
in it.]

She obviously means herself, but it is quite curious that Juana-Gil should love Juana-Elvira but that Juana-Elvira does not love "him"
back (2215–18). In trying to reconcile the Imaginary and the Symbolic, Juana has created concrete manifestations of the alienation within herself as subject. A final fiction adds to the complication by questioning whether she is dead or alive. Juana, so the first story goes, died from complications with her pregnancy. Her father, when he read (in a letter) about Martín’s actions, swore revenge (2066–74). Martín’s reaction is not to accept that Gil is someone else, but to believe that this other Gil is the alma en pena [soul in purgatory] of Juana (2098–2105). This is not merely the overactive imagination of a superstitious mind, but another indication of the function of placeholder that the woman can be. Her exchange value continues whether she is there alive and in person or not. In some ways, Juana-dead can be compared to Jakobson’s “zero phoneme” in that she signifies even when she does not exist. On another level, the link between death and identity (and sexuality) is the result of the fact that one must always pass through the defiles of the signifier, make a choice, leave something behind. The more choices one makes, the more one leaves behind, resulting in a fading of the subject [aphanisis].

For Juana’s original goal to be achieved, she will have to give up much of what she has become in its pursuit.

The reconciliation of the Imaginary and the Symbolic comes in the most complex and remarkable final scene. It is set up when, in order to forestall Inés’s renewed interest in Martín, she tells her that she is Elvira (2554ff.). Of course, Inés doesn’t believe her and won’t until she puts on a dress:

Ánsi se ha de hacer:  
vestirte en tu traje puedes;  
que con él podremos ver  
como te entalla y te inclina.  
Ven y pondrás un vestido  
de los míos; que imagina  
mi amor en ese fingido  
que eres hombre y no vecina.  

(Aparte.) ¿Qué varonil  
mujer! Por más que repara  
mi amor, dice que es don Gil  
en la voz, presencia y cara.

(2603–10)  

(2612–15)

Thus it must be:  
you can put on your dress;  
for with it we will see
"¿Y sois hombre o sois mujer?"

Even after she realizes that Juana is a woman, she still wishes she were Gil's "que yo adorara tu engaño" [that I might adore your deception] (2666). Isn't it, of course, the engaño [deception] with which one always falls in love?

Nearing the climax, Quintana tells Juana that she is "losing her name," her identity as Gil (3033), because Juan, Martín, and Clara also appear dressed as Don Gil de las calzas verdes. The timid Clara is empowered when she appears in men's clothes, threatening to take revenge on Gil (3031), but Martín is utterly confused because he believes that Juan (dressed as Gil), who is a live man, is a dead woman (Juana). Caramanchel, who thought his master was only a hermaphrodite, now believes he is lackey to an alma en pena [soul in purgatory] (2935–36), although Juana herself says that she appears not as an "alma sin cuerpo" [a soul without a body] but rather "en cuerpo y sin alma" [a body without a soul] (2950) as long as her mission is not yet accomplished. Just as Quintana accuses Martín of having stabbed his wife to death (the second version of Juana's death, 3120–26) and the authorities come to take him away, Juana enters, dressed once again as Gil (to which her own father asks, "¿Quién sois?" [Who are you?] 3206). The fathers (Diego and Pedro) are finally able to impose their names on the situation (Juana now has a paternal last name, not just the one she gave herself, de las calzas verdes [of the green breeches]). Caramanchel asks Juana the pivotal question of the play, "¿Y sois hombre o sois mujer?" [Are you a man or are you a woman?], to which Juana replies, "Mujer soy" [I am a woman] (3261–62), and the play ends in an apotheosis of marriage (Juana-Martín, Inés-Juan, Clara-Antonio). All are now assigned "proper" identities, and the play ends happily, or so we are led to believe.

Juana's adventure clearly allegorizes one's search for sexual identity. Because men and women in society are only signifiers and, as such, susceptible to shifting meanings,25 she is able to alternate between them before the final fixing of her identity. For the play to
end well, however, Juana must choose one role or the other, and by choosing that of wife, a position defined by the men to whom she subordinates herself, she must give up much of the independence and power she has shown. In Irigaray's terminology, a woman "borrows the disguise which she is required to assume. She mimes the role imposed upon her." Juana uses the masquerade that characterizes sexuality and femininity in order to achieve her goal of bringing Martín under the rule of Law. Apparently, more important than love (or, ultimately, even revenge) is the order and tranquility promised by the Symbolic. Reichenberger's formula of "order disturbed to order restored," at least in this *comedia,* is the appearance of a successful working through of the passage from the Imaginary (love and revenge) into the Symbolic (of marriage and society). Of course, the happy ending is yet another Imaginary fiction given importance by the structure of the genre itself. We are, after all, dealing with literature here, not life. If Juana and Martín were people rather than characters, we would see that their problems do not evaporate, that marriage will not necessarily make him love her more or treat her better, that the Imaginary is never supplanted by the Symbolic, and that the Symbolic never completely delivers on its promise of harmony.

Notes


2. This article cannot provide a comprehensive introduction to the work of Jacques Lacan. Moreover, the definition of Lacanian terms is a mercurial enterprise that can easily confuse more than it illuminates. Because of the importance of the Imaginary and the Symbolic to this study, however, the following definitions (incomplete and overly reductionistic as they are) may provide some aid to those unfamiliar with his highly nuanced use of language. The Imaginary and the Symbolic are idiosyncratic terms in the psychoanalytic writings of Lacan. Central to the Imaginary is the "mirror stage" occurring between six months and eighteen months of age. During this period the infant identifies with an image of integral individuality while at the same time coming to grips with the inevitable otherness of the image, the mother, the object of desire, and the like, with the resultant frustration of desire caused by the alterity of the object itself and the subject's necessary relationship with other subjects (intersubjectivity). The Imaginary is marked by the essentially narcissistic relation of subject to the ego, and by aggressivity and rivalry toward a counterpart. Indeed, the creation of the ego is a function of the Imaginary in the mirror stage. For Lacan, all Imaginary behavior and relations are always deceptive and will never fulfill their promise of satisfaction. The Symbolic is the external structure in which the subject must define himself or herself, and it includes language, social customs, and the law. Especially important here are the community's prescriptions for proper attire and behavior for

3. All references are to Gabriel Téllez (Tirso de Molina), Don Gil de las calzas verdes, ed. E. W. Hesse and C. J. Moolick (Madrid: Anaya, 1971).


7. Ibid., 200.


13. The shifting nature of these beliefs brings to mind Freud's permutations through denial: I (man/woman) love/hate you (man/woman), although this time the terms living and dead can also be added to the mix; I (living man/dead man/living woman/dead woman) love/hate you (living man/dead man/living woman/dead woman). See Lacan, Écrits, 188; Eugen Bär, "Understanding Lacan," Psychoanalytic and Contemporary Science 3 (1974): 520.


15. That the alleged homosexuality serves primarily comic purposes is expressed by Sullivan, "Sexual," 118; Hesse, La mujer, 140–41. Sullivan adds that such "homosexuality" is considered more or less normal in the world of the play, unlike the real world. See "Tirso de Molina: Dramaturgo andrógino," Actas del Quinto Congreso Internacional de Hispanistas, ed. Maxime Chevalier et al (Bordeaux: Université de Bordeaux, Instituto de Estudios Ibéricos e Iberoamericanos, 1977), 814. It is important here to delineate the difference between the psychoanalysis of women and the implication of psychoanalytic concepts in these characters that are allegories of women. Dramatic characters are not human beings with concrete symptoms; rather they serve to represent or allegorize a concept that has
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a certain resonance in psychoanalytic theory. As a result, the application of case studies of and theories about masculine women (as in Safouan 95–116, 129–39) is to reify these characterizations and thereby deny their power as emblems rather than real people. The same can be said about hysterical and obsessional neuroses even though the main questions that preoccupy them, “Am I a man or a woman?” and “Am I dead or alive?”; respectively, are found in the confusions regarding Juana’s identity.

24. There is no subject without aphanisis: as soon as the subject “appears somewhere as meaning, he is manifest elsewhere as fading,” as disappearance” (Lacan, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan [New York: Norton, 1978], 218; cf. 221. See also Régis Durand, “On Aphanisis: A Note on the Dramaturgy of the Subject in Narrative Analysis,” in Lacan and Narration: The Psychoanalytic Difference in Narrative Theory, ed. Robert Con Davis (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), 863–64. The fading of the subject is related both to castration and (again) the basis of the Symbolic in language. “All that is language is lent from this otherness and this is why the subject is always a fading thing that runs under the chain of signifiers. For the definition of a signifier is that it represents a subject not for another subject but for another signifier” (Lacan, “Of Structure as an Inmixing of an Otherness Prerequisite to Any Subject Whatsoever,” in The Structuralist Controversy: The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man, ed. Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato. [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972], 194).
26. Because the Symbolic Order is androcentric in its initial function (Lacan, Séminaire 2, 303–5), Juana is subjected to what Ragland-Sullivan calls a “Second Castration” in which the Symbolic, in addition to the deferment of the Imaginary object, institutes in the Law the many myths of inferior women and self-sufficient men (277, 283, 287, 290, 298–301).
28. Safouan, La Sexualité, 110.

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"¿Y sois hombre o sois mujer?"


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