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Author: Elizabeth Rhodes

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Elizabeth Rhodes

In his 1611 *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*, Sebastián de Covarrubias defines "monstruo" as "cualquier parto contra la regla y orden natural" (761). Covarrubias's definition reveals his culture's understanding of the presumably feminine source of the monstrous for any biology in which females give birth. The relative disorder associated with Woman indirectly manifest in this dictionary entry is directly apparent in documents such as seventeenth-century prescriptive literature and *pragmáticas* against male effeminate behavior.[1] Such references provide ample evidence of how gender constituted one of the most rigid categories of "la regla y orden natural" through which baroque Spanish society proposed to sustain and reproduce itself. The young, virile, and vicious protagonist of *El burlador de Sevilla* challenges dominant precepts of natural order by executing a dualistic performance comprised of both Female and Male attributes. Losing the challenge costs him his life, at the same time it guarantees his character a prominent place in western cultural history. Specifically, Don Juan performs negative cultural assignations of Woman while executing the positive features of Man, with the result that the

[1] Following established practice, I use Woman (Female, Feminine) and Man (Male, Masculine) to refer to the cultural constructs of gendered behaviors, in contrast to women and men, individuals who may or may not conform to those constructs. Butler makes refined distinctions between anatomical sex, gender identity, and gender performance, as does Vance. Similarly, I use Order in reference to the hegemonic construct of socio-political correctness.

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feminine traits of his character assure his damnation and his masculine properties render him heroic for posterity.

In stark imitation of biological categories, gender in seventeenth-century Spain was defined as either masculine or feminine. Covarrubias defines *género* saying, "Comunmente en castellano se toma, [...] por el sexo, como género masculino o femenino" (586).[2] This clean dualism acknowledged, nonetheless, a nuanced understanding of gender performance in early modern texts suggests two further considerations. First, characters defined as *Varonil*, meaning those who perform the attributes pertinent to the cultural construct of Male, were understood to be superior in kind and degree not only to what is Female, but any questionable admixture of the two in which behavior prescribed for one gender was embraced by the other. The associations between *Varonil*, power, and control, founded upon the essential equation of Male is Order, are obvious in Covarrubias's definition of the word *varón*: "Vale hombre de juicio, razón y discurso, y de buena conciencia" (952).

The contrast to this judgement, reason, and moral rectitude is *mujer*, whose inferior attributes serve as a foil to the dominant construct. Covarrubias cites St. Maximus as saying of women, among other things, "en la fábrica de un engaño, grandes artífices" (767). He goes on to remind his reader of Woman's essential instability and superficiality, recurring to an emblematic reference: "Jeroglífico de la mujer lo es la nao combatida del levante o norte, entre soberbias olas acosada" (767). Similarly, Hernando de Soto's 1599 *Emblemas moralizadas* offers the oleander as a metaphor for "El engaño en la mujer," in an emblem whose text elaborates on the image of a plant whose sight is as compelling as its consumption is deadly (see figure 1). De Soto's only other emblem about women likewise addresses their deceptive nature, admonishing, "Abra cada uno los ojos del entendimiento, y advierta, que se ha de perder, si las diere crédito" (60–62).

Woman is thus semantically opposed to Man as a figure of instability, deceit, and irrationality, and is mimetically inferior when

[2] Heise, citing Laqueur and Greenblatt, reviews early modern categories of sex, which were not grounded in anatomical distinctions, versus those of gender, considered a product of socialization (370–71). The perceived sameness of female and male anatomy, derived from a one-sex model which facilitated the definition of females as incompletely developed males, does not bear directly on the argument at hand but underpins the notion of gender; see Tuana, "The Misbegotten Man" (18–52).

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Meretricum fallacia.

El engaño en la muger.

De la Adelfa y de ſu roſa
Es el engaño increyble,
Que a la viſta es apacible,
Pero al guſto ponçoñoſa.
Mata a qualquiera animal
Que la come deſcuydado:
Y eſto en la muger he hallado
Deshoneſta y ſenſual.

Siendo

Fig. 1. Hernando de Soto. *Emblemas moralizadas.* Madrid: Herederos de Juan Iñiguez de Lequerica, 1599, 88.

construed in negative terms, as is most often the case. As Mirsky puts it: "[A]ll masculinities share two central components: the negatively defining characteristic of being *not* feminine, or like women; and the positively defining characteristic of having more power (social, physical, cosmic, and so forth) than that which is feminine, or women" (31). Two cultural icons paint the mimetically superior nature of Male over Female in stark colors, both tropes of oxymoron: the *mujer varonil*, the woman who gains something—according to patriarchal measures—by performing the Masculine, and the *mujer esquiva*, the one who attempts to reject the dominant sexual economy and is usually raped or married for her efforts. The very presence of the adjectives *varonil* and *esquiva* makes clear that the normative *mujer* will be neither one nor the other, because the former rightly adorns the semantic column of Male and the latter marks pointless resistance to the dominance of the same.

Secondly, in structural terms, the *comedia* follows a poetics that offers but a restricted space in which male and female characters can suspend "natural order" and temporarily impinge upon the cultural assignments of their generic other, a dramatic opening in which women can act like men and men like women without permanently calling into question their "real" gender. Influenced by Aristotelian poetics as it was, the *comedia* gravitates toward resolution, order, and ending at its close. Cross-dressing, like cross-behaving, was permissible at the beginning of the play, and could intensify even into the last moment. But by the final scene's conclusion, the "right" individuals should be wearing the pants and the restitution of order sealed with a heterosexual marriage or two, to assuage any doubts about the proper order of things.

So deeply ingrained was the marriage ending into dramatic norms for courtship plots that it determined turns of events which are in some ways unsatisfying.[3] In *La vida es sueño*, Segismundo's paring with Estrella in spite of his attraction to Rosaura exemplifies a sentimentally unsatisfying conclusion, one in which the dominion of political and public exigencies over personal desire constitutes heroic behavior. The demand for a clean resolution thus seems to frustrate the

[3] Wardropper (1967) makes the very useful distinction between the necessary outcome of plays whose protagonists are married and those whose main characters are single. In the former, when an individual's honor is stained in fact or in perception, the play ends tragically; in the latter, tragedy can be avoided due to the absence of eternally binding vows.

plot's internal emotional charge, so as to assure a formal closure whose right order demands that the taker of Rosaura's virginity somehow be brought to marry her. On the other hand, Ana Caro subverted the same determinism of resolution to great effect at the end of *Valor, agravio y mujer*. In the final scene of her meta-theatrical play, the playwright left the material pants on her morally defective Don Juan but endowed her heroine Leonor with the symbolic pants, leaving Don Juan socially castrated and literally on his knees before his betrothed muttering, "Te adoraré" (2725).[4] This is to say that modifications of a character's gender must be resolved by a return to "normalcy," or the entire poetics of resolution rendered ironic, by the time the curtain falls. Incursions into the generic other that are not ironic are resolved by the errant character's return to proper clothing and/or behavior, or punishment. In *El burlador*, Don Juan's uncorrected performance of the Feminine results in his final condemnation, in accordance with the gender rectitude implicit in dramatic closure.

Within the allotted textual openings available for playing with Order, dramatists had at their disposition a wide range of dramatic cues whose purpose was to suspend, expand, or alter a character's gender affiliation, the most typical being a change in costume. More subtle possibilities also provided access to the gender of the other, such as codes of speech and gesture (women swearing, men swooning), social and material possessions (a woman bearing a sword, a man holding a distaff), and spatial locations (women dominating exterior or border spaces, men enclosed in domestic interiors). Don Juan's gender performance is a highly sophisticated blend of negative traits associated with Woman (such as instability, irrationality, and sexual excess) and the positive characteristics of Man (for example, courage, *ingenio*, and virility).

The *burlador*'s incursions into the Feminine are startling, not only because he appears on the surface to be the archetypical Male, but

[4] Don Juan's final words clearly situate him beneath the empowered Leonor. While a purely symbolic positioning of men below women was prescribed during courtship, those positions were expected to be exactly inverted upon execution of a matrimonial agreement. In the traditional plot, female exercise of power, similarly, was appropriate only when a man was not performing his Male functions, and is acceptable behavior for a woman trying to win back a wandering man. In the end, however, exemplary female characters were expected to revert to their normative position, silent and obedient, once their marriages have been arranged, as does Calderón's bold Rosaura in the final scene of *La vida es sueño*.

because in what gender exchange does occur on the early modern Spanish stage, the predominance of women accessing the features of the *Varonil* is striking (Levine, Arjona). Lope's description of the pleasure the public derived from cross-dressed women, probably showing some leg, is famous: "Las damas no desdigan de su nombre / Y, si mudaren trage, sea de modo / Que pueda perdonarse, porque suele / El disfraz varonil agradar mucho" (*lines* 280–83). Tellingly, Lope says nothing about the appeal of males dressing or behaving as females. Dramatic gender bending almost always entails women acting and/or dressing like men, rather than vice versa, because it falls into the category of transvestism described by Fuchs as "less a challenge to the patriarchal order than a catalyst for the re-ordering of the patriarchal world when something has gone amiss" (22). Debate over the legitimacy of women acting like men is ancient: to Simon Peter's remark that "women are not worthy of the Life," Jesus reportedly retorted, "Every woman who makes herself male will enter the Kingdom of Heaven" (Gospel of Thomas 57). However, rarely are men represented as gaining anything but degradation by performing the Feminine.

Certainly early modern Spanish society had little tolerance for men acting like women, manifest in the fact that, as Heise says, "Spanish culture rejects transvestite boys [to play female roles] whereas English society prefers them over women" (360). Heise suggests that Spanish obsession with sodomy explains why Spanish theatrical practice settled for women on stage rather than boys dressing as ladies. To that argument, I believe, might be added the Spanish preoccupation with the damaging effects on character that were wielded by *anyone's* performance of the Feminine as an acceptable means to resolve a plot. The question, then, was not only whether women should be permitted to act on stage but also whether men should be dressing up and acting like women.

The entire spectacle of the *comedia* itself was blamed with weakening the virility of the Spanish male, in what Heise calls an "almost hysterical preoccupation with the effeminizing influence of the theater" (369). She cites *pragmáticas* and prescriptive treatises that loudly pronounce, on one hand, a fear of men becoming like women and, on the other, an assurance that this generic transformation had already come about due to the pernicious, effeminate effects of the *comedia*. For example, in his 1589 *Tratado de la tribulación*, the Jesuit Pedro de Rivadeneira frets to the Empress Doña María that in the theater, "no solamente se estragan las costumbres y se arruinan las

repúblicas [...] pero hácese la gente ociosa, regalada, afeminada y mujeril [...] no es buena recreación la que es dañosa a las buenas costumbres y destruidora del vigor y esfuerzo varonil." Broadly deprecating anything *Mujeril* as inferior, he continues, insisting, "Destas representaciones y comedias se sigue otro gravísimo daño [...] se hace la gente de España muelle y afeminada é inhábil para las cosas del trabajo y guerra [...] y hace mujeriles y flojos los corazones de nuestros españoles para que no sigan la guerra ó sean inútiles para los trabajos y ejecución dellos" (Cotarelo i Mori 522–23).

Rivadeneira's ideas were copied and amplified by García de Loaisa y Girón, whose *Consulta o Parecer sobre la prohibición de las comedias*, co-written with Fray Diego de Yepes and Fray Gaspar de Córdoba, moved Philip II to close the playhouses in 1598. Therein the detrimental effects of theater, described as fundamentally Female, are made even more explicit: "Allí se estragan las buenas costumbres, recibe daño la virtud, foméntanse los vicios, crecen y auméntanse las maldades [...] Destas representaciones y comedias se sigue otro gravísimo daño, y es que la gente se da al ocio, deleite y regalo y se divierte de la milicia, y con los bailes deshonestos que cada día inventan estos faranduleros y con las fiestas, banquetes y comidas se hace la gente de España muelle y afeminada é inhábil para las cosas del trabajo y guerra" (Cotarelo i Mori 393). The conservative wing manufactured a cause-and-effect relationship between theater-going and womanish behavior, signaling a particularly strong cultural current against effeminacy in men. Following this line of argument, males accessing the Feminine belittled the construct of Man, making such a performance a degrading trope of representation that served to pull the entire Masculine mimetic edifice downward. This is surely why Sor Juana and María de Zayas used it.[5] In the context of this perceived degradation of Masculinity, Don Juan's performance of the Feminine apportions an understanding of his flaws, his damnation for them, and the play's internal logic.

The legendary protagonist of *El burlador de Sevilla* is generally considered to constitute ontological categories of irregularity, or monstrosity, of a masculine nature. In this context, Don Juan's *burlas* are infractions based on trespass, hyperbolic performances of male behavior such as dare and cunning: he repeatedly breaches norms of sexual conduct and violates royal space, disregards the debt of

[5] Zayas in the "Desengaño sexto" of her *Desengaños amorosos* (293–336), Sor Juana in "Los empeños de una casa" (*Obras* 627–704).

hospitality and the nature of class obligations, and turns his back on laws of male hierarchy and relationships of kin. These are all *trans*gressions, effected via his movement through the bodies of women to arrive at his real target, which is social stability. His final and terrible descent to hell appears to stage the condemnation of these transgressions.

As has been pointed out, however, the cleansing ritual in which *El burlador* appears to culminate is relative at best, for Don Juan's crimes against society are merely exaggerated enactments of the perversion practiced by the very individuals who suffer his *burlas* (Wardropper 1973). Royal and familial authorities wink repeatedly at his excesses, and women's failure to guard the fortresses of their virginity invites his trespass of their bodies. As Fox says of Isabela, for example, "She has been so anxious to marry that she has made a bargain with the faux Octavio, acceding to the seduction in exchange for a promise of marriage" (40). Thus, although Don Juan's violations are extremely powerful and threatening, and although they open the portals of hell itself, they are by no means original, rather are merely aggrandized paraphrases of his victims' own, if lesser, moral shortcomings. Indeed, in two of his *burlas* (Isabela, Ana) he merely usurps the place of men already expected by their lovers, executing a change in personnel without altering the basic, technically immoral act itself.[6]

To the extent that Don Juan functions as a mere reflection of others, he is profoundly Feminine. As Zeitlin points out, "*functionally* women are never an end in themselves, and nothing changes for them once they have lived out their drama on stage. They play the roles of catalysts, agents, instruments, blockers, spoiler, destroyers, and sometimes helpers or saviors for the male characters" (69). Don Juan, like the traditional female theatrical character, shows a remarkable lack of imagination and is more reactive than active. In puerile fashion, he plows through the block towers built by his family and friends, casually and thoughtlessly knocking them down without ever building his own. Such lack of personal identity and individual initiative signals social impotence. It is a feature of Woman.

The reactive nature of the *burlador*'s threat to Order suggests that gender may be key to resolving the play's otherwise vexing plot. Gender analysis offers an alternative to the matrix of sin and

[6] Allatson, supporting Hesse, explains this practice observing, "for Don Juan, the idea of the *burla*—deceitful promise, seduction, flight—is as important as the deed" (263).

condemnation generally invoked to analyze *El burlador*, a matrix which is unsatisfactory for its inability to address the very monstrosity the play engenders: if the entire community is corrupt, why does only Don Juan go to hell, leaving the degenerate status quo unaltered? Given the predominance of plots driven by motifs of justice in the early modern period (Langer) and in the Spanish *comedia* in particular (Reichenberger), it would be unusual to encounter a dramatic text that ends in a rotund condemnation without some parceling out of punishment to the guilty. If indeed, as Pendzik suggests, "The system is not repaired, either by Don Juan's death or by the marriages" (179), then perhaps the point is not the system at all, rather something about Don Juan himself.

Mandrell's cunning thesis, echoed by Pendzik, that Don Juan seduces the patriarchy into normalizing its own shortcomings, is one possible explanation. Mandrell and Arias find sacrificial ethics at work in the play, which stage Don Juan as a scapegoat and so a victim. This interpretation, quite useful for explaining the mythology of Don Juan that developed subsequent to *El burlador*, has two inconveniences when applied to the original plot. One is that it renders innocent a character whom the dramatist has taken pains to affiliate with evil. The other is that it nullifies the seventeenth-century association between unrepented erroneous behavior and eternal condemnation, since the scapegoat is not only innocent but salvific, as was Christ. Don Juan, unlike the scapegoat, is condemned in no uncertain terms. As he draws the young man into infernal flames, Don Gonzalo unequivocally identifies himself as the agent of divine justice: "Esta es justicia de Dios" (2862). As God's own hand, the statue draws Don Juan into death without confession, impervious to the youth's cries that he is burning (2836, 2847, 2857). Were Don Juan a scapegoat, some transcendent virtue would accrue from his death, but the plot roundly denies him any such grace.

The play's title, *El burlador de Sevilla*, suggests another answer, for it signals the centrality of the *burla* in the play. It is not called *El pecador de Sevilla*, for the essential deviance of the drama is not sin. The protagonist and other characters alike sin joyfully, but those transgressions are not the focus of the action, which instead is Don Juan's shifty and unsettling behavior. Not surprisingly, in the seventeenth-century lexicon there is an intriguing semantic kinship between the *burlador* and the *mujer*. "El burlador," says Covarrubias, is "el engañador mentiroso, fementido, perjudicial, el que tiene poco valor y asiento" (216). The *burlador*, then, invokes not only a dichotomy with *Varón*,

but a simile with *Mujer*, manifest in the symbolic affinity between that "poco valor y asiento" and the uncontrolled ship blowing in the wind which Covarrubias cites as the emblem of Woman. These semantic clues reinforce the suspicion that there is something profoundly Feminine about Don Juan.

The *burlador*'s transgression is generally considered to be a sin of a patriarchal man against the patriarchy, whose interests include restricting the performance of Woman to women as a means of sustaining Order. Fox, amplifying Mandrell's thesis, finds that he is "both the fall guy and the agent of patriarchy" (42). Certainly, if Don Juan is the agent of the patriarchy, then one can rest assured that somewhere in his character there lies an indictment of Woman. With this in mind, the play's apparent paradox dissipates when nuanced with its original audience's understanding of gender categories.

In the early modern period, the verb *burlar* was used specifically to describe gender deviation as well as a man taking sexual advantage of a woman. Eleno/Elena de Céspedes, whose case has been studied by Israel Burshatin, was an individual endowed with what experts around 1568 identified as male and female genitalia. S/he was condemned by the Inquisition not for biological aberrance but for bigomy, because she had been once married to a man and then, upon deciding to be a man, married a woman. Burshatin recalls, "Medical experts in Eleno's trail expressed concern for certain *burladoras* 'female tricksters' from Toledo. Eleno was one of those *burladoras* who fashioned *artificios* 'dildoes' for themselves out of sheepskin" (450). The epigraph on his/her Inquisitorial dossier displays the dominant society's response to articulations such as Don Juan's "Tan largo me lo fiáis" and states, "Quien tal haze que así lo pague" (Burshatin 423), exactly the words used to condemn *el burlador* (2846, 2950). Similarly, in María de Zayas's "Desengaño" telling of Esteban's dressing as a woman to gain access to the young Laurela, Zayas uses *burla* to describe his deed (309, 320). *Burlar*, then, could refer specifically to the performance of a gender in defiance of one's biological identify, or a refusal to limit oneself to the performance of the Male or the Female. In this sense, Don Juan is a consummate *burlador*.

In the life-saving and life-giving moments of the text, Don Juan performs the Male. His enactment of archetypal masculinity, evident in his proper submission to authority at key moments, his persistent valor, and his sexual prowess, win the admiration of other characters, empower him, and thus enable his progressive scaling of social

offense. Don Juan's uncle catches him *in flagrante delicto* inside the royal space, after his errant nephew has made manifest the King's inability to secure his own domain. The trickster has made royal impotence painfully apparent not only by bedding the Duquesa Isabela therein, but by bringing to light the fact that she was actually expecting another man to manifest the same King's lack of control.

However, even in this first scene of apparent sexual conquest, when Don Juan appears to be most Male, his performance is decidedly Female as well. He executes the Feminine through his peculiar and exaggerated imperfections: he appears as a man with no identity, affiliated with darkness, bodiliness, the satanic, and the unstable, and defines himself as "un hombre sin nombre" (15). His lack of individual identity suggests reflective versus creative energy, instability, and weakness, all negative Female attributes. The profound instability of his gender performance allows him to draw the defects out of the Duquesa, his uncle, and the King all in one scene, by repeatedly performing the Feminine (seduction) then the Masculine (penetration). He penetrates the palace, Octavio's identity, and finally the same man's lover. He seduces not so much Isabela (who claims not to have known who he was) as his own uncle, and through him, the King of Naples and the baroque construct of Order.

Having committed the principle deed and standing face to face with his surrogate father, Don Juan astutely surrenders himself. Recognizing that by virtue of his age, he occupies an inferior position in the male hierarchy he has just flaunted, he dives downward before the alpha male to save his own life. Reminding his uncle "mozo soy y mozo fuiste" (62), he then invokes the popular refrain "Yerros de amor, dignos son de perdonar," by imploring, "tenga disculpa mi amor" (64). Demonstrating remarkable sagacity, he tells the simple truth ("yo engañé y gocé a Isabela," 67), thereby acting like a Man by proving himself responsible and willing to pay for his misdeeds. He also reminds his uncle of their blood ties, recalling "mi sangre es, señor, la vuestra" (99), thus protectively affixing himself to the body politic of the dominant group. Don Juan seduces his uncle and Male order by playing on its susceptibility to male virility, aggression, attractiveness, youth, and adherence to the pack's internal hierarchy. "Esa humildad me ha vencido," says Don Pedro (104), who then abets his nephew's escape.

As the plot progresses, Don Juan refines his performance of the ideal Man: he is eloquent, intelligent, his boldness incites admiration in all, and his sexual engine is the envy of the patriarchy and

matriarchy alike, certainly outside the text if not overtly within it. Various characters adorn Don Juan with epithets that signal him as a member of the male elite: Don Pedro describes his escape from the palace as "gallarda presteza" and then "heroica presteza" (130, 144). Tisbea, observing Don Juan risk his life to save Catalinón, calls him "mancebo excelente / gallardo, noble y galán" (580–81). Even the dead Comendador remarks to Don Juan "valiente estás" (2791) as he prepares the youth's condemnation.

Weaving in and out of the Male, Don Juan cements male alliances at the same time he breaks them. In the company of his supposed friends, the Duque Octavio and the Marqués de la Mota, Don Juan performs the requisite virtues that inform the cultural construct of the *Varón*, for he is dangerously compelling and potent in every sense of the word. When in their company, both he and they ignore his violation of their property (their women) and he proceeds to relate to them as any other acquaintance, leaving Catalinón and later his astonished father to articulate the error in no uncertain terms: "¿En el Palacio Real / traición, y con un amigo?" exclaims the dismayed Tenorio (1430–31). To cover up their own affront, both Octavio and the Marqués de la Mota are obliged to go along with the pretense. They thereby provide Don Juan with the space to display his pertinence to the Male domain, as he jokingly plans a night on the town with the Marqués, and apologizes to Octavio for having left Naples without taking leave of him (1144–89).

As long as women's bodies mediate Don Juan's transgressions against the Male, he is able to escape punishment and continue with his chain of *burlas*, which intensify in severity as they progress. There is thus an explicit alliance between dysfunctional males who pretend to power and Don Juan's ability to penetrate the women belonging to those men. Wherever Don Juan can exercise his feminized virility, there is a man imperfectly performing the Male, whether the King of Naples, his uncle Don Pedro, the Marqués, Tisbea's frustrated suitors, Aminta's father or her husband. As soon as Don Juan is forced to confront a functional male, one who defends his most important possession—his honor—not only to the death but beyond the grave, he is undone.

Don Juan's undoing is brought about by Don Gonzalo's ability to manifest what the other characters could not because of their failure to perform the *Varonil* and their consequent alliance with the instability and weakness associated with *Mujeril*. The Comendador thrusts the trickster into his proper, inferior position, first by serving

as the innocent sacrifice to Don Juan's imperfection, then by unveiling the youth's profound alliance with the Feminine, an alliance that takes him straight to hell. As Ter Horst has said in another context, "In the course of *El burlador de Sevilla* Don Juan Tenorio grows to gigantic proportions, and that is why he must be eliminated. He has become too powerful" (263). The significant extent to which his power results from his performance of the Feminine makes his elimination even more urgent.

Don Juan's execution of the archetypal Feminine is what earns him condemnation and marks him as truly monstrous: his association with the diabolical, his perpetual excess, his voracious and uncontrollable sexual appetite, his verbal deceits, his lack of his own identity, his inconstancy, and his irrationality.[7] His affiliation with evil indelibly marks him as female, since, as Sears observes, "where men are understood as *susceptible* to evil, women are conceived as *always already* evil" (52).[8] Unlike other *comedia* protagonists, such as Calderón's protagonists of *La devoción de la cruz*, Don Juan does not struggle with evil, rather *is* evil. He has no pretensions to goodness and suffers no internal struggle with guilt. Other characters repeatedly relate him to Satan, most often through references to a snake: Don Pedro reports that he lay on the ground "como enroscada culebra" (140), an association repeated by Tisbea, who says of Don Juan "Víbora fue" (2231); with Octavio, Don Pedro is more direct, claiming of his nephew, "pienso que el demonio en él tomó forma humana" (300–01); Arminta's husband Batricio comments upon seeing the intruder at his wedding for the first time, "Imagino / que el demonio le envió" (1740–41); finally the servant Catalinón, who knows Don Juan best, cries out to Arminta, "¡Desdichado tú, que has dado / en manos de Lucifer!" (1792–93). To the extent that Don Juan is understood as evil's natural agent, he is understood as Female.

The *burlador*'s sexual excess, which constitutes his entire signifying field, is his most telling performance of the Feminine. Don Juan's insatiable desire for women is obviously not the essence of his *burlas*, which deal with effronteries much more important to seventeenth-century Spain than mere women's bodies. But that uncontrolled appetite is undeniably the tool he wields to topple the edifice of Order. Unharnessed sexual voracity is Male sexual prowess taken to

[7] See "Aristotle: Woman as a Natural Monstrosity" in Tuana 18–21.

[8] Noddings and Pagels document the long-standing association between Woman and evil.

irrational extremes and performed by someone other than a functional man. Don Juan signifies exclusively by virtue of his exercise of irrational carnal appetite and thereby falls dangerously out of his proper signifying code—Male—and into the Female, where his degradation and condemnation are assured.

Inordinate sexual desire was understood to be a fundamental feature of Woman since the time of Aristotle and before, and its history has been studied meticulously by historians of sexuality and gender (Tuana, Noddings). Two lesser-known sources attest to the understanding of Woman as a sexual monster, an understanding which informs many early modern Spanish texts. In the *Compendio de la humana salud*, first translated into Castilian in 1494 and extremely influential on medical ideology in the following centuries, author Johannes de Ketham responds to the question of why women, and mares, desire intercourse with males even after they have conceived, recalling: "Responde Galeno: en las mujeres, porque cuando se disponen para ayuntarse, no solamente las mueve la inclinación y naturaleza de engendrar, sino también el desordenado deleite del acto libidinoso, y, acordándose de él después del ayuntamiento, desean volver al mismo deleite, por el recuerdo que tienen" (121; in mares the same excess is attributed to their disorderly eating habits and excessive digestion).

Similarly, in 1572 Dr. Francisco Núñez de Coria published a book about "el buen manjar," *Aviso de sanidad que trata de todos los géneros de alimentos y del regimiento de la sanidad, comprobado por los más insignes y graves doctores.* Toward the end of his book, the good doctor included a chapter entitled, "Tratado del uso de las mujeres y como sea dañoso y cómo provechoso, y qué cosas se hayan de hacer para la tentación de la carne y del sueño y baños" (ff. 289r–320v). Dr. Núñez specifically describes the perils of too frequent intercourse, a behavior condemnable precisely because it is womanly, saying: "porque muchos no saben en cuántos discrimines y peligros caigan los que a rienda suelta se dan a esta delectación, lo cual entenderán si del todo leyeren este mi tratado [...] que no de su vehemente delectación, aunque sea de muy hermosa mujer, *la cual por aventura es insaciable, como las demás mujeres, las cuales naturalmente son de apetito insaciable*, pues como dice Salomón en el treinta y nueve de sus proverbios, tres cosas son que nunca se hartan, la boca del infierno, la vulva, el fuego. El cual parecer fue de Aristoteles en el 4º de sus problemas en el problema 26, especialmente son de apetito insaciable [...]" (ff. 290r–v; my emphasis).

For his sexual prowess, meaning the ease with which he compels women into bed with him and his ability to perform the requisite act therein, Don Juan is admirable in terms of the cultural construct of Male. However, Don Juan is a character who exists solely in terms of a bodily function deeply associated with evil and culturally ascribed to Woman. Unlike the typical male character, he has virtually no other facet to his personality other than his sexually charged *burlas*: he has no education, political or military career or aspirations, nothing in his life to offset what he is doing with his codpiece. He is bodily excess incarnate. His character exists exclusively in terms of "love" and coupling alone, neither a heroic nor even an anti-heroic activity for a Masculine protagonist, and not surprisingly the only signifying field of most female characters of the Golden Age. As a man whose immediate ambitions and abilities go no further than the bedroom, whose being is circumscribed by the objective of "getting a mate" at any cost, and thus as a character who fails to signify beyond the social parameters of sexuality and its consequences, Don Juan is Woman.

The *burlador*'s irrationality and inconsistency are also subtly marked as Female in the play's own dialogue. The King of Naples laments the act between Isabela and Don Juan that transpired in his palace, crying, "¡Ay, pobre honor! Si eres alma / del hombre, ¿por qué te dejan / en la mujer inconstante, / si es la misma ligereza?" (153–56). Don Juan's own *inconstancia* and *ligereza* serve to mark him as dangerously Feminine, particularly since a rock-like consistency for the exemplary male was increasingly extolled in the seventeenth century. Diego de Saavedra Fajardo, the most read political theorist of early modern Spain, published his *Empresas políticas* in 1640 and by 1700 the book had been reprinted 74 times. The *Empresas* leave no doubt as to the virtues of the constant man: "Siempre el mismo" states Empresa 33, whose prose text reads, "significando la fortaleza y géneros a constancia que en todos tiempos ha de conservar el príncipe [...] El que se muda con la fortuna, confiesa no haberla merecido" (217). The cultural construct of the unwavering Male and the inconstant Woman directly informs the encounter between Don Juan and the statute of his victim, an encounter provoked by the unforgivable murder of Ana's father.

The *burlador*'s irrationality and inconsistency culminates in the scene in which he kills the noble Don Gonzalo. The confrontation occurs exactly at the text's center, in scene five of Act II, marking the moment when the story begins anew and moves toward the condemnation of the protagonist. In this scene, Don Juan, a man performing

the Feminine, confronts the unpolluted Man embodied in the Comendador, whose integrity the *burlador* will apparently destroy by killing him. The scene itself and its placement echo the opening of the play in which Don Juan performed his first *burla* with total success because the male figures around him collude with his offensive incursions against the Masculine rather than punish him.

Dismissing his daughter as "tan liviana" (1570), the Comendador rushes beyond her to confront her partner in the *Mujeril* to defend his own honor, and with it, the inviolable social construct of Male. With his dying breath, Don Gonzalo identifies Don Juan as one who is not Male and so not valiant, rational, or constant: "Es traidor, y el que es traidor / es traidor porque es cobarde" (1591–92). Rendered in Act III as a statue, as *piedra*, Don Gonzalo signifies the stable and monumental rigidity of the functional Male, who sacrifices his life for his honor and defends himself at any cost from lesser creatures of ignoble nature, such as women and men who act like them. As God's own agent in the final scenes, he is resuscitated in stone rather than as a disembodied voice or a misty vision to leave no doubt about his fixed and enduring nature.

Don Gonzalo refuses complicity with Don Juan and draws a performance of the Male out of him, thereby reinstating the normative boundaries between the *Varón* and the *Mujer*. Like the unstable character he is, Don Juan does indeed perform the Male upon sensing the potency of his enemy's own masculinity, which he reflects immediately. As the moment when his untimely judgment draws nigh, Don Juan's courage is manifest through contrast with the cowardice of the lesser males around him, thereby constructing an alliance with the truly noble Male that previously he did not have. The servants tremble, joke, and soil their pants in terror, but Don Juan stands firm and fearless, clearly more like the heroic man he killed than the cowards around him.

By imitating the Comendador, Don Juan manufactures a specifically Male identity for himself and infallibly performs Masculinity as his parting act. In the overpowering presence of Don Gonzalo, Don Juan proves himself functional in a male/male relationship uncontaminated by the proximity of women and becomes heroic. For the only time in the play, he is devout, charitable, honorable, honest, and ethical, in a scene which was crucial to the creation of Don Juan as a seductive myth of the irresistible man. Unlike his first encounter with a male authority figure seeking to correct him, the incident in which the Comendador metes out justice does not permit the *burlador*'s

submission because Don Gonzalo is unyielding in his high mimetic performance, and consequently demands the heroic from Don Juan. The heroic male, when faced with irrefutable evidence of his own defects, dies, thereby reconciling his heroism and his imperfection.

Confronted with the dead Comendador, Don Juan looks him in the eye and makes the only promise in the entire play that he keeps, the promise that kills him: "mi palabra te doy / de hacer todo lo que ordenes" (2488–89). Having exacted his promise from the doomed man, Don Gonzalo reaches out to Don Juan, saying not once but twice "Dame esa mano, no temas" (2499, 2831). In so doing, the functional male completely feminizes Don Juan by forcing him into the position of Woman, as the *burlador* hands himself over to a man in the same performative exchange that he himself had promised many women before.[9] The statue rectifies all of Don Juan's broken vows by "marrying him" to an accounting for his moral egregiousness, for having behaved like a woman, by treating him like one. The matrimonial promise that was meant to save women from disgrace and failure damns Don Juan: in accepting a man's hand, he overtly becomes Woman and the doors of hell creak open. The Comendador reappropriates all of Don Juan's *burlas* in the name of the *Varonil* as he exacts the woman's promise from the trickster. Thereby, he calls Don Juan's appropriation of Femininity to a severe accounting and justifies his ridding the world of the man who appropriates too many negative signifiers of the Female.

Through the play's ending, Don Juan assures his place in hell as well as his place in history. The enduring appeal of the Don Juan figure suffices to prove Mandrell's thesis that the *burlador* has seduced western culture, and clearly the mythology of Don Juan is founded on his performance of the *Varonil*. That character's first dramatic incarnation is threatening and monstrous, however, in his execution of the *Mujeril*. Analysis of gender performance reveals the underlying order sustained by Don Juan's condemnation: lax moral behavior within the boundaries of one's own gender is lamentable but unremarkable, and thus the other characters who are as morally decrepit as Don Juan do not merit eternal condemnation. When men acquire traits ascribed to the categorically Feminine, however, the monster is engendered

[9] Varey puts it differently: "Ha sido burlado a través de una mano, un recuerdo de la manera en que él había engañado a tantas mujeres después de pedirles la mano en matrimonio" (154). Allain considers the Comendador's gesture a *burla* in itself, appropriate for the *burlador*.

and must be removed. Don Juan becomes a famous *burlador* for acting like a Man. He goes to hell for acting like a Woman.

Boston College

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