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Don Juan Plays the USA: Translating the World's First Don Juan Play (El Burlador de Sevilla and Tan Largo Me Lo Fiais) for Twenty-First Century Performances in the United States

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(EL BURLADOR DE SEVILLA AND TAN LARGO ME LO FIAIS)
FOR TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY PERFORMANCES IN THE UNITED STATES

By

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to the dramaturg resident in you, the reader,
as you wrestle with these pages
and their implications for the stage
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One way of describing the role of a dramaturg is as a “mediator” who forges connections between “a body of texts” and “those who use them to make theatrical performances, including actors, directors, designers, theater staffs, as well as the community at large” (Proehl 134-35). To my lasting benefit, I’ve gotten to learn the role of mediating between the world’s first Don Juan play and 21st-century US stagecraft from two enormously talented women of the theater: Jean Graham-Jones and Carrie Sandahl.

Jean Graham-Jones made this project possible. She taught me how to assemble, absorb, analyze, and distill a “body of texts” that can revolutionize the process of translating Seville’s Burlador out of Renaissance Spanish and into contemporary US practice. Jean’s expert introduction to the art of re-producing Spanish stagecraft for performance in English (witness her elegant translation of Ricardo Monti’s Visit) inspired me to imagine a thoroughly American Don Juan in the first place. Before she left Florida State for CUNY, Jean Graham-Jones had guided me through the translation history that made it clear that Don Juan Plays the USA has things of value to say to theater people who are not aficionados of Golden Age drama.

Carrie Sandahl made this project accessible to that larger audience. Taking over where Jean left off, Carrie trained me in speaking to “the community at large.” Her patient re-readings and expert proddings carried my work through a metamorphosis, from mammoth translation history to streamlined study of representative translation problems. Through the last rewrite on the last day, Carrie Sandahl championed clear expression of clear ideas, so the widest possible audience could find clear and pressing reasons to make friends with this clearly stageworthy play.

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ABSTRACT

Plays from the Spanish Golden Age – even plays as famous as the world’s first Don Juan play – are woefully absent from production in the United States. Why? The traditional answer is “no translations,” but the comedia that gave Don Juan his debut has been translated into English, repeatedly. Arguing that longstanding translation problems are responsible for obscuring this comedia’s stageworthiness, Don Juan Plays the USA synthesizes new ways of making the first Don Juan accessible onstage.

I develop methodologies for solving three representative problems that have robbed this comedia famosa of production potential. “Decoding Don Juan’s Sex Life” devises a tool that displaces sex-drive as the driving force inside the first Don Juan. Taking advantage of this play’s uniquely rich translation history (no less than ten translations in print or onstage in the last 50 years), I premiere the practice of Conspectus – i.e., reassessing critical passages in the play through the eyes of a series of translators. Using Conspectus as a tool, it’s possible to determine that delight in seduction (not sex) motivates Don Juan, that a strategy of mirroring other characters characteristically advances his agenda, and that an energetic identity quest describes his arc through the play.

“Re-coding Multidimensional Damas” turns a unique feature of the play’s production history into a tool for revitalizing female roles onstage. Don Juan’s debut is recorded in two 17th century printed scripts which are clearly twins but manifestly not identical: El Burlador de Sevilla and Tan largo me lo fiáis. Rather than erase differences between the Burlador and Tan largo by conflating textual variations, I use variants to build a Stereopticon perspective, clarifying the subtext of critical scenes by reading them through divergences in the way that they’re scripted. From a Stereopticon perspective, it’s possible to see a calculated multidimensionality built into the play’s female characters – each one allied to an element, a humor, and a social status – and to recover the political power that these damas’ complexity gives them.

“Targeting Re-Production of the ‘Untranslatable’” attacks the problem of translation suppressing performance information that refuses to conform to
literalistic notions of theater translation. By surveying inventive approaches developed in the Caribbean and the UK for recovering this *comedia*'s pervasive musicality, multifunctional characterizations, and mordent social satire, I extract specific suggestions for re-producing non-verbal performance text from *Tan largo* and the *Burlador* in the US today.

The study’s dual aim – to understand how the first Don Juan play works as a living piece of theater, and to understand how the process of translation works to preserve liveliness as it transmits theater cross-culturally – culminates in a two-part conclusion. “New Ways of Making *Comedia* Accessible in the United States Today” combines Conspectus, Stereopticon, and Production Conceptualization techniques to excavate performance information from “Teodora’s Tooth,” and “Ben’s Sampler” Americanizes Thematic translation principles to produce model performance experiments from passages of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*.
INTRODUCTION:
THE ABSENT CLASSIC

A new approach to translating Golden Age drama for production in the United States is urgently needed. The world’s first Don Juan play provides a site uniquely well-equipped for synthesizing this new art. On these two interlocking perceptions hangs the unorthodox investigation into theater-translation problems that makes its premiere in *Don Juan Plays the USA*.

At the center of this investigation stands a *comedia* from 17th-century Spain — one of the thousands of three-act, mixed-genre, formally freewheeling, and unabashedly audience-thrilling dramatizations in verse that made the Spanish Golden Age (c. 1580-1680) the most fertile period that Western theater has ever known. What makes this particular *comedia* stand out historically is the fact that it gave birth to the most frequently re-written protagonist known to Western playwriting: i.e., Don Juan, the Burlador [joker] from Seville. Although tradition attributes the authorship of this watershed *comedia* [full-length play from the Spanish Renaissance] to the prominent playwright Tirso de Molina (1581?-1648; see Ziomek 87-90), nobody knows for sure when the play was written, by whom, or what the original script looked like.

One version of the playtext was printed at Barcelona in 1630, under the title of *El Burlador de Sevilla y combidado de piedra* [The Practical Joker from Seville and His Stone Dinner Guest]. A second version of the acting text — clearly the same play, identical to the *Burlador* in its plot, characters, and theme, but differing (sometimes sharply) in its diction, tempo, and tone (see Mandel 39-40) — appeared in print sometime between 1635 and 1670, entitled *Tan largo me lo fiáis* [Look How Far They’ll Trust Me] (see Fernández 11-12). The peculiar circumstances of the play’s publication history and the perplexed question of its authorship have excited a great deal of scholarly attention, most recently in an explosion of claims and counterclaims regarding actor-manager Andrés de Claramonte’s involvement in the conception and production of what eminent editors call the “Burlador/Tan largo” (see Fernández 5, López-Vázquez 1987 and 1990, and Vázquez).
Unfortunately, scholarly debates about the first Don Juan play’s authorship and text have diverted attention from the *comedia*’s stagecraft. This is regrettable, because the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* have a great deal to offer US theater people as twin records of the same world-class performance event. Don Juan’s debut – the first appearance of the character who calls himself civilization’s most successful *Burlador* [joker], *garanón* [stud], and champion of *valor* [the indomitable human spirit] – is potent theater, both in itself and as a key to a whole dramatic genus.

At stake here is the opportunity for university and repertory theater in the US to start exploring an untapped wealth of classical plays, while stepping into the kind of culturally pivotal position that playmaking occupied in Pericles’ Athens, Elizabeth’s England, or Havel’s Eastern Europe. A sea-change in US culture is under way. Hispanic Americans have come to represent the fastest-growing cultural force in this aggressively Hispanophobic country – a demographic already demonstrating impressive political, social, and economic muscle, a population sector projected to expand exponentially throughout the foreseeable future.

By continuing to ignore Hispanic presence, by persisting in a refusal to represent or respond to Hispanic points of view onstage, university-based theater in this country could accelerate its isolation as the private, peripheral concern of elitist Anglo dilettantes. By giving the Latinization of North America play-space to re-imagine itself, language to reinvent itself, and a public forum to review itself – the kind of critical mirror that theater provided for radical makeovers in the national self-images of Athens, England, and Eastern Europe – repertory theater in the US during the 21st century could thrive, becoming an active player in a defining cultural shift.

A repertory for initiating this central role in the re-making of contemporary America is already at hand, in the uniquely extensive, varied, and stimulating dramaturgy of the Spanish Golden Age. Spain put more plays onstage between 1580 and 1680 than any other country anywhere at any other period in theater history. Literally thousands of scripts by world-class dramatists
survive, dutifully mentioned in English-language theater-history texts, and largely overlooked in English-language play-reading anthologies.

The quality and variety of these scripts is breathtaking, ranging from full-length psychodramas, on the order of Calderón’s *La vida es sueño* [Life is But a Dream] to one-act send-ups of glitches in the national psyche, in the mold of Cervantes’ *El retablo de las maravillas* [which I have staged in English as “The Marvelous All-American Patriot Act”]. The inventory on hand and in print, in Spanish, overflows with superbly-constructed action-adventures, rollicking sex farces, rabble-rousing dramatizations from history and myth and the Bible, slapstick comedies, wrenching tragedies, achingly beautiful romantic fantasies, visionary utopian speculations, heartwarming family dramas, and even extravaganza musicals.

Producing these plays would provide US theaters golden opportunities to explore familiar plots from new points of view, through such masterpieces as Lope de Vega’s take on Romeo and Juliet, entitled (in Cynthia Rodriguez-Badendyck’s fine translation) *Castelvins and Monteses*. Staging Golden Age *comedia* could introduce Americans to important female playwrights, through such world-class accomplishments as Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz’ *House of Trials* (to cite David Pasto’s translation of *Los empeños de una casa*), a sparkling comedy of manners with fascinating New World roots. Adding classic Spanish drama to contemporary US rep could lend timely perspectives to crises in current affairs, exposing citizens who’re grappling with the implications of 9/11 to gripping confrontations between Islam and the West, such as Calderón’s lyrical and thought-provoking *Love After Death* (Roy Campbell’s translation of *Amar después de la muerte*).

Since *Siglo de Oro* [Golden Age] drama in Spanish doesn’t enjoy the unbroken tradition of performance that connects 21st-century English speakers to Shakespeare, reproducing *comedia* in the US offers unique benefits to all theatergoing Americans, Latino and Anglo alike. Furthermore, striking parallels between 17th-century Spain and the US in the 21st century serve to intensify the attractiveness of classic Spanish dramaturgy for contemporary American production.
The empire that Spanish playwrights celebrated, critiqued, reflected, and reflected on was the most powerful socio-political machine in its known world, and by the time the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* was written, everyone knew that something was out of order with the engine’s inner works. Spain’s armies – the *conquistadores* of the Holy Roman Empire, and of the New World, too – were dangerously overextended, with no real strategic plan for retro-fitting the empire’s military capabilities to its military challenges. Spain’s economy – the richest in the world – was habitually overspending its credit limit and disastrously outsourcing jobs, diabetically addicted to influxes of gold from developing areas to sweeten its balance sheets. The Spanish monarchy – the backbone of the country’s nationhood – was disturbingly allied with special interests, which king after king allowed to exercise chief-executive power, exempt from public accountability, like one-man multinational corporations beyond the reach of law. The country’s moral values – nominally based on the most orthodox brand of Roman Catholicism – were being hijacked to condone hate crimes in the name of honor, valor, and ethnic purity, as a Holy Inquisition claimed precedence over civil liberties.

Golden Age Spain was a world power living through a century-long crisis in self-confidence, a land deeply worried about shrinking social mobility, contracting economic opportunity, and diminishing personal aspirations, where the most deeply-feared enemy was a fellow-citizen with secret Muslim sympathies. Its drama has much to say to the US today, in the world-historical moment of an unwinnable War on Terror, an ungovernable global economy, unresolvable differences over social issues, and an unaffordable system for ensuring the security of society.

Why are plays from this top-quality, widely varied, relevant dramaturgy so rarely produced in the US? Most of the Siglo de Oro’s impressive repertory has never been translated into English. In fact, the vast majority of *comedias* are accessible today only to scholars fluent in Renaissance Spanish; as printed in their native tongue, the plays are not readily comprehensible even to native speakers of modern Spanish. This tantalizing state of affairs (imagine Shakespeare as the private preserve of university English faculties!) gives rise to
traditional wisdom’s standard answer to the longstanding puzzle of *comedia*’s invisibility in the US. Golden Age drama stands outside the purview of US stagecraft, we’re told, because there are “no translations.”

Before this simple explanation for classic Spanish drama’s absence from US production sends people rushing for their Spanish-English dictionaries in a fury of transcription, however, it’s worth pausing to consider a notable exception to the “no translation” rule. The first Don Juan play *has* been translated into English – repeatedly, expertly, and recently, even in the USA. Yet, despite this *comedia*’s world-wide name recognition, its importance as the founder of an enduring dramatic tradition, and its unusual position as the inspiration for an almost embarrassing wealth of translation into English, the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* remain stubbornly outside the realm of actively-produced US stage repertory. Why?

Three key points unlock the question of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*’s curious absence from US stages. The rationale for *Don Juan Plays the USA* turns on these pivotal points. Stated in starkly bare-bones form, they are:

- Specific, diagnosable translation problems have buried this dynamic *comedia*’s stageworthiness.
- These translation problems remain systematically unsolvable because they’ve never been methodically examined.
- Clearly diagnosed and creatively treated, the translation problems that stymie production of this *comedia* can point the way to new techniques for transmitting Golden Age drama into English more successfully.

With the bare bones of an unorthodox approach to this canonical text and its long tradition of translation laid out, let me add selected bits of muscle and sinew to the rationale.

Whole volumes should be written about the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*’s stageworthiness. Ironically, the play’s celebrity as a pillar of World Literature has distracted critical attention from its appeal as a living piece of theater. By summarizing the script’s performance impact from a series of different viewpoints, my discussion of “Stageworthiness” lays a foundation for identifying the translation problems that are blocking transmission of this *comedia*’s
effectiveness onstage. I begin by considering the play as an interlocking chain of *burlas* [practical jokes designed to expose the corruptibility of their “victims”]. I proceed to summarize how the dramaturgy exploits *comedia* conventions to maximize performance impact, and how the playwriting builds unity into its episodic flexibility by performing a systematic progression through a series of female antagonists, a selection of 17th-century Spanish social ills, and a catalog of challenges to Golden Age institutions (particularly marriage, *honor*, and *valor*). “Stageworthiness” closes with an overview of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* as high-stakes, high-variety, and high-impact theater.

After fleshing out the *comedia*’s stageworthiness, I briefly describe the “Losses in Translation” that account for the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*’s absence from production. I then sketch in the experience of getting to know the play in English translation, in both of its original Spanish versions, and in a variety of production contexts that informs this study’s unorthodox methodologies for identifying, analyzing, and resolving translation problems with the text.

A brief outline of the chapters that map out new technologies for translating the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* closes this introduction.

**Stageworthiness**

It is a proven fact that the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* can succeed in English, with an impressively wide variety of audiences, across an eye-opening range of venues. In the 1950s, the original Don Juan play made BBC radio audiences sit up and take notice in the guise of Roy Campbell’s *The Trickster of Seville and His Guest of Stone*, a translation in which this *comedia*, “flat and even absurd in the earlier translations I had read, came alive” for eminent US man of the theater Eric Bentley (Campbell vii). In the 1970s, the first Don Juan play became the most wildly popular, extensively toured theater production in Caribbean history, playing on improvised stages for massive audiences (some of them seeing live theater for the first time) as Derek Walcott’s magnificent *Joker of Seville* (King 321-27, 578-79). In the 1990s, this *comedia famosa* triumphed in the sacred precincts of the Royal Shakespeare Company, as an opulently staged, highly
sophisticated production for the most discriminating theatergoers in the English-speaking world, resurrected onstage as Nick Dear’s *Last Days of Don Juan* (Dear 4-6).

Though the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* have yet to enjoy any notable stage success in North America, this Golden Age *comedia* has recently and repeatedly demonstrated its potency in US performance venues by spinning off hit movies and plays even before it’s flexed its muscles first-person. In 1995, the first Don Juan play inspired a feature film starring Johnny Depp and Marlon Brando: *Don Juan de Marco*, the critically acclaimed, widely watched movie whose opening frame pays explicit homage to “‘The Burlador de Sevilla’ … The Original Tale of Don Juan.” The same year, Spain’s classic Don Juan seduced David Ives, the playwright whose virtuoso compilation of one-acts had taken New York by storm, into turning his talents to a three-act play: Off-Broadway’s opulently-produced *Don Juan in Chicago*.

These big-budget, mainstream salutes to the freshness of what the first Don Juan has to say in America today stand alongside a lively brood of recent niche-market progeny in the US. In 1994, the Burlador’s awe-inspiring vitality moved Theatre of the Jeune Lune to construct *Don Juan Giovanni*, “in which a ghostly operatic Don Giovanni haunts his theatrical counterpart while the latter is on a road trip” (Berson 20). In 1984, the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*’s relevance to cutting-edge issues in contemporary US culture surfaced in Carlos Morton’s *Johnny Tenorio*, first in a longrunning series of Chicano Don Juans that’s still in progress. Chicano Don Juans by Bierman, Morton, and Solís map a perceptible arc in the development of Chicano theater, linking variety entertainments for Day of the Dead celebrations to milestones in the production and publication of *actos* [one-act performances] and full-length playscripts (Bierman, Solís).

In addition to the testimony of successful performances outside North America and provocative spinoffs within the US, the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*’s extraordinary translation history stands as impressive evidence of this *comedia*’s stageworthiness. The first Don Juan play has been repeatedly re-clothed in English, by people with international reputations, including highly-decorated poets (e.g., Roy Campbell and Derek Walcott), influential scholars (viz., Gwynne
Edwards and Oscar Mandel), and prize-winning playwrights (to wit, Lynne Alvarez and Nick Dear). Only an eminently stageworthy text could attract such persistent attention, from such a distinguished band of practitioners.

Grasping the point that the first Don Juan play is a demonstrably stageworthy *comedia* – one that enjoys a remarkably well-developed history of translation into English – leads me inexorably toward the conclusion that complex translation problems, rather than a simple lack of translations, stand between *comedia* and dynamic re-production of classic Spanish dramaturgy in the US today.

The Burlador’s absence from American rep cannot be attributed to “no translation,” because translations abound for this particular Golden Age *comedia*. The first Don Juan’s curious absence from the stage can’t be due to translations that are out of date, since a brand-new US translation premiered in Toronto in 2004. The blame for his MIA status can’t be laid at the feet of “bad” translation, because the first Don Juan has been suited out in English by experts in Golden Age Spanish, experts in English-language poetry, and experts in American-inflected theater. The production gap can’t be blamed on weakness or irrelevance in the source material, since the Burlador and Tan largo are busily at work invigorating mainstream US movies, inspiring new experiments in US theater, and engineering historical breakthroughs in Chicano stagecraft.

Translation problems, not “no translations,” must account for this blockade. A complex, specific set of translation problems must stand between Siglo de Oro [Golden Age Spanish] rep and dynamic re-production in the US. The impact that inventive translation of the Burlador and Tan largo has unleashed in other English-speaking theaters – Walcott’s creative retooling of the script as a Caribbean musical, for example, and Dear’s aggressive foregrounding of the play’s dialog with feminism in the UK – add conviction to the conclusion that the Burlador’s invisibility in US theaters must be due to losses in translation. Shortcomings in traditional strategies for transmitting the play’s performance life out of Spanish into English run interference between US stagecraft and successful performance of this *comedia*. 
A critical study of the translation problems that stymie producing this world-class play in the USA is urgently necessary. Since a critical introduction to the play will make the groundbreaking study of translation problems that follows more legible, let me call your attention to a quick summary of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo’s* chief attractions onstage.

Don Juan’s origins survive in two 17th-century scripts: *El Burlador de Sevilla y Convidado de Piedra* [literally “The Burla-Maker from Seville”] and *Tan largo me lo fiáis* [literally “What a Generous Line of Credit You Give Me”]. Both plays tell a loosely-jointed, freewheeling tale of Don Juan tricking a series of ostensibly respectable citizens into making fools of themselves in public.

Under his spell, for example, the Neapolitan duchess Isabela tries to sneak her fiancé Octavio/Otavio (the character name is spelled differently in the two printed versions of the play) into the king’s bedchamber for a little prenuptial power-coupling. The self-possessed Tarragonian fishergirl Tisbea/Trisbea tries to keep her reputation as unattainable ice maiden intact and sleep with the son of the king’s right-hand man, too. The enterprising Sevillian Marqués de la Mota tries to fit a secret marriage to his cousin and a scam on an angry sex worker into the same night. And the rich redneck Gaseno/Gazeno (the Midas of Dos Hermanas) pretends that his conscience talked him into giving his daughter away to a nobleman who’s not her husband on her wedding night.

The tricks turn deadly when General Gonzalo, second-in-command in the prestigious military Order of Calatrava and the King of Castilla’s chosen ambassador to Portugal – the Imperial Spanish version of Colin Powell – interrupts Don Juan’s impersonation of his daughter Ana’s boyfriend Mota. The viejo [old-man character, traditionally played by an actor wearing a stage beard, the barba] duels the Burlador and dies. Later, Don Juan invites the General’s cemetery statue to dinner. The Dead Man (dubbed in Spanish both *Muerto* and *Bulto*, both Deceased and Numinous) shows up, to issue a dinner invitation of his own. At the end of that meal, moments before a wedding that the king has planned to cover up Don Juan’s transgressions, the Statue drags the Seducer bodily off to Hell.
This remarkably loose-jointed plot, with its notably wide-ranging, picaresque approach to geographical place and social level, conforms in many ways to the formula for a standard Golden Age *comedia*. It’s written completely in poetry, periodically varying its verse scheme from one time-tested theater meter to another, marking shifts in dramatic tempo, atmosphere, setting, characterization, and mood.

Like most *comedias*, the script is about 3000 lines long (2848 lines in the facsimile edition of the *Burlador* published by Xavier A. Fernández, and 2761 lines in the facsimile edition of *Tan largo*), divided into three acts of roughly equal length. It features a *galán* [an aristocratic young male lead] and a *gracioso* [his comic-sidekick servant] interacting with a dozen or so other *galanes*, *damas* [upper-class young females played by female actors], *viejos* or *barbas* [bearded older-male authority figures], *tipos* [character actors playing stereotypical bumpkins, tradesmen, soldiers, and bureaucrats], and *criados* [servants/stagehands, not infrequently doubling as live musicians]. Through a series of interlocking adventures (what Lope de Vega called the *enredo*, the knotting of the plot), which sound both comic and tragic tonalities (a genre-mix explicitly defended in Lope’s *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias* [Writing Plays the New Way]), the play builds to a thrilling, last-minute *desenredo* (the climax that cuts the plot’s multiple knots), followed by a severely foreshortened, apparently reinscriptive denouement.

The plots of the two scripts that make up the world’s first Don Juan play are world-class cliffhangers, expertly crafted to glue the audience’s attention to the stage. What merits stress here is how simply and strikingly this enormously complicated, detailed play can be held in receivers’ minds. The apparently spontaneous, episodic plotline follows carefully-sequenced structural patterns to ensure that listeners of many different sorts “hear” the play as a compelling, comprehensible whole. (In the Spanish Golden Age, theatre-lovers from every socio-economic and educational level flocked to the *corral* to *oír la comedia* — to *hear* the play.)

One way of neatly encapsulating this sprawling moral satire is by cataloguing Don Juan’s women. This is the way that Don Juan’s sidekick

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Catalinón, the *gracioso* [funny man] of *Tan largo* and the *Burlador*, indexes Don Juan’s history (note the anticipation of *Don Giovannii’s* Leporello and his famous list song). In their complex characterization, in their susceptibility to seduction, and in their collaborative exercise of power, the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*’s women neatly map the play’s terrain.

There are four of these *damas* [leading ladies]. Catalinón the *gracioso* keeps their full range clearly in the foreground, tracking the *comedia*’s progress from Isabela (the spoiled duchess debutante with entrée to Naples’ royal palace), to Tisbea/Trisbea (the barefoot beauty who makes her living fishing off the coast of Tarragona), to Ana (the daughter of the ambassador-Comendador who decides that Father does *not* know best in Sevilla), and finally to Aminta/Arminta (the redneck heiress in Dos Hermanas intent on becoming an aristocrat by marriage).

Even when they are not physically onstage, the multivocal presence of these women shapes the action, through Catalinón’s score-keeping, jokes, reminiscences, and terrors. Catalinón’s strikingly-expressed sympathy for the objects of Don Juan’s pursuit, for example, creates a dramatic kinship between Tisbea/Trisbea and Aminta/Arminta, though the only scene they share is the play’s denouement (Fernández 30, 46, 60, 71, 87). His forthright warning that Don Diego’s scold about the scandal that Don Juan stirred up in Naples would have been even more scathing had the old man known about the goings-on in Tarragona links Isabela to Tisbea/Trisbea, even before the two women meet (Fernández 39, 49, 80, 88).

The sidekick’s jocular suggestion that Don Juan should be preceded by a public warning to all women defines “burlador” in terms of interaction with the opposite sex: “*Y tu, señor, eres / langostia de las mugeres, / ... / y es el burlador-garañon de España*” [You, sir, you’re the interbreeding scourge of Spain – an Old Testament plague of locusts on womankind] (Fernández 39, 81). Catalinón’s scorekeeping – “this one makes four!” he cries [con esta cuatro serán] as Don Juan sets his sights on Aminta/Arminta – tracks the progress of the plot with an explicit body-count (Fernández 43, 84).

Catalinón’s paralyzing fear that the unknown fist battering the dining room door belongs to “the wronged women waiting to get even with us both”
[mas si las forçadas vienen / a vengarse de los dos] adds terror to the Stone Guest’s arrival (Fernández 52). His boozily mellow question “Which of all the women that you’ve fooled are they talking about now, sir?” [con qual de tantas mugeres / como has burlado, señor, / hablan?] ties the refrain of the song which Don Juan orders sung for the Statue to the Trickster’s own impending doom: “que largo me lo fiays” [lady, you’ll trust me to the day that I die!] (Fernández 53, 91).

Catalinón’s catalogue of conquests precipitates the catastrophe of the play. These dramaturgical strategies keep Don Juan’s women constantly in play, pacing, driving, pointing, critiquing, texturing, clarifying, and compactly summarizing the Burlador and Tan largo’s apparently accidental action.

Another microcosm that neatly contains this play’s apparent chaos is the model of Spanish society which the Burlador and Tan largo construct. The dramaturgy of social modeling is evident in the play’s extraordinarily comprehensive survey of social classes, its acute inquiry into the sources of cultural power, and its searching investigation of the moral and ethical imperatives that move society’s movers and shakers. Looked at from this perspective, the clear, unifying action of the Burlador de Sevilla and Tan largo me lo fiáis is to test the soundness of Spanish society.

As a living portrait of Seville, warts and all, the Burlador’s kaleidoscopic journey achieves unity and compelling clarity. To be sure, Golden Age comedias characteristically cut a broad social swath, pairing high-class protagonists with low-class confidants. But the Burlador and Tan largo go significantly farther, scaling every rung of Seville’s social ladder, and seriously exploring the possibility of mobility from rung to rung.

A rich range of tipos [social types] are represented, with special attention paid to the venture-capitalist opportunists indigenous to seventeenth-century Sevilla. The play brings Don Juan into contact with patriarchs at the very apex of the power pyramid (Alfonso and his privado [royal favorite] Don Diego). With equal gusto and development, the comedia sets Don Juan into interaction with folk so disempowered that only major shakeups in the system can make them
audible at court (Anfriso and Batricio, blue-collar petitioners whose suits must be sponsored by blue-blooded patrons Isabela and Octavio).

Between these extremes on the class scale, Don Juan encounters a whole play-world full of intermediaries, interlopers, parasites, and parvenus – provincial nobility from Naples, agricultural aristocracy from Dos Hermanas, working professionals from the red-light districts, junketing diplomats, marriage-mart maidens, playboy wannabes, and servants who just do what they’re told.

In addition to its class inclusivity, the social model shaping the Burlador and Tan largo is remarkable for its sensitivity to cultural power. The play features representations of high culture (Octavio/Otavio’s cerebral passion for his Isabella-ideal), low culture (Catalinón’s proverbs, bywords, puns, and chopped logic), pop culture (the recurrent references to bullfighting), and fads (Gonzalo’s travelog). Luxury, commodification, and money-muscle clearly dictate the diction, dreams, and dogma of this society-in-flux.

Capitalizing on its setting in Seville, the play pitches old-economy commercial power bases (e.g., Gaseno/Gazeno and his Carnival feast for Aminta/Arminta’s wedding) into competition with new-economy entrepreneurs (e.g., the Marqués de la Mota’s ladies and their version of “Lisbon”). Don Juan’s mission is to test the reach of this social model’s high-culture ideals (expressed, for example, in Tisbea/Trisbea’s culteranismo conceits), the grasp of its global markets (stretching from Naples to Lisbon, not omitting the Marqués de la Mota’s Lisbon-in-Seville), and the strength of its moral fiber.

Heaven for a Golden Age galán characteristically takes the form of marriage. A nuptial knot marks the social, moral, and ethical clincher at the end of many a Siglo de Oro play, and comedias tirelessly re-examine problems in courtship, engagement, fidelity, and honor. That makes the Burlador and Tan largo’s model of Seville all the more extraordinary, because in Don Juan’s Sevilla marriage is put in motion like a business plan, its profitability exploited with the instincts of a Wall Street analyst.

In this society, Don Juan finds, everything is negotiable. Credit – i.e., commercial, social, and moral believability – is the Spanish coin most current in Seville, where “trust me” [tan largo me lo fiáis] could be the city motto, and
where everybody longs to be a burlador, edging out the competition with
whatever it takes to close a deal.

Don Juan’s role as the ultimate Burlador builds another readily-legible
mnemonic map into the Burlador and Tan largo’s apparently unruly
dramaturgy. The play orchestrates a careful, consistent, climactic build in Don
Juan’s marriage promises. His ultimately self-deceptive betrothals neatly and
memorably summarize the full arc of the play.

In the opening scene of act one, Don Juan divests himself of identity, in
order to embody a man in love with the idea of love, and enact the richly practical
joke of forcing a cerebral passion into physical action (impersonating Duke
Octavio/Otavio meeting Duchess Isabela after hours, in the forbidden private
quarters of the royal palace). “¿Quién soy?” he counter-questions Isabela’s
belatedly aroused suspicion. “Un hombre sin nombre” [Who am I? I’m nobody –
I’m a man who doesn’t exist].

By the end of act one, Don Juan has become a man who flirts with the
promise of marriage. “Juro, ojos bellos, / que mirando me matáis, / de ser
vuestro esposo,” he swears to Tisbea/Trisbea [I swear by your dazzling eyes, eyes
that take my breath away, that I’ll be your bridegroom]. This is marriage,
however, promised across a social distance that the bride herself considers
unbridgeable, and to a man who intends to keep his identity a secret. “Si te
pregunta quién soy,” he instructs Catalinón, “di que no sabes” [if she asks you
who I am, tell her you don’t know].

In act two, Don Juan plays more aggressively with the institution that his
society expects to put a stop to his playing around. He incites the Marqués de la
Mota to marry kissable cousin Ana (“Casaos, pues es estremada”), then throws
himself whole-heartedly into his bosom buddy’s scheme to engineer a union with
the delectable Miss Ulloa, despite the king’s plan to marry her elsewhere (“El rey
la tiene casada”). The audience knows, as Don Juan doesn’t, that Don Juan
himself is the man the king has selected to play Ana’s mate. So when Don Juan
dons the marquis’ cape and imitates the marquis’ mannerisms to impersonate
Ana’s groom-elect (“la voz y el habla fingid,” the Marqués advises), the ironic
result is that Don Juan unwittingly plays himself. The near-marriage ends
disastrously, with Don Juan dishonoring the woman the king hand-picked to marry him, and killing his intended father-in-law.

Act three initiates the anti-wedding in Dos Hermanas [Two Sisters, a placename that slyly invokes the pairs of women – two city slickers, two local yokels – who map Don Juan’s progress through the social landscape]. Here, the Burlador achieves his *burla más escogida* [slickest trick of all] by faking a marriage in his own name, unfurling his real family connections as a selling-point, and offering a promise of eternal fidelity which he really keeps. This is marriage with all the extras.

To achieve it, Don Juan convinces groom Batricio to abandon his bride Aminta/Arminta on their wedding night: “Con el honor le vencí” [I screwed him with his own virtue] he crows, and indeed, the dialog shows Don Juan using the bridegroom’s own words to dispossess him. Then Don Juan persuades Gaseno to give Aminta away: “Pero antes de hacer el daño / le pretendo reparar: / a su padre voy a hablar / para autorizar mi engaño,” he confides to the audience [I’ll make knocking up Miss Dos Hermanas even funnier by knocking on her Daddy’s door and getting his permission to get my hands around her knockers]. And indeed, Gaseno promptly trots onstage to gush, “el alma mía / en la muchacha ofrezco” [Take her, son, with all my heart].

Finally, Don Juan gives himself away, boasting to Aminta/Arminta about his bloodlines, and binding himself with a bloodcurdling oath. “Yo soy noble caballero, / cabeza de la familia / de los Tenorios, antiguos / ganadores de Sevilla,” he tells her [I’m the exalted head of the Tenorios, who took Seville back from the Moors many long years ago]. And as that prominent, very public person he promises, “Si acaso / la palabra y la fe mía / te faltaré, ruego a Dios / que a traición y alevosía / me dé muerte un hombre ... / muerto: que, vivo, ¡Dios no permita!” [Cross my heart and hope to die, God kill me dead with a dead man’s hand if I ever break my promises to you].

The climax of act three, of course, delivers the payback on that nuptial promise. Don Juan’s marriage experiments culminate in his eternal union with the Stone Avenger.
Nobody knows who wrote the *Burlador* or *Tan largo*, but anyone who reads this twice-printed script can see how this *comedia* challenged its audiences. The original Don Juan impelled its makers and consumers to reexamine core values in their culture in at least three ways:

- first by putting contemporary realities onstage in savagely satiric detail,
- then by enacting transgression (including shockingly graphic sexual transgression) on a mythic scale, and
- finally by structuring an aggressively unclosed ending that serves to amplify rather than resolve the shock-waves set off by Don Juan’s attractive transgressions.

The Don Juan play from 17th-century Spain put socio-political realities onstage by mounting mordantly pointed, double-edged critiques of contemporary political, social, and cultural institutions. The *comedia* is politically scathing, lampooning Felipe IV’s demeanor in the stonefacedness of Don Juan’s dinner guest (Felipe was famous for moving nothing but his mouth when he dined in public), and gleefully ridiculing Spanish monarchs’ penchant for *privados* (royal favorites) through the repeated, torturous twists in public policy that Don Juan’s dad must engineer to keep his son’s transgressions private. All three acts are socially abrasive, finding every level of Golden Age society corruptible, and putting *culteranismo*, the very latest in privileged high-culture language, into the mouth of a fishwife.

Most importantly, the original Don Juan scripts satirize core values in Imperial Spanish culture. *Honor* was a life-and-death issue in Golden Age Spain, both on the stage (where female characters died if their husbands thought they were even thinking about adultery) and on the street (where the imperative to act macho impelled theatergoers into fatal duels over hot tickets). Don Juan audaciously lampoons *honor* as a laughable obsession with public image. *Honor* keeps bumbling bureaucrats up late at night, concocting coverups for the latest political screwups. *Honor* persuades young women that contracting an upwardly-mobile marriage is worth any moral compromise it might demand. *Honor* makes ignorant rednecks proud of their own gullibility. Like the Emperor’s New Clothes, the more you buy into *honor*, the more you set yourself
up for exposure. Even Don Juan gets lured to his damnation by a provocatively-constructed challenge to his reputation.

In addition to provoking ideological crisis through socio-political critique, the first Don Juan play challenges its audiences by enacting transgression (including shockingly graphic sexual transgression) on a mythic scale. Sex plays a prominent, unabashed, and distinctly kinky part in the original Don Juan story. The Burlador is sexually omnivorous. In a translation of the *comedia* generated within the US in 2004, his sidekick Catalinón expresses shock at Don Juan’s scandalously equal-opportunity appetite, gasping “Is no one safe from this guy? With him as their enemy, God help the Turks, the Scythians, the Persians, the Libyans, the Galicians, the Troglydotes, the Germans, the Japanese, and even the evil old tailor, stroking his little gold needle like some girl in a fairy tale” (Kidd 44; cf. López-Vázquez 236).

This Don Juan takes delight in breaking sexual taboos. He gleefully “screws over” a wide range of male acquaintances, then crows about it in overtly sexual terms. He does not hesitate to engage in sexual sacrilege. As his pièce de résistance (and he loves overcoming the resistance), he seduces a bride on her wedding night.

In a climactic development that even he finds creepy, the first Don Juan finds his most explicit erotic response triggered by the touch of the Statue’s hand:

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Valgame Dios, todo el cuerpo
se à bañado de un sudor,
y dentro de las entrañas
se me hiela el corazón.
Quando me tomo la mano,
de suerte me la apretò,
que un infierno parecía:
jamás vide tal calor.
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[Oh my God – I’m sweating on the outside, and freezing on the inside! When he held my hand, squeezing it like a real man – God, it was hot as hell!] (Fernández 54, 92)
Sending the transgressor to Hell hand in hand with his Rock-Hard guest brings the first Don Juan plays to a climactic, but not to a neatly closed, conclusion. The 17th-century text remains aggressively unsettled, multivocal to the end. The King’s sweeping command “let marriage make amends / For all the wrongs inflicted by this man, / … Let order reign again,” (Edwards 195) serves only to underscore the fact that Don Juan’s disruptions cannot be undone. In the wake of the Burlador, the only people left to make projected marriages are deeply compromised and fatally mismatched. With the Statue’s solemn judgement still ringing in their ears – “quien tal haze que tal pague” [nobody gets off scot-free; everything you do comes home to roost in the long run] the narrative’s resistance to closure unmistakably challenges its audience.

Don Juan’s first appearance on stage, then, enacts a theatre of change by challenging contemporary socio-political realities with the “possible worlds” it constructs, by inducing potential crises in its audiences’ belief systems through seductively performed mythically-scaled transgressions, and by impelling its audiences toward ideological reevaluation through the insistent openness of its ending. The potent appeal of this impulsion toward change has made the Burlador de Sevilla and Tan largo me lo fiáis one of the most revisited sites in theater history.

The first Don Juan play’s stageworthiness is deeply rooted. What’s great about this comedia as theater? Why, beyond its historical importance, should it be performed? What makes it particularly attractive as a performance piece for 21st-century US university and repertory theaters? How does it merit exploration beyond study on the page, in production on the stage? Let me recount just a trio of the most compelling ways this superlative play clamors for re-creation in the US today, by summarizing what it has to offer as high-stakes, high-variety, and high-impact theater.

The Burlador and Tan largo is high-stakes theater. It offers well-rounded roles for men and women, well-constructed dialog, and well-engineered dramaturgical effects. Far from exhausting the energy that the play pours into characterization, the richness of the title role – part Burlador [practical joker],
part garañón [studmeat], part Lord Carnival, and part Everyman – is emblematic of the multi-faceted people that inhabit this world.

- There are deftly-drawn viejos [leading-man patriarchs], on the order of Don Juan’s uncle Pedro (part ambassador, part retired rake, part ambitious family planner) and Don Juan’s nemesis Don Gonzalo (a warrior-cum-diplomat who comes back from the dead as a Statue).

- There is a magnificent gallery of other galanes [parts for young studs], including the Neapolitan Duke Octavio/Otavio (Isabella’s fiancé-elect, terrified at the prospect of having sex), and Don Juan’s bosom buddy the Marqués de la Mota (Ana’s groom-elect, a connoisseur of Seville’s red-light district).

- There are deliciously broad tipos [character-actor roles, including ethnic comedy, social-class commentary, and vigorously-conceived stereotypes] hailed onstage under names like Anfriso, Gaseno/Gazeno, and Batricio/Patricio.

- There’s a stupendously juicy part for a gracioso [lead comic, who plays a character that’s part Lou Costello, part Jay Leno, and part Jerry Falwell] dubbed Catalinón (which means something like “scared shitless”).

- There are women’s roles, too – roles written for women to play, as fully-developed, autonomous characters who create and populate a complete dramatic universe; roles of strikingly high quality and impressive quantity.

  The script’s sensitive dialog reflects its high-stakes construction. The Spanish text’s poetry records subtle shifts in atmosphere and relationship calculated to bring performance to life with the immediacy of discovery, invention, and surprise. For example:

- The play’s “11:00 number” – the scene that kicks off the plot’s final acceleration toward climax, like the make-or-break song a classic American musical saves till 11:00 – introduces an intricate new verseform to initiate a feminist alliance between the Duchess Isabela and the fishergirl Tisbea/Trisbea, snowballing events toward Don Juan’s date with Hell.

- Spoken text regularly features haunting word plays that weave themselves into the substructure of the play – as when Don Juan’s riddling self-
identification as “un hombre sin nombre” [a man’s man, ma’am] precipitates a play-long identity quest.

Conversations crackle with the adventurous use of polyglot diction, incorporating current slang, argot, regional dialects, and other languages to tickle the audience’s ear and keep the diction cutting-edge. (Case in point: Catalínón’s name, which seems to combine slang from several different brands of Spanish to make a collage of “coward” and “excrement;” see MacCurdy 263.)

The lines exhibit a dazzling range of rhetorical textures, ranging from political doublespeak to poetic fantasy – all set in a linguistic landscape that endows even lists of place-names with rich performance implications.

This comedia’s resourcefully structured dramaturgy makes it a Whitman’s Sampler of Golden Age performance charms, combining the instant thrill of episodic action with the slow build of consequences, panel by panel. Precisely placed songs, a sassy metatheatrical sense of its own theatricality, and impact-heightening doubling, where actors play multiple roles that talk back to each other, foreground this masterful playtext’s high-stakes construction.

The Burlador and Tan largo epitomize high-variety theater, too. The comedia’s full-throttle, adventurous mix of genres – putting slapstick comedy onstage cheek-by-jowl with damnation tragedy – is a hallmark of its stageworthiness. The play promises something for everybody in performance, integrating action-adventure thrills, horror chills, sex farce spills, and high-drama battles of wills into one breathtakingly unified dramatic experience. It prosecutes a serious examination of Self in a world where all the Names (of people, places, and things) participate in the quest for meaning. It seasons its complex mix of theatrical delights with carefully placed interruptions (act-breaks where songs, dances, or sketches were performed, reminiscent of classic television’s “word from our sponsor” commercial breaks) and leaves the audience still wanting more by ending with a bracingly acid denouement.

This comedia is stuffed with great situations, offering producers a smorgasbord of superbly-presented treats. Don Juan concocts his seductions by mirroring other people’s forbidden desires, setting up a long-running series of
juicy performance moments. At one critical point in the script, Don Juan’s best buddy Mota screws himself over by trying to doublecross Don Juan into impersonating him. The result is a delicious quadruplecross, as Don Juan succeeds in using Mota’s identity to compromise Mota’s lover-elect, without realizing that the woman in question is actually the King’s personal choice to become Don Juan’s bride. And that’s not the most richly-textured situation in the script. At another climactic turning point, Don Juan meets a social-climbing bride who reflects his own ambition to be something more than himself right back at him. The result is an unforgettable defining moment for them both.

A particularly attractive aspect of this play’s tantalizing variety is the multivocality of its scripting. Having the play’s performance score recorded in both the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* offers performers inspirational double perspectives on the action, and invites translators to take advantage of exciting liberties for re-creating performance moments. The 17th-century performance record, after all, takes the liberty of:

- relocating huge swaths of dialog (e.g., *Tan largo* completely cuts the longest speech that the *Burlador* assigns to any male character, and invents a brand-new celebration of Seville for Don Juan that takes almost four full pages of the script to print),
- re-developing or skipping over whole scenes (e.g., *Tan largo* stages the Marqués de la Mota’s pivotal release from prison, an event which the *Burlador* simply reports, and significantly re-mixes the *Burlador*’s presentation both of the 11:00 episode between Isabela and Tisbea/Trisbea and of Don Juan’s damnation),
- retooling subtext (e.g., *Tan largo* pinpoints the turning point in fateful decisions and roots them in clearly-focused character motivations, as when the bride of Dos Hermanas spells out step by step the considerations that persuade her to change husbands in the middle of her wedding-night),
- broadening characterizations and emboldening passions (e.g., *Tan largo* gleefully explodes Duke Octavio/Otavio’s lip-service to loving Isabela more than life itself, repeatedly poking fun at this androgynous aristocrat’s terror of finding himself trapped into actually having to have sex; additionally, the
comedia’s second source memorably turns up the volume on the father-lover overtones that Don Gonzalo’s attachment to his daughter Ana set vibrating). The high-variety feature of two eyewitness Golden Age perspectives on the first Don Juan play challenges 21st-century US theater-makers to take enlivening liberties with this canonical comedia.

In addition to promising present-day companies a high-stakes, high-variety production experience, the Burlador and Tan largo embody high-impact theater. Don Juan was born in a comedia that audaciously exploits intersections between the world of the play and the world of the audience, actively addressing current issues in the life (and death) of the nation. For example, the script is refreshingly frank and bracingly thoughtful about sex, sexuality, seduction, and seducibility. It masterfully succeeds, moreover, in playing sexy without letting sexiness take over the playmaking. For this Don Juan, sex is there to fuel an examination of deeper issues, including:

- issues of money and power (problematizing Don Juan’s immunity from prosecution, his sexual transgressions notwithstanding),
- issues of gender politics and gender equity (foregrounding the uneasy mating of Tisbea/Trisbea with Don Juan’s “ser” [his core identity as a representative of the privileged elite], a misalliance that raises uncomfortable questions about the Burlador’s coupling with women from other social levels),
- issues of class construction and social mobility (luring Catalinón into acting as Don Juan’s go-between with the eye-popping expectation that the King will elevate the gracioso to the role of Count),
- issues of national self-image and self-definition (appropriating games, sports, archetypes, and symbols intimately associated with the constitution of Imperial Spain to describe the arc of Don Juan’s life as a Burlador).

This play unflinchingly probes the core values of its world, presenting honor and valor as behavioral choices that require constant re-negotiation to exert their seemingly irresistible, apparently natural, rhetorically everlasting and institutionally inescapable social power. The play’s performance of marriage is particularly impressive. In the Burlador and Tan largo, matrimony becomes both a sacrament and a replicable, deconstructible, reformable social act.
Standard heterosexual betrothal and nuptial rituals are provocatively reflected in same-sex interactions, most strikingly between Don Juan and the Statue, but also between Isabela and Tisbea/Trisbea, between Don Juan and Gaseno/Gazeno, and even between King Alfonso and his right-hand man, Don Juan’s dad Don Diego (called Don Juan Senior in Tan largo).

Highlighting its dramaturgy of invasive interaction with the “real world,” this comedia foregrounds theater’s impact by exuberantly exploding the fourth wall and aggressively performing itself as a metatheatrical experience. Catalinón the gracioso [comic confidant] carries the workaday world onstage with his down-to-earth observations and asides. Don Juan constructs his most inventive adventures in direct consultation with the audience. Throughout the play, the insider language of theater terminology – entrances, exits, cues, and character types – is used to color social, political, and religious events.

Employing these high-impact techniques, this play challenges its source nation’s sense of itself, forcing cultural preconceptions about “Spain” through a thoroughgoing reexamination. The playwriting engages in daring, hilariously covert political satire, lampooning the Royal Family’s legendary gravity by bringing a Stone Guest onstage, bitterly denouncing the practice of privanza [royal favorites holding the reins] through Don Diego’s disastrous special pleadings for his son, and sharply calling into question institutionalized links between moral values and establishment power. The play’s settings describe a tour through an embattled empire’s pressure points, exposing the creeping rot behind this world dominator’s glorious facades – the overspending that’s eating up the big spender (the stinger in the catchphrase “¡tan largo me lo fiáis!”), the misplaced trust in military might that’s exposing the nation to sudden death (the bite in the Comendador-ambassador’s demise by dueling).

The impact of this national lampooning is heightened by presenting it anachronistically. The play pursues its satiric agenda by displacing the stresses that were tearing 17th-century Spain apart into defining moments in the nation’s mythic and historical pasts. So a King from the 14th-century Reconquista sits on the throne while 17th-century venture capitalism runs riot – the equivalent of George Washington sitting in the White House while Halliburton raids the
treasury with more overcharges for George W. Bush’s war in Iraq. Thus the hopes and fears of many years get compressed into one unforgettably intense three-act sweep through time – like experiencing Reconstruction, the Wild West, Prohibition, the Great Depression, the Dawning of the Age of Aquarius, and the Dot-Com Revolution all in the same evening.

High-impact engagement with global issues intensifies the play’s intimate, first-person payoffs. The comedia brilliantly insures that its audience will take its experience personally, by structuring itself as an irresistibly seductive morality play. Morally shocking audience members, then charming them into complicity with the transgressiveness that they initially rejected, and finally demonstrating the damnation that transgressiveness triggers, the Burlador and Tan largo expertly impels audience members into a process of self-examination.

**Losses in Translation**

Twenty-first century theatre in the US could be significantly enriched by better acquaintance with the Burlado and Tan largo, because the high-impact, high-variety, high-stakes experience they record is eminently stageworthy. This is theater bursting with richly-textured characters, acting out an exhilaratingly wide-ranging plot, which questions institutions and ideas that fundamentally define our culture, in language that crackles with wit, lights up with images and symbols, and delights with its sexual and religious frankness. This comedia masterfully stimulates imagination and profoundly stirs emotion, lancing the corruption beneath the surface of social respectability with the light touch of a lampoonist, framing damnation with feasts. It is a play big enough to chew on for generations, yet compact enough to hold in a list of four women, or a snapshot of Seville, or the circle of a well-circulated engagement ring.

Clearly, this comedia has much to recommend it for re-presentation on US university and repertory stages. The Burlador and Tan largo mark the debut of one of the longest-running, most provocatively elusive, and persistently irresistible stage characters in theater history. Moreover, and more importantly, this comedia is a dynamically lively theater text in its own right, brimming with a
political, social, and spiritual curiosity, a questing metatheatricality, and a
dramaturgical inventiveness perfectly pitched to appeal to 21st-century US
audiences.

So why isn’t the *Burlador* a standard entry in US rep? Why isn’t the first
Don Juan as familiar to US audiences as Tartuffe, Faust, Peer Gynt, or Romeo?
Why isn’t *Tan largo* busily launching a mutually beneficial conversation between
Hispanic culture and theater production in the United States? Given the vibrancy
of this *comedia*, plus the vigor of its translation history, answering this riddle
requires a thoroughgoing reassessment of traditional wisdom’s explanation for
Spanish drama’s curious absence from US theater performance schedules.

“No translations” can’t account for the first Don Juan’s impoverishing
invisibility in the US, because translations of his Golden Age debut abound. Both
the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* have been transcribed into English, repeatedly,
expertly, and recently. Don Juan the Burlador’s absence from production, then,
must be indicative of fatal losses in translation; of critical gaps in the processes of
decoding, re-coding, and targeting the Spanish that sap the script of its vitality in
English; of translation problems that bleed the playfulness out of the playtext.

This *comedia*’s impressive stageworthiness clamors to be recovered
through a thoroughgoing study of translation losses, study specifically aimed at
locating the junctures where the life of the play is eluding transmission, allowing
only a simulacrum of the play to seep through the transcription process, leaving
too much of its lifeblood behind. In light of the original script’s high-stakes,
high-variety, high-impact promise of vitality onstage, continuous absence from
production constitutes evidence of consistent problems in translation.

The conventions that governed the performance of Golden Age drama, it
should be noted, intensify the challenge of translating it. *Comedia* was
performed in the context of a total-theater experience – framed, interrupted, and
punctuated with songs, dances, and dramatic sketches that irresistibly
foregrounded intertextuality. This production context heightens the ever-present
problem of transmitting theater text without its subtext, the *comedia*’s words
without their enlivening resonance for character and situation. The Golden Age’s
idiomatic performance tradition foregrounds the danger of translation opting for
blandly general, blindly traditional, or blunderingly idiosyncratic takes on a \textit{comedia}'s scenes, without developing careful, intertextual methods for cross-checking the validity of the critical interpretation that's inseparable from translation.

\textit{Comedia} played to a complete cross-section of Spanish society, in a public venue that was officially owned by religious \textit{cofradias} [confraternities] and institutionally subjected to intense governmental scrutiny. Golden Age playwrights became past masters at the art of covert critique – techniques for (to quote the dramatist Bances Candamo) “saying without saying” (see Dixon “Spanish Renaissance Theatre” 167). This condition of \textit{comedia} production heightens the potential for translation unwittingly falling into the problem of silencing satire and impoverishing texture, simplifying storylines to the point of simple-mindedness, while missing covertly-stated relationships and warping obliquely-developed characterizations.

\textit{Comedia} was characteristically recorded in verse, using variations in meters and rhymes to construct performance effects that had nothing to do with the production of Great Literature. Because this dramaturgy’s native tongue is poetry, however, and its script’s printed forms reflect that, translation of Golden Age drama runs special risks of tripping over the problem of imposing literary standards on a dramatic document. The poetry trap can seduce translators into becoming more interested in a playwright’s tools than in the work the tools were used to do – into preserving the drama’s mechanics while occluding its message, misplacing the drive of the action, and burying the play’s performance impact under its Literary Stature. Especially in the case of a great literary event like the first Don Juan play, the temptation to transmit \textit{poesis} without putting the prosody into productive contention with its performance purpose can be all but overpowering.

In these elusive but pervasive ways, the first Don Juan play’s excellence as \textit{comedia} augments the danger of losing its stageworthiness in translation. Its masterful manipulation of Golden Age drama’s peculiar conditions of production serves to intensify the difficulty of re-creating its performance impact in English. This makes constructing a methodology that can identify translation problems
concretely and untangle them specifically all the more urgent and indispensable a step toward bringing classic Spanish drama to life on US stages.

In addition to offering US practitioners eminently stageworthy theater that promises huge payoffs in performance, then, the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* provide US theater people with case-study *comedia* uniquely equipped to pinpoint translation problems, diagnosing specific failures in transmission that hamper staging Golden Age drama successfully, and suggesting strategies for remedying them. The play’s double value – as a *comedia famosa* worth making famous in America, and as a model site for synthesizing new translation techniques to make thousands of *comedias* accessible for re-creation on US university and repertory stages – justifies examining this thoroughly critiqued text from new angles, to strategize translating this frequently-transcribed script along fresh lines.

Translation’s success in transmitting the stageworthiness of the world’s first Don Juan play has been sporadic, unpredictable, and emphatically foreign to the US. The *Burlador* and *Tan largo* have been repeatedly, expertly, and recently translated into English in the US, but never triumphantly staged here. Even transplants from lively translations from abroad – North American stagings of Walcott’s *Joker*, for example – have packed a puzzlingly puny theatrical punch in US theatrical circles. How is the life of the play eluding reproduction?

Theater experts in the US lay the blame squarely on translation problems. “A scholarly translation is not necessarily a good text for the stage, and many a translation has created the unfortunate impression that the respective play is not particularly stageworthy,” master dramaturg Carl Weber points out (269). In the US, Weber argues, where production conditions are “comparatively inhospitable to the drama of other cultures, past or present” (267), stageworthiness implies special demands on translation’s accessibility. US theater’s strength in psychological realism – the dominant tradition in contemporary American theater-making – makes other forms of dramaturgy seem more foreign to US actors, directors, and theatergoers. In this context of institutionalized resistance, where “American theater culture appears to have internalized a deeply imbued xenophobic attitude, a discomfort with plays in translation that is quite evident
but rarely admitted” (267), glitches in transmission that obscure performance impact can be fatal.

World-class theater critics and text editors in the US have concurred with Weber’s assessment, blaming translation problems for obscuring the stageworthiness of the world’s first Don Juan play and blocking its production in the US. What no one seems to have done, however, is to ask what specific, concrete problems in translation stand between production and this comedia’s stageworthiness, and to demand practical, producible answers to that question. No investigation of any rigor has been conducted into precisely what blockades to translation warp US perceptions of the Burlador and Tan largo.

Introducing The Trickster of Seville to US readers in 1959, Eric Bentley hailed Campbell’s translation as “fresh air,” a visionary departure from tradition, in which this comedia, “flat and even absurd in the earlier translations I had read, came alive” (Campbell vii). But Bentley offers no analysis of Campbell’s strategies for solving the translation problems that had stymied his predecessors. He contents himself with ascribing the liveliness of Campbell’s Trickster to “a touch of bravado, a vein of bravura” in the poet’s own English verse, together with a “straightforward lyrical gift” for expressing a “love” for “old Spain” (Campbell vii-viii). Is successful transmission of performance vigor across culture lines attributable only to natural gifts, to idiosyncratic accident or mysterious genius? How does Campbell’s work – or that of any translator – grasp the stage life of its source and transplant it for reproduction?

Publishing the first English translation of Tan largo ever attempted, in 1963, Oscar Mandel suggests that problems with translating the world’s first Don Juan play start with problematic transmission of the comedia’s Spanish text. Mandel combined passages from both of the 17th-century printings to produce The Playboy of Seville for his mammoth Theatre of Don Juan, a University of Nebraska publication so seminal that it’s still in print. Conflating Tan largo with the Burlador, Mandel argues, “might actually encourage performances by its offer of a more rational, a more stageworthy play” (41). But Mandel’s interest in the process of editing the texts together absorbs all his energy. The process of translating the edited text escapes his analytical eye altogether. Is well-edited
Spanish text all it takes to make an accessible US translation? Do English expressions for the *comedia*’s performance impacts become self-evident when you choose the right Spanish words to record the scene?

Certainly Gwynne Edwards doesn’t think so. Edwards edited and translated the *Burlador* in 1986 for Britain’s prestigious parallel-text Hispanic Classics series by Aris & Phillips (the series prints freshly-edited Spanish text and spanking-new English translation on facing pages). The Golden Age translation problem that interests Edwards has nothing to do with establishing the text. Indeed, his Spanish edition breezily trots out surprising, unprecedented, even highly questionable readings with no editorial comment whatsoever (see esp. Edwards 142-43). Edwards’ attention is consumed with finding the proper English verseform for re-creating “the pulse and the discipline of metre, ... the framework within which, as in a piece of classical music, emotion is contained and a constant tension between content and form established” (xxxix). On the basis of the fact that Campbell’s translation – considered “unreadable and unactable” by the directors that Edwards consulted (Edwards xxxviii) – employed rhyme, Edwards concludes that the key to translating the *Burlador* is to couch it in blank verse. Can meter break the blockade between *comedia* and successful cross-cultural production? The production history of Edwards’ *Trickster of Seville and the Stone Guest*, carefully re-cast in “the metre in which British actors feel most at ease” but still awaiting its professional debut (xli), casts doubt on the adequacy of his diagnosis.

Clearly, long-standing, deeply-seated, complexly-rooted translation problems stand between the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* and English-language productions that capitalize on the script’s stageworthiness. Comprehensive, methodical study is necessary to identify these problems with precision, so they can be efficiently addressed.
Approaches to Identifying Translation Problems

Three approaches to the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* have led me to three methodologies for identifying, analyzing, and resolving translation challenges within the text:

- Getting to know the play through a variety of English translations led me to the practice (premiered here) of analyzing problematic passages by examining them through a series of different translators’ eyes, a method of investigating translation problems that I call “Conspectus.”

- Getting to know the play through both of its 17th-century Spanish printed performance texts led me to the practice (premiered here) of analyzing the subtext of critical scenes by examining the tension between textual variants, a method of grappling with translation problems that I call “Stereopticon perspective.”

- Getting to know the play through a wide range of performance experiences convinced me that translators determine the meaning of moments in the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* by imagining the script in performance – a practice (explored here) that led me to a method of translating the “untranslatable” that I call “Production Conceptualization.”

These avenues into the play, and the insight into translation problems that they supply, have impelled me toward the conclusion that a new art for translating this *comedia* (and, by extension, other plays from the Spanish Golden Age) is indispensable if the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* are to come to life in the US today.

Getting to know the play in translation gave me my first inkling of how translation problems have befogged the stageworthiness of the world’s first Don Juan play in this country. I undertook an in-depth study of ten English-language translations of the *comedia*, spanning a 50-year period from the mid-1950’s to 2004. In chronological order, this translation survey interrogated:

1959: *The Trickster of Seville and His Guest of Stone*, translated by Roy Campbell prior to 1955, copyrighted after Campbell’s death first in a US version as part of Angel Flores’ *Masterpieces of the Spanish Golden Age*
collection (1957), then re-edited and finally anthologized in volume three of Eric Bentley’s *The Classic Theatre* (*Six Spanish Plays*, 1959)

1962: *The Rogue of Seville*, translated by Robert O’Brien and twice reprinted, most recently in Angel Flores’ *Great Spanish Plays in English Translation*

1963: *The Playboy of Seville, or Supper with a Statue*, translated by Adrienne M. Schizzano and Oscar Mandel for Mandel’s mammoth collection *The Theatre of Don Juan*

1964: *The Playboy of Seville*, translated by Walter Starkie for his collection *Eight Spanish Plays of the Golden Age*

1976: *Don Juan the Beguiler from Seville and the Stone Guest*, translated by Max Oppenheimer, Jr.

1978: *The Joker of Seville*, adapted by Derek Walcott under commission from the Royal Shakespeare Company and published with Walcott’s *O Babylon!*


1989: *Don Juan of Seville*, translated by Lynne Alvarez under commission from the Classic Stage Company in New York, then quickly reworked for staging by the Source Theatre Company in Washington DC, and finally printed in its New York version – first in manuscript by Theatre Communications Group as volume ten, number six of their Plays in Process series (1989), and then reprinted (misprints intact) in *Lynne Alvarez: Collected Plays Volume I* (1998)

1990: *The Last Days of Don Juan*, adapted by Nick Dear under commission from the Royal Shakespeare Company
The translation survey grew into a “Conspectus” that allowed me to study trouble spots in the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* by comparing how a wide variety of different English translations handle the same problematic Spanish text. The Conspectus embraced translations from a broad range of sources, including anthologies of Spanish drama (1959, 1962), collections of work by individual adapters (1963, 1974, 1978), single-play printings (1976, 1986), manuscripts (1989, 2004), and playscripts for actors (1990). Assembling the Conspectus required years of sifting through scholarly bibliographies (particularly the “Bibliografía general de Tirso de Molina” published every three years by David H. Darst in *Estudios*), leafing through library databases, surfing through online resources (such as those posted at [www.comedias.org](http://www.comedias.org)), posting queries on dramaturgical list-serves (notably the discussion chain maintained by the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas), chasing down script catalogs, and vigorously drumming up word-of-mouth.

The Conspectus assembled three basic kinds of translations, works that I call (appropriating terminology developed for New Testament studies) “Synoptic translations,” “Composite translations,” and “Thematic translations.” “Synoptic translations” practice close, “literal” transcriptions of Spanish dialog from the *Burlador de Sevilla* into English. Like the gospels of Mark, Matthew, and Luke, Synoptic translations define themselves by their concern for reporting storyline and dialog respectfully and accurately. Variations among Synoptic translations – and they are legion – ironically serve to emphasize their similarity of outlook. Their goal is the faithful transmission of events, carefully preserved in the same order (and as nearly as possible in the same language) as the *Burlador* in Spanish.
“Composite translations” transcribe Spanish dialog from both *Tan largo* and the *Burlador* into English. Composite translations aim at a critical investigation of text. Like a gospel harmony, where different versions of the same parable appear in print side by side, Composite translations focus on differences between the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*, looking for the truth about the play in the gaps between its printings. In the tradition of classical text criticism, Composite translations tend to believe that the ultimate source of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* rests in an original Ur-text, from which both printings derived, and toward which variations between the printings can lead perceptive editors.

“Thematic translations” transcribe ideas and themes from the first Don Juan play, even at the expense of rewording its speeches and rearranging its storyline. Thematic translations correspond to the Fourth Gospel in this categorization scheme. Like the good news traditionally attributed to John, these translations are as apt to find interest in movements going on beneath the surface of events as in the events themselves. Thematic translations hear the truth about the play most clearly in its meanings – its interplay of promise and fulfillment, the dialog that it sets in motion between different worlds, the cumulative force and sympathetic resonance of its central symbols, technologies of being, and dramatic logic. This style of translation energetically traces themes and symbols through the *comedia*, and regards the mechanics of literalness as misguided and unreliable.

Thematic translations differ from Synoptic translations, then, in valuing resonance more than sequence, and caring more about capturing ideas and their explanations than preserving events through precise quotation. Thematic translations differ from Composite translations by privileging images over words, and in approaching divergences between texts as windows where you catch glimpses of the play’s (meta)theatrical life, free from the burden of text.

Methodically constructing this multi-source, multi-type range of testimony about the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* in translation gave me a foundational first step toward identifying problems in the play’s transmission for performance. I found that lining up different translators’ perspectives on the same passage – that is, assembling a Conspectus on particular moments in the play – helped me to
diagnose translation difficulties. The problem spots that surfaced included jarring disagreements in how translations reported the play’s dialog and storyline, disagreements deeper and more stubbornly rooted than variations in the translations’ time period, provenance, or style. Irreconcilable differences in how translations view fundamentals facts about what happens in the first Don Juan play led me on toward the second step in this study.

Striking dissonances in English-language translations of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* – stark disagreements about the script’s plot, characters, meaning, and impact – impelled me to get to know the play in Spanish. Bit by bit, I made friends with both of the *comedia*’s authentic 17th-century printed versions, in the facsimiles helpfully assembled by Xavier A. Fernández:

EL BVRLADOR DE SEVILLA,

y combidado de piedra.

published in Barcelona in 1630, and

TAN LARGO ME LO FIAYS.

published, according to scholars’ best guesses, sometime between 1635 and 1670, possibly (but by no means surely) in Seville (Fernández 7, 11).

Surveying this *comedia* through its original performance records gave me a new outlook on its performance life. Many major trouble spots for the play’s translation, I found – pivotal scenes on the order of Don Juan’s damnation – turned out to be places where the two Spanish texts showed noticeable differences in wording and/or in structure. Editors have smoothed over those differences by conflating *Tan largo* with the *Burlador* or otherwise “correcting” textual variants. But that seems to have made problems with translating the trouble spots worse, rather than easing the way toward effectively staging scenes like Don Juan’s damnation in English.

I began to wonder what would happen if, instead of erasing disagreements between *Tan largo* and the *Burlador*, I explored those disagreements as different points of view on the same dramatic event. Using textual variants the way that someone looking through a Stereopticon uses two differently focused viewpoints on the same scene to achieve depth perception, I looked for clues to the subtext of turning points in the play – what the Marqués de la Mota wants to get out of the
cape caper, for example, and what makes Aminta/Arminta change her mind about her marriage in the middle of an argument with Don Juan, and what the Statue means when he lays out the reasons for Don Juan’s damnation. Reading critical scenes through two 17th-century performance lenses gave me a second method for identifying translation challenges in the script. By uncovering pervasive subtextual depth and recurrent performance sparkle that English translations to date have failed to suggest, this second line of inquiry led me on toward a third.

Getting to know the play in Spanish, and starting to sense huge losses in translation as I listened to the comedia’s native tongue, impelled me toward getting to know the Burlador and Tan largo through a variety of theater experiences. Some of these experiences were decidedly indirect. For example, I aggressively chased down every recent US re-conception of Don Juan that I could find, and came up with a respectable cache, including:

- three Chicano plays, ranging from
  - 1984 James Bierman’s The Fabulous Life and Death Adventures of Don Juan Tenorio (an unpublished manuscript premiered by El Teatro Campesino), to
  - 1988 Carlos Morton’s Johnny Tenorio (acted at home and abroad across the last two decades of the 20th century and reprinted in 1992), to
  - 1993 Octavio Solís’ Man of the Flesh (workshopped at Teatro Dallas, premiered at South Coast Rep, and then printed; San Diego Rep developed a Spanish version of the script to perform in rotating rep with the Anglophonic original);
- one Off-Broadway entry
  - 1995 David Ives’ Don Juan in Chicago (premiered Off-Broadway, then printed);
- and one feature film
  - 1995 Jeremy Levens’ Don Juan de Marco (screened in theaters and since reissued on video).
Looking at Don Juan through these lenses helped me to grasp the problems that translation faces in bringing the first iteration of an actively ongoing cultural tradition persuasively to the stage.

Other experiences with the play were much more immediate. For example, it was my privilege during the course of this investigation to witness the world premiere of Michael Kidd’s *Ladykiller of Seville* by the Poculi Ludique Societas in Toronto (2004). In addition to experiencing the whole last week of the *Ladykiller’s* debut first-hand – getting acquainted with the play both from the house and from backstage – I’ve been enlightened over the course of this study by meetings with dramaturgs, artistic directors, translators, and production teams who’ve put Don Juan on stage at Hart House Theatre in Toronto, the Classic Stage Company in New York, Teatro Dallas, the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco, the South Coast Rep in Costa Mesa, San Diego Rep, and El Teatro Campesino. My project has been influenced by sharing ideas with historians, critics, theoreticians, and practitioners at assemblies of Florida State University’s Literature and Film Conference, the Mid-America Theatre Conference, a whole slew of conferences hosted by the Association for Theatre in Higher Education, and meetings (in person and online) sponsored by the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas. These experiences have fundamentally shaped the course of this inquiry.

Even more influential to my process is the experience of leading students at Florida State University and Bainbridge College through hands-on approaches to analyzing and personalizing the first Don Juan’s stage potential. My students at FSU were a small cadre of advanced undergraduate theater majors, who approached Don Juan in the context of an intense six-week summer workshop in play analysis. These students read three watershed treatments of Don Juan: Lynne Alvarez’ translation of the *Burlador*, William I. Oliver’s translation of Zorrilla’s *Don Juan Tenorio*, and Carlos Morton’s bilingual Chicano acto entitled *Johnny Tenorio*. For each script, they identified a pressing question that would have to be answered in producing the play successfully, then used analytical tools to formulate performable answers to their questions. Getting to know the Burlador in this context laid the analytical groundwork for my conviction that
vital aspects of this comedia’s stageworthiness are recorded subtextually, and must be recovered through reading the Spanish more dramaturgically than traditional philology thinks.

Students in the “Don Juan Theater Lab” at Bainbridge College were enrolled in semester-long, 1100-level courses in Theatre Appreciation. Consequently, their exposure to Don Juan was designed to give them first-person experience in theater-making processes. Seeing the Burlador through the eyes of these collaborators was a defining experience for this project.

The three-semester tenure of the “lab” brought me in contact with five groups of students at a small two-year institution in the State University System of Georgia, a College which offered (and still offers) only one formal course in theater. The first “lab” had just six participants; the remaining four “labs” consisted of two mid-sized groups (containing 12-15 participants) and two large groups (containing 22-25 participants). The course of inquiry prosecuted by these five groups differed in specifics, but followed the same general arc.

Students began by reading an act of the Burlador or Tan largo in translation. From their reading, they selected a candidate for the act’s “most dramatic moment,” and presented passionate arguments for why their moment should get selected for production. They ended by presenting their own performance versions of democratically-elected pivotal points in the play.

Between first reading and final performance, “theater lab” participants debated the relative merits of published translations of pivotal scenes, on the page and onstage. They analyzed characters within these translations, expressing their responses in forms of their own choosing. (Choices ranged from short essays to splashy collages, from specific costume designs to atmospheric soundscapes, from character-specific choreography to custom-decorated cakes, and from original video to original rap lyrics.) They introduced themselves to critical contexts for appreciating and performing classic Spanish drama by watching productions of Hamlet and Tartuffe on tape, and by getting to know Don Juan de Marco up close and personal. And they re-wrote in their own words moments from the Burlador and Tan largo that they had identified as critical, trying to re-capture the essence of those moments’ impact.
The rewrites were a particularly revealing experience. One group of students set themselves the goal of re-envisioning the *Burlador*’s longest speech, a 142-line monolog from act one that simultaneously introduces a female lead, satirizes a cultural fad, narrates a rescue from shipwreck, and problematizes an erotic attraction. Students’ re-stagings for this theatrical tour de force ranged from stream-of-consciousness conversations inside a contemporary coed’s head, to the symbolist musings of an African-American poetess laureate, to the lurid headlines of a tabloid screaming the latest details about a celebrity sex scandal. These experiences convinced me that US cultural models offer resonant equivalents for translating the social critique so subtly and pervasively encoded in this Golden Age play.

Two other groups addressed three pivotal moments out of act two: Don Juan’s interception of a love letter meant for his bosom buddy, a duel where Don Juan kills the Commander whose Statue returns to haunt him, and a backwoods wedding reception where Don Juan steals the bride. Again, witnessing the intensity and variety of students’ takes on high-profile moments from the play was a profoundly illuminating experience. I saw the Burlador re-produced as a street-smart “thug” who fast-talks his “homey” out of a “booty-call.” I got to re-view the duel, first as an assassination plot, re-located to the Middle-East and hooked into international political ramifications (involving, in the wake of 9/11, internationally recognizable political figures). Then I got to re-experience the duel as a meta-theatrical send-up of action-adventure cinema (starring Christopher Walken). As for the wedding scene, I was in the audience as the Smooth Mover from Seville resurrected himself into Elvis at a high-society Memphis engagement party, giving the bride the courage to run away from her family’s oppressive expectations by his empathetic capacity for listening and the inspiration of his live-free-or-die example. These experiences convinced me that US stereotypes and US stage conventions can eloquently translate this *comedia*’s impressive range of character types and situations.

The remaining brace of Bainbridge College “lab” groups re-staged Don Juan’s damnation from act three – a prickly point for performing the play today, as variations in the early printed versions of the Spanish text indicate it must
have been in the 17th century. Here, students’ reassessments of Last Judgement, Don Juan style, helped me to sort out the strong and apparently contradictory impulses at work in the play’s climax. Does this damnation single out sexual transgression for divine disapproval? Does it present Don Juan as the scapegoat sacrificed to keep a self-consciously corrupt society from having to set its mind on reform? Does it put poetic justice onstage? Does it accomplish a mixture of these impacts?

Experiencing Bainbridge College readings of the Burlador’s last date, I saw re-enactments where women, former victims of the trickster, tricked him into making himself their victim. I saw summary judgements where men, whom the Burlador had fooled into parting with their self-respect, fooled him into parting with his “family jewels.” I saw divine interventions where God turned the tables on the Stud of the Universe by forcibly mating him with the Ugliest Woman in the World, and requiring him to satisfy every sexual whim she might ever feel a hankering for. These experiences convinced me that the first Don Juan play still speaks, and speaks eloquently, to morally-loaded cultural anxieties that are still formulating public policy and influencing personal behavior in the US today.

My three types of experience with the play – the play in performance, the play in Spanish, and the play in a slew of translations – grew into the three chapters that form the body of Don Juan Plays the USA, and the two-part conclusion that brings it to a close. The chapters are entitled “Decoding Don Juan’s Sex Life,” “Re-Coding Multidimensional Damas,” and “Targeting Reproduction of the ‘Untranslatable.’” They culminate in “New Ways of Making Comedia Accessible in the United States Today.”

The chapter on “Decoding Don Juan’s Sex Life” takes advantage of the Burlador and Tan largo’s extraordinary translation history (ten English versions represented here) to crack a longstanding translation problem. By “Decoding,” I mean the process of unpacking performance information from the Spanish script. When Don Juan identifies himself as “vn hombre sin nombre,” for example, Decoding challenges translation to recognize the phrase as a riddle for the ear, in which various possible meanings (“a man without a name,” “a name without a man,” “a man, yes, just man,” “a name, yes, just name”) compete for
communication. When Don Juan’s servant Catalinón punctuates situations where he’s being compelled to act against his better judgement with the sexually-loaded verb forçar, Decoding expects translators to recognize the parallelism in the passages, and to dig into them to expose their erotic force. When the comedia populates a world that it has constructed out of four elements, governed by four humours, and divided into four social classes with a grand total of four female leads, Decoding demands that translation transmit this carefully correlated context into performable character information.

Using Conspectus as a tool for examining Synoptic translations, this first wave of inquiry dislocates sexual conquest as Don Juan’s chief objective, and replaces it with a delight in mirroring other people’s weak spots. By “Conspectus,” I mean the practice (premiered here) of analyzing problematic passages by examining them through a series of different translators’ eyes. “Synoptic” describes a class of translations which aim at a closely “literal” reproduction of the Burlador’s diction.

My Conspectus investigation starts with an assessment of the “Stakes” involved in staging Don Juan’s sex life, then proceeds to “Locate” sex in the subordinate role which the playwriting assigns it and “Dislocate” sex from the spine of the play (where it has no business). The chapter concludes with a precis of revolutionary “New Ways to Play the Burlador” in light of Conspectus findings, stressing mirroring as Don Juan’s characteristic strategy and identity testing as his character’s through-line.

The chapter on “Re-coding Multidimensional Damas” builds on another unique feature of the first Don Juan text – the fact that it was printed twice in the 17th-century, with interestingly variant readings in the two publications. By “Re-coding,” I mean the process of making dramatic effects that are encoded within the Spanish dramaturgy accessible for performance in English. When character after character steps onstage wearing names that instantly offer speakers of Renaissance Spanish vital clues for creating and relishing complex characterizations – names ranging from “Jack Shit” to “Elizabeth Regina” in their cultural impact – Re-coding puts translation on its mettle to re-write this performance impact accessibly into the translated script. When Don Juan’s best
buddy makes a fool of himself trying to pull a fast one on Don Juan, when the Burlador uses a bride’s ambition as the bait that finally persuades her to switch grooms in the middle of her wedding night, and when apparent fluff in the dialog sets up deep-seated relationships between characters, Re-coding demands that translators mark these critical playing points in ways that contemporary English-speakers can appreciate and perform effectively. When Don Juan goes to Hell, Re-coding requires translation to reproduce the effect of his departure on the audience as faithfully as the fact of his demise.

Stereopticon perspective (which makes its debut in this chapter) seeks out textual differences in the printed text, not to “resolve” them, but to look through them as a way of seeing into the play’s subtext. This tool for solving translation problems pries open Composite translations to pull long-buried evidence of complexity in the play’s female leads into the foreground of the acting text. “Stereopticon perspective” describes the process of using textual variants to illuminate the ranges that characters play. “Composite translation” denotes an approach that combines elements from Tan largo with elements from the Burlador to produce an acting text.

My Stereopticon perusal opens with an analysis of how the play builds multidimensionality into its female leads by mixing “Element, Humor, and Status.” Differences in the two versions of the “11:00 number” – in which revolutionary collaboration between two damas [leading ladies] turns the tide of the play – enable Stereopticon perspective to make it clear that women in this play have “Political Clout.” The second chapter closes with a beat-by-beat analysis of “Damas and Don Juan’s Damnation.”

The chapter on “Targeting Re-production of the ‘Untranslatable’” attacks the problem of translation losing performance enhancements such as music, multifunctional characterizations, and social satire because they elude literal transcription. “Targeting” helps translators to translate the “untranslatable” by highlighting how successful stage translations shape themselves to make the most of the resources available to perform them. So when Don Juan travels from Naples (a favorite setting for exotic outbreaks of passion in Golden Age plays, and a claim to Imperial fame that eroded emblematically during the 17th century) to
Tarragona (the homeland’s northeastern frontier, a hard-bitten outpost of national security dating back to Roman times), Targeting expects translation to re-create the geopolitical backdrop of the action, transmitting to audiences in English-language theaters the effect of the *comedia*’s settings as well as its words. When the Statue that comes to supper silently parodies the stiffness of the royal family onstage, Targeting requires translators to recognize the unspoken but clamorous satire, and to re-impress it on the play in a way that contemporary English-speakers can appreciate. When the Golden Age script prefaces Don Juan’s damnation with a song that’s precisely located, structurally resonant, and significantly worded, Targeting expects translation to prepare that song for effective performance completely, providing access to music, preserving the multi-channel discourse of the script, and respecting the performance limitations likely to describe the cast. When “Don Juan” steps out of 17th-century Spain to make his bow in 21st-century America, Targeting asks translators to recognize what “Don Juan” means to the theater communities they translate for, and to complicate his translation for that particular circle of directors, actors, and audiences.

Targeting uses “Production Conceptualization” to interrogate Thematic translations about translating music, *honor*, and multifunctional characterizations. By “Production Conceptualization,” I mean the process of synthesizing a working idea of how this *comedia* works onstage to engage and challenge its audiences, stimulating them toward the production of meaning. “Thematic” describes a class of translations that faithfully articulate the themes of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*, even at the expense of radically rewriting their diction, plot, and characters. The Targeting initiative begins with “Bending Catalinón’s Gender” (an investigation into how cross-gendering the *gracioso* recovers the multifunctionality of the role), proceeds to “Re-conceiving Honor” (an inquest into the Absence of the female lead named Ana), and concludes with “Americanizing Musicality” (an analysis of the *Burlador* reconceptualized as American musical theater).

“New Ways of Making *Comedia* Accessible in the United States Today” brings this study of translation problems to a conclusion that combines and
expands its findings in two ways. “Teodora’s Tooth” takes the study’s overarching concern with the process of translation one step farther, by applying the tools of Conspectus, Stereopticon perspective, and Production Conceptualization in concert to one particularly revealing textual crux – the kind of site that Golden Age thinkers called a “lugar con dientes” [a site with teeth in it]. “Ben’s Sampler” brings the study’s organizing interest in the Burlador and Tan largo to a logical conclusion, by applying Decoding, Re-coding, and Targeting principles to selected passages from the first Don Juan’s Spanish playscript, illustrating new ways of making its music, spectacle, thought, diction, character, and thought accessible in US repertory theaters.
Staging Don Juan’s sex life is, quite literally, the first problem that the first Don Juan play poses its translators. The problem is sticky, unavoidable, and huge, especially for translators working in the United States. Both the Burlador and Tan largo open with a man and a woman onstage in a late-night rendezvous, consummating a new level of intimacy in their relationship. Does that mean the comedia’s inciting incident starts with sex? The plot proceeds to carry Don Juan from seduction to seduction, tricking a series of women (and men) with passionate intensity. Does that make libido the inner fire that drives the Burlador from burla to burla, setting his agenda and spelling out his strategy for achieving it? The play’s spectacular climax includes passing references to women who’ve been wronged. Does that mark Don Juan as a sex criminal, damned for letting his sex life get completely out of control?

In this chapter, three cords of inquiry twine together to give translators at the end of their rope a revolutionary new grip on answering these questions.

- Conspectus – the process of studying the play through a succession of translators’ eyes – provides a tool for identifying problematic sites where sex gets involved in the action and hammering out revolutionary new perspectives on what these sites mean for playing the role of the Burlador.

- Synoptic treatment – a body of work six translations big, representing what is traditionally the most “literal” approach to reproducing the Burlador de Sevilla in English – supplies a territory for Conspectus to excavate that’s arguably the deepest, widest, and richest grounds ever staked out for studying any comedia and for solving the challenges that Golden Age drama poses for performance today.

- Decoding – the practice of unlocking every performance effect that’s embedded within the Burlador and Tan largo’s performance score, retrieving all the stagecraft buried in the Spanish script – contributes the translation technique that Conspectus uses to dig new insights out of Synoptic territory.
Held together by these cords of inquiry, this investigation into staging sex follows the following trajectory:

- The beginning of the chapter, “Stakes,” examines the consequences of making sex the driving force behind Don Juan’s story, particularly for reviving the Burlador in the United States. Michael Kidd’s translation of the comedia, completed in the US in 2004 and premiered in Toronto later that year, provides a cautionary example of the warped and diminished dramatic experience that results when the Burlador from Sevilla becomes the sex-driven, sex-dominated, and sex-damned Ladykiller of Seville.

- The middle of the chapter, “Location and Dislocation,” adapts strategies recently developed to clarify sexual relationships in Shakespearean comedy to the task of decisively identifying (for the first time in translation history) places where sexual activity takes center stage in the Burlador and Tan largo, and places where sex does not sit in the comedia’s driver-seat. Textual and structural analysis of three representative sites – the play’s inciting incident, Don Juan’s inclinación soliloquy, and Catalinón’s three invocations of the unusual verb forçar – assemble conclusive evidence that sex plays an emphatically secondary role in the first Don Juan play.

- The ending of the chapter, “New Ways to Play the Burlador,” converts the chapter’s analytical finding that sex is not a driving force in Don Juan’s characterization into practical information that actors can use. Reexamination of the 17th-century script demonstrates the importance of mirroring and identity exploration for the first Don Juan’s performance, and produces model translations of critical passages for putting that revolutionary rediscovery of the character onstage.

This method of inquiry hauls a mother-lode of stageworthy mettle to the surface of the first Don Juan – findings that revolutionize the translation of Don Juan’s character objective, character strategy, and character through-line. What drives the Burlador, this investigation documents, is delight in seduction (not sex), a boundless interest in finding the festering secrets in other people’s lives and arranging a salutary airing for them. The strategy that he characteristically deploys to fulfill his objective, this interrogation determines, is mirroring (not
sexual conquest), the dynamically actorly practice of reflecting the inner lives and outer mannerisms of the people he’s involving in a *burla*. The through-line that connects the arc of his action from start to finish, driving him ultimately into the Statue’s arms, this excavation uncovers, is an identity quest (not a quest for sexual fulfillment), a virtuoso exploration of what it means to be human that carries Don Juan from the role of “v n (h) o m b r e s i (n) n o m b r e,” through the role of “Burlador,” and into the role of championing *valor*, without ever stopping to search and correct his own internal *ser* [fundamental human being].

These sweeping results spring from specifically-grounded research. Assembling a Conspectus on translating one verb into English, for example – the sparingly used, critically-positioned verb *forçar* – clearly diagnoses an elusive problem in re-producing the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*’s stageworthiness: translation’s tendency to mistake what the play has to say about sex. Assessing the performance impact of *forçar* provides a vantage point for viewing the consequences of translator squeamishness that suppresses sex in the play, translator eagerness that overblows the role of sex in the play, and translator positions between those extremes that wonder what to make of sex in the play. The resonant juncture in the dramaturgy marked by *forçar* acts as a case study to clarify the dynamo that drives the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* (i.e., seduction), and to suggest new techniques for putting the life of this play onstage in English (e.g., through physically realizing Don Juan’s role as other people’s mirror, and through re-producing the Burlador’s own identity quest as a unifying arc in the whole play’s performance).

From the chapter’s site-specific case studies of *forçar*, *inclinación*, and the *comedia*’s inciting incident, the outline of a new art for making the first Don Juan accessible in the US today begins to emerge. It even becomes possible to suggest ways of reinvigorating the production of other Golden Age dramas through Conspectus findings about the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*. 
What happens when translation decides that sex is Don Juan’s character spine – the force that defines the through-line of his career, the flaw that ultimately lures him to damnation? What difference does that level of sexualization make for the whole *comedia famosa*, viewed in performance? The most recent entry in this Conspectus on the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* – Michael Kidd’s *Ladykiller of Seville* – offers provocative grounds for digging up some answers.

The *Ladykiller* is perfectly situated for getting up close and personal with Don Juan’s character spine. *Don Juan: Ladykiller of Seville* was translated in the US in 2004, then premiered in Toronto the same year, vigorously staged by Julie Florio (a young Anglophonic director), and repeatedly witnessed onstage (I got to see five performances, the entire second half of the run, and to experience what cast members, production staff, and audience members cared to share about the play). Kidd’s translation, in Florio’s production, stands as a case study of what happens when sex becomes the driveshaft for the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*, put onstage by a university repertory company in contemporary North America. The *Ladykiller* stands as a caveat to translators against Decoding sex as the *Burlador/garañón*’s character spine.

Three advantages recommend siting a study of sex as Don Juan’s character spine in Kidd’s translation:

- the *Ladykiller* is a brand-spanking new translation,
- the *Ladykiller*’s acting script developed out of a prestigious university/repertory theater liaison, and
- the *Ladykiller*’s performance experience adds a wealth of insight into its acting text.

The *Ladykiller*’s recency allows it to take advantage of new developments in how the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* are being edited. Kidd’s translation, in fact, gives Alfredo Rodríguez López-Vázquez’ version of the *Burlador* its first airing in English. The choice to translate López-Vázquez lets the *Ladykiller* play a double role in the *comedia*’s translation history. Kidd’s style of translation focuses on
closely transliterating a single Spanish source into English, which makes the Ladykiller representative of Synoptic translation. But López-Vázquez’ edition of the Burlador incorporates significant passages from Tan largo into his acting text, which makes the Ladykiller a Composite translation, too. Moreover – and even more importantly – the fact that Kidd completed the Ladykiller in North America in 2004 gives his work the advantage of access to stage diction and stage decorum capable of presenting sex in performance terms that play as idiomatically up-to-date in the US today. The Ladykiller’s currency strongly recommends it to students of staging sex in the Burlador and Tan largo.

To the considerable advantage of recency, Kidd’s translation adds an impressive developmental transit through university/repertory theater channels. The Ladykiller of Seville and His Graven Guest (Or: To Death with Bated Breath) – the full, formal title of Kidd’s unpublished manuscript – was completed at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, in 2004. Later that same year, a slightly modified acting version of Kidd’s script premiered as Don Juan: Ladykiller of Seville in Toronto, Canada, the opening production of the 2004-2005 season for the Poculi Ludique Societas (commonly known as the PLS, whose Latin name means “The Association for Plays and Potations”). The PLS has been a major player in producing classical repertory since the 1970s; its revivals of medieval and Renaissance drama have built it a reputation worldwide.

The Ladykiller’s developmental history, then, makes it a site particularly well-suited to studying the effects of sex on the Burlador’s playability in university and repertory theaters. An attractive feature of the translation’s provenance is the fact that its development crosses regional lines: the Ladykiller offers more than a one-town take on how sex plays out in the Burlador and Tan largo and what that means for translation. That’s important, since attitudes toward a sexually expressive Don Juan can vary sharply with the viewer’s locality.

The Ladykiller offers a final, extremely valuable advantage as a site for assessing the effect that putting sex at the center of performing the Burlador and Tan largo exerts on the play’s performance: eyewitness experience of this particular translation in production. Reviews pass on a wealth of information
about how the Burlador can come across onstage, but reviews of a play so rarely produced are few and far between. To compound the problem, the viewpoint represented by a review is necessarily narrow and traditionally univocal, expressing one formulaic impression of how likely a performance is to appeal to a one specific readership. This assessment of sex in the Ladykiller, in contrast, can draw on a range of first-hand responses. I got to experience how this translation stages sex through watching the entire final week of its initial run (five performances); through hearing audience members (some of them veterans from the North American premiere of Derek Walcott’s Joker of Seville) analyze performances; through digesting pre- and post-show discussions with actors; through absorbing e-mails from the translator, directors, and production staff; as well as through studying the acting text in manuscript. This vigorously hybrid vein of testimony recommends Kidd’s translation as a site for wrestling with how sex affects performing the Burlador/garañón in the US today.

On the stage and on the page, the Ladykiller of Seville is a superb site for measuring what’s at stake when sex becomes the driving force inside the first Don Juan. The Ladykiller’s cautionary example is only part of the stakes story, however. Kidd and Florio’s vision of sex as the determinant factor in the Burlador’s character history responds to a cultural perception that Don Juan embodies sexual expression run riot. US culture’s deep-seated expectation that “Don Juan” sets the stage for “sex a-plenty” lays the foundation for the Ladykiller’s conviction that sex-crimes make Don Juan damnable. Since every US translator of the Burlador and Tan largo must work in a milieu that presupposes sex-drive as Don Juan’s core value, I preface my discussion of the Ladykiller’s disastrous overvaluation of sex with a quick look at its cultural setting.

Seeing sex call the shots in Don Juan’s story is a big idea in US performance culture, widely influential and deeply rooted. You can hear its echoes in Chicano playwrights resurrecting Don Juan to deconstruct machismo (see Bierman, Morton, Solís). You can trace its outlines in big-name songwriters using “Don Juan” as a synonym for “sexploitation.” You can take its pulse in Off-Broadway explorations of Don Juan as an exemplar for uniting eros with
emotional attachment in the age of AIDS (see Berson, Ives). And you can feel its ripples in Hollywood filmmakers updating Don Juan to reassess the Oedipus complex.

Twenty-first century citizens of the US confidently expect sexual rule-breaking to define Don Juan. Echoes of the Burlador in US popular culture are continually reinscribing and reinforcing this expectation. The movie Don Juan de Marco opens with the title character intoning his self-definition as “the world’s greatest lover,” and the movie is not five minutes old before Johnny Depp, as Don Juan, is playing a woman “like an instrument,” filling her with a sexual thrill that makes her mouth expand into a huge O of orgasmic wonder. Rap-star Ludacris relocates Don Juan to the streets of big-city USA, but keeps the rhythm that drives him moving to a strictly sexual pulse. “He got ho’s in ... significant places,” because Don Juan is the eponymous lord of the sexual quick fix. Song-writing duo Lieber and Stoller’s pop hit “Don Juan,” a solo centerpiece of the musical revue Smokey Joe’s Café, tells its story from a woman’s point of view, but the theme remains familiar. “Don Juan, ya money’s gone, / and when ya money’s gone, / ya baby’s gone,” jabs the soloist. In both instances, music and lyric provocatively mock the burlador burlado [the player who’s been played for a fool], their irony totally dependent on the cultural understanding that “Don Juan” represents archetypally sustained, and heroically successful, sexual voracity.

Sex sells, and you’d expect a sexually expert Burlador to sell like hot cakes (or at least as well as Smokey Joe’s Café and Don Juan de Marco). Close attention to the record, however, warns you that equating Don Juan with sex is not a sure-fire formula for popular success in the US today. Indeed, the most recent mainstream American experiment in that vein – David Ives’ Don Juan in Chicago (1995) – suggests that sex-drive makes poor-quality fuel for mounting a Don Juan play in the USA.

Ives takes all three unnaturally long acts of his Off-Broadway extravaganza to explore the dramatic consequences of reducing Don Juan to his sex drive. The New York Times calls the results “a protracted banquet in which every course is the same,” a flat, flaccid “struggle against redundancy” which “takes Juan
through the centuries only to have him discover, like Dorothy in ‘The Wizard of Oz,’ a basic homily that he’s really known all along: … that sex is best with someone you love” (Brantley 11:1). Don Juan in Chicago plants the idea that replacing sex as the Burlador’s character objective is an indispensable step toward reviving the Burlador and Tan largo in the US today, regardless of how sex-obsessed contemporary US culture may seem. Sexual repression – Pentheus jailing Dionysus in The Bacchae, Joe Porter slamming the closet door in Angels in America – may have the staying power to fuel powerful productions in contemporary America, but even Cialis seems unlikely to generate enough stamina to make untrammeled sexual expression (the defining trait of the garañón) a force inventive, sustained, and pressing enough to keep a whole comedia stimulating. Sexual indulgence, Ives’ experiment strongly suggests, restricts dramatic expression into such a narrow range that it stops being interesting.

This raises the stakes on Decoding Don Juan’s sex life. The preconception that “Don Juan equals sex” is deeply engrained even in Americans disposed toward giving the Burlador an eager, open-minded hearing. That sets serious pitfalls in the way of producing the Burlador and Tan largo for US audiences. Theatre experts and aficionados at assemblages ranging from Mid-America Theatre Conferences in the heartland of the US to Association for Theatre in Higher Education meetings all over the US and in Canada have told me that the first (and often the only) image that springs into their minds when they hear “Don Juan” is a string of “seduced women.” The Alabama Shakespeare Festival – one of the most opulently established regional theaters in the country – declined involvement in this project to resuscitate the world’s first Don Juan play, because the topic was “too sexual” for its support base. Judging by first responses from participants in the Bainbridge College theater “lab” who were introducing themselves to the Burlador in translation, contemporary Americans find something intuitive and deeply satisfying in the notion that Don Juan's sexual transgressions make him damnable. Even for theater people primed to applaud the Burlador’s resurrection, “Don Juan” in the US today means sex so shocking,
so intolerable, so out-of-line and beyond-what’s-allowed, that supernatural forces have to intervene to stop it.

Small wonder that Julie Florio, fitting the Ladykiller for the stage just across the border in Canada, should find her attention all but completely commandeered by sex:

When stepping in to direct, all I kept thinking to myself was – what did I even know about this Don Juan guy? There are lots of challenging issues to deal with: Lust, Desire, Fear, Betrayal, Violence. Maybe it was the ‘R’ word that scared me – Rape. I mean, it’s not a pretty story. It’s dirty and full of shame. It makes you squirm in your seat sometimes, and laugh at others. There is so much absurdity within these very dark situations. The old adage is true – if you couldn’t laugh, you’d cry. This show has a lot of that. Maybe I just simply felt grateful that I wasn’t actually being seduced by Don Juan myself. He is a master manipulator and a serial rapist: rape of the body, the mind and the soul. Not to mention that his sense of entitlement is unequal to none [sic]. It would mean I’d have to mentally go someplace I didn’t want to ... [ellipsis original] We forget. We forget that there are Don Juans everywhere. We forget how exactly we can be swayed into things we haven’t necessarily thought clearly about. Don Juan’s goal is sexual dominance, but it could just as easily be money, kingdoms, cars, or votes. The impulses and fears within this play are stored within us all. And maybe it was all of those challenges themselves that made me say ‘yes.’ (Director’s Notes, Don Juan: Ladykiller of Seville)

Florio’s list of things “we forget” puts her finger precisely on a major problem with putting onstage today a Burlador/garañón [a master practical joker whom his culture perceives as sexually insatiable, uninhibited, indiscriminate, unruly, and out of bounds]. Eager to harness the sexual energies that Don Juan represents, theater-makers do indeed tend to forget that “there are Don Juans everywhere,” and that “the impulses and fears within this play are
stored within us all.” Without irresistibly stageable alternatives to Don Juan the Walking Hard-on, the story of the Burlador on US stages flattens out into a cautionary tale about sexual conquest.5

Hemmed in by contemporary culture’s deep-seated, narrowly-calibrated preconception of Don Juan, how can 21st-century producers win the Burlador and Tan largo a fair hearing? How can you reanimate the play’s brilliant technique of harnessing sexual energies to drive social satire, when the society that the performance plays to is bound and determined to appreciate the hero’s performance in exclusively sexual terms?

Some writers and directors see the equation between Don Juan and easy sex as a marketing opportunity rather than a translation problem, and jump at the chance to capitalize on the anticipated sexual thrust of the play by the way they introduce its title character. Conspectus can point to a whole series of US translations promising encounters with a “Playboy” (Schizzano and Mandel in 1963, Starkie in 1964), a “Rogue” (O’Brien in 1963), a “Beguiler” (Oppenheimer in 1976), a “Don Juan” (Alvarez in 1989), or even a “Ladykiller” (Kidd in 2004). Lately, stagings of the play’s opening scene have started living up to this titular advertising. Nick Dear’s Last Days of Don Juan, commissioned for the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1990, raises its curtain on “A hot, dark night” with “Two young bodies clutching at each other in a corner: Don Juan and Isabela. They moan with passion. They subside. Don Juan immediately gets up and starts to dress” (Dear, 7). And Julie Florio chose to open the world premiere of Kidd’s Ladykiller with the Duchess Isabella facing upstage in a floor-length brocade gown, gasping out a cadenza of gasps and giggles until Don Juan rolled out from under her skirt.

The problem with this strategy is that it co-opts audience expectations so completely that it can never successfully upset them. Sex is a hot topic in 21st-century US culture, as the dramaturgy of the Golden Age attests it was in 17th-century Spain. With sex in contemporary cinema generating the documentary up-front-ness of Kinsey, with Sex in the City setting milestones for American television, with sexual practices providing nationally-aired talk-(therapy)-shows with topics of apparently inexhaustible interest, with sexual orientation
generating litmus-test issues for Presidential politics, and with sexual promise driving major sectors of the “new economy” (from commercial sales of Viagra, to government-funded initiatives promoting abstinence as sex education), sex offers playmakers a site for engaging many levels of contemporary life in the US simultaneously. When translation introduces the Burlador through a sexual encounter, however, the action finds it impossible subsequently to endow him with any supra-sexual traction.

Kidd’s Ladykiller bears eloquent testimony to the warped picture of the Burlador and Tan largo that translation transmits when it stars Don Juan as a protagonist whose claim to fame is grounded exclusively in sexual conquest – as, in a word, a “Ladykiller.” Rather than challenge social definitions, classes, and ranks, the Ladykiller’s Don Juan (like any Burlador defined first and foremost as a sexual creature) suppresses social inquiry and analysis. Rather than embody problematic elements within national ideals and appropriate public capital for his personal use, thus eliciting hot political debate, the sexual voracity of the Ladykiller’s title character serves to isolate dramatically-charged political discourse, compartmentalizing it, and shoving it to the margins of the play. Rather than directly and disturbingly challenging moral values with his sexual behavior (as the original Burlador decidedly does), the Ladykiller’s sex dependency actually mutes discussion of sexual behavior.

Introducing Don Juan as Sex Incarnate warps his characterization. Three notable kinks in the Ladykiller’s performance illustrate this warping:

- The Ladykiller’s never-ending appetite for (hetero)sexual pursuit produced a persona with a narrower, less critical connection to his audience and to his world than the Burlador exhibits. Making sex-appeal dominate the title character severely limits his charm.

- The Ladykiller’s sexual objectives made him decidedly more one-note and less up-to-date than the Burlador. Making Don Juan’s sex-drive drive the translation suppresses the play’s immediacy.

- The Ladykiller getting dragged to hell by the four women he “violated” generated not one shiver of the that-could-be-me shock that the Burlador’s
big exit sends through the audience (Kidd 52). Making sex-crime the root of Don Juan’s damnation reduces the climax’s impact.

What’s particularly striking about these disastrous losses in performance vigor is the fact that everyone involved in the Ladykiller’s performances – actors, audience members, and production team – wanted the play to walk taller than its sexual bent would let it.

The Golden Age acting text for the Burlador and Tan largo makes its point of attack tantalizingly pre-coital, using the what-if of sex as a way to rivet its audiences’ attention and draw them into the play. The Spanish script proceeds to electrify the Burlador’s performance with vigorously theatrical, intensely actable ambitions, lusts, strategies, and ecstasies that have nothing whatsoever to do with sex, but everything to do with generating charm, immediacy, and impact. The Toronto premiere of the Ladykiller, by contrast, opened with a sex act that irretrievably packaged its protagonist as a sex product. In the wake of that defining moment, Kidd and Florio’s Don Juan found no memorable motive, modus operandi, or meaning to play, apart from his sexual prowess.

Everyone was unhappy about that. Rather than free the actors to play more fully-developed characters, the Ladykiller’s sex-centeredness reduced their range of choices. The actor creating the role of the Ladykiller (Jordan Stewart, who trained at the University of Winnipeg and has played leads in a wide range of classical plays) found himself stuck with one invariable vocabulary for relating to fellow characters and to the audience. Even the Ladykiller’s soliloquies and asides got trapped in the language and gesture of sexual seduction.

Rather than render the world of the play more visceral, edgy, and real, the Ladykiller’s sexual forwardness made the performance experience more consciously artificial. The actress creating Thisbee (Olivia Barrett) was clearly a woman of color. Since the Ladykiller is Synoptically literal in translation style, the dialog’s classically-phrased references to Thisbee’s beauty – as when Don Juan’s “sidekick” Chickenshit begs permission “to kiss your snow-white hands” (Kidd 12, 56) – acted out a high-profile clash with the color of Thisbee’s skin. Audience members witnessing this clash conspired to erase Thisbee’s race. Only once in the five performances I attended did another audience member register
any response whatsoever to the disconnect between word ("snow-white") and action (ebony hands) that was happening onstage before us. Sexualizing the script served to disembody the actors.

Rather than update the play, the Ladykiller’s abundant sex-talk (and occasional sex-activity) energetically distanced its performance from Now. Veterans of another notable Don Juan premiere in Toronto – the first production of Derek Walcott’s Joker of Seville to play outside the Caribbean islands (Hart House Theatre, 1980) – energetically took exception to the Ladykiller’s sex-induced creakiness. Kidd puts sexual archaisms cheek-by-jowl with 21st-century sex slang in the Ladykiller: “So you’re intent on ravishing Thisbee?” questions the behavior of a Ladykiller who’s “going to find a whore right here to rip off” (17, 31; cf. 52). Since the antiquated terminology gets a higher profile in the script and got heavier weighting in performance, sex made the translation play like a museum piece.

Rather than add to Don Juan’s allure, the Ladykiller’s equation of sex-appeal with characterization turned its title character into a slime-ball onstage. “Smarm over charm” was the audience’s verdict on the Ladykiller, not only from veterans of Walcott’s Joker, but from a whole class of Golden Age drama enthusiasts from Waterloo University. The Waterloo contingent expressed particular surprise at finding Don Juan the Ladykiller wonderfully acted, but repulsively unlikable. The characterization’s sexualization killed (to quote the Joker contingent) its “joy.”

Rather than leave the audience feeling liberated or chilled by Don Juan’s damnation, the Ladykiller’s sex-crime execution left its eyewitnesses grim and cold. Florio staged the damnation as an allusion to the sex scene that started the play. The opening rendezvous between Isabella and the Ladykiller began behind a tapestry, which servants carried onstage to conceal the principals’ entrances. The Ladykiller’s departure to hell involved the same tapestry, brought onstage by the play’s four female leads; the women dragged the Ladykiller off to Hell on the wall-hanging. Florio’s strategy was elegant, clear, and inventive – a satisfying solution to the impossibility of trapdoors in the playing space, and a visible articulation of the action coming full circle. The staging even supported the
message of the play: “Live like this guy,” as audience members summed up their experience with the Ladykiller for me, “and you’ll end up dragged off to Hell.”

But then, (as audience members proceeded to ask me) who would ever “live like this guy”? Linking the Ladykiller’s death to a lifetime of sexual behavior made his damnation meaningless.

What’s at stake when translators start Decoding Don Juan’s sex life? Kidd’s Ladykiller convinces me that the producibility of the Burlador and Tan largo rides on the outcome. Determining precisely where and to what extent sex sets Don Juan’s agenda makes the difference between a translation that’s a masterpiece (e.g., Walcott, Joker of Seville, discussed in my chapter on “Targeting Re-production of the ‘Untranslatable’”) and a translation that’s a museum piece (e.g., Kidd’s Ladykiller).

Let me stress the fact that the warped, diminished Don Juan I saw debut as Toronto’s Ladykiller was not the result of flawed direction or infelicitous performance. The limitations in the role were a direct consequence of translation reducing the role’s central nervous system – Don Juan’s character spine – to sex. The charm, immediacy, and impact of the Burlador are written directly into his performance record, in the objectives, strategies, and connections to his world that the Burlador and Tan largo encode for him to act. The smarm, antiquity, and meaninglessness of the Ladykiller are recorded right in his written script, too. An excellent place for seeing that is in the problematic language which Kidd’s translation chooses to express the sexualization that it forces into the center of its central role.

Analyzing Kidd’s sex-talk lets me take the question of stakes from stage to page. This shift in focus reinforces the lesson that experiencing the Ladykiller in performance taught me: fusing Don Juan’s character spine to his sex life carries disastrous consequences for translating the Burlador and Tan largo. Once your eyes are open to this danger, you can see the disaster taking shape in print. Tracking how Kidd reduces the Burlador and Tan largo’s freewheeling, contemporary, suggestive, and engaging discussion of sex into the Ladykiller’s straight, uptight, antique, and pale vocabulary for sexual activity takes this survey to the next level. It brings Decoding Don Juan’s sex life down to language, the
locus where translation characteristically starts its work, and it acquaints you with the way the *comedia* constructs its sexual discourse, essential background for the case studies in “Locating and Dislocating” that follow “Stakes.” Allow me to guide you through some select, instructive examples.

Because the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* use sex as a lure for teasing open other topics, the sex language of the original Don Juan play tends to be fluid, provocative, and flexibly contemporary. The verbs that Don Juan uses, in private to his uncle, to describe his liaison with Isabela are characteristically racy and breezy, frank and immediate, suggestive and accessible. “Yo engañé, y gozé a Isabela / la Duquesa” [I fooled – and fooled around with – Duchess Isabela ... we had a real good time] reads the *Burlador*, and *Tan largo* corroborates, “si, que por el Duque Otauio / la engañè” [yep, pretending I was Duke Otavio, I screwed her but good] (Fernández 18, 64). Gozar, engañar, forçar, and (of course) burlar surface in the script repeatedly and pivotally, peppering the dialog with the language of everyday, current sexual commerce. In the world of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*, people fool around, play around, and screw around (burlar, engañar); they have their way with each other (forçar); they even make whoopee together (gozar). What they do not do is get mealy-mouthed about this activity, or limit their sexually-charged speech to strictly heterosexual contexts.

Characters in the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* can afford to be this straightforward about sex because sex is neither a final nor a fatal act within the world of the play. In fact, sex arguably breaks down barriers to self-knowledge for these characters. Consider the comment that *Tan largo* gives Trisbea after she resolves to take her case as *burladora burlada* [melted ice maiden] to the King – a comment clearly incorporated into Kidd’s *Ladykiller*: “Anfrisso, who wishes to be my husband, will also accompany me, and I hope to return his loving embraces in married bliss for as long as I live” (Kidd 48-49; cf. Fernández 89). Trisbea’s speech is crystal clear: her experience with transgressive sex has not ruined her life, but clarified her self-concept. This incessant tease – who comes onstage like the 17th-century Spanish equivalent of a *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit model, giggling about the sea kissing her erotically bared feet and laughing at the men tying themselves in knots to please her (see Fernández 22, 68; Defourneaux
experiences no punishment for her blatantly-exploited sexiness. The most desirable single man in Tarragona is still hers for the having.

Tellingly, in the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* (as in contemporary American street life) desirable single men do not hesitate to use the language of sexual intercourse in conducting their interactions with each other. Conveniently striking examples of this usage occur between Don Juan and the Marqués de la Mota. The same participle used to denote the women with whom Don Juan has tricked – *las forçadas* [women who’ve been bent to your will] (Fernández 52) – is applied to Mota, when Don Juan’s plot to intercept the Marqués’ secret meeting with Doña Ana begins to unfold. As Catalínón puts it, this time the Marqués “ha de ser el forçado” [he’s the guy who’s been fingered to get fucked over this time] (Fernández 38, 80).

The first step in Mota’s screwing-over involves erotically-charged stage business, as well as sexy language between the two *galanes* [young studs]. Don Juan delivers a message to Mota from his secret lover Ana, setting up a date for later that night. The Marqués responds by calling Juan the womb of all his happy expectations – “solo en ti / mi esperanza renaciera,” language that can describe erotic satisfaction in Golden Age drama. When Mota fervently embraces Juan, the Burlador uses *gozar*, characteristic diction for physical satiation via sex, to describe the effects of the same-sex ardor (see Fernández 38, 80).

Because sex carries connotations of playful exploration and passionate interconnection in the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*, the play can address sex playfully, passionately, and candidly. In the world of this play, sex plays a role freewheeling enough to act as the glue that holds healthy familial bonds together (see especially the passionate coupling that *Tan largo* describes as uniting father to daughter, lover to lover, and husband to wife; López-Vázquez 1995, 178, 199-200, 224). There is no onus of unforgivable sin for sex to generate here. There is no silence of the unspeakable for sex to respect.

Saddling sex with the burden of driving the *Ladykiller*’s title character – and driving him to damnation – throws the *comedia*’s stimulating dramaturgical balance fatally out of kilter. Shoving sex into the Ladykiller’s moral center ironically succeeds in muting translation of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*’s sexual
discourse, by repositioning sexual activity outside the pale of the pardonable. Making his sex-drive drive Don Juan to hell aggressively “straightens” the play’s sexual rhetoric, by recasting sex as an issue far too serious to countenance playful, experimental, or transitional realignments. Building the central character’s backbone around his sexual conduct makes everybody’s sexual behavior determine their standing in the mainstream of redeemable social and religious practices.

Spotlighting sexual activity as the star of the show, in sum, blurs the whole play’s sense of sharpness. As foreplay to seduce the audience into critical thought, rather than such thinking’s consummation, sex occupies a calculatedly liminal position in the Burlador and Tan largo’s makeup. Assigning primary production focus to this transitional feature of the dramaturgy is as warping to the process of putting the first Don Juan play onstage as it would be to take the death of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as the central point of Hamlet.

Yet the Ladykiller of Seville falls squarely into this trap, instructively demonstrating the disastrous consequences of making sex too central to an understanding of Don Juan, too pivotal in the staging of his story. Damning Don Juan for sex crimes does not make the Ladykiller more sexually frank, accessible, and revealing. On the contrary, the sexual imbalance that Kidd inscribes into the Burlador’s performance cripples his translation with language that makes sex unperformably straight, fatal, and archaic.

The mission to base Don Juan’s damnation on sex-crimes committed against women (and women only) skewes Kidd’s reading of sexually-charged language throughout the play, sharply privileging implications that are un challengingly heterosexual. “Así pagas de esa suerte / las doncellas que burlaste,” his source-text thunders at Don Juan’s damnation (López-Vázquez 302). Kidd translates, “In this way you’ll be punished for all the women whose honor you’ve destroyed,” and proceeds to buy into an emphatically heterosexist agenda for his Ladykiller (Kidd 65).

So for Kidd, the verb forçar becomes sexually explicit when it’s referring to “women come to take vengeance.” In those circumstances, forçar means “to violate” (Kidd 52; cf. López-Vázquez 268). In contexts where men and animals
become objects of the verb, however, _forçar_’s sexual directness evaporates. In such instances, the Ladykiller understands _forçar_ to mean activities that at best hint at sex, subliminally.

Thus the Marquis de la Mota becomes the Ladykiller’s “target,” and Chickenshit (Kidd’s magnificent translation for “Catalínón”) promises to support his lord and master, “even if it means _beating back_ tigers and elephants,” or if Don Juan orders him to “club” a priest into submission (Kidd 44, emphasis added; cf. López-Vázquez 205). And when Don Juan sets his sights on reaching the unreachable Arminta over Chicken’s vociferous objections, the Ladykiller’s sidekick gives in with the query, “Is no one safe from this guy? With him as their enemy, _God help_ the Turks, the Scythians, … and even the evil old tailor, _stroking his little gold needle like some girl in a fairy tale_” (Kidd 44, emphasis added; cf. López-Vázquez 236).

“Stroking a needle,” “beating back” a wild beast, “clubbing” a clergyman (cf. the British expression “banging the bishop”), “targeting” a score, and even invoking divine protection for the “safety” of notoriously rapacious enemies are all turns of phrase capable of carrying subliminally sexual undertones. What’s striking about the Ladykiller, though, is how rigidly straight-up it takes its sex, even in implication. For this translation, _forçar_ means either “rape a woman” or “masturbate yourself.” Males in this world never buck the assumption of heterosexuality with even a figurative “fuck you,” “blow me,” or “I’m gonna get you, sucka” tossed off at another male.

In addition to restrictive straightness, over-weighting sex in the Ladykiller burdens the translation’s diction with a marked fatality. Don Juan’s relations with women have to make him damnable, so they must become in the final analysis fatal events – not sex play as a vigorous mechanism for exposing systemic hypocrisy, but “lady killing” as a spine for erecting an anti-hero fit for Hell. It is no accident that Kidd’s version of _tan largo me lo fiáis_ – the leitmotif that audibly structures and reflects on the play’s dramaturgy and gives one version of the performance score its title – summons up the prospect of a woman smothering herself as the ecstasy she anticipates gets postponed. “Don’t wait with bated breath” sneers the Ladykiller, _ad damnandum_ (see Kidd 18, 19, 44,
50, 54, 64). The translation even takes its subtitle, “To Death with Bated Breath,” from this sexually-charged idea (Kidd 1).

The imperative to represent Don Juan’s *burlas* as acts of murder radically re-colors Kidd’s translation of sexy language, making occurrences of *engañar* and *gozar* sites for driving home the idea that Don Juan is dealing in Death. The Ladykiller’s dealings with Arminta provide a case in point. Setting up his strategy for blowing the sanctimonious covers off of a wedding night that’s been contracted between partners whose only mutual passion is the lust for social advancement, the Burlador de Sevilla confides to his audience,

> Pero antes de hacer el daño
le pretendo reparar:
a su padre voy a hablar
para autorizar mi *engaño*.
Bien lo supe negociar;
*gozar*la esta noche espero,
la noche camina, y quiero
su viejo padre llamar.
Estrellas que me alumbráis,
dadme en este *engaño* suerte,
si el galardón el la muerte,
tan largo me lo guardáis.

[Before I pull off this scam, I’ll sell them some insurance against it: I’m gonna to ask her dad to give her away to me, so he actually starts the con game going himself. Wow! What a rockin-sockin-hot-jockin great idea! Bet I’m LMAO @ her this very p.m. It’s getting late – time to “knock her old man up,” as they say in the jolly old UK. Star light, star bright, first star I see tonight: I wish I may, I wish I might, fool the fools I’m playing the fool for tonight. Oh, FYI and btw: if I’ll owe you big-time at the end of the line, make sure it’s a long, rough ride!]7 (López-Vázquez 241-42, emphasis added)
In Kidd’s conception, this scene becomes the plotting of murder in the first degree, premeditatedly aiming a “death blow.”

But before striking the death blow, I must plan it carefully. If I get her father to agree then I can deceive her with impunity. Yes, that’s the best route, since I wish to ravish her tonight, and night draws near; I’ll go talk to her father now. O stars that light my way, bring me luck in this deception. [He enters JASPER’s house.] (Kidd 42, emphasis added)

The same bad homicide-cop language – aiming “death blows,” rushing in “for the kill” – accrues to the Ladykiller’s other burlas, especially as Kidd’s translation gathers forces for staging its climax as a sex-crime trial in the highest of all Supreme Courts (see, for example, Kidd 32, 39). Linked to strongly-articulated images of sex as a “fruit … which, however golden, is bent on our death,” these killings (both of ladies and, as collateral damage, of their male protectors) crowd the Ladykiller’s sexual discourse within the narrow confines of a crime scene investigation (Kidd 31; see also 27, 29).

Making sex fatal is not the only way that equating sex with the title character’s through-line ironically restricts sexual discourse in the Ladykiller of Seville. Cheek by jowl with breathtakingly recognizable, contemporary sexual realities in the play – the ambition to “find a whore right here to rip off,” for example (Kidd 31) – stand impenetrably archaic expressions for sexual commerce. The thread of any cohesive debate about sex gets hopelessly tangled in this weird clash of vivid US street slang and pallid historical-romance circumlocution.

Oddly, given its provenance (USA, 2004), Kidd’s favorite verb for sexual encounters is “ravish.” He uses “ravish” repeatedly, pivotally, and universally, in all kinds of characters’ mouths, defining a range of different crucial developments in the plot, linking sex thematically to his translation’s central argument that ladykilling inevitably leads to moral correction (see esp. Kidd 17, 28). But “ravish” is an extremely problematic concept to sell 21st-century US customers as a basis for damnation. “Ravish” has the ring of Regency Romance. With its connotations of antiquated artificiality and coy posturing, “ravish” is a
disastrously unsuitable verb for introducing US actors and audiences to a serious moral reconsideration of current sexual behaviors.

Even more impenetrably, Kidd sprinkles his text with references to cuckoldry. No one in a grocery checkout line scanning tabloid headlines about Bill and Hillary, Jen and Brad, Oprah and Steadman, or Paris Hilton and her latest video scene-partner would question the fact that gossip about authority figures getting cheated on (a guaranteed attention-getter onstage in the Renaissance) remains a conversational live-wire in the US today. No veteran of the vengeance of Lorena Bobbitt could fail to notice that the cuckold’s chagrin, once a male prerogative, has now become a “unisex” experience. So contemporary Americans are bound to be familiar with sexual jealousy as a force to be reckoned with.

Twenty-first century Americans are also familiar with the adjective “horny.” They most emphatically do not, however, connect “horns” with the experience of “being cheated on,” an equation that Kidd repeatedly relies on his audience computing. At make-or-break moments in the script, Chicken calls Octavio “that innocent target so harmed – or should I say horned? – by Isabella’s arrows,” and comments that Batricio is “about to have horns like a bull, so it’s no surprise he snorts like one” (Kidd 23, 39; emphasis original). The Ladykiller’s clever invocations of this decidedly antique locution for horniness’ impact aim Kidd’s script at an elite, specialty audience, like the Poculi Ludique Societas’ devotees of early drama.

The performance-constricting impact of Kidd’s straight, uptight, antique, and pale sexual diction – diction generated by over-weighting sex in the central character’s through-line – calls translators to a radical re-calibration of the Burlador’s characterization. Unlike the Burlador, and unlike Tan largo, the Ladykiller features a climax that reads like a cautionary tale against sexual transgression – the kind of sexual transgression that only a Don Juan could have committed in the first place. That’s why audience members who experienced Kidd’s damnation during the world premiere in Toronto told me that its conclusion left them feeling a dispassionate sense of relief at the termination of a clever rapist’s career, or an impersonal sense of poetic justice at the screwing-
over of a skillful screwer, or an aesthetic sense of cleansing at the scrubbing-out of an unpleasant character. No one felt the smallest tingle of self-recognition, the least chill of personal terror, or the slightest impulsion toward self-examination.

Yet the Spanish script is clearly structured to produce self-examination—an intimately personal, immediately palpable, deeply-felt response. This conclusion is not guesswork, based on the assumption that Golden Age audiences were notoriously susceptible to religious subject matter, suckers for the kind of theatrical thrill that the sensation-loving Comtesse d’Aulnoy says she witnessed at the performance of comedias famosas. Claims the Comtesse, “when St. Anthony said the confiteor, which was quite frequent, everybody kneeled, and each one gave himself such a violent mea culpa that one thought they would crush their breasts” (qtd. in Cole and Chinoy, 73; on the Comtesse’s credibility, see Díez Borque 24-25 and Defourneaux 53).

Evidence that Don Juan’s damnation was designed for instant internalization is written right into the play’s performance score, modeled onstage in the person of Catalinón, the character who carries everyday humanity into the world of this specific comedia. Catalinón clearly sees the Burlador’s condemnation as his own. “No hay quien se escape,” he shudders in both versions of the 17th-century script: “No one … Not one single solitary person … sidesteps this Judgement” (Fernández 59, 94). The experience of watching the Burlador and Tan largo in the 17th century involved inclusion (inescapable, uncomfortable inclusion) in Don Juan’s damnation. Mistaking sex as the Burlador’s character spine blocks the basic mission of the play.

On the page and on the stage, the Ladykiller stands as a chilling caveat to translators everywhere:

- **Warning:** Reading this comedia as a cautionary tale about sexual behavior flattens its dramatic texture, simplifies its moral curiosity, trivializes its corrective agenda, and reduces its hero to a physiological urge. It both limits the play’s audience, and diminishes the play they see onstage.

- **Caution:** Sex marks a translation issue of potency and primacy for staging the first Don Juan – a challenge that crucially shapes his staging’s first moment,
then spills over into the development of his whole performance, from conception to delivery.

- **Beware:** Inserting sex where it doesn’t belong risks fogging the *comedia’s* metatheatrical vision, fudging its socio-political framework, diminishing its characters’ creative zest, and putzing with its structure.

- **Watch Out:** Missing sexual content where it’s called for risks transmitting a namby-pamby shadow of the play, unlikely to impress audiences well-conditioned to sexual frankness.

- **Go Slow:** Translating sex-drive as the driving force of the first Don Juan creates problems that carry fatal consequences for transmitting the performance impact of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*.

Since traditional methods of translation have shown themselves completely powerless to guide translators safely through this risky terrain, the caveat might as well read “Abandon Hope, All Who Enter Here.” Translating sex looks like a hopelessly tricky business for this Golden Age *comedia* – a longstanding, deep-seated, stubborn problem in cross-cultural performance transmission, a problem so big that it’s impossible to get a handle on it.

Moreover, it’s a problem made all the slipperier for translators working in the US by this double-bind: first, that US audiences, performers, and producers are pre-conditioned to expect sex to play a central role in any Don Juan story; and second, that letting sex hog the dramaturgical limelight fatally undercuts the play’s performance impact.

Sobered by the *Ladykiller’s* caveats and inspired by the high stakes that ride on Decoding Don Juan’s sex life, what practical steps can translators take to stumble on the new ways of translating the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* that are so clearly necessary if the first Don Juan play is to live again in the US? At Bainbridge College, practicing Conspectus revolutionized the way that people located sex in Don Juan’s story.

On first reading – regardless of the translation read – participants in the Bainbridge College “lab” all but unanimously agreed that the play was a one-dimensional, fire-and-brimstone tract damning extramarital sex. An extraordinary majority of my south-Georgia cohorts, in fact, started out seeing
the Burlador as a direct lineal ancestor to Fatal Attraction. They found the title character a magnificent counterexample against Fooling Around, the original live-theater incarnation of the stark equation “You Play, You Pay!” They identified his objective as uncomplicatedly sexual, and his comeuppance as well-earned payback, a simple case of social cleansing.

What complicated this first response? A Conspectus-generated exposure to second opinions. Hands-on, first-person experience with more and more translations unsettled the conclusion that Don Juan was a hero who got tripped up by his own hubristic horniness, complicating that first impression with second thoughts. Seeing Don Juan as sex-driven had made “lab” participants less interested in the Burlador, less engaged with his performance. Studying how different translations bring the same critical facets in his history to the page, however, helped Bainbridge Collegians unearth more promising ways to stage the Burlador’s seductiveness.

The next section of this chapter takes you along the same path. First, I show you how to locate sex in the play, using analysis of three speeches and scenes in which Catalinón describes Don Juan’s sex life with the power-verb forçar to establish sexual conduct in a vital supporting role. Then, I show you how to dislocate sex from the dramaturgical center of the play. By closely reading a soliloquy where, on the brink of his most adventurous burla, the Burlador reveals his innermost inclinación to the audience, I decisively displace the quest for sex as Don Juan’s chief motivation, making space for him to pursue a more performable character objective. By digging into the structural equivalence between the comedia’s inciting incident (the burla with Isabela) and its explicit situational echo (the burla with Ana), I conclusively undercut sexual conquest as Don Juan’s characteristic strategy for getting what he wants, clearing the ground for him to demonstrate a more actorly modus operandi.

**Location and Dislocation**

Decoding Don Juan’s sex life accurately and performably marks an indispensable step toward reproducing the Burlador and Tan largo’s
stageworthiness, with implications for enlivening every moment of this famously racy comedia. So far, however, traditional approaches to re-presenting Golden Age drama in English haven’t equipped translators with tools sensitive enough to reach a consensus about how, when, where, or to what extent the Smooth Mover from Seville includes sex in his performance vocabulary.

A vital aspect of the Burlador and Tan largo’s stage life is slipping through translation’s fingers, but the practice of translating this frequently-translated comedia has yet to synthesize any methodology for diagnosing this fundamental, far-reaching problem, much less strategize any new art aimed at solving it. It’s high time to build a better foundation for transmitting this sexy (but not sex-addicted) text into stageworthy English, by isolating instructive, exemplary sites in the script where it’s possible to crack how the dialog encodes performance information about its protagonist’s sexual behavior.

Conspectus supplies a sorely-needed tool for identifying sites to study how the Burlador and Tan largo puts sex onstage, and for strategizing more performance-friendly translations of this sexy comedia. Conspectus is the technique of studying critical passages in the play through a succession of translators’ eyes – lining up, in the tradition of a grand jury investigation, a range of expert testimony about the same dramatic event in the same place, assembling a Conspectus of points of view in order to reconstruct the event more reliably.

The focal point for half a century of repeated, expert, and continuous translation experience, the Burlador and Tan largo offer particularly rich, rare opportunities for Conspectus study of critical problems that beset revitalizing comedia for contemporary reproduction in the US. The translations available for comparison constitute an impressive body of testimony – expert eyewitnesses to the stageworthiness of the text drawn from a significant slice of time, from a wide range of backgrounds, and from an awe-inspiring range of expertise.

This gives Conspectus the effect of mustering a symposium on the play’s production challenges, assembling a conversation that reaches vigorously and variously across deep cultural divisions, building multi-level, broad-band communication bridges between dramaturgies. Conspectus this broad empowers perspectives on the Burlador and Tan largo that encompass important divisions
in English-speaking culture (including, for example, differences between UK, US, Canadian, and Caribbean cultural idioms) and embrace significant developments in Anglophonic stage conventions (including variations in performance decorum appropriate to different time periods, audiences, and venues). Conspectus this deep promises insights with implications both for invigorating the Spanish comedia’s staging and for identifying the dramaturgical spine of the play.

The problem of Don Juan’s sex life poses a double-decker challenge to Conspectus. In the first place, how do you identify places where sex is the subject of the action in the first Don Juan play – where sex happens, where it’s mentioned, where its influence becomes evident onstage? And on second thought, how do you identify sex’s place in the larger makeup of the comedia – its significance in characters’ lives, the kind of bond it forges between the world of the play and the world of the audience, its usefulness for the dramaturgy?

A concrete “way in” to constructing Conspectus answers for these questions can be opened by lining up Synoptic translations for the verb forçar [to exert force]. The kind of translation this study calls Synoptic aims at straightforward transmission of the Burlador’s plot and diction, with no formative reference to Tan largo. Synoptic translation is the most intently “close-to-the-first-text” modality in the play’s translation history. Intriguingly, the six Synoptic translations assembled for this study’s Conspectus show a striking lack of consensus in handling forçar – a rarely-used, strategically-placed verb which holds the potential of being sexually frank.

Since Synoptic translation tends to practice close transcription of a single printed text, the anomalies in Synoptic translators’ understandings of forçar are particularly thought-provoking. They present, in fact, precisely the kind of narrowly-focused, broadly-suggestive sites where Conspectus insight can revolutionize assessments both of the performance experiences encoded in this script, and of the translation techniques that most effectively Decode the scripted experiences for transmission across cultural divides.

Synoptic translations of the first Don Juan play put sex onstage at wildly different places in the text, playing vastly different roles in the Burlador de Sevilla. While Roy Campbell’s Trickster of Seville (1959) argues that Don Juan’s
lust for women eventually damns his soul (Campbell 310), Robert O’Brien’s Rogue of Seville (1962) stresses the fact that coitus is conspicuously absent from the seduction that Don Juan calls “the most brilliant and exciting of my accomplishments” (O’Brien 114). Walter Starkie’s Playboy of Seville (1964) excuses its hero from any male-to-male expressions of affection (Starkie 213), but Lynne Alvarez’s Don Juan of Seville (1989) has its title character positively revel in the fact that his buddy the Marquis de la Mota gets excited enough to kiss his feet – an act that carries (according to this Don Juan) gleefully explicit sexual overtones (Alvarez 165).

Sounding other, suggestive notes in the scale of Don Juan’s sexual experience, Max Oppenheimer, Jr., detects within his Beguiler from Seville (1976) a swinger side that makes him “love to swap” (Oppenheimer 46). Venturing further into the field of kink, Gwynne Edwards finds intimations of necrophilia in Don Juan’s sexual history. Edwards’ Trickster of Seville (1986) spends most of a soliloquy describing the eerily prurient interests that the touch of his Stone Guest’s hand arouses in Don Juan – a response to the Dead that is distinctly erotic, even orgasmic (Edwards 169).

Which of these faithfully translated, Synoptically conceived English versions reads Don Juan’s sex life rightly? Where does amor mean “lust” in the lexicon of the first Don Juan play (cf. Martel 294, Starkie 227)? When should “Dame esos pies” [literally “give me those feet”] be taken as a declaration of overmastering passion, or as a sign of sexual submission, rather than a conventionally respectful hello (cf. Martel 277, Rivera 118)? How does the playtext establish where the Burlador is coming face to face with his own mortality, as opposed to where Don Juan is experiencing le petit mort (cf. Martel 307)?

On what authority can producers of this watershed comedia reliably grasp the sexual content encoded for performance within the classic Spanish script, then Decode it for effective re-performance in contemporary English-language terms? How can dramaturgical expertise successfully locate sex in the staging of El Burlador de Sevilla y Convidado de Piedra, and its alter ego Tan largo me lo fiáis? What inventive approaches to translation are necessary to accomplish the
apparently unprecedented work of conceptualizing and empowering reliable
cross-cultural re-production of Don Juan’s sex life?

Recent scholarship regarding same-sex relationships in Shakespeare offers
a helpful model for addressing these pressing but heretofore unposed
performance questions. Joseph Pequigney has devised a three-step system of
dramatic analysis to distinguish the homosexual Antonio of Twelfth Night (i.e.,
an Antonio who is linked by erotic attraction to Sebastian) from the homosocial
Antonio of The Merchant of Venice (i.e., an Antonio who is linked to Bassanio by
affectionate friendship).

Pequigney pursues his persuasive “method of inquiry” (193) by:
- assembling a vocabulary of passion that is internal to the play,
- exploring parallel scene structures to pinpoint parallel passionate
  relationships between characters, and
- relating the dramatic resonance of same-sex passion to the performance
  impact of the play as a whole.

Pequigney undertakes new but indispensably necessary work in Shakespeare
studies. He Decodes the sexual content of Shakespearean playtext in order to
translate it into current performance terms (178-79, 193). His success prods
translators of the Burlador and Tan largo toward (to paraphrase Lope de Vega’s
celebrated manifesto for forging new techniques of playmaking in the Spanish
Golden Age) a “new art of analyzing sexual speech in 17th-century comedia.”

Pequigney’s “method of inquiry” suggests a three-pronged approach to
testing the script of the Burlador and Tan largo for sexual valence.
- First, in a step that Pequigney derives from Aristotle’s interest in diction [the
  words that characters choose to speak], you scrutinize the dialogue of the
  play, using “textual analysis and argumentation” to document sexual
discourse (179).
- Second, in a process that pays homage to the Poetics’ fascination with
  character [the decisions that dramatic personae choose to enact], you analyze
  parallelisms in the play, identifying “comparable scenes and ... situational
  analogues” to establish sexual implications within character interactions and
  motivations (187).
Third, in an assessment that replicates Aristotelian attention to plot [the event-sequence that the dramaturgy chooses to present], you sound the performance impact of the play as a whole, assessing specific dramatic moments for sexual import within “the structure of incidents that make up the main plot” (193).

Confusion about staging Don Juan’s sex life starts with problems in Decoding precise spots where the *comedia* turns its attention to sexual activity. Translations for the verb *forçar* illustrate both the scope of this problem, and the depth of the pitfall it poses to successful production of the play in the US today. This specifically-located 17th-century sex term offers people with their finger on the pulse of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* a site for identifying a persistent translation glitch, and for grasping the size of the stakes that ride on stanching the loss of dramatic lifeblood created by this loss in translation.

The Burlador’s sidekick and servant Catalinón uses *forçar* in three pivotal speeches, to describe Don Juan’s relationships with women, men, and animals. Yet no English-language version of the *comedia* currently available for production performably links Catalinón’s three uses of *forçar*. Indeed, Synoptic translations of Don Juan’s stage debut unanimously hear the *gracioso* [comic lead] raising the subject of sex only during his third and final invocation of the verb.

This lack of unanimity regarding the intersection of sex and *forçar* does not spring from Decoding that’s technically flawed (i.e., the kind of mistake in finding English words for Spanish that would generally be called “mistranslation”). Indeed, Pequigney’s technique of “textual analysis and argumentation” is indispensable for explicating Catalinón’s linked speeches precisely because lexicographical expertise alone gives translators tools that are too dull to locate sexual language in the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* precisely.

According to Covarrubias’ Golden Age dictionary *Tesoro de la Lengua Castellana o Española* [A Treasury of Castilian or Spanish Speech] (1611, expanded 1674), “Forçar, a vezes sinifica conocer una muger contra su voluntad” [*Forçar* sometimes means having sex with a woman against her will]
So forçar can signal forced sex, and I might translate it “rape.”

But the verb also speaks to any exercise of force or power, and is intimately related to terms that spill over into describing irresistible powers of persuasion, litigation, or self-defense (cf. Covarrubias 614). In these senses, forçar can express the complex forces at work within a “date rape,” and indeed can verbalize power-plays with no sexual implication whatsoever: e.g., recruiting rowers for the royal galleys. Given the range of meaning that Golden Age speakers assigned to forçar, can a persuasive case be made that Catalinón understands himself to be discussing sexual behavior when he chooses to use this word? Absolutely.

The gracioso’s final high-profile use of forçar crops up in act three, in his guilty response to the Statue knocking on Don Juan’s dining room door. Refusing to answer the eerie knock, Catalinón cowers:

Cat. Oy Catalinon acaba:
mas si las forçadas vienen
a vengarse de los dos.
[It’s curtains for Catalinón! What if the women who’ve been overpowered are coming back, with payback for us both?]

(Fernández 52; cf. Martel 303)

Translators universally acknowledge the sexual force of this speech. For the last 50 years, Synoptic translations of the Burlador have transmitted the performance impact of forçar’s last gasp as sexually charged, representing the women in question as “outraged,” “raped,” or “raped and ravished” (O’Brien 121; Oppenheimer 71 and Edwards 159; Campbell 297, Starkie 235, and Alvarez 194).

Perhaps the context of this quotation – Catalinón’s dread of imminent judgment and his confession of heterosexual transgression – makes the sexual overtones within the speech more audible. In Catalinón’s other invocations of forçar, the context becomes more complicated, and consensus about the sexual content of his discourse completely disintegrates.

Earlier in act three, for example, Don Juan engineers “La burla mas escogida / de todas” [the choicest scam of all] (Fernández 46, 86; cf. Martel 293) by substituting himself for a bride’s groom on the couple’s wedding night.
Foreseeing dire consequences both from outraged people and an upright God, Catalinón vigorously protests this course of action. Don Juan sneers at his sidekick’s fears, and cuts his moral objections short with a curt, “Vete” [Git!] (Fernández 46, 87; cf. Martel 293). The gracioso is goaded to respond,

“Fuerça al Turco, fuerça al Scita”
[Exert your force on a Turk, compel a Scythian]
(Fernández 46, 87; cf. Martel 293).

Does a sexual reading of forçar make dramatic sense here?

Synoptic translations of the Burlador strive for an asexual understanding of this speech. Campbell and Edwards conclude that forçar must mean “admire” in this instance, printing “How we admire the fearless Scythian” and “Admire the Turk, sir, and the Scythian!” (Campbell 288, Edwards 137). On surer lexicographical footing, O’Brien, Starkie, and Alvarez read the speech as a (possibly ironic?) apostrophe to power, hearing Catalinón say “All power to the Turk and Scythian,” “More power to the Turk, more power to the Scythian,” and “Well! / How brave we are! / Yes. / Strength to the Turks. / Strength to the Scythian” (O’Brien 115, Starkie 227, Alvarez 3-57).

Only Oppenheimer produces a translation with a clear sexual thrust to it. In The Beguiler from Seville, the gracioso [comic sidekick] interjects:

Ravish the Turk, the Scythian too,
the Persian and the Lybian,
the German and Galician,
and the Japanese, why don’t you!
Go and ravish the troglobyte,
yes ravish everything in sight … . (Oppenheimer 61)

People interested in staging the world’s first Don Juan play in the US today might question whether “ravish” conveys a sense of sexual transgression to 21st-century Americans. Certainly my collaborators in the theater “lab” at Bainbridge College had to work very hard to hear the sexual discourse re-coded in Oppenheimer’s translation. But no other translation of Catalinón’s second forçar speech gave them even a hint of sexual activity.
Perhaps translators lost sight of the verb in the elaborate list of nouns that Catalinón conjoins to Turks and Scythians – a seven-line, ten-item catalogue of stereotypically ferocious figures drawn from history, myth, and urban legend. Perhaps translators found the thought of Don Juan exercising his legendary sex appeal on Golden Age icons of manliness simply unthinkable. Occluded as it is by archaic diction, Oppenheimer’s “ravish” gives sex its only perceptible foothold in the translation history of this second forçar passage from the Burlador and Tan largo.

Locating sex in the translation history of Catalinón’s first usage of forçar is well-nigh impossible. The speech that inaugurates forçar’s usefulness as a tool for “textual analysis and argumentation” that can locate sex in Don Juan’s life, and put Don Juan's sex life in its proper place within the life of the play, comes in act two. Again, the action hovers on the brink of a notable transgression – an “engaño” [trick] that the Burlador celebrates as “Estremado” [awesome] (Fernández 37, 79; cf. Martel 275). Again, Catalinón objects, sputtering like (to paraphrase Don Juan) a parson preaching hellfire and damnation.

The Burlador spikes his sidekick’s guns with a trenchant reminder of a servant’s submissive status and the threat of a swift kick. Catalinón changes his tune, fulminating:

_Cata._ Digo, que de aqui adelante
lo que me mandas harê,
y a tu lado forçaré
vn Tigre, y vn Elefante.
Guardese de mi vn Prior,
que si me mandas que calle,
y le fuerce, he de forçalle
sin replica, mi señor.
[I say that from now on I’ll do
whatever you command me to,
and at your side I’ll bend
a tiger and an elephant to my yen.
Give me the go-ahead to shut up some church bigwig
and dominate, dominate, dominate him?
He’d better watch out for me –
I’ll take him without any backtalk, boss.

(Fernández 79-80, 37; cf. Martel 276)

Introducing animals and religious figureheads as objects of *forçar* radically alters translators’ perceptions of the verb.

Campbell, O’Brien, and Starkie deal with the prospect of Catalinón exerting sexual force on a *Prior* – who could be a prominent clergyman in a Golden Age church, monastery, or military order (Covarrubias 883) – by neatly excising it from their translations. Oppenheimer, Edwards, and Alvarez deal with the passage by focusing attention on the action of physically silencing orthodoxy’s mouthpiece, rather than on the implication of sexually menacing a representative of Religion. Edwards, in fact, presents the anti-clerical violence in such soft-focus fashion that it almost disappears: “And as for any blabbing preacher, / He’d best look out! Give me the order, sir, / To shut him up, I’ll do it silently, / To good effect, and not a word I’ll speak!” (Edwards 97).

At least Oppenheimer hears Catalinón promise personal force with personal consequences when he invokes *forçar*: “All you priors beware of me! / If you ask that I silent be / and overpower the poor guy, / I’ll do him in without reply” (Oppenheimer 41, emphasis added). And Alvarez goes so far as to embody Catalinón’s promised violence in the hardboiled slang of American gangster movies: “Watch out, you priests! / You’ll see, / if you order me to shut them up / or rough them up / I’ll do it with no mercy, / my lord” (Alvarez 164-65, emphasis added). Barring the suppressed eroticism that spices violence in American gangster movies, however, none of these translations sends off the slightest whiff of sex. The fact that Catalinón applies *forçar* to a man of the cloth seems to silence the verb’s from sexual force.

The presence of animals as objects of *forçar* (“un tigre y un elefante”) proves even more disruptive in the verb’s translation history. Rather than contemplate a Catalinón who countenances bestiality, Campbell, O’Brien, and Alvarez turn the force of *forçar* back on the speaker, making Catalinón a forced participant in Don Juan’s adventures. Campbell’s result reads, “Well, yes, from
now, whatever you command / I'll do as if you were flanked on either side / By a tiger and an elephant, Don Juan!” (Campbell 270). O’Brien hears Catalinón swear, “Whatever you say or command I’ll do just as if I were caught between a tiger and an elephant” (O’Brien 103). More equivocally, Alvarez arrives at, “As I was saying ... / from now on, whatever you tell me, / I’ll do ... I won’t run from it. / I’ll stand strong at your side – / like a tiger or an elephant” (Alvarez 164, ellipses scripted).

Starkie, Oppenheimer, and Edwards suppress the sexual potential of forçar exercised on animals by sublimating it into the comfortingly familiar, straight-male jargon of a big-game safari. So Starkie’s Catalinón swears, like a bushwhacker to Big Bwana, “I give my word / I’ll carry out your orders from now on, / And chase elephants or tigers by your side” (Starkie 213). Oppenheimer embroiders the same reasoning with rhyme: “And from now on, I promise you, / what you command me I shall do, / and at your side vanquish and kill / tigers and elephants I will” (Oppenheimer 41). Only Edwards’ version of the hunt betrays the slightest trace of sex-consciousness: “I promise, master. Seen and never heard / I’ll be! Obedient to your every word, / That’s me! At your side my loyalty / Will force an elephant or a fierce tiger / To its knees” (Edwards 97).

Three speeches where forçar is pivotal punctuate the Burlador and Tan largo’s action, then, but consensus about what the verb means surfaces among its Synoptically-formulated English-language translators only once, when Catalinón uses forçar to address Don Juan’s sexual conduct with women. Can persuasive evidence that forçar invokes sexual behavior be brought to bear on the two speeches where consensus about the verb’s meaning disintegrates?

Yes. Pequigney’s technique of analyzing dramatic structures to identify “comparable scenes and ... situational analogues” shows the way. The Burlador and Tan largo’s three high-profile appearances of forçar are painstakingly parallel in structure. All three instances of this sparsely-used verb pop out of Catalinón’s mouth. The playwright has marked them as analogical by assigning them to the same character. Moreover – and even more strikingly – the speeches constructed around forçar are embedded in dramatic situations that act as mirror images of each other.
Forçar is always spoken by the gracioso under extreme duress, when he’s caught in the vice of a carefully paralleled press of circumstances. On every occasion where he employs forçar – when the Statue comes to dinner and Catalinón must answer the door; when the Burlador booby-traps the sacrament of marriage and Catalinón must help him do it; and when Don Juan marks his bosom buddy as the butt of his next joke and drafts Catalinón as his accomplice – the comedia’s underdog finds himself trapped between his fear of Don Juan (who promises to hurt him physically) and his fear of God (whose moral judgment on transgression appears imminent).

Repeatedly, characteristically, forçar is a verb that the gracioso [funny guy] is driven to use under compulsion, at the moment when he abandons high principle for immediate self-preservation, saving his ass by acting contrary to his own avisos [moral advice].

Strongly marked parallels in the performance settings of these speeches suggest pronouncedly parallel meanings in Catalinón’s usage of forçar. In the analogous dramatic situations that produce them, the three speeches where Catalinón features forçar give translators, dramaturgs, directors, and actors firm grounds for expecting sequential discussions of sexual conduct. And these are grounds for locating sexual discourse within the comedia, it should be noted, decidedly more persuasive than any translator’s individual inclination toward (or squeamishness against) hearing sexually-explicit language at these junctures in the verse.

Pequigney’s new art of excavating reliable performance information by digging into “comparable scenes ... and situational analogues” proves materially helpful in the quest to mine the Burlador de Sevilla and Tan largo me lo fiáis for evidentiary bases upon which to stage Don Juan’s sex life. Another Pequigney technique – his method of assessing specific moments in the action for sexual content by reading them through the lens of the whole play, mapping them within “the structure of incidents that make up the main plot” – serves to strengthen the case for finding sexual conduct at the center of Catalinón’s concern when he chooses to express himself via the verb forçar.
Covarrubias documents forçar’s sexual force by defining it as a source of knowledge: “Forçar, a vezes sinifica conocer una muger contra su voluntad” [Forçar sometimes signifies knowing a woman without her consent] (Covarrubias 604). This is significant for assessing Catalinón’s usage of the verb, since lust for knowledge – not just a lust for nookie – drives the action of the Burlador and Tan largo.

Sex matters in Don Juan’s stage debut because sex acts as a deeply unsettling source of knowledge, and this comedia is fundamentally about pursuing (self-) knowledge by unsettling it, even at the expense of (self-) destruction. The pattern of penetrating appearances to experience true knowledge – the action expressed by forçar’s defining verb conocer [to know, even carnally] (see Covarrubias 345, 349) – is written into the play from beginning to end. That’s why a riddle about Don Juan’s identity starts the play rolling, with the Burlador’s ear-tickling self-definition “Quien soy? vn hombre sin nombre” [Who am I? I’m no man, ma’am] (Fernández 18; cf. Martel 239).

Revelations about the protagonist’s identity feed and focus every episode in this apparently casual, actually tautly-organized comedia. Developments in a carefully-plotted, play-long identity quest link incident to incident with increasingly pointed inducements to know Don Juan completely. That’s why the Burlador issues a challenge at the end of “the choicest scam of all” (“La burla mas escogida / de todas,” Fernández 46, 86). The burlador de Sevilla crowns his career as exposer of this world’s hypocrisies with the achievement of exciting a bride’s cupidity so expertly that she trades her groom in for a more promising model on her wedding-night. Stupendous success in the world of burlar whets his appetite for new worlds to conquer. “Que mal conoces / el burlador de Seuilla,” he taunts at this critical juncture: “How imperfectly you know the Seville Seducer,” underscoring delight in seduction (not dependency on sex) as the force that drives both him and his play (Fernández 88, 48; cf. Martel 297).

The Burlador and Tan largo even precipitate their climax through the catalyst of conocer [the overwhelming desire to know]. Don Juan embraces the Statue’s dinner-date as a chance to re-define himself, to transcend his identity as Burlador and audition for a more impressive, universal role (cf. Fernández 54,
That’s why the **gran burlador de España** [the most skilful detective of dirty laundry in the civilized world] confesses to his otherworldly host: “Huy de ser conocido, / mas ya me tienes delante” [the night I killed you, I ran away to keep from being known; but now I meet you face to face, ready for anything] (Fernández 58, 93; cf. Martel 314). His through-line down the spine of the play is to pursue an ever more demanding identity quest, driven by delight in seduction, expressed through expertly mirroring other people’s flaws.

In a play concocted from *burlas* [stratagems that seduce people into showing their weak sides] designed to promote the action of *conocer* [to know, up close and personal; to synthesize identity], sex’s resonance as a source of knowledge strengthens the argument for finding sexual behavior included whenever Catalinón invokes *forçar*. *Forçar*’s sexual force ties these sequentially-marked joints in the action to what Joseph Pequigney calls “the structure of incidents that make up the main plot,” unifying and enriching the *comedia* as a whole.

Pequigney’s “method of inquiry” for locating sex in classic text proves immensely useful for Decoding sex in the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*. It identifies sites where sexual conduct stands at the center of the conversation. Armed with Pequigney’s new art, students of this *comedia* can point to persuasive, performable evidence that Catalinón is raising the subject of Don Juan’s sexual practices each and every time he rolls out the verb *forçar* – evidence firmly grounded in textual analysis and argumentation, in the parallel structures linking scenes and situations, and in thematic impacts worked into the play as a whole.

There’s a second edge to Pequigney’s methodology for locating sex that is indispensable for translators of the first Don Juan. Translators need new ways to *dislocate* sex from center-stage in the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* when it hasn’t earned the right to be there. Pequigney’s “method of inquiry” helps here, too. The result of Pequigney’s investigation, remember, is not onlyactable evidence that *Twelfth Night*’s Antonio is homosexual, motivated by a mutual, explicitly sexual longing for Sebastian, but evidence (equally action-crafted) that *The Merchant of Venice*’s Antonio is homosocial, moved to befriend Bassanio by an affection that is both deeply rooted and explicitly *non*-erotic.
Decoding the first Don Juan for successful re-staging requires recognizing where the subject under discussion is not sexual activity, where the driving force of the action is not sexual appetite, and where delight in seduction does not equate with lust for sexual congress. Specificity about sex limits is particularly urgent for translations aspiring to stageworthiness in the US today, where people are apt to approach Don Juan with expectations that are decidedly sex-centric from the get-go.

The problem (like Pequigney’s “method of inquiry”) presents two cutting edges. On the one hand, putting plenty of sex in translations of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* promises to endow the first Don Juan drama with attention-grabbing raciness, up-to-the-minute immediacy, and a refreshing sense of no-bull frankness. It offers producers the lure of a protagonist who’s viscerally motivated and magically wish-fulfilling, and an action that’s driven hard, fast, and understandably, by a universally recognizable instinct. On the other hand, putting sex at the center of this *comedia* – where the climax sends Don Juan to Hell – ultimately risks representing the Burlador as a sex criminal. Damning Don Juan for his sexual (mis)deeds is an extremely problematic posture for translation to take, since it opens the way to serious downgrades in the lead character’s stature and credibility. In a country where Hannibal Lecter sets the standard for sex-crime, what sexual criminality can Don Juan show that’s heroically stageworthy? In a country where government-sponsored “just-say-no” passes for sex education, what lesson worth listening to does a sexually-driven Don Juan teach?

Here’s the flipside of Decoding *forçar*: translators of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* stand desperately in need of reliable ways to know when *conocer* does not call for carnal knowledge in this wryly knowing, sophisticated script, when this *comedia* pursues forms of knowledge that are emphatically supra-, extra-, or a-sexual. *Not* knowing this key information erects enormous roadblocks between the play and production in the US today.

To grasp the size of the problem, consider three ways that dislocating sex from the driving center of the Burlador’s characterization revolutionizes performing the role of Don Juan.
Dislocating sex as Don Juan’s dominant character objective cuts the ground out from under characterizing the Burlador as a sexual predator, and impels performance to explore his seductiveness from new angles;

Dislocating sex as Don Juan’s primary character strategy for pursuing his objective undercuts staging the Burlador as a sex addict, and coaxes performers into re-examining how he manipulates other characters to get what he wants; and

Dislocating sex as the root cause of Don Juan’s damnation yanks the moral high-horse out from under representing the Burlador as a sex fiend, and invites performers to give serious new thought to his character through-line. Can Conspectus connect translators with specific sites in the Burlador and Tan largo where these fundamental building-blocks in Don Juan’s stage life can be re-pointed for production in the “Now”?

Indeed it can. At least four times during the “knotting of the plot” (the enredo), the Burlador pauses on the verge of stepping into a decisive burla for a frank, first-person look at what he’s about to do, and why. The juiciest of these confessional chats crops up at the sticking-point of Don Juan’s burla más escogida, in a defining-moment soliloquy about his inclinación. Conspectus study of this pregnant moment extracts vital information about the protagonist’s motivation. The results are revolutionary, demonstrating that something very different from sexual conquest stands at the heart of Don Juan’s character objective. His conscious reason for doing the things he does, his analysis of himself as the eponymous arbiter of burlar, speaks to yearnings, ambitions, lusts, and fears that are emphatically more than sexual – desires that sex could never sate, which make sex immaterial. Conspectus-generated “textual analysis and argumentation” about inclinación decisively divorces sex from Don Juan’s (self-) defining character objective.

Conspectus unearths more revolutionary information about the Burlador’s performance strategy from the comedia’s opening scene. The playwright’s point of attack brings Don Juan onstage as the mirror image of another man. He’s reflecting the persona of Duke Octavio/Otavio in order to wangle a date with Duchess Isabela. This inciting incident sets vital ground-rules for the Burlador’s
character strategy, not only through introducing his *modus operandi* to the audience, but also by creating a ripple effect that extends through the whole arc of the play. Isabela’s *burla* excites a particularly crucial structural echo in Don Juan’s dealings with Doña Ana, daughter of the Comendador whose Statue delivers God’s judgement on the Burlador.

Conspectus authoritatively dislocates sex from Don Juan’s character strategy by establishing the *burlas* with Isabela and Ana as “comparable scenes and ... situational analogues,” then demonstrating that both of these decisive adventures – decidedly successful undertakings, from the Burlador’s point of view – are emphatically non-sexual in their conduct. Conspectus analysis decisively debunks the high-profile, structurally linked *burlas* of the Duchess and the Doña as sexual adventures. Conspectus shows reliable directions, recorded in the *comedia*’s performance score, to perform these structural high-points in the plot *non-coitally*. Rather than introduce Don Juan to the audience *in flagrante delicto*, with sexual conquest as his character’s primary strategy for getting what he wants, Conspectus concludes, the script maintains an emphatically extra-sexual performance mechanism in its protagonist’s role, equipping Don Juan with a characteristic strategy for pursuing his objective that shows not one tittle of sex-dependency.

By vacating sex from the center of the play – by dislocating sex-drive from the Burlador’s *inclinación* and separating sex from the way Don Juan characteristically conducts his character “business” – Conspectus clears the ground to excavate the extra-sexual dynamics that in fact drive this drama. Conspectus makes visible “New Ways to Play the Burlador,” providing the Burlador/garañón with a magnificently actable character objective (seduction), an elegantly performable character strategy (mirroring), and a resonantly production-friendly character through-line (identity quest). With this end in view, let me conduct you through a revolutionary Conspectus reevaluation of *inclinación* and the first Don Juan play’s inciting incident.

The *Burlador* and *Tan largo* bristle with provocative statements where Don Juan makes himself known in terms that certainly *might* be sexual, since they spring out of sexually-charged contexts, or they relate to potentially sexual
situations, or they adopt turns of phrase that are rich with sexual overtones. Performable translation demands Decoding these identity statements with clear directionality and intent, as stageable actions that enrich the play’s character-life onstage. What most English versions give you is calculated doublespeak that thickens mystery rather than revealing *mythos* — sound and fury, signifying a gnawing uncertainty about where the Burlador acts sexual, and where he doesn’t.10

A dose of Conspectus-directed “textual analysis and argumentation” cuts through the uncertainty. Conspectus identifies one sweet-spot where Synoptic translators stick their chins out and say for sure that sex is uppermost in Don Juan’s mind. The spot in question surfaces in act three, when Don Juan shares another irresistibly soul-baring intimacy with the audience. He’s about to kick off his *burla* with Aminta/Arminta, the bride of Dos Hermanas, the woman who inspires him to swear to God that he hopes a Man will return from the Dead and do him in if he does her wrong. This is “La burla mas escogida / de todas” (Fernández 46, 86) — the ultimate *burla*, Don Juan’s crowning achievement as the known world’s wiliest Burlador.

He prefaces the fateful foolery with a soul-baring confession: “Yo quiero poner mi engaño / por obra” [I’m all excited about getting this scam going]. He proceeds to examine his motivation, exonerating himself in advance from any moral blame that might accrue to his *burlando* [habit of staging *burlas*], by revealing: “el amor me guia / a mi inclinacion, de quien / no ay hombre que se resista” [Love prods me to follow my *inclinación* — marching orders there’s not a creature in creation can say No to] (Fernández 46; cf. 87).

Clearly, Decoding *inclinación* is a high-stakes enterprise. *Inclinación* internally explicates the *burla* that sets in motion the mechanism of Don Juan’s damnation — the Dead Man returning to enact God’s Judgement, at the Burlador’s express invitation. And on the narrow grounds of this uniquely-situated noun, Conspectus points out, Synoptic translation founds a fatal (mis)conception: that sexual (mis)conduct sends the Burlador to Hell.
Inclinación persuades Synoptic translators that the fire in Don Juan’s belly that ultimately drives him to do what the world remembers him for is a clear and present lust for carnal knowledge.

- That’s why Starkie finds sex launching the inclinación statement: “Lust goads me onwards, how can I resist / This tempting moment?” (Starkie 227).
- That’s why Alvarez hears sex anchoring the inclinación statement: “But it’s no time to be still. / Love takes me where it will. / No man can resist her. / I want to go to bed” (Alvarez 184).
- That’s why, in ponderous iambic pentameters, Edwards erects a monument to sex in the middle of the inclinación statement: “Now comes the hour when I must seize / The opportunity to exercise / My cunning, when I, guided by the power / Of love, pursue its irresistible / Attraction, faithful to my inclination. / I approach Aminta’s bed. I’ll call her name. / Aminta!” (Edwards 137-39).
- That’s why Oppenheimer makes sex the through-line of the inclinación statement: “Now my deceit to perpetrate! / Along my bent love guides me straight, / and no man can resist his bent. / To her bed now without relent” (Oppenheimer 61).
- That’s why O’Brien concludes that sex is the guiding force of the inclinación statement: “Now is the time for adventure. Love, whom no man can resist, will guide my inclination. For I must reach her bed” (O’Brien 115).
- And that’s why even Campbell (the least forthcoming translator of the Burlador and Tan largo when it comes to sexual matters, who’d rather crop the script than reproduce its bawdry) eventually, climactically, and at the last moment concedes sex as the driver of this damnation-triggering juncture, translating the inclinación statement: “Now I set my trap. / Love guides me to my joy – none can resist him. / I’ve got to reach her bed” (Campbell 288).

In the Burlador’s inclinación statement, Synoptic translators hit what they mistake as bedrock for locating Don Juan’s sex-life, and for linking his sex-life to dramatic consequences. They send the (anti-)Hero to Hell for what he does in Aminta/Arminta’s bed.

Synoptic translators reach consensus about sexual inclination driving this burla because sexual activity occupies such a prominent place in the context,
both of the *burla* and of the confession that serves as its curtain-raiser. Don Juan ends his fireside chat with the audience, after all, by explicitly calling for “Bedtime!” The last line of his *inclinación* statement is “Quiero llegar a la cama” [I want ... to come ... to bed] (Fernández 46, 87). Don Juan is about to clinch Aminta/Arminta’s decision to ditch her first husband on their honeymoon, moreover – the object of his *burla* to end all *burlas* – by offering her a sexual loophole. “En no siendo consumado,” he points out to consummate the confidence game that his *inclinación* statement prepares [the *Burlador* prints “En no siendo confirmado” at this point], “por engaño, o por malicia, / puede anularse” [Marriages that don’t get consummated ... sexually confirmed ... are as good as annulled – it doesn’t matter whether a calculated intention to defraud stands to blame, or some physical misfortune gets in the way] (Fernández 88, 47).

The prominence of these explicitly sexual elements in the *inclinación* statement’s context has reassured translators that sex occupies the center of Don Juan’s intention at this tide-turning moment in his career. At the juncture which he himself charts as the high-water mark of his activity as a Burlador, where he dares to call down divine Judgement on his conduct with his own mouth, translators find incontrovertible evidence that sex sits in the driver’s seat.

In fact, however, Don Juan’s *inclinación* – like his damnation – has nothing whatsoever to do with sex. The *comedia* couches the Burlador’s ultimate *burla* in pillow-talk terms to make you think about things that are even more intimate and harder to talk about than sex, issues that dynamically and stageably shrug off sexual limits. The protagonist that *Tan largo* frankly calls a *garañón* [a stud-beast, a walking sperm-bank] posits, at this pivotal point in the play, a statement that’s designed to define himself not as a sexual Superman, but as a moral Everyman.

One vital, supra-sexual element of the context gets overlooked in Synoptic translation’s rush to judgement. Don Juan’s *inclinación* speech begins with a soliloquy-intimate smile at an astrologically-specific slice of the night sky: “O wow! Look at those stars! ... those bright, particular stars ...” And for Golden Age audiences, *inclinación* took on a whole new meaning when coupled with star-
gazing. Translators today would be well advised to weigh this reminder from eminent Burlador and Tan largo editor Alfredo Rodríguez López-Vázquez:

> Conviene no olvidar que «inclinación» no tiene aquí significado psicológico, sino astrológico. El contexto y los usos de la época son muy claros: la inclinación de las estrellas es término astrológico.

Compárese el párrafo de la comedia de Andrés de Claramonte, El secreto en la mujer: «Mira Tisbeo, el amor / es una influcción de estrellas / que ésta inclina a lo peor / ésta a lo mejor ...» [It’s useful not to forget that inclinación doesn’t carry a psychological connotation here, but rather an astrological significance. Both context and period usage are crystal clear: the stars’ inclinación is astrological jargon. See the passage in Claramonte’s play How Women Keep Secrets that starts out, “Look, Tisbeo, love is just some powerful convergence in the stars, that pulls one girl this way, toward a happy romance, and another one that way, toward heartbreak ... ] (López-Vázquez 247, ellipsis original)

In its actual performance context, then – an angle on this speech that has yet to be put into English – Don Juan’s confession has nothing to do with how his sex-drive drives his life, as a psycho-physiological inclination that’s irresistible. On the contrary, this watershed statement is solely and supremely focused on how the Burlador’s stars control his destiny, as an astrological influence that excuses him – and indeed, every other human under heaven – from full responsibility for his actions.

In the Burlador’s inclinación, Conspectus locates a site where “textual analysis and argumentation” can decisively dislocate sex from Don Juan’s character objective, revolutionizing his role’s performance. Inclinación marks the spot where Synoptic translators finally achieve consensus about prurient interests – what they see as the Burlador’s “inclination” toward sexual activity – acting as the protagonist’s compelling motivation. They rest their case on context shoring up that conclusion. Applying “textual analysis and argumentation” to inclinación’s actual performance context, however – hearing the audience-engaging astrological allusion in Don Juan’s self-analysis – cuts the ground right
out from under the idea that this garañón is being led around by his gonads. The case for staging the Burlador’s inclinación as “lust” collapses, and the argument for staging Don Juan as a character driven by his sex-drive falls with it.

Working in tandem with “textual analysis and argumentation,” Conspectus decisively frees translation from the problematic, production-impeding idea that lust fundamentally motivates Don Juan, driving the Burlador from burla to burla down the easy-broad street to Hell. Sex is not, at any critical point in the play, this character’s (self-) defining objective.

The Burlador/garañón earns himself an awe-inspiring trip to Hell. That does not happen because inclinación predisposes him toward sexual transgression on a heroic scale and he proves tragically incapable of disciplining his archetypal drives. His damnation springs from everyday human resistance to self-examination, enacted on a mythic scale. Don Juan takes cover behind an arch allusion to astrology – the “destiny-in-the-stars inclinación that no one can resist” – to lure you into personal complicity with him in a burla you ought to deplore, preparing you to discover within yourself shocking resemblances to the Burlador. A new art of re-creating comedia’s performance impacts – its character objectives, strategies, and through-lines – is urgently necessary.

There’s one more step in the “Dislocation” story before “New Ways to Play Don Juan” can spring into view. Replicating the pattern that Conspectus used to crack the code for inclinación can move translation toward a new understanding of the Burlador’s modus operandi. The same process of:

- identifying a representative site,
- applying, to that critical juncture in the dramaturgy, techniques for character analysis and production conceptualization, and
- extracting results that speak to the central performance mechanisms of the title role

will Decode Don Juan’s characteristic strategy for shaking what he wants out of his world.

As in the case of inclinación, Conspectus makes it possible to identify a pivotal site for figuring out how Don Juan goes after what he wants. Here, I analyze the Burlador and Tan largo’s code-setting opening scene, historically a
queasy place for putting the play into English, and still an active problem for producing the play in North America today. As with inclinación, Conspectus inquiry into this site extracts performance information that definitively displaces sex as a central performance mechanism for the first Don Juan. In this instance, “textual analysis and argumentation” join with a consideration of “comparable scenes” and “situational analogues” to clarify how Don Juan characteristically pursues his goals – his character strategy. As Decoding inclinación cleared the air for translating the Burlador’s character objective more stageworthily, so Decoding structural parallels between the Duchess Isabella and Doña Ana breathes new life into transmitting the protagonist’s performance mechanisms into English.

Performance versions of the first Don Juan play in English repeatedly suggest staging sex as the way to kick this comedia off with a bang.\textsuperscript{12} Introducing Don Juan in flagrante may grab contemporary audiences’ attention, but it does so at the cost of making sexual conquest the Burlador’s defining strategy for getting what he wants from his world. This is especially problematic in the light of the playwriting’s insistence that the comedia’s initial burla [adventure] features no sexual contact whatsoever.

Two forms of evidence lay out the case for a sex-free first scene:

- the point of attack selected for the play’s first speech (a site for another adventure with Pequigney’s strategy of “textual analysis and argumentation”), which sets the scene’s performance tone as metatheatrical rather than carnal, and
- the structural parallel that the playwrighting establishes between the inciting incident and a second, subsequent burla (a site for Pequigney’s strategy of “comparable scenes and ... situational analogues”), which characterizes both interactions as emphatically non-sexual.

In both printings of the comedia’s first moment, the dramaturgical point of attack is set by the script’s inaugural verb, salir. In Spanish, salir is the verb that theater people have used for centuries to direct one another to “enter” – the technical term for embarking on a dramatic encounter, not ending it. So when the Duchess Isabella instructs Don Juan (disguised as her fiancé Octavio/Otavio)
to perform the action of *salir*, her dialog creates a sense of anticipation, of something critical about to happen, rather than glancing at a just-completed consummation or starting the play in the wake of a climactic coupling.

This calculatedly metatheatrical, *in medias res* point of attack sets a supra-sexual tone for the *comedia*’s first moment. You can hear these tonal markings in the first words recorded for performing the play, reproduced below. Stage directions and dialog for getting the *Burlador* up and running stand in the left-hand column; the code for launching *Tan largo* as a live-theater experience gets reprinted on the right:

*Salen don Iuan Tenorio, y Isabela Duquesa.*

**Isab.** Duque Octavio, por aqui podrás salir mas seguro.

**[Enter Don Juan Tenorio and Duchess Isabela]**

**Is.:** Duke Octavio, this way: you can make your entrance most safely over here.]

(Fernández 17)

*Salen Isabela Duquesa, y don Iuan Tenorio de noche*

**Isab** Salid sin hazer ruydo, Duque Otauio. *d. Iu.* El viento soy.

**[Enter Duchess Isabela and Don Juan, at night]**

**Is.:** Make your entrance without making any noise, Duke Otavio.

**Ju.:** Just a passing gasp ... that’s me.

(Fernández 63)

In a play which builds its most famous performance effect around a self-referential *coup de théâtre* – a Statue that stonily acts out the role of a Dinner Guest – the self-conscious theatricality built into this first moment is important evidence for Decoding the action. Isabela’s high-profile *salir* puts the stress in the opening scene on stage-savviness, not sex.¹³

Nowhere in the course of the conversation between Isabela and Juan is there the slightest hint that these two people have just had sex together, forbiddenly, for the first time. On the contrary, everything they say reinforces *salir*’s impression that the play’s point of attack *precedes* sexual contact (and, in fact, strategically forestalls it). The *Burlador* expresses a breathless concern for maintaining the rendezvous’ security. *Tan largo* spells out the fact that
unauthorized entry into the place where the Duchess is taking the Don constitutes a capital crime. In neither case would sexual intercourse before the first speech heighten the dialog’s socio-political tension. In fact, coitus as a fait accompli would make the Duchess’ caution look silly. As an overture to physical intimacy, hammering out hard-ball conditions for contact yet to come, her lines are cliffhangers. As disingenuous afterglow to sex, the same lines perform a stale stereotype of self-rejuvenating virginity.

No imperative driven by “textual analysis and argumentation” finds sexual activity central to the Burlador’s strategy in the opening scene. Despite all textual implications to the contrary, however, Conspectus shows translation after translation centering the performance of the Burlador and Tan largo’s first scene around sex. This tactic becomes even more problematic in the light of the “comparable scenes and … situational analogues” that spin off of the inciting incident.

The most telling of these “comparable scenes and … situational analogues” surfaces at the structural center of the comedia, where the Burlador explicitly repeats the Duchess’ burla on a Doña in Seville. This repeat burla records internalized stage directions for performing the comedia – directions which emphatically instruct players to find a more complicated character strategy than sexual conquest for acting the title character. The performance score dictates a secondary role for sex in the first Don Juan’s characterization two ways:

- by clearly structuring Ana as a performance echo of Isabela, and
- by explicitly stating that the burla with Ana involves no sex.

The structural parallel between Ana and Isabela – the instant replay of the Duchess in the Doña – is a prominently-stressed element of dramaturgical design in the Burlador and Tan largo. It earns a high-profile mention in the dialogue, where Don Juan equates Ana’s burla with Isabela’s as he guarantees his audiences: “Gozarela, viue Dios, / con el engaño, y cautela / que en Napoles a Isabela” [As God is my witness, I’ll get you all a good belly-laugh out of Ana in Seville, the same slick way I gave you world-class jollies out of Isabela back in Naples. Just sit back, relax, and play along] (Fernández 37). Like dramaturgical ultrasound, the situational echo sets off resonances deep beneath the script’s
linguistic skin, in the nerve centers of the play’s performance spine. Don Juan holds up the same seductive mirror to both *damas* [leading ladies]. He reflects their carbon-copy conviction that they can break rules with impunity, and takes on the persona of each woman’s Dream Man.¹⁶

No less high-profile is the play’s emphatic claim that the *burla* with Ana is devoid of any sexual content whatsoever. In the grip of the Stone Guest’s hand, holding onto Hell’s doorjamb, Don Juan claims “A tu hija no ofendi, / que viò mis engaños antes” [I did no damage to Doña Ana, since she saw right through my disguise] (Fernández 93, 59). In the wake of the Burlador’s disappearance, and in the presence of the play’s most powerful people, eyewitness-to-damnation Catalinón repeats the assertion that the “second Isabela’s” *burla* contained no sexual consummation,¹⁷ passing down this central fact of the play as Don Juan’s last words:

```
muriò, mas diciendo antes
que a doña Ana no ofendió,
que le conocieron antes.
...
diciendo antes que acabasse,
que a doña Ana no devia,
honor, que lo oyeron antes
del engaño.
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[Don Juan died, but *first* he said he’d never known Ana in the Biblical sense, since she’d known who *he* was too fast for that. ... That was the big exit line in his curtain speech, telling the world Miss Ana’s still a virgin. They saw through his play-acting before anything could happen, don’t you know.]

(Fernández 94, 60)

The fact that sex was never central to his character strategy stands as the Burlador’s last will and testament.

In structure and in statement, then, the playwriting links the Duchess Isabela to the Doña Ana, repeatedly, explicitly, and emphatically. The parallelism in their dramaturgical function implies parallels in the activity and outcome of
their contact with Don Juan. Staging sex in the opening moment of the play doesn’t make this link more playable. On the contrary, it blurs the two damas’ [leading ladies’] organic connection as Neapolitan aristocrat and her civil-servant Sevillian Echo. Pressuring sex into the play’s opening moment, in fact, warps the comedia’s structure, and skews the characterization of a whole series of central players.

The first burla in the Burlador and Tan largo energetically displaces sex as the Burlador’s primary performance strategy. “Textual analysis and argumentation” applied to the inciting incident’s dialog makes it clear that no sexual activity takes place at this defining moment in the dramaturgy. Moreover, the structural echoes of the opening scene that the comedia stages underscore the fact that the potential for sex in the inciting incident was never realized. “A plot rich in situational analogues” conclusively points to this critical rivet in the first scene’s framework: the potential for sex is there, but no sexual contact occurs in this comedia’s initial, code-setting episode. By clarifying this element of the play’s construction, Conspectus solves a problem that has plagued putting Don Juan onstage in English since the day Thomas Shadwell first attempted it in 1676 (see Mandel 165-250).

Arguing from “comparable scenes” makes another revolutionary perception about the Burlador possible: sex is completely immaterial to a burla’s success. Don Juan never equates “scoring” sexually with performing his role brilliantly. Manifestly, the Burlador considers the burla with Duchess Isabela a coup worth repeating with Doña Ana. He rates his engaño [bait-and-switch] with both women as “Estremado” [awe-inspiring], entertainment that’s qualitatively out of this world, since it’s worthy of celebration in song to entertain his Other-Worldly Guest at dinner (see Fernández 37, 79; 53, 91). As far as the Burlador is concerned, the absence of coitus from a burla’s performance mechanism devalues it not one iota, in this world or the next (see Fernández 59, 93-94).

The play’s first scene and its structural echoes make two propositions about the Burlador irrefutably clear, then:

- Don Juan performs the burlas with Isabela and Ana without performing sexually; and
Don Juan considers the performance of these *burlas* a resounding success – fame-making, definitive contributions to his identity as Burlador. There is only logical conclusion to Decoding the *comedia*’s first scene: sexual performance (conquest, rape, coitus, possession, physical satiation, nookie, another notch in his bedpost) is *not* Don Juan’s strategy for getting what he wants, *not* his defining performance mechanism.

Decoding the sex life of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*’s first scene uncovers a vigorous new picture of Don Juan in operation – a Burlador who pursues his agenda as the world’s most successful seducer through a *modus operandi* very different from sexual conquest. In fact, this Don Juan performs his role of embodying *burlar* by employing the supremely actorly strategy of mirroring the subjects of his *burlas*, reflecting their forbidden desires right back at them. This is a revolutionary discovery in cracking the *comedia*’s performance code.¹⁹

In “Location and Dislocation,” Conspectus has cleared the way to new ways of performing the Burlador by equipping translators of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* with a double-edged solution to the longstanding problem of Decoding Don Juan’s sex life. One edge of the solution serves to *locate* sex decisively within performance text. By aiming Pequigney’s “method of inquiry” at Catalinón’s serial invocations of *forçar*, for example, Conspectus has shown translators powerful ways to place sex onstage in the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*: by slotting it into a *supporting* role (just like the role played by the *gracioso* who delivers the *forçar* speeches), a role which advances the plot by *responding* to major developments in the action as superior forces in the play throw their weight around (as Catalinón responds to superior forces when he reacts with *forçar*), and a role which enriches performance by *adding spice* to important turning-points (as each of Catalinón’s *forçar* speeches spices a pivot-spot in the plot).

The second edge of Conspectus’ double-edged solution serves to *dislocate* sex from places where it has no business taking over in performances of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*. For instance:
Conspectus compellingly displaces sexual conquest as the Burlador’s *defining character objective* by applying Pequigney’s technique of “textual analysis and argumentation” to Don Juan’s *inclinación* speech.

And Conspectus revealingly displaces sexual activity as Don Juan’s *functional character strategy* by aiming Pequigney’s study of “comparable scenes and ... situational analogues” at the *comedia*’s first scene.

In a dramaturgical universe where Don Juan stands for irresistible libidinal allure cut short by divine intervention, all the women risk reduction to helpless victims, all the men run the danger of dwindling into hopelessly outclassed also-rans, and the Statue looks perilously like a one-note emissary from a God so picayune as to concern himself exclusively with what happens between people’s legs. In the wake of Conspectus’ action, locating and dislocating sex in the first Don Juan’s stage life, ways to play the Burlador that are better than sex are free to rise up and reinvigorate translation.

**New Ways to Play the Burlador**

What’s better than sex to bring the Burlador back to life – a livelier wire for electrifying his performance? With sex decisively displaced from the first Don Juan’s character objective, character strategy, and character spine, it’s possible to see:

- The character objective that motivates Don Juan, spurring him into action more irresistibly than a yen for sex, is *seduction*. What turns him on is the process of luring self-deceivers into acting on the lies that they tell themselves. He gets his jollies by making self-deceivers’ secret farces into public shows. Seduction can incorporate sexual elements if it needs to, but it’s always much more than a sexual activity for him.

- The character strategy that advances Don Juan’s agenda, marking his progress through the world of the play more indelibly than a world series of sexual conquests, is *mirroring*. What gets him what he wants is the process of irresistibly reflecting the trickiness of his slick “victims” right back at them, seducing them by expertly echoing their own self-talk.
The character spine that weaves Don Juan’s desires and history together, generating more pizzazz and performance impact than a hellfire-and-damnation sendoff for sexual transgression, is identity-testing. What carries him seamlessly from the beginning, to the middle, to the end of his story is the process of trying out new constructions of identity, filling roles so full that he splits them open and sloughs them off, challenging limits, reaching for more exalted states of being.

With the specter of a garañón who leads with his gonads firmly out of the picture, it’s possible to see seduction, mirroring, and identity-testing all over the Burlador and Tan largo, directing performers toward vibrantly supra-sexual realizations of the first Don Juan.

Mirroring and identity-testing map out performance directions for the Burlador that are wonderfully promising for US actors and strikingly different from the Ladykiller’s profile. I focus this brief exploration of extra-sexual character Decoding on how the Burlador and Tan largo build mirroring and identity-testing into Don Juan’s performance score, and ways that translators can recover that liveliness for re-production in the US today. First, I map the impressive range of Don Juan’s function as a mirror by examining his interactions with two women (Isabela and Tisbea/Trisbea) and one man (Don Gonzalo). Decoding the tenacity and theatricality of the Burlador’s mirroring strategy (magnificently foregrounded in Tan largo) revolutionizes translation of his duel with Gonzalo. Then, I touch three highpoints in the Burlador’s play-long identity quest – his self-presentation as “v n (h) o m b r e s i (n) o m b r e” in the opening dialog with Isabela, his assumption of the role of “Burlador” as he returns to Seville, and his ambition to transcend the role of “Burlador” in his courtship with the Statue. Decoding the electricity and connectivity of the Burlador’s spine (identity-testing, again enhanced by testimony from Tan largo) revolutionizes translation of his identity transitions, particularly his response to the touch of the Statue’s hand.

Don Juan consciously performs himself as a mirror, reflecting the character flaws in each of the people for whom he plays the Burlador/garañón. Viewed in this light, Don Juan enacts temptation incarnate. He’s irresistible.
because he mirrors precisely the form of indulgence that the person being
tempted secretly loves to indulge in. That’s why the *comedia* calls its protagonist
*Lucifer* at the point in the play where he explicitly steps into the role of a *lisonjero*
[a flattering wish-fulfiller] (Fernández 43, 84). Rising to his definitive
performance as Burlador – “La burla mas escogida / de todas ha de ser esta”
[Watch this closely, then try it at home: the choicest *burla* operation of all time!
Guaranteed!] (Fernández 46, 86) – Don Juan takes on the identity of the *homo omnia ad voluntatem loquens* [the human who whispers in your ear everything
you want to hear] which Covarrubias hears springing from the root “lusingero”
(don’t miss the echo of “Lucifer;” Covarrubias 769). In the *comedia*’s internal
performance vocabulary, then, the Burlador perfects Seduction by becoming the
perfect Reflection of hidden corruptibility.

Don Juan’s is the voice fluidly remolding itself “siempre a gusto de nuestro
paladar, alabándonos lo que hazemos o dezimos, aunque sea malo y contra razón
[always pitched precisely to our private palate’s taste, putting a positive spin on
the things we do or say, even when they’re bad or crazy] (Covarrubias 769). The
Burlador markets something people want so much they’ll buy, even though their
own better judgement tells them that they’re buying into a pipe dream, falling for
a ruinous delusion, applying for an exemption from responsibility that, exercised
by everyone, would unmake the world. The Burlador/*garañón* offers people who
would like to appear above temptation, free rein to act out their secret desires,
without the nagging fear of incurring public consequences.

Don Juan’s mirroring brings to the stage much more than a general
fulfillment of a fantasy that macho males are supposed to desire (i.e., a *garañón-
ish* freedom from all sexual restraint). The Burlador performs the archetypal
action of those *lisongeros* who, in the words of Benito Remigio Noydens (the
1674 expander of Covarrubias’ *Tesoro*), “abren la senda al engaño y es su fin despeño y precipio” [pave the way for people getting the wool pulled over their
eyes – and the result of that is a big trip-up and a mighty downfall] (Covarrubias
769). In the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*’s performance score, Don Juan enacts
precisely the character-specific wish-fulfillments that trip up the particular
disreputable desires harbored by each of the play’s self-proclaimed bastions of respectability.

For instance, the Burlador/garañón shapes the play’s first scene by playing on Isabela’s high-handed assurance that she lives above the law. He adjusts his behavior specifically to reflect her secret self-image as a privileged political insider who’s immune to prosecution. That’s why the Duchess’ engaño comes to public notice en palacio – a circumstance that Tan largo shoves downstage center in the inciting incident (see López-Vázquez 1990, 159-60) – in order to highlight the spectacle of an aristocrat fooling herself into getting caught fooling around in public by assuming that she’s foolproof. Don Juan’s self-presentation as “vn hombre sin nombre” [Mr. No-name] in the burla [the fooling] of Isabela satirically mirrors the exemption from incriminating identification that the Duchess thought she enjoyed.

Similarly, Don Juan seductively reflects Tisbea/Trisbea’s sadistic enjoyment of debasing of people in love, especially people in love with her. That’s why Tan largo prefaxes her capitulation to the man she calls her caballo griego [Trojan horse] (López-Vázquez 1990, 175) with Don Juan’s striking promise to humiliate himself, to play the masochistic suppliant for her scorn:

En tu casa estoy,
y estimo ser más en ella
un humilde pescador,
mereciendo tu favor
y tu mano hermosa y bella,
que las riquezas mayores
que el mundo puede ofrecer.
[I’m living in your house, and I think it’s a greater thing to take the role of a humble fisherman here, working my way up in your goodwill, hoping for a cuff from your beautiful, shapely hand, than the grandest riches the world can offer.]
(López-Vázquez 1990, 181; Fernández 72)

The Burlador reels Tisbea/Trisbea in by theatrically mirroring her own sense of special privilege. He absorbs the picture of herself that she radiates in private –
the claim to a unique “exemption” from love-toils that she confesses in soliloquy to the audience, and the secret sense of entitlement to “tyrannically entertain myself at the expense of the love-smitten” that Tan largo pulls into the foreground of her psyche (see Fernández 68) – in order to reflect that irresistible image of herself in action right back at her.

The *comedia* goes out of its way to make Don Juan’s role as mirror to these women’s character flaws playable in concrete terms. Nor is the Burlador/garañón’s reflective function limited to female characters. In act two alone, Don Juan plays the mirror-image game with at least four flawed males:

- He reflects Octavio/OTavio’s penchant for pursuing auto-erotic pleasures (passing themselves off as ascetic self-denial).
- He acts out a looking-glass copy of the Marqués de la Mota’s plan to steal another man’s fiancée (respectably cloaked as good-natured frat-boy fun designed to save a friend from boredom).
- He plays back Don Gonzalo’s preference for bloodlust over blood loyalties (concealed inside a dazzling suit of honor armor).
- And he models Gaseno/Gazeno’s unabashed self-aggrandizement (doing business behind the thin veneer of making his darling daughter’s dream wedding come true).

The reflection of Don Gonzalo is theatrical dynamite – a revolutionary recalibration of what happens in a high-stakes crux of the play.

Painfully aware of the duel’s importance – it marks the moment where Don Juan creates his own Nemesis – translators have gingerly tried to spice up what reads like a painfully flat and anticlimactic attempt at action-drama. O’Brien makes the duel a dirty fight; in the *Rogue of Seville*, Don Juan says “This is how I die” and then “(Stabs DON GONZALO),” putting an interestingly anti-heroic twist on the situation and the characters (O’Brien 107). Derek Walcott recontextualizes the clash as a Caribbean stickfight; in the *Joker of Seville*, Galt MacDermot’s calypso music underscores the duel with a rhythmic call-and-response chant, then punctuates its outcome with a stately dirge (Walcott 83-86, MacDermot lead sheets 44-46). Readers of *Tan largo*, the second printing of the *comedia*, which was rediscovered in the late 19th century and remains largely
unknown today, can see playwriting pouring a different kind of performance power into the duel.

_Tan largo_ stages the duel as the ultimate payoff in double-mirror exercises. Don Juan has breached Gonzalo’s defenses in the guise of Gonzalo’s nephew and Ana’s would-be fiancé, the Marqués de la Mota. The Burlador’s impersonation of the Marqués has been coached by Mota in person, stressing precise physical mirroring of voice and body language (see Fernández 40, 81). To ensure that the _burla_ lives up to its advance billing as “Estremado,” Gonzalo is a highly theatricalized character, a _barba_ who shamelessly milks the “garrulous old geezer” side of his role to pad his part (see Fernández 27-29).21

This duel is not about plying swords with death-dealing skill, but about mirroring identities with death-defying intensity. Translation that transmits the mirroring can revolutionize this moment with new ways to play the Burlador:

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DON JUAN   Déjame pasar.
DON GONZALO ¿Pasar?
             Por la punta desta espada.
DON JUAN   Oye.
DON GONZALO No me digas nada.
DON JUAN   Escucha.
DON GONZALO No hay que escuchar, que ya he sabido lo que es con esas voces que han dado.
DON JUAN Tu sobrino soy, que he entrado aquí.
DON GONZALO Mientes, que el Marqués de la Mota, mi sobrino, tan grande traición no hiciera. Mi honor viva. ¡El traidor muera autor de tal desatino!
DON JUAN   El Marqués digo que soy.
DON GONZALO Pues si eres el Marqués, piensa que es en ti mayor la ofensa,
y más ofendido estoy.
¡Muere, traidor!

[DON JUAN: Let me cross –
DON GONZALO: Cross? The point of this sword will open
you an exit straight to Jesus, friend.
DON JUAN: Friend, Roman Catholic, countryman …
DON GONZALO: Don’t you put on a show for me.
DON JUAN: … lend me your ears!
DON GONZALO: Don’t even start that razzle-dazzle,
’cause I already know exactly what you are: I
heard the lady screaming loud and clear.
DON JUAN: OK – I’m your nephew!
That’s why I made this dramatic star entrance.
DON GONZALO: You’re a liar. My nephew
the Marqués de la Mota would never do
anything that dirty and low-down. Throwing
mud on my family name?
That’s more disgusting than Fear Factor!
Sillier than The Young and the Restless! I hope
the person who thought up such a ridiculous
Broadway extravaganza dies like a dog!
DON JUAN: Read my lips! I – am – the Marqués!
DON GONZALO: Fine. Then think this over,
Smartypants. Your being the Marqués makes it
worse – a bigger insult to the family, meriting a
swifter backhand from your uncle. Die, traitor!
Die like a bitch, you dog!]

(López-Vázquez 1990, 207; for the metatheatrical implications of
passar, see Covarrubias 855 and Fernández 39; for a Golden Age
play using autor in its theater-jargon sense of “actor-manager,” see
Cervantes’ metatheatrical satire El retablo de las maravillas,
Morley 144-46)
Tan largo re-imagines the fight scene as a continuation of Don Juan’s impersonation of the Marqués de la Mota. This strikingly metatheatrical staging represents an enormously useful addition to the Burlador’s performance tradition. Conceived as the insistent finale to a burla in progress rather than a brand-new departure into capa y espada action-adventure, this duel erects the Dead Man who will carry Don Juan’s identity exploration to its grand finale on the firm foundation of the Burlador’s chief character strategy: mirroring.

The Burlador and Tan largo equip their lead character with an unsettling impact that’s better than sex. Don Juan performs a mirror, to seduce people into a process of self-reflection. Interlocking mirror-moments drive the play’s performance score. These points of reflective impersonation strategize burlas, give concrete expression to seductive intent, and organically unify both the episodic plot and the supra-sexual characterization of its protagonist. They are eminently capable of working on many levels at the same time.

The Burlador/garañón characteristically performs himself as a mirror, seductively reflecting the longing to indulge forbidden desires back at people who secretly harbor those desires. Since sexual adventure describes a facet of the forbidden self that many mirrored characters long to set loose, Don Juan’s career as Seducer intersects with Sex. The more clearly you see the Burlador and Tan largo using sex to oil its central dramaturgical engine of seduction, however, the less likely you are to confuse or equate those forces. Mistaking Seduction for Sex-Drive creates major obstacles to re-creating the comedia’s performance experience (witness Kidd’s Ladykiller). Sexual domination – a transaction implied by the recurrence of such verbs as gozar [to enjoy, including physical enjoyment] and forçar [to overpower, including sexual mastery] – doesn’t begin to describe the Burlador/garañón’s progressively more disturbing relationship with his fellow characters. These persistent, disruptive, and performance-shaping connections are forged through Don Juan’s role as a mirror, an unflattering but wholly frank reflection of his world.

Re-creating the dialogic mirror-strategy that makes the Burlador seductive becomes a primary aim, a fundamental methodology, and an ultimate measure of success for translators preparing the first Don Juan for re-production onstage.
Clearly Decoding the multiplicitously mirroring, sassily back-talking, provocatively (self-) reflective character mechanism that makes the Burlador “work” onstage will make the role come alive in performance, and re-produce its performance vigor in terms that can tickle ears, stimulate imaginations, and empower stagings today. Better than sex (more performable, more connective, more theatrical), mirroring Decodes the first Don Juan’s still-new art of staging a character strategy.

The love of reinventing himself unifies Don Juan’s mission, connecting his movement from mirror-image to mirror-image, making all the mirroring parts of the same clear character arc. Delight in concealing, revealing, and remaking his own identity is the central nerve-center that coordinates this character’s progression from inciting incident to ultimate climax, articulating and accelerating his development along a single performable character spine. A passion for hitching his star to higher callings, and an unshakable faith that he’ll always have time to test another identity position – the overconfidence that underwrites his signature catch-phrase “¡Qué largo me lo fiáis!” [There’s a sucker born every minute. Next!] – is the core trait in his character that irresistibly leads him to Hell.

That’s why the role’s supreme payoff moment – Don Juan’s damnation – grows out of the character’s most adventurous identity excursion: the ambition to play “first man in the world to shake hands with Death without shaking in his boots” (see Fernández 54, 92). That’s why the ex-Burlador, abandoning burlas to build himself a higher identity bracket, leaves riddles behind when he commits himself to meeting the Living Dead-Man on a whole new plane of self-performance: “Huy de ser conocido, / mas ya me tienes delante, / di presto lo que me quieres” [When you died the first time, I was playing a different person. I had to leave the scene to keep from breaking character and breaking up a famous burla in the making. Things are different now. This is a whole new me – all here, all yours, to become whatever you might want me to be, to play whatever role you can dare me to play, ready for anything] (Fernández 58, 93).

That’s also why the identity positions that the Burlador adopts trigger seductive reflections of every character he encounters except himself. It makes
dramatic sense for a strongly-written character’s motivation to connect to his spine, and for a stageworthy role’s performance strategy to express its throughline. As the Unbroken Line connecting Don Juan’s first moment to his last in the Burlador and Tan largo, identity exploration organically yokes the Burlador’s fascination with mirroring others (his character strategy) to his delight in seduction (his character objective), in ways that actively forestall his engaging in self-reflection (a failure that feeds his story’s climax). His identity quest (his through-line) carries him irresistibly through downfall’s doorway as he strides toward the threshold of greatness.

Exploring a riddle-full of constantly shifting identity possibilities diverts Don Juan from probing his own ser [fundamental makeup], from ever fully answering the question “A cielo, quien eres hombre?” His reflective talent catches Isabela in her own love of intrigue (see Fernández 63); fires Tisbea/Trisbea’s ice by treating her with calculated coldness (see Fernández 30, 72); acts out Ana’s contempt for patriarchy in a shocking parricide (see Fernández 37, 79); and dazzles Aminta/Arminta by shining her own visions of social grandeur back in her eyes (see esp. Fernández 88). But this superlative mirror’s through-line carries him lightly around the edges of his own soul rather than deep into the heart of corrective self-reflection.

The challenge of seducing others ends up seducing him. He gets completely inside identities played out by men as well as women, without ever unlocking the secret of his own humanity. This is markedly ironic in a play that’s strongly marked by irony. The character who launches an identity quest with his first conversation onstage never comes to know himself. The playwriting makes the most of the irony, peppering the script with frequent identity checkpoints. Don Juan moves through at least three major identity cycles in the course of the play, a different persona absorbing most of his interest in each act.

The checkpoint that launches Don Juan’s identity agenda in act one is oblique and open-ended, and the answer it elicits holds the key to the title character’s through-line. Duchess Isabela asks a question that unlocks a whole Pandora’s box of possibilities: “A cielo, quien eres hombre?” [What’s your place in the universe, fellow human?] (Fernández 18). And here, the Don’s reply is
correspondingly cosmic in scope, pluripotent in tone, and packed with concrete implications for performance.

“Quién soy?” the Burlador echoes, playfully mirroring Isabela’s question. “Who am I? Vn hombre sin nombre.” Or, to write his response in something closer to the riddling string of syllables, the multivalent mix of meaning options that a theater audience would experience, hearing his identity-testimonial live and onstage:

“I am ... v n (h) o m b r e s i (n) n o m b r e.”

(Fernández 18)

To an audience reading the play with its ears – and Golden Age terminology for attending the theater was (like Shakespeare’s) to “hear” a play – this cryptic self-christening contains a whole series of possible homonymic identities stacked on top of each other, ways the syllables spoken onstage could sort themselves out into sense and roll themselves onto the stage in action, all at the same time, including:

- a man without a name – i.e., Nobody
  
  *(un hombre sin nombre)*;

- a name without a man – i.e., an Empty Title
  
  *(un nombre sin hombre)*;

- a man without a man – i.e., the Un-Man, the Inhuman
  
  *(un hombre sin hombre)*;

- a man indeed – i.e., Everyman
  
  *(un hombre, si un hombre)*.

These intricately overlapping, interconnected, and mutually revealing identities, provocatively woven into the role by the ramifications of pronouncing “v n (h) o m b r e s i (n) n o m b r e” in performance, offer useful points of reference for exploring the Unbroken Line that the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* map to chart their title character’s progress through the play.

“A nameless Man” *(un hombre sin nombre)* describes the identity that Don Juan explores to become a Burlador to Isabela. Isabela creates a celebrity name for her companion in the first speech of the play, only to have him brutally quash her nomenclature in favor of an earthier, more honest and elemental
description of their relationship. She welcomes him to the forbidden precincts of the royal palace at night as “Duque Octauio, por aqui / podrás salir mas seguro” [Duke Octavius, over here! You can make a more effective entrance this way”] (Fernández 17). He proceeds, however, emphatically to divest himself of the title in which she’s invested every scrap of her social capital. He introduces himself to her King as “quien á de ser? / vn hombre, y vna muger” [Who does it always turn out to be? Some horny bastard and his bitch – some nameless Man, with some unidentified Woman] (Fernández 18, see also 63).

In making himself nameless, the Burlador plays the action of *burlar* to the hilt in this situation: he erases the name that Isabela has made for herself as a privileged, empowered woman-about-court, a rule-keeper. Interviewing the Duchess in the wake of her *burla*, the King of Naples makes it instantly clear that her contact with the Burlador has stripped away her accustomed access to the inner circles of her world. She’s not allowed to speak with a Duchess’ directness, nor even to look Majesty in the eye: “Calla que la lengua / no podrá dorar el yerro / que has cometido en mi ofensa: / ... / Ofensa a mi espalda hecha, / es justicia, y es razon / castigalla a espaldas bueltas” [Hush your mouth! Don’t even think your golden tongue can gloss over the black eye you’ve given yourself and this administration. You’ve fooled around behind my back; giving you the cold shoulder is paying you back, compassionately and conservatively] (Fernández 20, see also 65-66).

*Burlada* [played for a fool], Isabela becomes a nameless Woman, the emblematic fountain and cautionary fouler of every man’s *honor*. As the King exclaims in the unedited facsimile of the *Burlador*, “Ha pobre honor, si eres alma / del honor, porque te dexan / en la muger inconstante, / si es la misma ligereza?” [O boy! *Honor’s S.O.L. if you’re its guiding spirit. Poor honor, they’ve left you in the care of inconstant Woman – Woman, who’s fickleness incarnate”] (Fernández 19; cf. 65).

“A manless Name” (*un nombre sin hombre*) proceeds to make a second Troy of Tisbea/Trisbea’s world. The Pescadora’s identity rests on a high-profile foundation of loving No Man: “Porque en tirano imperio / viuo de amor señora, / que halla gusto en sus penas, / y en sus infiernos gloria” [Note to self: I live like
an Ottoman Empress, with love as my absolute slave – love that loves nothing more than putting people through absolute hell] (Fernández 23, see also 68). Loving nobody, the Pescadora marks herself as the perfect mate for a disembodied Idea.

Tisbea/Trisbea learns Don Juan’s official Name while she’s resuscitating him from shipwreck. She fires a question at his sidekick Catalinón – “Qvien es ese cauallero?” [Who is this unconscious VIP?] – and gets an earful in reply. In a statement bristling with more Power Names than a G-8 Summit guest list, Catalinón spells out this installment in the Burlador’s identity saga: “Es hijo aqueste señor / del Camarero mayor / del Rey, por quien ser espero / antes de seys dias Conde / en Seuilla, donde vá / y adonde su Alteza està, / si a mi amistad corresponde” [He’s the son, this Mr. Man is, of the chief Muckety-Muck of the Holy Roman Emperor himself, by whom I hope to become in less time than it took God to make the world the biggest Bigwig in Seville, where he’s going, and where His Ineffable Highness is currently shining, if we all see eye-to-eye on the matter] (Fernández 25, 69).

Curiously, the man behind this great Name is careful to remain incognito in his dealings with the Pescadora. That’s why the Burlador cautions Catalinón, well after the gracioso has revealed everything that anyone could ever want to know about his Name, “Si te pregunta quien soy, / di que no sabes” [If she asks you who I am, tell her you don’t know] (Fernández 26, cf. 70). This queer development in Don Juan’s identity quest does not marks a glitch in the performance score, does not record a “nod” in the playwriting, and doesn’t even represent a realistic performance-score offshoot of Don Juan’s being unconscious onstage during Tisbea/Trisbea’s inquest into his identity.23

The peculiar form of incognito that the Burlador plays out for this burla – “tell them you have no idea who I am” (Fernández 70) – is a conscious experiment in a play-long fascination with identity exploration. Here, Don Juan gleefully throws himself into the role of manless Name, dissociating his dazzling pedigree (the known and touted nombre) so completely from his performance as an unidentified man (the incognito hombre) that (in Tan largo’s terms) his
incognito hombre disappears into the persona of “vn umilde pescador” [a simple fisherman] (Fernández 72).

Dazzled by his Name, Tisbea/Trisbea misconstrues the distance between “amar” [to love] and “a mar” [to stampede toward the sea], syllable sequences that sound the same in Spanish, inducing reflection through a riddle (Fernández 25). Smitten by the Name to the exclusion of noticing the man, she ends up giving herself away to Don Juan’s “ser” [his brilliant social standing], without ever getting to know who he is (his hidden inner man; see Fernández 30, 72). The Burlador’s identity experiment as nombre sin hombre suits the dramatic situation to a T, and drives this burla to a dramatically harrowing conclusion (see Fernández 31-32, 49-50, 60, 72-73, 89, 94).

Contested identities – his incarnation as hombre sin nombre [nameless Man] in the inciting incident with Isabela, and his experiment as nombre sin hombre [manless Name] in the act-one climax with Tisbea/Trisbea – map Don Juan’s development across the arc of the first act. The dynamic identity contest packed into the Burlador’s character by “v n (h) o m b r e s i (n) n o m b r e” connects the dots in his career, making sequential, progressive, suspense-building sense of his character action throughout the play, but in the second act, his identity riddle takes second place to a brand-new identity title: “Burlador.”

People who are reading Don Juan’s first play today can gather that he fills the role of “Burlador” from the cast of characters page, before they dip into word one of the dialog. Audience members watching Don Juan’s identity shifts onstage in the 17th century, however, were more likely to describe themselves as ticket-holders to El convidado de piedra [The Statue Who Came To Supper] than patrons of the Burlador de Sevilla [The Seville Seducer]. El convidado de piedra, after all, is the title worked into the dialog of the Burlador’s denouement (where comedias frequently embedded their stage-names as sign-off signals), and records from the 1620s show the Statue taking top billing in the way the play was advertised for production during the Golden Age (see Fernández 60, López-Vázquez 309).

The burla with Ana, then, shows Don Juan growing into the role of “Burlador” – discovering this identity (as he will later outgrow and discard it).
No one knew from the outset of the play that “Don Juan” would come to equal “Burlador.” This fundamental fact of his character through-line sits well with provocative evidence (discussed below) that this comedia aggressively unsettles the cultural concept of “Burlador,” calling the definition of the term hotly into question. More apropos at present is the point that taking on the identity of “Burlador” is an actor inspiration that helps to map a supra-sexual character through-line for Don Juan.

The idea that Don Juan plays a “Burlador” is not introduced into the Burlador and Tan largo until the middle of the play. His conscious performance of this identity position begins in act two, with an hombre sin hombre [Un-Man] experiment. The first time that Don Juan calls himself a “Burlador” crops up almost 300 lines into the second act, just 30 lines after the term makes its debut in the drama’s discourse, near the script’s mathematical midpoint (see Fernández 36-37, 39, 78-79, 81). Realizing this development maps a central rotation point in the character’s spine, and a revolution in putting Don Juan onstage.

Acting out the identity of un hombre sin hombre [the Un-Man], the Burlador radically un-mans Doña Ana’s hidden, two-Man world. By the end of her burla, Ana is orphaned and widowed, her father dead, and her lover under sentence of death for her father’s murder. Don Juan has made her Manless.

Don Juan reaches the highest peak possible in the performance of “Burlador” – a burla to define the genre for all time (“La burla mas escogida / de todas;” Fernández 46, 86) – as he redefines his identity vis-à-vis Aminta/Arminta, the fourth and final dama [leading lady] of the comedia [three-act drama]. Inspired by the peculiar challenges inherent in Aminta/Arminta’s status as just-wed but not-yet-bedded, the Burlador becomes in her case un nombre sin nombre – a Name with no Name behind it, a seductively irresistible social fabrication.

Exploring this identity position connects act two to act three. Don Juan’s entrance into the world of Dos Hermanas [Two Sisters, a placename that highlights the parallel between Tisbea/Trisbea and Aminta/Arminta] throws his famous Name into high relief even during the overture to this definitive burla. He’s heralded as the “hijo del Camarero / mayor” [son of the King’s right-hand
man] and celebrated as a Big Name before ever he sets foot in the scene. He proceeds to pin the success of the burla with Aminta/Arminta on aggressively developing this theme, playing his strongest card by identifying himself as “noble Cauallero, / cabeza de la familia / de los Tenorios antiguos, / ganadores de Seuilla. / Mi padre, despues del Rey, / se reverencia, y se estima, / en la Corte, y de sus labios / penden las muertes y vidas” [I’m a really really Big Deal: came over on the Mayflower, own every hotel on Park Place, got a pipeline straight inside the White House. My Name is good for anything I choose to sign it to, from death sentences to lifetime appointments] (Fernández 47, 87).

As with Tisbea/Trisbea, so with Aminta/Arminta, the Burlador so adroitly exploits a dama’s lust for social heights that she joyfully abandons herself to a Name with no man attached to it. Aminta/Arminta trades up from Batricio’s “simpleminded sincerity” to Don Juan’s storied magnificence, and begins to identify herself as Doña [a Big-Name Bitch] (Fernández 47, 51, 90). But there is no “Name” in her new Name – the title that she ditched her groom to win is absolutely bogus – and the image of a Nobody from Nowhere performing herself as Countess of Nothing is so dramatically powerful that the comedia brings it onstage repeatedly (see Fernández 47, 57, 60, 88).

Like the multidimensional identity quest set off by “v n (h) o m b r e s i (n) n o m b r e,” Don Juan’s identity experimentation with “Burlador” does not end but does get superseded by a new identity interest. There is resonance aplenty in “Burlador” for a whole play. There are promising indications that the comedia’s identity project touched off a culture clash that enlivened the play’s performance in 17th-century Spain, and can re-invigorate its re-presentation in 21st-century US theaters. In his discussion of “BURLA,” Covarrubias documents an uncompromisingly dismissive, belittling, and condemning cultural understanding of what is meant by the term “Burlador.”

Three statements from the Tesoro clamor for quotation:

- First, Covarrubias defines an “Hombre de burlas” [a burla-maker] as “el que tiene poco valor y assiento” [a man who has little courage or discretion – a gutless wonder] (246).
Next, he proceeds to describe a live-wire, life-of-the-party, personality-plus kind of person as a “Burlón, el que es amigo de burlarse con otros, pero sin perjuzyzio” [Burlón is the name for someone who loves kidding around, but without putting anybody else in harm’s way] (247).

Then and only then, in the final sentence of his 50-line disquisition, does the ear-witness philologist turn his attention to “Burlador,” pegging this tipo [standard personality type] as “el engañador mentiroso, fementido, perjudicial” [a “Burlador” is a con man who’ll feed you full of lies, break every promise he makes you, and ruin everything you care about] (247).

Don Juan aggressively unsettles the cultural perception of “Burlador” that Covarrubias records:

The Burlador de Sevilla is most decidedly an “hombre de burlas,” but in sharp contradistinction to the playboy that Covarrubias describes as deficient in valor and assiento, Don Juan proves his intrepidity and resourcefulness, his worth and his worthiness, beyond the shadow of a doubt. (Valor, it should be noted, means both “value” and “valor,” and assiento invokes connotations ranging from “bottom” to “discretion.” Don Juan ultimately overachieves in all these areas.)

The first Don Juan’s burlas display the defining wit of a Burlón – the intellectual appeal, the playful inventiveness, the delight in poetic payoffs that hallmark the activities of an “amigo de burlarse con otros.” Precisely because of this charm, however, his burlas actually do more damage, attracting admirers, inspiring emulators, and making nonsense of the defining limits that Covarrubias imposes on a Burlón’s effect.

Tellingly, however (and this is where the comedia most decisively controverts the dictionary), the damage done by Don Juan’s burlas is of a strictly-targeted and strikingly purgative nature. He’s not the Devil incarnate, come to steal, kill, and destroy. He’s the finger of God, who lances festering secrets so the body politic can heal.

Don Juan lures liars, promise-breakers, and system-exploiters into confidence games that are custom-designed to expose their flaws to correction (engineering the perfect castigo [corrective action] for each crime). Telling lies,
he brings the truth to light. Breaking promises, he tests the tensile strength of fidelities. He doesn’t seize social valuables by force, in the style of the “Burlador” that Covarrubias defines. He extends special dispensations of social credit to people whose credit ratings are over-inflated, offering them the prospect of engaging in behavior that costs more than their lives are worth without having to pay the consequences. He sets up social idols to smash false images of themselves.

Clearly, this kind of a Burlador unsettles assumptions about social identity and cultural worth that were entrenched enough in 17th-century Spain to inscribe themselves into Covarrubias’ definitions without a hint of challenge. The conflict between the Burlador and Tan largo’s portrait of Don Juan and the character-sketch of a Burlador presented by Covarrubias, in fact, pinpoints a culture clash that is useful both for understanding and for performing the play. It foregrounds the contentious question, “What does it mean to be a Burlador?”

The Burlador de Sevilla’s own final answer to that question develops in act three, between two high-profile identity checkpoints, in response to the Statue’s touch. The playwriting lays out two identity checkpoints to guide this final identity incarnation through the climax of the play point by point – checkpoints that stand out unmistakably, even in a comedia riddled with identification interrogations. These two high-profile inquests into who’s who track Don Juan’s progress across the threshold of a new order of experience, where a creature from a decidedly different order of being joins the action onstage. The checkpoints introduce, and connect, the two instances of the Statue coming to Supper.

The first identity checkpoint is laid out more elaborately in the Burlador, where the Statue’s entrance sets off a double set of questions, reminiscent of Isabela’s interrogation of Don Juan. This time Don Juan poses the questions, and his respondent represents the most extraordinary identity position in the play.

*d. Iu.* Quien soys vos?
*d. Go.* Soy el Cavallero honrado
que a cenar as combidado.
[Juan: Who’s there?
Gonzalo: It’s me.
Juan: Who’s “me”?
Gonzalo: I’m the goddam Statue you invited to supper.]

(Fernández 52, cf. 90)

With this identity-check, the Burlador’s ultimate *burla* bears fruit. The Dead Man that he summoned up himself to seal the *burla* of the groom-switching bride – the last word in *burlar* – is now up close and personal with him, shaking him by the hand.

The touch of the Statue’s hand inspires in Don Juan a soliloquy that sets a radical new course for his explorations in identity:

*Quando me tomò la mano,*
*de suerte me la abrasò,*
*que vn infierno parecia,*
*mas que no vital calor.*

*Pero todas son ideas*
*que dà a la imaginacion*
*el temor, y temer muertes*
*es mas villano temor.*

*Si vn cuerpo con alma noble,*
*con potencias, y razon,*
*y con ira, no se teme,*
*quien cuerpos muertos temió?*

*Yré mañana a la Iglesia*
*donde combidado estoy,*
*porque se admire y espante*
*el mundo, de mi valor.*

[When he grabbed me – took hold of my hand, ... manhandled it, I could have sworn a flash of hellfire ran through me – something hot that made me break out in a cold sweat, like touching something ... un-dead. *(beat)* Listen to me, yammering away about “the bogeyman” like a kid scared witless by the special effects in a]
Freddy Kreuger movie! Hey, if a live man doesn’t scare you, walking around fully operational, able to track down the man who shot his Pa and shoot somebody back, why wet your pants over a night with the walking dead? Here’s what I’m going to do: Tomorrow night I’m headed straight to that church. I’ll play guest of honor at Mr. Dead Man’s dinner party, and I’ll show people the world over a Profile in Courage like they’ve never seen before!]

(Fernández 92, 54)

With this soliloquy – his most extensive interior monolog ever – Don Juan declares a wholly new goal for his identity-questing: from now on, he’s going to commit himself to exemplifying valor rather than perfecting burlar. He proceeds to back up his verbal declaration with solid action. He keeps his promise to turn up for a second date with the Statue, and even postpones a royally-sponsored marriage with Isabela to do it.

The Burlador’s policy on keeping promises was radically different from the new Don Juan’s. Standard operating procedure for the Burlador was to shake hands, then break faith. Every one of his burlas with damas calls for clandestine nuptials, and every one of those secret ceremonies features binding promises sealed by an exchange of handclasps (see Fernández 18, 30, 37, 47, 63, 72, 79, 88). The first handshake deal this character ever follows through on is his dinner date with El Muerto.

Keeping the date costs him something, too. The Duchess Isabela – succulently attractive, socially above him, strategically the spoils of his peerless talent for bringing new meanings to life in burlar – represents unadulterated advancement for the Burlador. In the wake of the new vision of himself awakened by the Statue, however, Don Juan loses interest in advancing his identity as “Burlador.” He’s looking for new worlds to conquer, new fame to win, new identities to inhabit.

Structurally underscoring this new departure, the second dinner date opens with an identity-inquest reprise – a second check-point to set the final direction for the role, a last chiropractic adjustment to the character’s spine. This time, Tan largo is the version that develops the inquiry more deliberately:
Sale el muerto.

d. Iu. Quien soys vos.
d. Gon. El muerto soy no te espantes,
    no entendi que me cumplieras
    la pa abra, segun hazes
    burla de todos. d. Iu. Me tienes
    en opinion de cobarde.
d. Gon. Si porque de mi huyste
    la noche que me mataste.
d. Iu. Hui de ser conocido,
    mas ya me tienes delante,
    di presto lo que me quieres.

[ (Enter the Dead Man.)
Don Juan: Who is that over there?
Don Gonzalo: It’s me.
Don Juan: Who the hell is “me”?
Don Gonzalo: I’m the Dead Man. Don’t get your panties in a
    twist, I’m just as surprised as you are. Never thought you’d
    keep a date with me, when you could put “breaking dates” on
    your resume as a special skill.
Don Juan: That’s all you see in me – a yellowbelly?
    scaredypants? spineless candy-ass? a dickless wonder?
Don Gonzalo: Son, you ran away the night you gunned me
    down. Couldn’t see your butt for dust.
Don Juan: I was impersonating your nephew. The role
    required me to skeedaddle away from danger like a scared
    rabbit. Now it’s me here with you, Papi, man to man, mano a
    mano. Just me, ready to take anything you’re ready to dish
    out.] (Fernández 93, cf. 58; gaps in the Spanish are
    reproduced per facsimile)
Like a caterpillar splitting open its chrysalis, Don Juan sloughs off “Burlador” to step into whole new worlds championing valor. He steps out of the identity implicit in un nombre, sí un nombre [the ultimate title-holder, Superburlador, the burla-maker to end all burla-makers]. He leaves that role behind to play another part to the hilt: un hombre, sí un hombre, where he represents every human being meeting the ultimate in human responsibilities face-to-face (i.e., facing up to self-knowledge, self-examination, and energetic identity exploration informing effective self-correction). Far from marking a rough juncture in the playmaking – what Oscar Mandel calls a join where, “cunningly though the invented episodes of Don Juan’s wicked life and the traditional tale of the Double Invitation are sewn together, the stitches show” (Mandel 42) – Don Juan’s change of tack in the dinner scenes represents a carefully plotted, breathtakingly effective climax to a play-long identity quest.

Decoding the final direction of Don Juan’s character arc makes revolutionary differences for performing the role. The ex-Burlador steps into the climax of the play leaving non- and super-human modes of being consciously behind him – not performing Un-Man or Super-Man, but with the stated aim of showing humans how to perform humanity. He dies to live up to his name – not the name of “Burlador,” an identity he outgrew with the first touch of the Statue’s hand, but the new name that feasting in the tomb will win for him, an identity celebrating valor’s manly fearlessness in the face of Death. The Statue’s judgement – “quien tal haze, que tal pague” – passes sentence not on Don Juan’s fascination with burlar (much less the fact that his burlas break sexual taboos), but on his human failure. Don Juan fails to focus his capacity for examining identities from the inside out onto the work of reforming himself, the work that in fact defines “humanity” and finally answers the question “Quien soy?” That’s what the Man of Stone means when he says, “Every man who does like this, goes the way of this Everyman.”

Don Juan’s character spine, it proves, is perfectly aligned with the spine of the play. In the final analysis, the Burlador and Tan largo’s principal character embodies un hombre, sí un hombre – a dramatically intensified portrait of Manliness – and does so by design. That’s why his final ambition is to exemplify
**valor**, the ultimate measure of a person’s worth in early 17th-century Spain (see Defourneaux 33, Calvo 89). In its overall impact, the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* impel people toward corrective self-examination – an urgent experiment in identity exploration – and do so by design. That’s why this *comedia* uses the most celebrated cultural value of its time (*valor*) to lure its leading character to Hell.24

Don Juan embarks on an identity quest that packs his role with surprises, textures his performance with specific connections to his world (onstage and off), and hitches his wagon to a star. He proves himself the greatest Burlador the world has ever known (redefining the term in the process), then leaves all that behind to become the most awesome exponent of *valor* known in this world or the next. That makes him irresistible.

What he never does, through all the play-long, plot-driving, character-defining arc of his identity explorations, is to reflect on Don Juan, to look into his own flaws, or to hitch his flashes of self-revelation to any active self-correction. On the contrary (as in the case of the *inclinación* speech), he hijacks self-knowledge to help him pull off hijinks in self-justification. That makes him damnable.

The Burlador/*garañón*/Don Juan acts out a breathtakingly vigorous and vital repertory of identity positions – the whole panoply of personæ packed into the riddle “Quien soy? v n (h) o m b r e s i (n) n o m b r e.” His most important impersonation is collective, the cumulative effect of inhabiting so many points of view without ever seeing himself more clearly. In fixing his focus on *other* people’s flaws, in refusing to follow the question of who *he* is to a full and effective program of self-reform, in letting his best intentions (¡*valor*!) lead him straight to Hell, the scene-partner that Don Juan ultimately mirrors most recognizably is every self-satisfied, complicit, and complacent human being in his audience. That makes him dynamically corrective.

Clearly, staging Don Juan’s sex life calls for new skills in translating stage language – arts that start with evidentially-based accuracy in Decoding vocabulary, but do not end there. Based on vocabulary evidence alone, for example, you could translate every one of Catalinón’s uses of *forçar* as “rape.”
Indeed (as you will recall), Synoptic translations of the *Burlador* unanimously find “raped women” the subject of the *gracioso’s* final *forçar* speech.

But sensitivity to the performance impact of the play today would never accept “rape” as a stageable translation for what Catalinón says with *forçar*. Today, “rape” means “sex submitted to in fear of your life,” and neither the *Burlador* nor *Tan largo* offers one shred of evidence that Don Juan’s behavior ever does, would, or could include forcing women or men (not to mention religious figureheads or animals) into having sex with him.

As Conspectus has conclusively demonstrated, the Burlador’s delight is in seduction – the thrill of luring people into compromising positions and then exposing them to public ridicule. Students of Don Juan at Bainbridge College would not even call that “date rape.” What they did call it, in words deeply imbued with potent, performable, and contemporary sexual vigor, was “screwing people over.”

“Screwing people over” provided my gaggle of South Georgians with a textually accurate, sexually tinged expression to capture what Catalinón means when he says *forçar*. “Screw over a tiger, screw over an elephant, screw over the preacher, screw your bosom buddy over, too!” they heard him exclaim in act two, to be followed up with “Screw over a Turk, screw over a Scythian!” and “What if all the women we’ve screwed over are waiting at the door for revenge?” in act three. For the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*’s audience at Bainbridge College in 2003, translating *forçar* as “to screw over” constituted a giant step toward serving up Don Juan’s sex life onstage with its dramatic juices still flowing.

Let me hasten to point out, however, that finding this particular Americanization for *forçar* was by no means the only step possible, and far from the only step necessary, in reproducing the performance impact of these speeches. I think Victor Dixon is right on the money when he asserts, “A word-for-word transcription cannot possibly encompass the complications and implications of the original, and its relationship to its linguistic and cultural context” (Dixon “Translating” 94).

Transmitting the performance impact of *forçar* does not depend on constructing a one-to-one correspondence between a verb in Spanish and a verb
in English, however accurately researched, well-chosen, and resonant that correspondence might be. Indeed, the problems posed by translating Don Juan’s sex life suggest that re-creating *comedia* in the US today requires re-conceiving the art of theater translation in ways that move fussing about “philological literalness” firmly out of the driver’s seat. Letting philology take charge of theater translation warps the reproduction of dramaturgical experience just as weirdly as letting sex drive Don Juan’s characterization distorts the contours of his role.

For all its torturous “fidelity” to transcribing words, Synoptic translation has failed to locate even the language of sex in the text of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* with any actable consistency. It’s time to re-think Synoptic translation’s basic tenets, absorbing forçar’s suggestion that faithfully re-creating dramatic effects requires fundamentally redirecting theater translation’s focus, away from painstakingly transcribing words onto pages, and toward dynamically reproducing complications, implications, and relationships onstage (see Pequigney 182-85).

An excellent step in that direction awaits translators who replace Synoptic strictures with Stereopticon perspectives. Exploring the Burlador’s world through the divergencies between *Tan largo* and the *Burlador* opens new identities for theater translators to try out, and forms the focus of “Re-coding Multidimensional Damas.”

1 *Tan largo* introduces a new term for Don Juan that’s loaded with implications for sexual transgressiveness – the term *garañón*, which means a jackass or stallion at stud, especially one who specializes in cross-breeding mares or jenny asses to father mules (mix-breed, legendarily stubborn animals who are themselves inter-special and therefore sterile). Catalinón identifies his master as a *garañón* three times in *Tan largo*, the third time with Don Juan’s enthusiastic endorsement (see López-Vázquez 1990, 195, 198, 204).

In *Tan largo*, then, the Burlador [the trick-puller, the inventor of artifices] also enacts “stud meat,” a “walking hardon.” He plays the dramatic embodiment of a noun that Covarrubias traces back to Hebrew verbs for “mixing sperm” and
“starting fights” – a term that Covarrubias brings directly into 17th-century social discourse with the remark, “Al hombre desenfrenado en el acto venéreo, especialmente si trata con muchas mugeres, suelen llamar garañón” [A man who puts no restraint on his sexual appetites, especially if he has relations with lots of women, is likely to be called a garañón] (628-29).

Conspectus can point to many translations that are not so blessed, where changes in how sex is acted out today make a script unstageably stodgy, or new wrinkles in how sex is talked about make a script unstageably silly. To cite an instance from across the Atlantic, consider Roy Campbell’s Trickster of Seville (1957). “Gay” no longer means “charmingly light-hearted” in America, but Campbell uses “gay” as a pivotal adjective to describe his title character. For people living in a world where “the gay agenda” is generating front-page news about the US Supreme Court decriminalizing homosexual conduct and mainstream US churches blessing same-sex unions, the wake-up call that Campbell’s Thisbe hopefully trills to her Trickster is gut-bustingly inapropos: “Noble young man, so handsome, gay, / And exquisite, wake up, I say!” (Campbell 248).

Closer to home, but no less outdated in tone, Walter Starkie’s Playboy of Seville (1964) runs hilariously afoul of changes in sex-code that sneaked into the culture after his translation went into print. A Tarragona where “those gay fishermen spend hours in song / And dancing,” for example, could definitely be the setting for a Tony Award-winning play in the US today, but it’s not likely to be a place where all the boys are eating their hearts out for “Thisbe” (Starkie 200-201, emphasis added). And when Starkie’s King Alfonso denies Duke Octavio the right to duel Don Juan, exclaiming “Don Juan is Lord of the Bedchamber and / My man, and chip off this most ancient block, / Mind you respect him” (Starkie 242, emphasis added) – well, those are howlingly funny lines, but for all the wrong reasons.

The Ladykiller stands as a sequel to Kidd’s Life’s a Dream, an English version of Calderón’s La vida es sueño published by the University of Colorado Press in 2004.
Certainly the sex in Lynne Alvarez’ Don Juan of Seville inspired very different responses from reviewers in New York City and Washington DC. Writing for *The New York Times*, Wilborn Hampton blasted *Don Juan of Seville*’s sexual frankness as performed in the Classic Stage Company’s New York premiere:

> The modest fisherwoman Tisbea, for example, is introduced as little more than a strumpet making lewd suggestions with her fishing pole and sensuously crawling all over the shipwrecked Don Juan when he washes onto her beach. As played by Kim Yancey, one must seriously question who is seducing whom. Tisbea’s chaste admonition to Don Juan, moments later, that “God exists and so does death” thus become ludicrous. (Hampton C3:5)

But neither Joe Brown nor Joseph McClellan, writing separately and sequentially for the *Washington Post*, found anything to cavil at in how *Don Juan of Seville* staged its “sex scenes” on the Source Theatre in DC. Brown notes, but does not fault, the production’s “bed-dominated set” (Brown D2). McClellan revels in the “experience” of “constant little shocks of *déjà vu* watching ‘Don Juan of Seville,’ … which moves the action up to modern times and indulges in levels of sexual explicitness that Tirso de Molina or Lorenzo da Ponte would never have dared to put on stage” (McClellan G6).

Even radical re-conceptions of the Burlador/garañón in the US have had to struggle in order to re-define themselves against Don Juan’s sex-delimited reputation. James Bierman’s magnificent recontextualization of Don Juan for El Teatro Campesino, for example, sprang from a clearly-articulated, dynamically-embraced mission “to Mexicanize the legend and to demonstrate through the play the Mexican attitude toward death and the reactions of Mexico to the restless colonial powers represented by Don Juan and his culture” (Bierman *Latin American Theatre Review*, 131). This represents an excitingly supra-sexual understanding of Don Juan’s character, provocatively in line with the satiric vision of the Burlador/Tan largo.
El Teatro Campesino proceeded to develop the project with a breadth appropriate to its artistic vision, adopting a strong collective process, a bold Día de los Muertos setting, a striking articulation of La Muerte as a character, and a unique rasquachi style [down-and-dirty “poor theater” esthetic] for generating the script. Even this firmly-grasped big picture of the play, however, and the intensely thought-provoking process that carried it toward production, couldn’t keep the focus on the protagonist from getting dragged towards sex-crimes.

As Bierman chronicles it,

El Teatro Campesino provided us with a workshop situation which was ideal for experimentation and for literally developing the script. The playwright, the composer, performers, designer, director – the entire ensemble participated in the workshop. ... As we pooled the contributions of the entire cast, we found ourselves organizing and editing a wealth of themes and ideas. Some of these were themes familiar to the work of El Teatro Campesino, such as the portrayal of the Mexican attitude toward death and the meeting of “indígena” culture with the Old World. Others brought us to new challenges. Not the least of these involved the roles of the women deceived and abused by Don Juan. We found ourselves depicting the scandalous exploits of a rapist, and killer, and not softening them behind the pretense that he was merely a great lover. Our Don Juan was both fundamentally repulsive and also human, and we were faced with the challenge of making apparent the humanity of those manipulated by him. The women in the company found a voice in the piece which was previously not appropriate to the material dramatized by the group. (Bierman *Latin American Theatre Review*, 133-35)

The challenges that confronted Bierman and the Teatro Campesino still stand, to harass any producer staging a sex-defined Don Juan. How do you sell a title character who’s “fundamentally repulsive” (a reaction to the Burlador that several members of the Ladykiller’s audience experienced, to their puzzlement...
and dismay)? When your protagonist’s range is limited to “the scandalous exploits” of either “a rapist, and killer,” or “a great lover,” what production choices can fill the character’s performance with multidimensional life?

It is worth noting that the same cultural climate which wants to seal Don Juan into solitary confinement as a sex criminal, can also see his dramatization as an occasion for the liberation of women. (Witness Bierman’s reference to “the women in the company” finding “a voice” in reviving the Burlador “which was previously not appropriate to the material dramatized by the group.”) But must the Burlador/Tan largo pay this steep a price – transforming its protagonist into the epitome of a ‘70s “male chauvinist pig” – for giving voice to feminist viewpoints?

6 Readers of modern Spanish will note how the Renaissance printing’s approach to diacritical markings increases the text’s teasing suggestiveness, hinting at counter-statements beneath what’s explicitly said. In modern Spanish, si [if] is distinguished from sí [yes] by an accent. In the Burlador and Tan largo, there’s no orthographic distinction between the words.

7 One of my goals in translating this pivotal soliloquy is to re-create the way that Don Juan’s role taps into the dynamism of sexual pursuit without getting trapped in the limitations of a character who can never grow any larger than his libido. Both this speech and Don Juan’s characterization are electric with sexual potential. But neither this speech nor its speaker’s characterization are defined by their sexual potential. Could a successful strategy for capturing this energy for staging today be to revel in the unabashed sexiness of the speech, while using that sexiness in the speech as a way of highlighting Don Juan’s supra-sexual interest in seduction, mirroring, and identity testing? This translation experiments with that question.

8 Indeed, Georgette Heyer’s Venetia (1958; a novel some writers of Regency Romances credit with reinvigorating the genre) opens with an arch reference to a “ravishment”: ‘A fox got in amongst the hens last night, and ravished our best layer,’ remarked Miss Lanyon. ‘A great-grandmother, too! You’d think he would be ashamed!’ (Heyer 5).
As in my translation of Don Juan’s speech to the audience about involving Aminta/Arminta’s dad in his daughter’s *burla*, a prime goal of my translation here is to re-create the energy that sexual references give the play’s language without falling into the trap of making the characters who speak the language sound like sex maniacs. The overtones of bestiality and sexual kink expressed in “bending a tiger to my yen” and “dominating a Dominican” are all there in *forçar*. What is most important about the verb’s usage, however, is that Catalinón uses it under extreme duress – when he’s being bent to Don Juan’s yen, a *gracioso* dominated by his *galán*. My translation tries to harness the speech’s sexual energy to the supra-sexual task of bringing Catalinón’s dramatic situation memorably to life.

In act one, for example, Don Juan shares a confidence with Catalinón as he puts the finishing touches on the *burla* of Tisbea/Trisbea, the *hermosa pescadora* [*the fair female who fishes*] from Tarragona. “El burlar / es hauito antiguo mio,” the Burlador confides: “the action of *burlar* fits me like my birthday suit” (Fernández 71, 30).

What is the Burlador exposing in this critical flash of self-definition? Does he mean he was just born to beguile? Is he confessing to an unquenchable lust to defile? How much physical lust, how much psychic curiosity drives his design to know the truth about Tisbea/Trisbea’s self-touted untouchability? How does sex shape the Pescadora’s *burla*, and how does this defining moment set the agenda for seduction in the play as a whole? Conspectus shows that Synoptic translators – see Campbell 257, O’Brien 95, Starkie 201, Oppenheimer 25, Edwards 63, and Alvarez 151 – can’t begin to say.

In act two, Don Juan turns directly to the audience to confide, “Seuilla a vozes me llama / el Burlador, y el mayor / gusto que en mi puede auer, / es burlar vna muger, / y dexalla sin honor” (Fernández 37, 79). He shares this confidence at a particularly pregnant moment in the plot, when the means to start a *burla* with Doña Ana the Comendador’s daughter have just magically fallen into his lap. Weighing his next step, what he *ought* to do at a point where all sorts of possibilities collide, the Smoothest Jokesmith in Civilization makes his audience
into co-conspirators, winking: “All the folks who’re in the know throughout the whole known world know this: ‘El Burlador’? That’s me, and the biggest kick I know of comes from pulling a burla on some babe – catching her with her panties down in public!”

What *gusto* drives Don Juan? Is his pleasure sex-based? Is he defining himself as a sex-fiend? Or does his delight in *burlar* have a gleefully extra-sexual, satirical basis? Does he passionately enjoy using the art of seduction (which includes sexual allure, but isn’t limited to sexual conquest) as a sounding-board for socio-moral weaknesses in the creatures (male, female, and otherworldly) he seduces? Could he see himself as hidden corruption’s corrective agent? And if that’s the case, isn’t it incumbent upon translation to make sure he says so, clearly and actively?

Again, at a critical juncture in the plot – at the moment when the *burla* with Doña Ana hangs in the balance, the same *burla* which leads to the duel with Don Gonzalo, which results in Gonzalo’s Statue coming to supper, which ends up with the Burlador going to Hell in the Dead Man’s hand-clasp – Synoptic translators just can’t say how much influence Don Juan’s libido has on his conduct. (See Campbell 269, O’Brien 103, Starkie 212, Oppenheimer 39, Edwards 93, and Alvarez 163.)

Ever the equal-opportunity Burlador, Don Juan embellishes Doña Ana’s *burla* with a side-*burla* on her fiancé, his bosom buddy the Marqués de la Mota. Juan accepts his pal’s offer to loan him a distinctive cape as a disguise for the evening, dons it, and proceeds – with Mota’s eager approval and with the benefit of Mota’s personal coaching – to use that cape as his (Juan’s) open sesame for entering Ana’s bedroom. As the cream of this jest is rising (in Don Juan’s exit speech, en route to Ana’s door), the Burlador confides to Catalínón, “El trueque adoro” [*Tan largo* reads “El trueco adoro”]: “I adore enacting the action of the verb *trocar*” (Fernández 40, 81).

According to Covarrubias, *trocar* is the verb where the plot of *Trading Places* lived during the Spanish Golden Age. Its derivative noun *trueco* meant “El cambio que se hace de una cosa con otra” [the exchange that you make trading
quid pro quo], as trueque still does in contemporary Spanish, where it’s lending Argentina’s 21st-century barter economy a formal name (see Covarrubias 981, Cassell’s 759, Nuevo 982). The root verb beneath both nouns takes on rich implications for staging the Burlador/Tan largo, especially in the reflexive, where (attests Covarrubias) “Trocarse uno, es mudarse de condición o parecer” [embodying trocar means to (ex)change your status or appearance (with someone else)] (Covarrubias 979).

Trocar is a verb tailor-made to express mirror-image impersonation, which is precisely the mechanism that Don Juan employs for the burla with Mr. Mota. Recapitulating blow for blow the brilliance of his act-one burla with the Duchess Isabela back in Naples (where he “passed” as Duke Octavio/Otavio to crash a romantic rendezvous), the Burlador becomes a perfect mirror of the Marqués’ condición o parecer at the climax of act two, and slips behind the façade of Doña Ana’s putative respectability on the strength of his trueco.

Surely, what Don Juan tells Catalinón that he adores at this pivotal juncture in the action, then, is the heady process of identity exchange, the thrill of status exploration, the adventure of carrying off a conditional impersonation, and the adrenaline-pump of playing with appearances. He means “I really get off on trading places,” “identity theft floats my boat,” and “Nothing feels as sweet as a sap loaning you his pointy-toed shoes so you can kick him in the keister!” The sex in the scene – and there’s sex a-plenty there, adding kick to the cape switch; Mota invites Juan to dresses up in the persona of “Marqués,” after all, to create a decoy to divert the anger of a cheated whore – is completely immaterial to the Burlador’s delight. What drives him is a quest to try on new identities, to experience new states of being. What empowers his quest is consummate skill in mirroring others.

You won’t find the indispensable performance information that’s encoded in this crucial speech Decoded into Synoptic translation, however. The sexual context of the scene – all too obvious to the ear – hopelessly cows translators’ confidence in trocar’s subtly-expressed, insistently supra-sexual vision of seductive identity-imaging. The result is a series of stolidly uninformative throw-
away lines, obscuring the bravura identity-mirror that the *comedia* concocts to knock its audience’s socks off at this cliffhanger spot in the plot (see Campbell 275, O’Brien 106, Starkie 217, Oppenheimer 46, Edwards 107, and Alvarez 170).

Pequigney’s art of “textual analysis and argumentation” points translation toward revolutionizing performance of The Cape Caper, decisively separating Don Juan’s delight in disguise from the sexual context that frames it in the scene. Digging into the roots of the *trueque/trueco* that he adores unearths a persuasive, extra-sexual character objective guiding the Burlador’s behavior towards Mota, Mota’s cheated whore, and Mota’s soon-to-be-cheated bride. The breakthrough comes, moreover, at a site where half a century of expert Synoptic sounding has assembled no common ground whatsoever for measuring the sexual content of Don Juan’s conduct.

Understanding *trocar* as “trading identities” (rather than “swapping beds”) lands a major body-blow on the idea that sex-drive motivates Don Juan.

“Stud-beast” and “sperm-bank” translate Covarrubias’ remarkably frank language defining *GARAÑON* (628-29).

Using “comparable scenes” and “situational analogues” to Decode sexual content in the *Burlador/Tan largo* promises to rebuild translators’ understanding of the play from the ground up, since dealing with Don Juan’s sex life is quite literally the first problem to confront you in this *comedia famosa*. Sex starts clamoring for attention in the first dramatic situation of the *comedia*, generating the first lines of dialog spoken from the stage.

Some translators have grabbed this bull by the hornies and run with it. The Toronto premiere of Michael Kidd’s *Don Juan: Ladykiller of Seville*, for instance, opened with cunnilingus in progress onstage ... or possibly analingus in action ... but certainly something sensual and eventually orgasmic going on underneath the leading lady’s skirt downstage center. True to its sex-driven opening scene, this production ended with a damnation that was firmly – even titularly, given the protagonist’s characterization as a “Ladykiller” – tied to sex crimes.
Even more graphically, Nick Dear raised the curtain on his Last Days of Don Juan (1990) with “Two young bodies clutching at each other,” clearly enacting copulation (Dear 7). Dear proceeded to dot Last Days’ staging with recurrent sex-acts as explicit events in his performance score, where the stage directions dictate a rising tide of divestments, gropings, onstage grunts, and half-lit humpings. His climax shows Don Juan dragged to hell in the presence of four female witnesses, who consciously decline to intervene on his behalf.

It’s worth noting that sexual frankness in (re)staging this comedia is by no means a development of the last decade, a function of translation just keeping up with the times. Way back in 1978, Derek Walcott rooted the first scene of his Joker of Seville in an explicitly sexual bit of “bedplay” – an inciting incident that soon sends the Joker all the way to the New World in search of a new Eve. Interestingly, Walcott wraps his Don Juan’s raison d’être around a psycho-sexual split between Body and Soul, and routes his protagonist’s life-journey through a failed quest for (physical) (re)Union.

Enriching the impact of salir’s metatheatrical tone are quickly-established socio-political contexts, character traits, and dramaturgical patterns that shove sex even farther into the background of the scene’s performance scheme. Like the comedia’s delight in self-referentiality, these vibrant notes in the play’s makeup, struck so early in the action, set off a series of sympathetic vibrations in the playmaking, building structural echoes of the opening scene into resonant moments that follow.

That’s why the setting for the inciting incident codes a covert political satire onto the scene. The Duchess is planning to stage her tryst in a lecherous King’s private quarters. That’s why the Duchess’ character embodies a challenging mix of boldness and passivity. She enacts a mismatched marriage of fire and ice, designed to haul active cultural anxieties about femininity and status onstage in the person of the scene’s leading lady. That’s why Don Juan is playing the scene in disguise, impersonating a Duke who’s uneasily under pressure to deflower the Duchess. The play’s inaugural episode brings its title character to the stage more in the manner of Zero Mostel than Zorro, playing not a pastmaster
of erotic expertise, but a reflection of romantic indecision, a mirror of comic impotence. Not one of these resonances, set a-quiver by the inciting encounter between the Duchess and the Don, depends on sexual contact in the first scene to generate its buzz.

14 In fact, textual elements in the *comedia*’s inaugural *burla* emphatically assign sex what is at best a *secondary* role – the role of raising the possibility that people could break the rules, and thus supporting the performance of a corrective socio-moral satire. This calls into question the repeated, popular practice of translating sexual conquest as the Burlador’s *modus operandi*, and its corollary tradition of representing sexual transgression as the failing that eventually damns Don Juan.

15 Don Juan repeatedly revisits the *comedia*’s opening moment at pivotal points later on in the plot. For instance:

- act one finds him bragging to his Uncle Pedro about how he “got” the Duchess in Naples by making himself the mirror-image of a Duke, exposing Isabela by disguising himself as Octavio/Otavio;
- act two shows him reprising his adventure with the Neapolitan Duchess in a *burla* [a “gotcha” trick] on a Doña in Seville, performing himself as the living reflection of Ana’s cousin Mota to penetrate the forbidden precincts of Ana’s bedroom;
- and act three has him deliciously anticipating an encore of the take-one night in Naples, this time meeting Isabela in the King of Castilla’s private chambers as her royally-appointed groom-elect (a consummation that’s permanently postponed by Don Juan’s Last Dinner date with the Statue).

Making sex the center of the first moment’s performance mix enriches none of these character-revealing revisitations.

If the *burla* with Isabela is *not* sex-driven, the Burlador’s instant replay for Don Pedro becomes more inventive. Uncle Pete, as his nephew broadly hints, has a history of playing a *burlador* – a reputation this *barba* [mature male role model; sly old dog] is secretly proud of. So spinning Don Pedro a tale of sexual conquest lets the Burlador perform a feat that says nothing about his sexual
experience, but volumes about his acting skill. This is juicy stuff for staging, endowing the play’s title role with the fertile fantasy-life of an *American Pie*, and (since Pedro plays ambassador by putting political “spin” on scandalous sex) the satiric bite of a *National Lampoon*.

Presenting the play’s opening *burla* as a booty-call doesn’t pump up the performance impact of repackaging the story for Pedro, adding new sources of invention to the Burlador’s stage repertory. On the contrary, it deflates it, reducing Don Juan to a Johnny One-Note.

If Don Juan’s strategy from the first moment of the play is more deeply-laid than just getting laid, it makes Isabela’s climactic reappearance in his life more interesting. It makes sense of the way the Burlador describes the Duchess bride who awaits him at the climax of act three – the acting-language opposite of “been there, done that.” And it makes sensational theater out of the fact that Don Juan postpones sexual union with this wholly desirable bride, so he can put his hand in the hand of the Man he made a *Muerto* [a Death’s-Head].

Juan’s description of his Duchess bride is physically delicious. In his eyes, she’s a being from a better world (“Como vn Angel”), poised tantalizingly on the cusp of sexual awakening: “El rostro / bañado de leche, y sangre, / como la rosa que al Alua / despierta la debil caña / rebienta la verde carcel” [blushing like a milk-white bride, an American Beauty all ripe for pricking, by the dawn’s early light, into full, bud-busting bloom] (Fernández 57, 93).

Significantly, the Burlador postpones becoming Isabela’s husband for a prospect he finds even more exciting – becoming a Dead Man’s dinner guest. Reading sexual knowledge into Don Juan’s first encounter with the Duchess does nothing to pique his interest in finally marrying her, or to heighten the new experiential peak he seeks to scale in a second rendezvous with his Rock-Hard Dinner-Date. Starting the play with sex lends its development through analogous situations less punch, not more – less tease, less temptation, less ground to cover, less consummation devoutly to be wished.
The analogy between the scenes is unmistakably inscribed in the structure of the show; *Tan largo* even scripts two sets of lines for Don Juan to spell out the twice-told parallel (see Fernández 79).

Like Don Juan’s deathbed denial that he ever bedded Ana, Catalinón’s second witness to this twice-told trick’s performance stands at a structural make-or-break point for producing the play. The Burlador dismisses sex as his seductive strategy, and clarifies the staging of his damnation. His *gracioso* [the low-life eye on the action, the dramaturgy’s down-to-earth point of view, the man on the street who turns up onstage] reasserts the Burlador’s extra-sexual methodology for acting out *burlar*, and lays down the groundrules for realizing the *comedia’s desenredo* [its denouement].

Language that “pops” with the sexual frankness of 21st-century American slang could be useful for capturing the dramaturgical finesse of Don Juan’s characterization. The role is clearly not in thrall to sexual experience, but is clearly energized by sexual potential. So for some audiences, the liveliest translation of the Burlador’s *engaño* might be “tricky dicking,” and his anticipation that the *burla* with Ana will be “Estremado” might translate as “fuckin’ awesome!” Once translation has made it crystal clear that issues, objectives, and motives larger than sex drive this role, the sexual electricity of the play’s language can light up the characterization without cutting down its ultimate impact.

In the clearer air that follows displacing sex from the strategic center of the play’s opening moment, new options come to light for performing the play’s closing moment.

As mentioned, the *Burlador/Tan largo* ends with Don Juan’s death-bed confession (so to speak) denying he ever bedded Doña Ana, and miraculously recouping Ana’s social position. The recuperation of Ana’s *honor* drops into the denouement so conveniently, so incredibly, so on right-on-cue and big with “the magic of theater” that it seems designed to parody the idea of a “happy ending,” to set a boobytrap to subvert closure in its calculated overstatement, to foolproof the score against any attempt to “sell” this conclusion as fully resolved. Like a
Burlador whose strategy for bringing hidden things to light goes way beyond sex, Decoding evidence of a thoughtfully unsettled denouement could make this play more interesting to perform in the US today.

Is it possible to have both – both the Burlador who seduces sexlessly and the Doña who succumbs irrecuperably? Yes. In fact, Decoding the first of those strong performance positions leads you on toward Decoding the second. At first glance, it would seem that you have to choose between either

- performing Ana’s *burla* as a non-sexual event and accepting her final exoneration at face value, or
- performing Ana’s seduction with a sexual consummation in order to unsettle the neatness of a “happy ending” to her narrative.

To rephrase the conundrum in stage-picture terms, it looks like you have to pick between making Don Juan the kind of smooth operator who can seduce Ana and Isabela without ever touching either of them (which makes his seductions more interesting), and making Ana end up as a pregnant bride (which makes the ending more interesting).

But Decoding the Burlador’s extra-sexual strategy of operations opens new performance options for ending the play. Presenting Ana’s *burla* as supra-sexual, and producing Ana’s exoneration as parodically over-the-top, both depend on cracking information that’s been encoded in the same sex-displacing cipher. Both of these attractive production concepts depend on breaking the equation between Don Juan’s performance compromising Ana and Don Juan’s performance consummating sex with Ana.

Decoding the fact that compromising Ana (an event performed in the *Burlador/Tan largo*’s plot) has no connection whatsoever to consummating sex with Ana (an event never performed in the plot) magnificently enriches performance of the play’s final moment. It makes Ana’s instant redemption instantly suspicious. It packages her story’s apparent closure in a form so pat that it undercuts the closure’s impact. And, through yet another jolt of dramaturgical energy generated by rubbing Ana’s story up against Isabela’s, it revolutionizes performance of the *comedia*’s final scene.
Scenic structure keeps the Duchess and the Doña firmly linked to the last. In the final scene, they’re more alike than ever – both technically widowed, both actually unmarried, both physically virgins, both socially whores, both never screwed, both forever screwed over, both of them vital moving parts in a marriage-machine that promises (now that the Burlador’s monkey wrench has been blasted out of its works) to put a sustainably retooled version of status quo back in operation. In a maneuver that’s as revealing for performing the play’s first scene as its last, unsettling the Doña’s ending upsets the Duchess’, too.

20 *Tan largo*, the lesser-studied of the *comedia*’s two printings, enlarges the performance scope for each of these mirrorings.

In the instance of Octavio/Otavio’s sublimated eroticism, *Tan largo* spotlights a character trait in the *comedia*’s Duke that the *Burlador* brings to the stage more subtly. Both printings show Octavio/Otavio performing himself as a martyr to self-discipline (i.e., suffering unbelievable agonies to admire Isabela from afar). And both Spanish scripts contain dialog that strongly suggests the Duke’s courtly-love façade serves as a cover for indulging himself in the kind of self-titillation that he secretly enjoys (namely, exploring an active erotic fantasy-life, while avoiding any real-life erotic responsibilities).

*Tan largo* raises the profile on Don Juan’s reflection of Otavio’s secret, self-indulgent delight. First, *Tan largo* makes “Sevilla” spell relief for Otavio’s sleepless nights, ostensibly spent worrying himself sick over Isabela. No sooner has the Duke poured out his troubles to Castilla’s King than King Alfonso has promised to fix up the Duke with a Sevillian bride – instant salve for his wounded soul. As the Second Servant queries, “¿ya no te desvela / Isabela?” [So all-night tizzies ’bout Ms. Izzy ain’t the happening thing no more, boss?], to which the Duke emphatically answers “No” (López-Vázquez 1990, 187). Then, *Tan largo*’s Burlador/*garañón* proceeds to mirror this double-facedness in the Duke’s character with the biggest Don Juan speech recorded in all of 17th-century Spanish literature: a glitzy, 260-line paean to Seville, concocted for Otavio’s ears only.
The longest, and superficially the soberest, speech in the play, Don Juan’s loa [production number] portrays “Sevilla” as the mirror-image of Spain – a Spain pitched precisely to Otavio’s private taste. There’s an impeccable façade, complete with roots reaching right back to the Holy Romans, and pious establishments endowed to endure to the Last Trump. Then, just beneath the righteous crust, there’s a well-camouflaged capacity for hanky-panky. In the Sevilla which Don Juan celebrates for the Duke (the city that the “Burlador de Sevilla” eponymously characterizes), men can indulge their every desire without compromising their reputation for manliness, women can be chased right into the backseat of closed carriages without abandoning their public standing as chaste women, and the cathedral’s crowning feature is a weathervane representing Faith which also glories in the nickname of “Fickle Woman” (López-Vázquez 1990, 188-95; see Schizzano and Mandel 66).

This Seville turns out to be the Marqués de la Mota’s stomping grounds, and Don Juan is quick to reflect hidden sides of the Marqués that define this character, too. Tan largo calls attention to the Burlador mirroring Mota in several striking interchanges between the bosom buddies, but the series culminates in the comedia’s most explicitly scripted mirror exercise: a burla in which the Burlador/garañón, with the Marqués’ assistance and expert tutelage, rehearses and then performs a full-scale impersonation of Mota, warts and all.

The pattern of this episode-uniting reflection starts with the first intimation of Mota’s scandalous intent to preempt his uncle Gonzalo’s plans to marry off his cousin Doña Ana. Having spilled the secret of his willingness to steal another man’s fiancée, the Marqués is overjoyed to hear – via Don Juan, who’s even then reflecting Mota’s felonious intentions – that plans for the theft are already afoot. His cousin Ana has decided to leave the door to her bedroom open for him that very night. This news inspires Mota passionately to embrace the Burlador/garañón as the bearer of glad tidings. Don Juan responds with Tan largo’s mirror-on-the-wall remark:

Mas piensas que yo he de ser quien la tiene de gozar,
y me llegas a besar
los pies

[Hey – you must think *I’m* the one who’s going to steal a kiss from
your kissing cousin! You’re sure kissing up to me like crazy!]

(Fernández 80; cf. López-Vázquez 1990, 202)

The kissing cousin to whom *Tan largo* alludes introduces to the play a
daughter willing to force her father’s hand by fornication, as long as she can
prosecute her policy of *forçando* out of the public eye. That’s the covert
subversion that *Tan largo* spotlights in the phrasing of Ana’s letter to Mota,
intercepted by Don Juan (see López-Vázquez 1990, 199-200). The Burlador
begins to mirrors Ana’s hidden agenda, too. He reflects her dissimulation – that
she is a model daughter who perfectly conforms her will to Daddy Gonzalo’s at
every point – with his own dissimulation as Ana’s perfectly conformable suitor
(Mota the moldable). The result, precipitated by Don Juan’s performance as
Mota’s spitting image, is a duel to the death with Don Gonzalo.

In playing out the duel with Gonzalo, Don Juan reflects more than Ana’s
violent subversion of patriarchal rule. He also plays back, quite precisely, Don
Gonzalo’s enraged and outrageous weakness for shooting first and negotiating
later – a character trait that *Tan largo* highlights in a quite remarkable expansion
of the *Burlador*’s duel dialog (see López-Vázquez 1990, 207-208). In the
*Burlador*, Don Juan’s fatal encounter with Don Gonzalo fills some 20 lines of
text, terse and formulaic in tone (Fernández 40). The words recorded for the
combatants to speak act as rhetorical filler (*ripio*) marking beats in the fight.
Clearly, the fight itself – the physical action – co-opts the central focus in the
*Burlador*’s version of this *burla* development.

Compared to the *Burlador*, *Tan largo*’s standard practice is to condense
dialog in order to compress action, embodying stage effects so leanly that they
become ektomorphic. In a startling reversal of its this policy, *Tan largo*
strikingly expands this fight sequence, increasing the line count by more than
50% vis-à-vis the *Burlador* to ratchet up the dramatic impact.
Mirroring links the *burla* of Ana, Mota, and Gonzalo to the *burla* that closes act two, unifying scenes that are set in wildly different social strata, geographic locations, and literary contexts by means of building them around the same performance mechanism. Gonzalo the bloody-minded *barbacana* (representing both the “barbican” that secures the castle of his *honor* and the “greybeard” who constitutes an enduring character-type in Golden Age *comedia*) is carried offstage in a burial procession, at the same time as Gaseno/Gazeno the *viejo* with the *nobles canas* [the old character actor sporting the grey hair of a true blue-blood] sweeps onstage in a wedding march (see López-Vázquez 1990; 207, 212). An unspoken but powerfully eloquent scenic montage – a cinematic cross-fade that has yet to be transmitted into an English-language performance score for the *Burlador/Tan largo* (see the *paseo* at Fernández 39 and cf. Kidd 30) – underscores the ubiquity of the Burlador’s *modus operandi* as a role-modeler, and unveils Gaseno/Gazeno as Don Juan’s next subject for reflection.

It’s ironic that Gaseno/Gazeno’s *burla* comes last in act two, because (as *Tan largo* repeatedly, subtly points out) this countrified Father of the Bride just loves putting himself in first place. Gazeno grabs the first line of dialog in *Tan largo*’s wedding scene, pre-empting the remarks of both bride and groom with his self-aggrandizing give-away-the-bride speech (a performance he enjoys so much that he grandiloquently reprises it for Don Juan in act three; López-Vázquez 1990, 211 and 219). Gazeno’s wedding breakfast merits attendance, claims its host-with-the-most, not only by the Pope, but also by the entire race of Pastors, and Don Juan’s arrival signals an honor not only to Gazeno’s age, but also to the host’s innate nobility (cf. Fernández 42-43 with 84).

Given Gaseno/Gazeno’s greediness for the limelight, Don Juan’s appropriation of the groom’s place at the wedding feast serves not as an example of sexual aggression goading a *garañón* into action, but as a striking instance of the Burlador’s delight in seductive character-reflection. The Mirror catches to perfection the *viejo*’s internal attitude towards his daughter’s lifemate. That’s why *Tan largo* has Gazeno quash the bridegroom’s objection to Don Juan’s sitting beside his bride with this rank-pulling remark: “que [or possibly *quien*;
the facsimile prints a q with a slash over it at this point] es el nouio?” [“Hey! Who’s in charge here? Move your butt, Patricio, and let our guest of honor try a slice of our blushing bride’s first-class cake”] (Fernández 84). (Cf. López-Vázquez 1990, 213, where the editor’s re-punctuation makes this speech say “whoozits here is the groom;” Covarrubias 831 notes that the term novio “les dura hasta que se acaba de comer el pan de la boda” [novio is what you call a new husband until they finish eating the last slice of wedding-cake].)

The Burlador’s strategy of performing his role as a mirror of other characters in action proceeds to link the end of act two to the beginning of act three. Batricio the bridegroom – the Burlador facsimile prints his name as “Patricio” [patrician] at some points, a joke that pokes fun at this redneck character’s far from blue-blooded status (see Fernández 17) – starts the final jornada [stage in a journey, workday in a profession, act in a comedia] with a long soliloquy, taking the story of his nightmarish wedding reception straight to the audience:

- He hasn’t been allowed to enjoy the food – every time he reached for a tidbit, Don Juan pushed him away, tut-tutting “grosería, grosería” [gross! how gauche!] (López-Vázquez 1990, 215; see Covarrubias 660).
- He hasn’t been able to squeeze a word in edgewise with his prize bride Aminta/Arminta – every time he tried that, Don Juan intercepted him with another fiercely-administered “grosería, grosería” [gross! how gauche!].
- He’s even starting to dread going to bed with his novia [newlywed woman], lest Don Juan be there to run interference between them, hissing “grosería, grosería” [gross! how gauche!] (López-Vázquez 1990, 216).

Before he finishes unburdening himself and can slink off into hiding, Don Juan enters, catches sight of Patricio/Batricio, and inveigles him into a verbal one-on-one.

In the Burlador, the man-to-man chat that follows unfolds through Batricio filling in a series of blanks left dangling by Don Juan’s elliptical leading statements (Fernández 44). This replicates a familiar pattern in the play – the pattern of the Burlador adopting a mirror as his modus operandi, reflecting his
interlocutor’s own failings and capitalizing on the ugly responses that his flawed subjects’ anxieties arouse.

In a mirror-magnifying performance moment scored into Tan largo, the mirrored subject talks back, aggressively mirroring his mirror. Batricio regurgitates the words that he’s had stuffed down his throat by Don Juan – the catchphrase “grosería, grosería” – and strategically feeds them back to the Burlador. This development rises out of another new twist in the performance record introduced by Tan largo. Here, the garañón sets his tone toward Batricio not as an agent provocateur’s provocative suggestiveness, but as a romantic rivals’ pre-emptive aggressiveness:

El amor
con tal ira y tal furor
en el alma se desmanda,
que lo que encubrir quería
la boca, no ha de poder.
[Love … love with such quicksilver rage, and such explosive, ecstatic fury … love at the very center of your being breaks all the rules … so that things the mouth desires to keep tightly under wraps, it’s just not possible to hide.]
(López-Vázquez 1990, 216; see Covarrubias 92, 460, 615, 741 on alma, desmandarse, furor, and ira)

Which inspires Batricio to drop this bombshell of his own:

Mas que ha de venir a ser
groseria, groseria.
[although it eventually all comes down to “gross! how gauche!” right?]
(Fernández 85; cf. López-Vázquez 1990, 216-217, where the editorial decision to end the statement with an ellipsis tilts the speech towards saying “any second now we’ll get around to the ‘gross! how gauche!’ part …”)

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Batricio’s appropriation of “grosería, grosería” makes him echo Don Juan in the middle of a maneuver where the Burlador is convincing Batricio that his marriage is doomed by taking the words right out of the bridegroom’s mouth. Read intertextually, the Burlador and Tan largo record “the best of all possible burlas” as a two-way talking mirror in action on the stage, in which Don Juan and Batricio mutually reflect each other, and the gran Burlador del mundo (cf. Fernández 92) ultimately takes the trick.

21 The action-drama in this duel has nothing to do with the kinds of thrills that Indiana Jones or Jackie Chan give their audiences today. The spotlight here is on dramatic finesse, as the Burlador mirrors two over-the-top characters at one time: the Marqués (whose eponym makes him the “Bigwig from Little Kink”), and the Comendador (whose rank makes him “#2”).

22 “The Unbroken Line” is Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood’s translation for Stanislavski’s discussion of how an actor uses “inner forces to feel out the soul of the part,” building from its “fundamental objective” a “line” that “gradually emergest as a continuous whole,” making “the actor and his part … belong to each other” (Stanislavski 252-60). Since generations of American actors have been introduced to Stanislavski’s method through Hapgood’s translation, I use “Unbroken Line” as an enriching term for focusing attention on how the Burlador and Tan largo build a supra-sexual through-line or character spine into Don Juan’s role.

23 Indeed, there’s evidence in the dialog that the Burlador fakes his faintness on the beach to prolong the Pescadora’s cradling him in a Pietà-like clinch (see Fernández 25-26, 70). Julie Florio capitalized on this evidence to have the Ladykiller steal a kiss from his resuscitator (see Kidd 13).

24 Transforming a Burlador into the champion of valor is a breathtaking dramaturgical strategy for seducing an early 17th-century audience into active debate about current cultural values. In 17th-century Spain, courage in the face of Death was prized to the point of obsession. Defourneaux cites a case in point – a defining moment in Spanish national life that was quite possibly contemporary with the drafting of the Burlador and Tan largo:
Victim of the reaction against those who had so scandalously enriched themselves in the reign of Philip III, Rodrigo Calderon, Marquis of Siete Iglesias [Seven Churches], was brought to justice by the Duke of Olivares, the new favourite of Philip IV. His too rapid rise in society, his arrogance, and his ostentatiousness made him the most unpopular man in the realm. This is why he became a scapegoat at the beginning of the new reign. Accusations and evidence piled up against him. Fantastic allegations such as sorcery were added to the real crimes and abuses which were attributed to him. The trial was followed with passionate interest, and, as soon as the death sentence was pronounced, a scaffold was erected in the Plaza Mayor [Principal Square] of Madrid, with a mise en scène [stage setting] calculated to make the maximum dramatic impression on the public. But Rodrigo Calderon arrived at the base of the scaffold calm and scornful; ‘... he treads the steps with ease, throwing the skirt of his cloak over his shoulders, retaining even in this terrible extremity, great dignity and a grand seignior’s [great lord’s] mastery of himself. Since then his trial, his crimes, his unpopularity, and the peoples’ hatred of him have vanished, wiped out by the nobility of his bearing. Spain remembers only the supreme elegance with which Calderon came face to face with death. Moreover, he became a sort of idol, with people fighting over his relics, even over bits of cloth stained with his blood. ‘Brave as Rodrigo on the scaffold’ has been a proverb in Spain ever since October 21, 1621: ‘The most glorious day,’ a contemporary said, ‘in the whole of our century...’ (33, ellipses original)

Like Rodrigo on the scaffold, Don Juan’s courage in the face of Death is tremendously impressive. But the Burlador and Tan largo destabilize unthinking respect for courage by carefully problematizing valor’s results. Don Juan’s fearlessness leads him directly into damnation. Right to reject the fear of death, he embraces an infinitely seductive, wrong conclusion. He takes his
brushes with mortality (*tan largo*) as endorsements of a longterm lease on present-day license, and braves himself right into the pit of hell.
RE-CODING MULTIDIMENSIONAL DAMAS: USING STEREOPTICON PERSPECTIVES ON TEXTUAL VARIANTS TO ESTABLISH SUBTEXTS FOR FEMALE LEADS

Literally the first problem to confront translators who are preparing *Tan largo* and the *Burlador* for re-production in the USA is a quandary about how to Decode Don Juan’s sex life. Close on its heels comes a second challenge to stageworthy translation, inseparable from (and equal to) the first: doubts about how to Re-code the *comedia*’s female leads – its *damas* – for performance today.

Three sets of expectations about women and Don Juan complicate the process of making available in English all of the performance information that *Tan largo* and the *Burlador* record about *damas* (i.e., Re-coding these female roles for English-speaking actors to perform). Theater people in America expect the women in Don Juan’s story to be:

- plentiful in number but immaterial in their individual articulation,
- vengeful in outlook but ineffectual in their political operations,
- powerless to help themselves and peripheral to the core concerns of the play but ironically key to the supernatural event that sends Don Juan to Hell.

The *damas* in *Tan largo* and the *Burlador* move against the grain of every one of these expectations. When the textual variations in *Tan largo* are brought to bear on their characterization, the four female leads in the first Don Juan play show themselves to be:

- elementally individual in construction, because they’re coordinated with the four elements, the four humors, and four social rankings that structured Golden Age thinking about cosmology, psychology, and sociology;
- uniquely effective politically, because they’re capable of pooling private grievances to fuel communal initiatives for reform; and
- completely immaterial to Don Juan’s damnation, because his damnable act was not exploiting women, but procrastinating his own self-correction.

Caught in the squeeze between cultural expectations and textual variations, *damas*’ roles have suffered in translation, and suffered hideously. For example, expecting wrongs against women to damn Don Juan has reduced the
comedia’s leading ladies to indistinguishable “victims” in their English incarnations (see Mandel 42-44). Differences in the way that Tan largo and the Burlador structure the damnation scene hold persuasive evidence that wronged women are immaterial to Don Juan’s death-sentence, but translation has taught itself to eliminate the Spanish record’s textual inconsistencies. Erasing the textual variants that clarify damas’ disconnection from Don Juan’s damnation, and embracing the expectation that women’s victimization sends Don Juan to Hell, translation traps itself into re-presenting Isabela, Tisbea/Trisbea, Ana, and Aminta/Arminta as faceless parties to a moral class-action suit against Don Juan. The women get Re-coded as faceless ciphers who call down fire from Heaven – indistinguishable, but divinely favored. This reductive Re-coding blocks revival of the play.

Similarly, expecting comedia to show minimal interest in character development reinforces and compounds the problem of Re-coding these women performably (see Dixon “Spanish Renaissance Theatre” 153). Minimal character development means a negligible degree of self-awareness in female characters, and self-awareness is a precondition of striving for political self-determination. Variations between the acting texts of Tan largo and the Burlador attest to women wielding impressive political clout in the world of the first Don Juan – clout on the order of the 20th century’s Thelma and Louise. Skewed by the cultural expectation that comedia characters don’t exhibit complex characterizations, and uncorrected by close attention to textual variants, translation cuts these leading ladies down to personae whose speech patterns, social standings, personal aspirations, and political impact are effectively indistinguishable, and fundamentally dismissible – vengeful, but ineffectual stereotypes (see Kidd 47-49). The loss of complexity in Re-coding these characters militates against staging them effectively.

Furthermore, expectations about women and Don Juan that are specific to the US today serve to exacerbate translators’ problems with Re-coding Tan largo and the Burlador’s crucial roles for damas into American acting text. Every American I’ve talked with who was willing to share a mental picture of “Don Juan” – and my informants number in the hundreds, ranging from theater
scholars at international conferences to first-time theater students in the Bainbridge College “lab” – has assigned women a plentiful but immaterial place in Don Juan’s world. Women belong in the picture with Don Juan, people tell me, not because they sharpen the scene with clearly-defined features of their own, but because they fill the frame in mind-bogglingly large numbers. It’s women by the gross who populate US impressions of Don Juan (impressions both popular and highly educated): herds of generic honeys, swarms of indistinguishable sweeties, bevies of cookie-cutter babes.

Don Juan stories playing the US today characteristically perpetuate, reinforce, capitalize on and cater to this expectation, linking their leading man with nameless hordes of the opposite sex. Note, for example, the 1500 inmates of the harem in Don Juan de Marco (feature film, 1995), and the ledgers-full of swinging singles in Don Juan in Chicago (off-Broadway play, 1995). Check out the scores of “scores” in the seduction contests that start the ball rolling in both Johnny Tenorio (bilingual Chicano acto, 1988, still actively produced in US teatros) and Don Juan Tenorio (seven-act Spanish spiritual fantasia, 1844, still traditionally staged in Mexican-American observances of the Day of the Dead).

Throw in for good measure the “mil e tre” [1,003] conquests specific to Spain that famously punctuate Leporello’s list song in Don Giovanni (two-act Italian opera, 1787, a mainstay of opera rep in the USA).

Textual variants in the performance record of the first Don Juan play emphatically contradict the popular US expectation that Don Juan’s women must be infinite in number and immaterial in character. Differences between Tan largo and the Burlador, in fact, insist that this comedia’s strikingly finite number of damas (four) is specifically designed to foreground their elemental materiality within the world of the play, and the world of the audience that’s watching them. A Golden Age table of the elements held four entries, after all: fire, water, air, and earth. Renaissance Spanish understanding of psychology described human behavior in terms of four humors, or fluids, that determined disposition (something like hormones today): phlegm, black bile (melancholy), yellow bile (jaundice), and blood. Seville’s venture-capitalist society knew four status levels: hereditary aristocrats, government bureaucrats, prosperous agribusinessmen,
and subsistence nobodies. *Tan largo* and the *Burlador* record careful variations on four (and only four) *damas*, to fill performances of this Don Juan play with a whole world of women, every woman enacting a multidimensional commentary on the whole world.

Textual variants in *Tan largo* and the *Burlador* challenge cultural expectations about the women around Don Juan. By aggressively unseating assumptions that the *damas* in this *comedia* must be plentiful but immaterial, vengeful but ineffectual, and faceless but divinely favored, textual variants offer translators of *Tan largo* and the *Burlador* indispensable aid in Re-coding the *comedia*’s women characters for performance today. Longstanding traditions in text editing, however, have been actively at work to erase the differences between the two original Don Juan scripts, telling translators that these “trouble-spots” must be flaws in textual transmission, rather than different perspectives on performance possibilities. This chapter addresses that problem by exploring a wholly new approach to handling textual variations.

I call the approach “Stereopticon perspective,” because its principle of operation reminds me of the Stereopticon in my Grandad’s house. Grandad’s Stereopticon held two slides in a frame so you could look through them at the same time. The slides were pictures of the same scene, taken from slightly different angles. With both slides in the frame and with both your eyes open, the two-dimensional pictures took on three-dimensional depth. Looking through the partial record’s differences, you rediscovered the original scene’s dimensionality.

“Stereopticon perspective” handles variations between *Tan largo* and the *Burlador* as though they formed the two slides in a Stereopticon. You can choose to look at one slide instead of the other (as text editors do when they “correct” divergent texts), but you’ll never see the scene in 3-d that way. You can even take the choicest bits from each of the two slides and make one new, composite slide (as text editors do when they conflate divergent texts). But that won’t show you new dimensions, either – just new elements in a glossier flat print. If you look through both out-of-synch pictures at the same time, however, you can catch a glimpse of dimensionality in the scene. The two versions’ differing points of view on the same point in the play open a window through the text for you to survey.
the scene’s subtext – its structure, the relationships that form it, the unspoken attitudes that move beneath its skin.

Stereopticon perspective represents a highly experimental, emphatically nontraditional way of dealing with textual difference. Standard operating procedure for handling variants between Tan largo and the Burlador is editorial erasure, rubbing out an embarrassment of riches. Oscar Mandel, co-author of the Playboy of Seville, “the first attempt in any language, including Spanish, to present a conflated text of Tirso’s play,” sums up the tradition of text-editing this way:

Where two versions of a play exist, neither of which is identifiable beyond doubt as the authentic text, both of which have imperfections, and both of which have preferred readings by linguistic, logical, or aesthetic criteria, a composite text may be constructed from the elements of these versions. This, it must be stressed, is a best text rather than a conjecturally genuine one. Not only is it impossible to reconstruct a warranted authentic Burlador (or a warranted authentic Hamlet, for that matter), but we do not even know if Tirso ever wrote a draft of the play which he considered the master or final version. (40)

“Stereopticon perspective” and “Composite text-editing” take radically different approaches to textual variation. Stereopticon perspective seeks out differences between the dialog of Tan largo and the Burlador to see what they can show translators about the thought processes, relationships, and scenic structures that lie beneath the dialog, giving it its variant shapes. Composite text-editing seeks out differences between the dialog of Tan largo and the Burlador in order to stamp them out, replacing them with “best text.”

The stated aim of Composite text-editing is to “encourage performances by its offer of a more rational, a more stageworthy play” (Mandel 41). What started me on the path toward Stereopticon perspective, however, was not the tang of Composite translation’s superior “rationality,” but the experience of finding that women in Schizzano and Mandel’s Composite translation came suddenly to life at crucial junctures in the play. Hauled before the King of Naples for conduct
unbecoming a gentlewoman, Schizzano and Mandel’s Isabela gave voice to inner conflicts I’d never heard this character express in English:

My lord, I confess. Let my punishment be my shame in your presence. Yes, I violated your palace. After Duke Octavio had given me his hand in marriage, he gained admission to the palace, to my soul, and to my dearest possession. My chastity, my honesty are lost. (Schizzano and Mandel 54)

The complex collision of shame and pride in this speech – a confession that counterposes every admission of guilt with a reminder that the speaker occupies a social standing that is inviolably above suspicion – was a revelation. The self-awareness expressed by Schizzano and Mandel’s Tisbea was similarly eye-opening. I’d never heard in English the melancholy sense of self-loss that this *dama* expresses when she meets Don Juan in Spanish. Certain brief spots in Schizzano and Mandel caught that gleam of inner life:

DON JUAN: Oh the sea tosses me from one torment to the other, for I no sooner pulled myself from the water than I met its siren – yourself. Why fill my ears with wax, since you kill me with your eyes? I was dying in the sea, but from today I shall die of love.

TISBEA: You have abundant breath for a man who almost drowned. You suffered much, but who knows what suffering you are preparing for me? Perhaps you’re my Trojan horse, come out of the sea. (Schizzano and Mandel 59)

For the first time in my translation survey, I’d found a script that let Tisbea’s classical allusions tell me something about the way she sees her world, and herself in flux within it.

As I dug into Schizzano and Mandel’s Composite text, I discovered that both of the speeches which had impressed me came directly from *Tan largo*. That sent me directly to *Tan largo*, too, to see what other variants from the *Burlador* this equally antique, equally authentic, fraternal-twin version of the first Don Juan play has to offer. This chapter presents selected highlights from that journey.
“Element, Humor, and Status” synthesizes new perspectives on damas’ characterizations. Building on recent developments in comedia criticism (represented by Francisco J. Martín’s groundbreaking analysis of the four elements in the Burlador), I counter the cultural expectation that women in Don Juan’s story must play undifferentiated victims, with evidence from the textual variants that differentiate Tan largo from the Burlador. These variants show both versions of the first Don Juan play constructing vibrantly multidimensional, highly individualized characterizations for women, by dynamically misaligning one element, one humor, and one social status to produce each individual dama. I focus on two of these multidimensional characterizations in detail: Isabela the Neapolitan Duchess (a composite of Fire, Phlegm, and Aristocratic Privilege), and Tisbea/Trisbea the Tarragonian Pescadora [female angler] (an amalgam of Water, Melancholy, and Disenfranchisement). Isabela’s self-denunciation to the King of Naples gives this first stage in the exploration a site for exploring how Stereopticon perspective can help translators re-produce damas’ complexity in English acting text.

“Political Clout” counters the cultural expectation that the women in Don Juan’s story must play roles that are vengeful but politically ineffectual, with textual variants from the 11:00 scene of Tan largo and the Burlador. Marking a turning point where the play accelerates toward Don Juan’s damnation, the 11:00 scene brings Isabela and Tisbea/Trisbea together onstage for the first time. I use Stereopticon perspective to establish this pivotal scene’s structure: a movement that carries Isabela and Tisbea/Trisbea from a position of elemental opposition (Fire vs. Water, Aristocrat vs. Nobody), into a posture of outright competition (who’s most Misfortunate?), which leads to an apparently irreconcilable rupture as the women discover that they are both engaged to Don Juan, and concludes in a surprise equal-partner collaboration, joining Fire with Water to change the world. Drawing on recent thinking about how theater enacts political change (represented by Baz Kershaw’s work on The Politics of Performance), I identify the different methods of establishing the women’s political efficacy that Tan largo and the Burlador use. The exploration wraps up with model translations.
that illustrate the scene’s structure in action – a structure which English translations have traditionally reversed.

“Damas and Don Juan’s Damnation” counters the cultural expectation that wronging women must send the Burlador to Hell, with textual variants from \textit{Tan largo} and the \textit{Burlador} which clearly displace women as the root cause of the Burlador’s comeuppance. Breaking the two versions’ damnation scenes down into dramatic beats, I demonstrate that the Spanish scenes as originally printed strongly resemble each other in the way that they center the cause of Don Juan’s damnation not in his transgressions against women (which would make his damnation punishment for an absolutely unique moral failing) but in his failure to turn his talents to the business of self-examination (which makes him an Everyman). Michael Kidd’s translation of a Composite damnation provides a sobering example of how conflating textual variants distorts a dramatic scene. Kidd’s Composite damnation features women at its moral center (a fact that Florio’s staging of the scene responded to as she brought her \textit{damas} onstage to drag Don Juan to Hell). This segment in the exploration ends with a new, model, Stereopticon translation of the damnation scene.

Stereopticon perspective’s world premiere, like the first-appearance-on-any-stage for Conspectus study that preceded it, employs a three-ply method of inquiry through all three of its installments. Stereopticon perspective is the tool, which digs into the territory of Composite translation, to illuminate Re-coding as a translation technique. Stereopticon perspective and Re-coding have enjoyed intense discussion in this introduction, and are about to be put to work analyzing \textit{damas’} complexity, establishing political efficacy in the 11:00 scene, and probing Don Juan’s damnation. Since Stereopticon perspective and Composite translation differ so widely in their approach to variant text, it will be helpful to summarize Composite territory here, since it gets considerably shorter shrift in Stereopticon study than Synoptic translations got in Conspectus investigations.

Synoptic translators (note the perilous similarities between “Synoptic translation” and “Stereopticon perspective”) excavate their acting text from a pre-existing edition of the \textit{Burlador de Sevilla y Convidado de Piedra}, and carefully replicate its storyline and dialog in English. Synoptic translators initiate no
contact with *Tan largo me lo fiáis*. Composite translators, in sharp contradistinction, take an active interest in *Tan largo*, whether through making their own conflation of *Tan largo* with the *Burlador* (as Adrienne Schizzano and Oscar Mandel do for their *Playboy of Seville or Supper with a Statue*, 1963), or through choosing to translate an edition that aggressively combines the two texts (as Michael Kidd does for *The Ladykiller of Seville and His Graven Guest, Or: To Death with Bated Breath*, 2004). The Composite approach is reminiscent of the “gospel harmonies” generated by New Testament scholars, who sequence episodes recorded in different gospels and reconcile differences in the way the same episodes are reported, to present a fuller, recombinant picture of all the incidents in one compilation. Its mission to reconcile textual differences sharply distinguishes Composite translation from Stereopticon perspective.

**Element, Humor, and Status**

The first site I select for sampling Stereopticon perspectives counters the cultural expectation that women interacting with Don Juan must be plentiful in number and immaterial in character, with evidence of *damas*’ limited number and calculated individuality in *Tan largo* and the *Burlador*. Since characterization of the *comedia*’s female leads has been studied in such a limited fashion to date – debate about the *damas*’ moral stature passes for character analysis in most translators’ discussions (see Edwards 22-23, 40, 61, 64-65, 77, 96, 102-103, 108, 136, 152, 172) – I begin by looking at how the two versions of the play use precisely similar methods to build multidimensionality into these dramatic personae. Francisco J. Martín’s groundbreaking analysis of the four elements in the *Burlador* proves helpful in this preliminary spadework, though I complicate Martín’s conclusions exponentially by adding the dimensions of psychology (i.e., disposition or humor) and sociology (i.e., social status or class) to the character analysis.²

With the groundwork of the character analysis laid out, I turn to a representative pair of female leads – Isabela and Tisbea/Trisbea – to examine how textual variants between *Tan largo* and the *Burlador* reinforce the
complexity and multidimensionality of *damas*’ roles. Stereopticon perspective illuminates how variations between the play’s published scripts illuminate actor choices for playing the roles dynamically. The discussion culminates with a model translation of Isabela’s self-denunciation to the King of Naples. Here, a speech whose vigor in Schizzano and Mandel’s Composite translation first urged me to explore *Tan largo* comes full circle, with a full Stereopticon treatment.

Longstanding cultural traditions make “Don Juan” synonymous with “women in large quantities,” dragged in to provide the hero with an impressive number of notches in his belt. *Tan largo* and the *Burlador* counter that tradition with leading roles for women who stand out from the crowd, theoretically suggestive, nontraditionally chic, and instructively well-developed. Both the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* feature a meager total of four females to populating their dramatic landscape: Isabela the occupied-territory aristocrat, Tisbea/Trisbea the Noble Savage, Ana the daughter of the Imperial administration’s best-loved fall-guy, and Aminta/Arminta the rich redneck who dreams of a wedding that will make her the envy of the civilized world. These are *damas* who one and all have quality, in-depth, supra-sexual experiences with the Burlador/*garañón*, and exhibit vigorously independent, individually differentiated stage lives of their own. Small in number, they’re big in development. Both their finitude and their finesse demonstrably spring from dramaturgical design.

The arrestingly finite number of opposite-sex partners that this *comedia* supplies its protagonist is no accident. It’s a conscious choice in the playwriting. The script repeatedly calls attention to the minuscule scale of its leading man’s field of operations with the ladies (see Fernández 43, 84; 53, 91). This aggressively stressed feature of the *comedia*’s dramaturgy nudges thoughtful auditors to wonder: Why four? Why does the inventor of the *gran burlador de España* [the most successful seducer in the civilized world] choose to focus the first Don Juan’s field of action on just four women?

The answer to this question – a query right at the heart of Re-coding this *comedia* from page to stage, from Spanish-language acting script to English-language acting score – lies in the fact that for 17th-century Spanish *dramaturgos* [playwrights], four constituted an extraordinary number. Four elements
comprised the cosmos in Golden Age cosmology: fire, water, air, and earth. As my Bainbridge College cohorts quickly pointed out, this provocatively corresponds to Isabela’s association with light, Tisbea/Tribea’s affiliation with sea, Ana’s ethereal operation through whispers and rumors, and Aminta/Arminta’s earth-mother inheritance of conspicuously fertile farmland (see Covarrubias 502; Martel 248 and 256, Edwards 26 and 46, López-Vázquez 150 and 164; Martín 33-41).

Moreover, four humors participated in a Spanish Renaissance understanding of the human microcosm: phlegm, bile, choler, and blood (see Martín 30). These four fluids, which determined disposition, illuminate the range of the four damas’ personalities: Isabela’s orientation toward indolence, Tisbea/Trisbea’s melancholic outlook, Ana’s tendency to jump to inflammatory conclusions, and Aminta/Aminta’s sanguine belief that she has married into the aristocracy (see Covarrubias 600-601, 797, 336 with 741, and 925; Martel 224 with 297, 255-56 with 263, 275, and 300 with 317).

Four could even describe the fundamental building blocks of Spanish society, especially within the venture-capitalist world of “Sevilla.” The architectural makeup of Spain on the make – the striations in social status that corresponded to the marble pillars, the industrial mortar, the weight-bearing bricks, and the commercial signposts that gave Seville its civic face – is crisply reflected in Tan largo and the Burlador’s female leads:

- Isabel’s much-touted title of Duchess corresponds to the ranks of hereditary noble, the reconquistadores who repossessed Andalucía from the Moors, establishing their own fiefdoms in the process. Her title also complicates the idea of nobility in Golden Age Spain by hailing from Naples, a tenuously-held territory acquired in the Holy Spanish Empire’s glory days.
- Tisbea/Trisbea’s disenfranchised fisherfolk exemplify the dirt-poor nobodies at the very bottom of the Spanish social ladder, in-breds so far beneath the notice of polite society that they have to be artistically re-processed into the Golden Age equivalent of “Beverly Hillbillies” to become culturally visible.
- Just beneath the upper crust stand overworked government officials, poignantly embodied onstage in the person of Ana’s duty-driven father Don
Gonzalo de Ulloa, who sacrifices first his personal wealth, and then his life, to the interests of imperial security. The stratum lives on in the person of the daughter who survives him and expertly manipulates his image as the nation’s favorite fallen hero.

- Rapidly rising from the lower rungs are another set of stand-outs in Seville society, the upwardly-mobile, recently-enriched entrepreneurs, emblematized in the conspicuous consumers at Aminta/Arminta’s wedding and the social-climber bride they salute.

A quartet of principal female characters amply populates *Tan largo* and the *Burlador*, because these four roles constitute an entire universe. They incorporate the whole world of elemental creation, the complete range of human nature’s possibilities, the full scope of civilization’s social roles. The striking finitude of this *comedia*’s women, then, offers persuasive evidence of the play’s careful attention to characterization. The finesse of the characterizations that the playwriting creates – the sharply-delineated lines of action and facets of personality and webs of meaning that the dramaturgy lays out for its *damas* to enact – holds more surprises for US readers, and more incentives to produce this play in the US today.

So how does the first Don Juan play use a four-element, four-humor, four-status composition – a recipe that seems to call for stacking cut-and-dried schematic concepts three layers deep – to fold dramatic complexity into its four leading female roles? How does the dramaturgy take conventional systems for explaining the dynamics of nature, of human behavior, and of Spanish social order, and make them into dynamic characterizations for world-class actors to play?

The answer identifies both an ingenious aspect of *comedia* construction evident in both *Tan largo* and the *Burlador*, and a deep-rooted source of the problem that Re-coding *comedia* characters presents for contemporary Americans. The first Don Juan play makes faceless general schema into the raw material for creating character-specific personalities by means of embodying the schema out of synch. By pouring the elements and the humors and the social standings together in ways that set up dynamic misalignments, *Tan largo* and the
*Burlador* use three schematic systems for classifying knowledge to build three-dimensional characterizations for its *damas*.

Rather than impose the schema mechanically, to predetermine, pigeonhole, typify, or simplify the characterizations, the dramaturgy programs surprises into performance by presenting unexpected, unlikely correspondences between element and humor, and between disposition and rank. The playwriting calls attention to character development by tracing changes in characters’ schematic associations, tracking shifts in the way that a character represents her element, her humor, and her status in society. Upsetting expectations, stressing incongruities, and recording movements in characters’ schematic makeup, the *comedia* carefully maps complexities into its *damas*.

This dramaturgy of schematic mismatch and slippage is clearly articulated in both printings of the Spanish performance score, available for all who put aside traditional blinders to see. In his groundbreaking article on “The Presence of the Four Elements in *El burlador de Sevilla*,” for example, Francisco J. Martín restricts his focus to the elements (not discussing the humors or the social rankings). He only has eyes for the *Burlador* (not *Tan largo*). He narrows his range of vision to the play’s literary values (not its stage potential). And even so, he clearly catches a glimpse of the complexity that this *comedia* gives its characterizations, and the dramatic vigor that the *Burlador* generates by linking its leading ladies to fixed schematic systems which their stage lives throw into dynamic flux – a vision of the play’s stageworthiness that it took until 1998 for *comedia* criticism to notice.

Martín’s progress toward this perception is instructive. First, he marshals intricately detailed evidence to establish the literary fact that “speaking in general terms, Isabela has a correspondence to fire, Tisbea primarily to water, Doña Ana to air, and Aminta, a *villana* (peasant woman), to earth” (32). These correspondences, Martín observes, are so organically worked into the composition of the play that they dictate the development of the plot. “The order in which these four women appear,” he points out, “might at first glance seem unplanned or coincidental,” but in fact replicates “the system of balancing
alternations by which the elements are presented in the sequence of light-heavy-light-heavy” in a traditional 17th-century Spanish “scheme of ideas” (32).

But the play’s characterizations are too complex to be squeezed into one-to-one correspondences. Scarcely has Martín established a system of iconic relationships between one element and one dama before he sees the Burlador begin to complicate this neat schematic arrangement, displacing the correspondence’s one-dimensionality with richly textured developments that produce complex correlations between the women and the elements. As Martín puts it:

The four elements are not represented in the four female characters at all times in their purest forms. Quite to the contrary, in each of the four women we discover multiple correspondences to all of the other three elements not specifically represented by the woman in question. This combination of the elements in the female characters serves as a perfect illustration of the phenomenon ... termed “trans-elemental imagery” ... (33)

At the highpoint of this trans-elemental re-mix stands the comedia’s 11:00 number – the point where the play galvanizes its audience’s attention with an acceleration toward catastrophe; the scene where aristocrat Isabela meets oyster-picker Tisbea/Trisbea, and the two women flabbergast each other with their common desire to make Don Juan pay for the way he’s exposed them to (self-) reproach. Martín attributes the explosive power of this moment to a fusion of elements:

These two women ... have formed one voice, they have become one person, with one same complaint. The perpetrator of the misdeeds causing their affliction is also one and the same. Fire and water have been fused together. In addition, earth ... and air ... have also experimented [sic] this process of fusion. All the four elements now appear fused together. (41)

Throwing schema out of synch enacts a dramatic purpose. In Martín’s view, the displacements and developments that the comedia programs into the complex correspondences between characters and elements serve “to enhance the effect of
violence and motion” in the play (41). (As will become evident in my discussion of the meeting between Isabela and Tisbea/Trisbea in “Political Clout” below, what I see taking place at this point is a conscious political collaboration between elementally different women who decide to pool their resources – their fire and their water, their phlegm and their melancholy, their aristocratic privilege and their nobody know-how – in the interest of making common cause against patriarchal oppression. I find political purpose in the “fusion” Martín describes, and refute the loss of identity that “fusion” implies by using variations in the playtexts to show that the dramaturgy in fact generates the 11:00 scene’s plotline out of the two damas’ highly individual characterizations.)

Martín offers a valuable perception: Tan largo and the Burlador pack dramatic wallop by complicating one-to-one systems of literary presentation into complex schemes for presenting dynamic character development onstage. Standing on Martín’s shoulders, it’s possible to see three dimensions of this technique for programming three-dimensionality into characters. The comedia builds complex characters, as it engineers performance-enhancing slippages between each woman’s characteristic element, humor, and status. Differences between the Burlador and Tan largo intensify this strategy for endowing damas with performance impact, making women characters more complex, and more dynamic onstage.

Take Duchess Isabela as a case in point. In 17th-century Spanish terms, Isabela’s element (fire) can line up reinforcingly with her social standing (noble). Both suggest personal qualities that are exclusive, high-class, and high-maintenance. But her humor – a pedestrian disposition towards phlegm – stands oddly out of line with her high-flying cosmo-sociology. This woman of Phlegm, Fire, and Hereditary Privilege, then, carries onstage with her a bold, incongruous collage of symbolic, psychologic, and social associations – the raw materials for a rivetingly complex characterization that subtly unfolds over the course of the play’s performance.

Overlooked as it has stood through centuries of criticism that approach comedia as literature for the page, this misalignment of schema – designed to empower actors on the stage – merits examination in detail. How do Tan largo
and the *Burlador* go about building actor-friendly, audience-legible individuality into the character of Isabela? What dynamic tensions in 17th-century Spanish culture does the play play on in order to breathe creative life into its stage Duchess? Textual variants between *Tan largo* and the *Burlador* make it clear that both versions of the *comedia* share the same vision of a vigorously multidimensional Isabela, charged with dramatic electricity by her own internal contradictions. For economy's sake, I detail the strategies' similarities before turning to the textual variations that foreground the Duchess' complexity.

Both versions of the *comedia* call for Isabela to kindle the inciting problem of the play, by introducing fire's elemental effect of light [*luz*] into the opening scene, blowing Don Juan’s cover as Duke Octavio/Otavio in disguise (see Fernández 18, 63; on *fuego*’s organic connection to *luz* see Covarrubias 611; cf. Martín 32-33). So *Tan largo* and the *Burlador* inaugurate the process of introducing its cast to the audience by presenting Isabela as an emblematic Fire-Starter, the elemental representative of *fuego*.

Judging by Covarrubias’ first-person *Siglo de Oro* testimony, Golden-Age Spaniards associated *fuego* with high-society privilege, aristocratic pull, and celebrity scandal. People at the top of the social ladder, after all, were the characters who declared war “a fuego y a sangre” [on the scorched-earth principle]. It was the privileged few who kept the ever-burning Vestal Flame well-fed, and staged Trials by Fire to prove their innocence publicly, especially in the case of a woman charged with Adultery (see Covarrubias 610-11). Fire could bake your bread – it was the element which gave its name to “hearth and home” (“Casa y fogar,” 612) – and it could burn your body to a crisp. It was the elemental epitome of the observation, “es menester tratarle con mucho recato y respeto”: “Danger! Use with Caution” (Covarrubias 612).

The untamed flicker of *fuego* in Isabela’s makeup fundamentally invigorates the Duchess’ role, highlighting incendiary aspects of her behavior throughout the play. Fire provides a key to Isabela’s characteristic speech patterns, warming and distinguishing her dialog with a deeply embedded image. More importantly for performance purposes, fieriness acts as a key to her characteristic behavior patterns, giving her an organic basis for undertaking a
series of inflammatory actions. For this is the woman whose flinty refusal to be made a fool of finally strikes the spark that fries Don Juan, as her friction with Tisbea/Trisbea kindles the eleventh-hour campaign for feminist liberation and enlightenment which precipitates the climax of the play (Fernández 50, 89).

Fire is foundational for Isabela’s role, the elemental basis of her characterization. But fire drives only part of Isabela’s story. In addition to characterizing the Duchess with elements of *fuego*, both the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* complicate her makeup from the first moment of the play with a phlegmatic disposition, making her an incarnation of *flema*. According to Covarrubias, *flema* is the humour that “haze a los hombres tardos, perezosos y dormilones, y a los tales llamamos flemáticos. Proceder en un negocio con flema, es ir con él muy de espacio” [Phlegm makes people content to let things happen in their own sweet time, so we call people like that “phlegmatic.” To manage your business phlegmatically means to take things slow and easy] (600).

*Flemática* describes key facets of Isabela’s *anti*-inflammatory behavior in both versions of the *comedia* to a T, illuminating her choices, outlook, disposition, and experience through the full arc of her characterization. For example, she philosophically (and the reverse of fierily) leaves unchallenged the King of Naples’ assumption that her forbidden companion *en palacio* was Octavio/Otavio, resting her defense on the indolent expectation that maybe the Duke will help her duck the blame for her part in the scandal (Fernández 20, 66). She sleepily (and quite unlike an incendiary) lets herself be hauled across the sea from Naples to Seville for a re-union with Don Juan, neither thrilled nor appalled enough by the prospect of the marriage to do much about it either way (Fernández 48, 89). Rather than sweeping into the play’s final scene like Hell on high heels, she takes vengeance on Don Juan so passive-aggressively that her formal complaint about him to the Rey de Castilla costs her only two words: “Dize verdad(es)” [She’s right / Amen, sister] (Fernández 60, 94).

Clearly, moments of calm, cool, collected charm-school poise punctuate the performance of Isabela the Fire-Bearer. Like Scarlett O’Hara, she has both the capacity to burst into flames (as primal, crude, and all-consuming in her behavior as Sherman torching Atlanta), and a highly-developed ability to “think about that
tomorrow” (to face up to the future in her own sweet time, to conduct herself in a manner that is fascinatingly the opposite of frantic).

Giving the embodiment of Fire an incongruously Phlegmatic Humor packs stageworthiness into the play, because it gives the actress playing Isabela a faultline within the character on which to build a constantly shifting performance of a persona in flux. Isabela is part scion of the social upper-crust, after all, accustomed to getting her own way (and getting it absolutely). She’s also part passive observer, resigned to any fate God sends her way; and part inflammatory revolutionary, blazing new trails in womyn-fest destiny. In the same pivotal scene – the 11:00 scene that sets the agenda for Don Juan’s damnation – she can play a passively homesick creature of habit, a passionately incensed bundle of nerves, and a spoiled debutante throwing her weight around just to prove she can (Fernández 48-50, 88-89). This dynamic construction of the character impels the actress playing the role toward a performance that genuinely rocks the world of the play.

With the basic strategy of Isabela’s characterization made clear – a strategy shared by Tan largo and the Burlador – I can quickly illustrate how variations between the two scripts foreground Isabela’s complexity and focus actor choices for playing her role. Here, Stereopticon perspective begins to revolutionize the performance of a leading female character. Translators gain insight into making Isabela’s behavior come alive by refusing to smooth out the rough spots (textual and psychological) in her character, and by insisting that her stage life filter through contradictions (the contradictions in her characterization, as well as the textual contradictions that record her role).

Two basic choices lay open to an actress embodying the vigorous discords set in motion by stacking Isabela’s noble status atop a phlegmatic disposition and a fiery elementality. The actress could compress the character’s consciousness of contradiction, playing the Duchess as a self-renewing Virgin who stands icily above showing the slightest sign of noticing that her reputation has gone up in holy smoke. Or she could vigorously explore the character’s experience and awareness of dissonance, portraying Isabela as a woman who actively, publicly, and repeatedly renegotiates her identity.
The two 17th-century versions of the role highlight these two acting options. The differences between the Burlador and Tan largo underscore the complexity of the dama’s characterization.

The playtext of the Burlador tends to compress and bifurcate Isabela’s conflictedness, reserving her hot side (her fuego) for distinctly private moments, and having her conduct herself on state occasions with coolly impassive autocratic reserve (flema). In the Burlador, the Duchess’ conversations with Kings are so understated and uninformative that they’re covertly subversive (see Fernández 20, 60). The fire in her veins bursts into view only off the record, in private interactions with Don Juan or her underlings, and in her passionate asides to the audience (see Fernández 50, 20).

Tan largo takes a different tack, underscoring the dissonance in Isabela’s dimensions both publicly and privately, capitalizing on the ongoing internal clashes – between nobility and inactivity, domesticity and publicity, convention and invention, depression and revolution, privilege and community – that characterize this Duchess’ career. US readers of the first Don Juan play are apt to find Tan largo’s straightforward approach to presenting character conflicts both congenial and persuasive, a revelation in the quest to recover the character juice that made this comedia stageworthy in the first place. Stereopticon perspective on Isabela’s role can recoup the steep price that translation has paid for ignoring this “inferior” text, and recoup it with back interest.

Tan largo magnifies conflict in Isabela’s characterization from the very first moment of the play. Isabela launches the plot in a meeting which mixes exquisite anticipation with excruciating dread, measure for measure – a recipe for dramatic rocket-fuel. The Burlador assumes that its audience will automatically Decode the terms of this conflict, since both the Duchess’ intention and her transgression (her character’s acting objective, and its obstacle) are based on expectations and taboos that were deeply ingrained in 17th-century Spain. In a strategy extremely helpful to translators, Tan largo pulls the forces that pull Isabela in different directions into the foreground of her dialog, Recoding the given circumstances of the scene for dynamic performance. The sense of dread that complicates the Duchess’ character action during the inciting
incident is fed by her knowledge that she’s committing a capital crime. In Tan largo’s Re-coding, she spells out her sense of culpability for the audience as she lays down the law to her after-hours guest:

que haberos dado en palacio
entrada de aquesta suerte
es crimen digno de muerte.

[Giving you entrée to the palace like this is a death-penalty offense, you know.] (López-Vázquez 1990, 159)

The anticipation that drives her on, despite the danger, is the promise of finding Octavio/Otavio under contract to marry her. Again, Tan largo’s Re-coding specifies the windfall profit that justifies her extreme risk:

Mano de esposo me has dado
Duque.

[Remember our handshake deal, Mr. Duke: you’ve finally and firmly promised that we are man and wife.] (Fernández 63)

When she kindles a candle to reveal not Octavio, but “Un hombre” [a man] who flippantly admits “No tengo nombre” [Call me Mr. No-Name – Jerry Generic], Tan largo’s Isabela explodes into action. Her first action, more premeditatedly undertaken than in the Burlador, is to call for help: “¡Gente, criados!” [Security! Staff!] (López-Vázquez 1990, 160). Her second stroke is even bolder, and not even hinted at in the Burlador. Tan largo’s Isabela aggressively denounces her own behavior to the King.

Isabela’s self-denunciation marks the most pronounced textual variation from the Burlador that Tan largo records in the whole of Isabela’s role. Where the Burlador assigns the Duchess a single line – “Con que ojos veré al Rey?” [With what eyes shall I look at the King?] (Fernández 20) – Tan largo inserts Isabela’s longest speech – sixteen lines crammed with epiphanies about the Duchess’ complex personality. This major difference in the textual record provides an excellent spot to pause for an epiphany about how translators can process Stereopticon perspectives into more stageworthy translations.

Stereopticon perspective’s basic principle is that variants have value. Variants record complicating points of view on the action. Variants insist that
characters’ complexities receive Re-coding. Variants merit preservation, because they themselves preserve evidence of pressure-points in the playmaking. The purpose of Stereopticon perspective, then, is not to recommend that translators adopt one textual variant over another. That’s the job of text-editing, the tradition that erases variants by choosing between them or folding them together into “best texts.”

Stereopticon perspective helps translators by tracking variants as a way of recording the play’s dramatic pulse. When the variants speed up (as they most certainly do in Isabela’s self-denunciation scene), Stereopticon perspective alerts translators to watch for major developments in subtext. In the case of Isabela’s appearance before the King of Naples, Stereopticon perspective specifically reminds translators that the dama in action is multidimensional (through Tan largo’s specification of the social and elemental risks that the Duchess runs at top of the scene), and that that every element in the damas’ makeup is in conflict at this juncture (through Tan largo’s remarkable self-denunciation speech). Thus alerted, translators may choose to translate either Tan largo’s version of Isabela’s meeting with the King, or the Burlador’s version of Isabela’s meeting with the King, or even some combination or invention of words that captures the same dramatic moment. The point is that a woman of Fire, Phlegm, and Aristocratic Privilege is appearing onstage, with every part of her makeup at war with her dramatic situation.

From a Stereopticon perspective, then, Isabela’s audience-with-the-King speech carries the same dramatic information, the same dimensionality onstage, regardless of whether it finds its voice in Tan largo’s sixteen lines or the Burlador’s single line. Since the high drama of the moment is easier to see in Tan largo’s longer version, I deal with it first:

Señor, confieso
mis culpas y mis ofensas;
mas sírvame de castigo
el verme en vuestra presencia.
Profané vuestro Palacio.
Discúlpennme Troya y Grecia,
si hay disculpa, gran señor,
bastante en tanta bajeza.
El Duque Otavio me dio
mano de esposo, y con ella
le di entrada, y le di el alma
y la más costosa prenda.
Perdóname las palabras
si las obras consideras,
que al punto que no fui casta,
a ese mismo no fui honesta.
(López-Vázquez 1990, 165-66; on casta and honesta, see Covarrubias 316, 696)

Seen through a Stereopticon perspective, this speech crackles with character-specific conflict – internal stresses pulling Isabela in different directions even as she speaks. Translation illuminated by Stereopticon perspective seeks to Re-code that conflict, in full. Here, the white-hot demands of self-defense pit themselves against a palpable reticence to take action. (Note the perfervid references to castigo [learning your lesson], disculpa [extenuating circumstances], and perdón [official erasure of offense] slipping through the tortured, truncated sentences expressing a disdainful apology for the bajeza [distasteful necessity] of stooping to palabras [speaking out].) Untouchable hauteur faces off with utter humiliation, each feeding off the other. Fuego, flema, and sangre slug it out, fighting themselves to a standstill in sixteen lines.

Re-coded into English, Stereopticon perspective on the speech could sound this way (substantively different from Schizzano and Mandel’s Composite translation of the same lines, in the introduction to this chapter):

Sir, I confess my guilt and my crime – let having to appear like this in your presence serve as my punishment. I profaned your palace. Greek and Trojan precedents ought to defend me, if any defense can serve, your majesty, for behavior so unpardonably base. Duke Otavio gave me his hand as my husband, and on that understanding I gave him entrée – I entrusted my hope of heaven to him, gave him
my soul and the most precious of my prized possessions. You’ll pardon my speaking out like this when you weigh my actions carefully. I swear to you: I could sooner devolve into illegitimacy and low birth than I could stop being a woman whose virtue is wholly unbesmirched.

Stereopticon perspective becomes even more useful for unpacking the Burlador’s one-line speech. Isabela’s subtext is the same for the Burlador’s unilinear utterance as for the sixteen lines in Tan largo. The stakes remain enormous. The character remains complex, and in conflict. But Composite translation of the Burlador’s

Con que ojos veré al Rey?

(Fernández 20)

conveys only the palest glimpse of the subtextual stresses of the moment into Kidd’s Composite Ladykiller. Kidd has his Isabella say “[Aside.] How shall I look the King in the face?” (6) – a perfectly literature translation, but almost completely devoid of character information. In Julie Florio’s staging, in fact, the speech became a throwaway entrance line for an actress reappearing after a two-and-a-half-page absence.

Stereopticon perspective alerts translators that, brief as it is, this speech expresses Isabela under maximum stress – conditions of performance that encourage translation to encode the boldest meanings for loaded terms like ojos (see Covarrubias 835) in a translation, along the lines of:

Put on your best Duchess face, girl –
you’re about to eyeball His Majesty!

Like Isabela, Tisbea/Trisbea exhibits a multidimensional characterization that’s recorded in both versions of the play, but which textual variants in Tan largo help to foreground for translation. Again, the dama profits from the out-of-synch assemblage of an iconic element with a characteristic disposition and a clearly-marked social standing. Tisbea/Trisbea lives where Water restlessly cohabits with Melancholy at the very bottom of the social scale, in a kind of primordial Noble-Savage-land.

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As in the case of Isabela, the three dimensions of Tisbea/Trisbea’s characterization integrally shape her role throughout the play, expressing themselves in her speech, outlook, setting, and impact. The fact that she hails from an ancient Roman settlement on Spain’s northeastern coastline (Fernández 23, 89), the way she throws herself into the sea after making her seduction public (Fernández 32, 73), and her explicit conversation with Don Juan about the distance separating their status levels (Fernández 30, 72) – these central contributions to the world of the play derive directly from her three-dimensional makeup.

Instructively (and very Isabela-like), Tisbea/Trisbea’s characterization gains dynamism and direction from the conflict inherent in calculatedly mismatched character dimensions. Both versions of the script repeatedly stress Tisbea/Trisbea’s primacy as a female reflection of Don Juan – a would-be sex-free seductress who ends up calling herself a *burladora burlada* [a tricky Dixie caught in her own trickiness] (Fernández 31, 50, 72-73, 89). But while the *Burlador* presents a performance score for Tisbea that uses Water’s association with the Blessed Virgin Mary to highlight the virginal sides of the character, *Tan largo* refocuses the same material to foreground the character’s come-hither angles, making Trisbea a Siren on the Lookout Rocks of her Oceanfront wilderness (Fernández 25-26, 69-70).

Clearly, excavating Tisbea/Trisbea’s emblematic alliance with the element Water, exploring her dispositional alignment with the humor Melancholy, and assessing her representation of Spain’s least enfranchised social echelon, the Noble Savages of Tarragona, is indispensable to the process of Re-coding this character for faithful re-production in English. Only by grasping Tisbea/Trisbea’s complexity can translators put themselves in a position to transmit the character’s developmental arc, her symbolic impact, and even her involvement in the plot, with vigorously playable specificity and pizzazz.

Consider how this *dama*’s construction characterizes her, generating a stage presence that is as dynamic as the Duchess’, but clearly individual, specific to Tisbea/Trisbea. Tisbea/Trisbea swims into the audience’s ken as a wide-eyed girl all a-giggle about the waves kissing her feet as she stands on the beach getting
ready to go fishing. From that moment, her alliance with Water (Agua) is unmistakably inscribed into her performance text. Agua insistently dominates the allusions in the lines that she speaks – Medea crossing the sea, Troy set ablaze by sailors, the Monster from the Deep who ruined her life (Fernández 31, 49, cf. 73, 89). Agua imperiously dictates the associations implicit in the native setting that frames her – Tarragona’s coast, Spain’s first line of defense against invading pirates and last outpost of industry not yet outsourced (Fernández 23). And agua sets the agenda for the fundamental “business” that she enacts in the play – fishing for her living, saving Don Juan from shipwreck, and bitterly cursing the sea when he abandons her (Fernández 24, 89, 94). Obviously, you can’t come to terms with Tisbea/Trisbea without Re-coding her connection to Water – linking her characterization to images, places, and occupations that define her nation (see also Martín 33-36).

What may not be so obvious, from a 21st-century US perspective, is the fact that Tisbea/Trisbea’s elemental association with Agua unlocks key contradictions in her characterization – contradictions that are vital to re-creating her impact in performance. Critics have hotly disagreed about Tisbea’s moral stature for generations – in fact, debate about her moral stature has passed for character analysis in large chunks of comedia scholarship (see Rose, esp. 48, 54, 56). Is she the passion-proof Virgin she claims to be, or is her innocent angler act a front for a Harpy hooking, the seductive façade of a Whore? In a maneuver brilliantly designed to make nonsense of this kind of moral pigeonholing, Tan largo and the Burlador make her both.

Agua in 17th-century Spain, after all, could represent both the Holy Spirit and urine, both the pure distillation of heavenly fragrances and crocodile tears, both the last resort of the hopeless (“darle el agua a la boca” meant to be in trouble way over your head; “echarse al agua,” to abandon ship) and the first-responder strategy of the pragmatic («Del agua vertida, la que puede ser cogida» proverbially expressed commitment to concentrating on what’s salvageable in a bad situation; see Covarrubias 51-52). So it’s well within the elemental range of the play’s Water-Woman to embody both Baptismal regeneration and the Whore of Babylon.
*Tan largo* and the *Burlador* gleefully build up, and build on, this dynamic union of opposites, giving both the Saint and the Sinner sides of Tisbea/Trisbea equal stress. This double-barrel development policy is inscribed even into the *comedia*’s calculated variations on the character’s name. The distance between “Tisbea” and “Trisbea” maps a range of performance options that packs enormous potential into the role.

The name that the *Burlador* assigns the Pescadora [female who fishes for a living] – “Tisbea” – has a rich range of playable, character-suggestive implications. According to Covarrubias, “Tis” is a “corruption” of “Tirso,” and the first San Tis to achieve beatification suffered martyrdom in the province of Spanish Tarragona, Tisbea’s native turf (927; according to Covarrubias 955, Tarragona was the site from which the Emperor Octavian issued the Biblical order for all the world to be taxed that took Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem for Jesus’ birth). So in the *Burlador*, the Pescadora’s name (“Tis-beata”) suggests both a salute to homegrown Tarragonian holiness (the Blessed Sister Tis) and a wink at the famous monk who wrote *comedias* (Holy Saint Tirso!), who doesn’t have to be the author of this particular *comedia* to be playfully included in its world. “Tisbea,” then, highlights the character’s embodiment of cultural parody and religious irony. This name packs intelligentsia insider-ness into a working-class character, and beatific otherworldliness into a woman whose passion carries her straight to her own personal hell.

*Tan largo*’s intrusion of an “r” – dubbing the Pescadora “Trisbea” – expands the role’s eponymous potential. In the 17th century, “Tris” described the sound of things getting smashed (Covarrubias 975). Dictionaries of current Spanish usage associate “Tris” with the sound of breaking glass, with a tiny shard of time or space (a trice), with the prickly fear of imminent danger, and (in the expression *tris tras*, documented by Covarrubias) with the maddening repetition of a wearisome complaint (see Cassell’s 757, *Nuevo diccionario ilustrado Sopena* 959, Covarrubias 975). By naming this *dama* “Trisbea,” then, *Tan largo* suggests that the Pescadora embodies blessedness on the brink of being broken, happiness on the verge of being everlastingly lamented.
Unpacking so much punch from a one-letter name-shift might seem like dramaturgical over-interpretation, except for the fact that the character’s development proceeds to capitalize on the possibilities implied by the name-range. In the *Burlador*, just before he makes his reference to the world of meaning that one letter can contain – “que ay de amar a mar / vna letra solamente” [since there’s only a one-letter step from sea-ing (mar) to love-ing (amar)] (Fernández 25) – Don Juan addresses Tisbea in terms a pilgrim would use to pray to a patron saint:

```
pues del infierno del mar
salgo a vuestro claro cielo
...
para arrojarme a esos pies,
que abrigo y puerto me dan
Y en vuestro diuino oriente
renazco .... .
[since from ocean’s hell
I enter your bright heaven
...
to throw myself at your feet
which give me shelter and safe harbor,
and in your divine sunrise
I am reborn .... .] (Fernández 25; cf. Martel 255)
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*Tan largo* revamps Don Juan’s adoration of Tisbea the Blessed Virgin into a broken whimper to Trisbea the Seductively-Whining Siren. Here, the fear of being shattered and the fatal charm of a woman repeating complaints take center stage:

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iO, sin duda el mar ordena,
tras del suyo, otro pesar,
pues sacándome del mar
vengo a dar en su sirena.
Y puesto que lo seáis,
no pretendo a vuestras quejas
```
poner cera en mis orejas,
pues con los ojos matáis.
Ya muero en vos ...

[O! doubtless ’tis the sea ordains
another trial foll’wing shipwreck’s pain,
since pulling myself up safe from brine
puts me in range of your Siren whine.
And though a Siren’s what you are
I won’t attempt to seal my ears.
Wax is no rescue from your sweet sighs
since I’m done in by the darts in your eyes.
Already in you, I die ...
]

(López-Vázquez 1990, 175; cf. Fernández 69)

In the *Burlador*, Tisbea the Pescadora on her peñasco [lookout rock] enacts an edgy emblem of Stella Maris, and her suggestive saint-name supports her in that role. In *Tan largo*, Trisbea the Pescadora plays a Siren on a rocky shore, the embodiment of high hopes about to be shattered, a legendary singer of irresistible complaints that drive their listeners mad. Again, her name adds resonance to her characterization.

Stereopticon perspective takes note of the fact that the two versions of the script choose to foreground different sides of the Virgin/Whore binary at the same point in the action. This leads Stereopticon perspective to perceive something fundamental about this character: she embodies both sides of this cultural opposition. Where conflation would force a choice on translators, flattening the role to Stella Maris or the Siren, Stereopticon perspective complicates the role’s Re-coding by highlighting the fact that Tisbea/Trisbea enacts both terms in the Virgin/Whore binary in the same dramatic moment, playing complexity to the hilt. In the loaded moment when the Pescadora revives Don Juan, he sees her as both Salvation Incarnate and Seduction in the Flesh. This drives home the Stereopticon expectation that the actress playing the role will inhabit both facets of this culturally specific, culturally-imposed, culturally problematic, and morally questionable contradiction in terms.
The *comedia* tightens the tension in this character’s contradictions by housing them in a woman from society’s outer fringes. Tisbea/Trisbea introduces a snapshot of Spain populated by backcountry *pescadores* [fishing folk], *pastores* [herd-keepers], and *villanos* [villagers] (López-Vázquez 1990, 183). Her “homies” would be Appalachian inbreds today, so far below the gaze of the elite eye that the only way high culture could see them in *Siglo de Oro* Spain was to weave them into piscatorial fantasies (see Rose 49). The Pescadora’s unsightly social standing provides a particularly telling example of how *Tan largo* and the *Burlador* build complexity into characterizations through misaligning character traits.

Status plays a prominent part in Isabela’s story, too, but it’s an aspect of her makeup that the Duchess takes for granted, something (from her phlegmatic point of view) not worth worrying her aristocratic head about. Isabela’s social prominence may get the *comedia*’s patriarchs all hot and bothered, generating remarkable excitement in Don Juan’s uncle Pedro, Don Juan’s dad Diego/Juan Senior, and his dad’s boss King Alfonso XI of Castilla (Fernández 19 and 64, 32 and 73, 55 and 92). In Isabela’s eyes, however, standing at the top of the social ladder is so integral a part of who she is that it stands beyond question. Indeed, at the top of the 11:00 scene the Duchess dismisses the suggestion that she needs to marry Don Juan in order to restore her respectability as a laughably alarmist notion, totally beneath consideration (Fernández 48, 88) – a social conclusion that King Alfonso emphatically seconds (Fernández 55, 92).

Not so Tisbea/Trisbea. Here, the *dama*’s wavering faith in her own social mobility takes center stage. Indeed, the play uses this *dama* to unsettle its audience’s convictions about status, by characterizing this servant-class woman not as a smart-mouth female sidekick – a typical *criada* or *graciosa* character – but as a full-scale leading-lady [a *dama*], a role formally above her social station. When Don Juan starts promising to become her husband, Tisbea/Trisbea stops him mid-line with this stark status assessment: “Soy desigual / a tu ser” [But I’m not your social equal] (Fernández 30, 72), pitchforking social standing right into the foreground of her character’s consciousness, and marking social motion as a pivotal factor in her character’s development.
In the *Burlador*, Don Juan counters Tisbea’s objection with the argument that Love can equalize their ranks:

Amor es Rey,
que yguala con justa ley
la seda con el sayal.

[Love rules, and love’s laws can indivisibly weave silk and sackcloth into the selfsame garment.]  (Fernández 30)

*Tan largo* goes farther. In the 17th-century Spanish second-look at Tisbea/Trisbea’s makeup, the Burlador makes himself a candidate to become her running-mate for life, *not* by claiming that her social star could rise to meet his, but by proving (in a shocking social devolution) that he can lower his status to match hers. To overcome Trisbea’s scruples, Juan Tenorio, the biggest noise in high-society Seville, assumes the role of a Tarragonian Pescador, suffering the same indignities and cherishing the same hopes as Anfriso and his fellows:

En tu casa estoy,
y estimo ser más en ella
un humilde pescador,
mereciendo tu favor
y tu mano hermosa y bella,
que las riquezas mayores
que el mundo puede ofrecer.

[Your world is all the world to me. I’d rather be a good ole boy right here, shucking oysters, shuffling my feet and saying shucks-ma’am every time I can get you to look my way and wave, than be the Donald in a custom-made Armani suit, giving some new Apprentice hell.]  (López-Vázquez 1990, 181)

Clearly, status concerns stand at the center of Tisbea/Trisbea’s encounter with Don Juan. Her social class marks the most concrete, expressible obstacle to her buying at face value the picture of herself as Mrs. Social-Mover Tenorio that the Burlador/garañón teasingly reflects.

Insight into Tisbea/Trisbea’s status-consciousness is a particularly promising facet of Stereopticon study for translators in the US. *Tan largo* and
the *Burlador* are brimful of social ranks and offices that carry no meaning whatsoever for contemporary American theater people, but translation practice has yet to model any thoroughgoing system for dealing with this major translation problem. Stereopticon perspective helps the situation in two ways. First, Stereopticon study introduces US translators to *Tan largo*, still the *Burlador*’s shadowy half-sibling in translation history. (Only one translation in this 10-play survey, you’ll recall – Schizzano and Mandel’s *Playboy* – bases its English text directly on *Tan largo*; Kidd’s *Ladykiller* doubles as a Composite work by virtue of the fact that his Spanish source borrows freely from *Tan largo*.) Getting up close and personal with *Tan largo* is a revolutionary experience for US translators because (as *Tan largo*’s version of Trisbea’s moment of class-crisis demonstrates) *Tan largo* stages social inquiry in terms that are more open, accessible, and compatible to contemporary US readers than is the more covert, indirect, and encoded social satire of the *Burlador*. *Tan largo*’s foregrounding of social issues is a useful precedent for US translations of the first Don Juan.

Stereopticon perspective, I hasten to remind you, works *not* by inducing choices between the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*, but by reading through their differences to identify subtextual structures, stresses, and developments in critical scenes. This subtextual focus is a second source of Stereopticon perspective’s usefulness to US translators who are grappling with problems of re-producing the performance effect of social class in the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*. Reading through the differences in Don Juan’s two answers to Tisbea/Trisbea’s social scruples, you learn one vital thing about this *dama*: social concerns are absolutely central to her consciousness. Re-coding Tisbea/Trisbea’s class-consciousness for transmission into contemporary US theaters, at this make-or-break point in her history, may require strengthening the language and making it more direct. Stereopticon perspective’s fidelity to subtext makes room for such departures.

Translators stand urgently in need of new ways to Re-code Tisbea/Trisbea’s conflictedness about class – new ways that Stereopticon perspective makes feasible. Surging to the fore at the very points where she’s negotiating moral adjustments, Tisbea/Trisbea’s class-consciousness is powerful
protection against conceiving her role as a one-dimensional warning against women getting out of line (the “Women Beware Burlar” syndrome that substitutes moral measurement for character analysis). Stereopticon perspective shows that concern with status adjustment is organically rooted in this dama’s character, springing from a fundamental disalignment of her social standing with her iconic element. Fisherfolk (Tisbea/Trisbea’s social peers) represent the least dominant sector of Spanish society imported into the world of this comedia. But in 17th-century Spanish conceptions of the cosmos, Tisbea/Trisbea’s iconic element Water [Agua] took first place.

Covarrubias’ discussion of Agua opens with an observation that is essential for appreciating Tisbea/Trisbea’s characterization. Recording a 17th-century Spanish take on the freshest and wettest of the elements, the dry old lexicographer notes:

AGUA. Elemento principal, entre los quatro. ... Parece tener imperio sobre los demás, porque el agua se traga la tierra, apaga el fuego, sube al aire y le altera y, lo que más es, que está sobre los mismos cielos ... . [WATER. Amongst the four, the primary element. Water clearly dominates the others, since it swallows up earth, smothers up fire, and rises up into air and changes its consistency. Water is also – and this really takes the cake – the element that Scripture tells us “stands above the very heavens.”]

(Covarrubias 51)

How can Tisbea/Trisbea of Tan largo and the Burlador, a dirt-poor no-class trailer-trash nobody from a boil on the backside of nowhere, play Principal Element in this elegant play?

Tisbea/Trisbea takes first place in a chain of fools by expressing her inclusion in it most forthrightly. Tisbea/Trisbea’s impressively prolix speeches – she has more to say than any other woman in the play – are fundamental to staging the comedia not because of their length (the one feature that catches traditional criticism’s attention), but because they perform dramaturgical work that is central to the mission of Tan largo and the Burlador. She authoritatively sets the dominant tone of the play (satiric), demonstrates the dominant
mechanism of seduction (self-deception), and maps the play’s dominant mode of response to experiencing seduction (self-correction through improved self-knowledge).

This last point – the Pescadora’s primacy as self-acknowledged *burladora burlada* – is crucial to Re-coding her character, and the pivotal 11:00 scene she stars in. Consider her trenchant self-diagnosis during the major development she undergoes in full view of the audience, right after Don Juan’s departure from Tarragona and right before the first-act curtain falls. In the *Burlador*, Tisbea expresses nacent self-recognition this way:

> Yo soy la que hazia siempre de los hombres *burla* tanta,
> que siempre las que *hazen burla,*
> vienen a quedar *burladas*.
> [I’m the same woman who was always making fun of men in love. Watch out! Women who’re always laughing at other people end up getting laughed at.] (Fernández 31, emphasis added)

In *Tan largo*, the same new-forged self-awareness inhabits Trisbea’s very different words:

> Yo soy aquella que hazia, emula de las çagalas, *burla* de amor, que assi amor a quien del se *burla* paga.
> [Don’t you recognize me? I’m that lucky bitch who used to make all the other girls eat their hearts out, the one who laughed at anyone in love, laughed long and loud. Oh yeah. Love’s making me pay for every laugh – pay right through my snotty nose.] (Fernández 72-73, emphasis added)

Major restatements of the Pescadora’s preeminence as a *burladora burlada* recur in the 11:00 scene. This preview of the theme rounds out the *dama’s* character construction, and highlights Stereopticon perspective’s usefulness for Re-coding this *dama’s* complexities. Textual variants in *Tan largo* and the *Burlador* raise the profile of Tisbea/Trisbea’s *burladora burlada*
characterization by recording that theme in differing words. Its finger lightly on
the pulse of the play, Stereopticon perspective alerts translators to the heightened
dramatic tension when the two scripts diverge, and urges them to Re-code
accordingly.

Stereopticon perspective helps translators both to locate and to Re-code
complexity in *dama* characterizations, by raising the profile of the elements,
humors, and status distinctions that the *comedia* uses to build
multidimensionality into its female leads. The elemental schema that connects
Isabela to fire, Tisbea/Trisbea to water, Ana to air, and Aminta/Arminta to earth
in the *Burlador* is so well concealed in subtext that literary criticism took until
1998 to mention it in print. To the best of my knowledge, the *Burlador*’s scheme
of misaligning humors and social standings with elements in order to maximize
its *damas*’ complexity has never been discussed before. Textual variants in *Tan
largo* help to foreground each facet of this complexity – for example, by
complicating Tisbea/Trisbea’s connection to water with Siren images, and by
developing Isabela’s association of phlegm with fire by writing her a sixteen-line
speech to the King of Naples that simultaneously accuses and excuses herself,
wavering from passionate fieriness to dispassionate resignation almost word by
word.

Some useful consequences of Stereopticon perspective’s subtextual focus
are worth a look as I bring this investigation of “Element, Humor, and Status” to
a close. Tradition has valued *Tan largo* as an editorial aid to filling in lacunae in
the *Burlador*’s rhyme scheme, rather than as an equally authoritative second lens
for building Stereopticon perspectives on the dramatic conflicts that fill dramatic
verse with performance vigor. The same tradition has taught that translating
drama means transcribing dialog precisely and philologically, rather than
transmitting the complex hopes and fears and compulsions (sometimes carefully
hidden) that make characters speak their dialog in the first place. So translators
have found themselves adrift on a sea of imprecision that director-adapter
Laurence Boswell trenchantly diagnoses, able to “give a character almost any
word which would make a kind of sense of the relationship they were in and
would kind of relate to the original language” (qtd. in Johnston 283). Absent any
specific analytical technique for achieving precision of perspective (what Boswell describes as “getting in touch with the characters”), imprecision viciously entrenches itself. Fuzzy ideas about characters generate unfocused translations of characters’ speeches, which in turn reinforce the misconception that the characters were fuzzily conceived in the first place. Re-coding suffers.

Understanding Tan largo and the Burlador’s layered approach to characterizing women is an indispensable tool for recovering this comedia’s stageworthiness, and for Re-coding its performance experience in terms that can generate equivalent experiences in 21st-century theaters. The urgency of this task – revolutionary as it is in the context of a translation tradition that suppresses women’s complexity at every turn – becomes doubly apparent as Stereopticon perspective turns to Re-coding political clout and making sense of the “11:00 scene” that brings Isabela and Tisbea/Trisbea into conflict.

**Political Clout**

The structure of this inquisition into political clout is familiar. As in the study of elements, humors, and status levels that preceded it, the fundamental shape of the argument is to counter cultural expectations about women in Don Juan stories (this time, the expectation that Don Juan’s damas must be vengeful but politically ineffectual) with textual variants from Tan largo and the Burlador. Again, the study starts by establishing ways that Tan largo and the Burlador resemble one another, as a means of making distinctions between the versions more comprehensible. New developments in thinking about how theater works – this time via Baz Kershaw’s description of what theater has to do to generate lasting change – inflects the perspective. Then, close study of variants leads to translations that are enriched by Stereopticon perspectives, without becoming bound to either textual alternative.

It’s structure itself that plays a new role here. So far, my applications of Stereopticon perspective have been focused on variants’ wording. Surveying the 11:00 scene, I shift the focus to variants’ structure – a particularly powerful application of Stereopticon perspective, since some of the most informative
differences between *Tan largo* and the *Burlador* arise as the two versions of the first Don Juan play stage provocative re-mixes of pivotal scenes. Structural divergences between the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* – like the double helixes in a strand of DNA, bending creatively away from each other to make their organic oneness more potent – make conflicts between *damas* more productive onstage.

A prime site for sampling Stereopticon perspective on a critical juncture in the first Don Juan play’s structure presents itself in the climax of the *comedia*’s 11:00 number. To explore this site:

- I launch the investigation with a description of what theater people expect an “11:00 number” to achieve, accompanied by a bone-crunchingly brief synopsis of the 11:00 scene in *Tan largo* and the *Burlador* (concentrating on the episode’s explosive climax).

- I proceed to note that tradition recognizes this turning point’s political potential, but translates the scene subject to the assumption that *damas* play victims in this *comedia*, which controverts the scene’s carefully structured political impact.

- The next step in the argument points out how differences between the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* make the 11:00 scene’s political punch both more powerful and more stageable, as they spell out different structural approaches to staging the surprising emergence of a revolutionary collaboration between *damas* who begin their interaction as elementally opposed.

- I incorporate new ideas about how theater creates political change from theater theorist Baz Kershaw to pinpoint precisely how, in the climax of the 11:00 number, each version of the play changes its tune from competition to collaboration, and structures the new harmony to enact substantive political change.

- Kershaw’s ideas first illuminate the *Burlador*’s strategy of building unlooked-for community on the basis of both women’s status as *burladoras burladas*.

- Kershaw’s ideas then highlight *Tan largo*’s strategy of relocating the rupture between the *damas* significantly earlier in the 11:00 scene, allowing their recovery from near-riot more time to develop into collaboration, more audibly.
Finally, translation – Schizzano and Mandel’s *Playboy*, the only English acting text in this survey which transmits an authentic 17th-century vision of the 11:00 scene’s recovery from rupture, complete and intact – demonstrates the vitality of this climactic moment, when its impact is not flattened by conflation.

The trip to 11:00 draws to a close with a trenchant reminder that the impact of the 11:00 scene (like the vitality of the *comedia* as a whole) has a symbiotic relationship with its characters’ complexity, and a quick promise to demonstrate the disastrous effect of conflating (rather than Stereoptically investigating) textual variety in the last section of this chapter: a Stereopticon perspective on Don Juan’s damnation (the climax that the 11:00 scene prepares).

In a traditional American book musical, you expect the show’s 11:00 number to accelerate the action by setting off the trip-wires that trigger the grand finale (think “So Long, Dearie” in *Hello, Dolly!*); to give the performance new zip by revealing new sides of central characters (think “The Highest Judge of All” in *Carousel* and “Just You Wait, ‘Enry ‘Iggins” in *My Fair Lady*); and to buy the production a new grip on its audience by introducing a fresh, unforgettable tune into the show’s thematic mix (think “Rose’s Turn” in *Gypsy*). Ideally, that sense of pick-up, drive-forward, and lift-toward-the-ending will spring from edge-of-your-seat developments in character, which is why Carol Channing calls “the eleven o’clock number” the place “where the people carrying the plot stand there and bare their souls” (qtd. in Frommer 4). That is precisely what happens in *Tan largo* and the *Burlador*. Every development in the 11:00 episode – leading up to and culminating in the arresting turnaround in the scene’s climax – springs directly from the characters who act it, standing there and baring their souls.

In *Tan largo* and the *Burlador*, the 11:00 scene moves isolated, ineffective, individualized women from a position of passive, disempowered solitude to a position of pro-active, mutually supportive solidarity. The scene pursues this community-building point by capitalizing on conflicts within its principal actors’ characterizations, writing itself into the performance record in two different versions in order to present Isabela and Tisbea/Trisbea in their full-blown three-dimensional formulations, complete with internal contradictions.
Flattening difference – differences within or between the characters – is foreign to the scene’s agenda, so down-pedaling difference proves the diametric opposite of its playwriting technique. The dramaturgical strategy here is to stage complex individual alongside complex individual, maximizing rather than compromising the distance they have to travel toward community. Confronting a multidimensional Duchess with competing dimensions in a Pescadora means that this dramatically recharging, socially eye-opening scene – comedia’s salute to Thelma and Louise – has to forge a basis for unity in the women’s mutual acceptance of their many contradictions. These damas pour their differences together, undiluted, into a formula for pledging fundamental social reform.

Briefly, here’s what happens in Tan largo and the Burlador’s 11:00 number:

- Isabela formulaically and lackadaisically laments her fall from grace. Her escort urges her to look on the bright side of developments: marrying Don Juan will reestablish her social position.
- Left manless as her courier deals with travel arrangements, Isabela’s attention turns to Tisbea/Trisbea’s melancholy denunciations of the ocean. The two women introduce themselves, and discover a dollop of common ground in comparing (competitively) the sufferings which the sea has caused them.
- Tisbea/Trisbea precipitates a crisis in their fast-blooming fellow-feeling by revealing that they have something in common more divisive than competitive disenchantments with the sea: both of them have shotgun-wedding claims to Don Juan.
- The Duchess erupts, and the common ground between the women seems sure to suffer an extinction event. This marks the climactic rupture of the scene.
- Surprisingly, the climactic resolution shows the two women, formally competitors for young Mr. Tenorio’s attention, deciding to make common cause with one another. They pool their resources – blending the synergies of fire and water, phlegm and melancholy, aristocratic access and outsider determination – to bring the Burlador to justice. The scene closes with a thrice-repeated slogan of solidarity: “Mal aya la muger que en hombres fia!”
[Begging for trouble – that’s a woman falling for anything that comes out of a man’s mouth!] (Fernández 50, 89).

It’s persuasive to note that throughout the full 50-year arc of translation history that informs this investigation into translation problems, Tan largo and the Burlador’s 11:00 scene has been invariably and unanimously treated as a site where political impact hangs in the balance. Tradition recognizes this juncture as politically-charged, a critical site for seeing power change hands. But tradition couples this recognition with the assumption that the damas in this play play helpless victims. That results in re-presentations of the 11:00 scene that aggressively erase women’s political clout during the episode’s climax.

Tradition’s most popular strategy for quashing political impact in the 11:00 number is to end the scene with a political disclaimer. Translators following this tradition make Isabela’s final line in the scene a hymn to hopelessness, an explicit abandonment (in the face of wrongs that prove too massive to right) of the struggle to act out efficacy. An excellent example of this ploy surfaces in Walter Starkie’s Playboy of Seville, where the Duchess caps the scene with this despondent summation: “No vengeance ever will satisfy my wrongs” (Starkie 232; see also Campbell 294, O’Brien 118, Oppenheimer 67).

A recent spin-off from the tradition of inserting political disclaimers succeeds in de-politicizing the episode by staging its conclusion as an exercise in duplicity. Translators following this path to minimizing women’s impact introduce the episode’s participants as damas whose differences are trivial, then use the revelation that both the Duchess and Tisbea/Trisbea have invested heavily in Don Juan futures as grounds for a rupture that transforms the women into covert enemies. Gwynne Edwards’ Trickster of Seville scripts an alluring instance of this diversion from efficacy when he makes Isabela’s final line a private [Aside] advancing her private quest for “vengeance” at the expense of the “justice” in Tisbea’s “claim” (Edwards 151; see also Alvarez 190). Instead of meeting as natural competitors, Fire running into Water, Edwards’ Duchess and Pescadora begin the scene as embodiments of an elemental affinity (“friends” with egregious likenesses; see Edwards 147-49). Instead of ending the episode as sworn collaborators, poised to pull the rug out from under special privileges
entrenched in their social contract (especially privileges that empower exploitative men), this *Trickster*’s Thelma covertly sells out her Louise.

Time after time, from 1957 to 2004, the scene designed to galvanize the audience into a new level of attention to the action onstage has stepped into print as a stale two-women-in-the-same-dress joke. At the dramatic turning point where *Tan largo* and the *Burlador* use two different ways to record the same electric shock in the performance score – women from different corners of their world making common cause to take charge of their own destinies (Thelma bonding with Louise) – tradition inscribes a tired cliché: two ridiculously used-up *damas* staging a cat-fight for the right to stand first in line for a snowball’s chance at the same powerful man’s attention (Geraldo meets *The Bachelor*).

Both the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* paint a stage picture of the 11:00 scene’s climax that’s radically different from tradition’s view of a political impulse foredoomed to failure, hamstrung by women’s incapacity for effective social action. In the 17th-century Spanish printings, this marks the point in the plot where women take arms against a sea of troubles and, by collaborating, forge a sea-change in their world, redirecting the plot toward Don Juan’s damnation. Here, women decisively exercise social agency and enact political efficacy with gusto. The Duchess and the Pescadora enter the scene as isolated victims; they exit as Thelma and Louise.

The differences between the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* make this impact clear, and Re-codable for dynamic re-staging today. The two versions of this 11:00 scene vary by brilliantly re-mixing one another – presenting precisely the same dramaturgical elements, differently layered into the action. Studied Stereoptically – that is, through the lenses that both of the slightly divergent viewpoints on the scene supply, keeping the differences between them informatively intact – the two versions of the 11:00 scene serve to clarify its dramatic point and highlight its dramaturgical technique. The point of the scene is to construct a coalition between opposites, building a new vision of community from the bottom up. That’s why both representations of the action are structured to track two women’s progress toward a deeply rooted fellow-feeling that unites them despite huge “natural” obstacles to their solidarity. The scene’s
dramaturgical technique foregrounds complexity and conflict in the two individuals who forge this unlikely alliance, maximizing the distance they have to travel toward community. That’s why both versions bend over backward to present Isabela and Tisbea/Trisbea in their full-blown three-dimensional formulations, complete with internal contradictions.

*Tan largo* makes it possible to take a second, authentically 17th-century look at this pivotal passage of the play, and its testimony about the *comedia*’s 11:00 number comes through loud and clear: the scene’s dramatic juice lies in the fact that it squeezes “natural” enemies onto the same bandwagon, making them subscribers to the same agenda. This dramatic point is perceptible in the *Burlador* all by itself, but it can be hard to read there, because the *Burlador*’s version of the scene is relatively swift-moving and low-profile. *Tan largo* makes the characters’ progress toward community bumpier, and thus more legible.

New ideas about how theater writes political impact into performances can pinpoint differences between the way that the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* stage the 11:00 scene’s climax. Theater theorist Baz Kershaw spells out two levels of inscribing efficacy into dramatic experience. Locating those levels in the two stagings of the *comedia*’s Thelma and Louise scene can equip translators to train a Stereopticon perspective on the most critically feminist juncture in the play.

So how do theorists go about describing what has to happen for a play to make a political impact, or for a performance to generate, in one glorious buzzword, “efficacy” onstage? Baz Kershaw’s inquisition into 20th-century experimental drama in the UK offers a lucid, portable answer to that question. Kershaw theorizes:

> To have any hope of changing its audience a performance must somehow connect with that audience’s ideology or ideologies – to ‘play’ with the audience’s fundamental beliefs, and to provoke a potential crisis in those beliefs, *without* producing immediate rejection. The paradox of rule-breaking-within-rule-keeping is crucial to the efficacy of performance. It is when this paradox is operating at its most acute – when a riot of anger or ecstasy could break out, but does not – that performance achieves its greatest
potential for long-term efficacy. For the ‘possible worlds’ encountered in the performance are carried back by the audience into the ‘real’ socio-political world in ways which may influence subsequent action. (21, 28)

In Kershaw’s view, then, efficacy results when an ideological clash precipitates a crisis that is all-but unsalvageable – when value-based viewpoints diverge so sharply that communication almost ceases, without completely cutting off the flow of ideas.

Surely Isabela’s outburst at the climax of the 11:00 scene enacts just such a crisis for the two characters onstage. And while Kershaw’s theory expresses itself in terms of ideological challenge that a play poses for its audience, surely his insight is transferable to value conflicts that work themselves out between characters, too. I borrow Kershaw’s theory, then, to describe how the 11:00 scene in Tan largo and the Burlador creates the expectation of efficacy in what happens onstage, by precipitating an all-but unsalvageable crisis between the Duchess and the Pescadora.

Kershaw’s notion of a two-tiered progression toward “long-term efficacy” – playing with “fundamental beliefs” (tier one), and then provoking “a potential crisis in those beliefs, without producing immediate rejection” (tier two) – is extremely suggestive for students of Tan largo and the Burlador. The two versions of the play’s 11:00 scene diverge, in fact, as they map the episode’s progress through these efficacy-insuring dramaturgical tiers.

Stereopticon perspective on this politically decisive, dramatically divisive moment shows that both the Burlador and Tan largo structure the conclusion of their 11:00 scenes to ensure that coalition succeeds the crisis onstage. Because the two treatments use such different methods of tilting performance toward efficacy, however, Tan largo’s ending has been translated very differently from the Burlador’s. Understanding this specifically tricky sticking point in translation, and grasping its huge ramifications for Re-coding the whole play, requires coming to grips with the structure of the 11:00 number step by step.

The Burlador structures a tier-one approach to efficacy, pumping up the theme of personal responsibility – a crucial tool for provoking “fundamental
beliefs.” That’s why the Burlador detonates the climax of the scene with two closely-spaced re-statements of the burladora burlada theme. These responsibility statements set off the scene’s volcanic crisis, and set up an indestructibly cohesive similarity between the damas at the same time.

Tisbea sets out both of the Burlador’s crisis-provoking challenges to fundamental beliefs. Her first responsibility statement comes in answer to Isabela’s question “de donde soys?” [Where are you from?] (Fernández 49). Identifying her physical origins for the Duchess, Tisbea points to a cabaña [fisherman’s shack] whose walls are falling to pieces (“desparcidas,” like the whispers spreading everywhere about Isabela and Don Juan, see Fernández 48). In the words of Michael Kidd’s Composite Ladykiller (2004), she confesses:

In the safety of their thatch, my heart was once the hardest of diamonds, but the offspring of that arrogant beast [Gesturing toward the sea.] melted it more quickly than soft wax in the hot sun. (Kidd 48)

Here Tisbea presents herself as a body politic that has overthrown its own constitution, a Water woman undone by the son of the Sea.

Tisbea’s second responsibility statement follows 25 lines later (Fernández 50). In response to Isabela’s boast that she (the Duchess) has been forced into the role of Europa, drafted to play the bride in a power-wedding arranged against her will, Tisbea re-stakes her claim to first-person involvement in the event that radically changed her own world’s political topography. Spelling out the origins of her psychic self, the Burlador’s Pescadora tells the Duchess of a “despicable visitor” who (again quoting Kidd’s Composite translation):

turned venomous and struck me in my most vulnerable moment.
With the promise of marriage, she who had mocked suitors from up and down the coast fell for the deception. (Kidd 48)

The burladora [mocker] has actively, personally, and responsibly participated in making herself mocked [burlada, a gal who falls for a deception].

This second responsibility statement precipitates the Burlador’s 11:00 scene into crisis. Isabela instantly explodes into “Calla muger maldita” [Silence, witch!] (Fernández 50), and the “riot of anger or ecstasy” that Kershaw sees as
efficacy’s touch-point is touched off. The big question is how far the riot goes. Does it break the ideological tension in the scene irreparably, producing what Kershaw calls an “immediate rejection”? Or does it stretch the ideological charge on the scene to heighten it, rubbing “the ‘possible worlds’ encountered in the performance” up against “the ‘real’ socio-political world in ways which may influence subsequent action”?

Tradition sees the rupture as irreparable, and writes that conclusion into English-language performance scores in disclaimers and asides. The mechanism that inscribes efficacy into the *Burlador’s* version of the scene, however, is clearly recorded in the Spanish dialog. Words that measure the crisis’ rupture, keeping it just deep enough to be critical, and just small enough to be bridgeable – the recipe (according to Kershaw) for theater that produces efficacy – are spoken onstage. But tradition, ears ablaze with the explosiveness of the climactic rupture between the *damas*, cannot hear them.

Tisbea’s last words before Isabela’s outburst in the *Burlador* are “mira si es justo, que vengança tome” [You be the judge: does my case prove he owes me bigtime?] (Fernández 50, emphasis added). Isabela’s last words before sealing a new deal for women in the *Burlador’s* version of the scene are “No ay vengança que a mi mal tanto le quadre” [No other fine would suit my findings so fine] (Fernández 50, emphasis added). The *vengança* that the *Burlador’s* Isabela finds perfectly meted to her *mal* is not some private payback for injuries done to her as Duchess, but an outspoken endorsement of the *vengança* that Tisbea has asked her sister sufferer if she (the Pescadora) has legitimate claim to. In the face of huge ideological obstacles to their coalition, these women have made common cause.

Clearly, the *Burlador* structures its 11:00 scene to produce a political impact – the impact of ideological adversaries finding a common bond in the center of a crisis that threatens to drive them explosively apart, the impact of disempowered women taking a hopeful grip on efficacy. But traditional expectations keep translations from seeing that. Through the lens of *Tan largo*, these *damas’* movement toward maturity, responsibility, and community
becomes more perceptible for English-speaking readers, unlocking the political impact of the 11:00 scene for transmission more quickly and completely.

While the *Burlador* marks its 11:00 characters’ progression toward efficacy by developing their sense of personal responsibility, *Tan largo* underscores the pivotally-meeting damas’ political impact by magnifying their movement from rupture to realignment. The *Burlador* structures a first-tier explication of efficacy, foregrounding how these women “provoke” (in Kershaw’s terms) “a potential crisis” in “fundamental beliefs.” *Tan largo* remixes its version of the episode to foreground a second-tier encoding of political punch, spelling out what Kershaw would call the “riot of anger or ecstasy” that breaks out “without producing immediate rejection.”

Translators miss the revolutionary bang in the *Burlador’s* 11:00 number precisely because they hear the shouting at the end of the scene as a sign of immediate and irreparable “rejection.” Since the two women kicking up such a rumpus couldn’t possibly proceed to seal an equal-collaboration deal, *Burlador* translators find themselves concluding the scene with some sort of efficacy disclaimer, diffuser, or diverter. *Tan largo’s* second opinion is well positioned to be a real help in transmitting the episode’s political clout authoritatively. As though to stress that fact, *Tan largo* re-positions its crisis significantly closer to the middle of the 11:00 scene, where its more central position makes its impact more discernible.

The 11:00 number is the same size in both the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* – 107 lines long in each printing (see Fernández 48-50, 88-89). Moreover, both original versions of the scene are couched in the same distinctive verse-scheme: the intricately rhymed, curiously patterned *sextillas* that make their sole appearance in the script at this point. Yet (in a divagation that makes nonsense of defining “fidelity” as “philological literalness”) the two treatments are drastically different in their wording, and very differently paced.

The *Burlador* prolongs development before the crisis, investing lines into its personal responsibility project. In the *Burlador’s* score, Isabela’s firebrand eruption comes only eleven lines before the end of the 11:00 scene. *Tan largo*, in contrast, lavishes attention on crisis recovery – on the almost inconceivable birth
of an equal-partners collaboration in the aftermath of a disruptive outburst (i.e.,
efficacy emerging from a “riot” that breaks out “without producing immediate rejection”).

So in the performance that’s scripted by *Tan largo*, the Duchess goes up in holy smoke significantly closer to the middle of the scene, a full 23 lines from the episode’s ending. *Tan largo*, then, spends twice as much time as her sister script putting into action the fact that the 11:00 rupture represents not an efficacy-aborting rejection, but the kind of riotous readjustment in fundamental beliefs that gives efficacy birth.

*Tan largo*’s clarification of the scene’s crisis is immediately apparent in English, unlocking the 11:00 number’s political impact for performance right Now. In 1963 – a year before Walter Starkie’s *Playboy* went to press, reversing the arc of Isabela and Tisbea’s competitive postures morphing into collaboration, and ending their encounter on a note of hopeless helplessness – Adrienne M. Schizzano and Oscar Mandel put in print “the first attempt in any language, including Spanish, to present a conflated text of Tirso’s play” (Mandel 40).

The climax of the 11:00 number in Schizzano and Mandel’s *Playboy* is 100% *Tan largo*. Every other translation that I’ve surveyed editorially blinkers the authentic 17th-century vision of this pivotal moment by “correcting” its text in one way or another. Schizzano and Mandel’s script is a revelation about the scene’s political punch. Instructively, this version sizzles with efficacy emergent:

ISABELA: Enough! Cursed woman! Out of my sight! Oh, you have killed me. No, wait, if it was grief that moved you, you are not to blame. Continue. Is it all true?
TISBEA: True as life and death.
ISABELA: Evil strike the woman who believes the words of a man!
It was God who brought me to this hut. You have revived my determination to seek revenge. Evil strike the woman who believes the words of a man!
TISBEA: I beg you to take me with you, my lady, and my poor old father as well. He wants to ask the King for justice and satisfaction.
And Anfriso, the man I should have married and loved forever, and who wants me even now, let him come with us too.
ISABELA: You may all come with me.
TISBEA: Evil strike the woman who believes the words of a man!
[Exeunt.] (Schizzano and Mandel 85)

In the aftermath of this crisis, coalition springs to life multidimensionally and performably. It’s there in the palpable revival of sympathy (“No, wait, if it was grief that moved you, you are not to blame”). It’s present in the perception of divine intervention (“It was God who brought me to this hut”). It’s acted out in the communal pooling of private claims to compensation (“You have revived my determination to seek revenge” and “I beg you to take me with you ... to ask the King for justice and satisfaction”).

Like longleaf pine seeds popped open by the forest fire that it takes to make them germinate, the impetus toward efficacy (the “revived ... determination,” driven by the new vision of “justice,” “satisfaction,” and “revenge”) takes root right in the wake of a rupture that all but blew these women apart forever. Here, precise transmission of a shared solidarity slogan (“Evil strike the woman who believes the words of a man!”) maps the dramatic progress of an equal-status partnership that rocks the status quo. In this performance score, both Duchess and Pescadora end the scene in a collaborative, clear, and present expectation of practical political results (“ask the king for justice and satisfaction”).

At first glance, conflating the two 17th-century performance versions of the one original Don Juan play would seem like a major step toward packing the most performance power into the 11:00 scene. In the light of Tan largo’s treatment, the Burlador’s strategy of wrenching collaboration out of the jaws of crisis becomes clearer. It’s easier to see the damas’ revolutionary similarities – their equal status as burladoras burladas, their communal claim to vengança – surviving the stereotypical rupture of their competing promise from the Burlador, as Tan largo’s step-by-step testimony about their quick-step progress toward solidarity comes into play.
Does that mean combining the two versions could produce an even more audible political pop? Doesn’t it stand to reason, that if the *Burlador*’s responsibility statements build political muscle into the 11:00 scene, and if *Tan lardo*’s slow-motion picture of collaboration emerging in the aftermath of crisis makes the scene’s political impact palpable, then combining the two strategies should write efficacy into the episode all the more ineradicably?

In practice, conflating *Tan lardo* with the *Burlador* to produce a single “best text” tends to erase complexity from the performance record, flattening this pivotally textured scene. Differences in the way the two versions build efficacy into the scene tend to neutralize each other when the strategies are combined. Following López-Vázquez’ “correction” of the *Burlador*’s text with interpolations from *Tan lardo*, Michael Kidd’s *Ladykiller of Seville* attempts a Composite “improvement” on the 11:00 scene. The results are instructive.

Kidd’s 11:00 scene sits on the page like dramatic dead weight, smashed flat by its opaque diction, its melodramatic stage directions, and the misogynistic predictability of its stereotypical characterizations. Onstage in the Toronto premiere of Kidd’s translation, the most legible movement toward efficacy in the *Ladykiller of Seville*’s 11:00 scene emerged not from Kidd’s dialog, but from Julie Florio’s direction. Florio had the actresses playing “Isabella” and “Thisbee” join hands for the final line in the episode and speak it in unison: “Woe to the woman who trusts in men!” (49, a line assigned to Thisbee solo in the translation). Florio proceeded to bring this promise of women making a difference in their world to fruition in her staging of Don Juan’s damnation, where she hailed all four female leads onstage to drag the Ladykiller offstage to hell—again, a directorial improvement on the performance recorded in Kidd’s script (see Kidd 65).

Florio’s payoff for the 11:00 scene suggests Don Juan’s damnation as a productive site for digging deeper into the question of how erasing differences between *Tan lardo* and the *Burlador* impoverishes this *comedia*’s performance. Damnation is the next stop in this investigation. Before leaving the 11:00 scene, however, it’s illuminating to apply Stereopticon perspective to translating cruxes in the structure of the 11:00 scene.
Character-specific conflict between two highly individuated characters creates the 11:00 number, generating its determinative structure. Both versions of the episode energetically develop their damas’ differences, gleefully stretching the distance that separates Duchess from Pescadora, spicing their confrontation by heightening its potential for conflict, and electrifying its conclusion by reversing the expected outcome. The playwriting’s systematic development of conflict calls attention to the fact that tensions within and between these two carefully constructed characterizations cause the action to develop as it does.

Tan largo, for example, generates its version of 11:00’s climax directly from the way that Trisbea’s melancholic agua-ness rubs up against Isabela’s phlegmatic fuego-ness. The structure that Stereopticon perspective makes apparent begins in elemental opposition. An excellent place for observing this structural pattern in action – and for carrying it into English – surfaces in the speech that marks Trisbea’s first reappearance onstage since act one of Tan largo, and launches her into a sob-story contest with Isabela. Listen to the conflicted melancholy that sings out in the Pescadora’s rousing conclusion, translated with a Stereopticon perspective on its participation in the scene’s structure:

a tus sordas orejas
quiero dar vozes, pues la causa has sido
de que el honor perdiera
la que siempre cruel con hombres era.
[Your deaf ears are where I scream, Sea of Spain, because you were the instrument used to humiliate me – me, who made a career out of making men choke on humble pie] (Fernández 89)

Expecting no response, but complaining anyway; bewailing woes that she herself accepts complicity in creating, this speech intensifies the tension between despondency and responsibility that characterizes the comedia’s Pescadora.

The Pescadora’s internal conflict (an element of characterization) authors her competitive posture toward the Duchess (an element of structure). Isabela’s reaction to Trisbea’s sea-chanty makes the plot-generative potency of character development clearly perceptible – a subtle, insistent reminder that
characterization organically molds the turning points in this pivotal scene’s plotting. Listen, as melancolía rouses flema to a competitive response, goading the Duchess to challenge the Pescadora to a contest for Miss Misfortunate. Again, the translation Re-codes a Stereopticon perspective on the speech’s place in the scene’s structure:

*Isab*  Porque del mar te quexas?
estás del mar zelosa, pescadora?
*Pesca.*  El mar parió mis quexas,
dichosa vos, que sin cuidado aora
del os estays riendo.

*Isa.*  Tambien furias del mar estoy sintiendo.

[Isabela: Why are you singing he-done-me-wrong songs to the surf, sweetie? Is the Sea your ... significant Other?
Trisbea: He’s the mother of my troubles. Lucky you. You can stand there without a care in the world, laughing in his face.
Isabela: Hey! I’m smarting from outrageous ways that Mother Sea’s behaved to me, too! Bet I can outdo you in the Blue-Water Blues department any day, babe ...]

(Fernández 89, cf. 49)

*Tan largo* uses Trisbea’s brand of melancholia (an essential element of her characterization) to precipitate a competitive situation with Isabela (an essential development in the plot). This strategy is instructive. The dramaturgy makes multidimensional character development drive its multifaceted plot.

That’s why key elements in these *damas’* characterizations continue to grow, shaping attitudes and lines and courses of action through the very end of the scene. The edgy union of opposites in the Pescadora’s makeup cues her stage business repeatedly. It informs Trisbea’s self-analysis as burladora burlada: “You set me up, Sea! I put men through romantic water-torture, so you brought a man across the water to torture me!” (pués la causa has sido / de que el honor perdiera / la que siempre cruel con hombres era; Fernández 89). It shapes Trisbea’s status as an emphatically fallen woman who is also an eagerly awaited bride (the Virgin Whore):
Anfriso, en cuyos braços
me pensê ver en talamo dichoso,
dandole eternos laços
...
que quiere ser mi esposo.
[Anfriso, the cowpoke I always sorta orter’ve had a hankering to have my shivaree with, hogtied together for the long haul – he’s still bucking like a unbroken bronco to have me for his bride] (Fernández 89).

The performance power of Trisbea’s role gathers steam, and the performance impact of the episode grows, as her character’s development torques up the dynamic tension generated by compressing into one personality, housed within the person of a cultural outsider, competing values that are central to the culture.

The dramatic energy that Tan largo and the Burlador generate by packing the most dominant element in the cosmos (agua) into the character with the least social say-so in the whole play (a pescadora) sparks the storytelling in the 11:00 scene. Here, Tisbea/Trisbea’s status demotion – her devolution from self-assured burladora, standing at the tip-top of society’s bottom rung, to self-confessed burladora burlada⁹ – intensifies her role as agenda-setter for a new vision of women determining new directions in social development.

It’s Tisbea/Trisbea the Pescadora who isolates the social problem that separates women from power in this scene – i.e., the cutthroat competition for the same man’s attention that men’s expectations have imposed on them. Tisbea/Trisbea may be completely unaware of the political ramifications of her revelation (a consideration beyond her ken as a social Nobody), but she’s the one who blows the whistle on Don Juan’s double-dipping (Fernández 50, 89).¹⁰ In both versions of this episode, Tisbea/Trisbea’s falling social stock fuels the impact of her shocking exposé.

It’s Tisbea/Trisbea, moreover, who maps out a practical plan for giving isolated, individually powerless women a collective tool for gaining access to power – viz., mounting a public appeal to the King, supported by key witnesses. She may be powerless to implement such a plan (since it calls for social resources
well beyond her reach), but Tisbea/Trisbea the Pescadora is the one who sees how heaven’s poetic vengeance can be carried out in political action here and now, from backwoods Tarragona to greater metropolitan Seville.

*Tan largo* works this expression of Trisbea’s character into the story with particular punch. Like Water acting as the conductor of lightning’s Fire, Trisbea translates Isabela’s vision of heavenly stirrings into shocks that can rock the action here on earth. This provides an excellent opportunity for translation to apply Stereopticon perspective on the 11:00 scene’s structure to Re-coding a structural crux in the scene, re-producing the critical point in the collaboration where the Woman of Fire and the Woman of Water pool their resources. Under the leadership of the play’s least important citizen, the righteous fervor of the Duchess’ born-again *vengança* gets fitted with wheels, so it can take action with plenty of traction in the arena of practical politics. Appropriately, it’s the Pescadora who buttons the scene with a slogan that opens membership in the alliance she’s negotiated with Isabela to any woman in the world, presenting this character-specific pact as a model of solidarity for all womankind: “May aya la muger que en hombres fia!” [Listen, women: Don’t risk your life savings on any man’s handshake!] (Fernández 50, 89).

A new depth of attention to character is clearly central to a new art for recovering *comedia*’s stageworthiness in contemporary performances. Does focusing translation away from diction and onto character mean cutting translation free from its textual anchorage? No. In fact, Laurence Boswell describes “getting in touch with the characters” as a means of making translation *more* textually precise, for making the “choice of words” for a “specific moment” go “from infinity to two or three, because the character couldn’t use that word at that moment” (see Johnston 283). Part of what he means, I think, is that characters come equipped with traits that work themselves into speech. Just as *Tan largo* and the *Burlador* generate the action of the 11:00 scene from the character traits of the personae who appear in the scene, so translators can generate diction from characterization, when they take the time to Re-code it.

Consider how “getting in touch with the characters” can inform the way that translators Re-code the 11:00 scene. The combination of *Beach Blanket*
Bingo innocence and Baywatch-babe sexuality in Tisbea/Trisbea the Pescadora might work itself into these words for provoking the episode’s crisis (the Spanish records the Burlador’s buildup to the episode’s blowup):

*Tisb.* Si mi manzilla
   a lastima os provoca,
   y si injurias del mar os tienen loca,
   ...
   Con palabra de esposo,
   la que de esta costa burla hazia,
   se rindia al engañoso,
   mal aya la muger que en hombres fia:
   ...
[If the way life’s beaten up on me makes you feel sad ...]
[if sorrows coming your way across the sea have driven you mad ...]
take pity.
And shudder if you’re proud:
I used to laugh out loud
at lovesick beach bunnies and their honeys,
till one bum on the beach looked me straight in the eye,
swered he’d marry me for sure,
and I believed that bareassed lie.
Watch out, girls! Don’t you rise to that lure!
What’s easy on his lips could be murder on your hips ...
(Fernández 50)

Stereopticon perspective on dramatic structure can give translators a practical methodology for turning Boswell’s notion of “getting in touch with the characters” into character-specific English dialog. Re-coding the *Burlador’s* structural pattern of preparing political efficacy through personal responsibility statements produced the translation of Tisbea’s warning above. Re-coding *Tan largo*’s structural pattern of putting efficacy into action through equal-partners
collaboration shapes the translation below. In this instance, Stereopticon perspective revolutionizes translation of the pivot-point in a new deal where Woman of Fire and Woman of Water decide to pool their resources (the Spanish records Tan largo’s recovery from rupture):

Isab. Pero sin duda el cielo
   a ver estas cabañas me ha traydo,
   y de ti mi consuelo
   en tan graue passion ha renacido,
   para vengança mia
...

Pesca Que me lleueys os ruego
   con vos, señora, a mi, y a vn viejo padre
   porque de aqueste fuego
   la vengança me dé que mas me quadre,
   y al Rey pida justicia
   deste engaño, y traycion, desta malicia
...

[Isabela: Thank God I met you in time! I see Heaven’s hand in this, reviving a burning desire for just repayment of my wrongs, and comforting me as I lay eyes on the scorched shelters where you lived ...

Trisbea: Don’t stop there, Duchess. Let’s pool our quests for payback. Take me with you to Seville, with witnesses to the wrongs that make my eyes water. I’ll borrow a little of your burnedness to build a fire under the King, and together we can get him all steamed up about this flood of shell-game flim-flams, this rising tide of broken guarantees, this tsunami of ironclad deceits, this Hurricane Katrina of damaged goods and feeble responses ... and we won’t quit till he declares it a national emergency!] (Fernández 89, emphasis added)
The differences between *Tan largo* and the *Burlador* make these women’s characters more complex, and conflicts between them more productive. Capitalizing on those differences sharpens *damas’* dialog, and clarifies their stage business, since both their actions and their speech organically grow out of their characterizations.

Erasing differences between the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* dulls the play’s dialog, and cuts the characters’ action loose from the character traits that generate it. This impedes performing the 11:00 number convincingly, as Kidd’s sporadically Composite translation demonstrates. The Spanish text that the *Ladykiller* uses – López-Vázquez’ edition of the *Burlador* – extensively conflates critical scenes, including the confrontation between Isabela and Tisbea/Trisbea. Conflation’s dulling of the scene’s edge is audible. Only one quick flash of character vitality – Thisbee’s “I might forge from the embers of this fire a vengeance to fit the crime” (Kidd 48) – slips through on Kidd’s page. None made it to the *Ladykiller*’s stage.

Stereopticon perspective on the 11:00 scene shows two distinct paths toward the same structural goal of women exercising political clout in Don Juan’s world. Textual variants between *Tan largo* and the *Burlador* make this structural movement clearer and more translatable, suggesting new ways of Re-coding the complex *dama* characterizations that drive the 11:00 scene. In contrast, conflating the 11:00 scene’s textual variants serves to cloud its political point.

Erasing textual variants from the first Don Juan play’s performance record opens the door to performance-suppressing cultural expectations about women and Don Juan. That’s evident in Composite translations of *Tan largo* and the *Burlador’s* 11:00 scene. The damaging effect of conflation on performance impact resurfaces with a vengeance in Composite translations of the damnation that the 11:00 scene precipitates. The damnable effects of conflation on the climax of the whole play describes the terrain for the final stage of this investigation.
Damas and Don Juan’s Damnation

One of the most revealing first-person experiences with Tan largo and the Burlador staged at the Bainbridge College theater “lab” was a project where students re-presented Don Juan’s damnation in their own words. As an exercise in Re-coding, this close-up encounter with the comedia connected the 11:00 scene’s impact with the big blowout that the 11:00 scene prepares. Participants in the project hand-picked the damnation as a site to Re-code, voting it absolutely critical to the play’s performance. They produced their rewrites with gusto, and acted them with superb assurance, convinced that they had recaptured the full artistic vision of the first Don Juan drama’s final firestorm.

The most enthusiastically applauded damnations Re-coded at Bainbridge College included a version where God condemns Don Juan to serve as sex-slave to the ugliest woman on earth, at her beck and call; a variation where the stud gets lured to his death by female assassins promising him sexual favors; and two verdicts where Don Juan’s victims trick him into (self-) emasculation – once offstage with a sword, and once onstage with a specially modified crop harvester. Clearly, Re-coders at Bainbridge College thought that Don Juan’s story dramatized a sex-education moral, centered in the Burlador’s treatment of women. For them, Don Juan’s damnability came down to one extraordinary individual sexually exploiting a series of women, and his sin merited a sexual retribution. Viewing the play’s final message as a sexually-charged condemnation of someone unique, blinded them to many subtleties in the climax – complexities which they came to find more fascinating, and ultimately more rewarding, than straightforward sexual revenge as they got more familiar with the script.11

So what made their first picture of the play so small, so enslaved to sex, and so ultimately dismissible? Cultural expectation did that, working through translation. The only avenues into the climax of the play that lay open to the Bainbridge College “lab” were English-language translations, and translations – even the Composite translations crafted by Schizzano, Mandel, and Kidd – adhere to a strong tradition of putting women at the center of damnation,
aggressively erasing the differences between the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* in Don Juan’s damnation scene. Not one single English-speaking script in this survey faithfully transmits a 17th-century vision of Don Juan’s grand finale. Conflation runs rampant, “improving” the scene out of all knowledge. The result is a severely diminished breadth of impact for the play’s climax, and for the play as a whole.

As a direct result of translation clouding what happens when Don Juan goes to Hell, the only place where Bainbridge College people instantly recognized a reflection of their own world in Don Juan’s comeuppance was in the all-too-familiar picture of women, who’ve been seduced and abandoned by forces beyond their control, hoping against hope for a taste of revenge. Naturally, “lab” participants were happy to see the tables turned, old scores evened up, and the bastard responsible for the pain frying in hell.

The differences between the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* enlarge, clarify, and energize the ways that a wide variety of 21st-century people can see themselves in Don Juan’s damnation. Since Golden Age drama becomes accessible as audiences come to recognize their world in the world of the play, the variance between the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* holds a vital key to Re-coding the damnation scene for performance today. A translation that speaks from many angles, challenging the audience’s self-conception with its multivocality and variety, its fluidity and provisionality, its sharpness and range, its ability to exaggerate and its facility in changing focus, can hold its watchers rapt.

Conflation makes a raptly watchable climax to *Tan largo* and the *Burlador* harder to come by. The *comedia*’s success depends on inducing second looks and indulging new perspectives – conditions of production that Stereopticon finds extremely congenial; an impact that’s the very opposite of achieving a smug, one-true-faith point of view on the action. Don Juan’s damnation is the capstone event in a “dramaturgy of doubt” designed to lure its audience into energetically engaging in self-examination.  

As a dramaturgy of moral correction, *Tan largo* and the *Burlador*’s pattern of indignation, followed by complicity, culminating in self-recognition stands in illustrious, and illuminating, company. The impact of Don Juan’s
damnation can be clarified by the dramaturgical model that other great plays of moral correction employ.

In classic morality-play form, *Tan largo* and the *Burlador* bring Don Juan to Judgement not as a tragic hero felled by a moral flaw, but as an emblematic figure undergoing an experience common to all humankind. This representation of the Burlador as Everyman, in turn, dramatically advances the very specific judgmental project built into the play – engineering moral reform within audience members by forcing them into a process of self-examination.

The result is a deeply-rooted performance response, similar to the alarm that Americans in the 18th century must have experienced hearing Jonathan Edwards (the theatrically gifted President of Princeton College) preach his famous sermon “Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God.” But alarm is not the ultimate goal of *Tan largo* and the *Burlador*’s morality project. The play induces the conviction of mortal guilt in order to precipitate moral reform – a present, pressing quest for the repentance so dilatorily endorsed by Don Juan, leading to a state of grace like that enjoyed by the Statue.

Don Juan’s damnation, after all, ultimately derives not from what he’s done, but from what he’s left undone. On the faulty assumption that spiritual correction can be postponed with impunity, he procrastinates himself into hell, seeking repentance too late. “No hay lugar,” intones the Statue, “ya acuerdas tarde:” “You’ve run out of space for self-examination – left it till the last minute, and missed your deadline” (Fernández 59, 93).

For 17th-century Spaniards, the inefficacy of Don Juan’s attempt at last-minute repentance may have been the most chilling aspect of his damnation. Defourneaux describes deathbed confessions as hot news in Golden Age Madrid:

> In public ‘notices’ and ‘news bulletins’ which reflect the agitated life of the Spanish capital in the seventeenth century, similar announcements of assassinations and murderous affrays recur constantly: ‘Tonight, Fernand Pimentel was killed by a sword thrust before he had time to grasp his own weapon. ... He cried out loudly for confession and died with every sign of repentance for his sins; and saying aloud the *Miserere mei Deus*, then amid floods of
tears: “In te, Domine, speravi”, he expired’ (August 8, 1622); then: ‘At eight o’clock in the evening certain gentlemen waited for Diego de Avila to come out of a house to kill him. They jumped on and slaughtered him; he cried out loudly for confession’ (December 1, 1624); or: ‘Christopher of Bustamante was killed in Parades Road before he had time to make confession’ (October 3, 1627).

(Defourneaux 30-31, emphasis original)

In sharp contradistinction to these stirring news stories, Tan largo me lo fiáis and the Burlador de Sevilla deeply unsettle faith in the efficacy of a final-moment reform. Don Juan calls for confession and absolution in extremis, and goes to hell. Don Gonzalo makes no dying plea for the last rites, and returns from the grave in a state of grace. The contrast between these two characters’ destinies drives home the fact that present readiness for Death is humankind’s most pressing business, and that the time to take a fresh look at your spiritual condition is right now.

In a dramaturgical development highly congenial to Stereopticon perspective, Tan largo and the Burlador induce second thoughts in their auditors by presenting two versions of pivotal moments in the play. Two deaths – Don Gonzalo’s and Don Juan’s – provide the perspective necessary to reconsider how you ought to die. Similarly, two marriages (to Tisbea and to Aminta), two upper-echelon seductions (of Isabella and of Ana), two burlas with best friends (making both Duke Octavio/Otavio and the Marquis de la Mota the butts of jokes), two dinner songs, three repetitions of “Evil comes to the woman who believes the words of a man,” three repetitions of the Marquis’ serenade, at least four repetitions of “Death cannot frighten or restrain me” – these stereophonic effects in the script pattern its audience through the process of re-consideration, re-examination, and re-valuation.

Tan largo and the Burlador pursue the goal of moral reconsideration through calculated ironies and resonant inconsistencies. They bring onstage a Statue in a state of grace, who makes his home in Hell. They put wise-sounding sayings such as “¡Mal haya la mujer que en hombres fía!” [God damn the woman who trusts in men!] (Martel 299, Edwards 150, López-Vázquez 259-60) into the
mouths of characters whose idea of salvation is a spoken guarantee from an emphatically patriarchal king. And they weave these illogicalities into memorable theater because their purpose is not to induce agreement with a predetermined moral conclusion, but to disturb their audiences into the process of individual moral re-consideration.

Like its political satire, the *Burlador/Tan largo*’s moral dimension is aimed at unsettling the status quo, at exposing hypocrisy, and making people face up to the gaps between the ideals they say they revere and the behaviors that they actually practice. This *comedia* grabs its audience’s attention, remember, by maneuvering audience members into condemning a transgression that they themselves proceed to commit. The sense that “Everybody does it” collides with the chilling realization that “You pay for what you have done,” and moral reconsideration results.¹⁴

The differences between the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* make Don Juan’s damnation clearer in structure and broader in scope. In the pattern of the 11:00 scene, this climax takes on intensity and “pop” when viewed through a Stereopticon perspective. Because the *comedia*’s two printings intently pursue the same performance goal through illustratively variant performance strategies, re-conceiving the grand finale through their differences (rather than erasing those differences through conflation, emendation, or selection) can give translators insight into how the scene works onstage that revolutionizes its translation.

Both the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* construct a climactic damnation scene that is brilliantly calculated to goad its audience into immediate, meaningful, and long-lasting action. In both of its original versions, this scene works onstage by incorporating the audience’s first instinct – to set itself beyond the reach of the Statue’s denunciation, through the device of blaming Don Juan’s condemnation on his relations with women. The overture to Don Juan’s sentencing explicitly elicits that comforting expectation – no one in the audience, after all, could stand guilty of such egregious *donjuanismo* – in order to engineer a severely discomfiting, take-action reversal.
The dramaturgical goal of both versions, then, is one and the same. The tactics vary, and in that variance the unanimity in their strategy – indeed, the strategy itself – gains clarity and grows in performance power. In different moves across the same climactic arc of action, the Statue proceeds to disqualify relations with women as the basis for ending the Burlador’s career. He reassigns the cause for Don Juan’s damnation clearly and extremely discomfitingly to actions that everyone in the audience stands guilty of: i.e., fantasizing about breaking the rules and getting away with it (“que ya pusiste / tu intento”), and procrastinating about undertaking any conscientious attempt at change (“No hay lugar. Ya acuerdas tarde,” López-Vázquez 302-303).

Studying the differences in the way that the Burlador and Tan largo script Don Juan’s damnation makes their unanimity about damnation’s impact all the clearer. Both scenes begin with Don Juan giving his hand to the Statue – part handshake, part dare, part touching recapitulation of the risk that a trusting bride embraces when she gives herself to her novio. The first time his palm of flesh kissed palm of stone, the Burlador found the experience “hot as Hell” (“que vn infierno parecia;” Fernández 54, 92). This time, the handshake shakes him to his core: the Burlador/garañón begins to burn with a supra-passionate heat which, the Statue tells him, is just a taste of the fire that awaits him.

The handclasp is the first dramatic beat in what both the Burlador and Tan largo script as a nine-beat performance sequence. In both printings, the damnation’s specific sequence of beats is carefully chosen from nine possible units of action, which can be rearranged, repeated, suppressed, or restructured to construct a version’s specific “take” on Don Juan’s demise.

To track the different ways that Tan largo and the Burlador go about building their damnation sequences – a difference in execution that underscores the scriptings’ unanimity in performance impact – I’ve found it helpful to assign a symbol to each of the nine dramaturgical units that the playwriting authorizes to appear in an authentic first-edition staging of Don Juan’s send-off. All told, then, here are the beats that hammer out the Burlador’s big exit:
the Overture, where the Statue dares Don Juan to shake his hand, and makes his grip irreversible – the burning handshake, the fatal hand-job, the ardent joy-buzzer that kicks off the damnation sequence (Fernández 59, 93);

the dialog of the Dead Man’s Hand, where the Statue attributes his own role in Don Juan’s finale to the miracles of God – *maravillas* which he calls *investigables* [which can mean both “unsearchable” and “compelling you to research them”] (Fernández 59, 94);

the business of the Useless Bullet, where Don Juan attempts to kill the Statue (again!), unavailingly (Fernández 59, 94);

the Late Intentions interchange, where Don Juan argues that Doña Ana suffered no lasting damage from his *burla*, then formally requests confession, while the Statue tells him that intention (not completion rate) is what counts and that he’s missed his repentance deadline (Fernández 59, 93);

the Virginity Clause, a two-line speech in which the Statue makes specific reference to *las donzellas que burlaste* [the untouched damsels you manhandled, the virgin girls you fooled] (Fernández 93);

the Inclusive Verdict, where the Statue stresses the conclusion that *quien tal haze que tal pague* [everyone who behaves like this, pays for it this way] (Fernández 59, 94);

the No Exit impasse, where Don Juan falls dead, and Catalinón expects to join him, since “No hay quien se escape” [not one soul gets off scot-free] (Fernández 59, 94);

the Street Scurry, where Catalinón escapes to tell the tale of Don Juan’s death to folks who weren’t eye-witnesses (Fernández 59, 94);

and the Special Effect, where there’s lots of noise while the set collapses (Fernández 59), or they yank the chapel cart offstage (Fernández 94).

Analyzing the damnation as a fixed number of beats that can be arranged in a variable order is a useful step toward understanding how the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* create the same impact through differently structured scenes. The mechanical ring of this analytical approach should lead no one, however, to suspect that the scenes themselves play as cobbled-together, paint-by-number, jig-saw-puzzle performance assemblages. Each version of the play’s climax has
its own tight internal logic, its own organically-generated dramatic flow, its own
tour-de-force authority.

Witness the dramatic assurance of Tan largo’s damnation moment:

对该文进行分析
Tiran el carreton, o se hunde, y salen el Rey,
Tenorio, el Marques de la Mota, Isabel,
la Pescadora y acompañamiento.

[Don Juan: I’m stuffed. Thanks for an unforgettable dinner.

Gonzalo: Want to lend me a hand in the kitchen? C’mon, don’t be a weenie – lend me a hand.

Don Juan: Are you calling me a girly man? Me? Here’s all the hand you can handle, buster ... God damn that burns! What the hell, man? Keep your home fires burning somewhere outside of my rosy palm.

Gonzalo: Oh, this is just a scratch-and-sniff sample of the flame-broiling you’ve been begging for. Imagine having to pay for all the swinging singles you’ve scorched this way.

Don Juan: ’Swear to God I never touched your daughter – she blew my cover before we got anywhere close to bed.

Gonzalo: You think that matters? What was in your heart? Did you ever think of looking there?

Don Juan: OK, let me go and I’ll hop right on the helpline. I’ll get counseling. I’ll start a twelve-step program. You’ll see me change before your very eyes.

Gonzalo: Son, you haven’t left yourself twelve seconds, much less time for twelve steps. Frittered away your chances staging fancy exposés of everybody else’s failings. Never even glanced at your own. Time’s up. God’s blown the whistle and it’s time to take a good hard look at what you people like to call the “imponderables” in life. It’s coming to everyone – a long, hot handshake with Mr. Death.

Don Juan: This hand-job is over, you petrified pervert. Stop diddling with my digits, or I’m blowing you away. I mean it,
man – I’ll shoot! Jesus! You’re burning worse than ever, and my bullets go right through you ...

Gonzalo: This is God’s justice: whoever behaves like this, pays this way.

Don Juan: Burning up, I’m ... ’bout to fry alive, I’m ... I’m dead.

Catalinón: No one gets away. Saint Bigwig, Saint Tony Danza, get me safely back out to the street.

They pull the chapel set offstage, or it sinks out of sight.

Enter the King, Tenorio, the Marqués de la Mota, Isabela, the Fisherwoman, and attendants. (Fernández 93-94; on apretar la mano, see Covarrubias 135)

In Tan largo, then, the logic of the scene connects the Overture (☼) to the Virginity Clause (☼), which launches the Late Intentions interchange (♀). That dovetails into the Dead Man’s Hand dialog (♀), which motivates the Useless Bullet beat (♀). The Statue caps the sequence with the Inclusive Verdict (☼/♀). Then the No Exit impasse underscores the verdict (☼), the Street Scurry grants Catalinón a momentary exemption (♀), and the Special Effect closes the scene (♀). Stereopticon perspective on the scene’s carefully sequenced structure empowers more performable translation of the scene’s dialog.

Tan largo incorporates every one of the nine available dramatic units to construct its damnation sequence. Taking sexual rule-breaking as a point of departure, it aggressively generalizes Don Juan’s judgement, to include increasingly wider segments of the audience. It carefully, relentlessly spreads the net of quien tal hace [whosoever does so] from the extraordinary fooler of a series of virgins, to everyday examples of everyday folly: everyone who leans toward a lust for self-indulgence, everybody who lags behind in the pressing business of self-reformation. Its windup is characteristically breathtaking, a punch directly to the mental solar plexus, aimed with Tan largo’s hallmark precision and economy: “No one gets away.”

The Burlador uses a differently-sequenced, more repetitive structure to pack the same punch:

d. Iu. Ya é cenado,
haz que levanten
la messa. *d. Go.* dame essa mano,
no temas, la mano dame.

*d. Iu.* Esso dizes, yo temor?
que me abrasso, no me abrasses

* con tu fuego. *d. Go.* Este es poco
para el fuego que buscaste:
Las maravillas de Dios,
son don Iuan inüestigables,
y assi quiere que tus culpas
a manos de un muerto pagues.
Y si pagas desta suerte,

esta es justicia de Dios,
quienn tal haze, que tal pague.

*d. I.* que me abraso, no me apriettes,
con la daga é de matarte,
mas ay que me canso en vano,
de tirar golpes al ayre.
A tu hija no ofendi,
que vio mis engaños antes.

*d. Go.* No importa, que ya pusiste
tu intento. *d. Iu.* dexa que llame
quienn me confiesse y absuelva.

*d. G.* No ai lugar, ia acuerdas tarde
d. *I.* Que me quemo; que me abraso
muerto soy. 

*Cae muerto.*

*Cat.* No ay quien se escape,
que aqui tengo de morir,
tábien por acompanarte.

*d. Go.* Esta es justicia de Dios,
quienn tal haze, que tal pague.

* Hundese el sepulcro, con don Iuan, y D.*
Gonçalo, con mucho ruydo, y sale Catalinon arrastrando.

Cat. Valgame Dios, que es aquesto?
toda la Capilla se arde,
y con el muerto é quedado,
para que le vele y guarde.
Arrastrando como pueda,
yre a avisar a su padre,
San Iorge, san Agnus Dei
sacadme en paz a la calle.

Vase, sale el Rey, Don Diego y acompañamiento.

[Don Juan: This Last Supper has lasted long enough – let’s sing
the Passover hymn and get this Passion Play in gear.
Gonzalo: The right hand of fellowship. Don’t stand there like a
Doubting Thomas, shivering and unsure. Give me your hand as a
sign that we’re in communion.
Don Juan: Is that how you see me – shivering and unsure? I’d
shake your hand if you were Judas himself, poised to kiss me
goodbye and turn me over to the Jews. Good God – you’re burning
me! Jesus H. Christ, you sanctimonious prick – turn down the
heat!

Gonzalo: Heat? What heat? This is iced tea at an after-church
dinner on the grounds compared to the Hellfire you deserve. “God
moves in mysterious ways His wonders to perform,” Don Juan. It
may sound stuffy and King-James-ish, but you ought to start
thinking about it long and hard, right now. I’m an answer to
prayer.

How many times have you said, “There’s plenty of time to
clean up my act – I’ll fix it all with a deathbed conversion”? Well,
heeeeeeeeeeere’s Death! You’re finishing our love-feast this way to
broadcast a warning to the whole wide world: Turn or burn! Fly or
fry! Every single person who thinks he can take care of cleaning up his act tomorrow ... is going to end up just like this!

Don Juan: I’m toast – burning up from the inside out. Turn me loose or I swear to God I’ll kill you ... with my bare hand! Judas Priest! It’s like trying to arm-wrestle air! There’s nothing there to grab ahold of ... “Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher: all is vanity.” Isn’t that somewhere in the Bible?

OK, listen to this, hardass – I’ll swear it on a stack of floppy blacks if that’ll make you happy. I never touched a hair on your daughter’s head (and I know they’re all numbered – the Good Book says so). I didn’t do Mota’s accent right, so she didn’t fall for the trick (just like that lamb in the gospels shying away from the substitute shepherd’s voice).

Gonzalo: “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” Proverbs 23:7. Did you mean to do wrong? Examine your intentions.

Don Juan: OK, you win! You’ve twisted my arm, and I give in. Show me the way to the rededication aisle, and I’ll show you a new Don Juan from this day forward.

Gonzalo: “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found. Call ye upon him while he is near.”

Don Juan: Amen.

Gonzalo: “Today is the day of salvation.”

Don Juan: Preach it, brother!

Gonzalo: You waited too late. You’ve run out of “todays.”

Don Juan: Oh God, I’m going! Oh God, I’m gone! Oh God! Where am I? (He disappears into thin air. Echo.) “Ashes, ashes, we all fall down ...”

Catalinón: Jesus! That was scarier than Dorothy douching the Wicked Witch of the West! “Toto, too?” Am I in deep doo-doo for hanging around with Don Juan?
Gonzalo: God’s justice speaks to the whole wide world:

Everybody who thinks you can put off cleaning up your act until tomorrow ... is going to end up just like this!

The mausoleum starts plunging into the pit, with Juan, Gonzalo, and the scariest sound effects you can make. Catalinón scrambles out at the last possible second.

Catalinón: Suffering succotash – would you look at that? The chapel’s lit up like a lava flow ... and they’ve left me here in the dark, all by myself, with his skeleton! I’m getting out of here any way I can – I’ll pass the news on lickety-split to his dad!

Sweet Saint Whore-of-the-day, our Holy Lady Doris Day, Baa-baa Agnes Day have-you-any-wool, and the Blessed Virgin Amazing Grace have-mercy-on-my-soul, be my guides ... get me out of here alive!

He exits. Enter the King, Don Diego, and entourage.

(Fernández 59; on arrastrar, see Covarrubias 150)

Here, the Overture (▽) segues directly into the Dead Man’s Hand dialog (◆), which concludes with a first statement of the Inclusive Verdict (▽). The first invocation of quien tal haze, que tal pague springboards into Don Juan firing off the Useless Bullet (□), which motivates the Late Intentions interchange (○). The No Exit impasse (●) punctuates the Late Intentions exchange; then a second statement of the Inclusive Verdict caps the sequence (▽*). The Special Effect (☠) underscores quien tal haze, que tal pague’s restatement, and the scene closes with a poetically extended, elaborately riffed edition of the Street Scurry (◆).

So the Burlador uses eight units to generate its nine-beat damnation sequence. The repeated beat, significantly, is the Inclusive Verdict (▽ and ▽*), the statement that drives home the Everyman universality of Don Juan’s tailor-made Last Judgement. This version of the climax markedly bypasses the Virginity Clause (⛪), specifically suppressing the impulse to attribute Don Juan’s culpability to the specifics of his particular way with women. (The studliness disclaimer in the no-harm-to-your-daughter section of the Useless Bullet business [□] underscores the supra-sexual tone of this damnation.) Indeed, the
comic elaboration of Catalinón’s exit speech (☞) – giving the gracioso a reaction to the chapel’s fiery disappearance and his being “left with the body” reminiscent of Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein – acts as a powerful set-up for the denouement, which Catalinón clinches with another repetition of quien tal haze, que tal pague (Fernández 60).

Again, Stereopticon perspective on the damnation episode’s structure makes multidimensional translation of the dialog possible, foregrounding the immateriality of crimes against women as the cause of Don Juan’s damnation, and articulating the scene’s morality-play impact in accessibly contemporary American terms. It’s high time that contemporary American translations began taking advantage of Stereopticon perspectives. Certainly the alternative to Stereopticon perspective – conflationary erasure of the textual differences between Tan largo and the Burlador – shows little promise for making the play more performable in the US today. Consider what happens when López-Vázquez, a text-editor with a very large axe to grind (whose edition of the Burlador Michael Kidd’s Ladykiller turns into English), succumbs to the temptation to improve on the original versions of the climax. The results offer translators an excellent site for studying the radically different kinds of “respect for text” inculcated by Stereopticon perspective and traditional text-editing.

From a Stereopticon perspective, the Burlador and Tan largo are records of performance, providing insight into how the first Don Juan play worked onstage. Deviations in the record equip translators with double lenses that enrich perception of the play’s impact, by allowing a multifocal perspective on its operation at a series of critical points. Stereopticon perspective values differences in the design and execution of cognate scenes, as eye-opening expansions of the play’s performance range. Divergences between the two 17th-century printings present not flaws to be corrected, nor transmission streams to be mapped, nor rewrites to be ranked, but eye-witness testimony about how the play has equipped actors to move audiences – testimony worth heeding with all the creative force a translator can muster.

From a traditional text-editor’s point of view, what’s printed in the Burlador and Tan largo is an imperfect reflection of a poet’s once-finished but
now partially-lost work of art – an aesthetic conception that performance actually subjects to decay rather than brings to life. Differences in the printings can help to flag places where the text has become corrupted, though the editor’s scansion of the play’s verse and parsing of the dialog’s syntax is often more acute than publication history in this regard (see López-Vázquez 143, 205, 256, 306, and especially 182, 216, and 263). Variants are valuable primarily as clues about how the artwork came to be transmitted in its present, imperfect form (see López-Vázquez 145, 162, 255, 284); they can even help to correct incoherencies, incongruities, and lacunae introduced in the transmission process (see, for example, López-Vázquez 286, 293). Tracing the trail of textual infelicities back to the pristine original is the ultimate, and (acknowledgedly impossible), goal; eliminating textual divergences is the immediate, practical side effect.

A text-editor of López-Vázquez’ stature is immensely useful to a translator trying to put his finger on the pulse of Tan largo and the Burlador. López-Vázquez writes luminously about the play’s vocabulary (see especially 154, 157, 197, 201, 213, 235, 239, 247, 275). He inquires searchingly into the play’s connective tissues, dissecting characters’ outlook on the world of the play, questioning their motives, and occasionally passing judgement on their behavior (see especially 146, 189). But his own outlook is blinkered by an assumption that I find unpersuasive. This eminently learned, expertly sensitive text-editor assumes – as Schizzano and Mandel assumed before him, and as Kidd, embracing López-Vázquez’ edition as his base text, effectively assumes after him – that composite text produces a more complete, more authoritative, and more stageworthy script than either the Burlador or Tan largo can supply. The misperception engendered by this assumption disastrously skews López-Vázquez’ view of Don Juan’s damnation, and that in turn fatally warps the climax of Kidd’s Ladykiller.15

Stereopticon perspective on the two scripts’ climax shows different paths toward the same effect. The Burlador and Tan largo diverge significantly in the way they structure Don Juan’s damnation, but their deviation from each other – like the distance between the double helix in a strand of DNA – serves to underscore the genetic unity of their dramatic vision. The catastrophe that cuts
short Don Juan’s career impels his audience toward change. He is damned for deeds that everyone in the house has done.

López-Vázquez disastrously controverts the dramatic effect of this scene by conflating its two variants. Insisting on the inclusiveness of a composite editorial approach, and valuing textual correctness over performance impact, he cobbles together a hybrid ten-beat climax that damns Don Juan for sexual misdeeds peculiar to his own unique career. The Ladykiller translates the resultant bigger text, with the consequent smaller impact, this way:

† STATUE. Give me your hand, have no fear. Give me your hand. DON JUAN. How dare you suggest such a thing! What fear? [HE extends his hand and the STATUE siezes it.] It burns, stop!
‡ STATUE. This is nothing compared to the fire that awaits you. God works in mysterious ways, Don Juan, and He desires that you pay for your errors at the hands of a dead man.
⊕ In this way you’ll be punished for all the women whose honor you’ve destroyed.
≖? This is the Lord’s work: To the degree that you stray, thus shall you pay.
⊗ DON JUAN. I’m burning alive, stop squeezing my hand! [He stabs clumsily at the STATUE.] I shall kill you with my dagger; but – oh! what’s this? – the blade falls through thin air!
忖 I didn’t deflower your daughter, for she recognized the deception in time.
STATUE. It matters not; your intention was clear.
DON JUAN. Allow me to confess to someone who can forgive my sins!
STATUE. That’s not possible; you’ve waited too long to think about such matters.
DON JUAN. But I’m on fire, I’m burning alive, it’s killing me! [He falls dead.]
 يريدChicken. There is no escape; I, too, must die here, for I was party to your sins.
STATUE. This is the Lord’s work: *To the degree that you stray, thus shall you pay.*

[With deafening noise, the tomb is swallowed into the earth along with DON JUAN and DON GONZALO. CHICKEN crawls to safety.]

CHICKEN. God help me! What am I witnessing? The whole chapel’s ablaze, my master’s dead, and I’m the only one left to explain what happened. I’ll have to inform his father even if it means crawling the whole way. Saint George, Saint Agnus Dei, get me out of here in one piece! [Exit.] (Kidd 65)

Following López-Vázquez, Kidd produces a climax to the first Don Juan play that no 17th-century Spanish fan of the play would recognize. He begins his sequence with the familiar Overture (第十). As in the Burlador, the Overture segues into the dialog of the Dead Man’s Hand (第十). This much of the scene plays true to its originals. But then the Virginity Clause (第十), borrowed from Tan largo, yokes the poetic justice of the Dead Man’s Hand to the conclusive certainty of *quien tal haze, que tal pague* [“This is the Lord’s work: *To the degree you stray, thus shall you pay*”], rendering the Verdict the diametric opposite of Inclusive (第十)?.

Making the Virginity Clause – “In this way you’ll be punished for all the women whose honor you’ve destroyed” – the logical linchpin that connects God’s mysterious ways to the lesson of this miracle, neatly and irrecoverably reduces Don Juan’s damnation to payback for the way he’s treated women. *Tan largo*’s passing introductory reference to *las donzellas que burlaste* [the young, unmarried, and putatively virginal women you’ve made the butt of your jokes] has been jerryrigged into the dramatic centerpiece of the scene – its social conscience, its philosophical touchstone, the keystone in its system of values (Fernández 93; on donzella, see Covarrubias 483).

Every beat in the remainder of the scene is colored by the centrality of “the women whose honor you’ve destroyed.” López-Vázquez proceeds, Kidd following faithfully at his heels, to glue the Useless Bullet episode (第十), to tie the Late Intentions exchange (第十), and to nail the No Exit impasse (第十?) onto his melange of dramaturgical units, but the scene is already screwed. Set up by
Catalinón/Chicken’s reinvocation of Don Juan’s unique status as a sexual rule-breaker – “There is no escape; I, too, must die here, for I was party to your sins” – the second statement of the Verdict (?) does even more damage than the first. What plays onstage, clearer than ever, is the message that “the Lord’s work” is peculiarly stirred by overly successful and unbecomingly unrepentant sexual activity. “Stray” in the formula “To the degree that you stray, thus shall you pay” becomes a stricture restricting itself to sexual conduct, and Don Juan is left standing as the unique and only object of the Statue’s discipline. A Re-coding clearly in the tradition of Bainbridge College’s first rewrites for Don Juan’s damnation has been born.

The Special Effect (☎) and the Street Scurry (’envelope) round off this mutant composite with sound and fury, without in any way correcting its catastrophically skewed significance. Compared to the cunningly-crafted summons to self-correction that Tan largo and the Burlador’s original consumers experienced during Don Juan’s damnation, this “best-text improvement” on the original printings’ climax is a Frankenstein’s monster. It patches together parts from different wholes, then sets them in motion to destroy the redemptive impulse that created them.

It should be noted that the monstrosity of the climax which the Ladykiller (following López-Vázquez) imposes on Tan largo and the Burlador is not the result of inept editorializing, but the direct offshoot of conflation’s deadening effect on dramatic impact. Schizzano and Mandel fold the Burlador and Tan largo together to produce the damnation scene in their Playboy, and the outcome is even more deleterious. In Schizzano and Mandel’s conflation, the judgement starts general and broad-impact, then narrows to crimes against women with a unique focus on Don Juan:

The wonders of God, Don Juan, are unfathomable. His justice demands that a dead man exact the payment of your crimes. As a man sows, so shall he reap. ... Don Juan! You are paying for the women you cheated. ... Your intention condemns you. ... As a man sows, so shall he reap. (Schizzano and Mandel 97)
Once again, erasing differences between textual variants subverts the performance shape of *Tan largo* and the *Burlador*, diminishing their impact onstage.

Stealing performance vigor from the damnation scene affects *damas*, too. Since every female lead in this *comedia* acts the *burladora* [female reflection of the Burlador], scaling back the stageworthiness of the title role reduces the performance resonance of the supporting roles as well, forcing them into stereotypical postures of helplessness and victimization. Conflation impoverishes performance. Stereopticon perspective empowers it.

Stereopticon perspective on Don Juan’s damnation undergirds the play’s presentation of Don Juan’s female scene partners as the *reverse* of helpless victims. Isabela, Tisbea/Trisbea, Ana, and Aminta/Arminta were not created just to show that no woman is safe from this Burlador/garañón. ¹⁶

Rather than pity-generating innocents, *Tan largo* and the *Burlador* create terror-inspiring Everywomen in their leading ladies, every one of them a sharp reflection of Don Juan. These women stand as case studies in the same self-excusing exploitation of others’ foibles that Don Juan practices more masterfully than any other character in the play. Like him, they enact the essence of *burlar* [gleefully to play on other people’s blind spots] – the self-defining activity of a *burlador(a)* [expert practical jokester].

At the root of each of these *damas*’ histories lies a sound satirical perception of behavior that makes other people look silly: Tisbea/Trisbea’s scorn for the ridiculous promises that lovers make; Ana’s contempt for her father’s willingness to sacrifice everything for his job; Aminta/Arminta’s distrust of rhetoric without a ring to back it up; and Isabela’s real-politik understanding of why a King who wants to appear saintly without reining in his sex life would pass a law against other men visiting his palace at night. Coupled with these satirical insights, and sharpening their cutting edge, is the observer’s stubborn inability to see any weakness in herself. As with Don Juan, so with the *damas*, the combination of percipience and blindness plays itself out in an irresistible invitation to lampoon others’ corruptibility [to *burlar*], which culminates in an
explosive exposure of the self-appointed exposer’s failure to self-correct – the failure that makes him/her a *burlador(a)* burlado/a.

Damning Don Juan through the differences in the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* opens the door to more complex and more effective performances from every female lead. Stereopticon perspectives make *damas* come to life in *Tan largo* and the *Burlador*. By clarifying the structure of women’s characterizations and complicating the impact of women’s roles, Stereopticon viewpoints make the most of the embarrassment of riches that the textual variants in the first Don Juan play present. Based as it is on a unique feature of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* – the two equally authoritative printings of the script – Stereopticon perspective might at first blush seem untransferable to other *comedias*, or even inapplicable to sectors of this *comedia* that turn up in only one printed version of the play. Yet double vision informs many Golden Age dramas (and every part of this Golden Age drama) in ways that encourage dual-focal study of production possibilities – double visions that include external re-visions of a play (expressed in *refundiciones* and re-castings into *autos* or *entremeses*) and internal shifts in time and place and point of view. Certainly the fundamental lesson of Stereopticon perspective – that complexity is *comedia*’s native tongue, and that erasing difference flattens *comedia*’s performance – is richly transferable to a host of Golden Age dramas, and richly suggestive for conceptualizing re-productions of the first Don Juan play.

1 Both Stereopticon perspective and Composite praxis regard the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* as divergent printings of precisely the same performance product.

There is excellent evidence to support this outlook, starting with the two printings’ palpable twinship. Oscar Mandel hits the nail on the head when he notes:

*Tan largo* offers many departures from *El Burlador* – some minute, some substantial – and yet it is plainly the same drama: its “plot outline” would differ little from that of *El Burlador*, and half
of the lines of the two plays are identical, or nearly identical.
(Mandel 39)
Like Tennessee Williams’ various takes on Maggie the Cat, these two printings of the world’s first Don Juan play give theater people opportunities to read performance possibilities that are built into the same drama intertextually. They represent equally authentic versions of the same script, opening equally valid paths to discovering the most effective form for re-staging the play.

Re-staging comedias produced famous results in the Siglo de Oro, typically not through extended runs or repeated revivals of famous scripts, but through high-profile re-writes of celebrated plotlines. Both Lope de Vega and Calderón de la Barca, for example, produced comedias entitled El Alcalde de Zalamea [The Sheriff of Zalamea Hosts a Shotgun Wedding], resulting in two great and revealingly different visions of grassroots Spanish citizens standing up for their rights against oppressive royal appointees (see Colford, Mitchell; cf. Ziomek 60, 148-49). So common and artistically respectable became the practice of recycling a previously-staged play, in fact, that the technique earned its own code name: a refundición [a reworking, as in the recasting of metal; an updating or homeowner improvement, as in rebuilding on an altered foundation; see Nuevo diccionario ilustrado Sopena 852; Ziomek 131, 134, 152, 186-87).

Nor were full-scale refundiciones the only way that variant scripts could spin out of the same dramatic material. In the last stage of his career, Calderón enjoyed re-writing his own comedias [full-length commercial-theater pieces] into lavishly-produced spinoff performances quite different from run-of-the-mill refundiciones. He re-cast a series of his own hits, including the famous La vida es sueño [Life is But a Dream], as autos sacramentales [one-act plays for religious celebrations] (Dixon “Spanish Renaissance Theatre” 171-72).

It’s important to consider the relationship of the Burlador de Sevilla to Tan largo me lo fiáis within the context of Golden Age rewrites, because debate about the first Don Juan play’s authorship has given rise to the claim that Tan largo represents not the Burlador’s genetic twin, but a degenerate refundición (see Vázquez, esp. 43-50). Golden Age precedents in re-writing comedias,
however, clarify just how genetically identical the two first-printings of the first Don Juan play genuinely are. Contrasting differences between the Burlador and Tan largo with the changes wrought during refundición decisively debunks the notion that Tan largo is a derivative, distantly related, degraded version of the Burlador.

Unlike a refundición and its original, and unlike a comedia and its auto spinoff, the Burlador and Tan largo share the same dramatic DNA. They feature precisely the same principal characters, following exactly the same arc of action, pursuing demonstrably the same satiric mission. The fact that the Burlador’s dramatic genome expresses itself through performance variants in Tan largo – featuring re-balanced roles for familiar characters, re-mixed elements in familiar scenes, and a leaner, tauter dramatic construction – makes the less familiar printing even more valuable for focusing translators’ attention on the organic core of this comedia. The two printings present the same play from instructively altered viewpoints, through revealingly re-colored lenses.

Siglo de Oro playwrights who re-worked famous comedias (even their own original creations) characteristically made radical revisions in the original play’s supporting characters, and thoroughly revamped their source script’s expressive dialog, in order to re-contextualize and re-examine the original drama’s central characters and ideas. That’s certainly what Antonio de Zamora did with the Burlador/Tan largo in the 1714 refundición that he originally entitled No hay deuda que no se pague y Convidado de Piedra [No Debt Escapes Payback and the Stone Dinner-Guest] (see Isasi Angulo 39, 211-360). More commonly known nowadays as No hay plazo que no se cumpla ni deuda que no se pague, y Convidado de Piedra [Enforcing Term-Life and Securing Loans with the Implacable Collection Agent from Beyond the Grave], Zamora’s comedia offers production-enhancing viewpoints on the first Don Juan play, while clearly exhibiting genetic material that’s different from the Burlador/Tan largo’s.

For example, Zamora’s refundición latches hold of the theme of desengaño [disengagement from engaño, deliverance from de/il/lusion] in the Burlador/Tan largo – the idea that it’s both spiritually necessary and damnably
difficult to see yourself clearly, without the cosmetic fuzz of de/il/lusions. The refundidor [re-worker] rewrites the comedia with that theme (seen from the perspective of 1714 Spain) as its spine. The stated mission of the Statue (not to mention Don Juan’s secret lover Doña Beatriz, and his father Don Diego) becomes to desen-gañar Don Juan, bringing him to a sobering sense of his sins (see Isasi Angulo 309). Clever twists in the plot (such as the bullet from Beatriz’ brother that blows out the light just as she screams a warning to Don Juan, making him think she was his attempted assassin) plant obstacles to desengaño, perpetuating false de/il/lusions (Isasi Angulo 311). At the climax of the refundición, Don Juan embraces the Statue’s divine mission (and the Statue’s rock-hard body), eloquently pleading God’s mercy on his disillusioned soul the second before his overheated corpse drops dead (Isasi Angulo 356, 359).

Zamora’s refundición has useful insights to offer translators of the Burlador/Tan largo. The spinoff script’s handling of the desengaño theme highlights a stageworthy aspect of the original comedia’s performance score, and the way that No hay deuda reframes the Burlador/Tan largo’s denouement is dramatic dynamite. Zamora is provocatively select, almost stingy, with the characters he brings onstage in the wake of Don Juan’s death. He fills his final stage picture with men. Present and accounted for are the King (a mere sobresaliente, a cameo walk-on in this comedia; Isasi Angulo 213), the Marqués de Cádiz, the Conde de Ureña, Don Diego, Camacho the gracioso, and Filiberto, who wants to marry the departed Don Gonzalo’s daughter Doña Ana.

The only woman in evidence in Zamora’s last scene is Doña Beatriz, all torn up about Don Juan’s exemplary death. Future marriages get a mention, but there’s no pretense of happy ending. The refundición provocatively re-articulates the original comedia’s closing image, replacing uneasy nuptial coupling with a more pressing concern: the need to hear the story of Don Juan’s ending in detail, and to meditate on the meaning that his desengaño holds for every one of its hearers (Isasi Angulo 359-60).

² Element, humor, and status do not exhaust the damas’ schematic complexity. With more space, a good case could be made for each of these
women representing a different literary genre, as well – Isabela novels of intrigue, Tisbea/Trisbea Gongoristic poetry and piscatorial pastoral, Ana the action-adventure of comedias de capa y espada, and Aminta/Arminta the classic pastoral. These talk back to and develop the strain of the picaresque running through Don Juan’s adventures.

 offending this point, Catalinón punctuates the comedia’s second act with a high-profile foreshadow of Leporello’s list, remarkably foreshortened in longitude:

¡Almagrar y echar a extremo!
Con ésta cuatro serán.
[Chalk ‘em up and chunk ‘em out!
This one brings the body count to four.]
(Martel 288, Edwards 124, López-Vázquez 235)

Act three of the comedia [three-act play] confirms the body-count – four women, count ‘em, four – and serves it up with even more dramatic oomph. This time the tally gets re-counted in song and speech as the gracioso [comic sidekick] and his galán [action hero] throw together some dinner entertainment for their Stone Guest (see Martel 305, Edwards 164, López-Vázquez 274). The point is unmistakable: the fact that Don Juan has dealings with four damas [leading ladies] and only four is a matter of dramaturgical design.

This is an aspect of Isabela’s characterization that Martín informatively probes (see Martín 33, 40-41 and Fernández 18, 20, 48, 63, 65-66, 89).

This is an aspect of Isabela’s characterization that Martín’s literary analysis overlooks, but that the playscript brilliantly exploits (see Fernández 50, 66, 89).

Boswell’s notion of making character analysis the spine of theater translation comes in for an illuminating field-test in the “Teodora’s Tooth” section of this study’s conclusion. See the chapter entitled “New Ways of Making Comedia Accessible in the United States Today.”

Stereopticon perspective on Isabela’s complexity revolutionizes Recoding a dramatic turnaround that has thrown translators for a loop. The
Duchess lights up the stage when she hears that her groom-elect is already promised to the Pescadora. This revelation instantly transforms the dama from Naples into a fire-breathing Dragon-Lady: “Calla muger maldita,” she explodes, “vete de mi presencia, que me has muerto” [Shut your hole, you sleazy ho! Git out of my sight! God damn you, bitch, you’ve killed me dead] (Fernández 50, 89).

In the next breath – just as instantly – Isabela is reversing herself, backpedaling (in Tan largo, without the intervention of so much as a comma) to a second-thought position: “mas si el dolor te incita, / no tienes culpa tu, prosigue…” [Wait. If it’s really grief that’s making you spill your guts, then you’re not the guilty party. Go on ...].

Isabela’s performance flickers breathtakingly from condescending patron, to Dragon-Lady competitor, to equal-stakes collaborator at this point because that’s how Fire behaves. In dynamic contradiction to flema’s stolidity, fuego moves with the speed of lightning and the transformative power of Krakatoa. Tan largo intensifies the effect of the Duchess’ climactic Fire-breathing by making it pave the way for the thematic point of the scene, the stirring call to action that Tan largo puts in Isabela’s mouth first, as the button to her inflammatory outburst: “Mal aya la muger que en hombres fia” [Ladies who leave their lives in some gentleman’s care are about to get burned, real bad] (Fernández 89).

Stereopticon perspective makes it clear that Isabela’s characterization – the multidimensional compression of fuego and flema that defines her by dramaturgical design – dictates the quick-turn climax of this scene. Her breathtaking shift from Fire-Breathing Competitor to Cool Collaborator is not due to an accident in textual transmission (the tacit explanation for the jarring rapidity of these events that text-editors would hand you, pointing to variants in the wording of the two printed scenes). Nor does this climactic moment’s lightning acceleration from communication’s break-up to solidarity’s wake-up call show evidence of weak writing, of a comedia-scribbler shoving in some fancy footwork in the action department to cover up his ineptness with or disinterest in character development.
In a 21st-century US playtext, a slew of stage directions, character descriptions, and unspoken but very present fluencies in performance conventions—how character types behave, how plays reach out to actors and audiences to engineer dramatic builds, how language generates expectation and action onstage—would help performers and audiences Re-code a moment this pivotal to a scene and to a play. Performance contexts for Re-coding the script are recorded in the Burlador/Tan largo, too, but the ways in which this comedia tells actors how to realize their parts and audiences what to expect of them have fallen out of use. So Isabela’s big moment just stands there, like an indigestible bit of bone stuck in translation’s throat.

Tradition hoodwinks translators into handling the Duchess’ transformational discovery as a dry philological fact in a play that tradition teaches translators is not very adept at creating characters anyway. Hamstrung by tradition, this superbly-orchestrated dramatic surprise steps into English as an example of ham-handed dramaturgy botching a vital turning point, rather than an instance of masterful stagecraft making a point turn on a character trait. And the hambone results of translations thus hampered by cut-and-dried tradition help to root the suspicion that Golden Age plays really aren’t worth re-staging after all a little deeper in the dark loam of American theater’s xenophobic outlook (see Weber 267-69).

Playing “Fire” gives performers a handle on executing Isabela’s dramatic turnaround in a way that supports and makes sense of the scene by actively connecting it to its player’s characterization. Connected to a context of continuous character development, the performance challenge posed by the Duchess’ radicalization is a delicious inducement to put this play on stage. New techniques for Re-coding character in Golden Age comedia are urgently needed.

8 The social distance that separates these damas is worth stressing. In 21st-century US terms, the Burlador/Tan largo’s 11:00 scene presents a predictable clash, followed by a surprising collaboration, between a big-city Rich Bitch and a Trailer-Trash Chick.
The dramatic lowering of the Pescadora’s already low status increases the social torque on the scene as the Duchess embraces equality with her scene-partner, first as a practical reflection of their equal relationship with Don Juan, and then as a political revolution in their equal collaboration in a venture to stymie Don Juan. Translation that foregrounds Tisbea/Trisbea’s loss of status, then, does the staging of the scene a favor. In contemporary American terms, the Pescadora might say, “I hitched my star to the ass-end of the social subway’s caboose.”

Note that this ironically fulfills a prediction that Catalinón imparted to the audience privately in act two, that if Don Juan’s dealings with the “pobre pescadora” ever came to light, patriarchs would not be pleased (see Fernández 39, 80).

On closer reading, the subversive critique of marriage in the Burlador’s conclusion delighted most Bainbridge College folks. Once it caught their attention, the final scenes’ covert exposure of political corruption woke them up to instances of social satire all the way back to the beginning of the play. Challenged by the suggestion that Don Juan is merely Most Valuable Player in a game that every character in the comedia is playing with all his might, they began finding bigger, more interesting pictures of themselves inside the play. It took hard work, piecing together bits of insight from a slew of translations, to see other aspects of their world recognizably reflected in this scene – to catch a glimpse of their own experience of facing up to mortality in the aspiration to outdo himself that lures Don Juan to hell; to hear an echo of their own distrust of deathbed conversions in Don Juan’s frenzied negotiations with the Statue; to taste the tang of their own suspicion about quick political fixes in officialdom’s response to Don Juan’s demise. Once they caught that vision, their reading of the damnation scene became markedly more complex, and their view of Don Juan’s story decidedly more open-ended. Finding more of themselves reflected in the play, they found the Burlador/Tan largo a bigger, more vital, immediate, and contemporary piece of theater. Access to Stereopticon perspective would have organically broadened the damnation’s impact at Bainbridge College.
It is possible to get glimpses of the play’s agenda, even through conflation’s occlusions. The *Burlador de Sevilla/Tan largo me lo fiáis* is not the only classic drama, in Spanish or in English, to throw a magnificently empathetic sinner onstage, lure the audience into identifying with him, and then damn him. *El condenado por desconfiado* [Damned for Despair], another 17th-century comedia famosa – not to mention English moralities ranging from *Mankynd* to Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus* – follows the same trajectory of first shocking its audience by enacting unthinkable transgression onstage, then nudging the audience into complicity in the transgression, before finally reasserting the culpability of all who indulge in the transgression in question.

A major challenge to translating this *comedia*’s textually evident moral impact is finding cultural equivalents for the recurrent spiritual touchpoints that shape the action. One strategy for transmitting the play’s morality matrix from page to stage could be to punctuate the dialog with extracts from such recognizably American moral milestones as Jonathan Edwards’ famous sermon, just as Catalinón peppers his speeches with a compendium of proverbs, maxims, and wise warnings drawn from defining moments in Spain’s national history.

What I call “the dramaturgy of doubt” does establish one value, but it accomplishes even its work of moral assurance in an indirect, oblique way. The value that proves perdurable in the world of the play is grace, the condition of “gozando de Dios” [enjoying God, experiencing divine consummation] spoken of by the Statue and glimpsed by the Burlador in his communions with the Bulto (a word to which we will return).

Interestingly, the Spanish expresses this highly-valued condition by way of the more transitory of the language’s two verbs of being. The play speaks of grace in terms not of *ser* [a permanent state of being, a condition that’s DNA-deep], but of *estar* [a changeable state of residence one passes through, a temporary condition that must be renewed to persist]. Don Juan asks, “¿Estás gozando de Dios?” [Are you at this moment possessing, sensing, and communing with God?], and the Statue eventually answers him, “en gracia estoy” [I currently inhabit a state of grace] (Martel 306-307, Edwards 166-68, López-Vázquez 276-78).
Expressing grace as a function of *estar* – stressing both its providential and its provisional character – congenially fits the process of pursuing grace into the *Burlador*’s dramaturgy of doubt, disturbance, and moral questioning. Putting the assurance of grace into the mouth of a Bulto drives that point of productive insecurity even more surely home.

Covarrubias’ dictionary *Tesoro de la Lengua Castellana o Española*, a Godsend to dramaturgs RE/decoding *comedia*, eloquently describes the instabilities in the word that Catalinón chooses to denominate Don Juan’s otherworldly Guest (see Martel 318, Edwards 192, López-Vásquez 307):

**BULTO.** Todo aquello que haze cuerpo y no se distingue lo que es ... lo que se vee de lexos sin distinguirse en particular lo que es. Los cortos de vista dizien ver de las cosas el bulto, que es la corpulencia. Juzgar una cosa a bulto o tassalla, quando no se distingue pieça por pieça, y a ojo y poco más o menos dezimos lo que puede montar. ... Díxose bulto *quasi voluto*, *voltato*, *a volvendo*, por ser cosa embueilta y confusa ... Bulto sinifica algunas vezes la efigie puesta sobre la sepultura de algún príncipe, y algumas vezes la mesma tumba cubierta.

[“Bulto” means everything that has a body without your being able to tell what it is ... what you see from a distance without distinguishing precisely what it is. Shortsighted people, they say, see the “bulto” of things, which is their general materiality, size, bulk, or body-ness (corporality). To judge something by its “bulto” or to estimate it, is when you don’t break it down piece by piece, but ballpark it and approximate its worth. ... They say “bulto” derives from *voluto*, *voltato*, from the Latin verb *volvendo*, since it’s something muffled, enveloped, and mixed up ... Sometimes “bulto”]
means the memorial effigy mounted on some prince's tomb, and
sometimes it even refers to the tomb covered by the statue.] (245)

In the _Burlador de Sevilla_ and its twin script _Tan largo_, the messenger of grace,
like the grace itself, is a presence that’s provisional, negotiable, and shifting, and
also palpable, intriguing, and involving – not a fixed quantity nor a pat formula,
but a challenge to first-person involvement in an intensely personal quest.

The dramaturgy of doubt laid out in the world’s first Don Juan play – the
project of unsettling values to impel people toward a process of self-examination
– magnificently equipped the _Burlador/Tan largo_ to appeal to Counter-
Reformation Spaniards. The _comedia_’s unorthodox call to reform also has the
capacity to move postmodern Americans. The moral, spiritual, and even
religious agendas encoded within the play are not out of date, not unplayably
doctrinaire, not dramatic drawbacks to be suppressed, glossed over, or tolerated
as museum-piece features of an authentic antique (see, for example, Dear 4-5).
They are as current as the next national disaster – terrorist attack, hurricane,
firestorm, virus – which starts national figures wondering out loud about the
judgment of God in the USA today. Properly Re-coded, the morality-play aspects
of the _Burlador/Tan largo_ offer 21st-century US theater people access to
dramatic dynamite.

15 López-Vázquez’ methodology also presumes that a dramatic poet cares
more about poetry than drama. The conviction that verseform outweighs
dramatic values, that rhyme trumps subtextual reason, that _dramaturgos_
[playwrights] in the Golden Age privileged scansion over scenic effect, is written
all over López-Vázquez’ editions, and written in a large and heavy hand, in the
form of frequent emendations. Why should any poet, however, particularly a
dramatic poet, finish every stanza to perfection? Aren’t there performance
impacts that aposiopesis, or ruptures in the meter, or attention-pricking
interruptions in the rhyme are the most efficient means of generating? Can a
character who’s losing his mind (think Octavio/Otavio hearing the news about
Isabela), or picking up the pieces of her shattered world (as Tisbea/Trisbea tries
to do during her last walk on the beach at Tarragona), speak perfectly-finished verse believably?

16 In fact, the play makes Catalinón suggest that public notices should be posted warning innocent damsels [donzellas] of Don Juan’s presence in the neighborhood, just so attentive listeners will have a counterexample to help clarify the character profile of the damas that the comedia actually puts onstage (Fernández 39, 81).
TARGETING RE-PRODUCTION OF THE “UNTRANSLATABLE:”
USING PRODUCTION CONCEPTUALIZATION TO TRANSMIT
NON-VERBAL PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

It’s traditional for translation to squeeze some of the juiciest performance material in the first Don Juan play right off the stage, into footnotes at the bottom of the page.¹ There it’s conscientiously labeled “untranslatable.” That’s why even translations that insist “a good translation should not require notes” since “all explanations of difficult passages and obscure allusions, based on history, myth or local lore, and all puns and jokes are as best possible clarified in the translation itself” – as The Beguiler from Seville and The Stone Guest by Max Oppenheimer, Jr., most emphatically does (viii) – end up knee-deep in footnotes, stubbing potential producers’ toes on arcane learning that contemporary actors can’t act and contemporary audiences wouldn’t understand if they could.²

Instructively, the kind of performance effect that translators designate as “untranslatable” is directly proportional to how philologically literal they think “translation” has to be. That’s why so accomplished an editor and performance-friendly a translator as Gwynne Edwards ends up telling readers of his Trickster of Seville and the Stone Guest that the word-play between the two galanes [elegant young studs] Don Juan and the Marquis de la Mota is untranslatable – on the same page that he translates with effortless ease precisely the same brand of verbal wit between their graciosos [comic sidekicks] Catalinón and Ripio (Edwards 84-85).

Evidently the freewheeling comic effect of the servant characters, uncomplicated by any responsibility to embody the literary merit of the play, sets Edwards free to focus on the dramatic idea that the graciosos enact, rather than on the complicated words that they speak. Paradoxically, this shift in focus (from diction to idea) leads Edwards to the discovery of language that vibrantly (though not literally) re-captures the action between Ripio and Catalinón. The literary stature of Don Juan and the Marquis, in contrast, keeps the translator’s attention riveted on the literary expressions that their dialog records, rather than on the dramatic ideas that their dialog acts out. As a result, the galanes’ repartee ends
up relegated to a footnote, soberly explaining the literal workings of “a joke which cannot be suggested in English” (Edwards 85).

What if, instead of narrowing the idea of “translation” down to what Aristotle called a play’s “diction” (lexis), translators broadened it explicitly to include the play’s “thought” (dianoia, see Golden and Hardison 12-13, 125-26)? Targeting the Burlador and Tan largo’s fundamental themes, ideas, and thought-structures for re-production in the US today could revolutionize the way that translators go about re-conceiving this comedia as a dynamic American performance vehicle.3

Tentative steps toward Thematic translation have been sketched out by Synoptic and Composite practitioners. Every translator, after all, depends on an idea about how the comedia functions in performance as a guide for re-casting the Burlador and Tan largo into English. What themes fill the plot with meaning, what theatrical and meta-theatrical resonance makes the characters memorable, what challenges to conventional wisdom endow the dramatic experience with worthiness, for the stage and for the world that contains the play – these Thematic Conceptualizations of the play fundamentally determine what translators hear the dialog saying. In theater translation, “thought” trumps “diction” every time.

Theater translation ultimately depends on Thematic perception, but thorough-going exploration of Thematic translation’s possibilities for reviving the Burlador and Tan largo is the exclusive territory of two works, both commissioned by the Royal Shakespeare Company, and both the progenitors of a distinguished production history.

Derek Walcott’s Joker of Seville made the Trinidad Theatre Workshop a force to be reckoned with in Caribbean culture when it premiered at the Little Carib Theatre, Port of Spain, on November 28, 1974, with music by Galt MacDermot and stage direction by the author (Walcott 6; King 319-27, 578-79). The translation was published for US readers in 1978, and re-staged in Toronto two years later, where it re-incorporated parts of Walcott’s prompt script that had been pruned out of the printed version.
Nick Dear’s *Last Days of Don Juan* opened at the Swan Theatre, Stratford, in 1990, with an opulently scaled acting text requiring thirteen men, seven women, and five musicians to put onstage.

This chapter uses the tool of Production Conceptualization to explore the territory of Thematic translation. Thematic approaches to theater translation, like the fourth gospel’s orientation toward recording the impact of Christ, organize themselves around ideas rather than chronologies and vocabularies, privileging what Aristotlean’s would call the “thought” element of theater-making over the transmission of “diction” or “character” or even “plot.” At first thought, Targeting a theater document for re-production first and foremostly in terms of its Thematic thrusts seems to countenance radical losses in production information. How can you translate a scene without faithfully reproducing its words? How can you accurately transmit a dramatic movement if your methodology admits of rearranging the sequence of events?

The fact is, however, as traditional translation’s practice repeatedly makes clear, that translators’ Thematic grasp of how moments “work” onstage ultimately determines how their translations Decode, Re-code, and Target diction, character, and plot. The ideas that a translator hears a speech’s words expressing, and the point of the dramatic movement that the translator sees the speech advancing, make philological transcription feasible. Thematic translation is an unspoken prerequisite to every “literal” rendering.

A translation may choose to think of itself as an austerely literal process of textual transcription. In fact, however, that translation’s stageworthiness (like every other reproduction of *comedia* in English) depends on making sense of staged words and performed events, and the sense that the translator makes is dependent upon reading the whole play Thematically. That’s why philologians like to footnote particularly complex performance effects as “untranslatable”—not because the effects’ impact on thought processes is indecipherable, but because the impact can’t be reproduced within the limited resources which literal transcription allows translators for transmitting Thematic insights. “Untranslatable” serves as tradition’s code for “too complex to be transmitted literally.”
Jean Graham-Jones’ fresh conception of translation as a continuum is a helpful counterbalance to suppressive traditions that assess translation’s “accuracy,” “fidelity,” or “definitiveness” in terms of philological literalness. In her discussion of “South Goes West: Moving Ricardo Monti’s *Finlandia* to *End-Land,*** presented to the Association for Theatre in Higher Education in 2004, Graham-Jones re-conceptualized the differences in translation products that have traditionally been used to distinguish a “translation” from “an adaptation” or a “version.”

Graham-Jones interprets differences in translation outcomes as a function of differences in the translator’s position on a continuum between two points:

- the point where the play’s transmission is envisioned completely in the terms of its original audience and its originating culture, and
- the point where the play’s transmission is conceived of wholly in terms of its target audience and the culture to which it’s being transplanted.

This chapter’s goal – identifying stageworthy material that has traditionally been considered “untranslatable” and Targeting it for vibrant re-production in US performances of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* – places it squarely at the second end of Graham-Jones’ continuum.

Like the investigations into longstanding translation problems that precede it, this chapter adopts a three-headed method of inquiry. Here, Production Conceptualization provides a tool for exploring Thematic translation as a territory for mastering Targeting’s technique. While Conspectus investigation and Stereopticon perspective chose one site to dig deeply into the roots of a problem that was evident on translation’s surface, Production Conceptualization chooses multiple excavation sites to dig out many facets of the *comedia*’s stagecraft heretofore considered “untranslatable.” Recuperating stageworthiness unites the chapters as a common goal. Where Conspectus and Stereopticon inquiries aimed deep, though, Production Conceptualization aims wide.

The chapter’s panoramic approach encompasses three sites:

1. Nick Dear’s cross-gendered translation of Catalinón launches this broader look at Thematic practice. Traditional techniques have effectively designated
Catalinón’s role as “untranslatable” by drastically simplifying its complexity. Read through US dramaturg Susan Jonas’ theory for “Aiming the Canon at Now,” Dear’s translation of Catalinón into Catalina provides an excellent site for exploring how gender manipulations can Target comedia’s multidimensional characterizations for dynamic re-production today.

2. Dear’s transmission of Doña Ana’s role in the Burlador and Tan largo provides another case study in Thematic translation Targeting 17th-century stage vitality for 21st-century performance. Traditional translation erases Ana from the stage altogether (much to the relief of conventional readings of the comedia’s denouement). Ana’s transgressive presence takes center stage in Dear’s Last Days of Don Juan, where character information that’s implicit in the original script becomes explicit character action in the translation, challenging and clarifying the concept of honor. Traditionally considered an indigestible cultural fact, honor recovers its limber liminality in Dear’s translation. Again, Jonas’ “Strategies for Adaptation” help to bring the lesson home for use in the US.

3. Walcott’s treatment of the comedia’s musicality opens a site for exploring how Thematic translation recovers the impact of music in the original performance score, and the way that musical structures organize and unify dramatic experience in the Burlador and Tan largo. At this site, I reconstruct Galt MacDermot’s songs from the Hart House Theatre prompt script (where Walcott’s Joker had its North American premiere) to fill a production gap that’s traditionally been voided by absence of music. Walcott’s translation of the comedia as an American Musical Theater piece models a promising approach to revolutionizing its reception in the US, and illuminates the original play’s structural integrity.

Through these three sites runs this common theme:

- Nothing is “untranslatable.” By clearly transmitting its dramatic idea, every performance effect in the Burlador and Tan largo can be Targeted for re-production in America today.

- Fidelity goes deeper than diction. Literally transcribing the script’s words can betray their dramatic purpose. Faithfully resurrecting a scene’s Thematic
impact may require revamping its dialog, setting, character names, stage
business, pacing, and even its plotting. *Tan largo* does all this and more to
re-present the first Don Juan story.

*Tan largo* sets the standard for manipulations of diction, character, and plot
to vivify thought – a 17th-century precedent for re-charging performance
through Thematically Targeted Production (Re)Conceptualization.

Though the survey is swift, the stakes are high. Diction-dominated translation
techniques are dropping indispensable performance information out of the
translation process. Production conceptualization promises to recover untapped
performance potential of enormous magnitude for putting the *Burlador* and *Tan
largo* onstage, revolutionizing the way that its roles function onstage, its message
reaches its audience, and its artistic integrity inflects the future of dramatizing
Don Juan.

1. **Bending Catalinón’s Gender**

   **to Recapture the “Untranslatable” Range of His Role**

Conceptualizing a role for re-production makes translators think beyond
the scripted lines that are used to record an actor’s part, to the full range of the
dramaturgical functions that the role fulfills. This case study demonstrates
Thematic principles at work, Targeting translation to recapture the
multifunctional performance range of the *gracioso’s* role.

The site is Nick Dear’s *Last Days of Don Juan*. The Targeting technique
that Dear adopts is cross-gender translation. Through translating Catalinón (the
Burlador’s male sidekick) as Catalina (Don Juan’s female cook, frequently cross-
dressed as a man), Dear succeeds in bringing four critical functions of the
*gracioso’s* role to life in contemporary English at the same time. Susan Jonas’
strategies for “Aiming the Canon at Now” nudge translators in the US toward
duplicating Dear’s UK-specific success.

One way that the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* pack impact into their scripts is
by making every role that they put onstage do an extraordinary amount of
dramaturgical work. Don Juan’s gracioso Catalinón is a prime example of the kind of multifunctional performance dynamo that results. Catalinón fills at least four major functions designed to make performances of the first Don Juan play live and breathe:

- He plays the role of Don Juan’s conscience, preaching a whole string of avisos [general moral warnings] at the Burlador, and serving as the most outspoken critic of the garañón’s specific moral choices, burla by burla. The gracioso becomes a kind of jiggly human scale for weighing the title character’s ethical gravity. He studies Don Juan’s appetites up close and personal, and shares the fruits of his analysis with a candor that costs him a broken tooth (Fernández 51,89).

- He performs a comic foil to his galán [young male lead], parodying the Burlador’s aristocratic derring-do with his blue-collar don’t-dare-to. The gracioso adds depth to the action with deftly-timed physical humor; for example, the fright routines that he plays out every time he meets the Statue serve appreciably to boost the fright factor in the Dead Man Walking’s appearances (Fernández 52-54,58-59, 90-93). Catalinón embodies the underdog under pressure.

- His allegiance to Don Juan grows as the play progresses, endowing the comedia’s central figure with growing magnetism, charm, and warmth. Catalinón takes an increasingly loyal, protective, and understanding stance toward his employer – a posture that could only be motivated by genuine affection. His hero-worship humanizes the Burlador.

- The graciooso builds a well-traveled bridge between the world of the play and the world of the audience, chatting across the fourth wall like a favorite neighbor. He drives the dramaturgical mission of the play with his man-in-the-street point of view, his working-stiff indestructibility, his entrepreneurial spirit, and his down-to-earth notions about Don Juan. In the end, he becomes the eyewitness to damnation who expects to pay full price for spectatorial complicity.

If Catalinón’s multifunctionality reminds you of the multidimensionality that the Burlador and Tan largo builds into its damas, that’s all to the good. Both
features of the dramaturgical design pack stageworthiness into the script, maximizing its performance potential by diversifying its papeles [character roles].

Four functions don’t describe the full limit of the gracioso’s contribution to an impressively well-rounded, satisfyingly multidimensional world of the play. Catalinón repeatedly adds edges to the action that go beyond the duties of focusing moral debate, foregrounding comedy, humanizing the hero, and making the audience at home in the world of the play. But these four angles on the gracioso’s functionality can serve as representative for the purpose of demonstrating that tradition has effectively designated this role as “untranslatable,” by drastically simplifying the range of its dramatic impact. Philological translation usually reduces Catalinón to just one of his dramaturgical functions:

- to the unbending moral compass that he becomes in Alvarez’ Don Juan of Seville, for example (Alvarez 141-42, 151-52, 167, 171, 191, 194, 197, 203-204, 206, 210; compare O’Brien 114, 131);
- to the comic reflection of Don Juan that dominates his re-presentation in Edwards’ Trickster of Seville (Edwards 61, 103; compare Oppenheimer 16, 72);
- to the scaredy-cat lover that prescribes his limits in Starkie’s Playboy (Starkie 202-203, 236-38; compare Schizzano and Mandel 60, 89); or
- to the tragic chorus he’s re-cast as in Campbell’s Trickster (Campbell 257, 313; compare Kidd 67).

Tradition characteristically transmits this vibrantly multifunctional character into English as one-dimensional.

How does this impoverishment of performance potential happen? Canonical translation assumes that the play’s thought structure is self-evident, transparently fixed within the original written text. Thematic translation knows better. Intimately aware of living scripts’ calculated provisionality, of their construction as springboards to performance, Thematic translation carefully interrogates the original to uncover the ideas that give the recorded words
meaning, and then energetically sets about the business of re-producing those ideas in culturally accessible performance terms.

This praxis of excavating and transmitting a play’s fundamental mindset interestingly parallels dramaturg Susan Jonas’ approach to “Aiming the Canon at Now.” A leading figure in the emergence of dramaturgy both as an artistic practice and as an academic discipline in the United States, and lead editor for the seminal collection *Dramaturgy in American Theater: A Source Book* (1997), Jonas identifies a wide, multifunctional range of “Strategies for Adaptation” which can be used to Target a Thematic approach to the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* – an approach not yet attempted by a US translator – for US applications. Notes Jonas,

Theatremakers can employ the canon to **reveal** its own biases about gender, as well as race, sexual preference, and other issues and sensitivities. Dramaturgy can not only elucidate but question authority in these matters. ... In fact, the more conversant with the canon are we theartemakers, educators, students, and audiences, the greater the possibility of engaging in profound dialectics with our source material. (Jonas 244-45, emphasis original)

Jonas proceeds to identify two techniques that stimulate dialectical engagement with canonical texts about gender issues: “Gender-Reversal” (i.e., changing a character from male to female, or vice versa), and “Cross-Gender Casting” (i.e., filling a male role with a female actor, or vice versa). Casting female actors to play male characters can help bring thinking about gender to the surface of a performance text, Jonas reports, because it “draws attention to gender construction and allows performers and audience members to cross-dream” (257). “Reversing the gender of a character,” she notes, “can provide a distinct stylized critical layer, or it can be inlaid naturalistically” (Jonas 257). Either form of gender-bending can serve to highlight gender issues, by calling attention to how characters onstage (and, by extension, people in the audience) deal with the challenge to “negotiate with and beyond social gender construction, breaking the rules and making new ones” (258-59).
Nick Dear combines these techniques in *The Last Days of Don Juan.*

From the point of view of Jonas’ dramaturgical theory,

- Dear “naturalistically inlays” female gender into a major role of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*, by translating the role of Catalinón into Catalina.
- He simultaneously contrives to maintain a “layer of distinct stylized gender criticism” within the gender reversal, by presenting Catalina as a woman who cross-dresses as a man. In *Last Days*, Don Juan’s first order to Catalina is to dress herself “decently,” in men’s clothing (Dear 20-21).

Translating the *comedia*’s thought-structure this way, Dear’s cross-gendered, cross-dressed Catalina offers English speakers arresting opportunities to experience not only what it means to be female in the world of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*, but what it means to be Catalinón in the first Don Juan play.

Dear’s strategy of bending the role’s gender allows him room to re-capture more of the character’s thematic complexity.⁵ Take Catalinón’s function as Don Juan’s conscience, for example. How do you re-create the mix of proverb-citing triteness, hellfire-and-damnation fervor, self-exculpatory hypocrisy, and status-quo-perpetuating predictability that characterizes the sidekick’s efforts to preach propriety to “Satan” (Alvarez 176, see Fernández 43, 84)? Catalina’s gender offers a way in to re-producing this moral melange, by foregrounding the role’s motherliness. Listen to Catalina scolding Don Juan’s plan to pull some “dirty work” on Tisbea before he makes a “fast exit ... my signature”:

**CATALINA:** Are you really planning to take advantage of the girl who saved your life?

**DON JUAN:** Seduction is my special skill. I cannot break the habit. I thought you said you knew me ...?

**CATALINA:** I know you’re a bastard to women.

**DON JUAN:** But I’m dying for this sea-nymph! A body like Italian art! Exquisite! I have to possess it!

**CATALINA:** And once you’ve possessed it, you’re off, are you? That’s a fine way to repay her hospitality.
DON JUAN: You are tedious. Don’t you remember Aeneas behaving exactly like this towards Dido, Queen of Carthage?

CATALINA: No, I don’t. When was that?

DON JUAN: ... Before I was born!

CATALINA: Well, I’m older than you, and I still don’t remember.

DON JUAN: Christ, you’re old enough to be my mother.

CATALINA: If I was your mother, sir, I’d box your ears for bad behaviour. They say one day you pay, for all your naughtiness on earth, don’t they?

DON JUAN: Plenty of time to settle that debt. Meanwhile I’ll do what I want.

CATALINA: Well, I’d sooner be me than you. Sooner be called a chicken than have debauchery on my conscience. Here comes the wretched peasant. Wait till she learns the truth ...!

(Dear 25-26, ellipses scripted)

The motherliness of Catalina’s relationship with Don Juan flavors the *comedia’s* moral reminders with a homely tang of Nagging Mom that is absolutely right for the role. Mothers’ nags express solidarity with the sinner, even as they condemn the sin. Packed with the potency of I-told-you-so, maternal correction offers performers a deeply satisfying method for re-producing the thematic texture of Catalinón’s *avisos* [moral caveats].

Making Catalinón a woman helps Dear to Conceptualize Re-Production of the *gracioso’s* function as Don Juan’s conscience, the person who’s always reminding the Burlador to clean up his act and show the world his best behavior. Moreover, making Catalina a cook (i.e., Targeting her trade as culturally legible in the current day) helps Dear to recapture Catalinón’s function as Don Juan’s comic foil.

In the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*, Don Juan’s sidekick plays a funhouse reflection of his hero’s *valor* [manliness]. Catalina’s profession magnificently
re-captures this parodic aspect of the role for re-production in the Last Days of Don Juan. Listen in, as the swashbuckling Duke Octavio and his attendant Ripio bow themselves offstage to make room for Don Juan’s reunion with the Marquis of Mota, and Catalina undercuts the machismo crap of their farewells with a crisp culinary twist:

OCTAVIO: My sword-arm is ever at your service. (He bows to Don Juan.)

CATALINA: (Aside) And your women, too, I suppose.

RIPIO: Did you say something?

CATALINA: I said my, er, sword-arm is at your service, too, and my egg-whisk arm, and my rolling-pin arm ... if you want them ...

Exit Octavio and Ripio. Enter the Marquis of Mota.

(Dear 32, ellipses scripted)

Interestingly, this passage lets Last Days incorporate a touch of mujer varonil into Catalina’s characterization. By faithfully translating the dramatic idea behind the speech – a fidelity more deeply seated than loyalty that starts and stops with the comedia’s diction – Dear succeeds in putting a fuller-flavored slice of the comedia’s world onstage. A glimpse of the “manly woman” character-type central to many Golden Age comedias (the Spanish Renaissance equivalent of the Unruly Women and Viragos that enrich Elizabethan and Jacobean theater experiences) adds performance kick to the Last Days of Don Juan. Dear Conceptualizes a role capable of containing a fully feminine mistress of the kitchen and a fully macho master of the saucy remark at the same time (Fernández 35, 77; see Stoll and Smith 85-106, 259-71).

Catalina’s occupation helps Last Days to recapture other sides of Catalinón’s comic function, too. In addition to witty comebacks and parodic mirrorings, the Spanish gracioso enlivens his comedia with physical humor – extended jokes about bodily functions, pratfalls, slapstick, and down-to-earth reminders of corporal realities (Fernández 25, 69; 39, 81; 52,90). Re-casting his funny man as a female cook gives Dear a means of vigorously returning this body-
based comedy to the stage. As a case in point, Catalina’s professional interest in catering hilariously complicates her presence at Don Juan’s dinners with the Dead Man:

DON GONZALO: Please sit.

Two cadaverous servants dressed in black enter with chairs. Catalina hesitates.

DON GONZALO: Sit!

CATALINA: Sir, I’ve got a bit of an upset tummy, to tell you the –

DON GONZALO: Sit!

CATALINA: ... I’ve sat.

DON GONZALO: Impertinence!

CATALINA: Sorry. (Aside) San Panuncio, San Anton, get me out of here! – What’s this, then? The plat du jour?

DON GONZALO: A dish of snakes in venom.

CATALINA: And the garnish?

DON GONZALO: Scorpions’ spit.

CATALINA: Really? What do you do, do you marinade the –

DON GONZALO: It’s the speciality of the house.

CATALINA: I see. Trade secret. The casserole?

DON GONZALO: Fingernails.

CATALINA: Sharp, and curved like talons: a solicitor?

... Do you have a decent cellar? Any good wine laid down?

DON GONZALO: Taste. (Pours wine.)

CATALINA: A complex bouquet. Got quite a nose on it, hasn’t it? Let me guess: vinegar, phlegm, and donkeys’ piss?
Where Catalina’s parody of food snobbery – and the gender reversal that drives the parody home – succeeds most resonantly is in re-producing the underdog in Catalinón’s brand of comedy (“Sit!” “... I’ve sat”). This character operates under intense pressure. A vital element in the recipe for what makes him funny is that he plays a wage slave who’s forced to aid and abet the Burlador under protest, an everyday guy just trying to get by and having a monumentally hard time doing it. Like Costello baffled by Abbott’s logic, or Laurel bowing to Hardy’s superior self-assurance, Catalinón gets strong-armed into shenanigans of which he vociferously disapproves, only to get left holding the bag, facing the awful consequences. Catalina as unwilling guest of honor, scared shitless at the supper table, is squarely in this tradition of comic underdog.

Dear’s strategy of gender reversal brilliantly highlights the pressure-cooker ingredient in the sidekick’s comic makeup. An excellent passage for surveying this effect crops up right after Don Juan has intercepted Dona Anna’s letter to the Marquis of Mota. Note how Catalina’s gender underscores the social coercions that constrain this character, as the cook encounters the new scheme Don Juan is cooking up:

CATALINA: You’ve got a new scheme.
DON JUAN: Yes, a colourful one.
CATALINA: Whatever it is, I do not approve.
DON JUAN: We’ll get away with it.
CATALINA: We? What do you mean, we? I’m not helping out with your horrible tricks.
DON JUAN: You stole two horses. That’s a serious offense.
CATALINA: You think you cheat the world, Don Juan, but you only cheat yourself. Take care. Or you’ll end up good and damned, on the Day of Judgement.
DON JUAN: What is this, the Holy Inquisition? How insolent!
CATALINA: The truth makes me brave!
DON JUAN: And fear makes you a coward! I don’t need advice. What are you, anyway? Not even a valet. A cook! Advice, from a cook! You have to appreciate that a man gets nowhere without a few risks!
CATALINA: Yes, and the bigger the risk, the worse the punishment when finally they catch you.
DON JUAN: I’m warning you, Catalina! No more sermons! Or you’re out – understood?
CATALINA: Someone else will take me in.
DON JUAN: That’s hardly very likely. Look at yourself. Not exactly a raving beauty, are we?
CATALINA: I’ve a good brain.
DON JUAN: That counts for nothing in this town. You stay with me. You need me. Understand?
CATALINA: I understand. I’ll follow your orders. (Aside) What choice is there? I’ve nothing to my name. Oh, if I had a little money ... – What do you want me to do, then? Undress women? Swindle men?
DON JUAN: Shut up. Here come the Marquis.
CATALINA: (Aside) Oh, he’s the victim, is he?

Enter Mota.

(Dear 36-37, ellipsis scripted)
Manipulating the gracioso’s gender helps to re-produce his role’s capacity for bringing a wide variety of thematic textures to life onstage. In Dear’s UK-Targeted cross-gendering, altruism rubs shoulders with blackmail (“I’m not helping out with your horrible tricks.” “You stole two horses. That’s a serious offense.”); moral indignation does battle with social scorn (“The truth makes me brave!” “Look at yourself. Not exactly a raving beauty, are we?”); laziness, ambition, and greed stand cheek by jowl with curiosity, loyalty, and mule-headed
independence (“I do not approve.” “Oh, if I had a little money ... – What do you want me to do, then?”). Catalina foregrounds the dramaturgical fusion of conscience, comic compulsion, and survival instincts that characterizes Catalínón.

The gender of Last Days’s funny guy also highlights Catalínón’s function as Don Juan’s hero-worshipper and humanizer. Implicit in the Burlador and Tan largo is the fact that the gracioso gradually grows into the role of self-sacrificial protector for his galán. He does not spill the beans about Tisbea/Trisbea when Don Juan’s getting tongue-lashed by his Dad (Fernández 39, 80). He makes himself a rowdy gate-crasher to divert resentment from Don Juan at the wedding reception in Dos Hermanas (Fernández 43, 84; 44, 85). He worries about Don Juan’s pre-nuptial reception by the King, and fusses like a mother hen over the Burlador/garañón’s upcoming marriage to Isabela (Fernández 57-58, 93).

Catalínón’s subtextually-stated affection for his boss is a rarely-turned key to understanding both master and man. Catalínón stays in his job because, much as his employment from time to time appalls him, he sincerely comes to love his employer. Don Juan’s ability to inspire love in this lovable sidekick, in turn, underscores the superhuman strength of the Burlador/garañón’s attractiveness, and subtly humanizes his heroic irresistibility, measuring it on a disarmingly down-to-earth, charmingly non-sexual scale.

Tradition’s fixation on the play’s diction dupes translators into fatally overlooking (if not overturning) this deeply-encoded mutual attachment. Translating only the dialog over-privileges Catalínón’s televangelistically fervent denunciations of Don Juan and over-weights Don Juan’s decisive impositions of his will on Catalínón, while burying information about how these characters act out real affection for each other – information that the original script transmits structurally and thematically (compare, for example, Fernández 43, 84 with Alvarez 176).

Dear’s Thematic outlook, operating through the strategy of gender reversal, leaps this production pitfall. In fact, Dear’s cross-gender translation succeeds in humanizing the hero at the point where translation traditionally gives
him up for lost (see Fernández 50-51, 89, and compare Edwards 152-53) – right where his loyal servant’s fear of coming judgement rubs Don Juan the wrong way, and he “hits her”:

CATALINA: You broke my tooth.
DON JUAN: Keep your mouth shut, then. Where did you hear this rubbish?
CATALINA: It’s not rubbish. It’s the truth.
DON JUAN: The what?
CATALINA: The – oh I give up. You’ve no idea of good and bad at all. I’m leaving.
DON JUAN: ... Don’t go.
CATALINA: Why not?
DON JUAN: I hate to be alone. I’ll double your wages.
CATALINA: You don’t pay me wages.
DON JUAN: Tomorrow! I’ll give you two thousand, tomorrow. Stay with me tonight. I need you. I don’t even know where I’m lodging.
CATALINA: Round the back of the church. It’s dark, and secret.
DON JUAN: What, sleep on consecrated ground?
CATALINA: A lot of people in Seville would love to get their hands on you. Here you should be safe. – When you say, stay with you ... ?
DON JUAN: Yes?
CATALINA: In what sense, stay with you?
DON JUAN: In the stable, same as usual.
CATALINA: Oh. Right.
DON JUAN: Why, did you think you were getting the bed? I can’t very well sleep with the horses, can I?
CATALINA: But you’ll pay me tomorrow? (Aside) Enough to start out on my own?
DON JUAN: Catalina, I swear to you –
CATALINA: Don’t do that, please. Just get the money.

(Dear 60, ellipses scripted)

Putting a female in charge of Don Juan’s sleeping arrangements helps the translation transmit Don Juan’s hunger for (non-sexual) human companionship. Putting a woman on the receiving end of Don Juan’s (non-sexual) physical abuse helps Last Days to highlight the personal ties that instinctively bind this dynamic duo together. Reassigning the servant’s gender helps Last Days transmit not only the complex web of aspirations, resentments, affections, and thoughts that keeps Catalinón at Don Juan’s side, but also the vulnerability, self-doubt, supra-sexual longings, and buddy-love that makes the attachment mutual.

Last Days highlights the growing friendship that warms the heart of the play, by Targeting the Spanish script’s implicit affection for explicit re-production in English. Nor does the translation stop there. Last Days proceeds to compose dialog not found in Spanish, in order to put Catalinón’s original, authentic, and thematically-recorded ties to Don Juan onstage in ways that are performable Now. Following Tan largo’s precedent in rewriting the Burlador, Dear writes dialog for an event that clearly happens during the course of the comedia, but which neither of the 17th-century Spanish printings puts onstage.

In Last Days’ act two, scene eight, Catalina is waiting for Don Juan, who’s in a top-level meeting with the King of Castile, finalizing plans for the forthcoming Tenorio-Isabella nuptials. A series of people in search of Don Juan ask her for information, and get protective misdirection. The scene is intensely revealing about Catalina, Don Juan, and the relationship between them – all the more so because of Catalina’s gender:

Seville. Night. Enter Catalina.

CATALINA: My master’s with the King. Being raised to the peerage. He went in a rascal, he’ll come out a Count. It’s standard practice here. And tonight he’s actually going through with a wedding! I suspect the King’s twisted his arm. But when do I get my two thousand, that’s what I want to know . . . ? He said tomorrow. Well,
this is tomorrow. I’ve been living for tomorrow for as long as I recall. I’ll buy a little corner bar, serve the best chilled soup in Seville! All you have to do is get a reputation, and you’re rich, and once you’re rich, you can live off your reputation.

She deflects a question regarding Don Juan’s whereabouts from his uncle Don Pedro, and proceeds:

The more I think about it, the more I think I’m ripe for a change of career. This job’s dangerous. All that lust and dissipation has left my nerves in shreds. But nonetheless, I love to watch him move …

She stiff-arms Dona Anna (Gonzalo’s orphaned daughter) with the news that Don Juan is slated to get married later that evening, and continues:

I wouldn’t sniff at the responsibilities of marriage myself. In a place of my own, doing a healthy trade, little white apron, I’d say I’d be rather attractive. . . . Surely someone’ll make me an offer? One day Don Juan will be gone. Without him to measure up to, perhaps the rest won’t seem so dull.

She gets rid of Anfriso (Tisbea’s ex) by promising to have Don Juan meet him at the docks early the next morning, and concludes:

Why can’t he lead a normal life? My big, brave beautiful boy? Set up with one good woman, and abandon this urge to destroy?

*Enter Don Juan, in a sash.*

(Dear 75-77, ellipses original)

Catalina’s hero-worship of Don Juan is written all over this passage. He’s her “big, brave beautiful boy,” whose “lust and dissipation has left my nerves in shreds. But nonetheless, I love to watch him move …” He is the exceptional man
who rules all other men out of the running as exciting candidates for companionship: “Without him to measure up to, perhaps the rest won’t seem so dull.” And he is the “rascal” in a tight spot who needs her protection, and gets it unquestioningly, with no real expectation of reward. Like a reflex moving her instinctively, Catalina’s admiration for Don Juan makes her stand between him and the fisherman bent on filleting him, the woman obsessed with bewitching him, and the uncle committed to settling him down into a staid pillar of the state.

For diction-centered readers of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*, what Dear stages here is a total fabrication – the sort of effort toward cross-cultural transmission that Victor Dixon insists is “attempting not a translation, but an adaptation, a work of transformation, ... or indeed an original creation (‘loosely based on ...’ ‘from an idea by ...’), and should not be ashamed (but rather proud) to say so” (Dixon “Translation” 95, ellipses original). From a thought-centered point of view, however, Dear is translating authentic performance impact from the original performance text.

All of the action that *Last Days* brings onstage in this scene takes place in the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* (see Fernández 57, 93). In the Spanish script, the action that *Last Days* stages just takes place offstage. The relationships, the ideas, and the dramaturgical sense of movement expressed in the Thematic scene are profoundly faithful to the first Don Juan play. In fact, they re-create the *gracioso*’s dramatic function with a fullness that philological transcription finds untranslatable. Bending Catalina’s gender helps *Last Days* to translate Catalinón’s medial position as both the hero-worshipper and the humanizer of the Everyman Don Juan. Dear’s gender manipulation also foregrounds another medial status inhabited by the *gracioso* – that of mediator between the world(s) of the audience and the world(s) of the play.

In the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*, Catalinón repeatedly and quite remarkably bridges these worlds. He imports ideas, turns of phrase, and cultural standards familiar to the audience into the action of the play, sometimes comically distorting them (Fernández 52-53, 90-91). He steps outside the action of the play to address the audience directly, sharing his feelings, updating auditors on offstage developments, and talking his fellow eye-witnesses through their first
reactions to shocking events (Fernández 39, 80-81). He brings salt-of-the-earth, common-decency, commonsense perspectives to bear on the play’s unsettling challenges to conventional wisdom (Fernández 46, 87).

Catalina’s outspoken commitment to getting her hands on some cash brilliantly re-captures the bridge-building function of Catalinó’s role. Her lust for capital, in fact, bridges worlds in at least three suggestive ways:

- Her calls for back pay connect her to a rich tradition of Don Juan’s servants, most specifically to Sganarelle, the zany in Molière’s Dom Juan, ou Le Festin de Pierre [Don Juan, or the Stone Guest]. Sganarelle famously closes Molière’s play (premiered 1665) with a heartbroken call for “My Wages! My Wages!” (see Mandel 163).

- Her contract negotiations with Don Juan connect her to a covert but deep-seated concern for fiscal fair-dealing in the Burlador and Tan largo, upping the ante on performing the servant role. Catalina, in fact, single-handedly and quite uniquely recovers Catalinó’s unstudied function as champion of the little guy. She makes dramatic sense of the graciosos’s refusal (with all the force of his good name) to steal horses from Tisbea/Trisbea; his efforts to dissuade aristocrats from stiffing whores; and the risks he takes to keep the Burlador/garañón from stepping between Aminta/Arminta’s dowry and Batricio, the working stiff who’s earned it (Fernández 29, 71; 39,81; 46, 87; and compare Dear 25, 39, 53).

- Finally and most importantly, Catalina’s spirited attempts to make herself a practicing capitalist build a bridge between her and the commercial world of contemporary America. Across the arc of this bridge, the graciosa carries the message of the play, aimed straight at the heart of US audiences today. The money-hungry side of Catalinó is a productive discovery for US translators, since it empowers the re-production of yet another accessibly American side to the character the comedia casts as the audience’s chief confidant. The complexity of Catalina’s connection to money, moreover – neither outright worship, nor upright rejection, but a rich, conflicted mix of values ranging from altruistic freedom from the lust for Filthy Lucre to whole-hearted longing to live on Easy
Street – makes the character even more “right on the money” as a mediator between the world of Don Juan and US cultural ideals.

Nick Dear’s Catalina would be difficult to perform in the US. Her deeply-ingrained attachment to British ideas – her respect for an incomprehensible array of social ranks, for example, and her references to outdated concepts such as cuckoldry, not to mention her British-inflected diction, would require a complete process of translation to become accessible in US theaters (see, for example, Dear 31, 39-40, 49, 81). But Catalina points US translators toward accessibly American sides of Catalinón that are raring to invigorate US performances of the Burlador and Tan largo.

The rich thematic mix of sit-com-mom morality, silent-movie comedy, superhero-humanizing affection, and world-bridging wage-consciousness that Catalina unearths in Catalinón challenges US translators to bring this full-blown character to the stage, fully functional. Read thematically, Catalinón combines the classic physicality of a Lou Costello with the golden-age psychology of a Gracie Allen, the moral fervor of a Barney Fife, and the indestructible under-doggedness of a Ralph Cramden. He stages the kind of fertile cross-pollination of social, psychological, and physical values that Jim Carrey has staked out as both contemporary and American in such films as The Mask and The Truman Story. He can act as part of the Burlador and Tan largo, part of 21st-century US concerns, and a dynamic bridge between them.

Judging by the magnificent ending that Nick Dear scripts for Catalina, transmitting the full range of the graciosos’s function as a bridge between worlds can make all the difference in the world for re-creating the impact of the Burlador and Tan largo’s climax. Rescued from accompanying Don Juan to hell “At the last moment” by the intervention of the four traditional female leads (Dear 83), Catalina tells the women and Don Pedro the story of Don Juan’s Last Supper: “God spared me to tell you. That every man pays, for every sin. That justice will be done” (Dear 84). Then:

Don Pedro comes forward and kneels at the altar.

CATALINA: Who are you, sir?
DON PEDRO: Don Juan’s uncle.

CATALINA: His uncle? He spoke highly of you.

DON PEDRO: Did he? That makes it worse. *(Prays)* Almighty Lord, I beg forgiveness. Tell me how I may atone, and be a better man.

CATALINA: Sir, I don’t like to mention it, but that nephew of yours owed me a couple of thousand... I’m starting out in trade...

DON PEDRO: Kneel.

CATALINA: Should we pray?

DON PEDRO: Every day. For our souls. We should pray.

*All bow their heads. Slow fade.*

THE END

(Dear 84-85)

This multifunctional ending – again, an achievement quite outside the scope of theater translation for those who restrict that endeavor exclusively to the transmission of a playscript’s diction – is thematically right on the money. It Targets for re-production precisely the performance impact that the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* damns Don Juan to build. Don Pedro’s embarkation on a long-term process of self-correction models onstage exactly the effect that the original ending is constructed to elicit in its audiences.

Instructively, *Last Days*’ final moment puts Catalina’s dream of economic independence cheek by jowl with Don Pedro’s quest for self-reformation. “I’m starting out in trade...” cues the stark command “Kneel.” This quizzical juxtaposition presents future translators with a neat precis of how Thematic translation can promote production of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*. Translator Walter Starkie provocatively remarked, “The main fascination of *The Playboy of Seville* today arises from the clashing points of view” (xxxv). Translating the first Don Juan play Thematically brings clashing viewpoints – for example, the conflict between Catalina’s hope of collecting back pay and Don Pedro’s terror of encountering payback – right to the surface of the script. This allows Production
Conceptualizations to capitalize, immediately and accessibly, on the *comedia’s* inner strengths.

2. **Re-conceiving *Honor* and Re-staging Ana’s “Untranslatable” Absence**

Translating *comedia’s* thought-structure requires recapturing the dialog that the play strikes up with its culture’s core values as vividly as the dialog that the play’s characters strike up with each other. This case study examines Thematic translation’s approach to re-conceiving the Golden Age value of *honor* for re-staging in the 21st century. The site is the *honor* of the elusively absent *dama* [leading lady] Doña Ana, a presence who’s designed never to appear onstage, but whose transgressive behavior behind the scenes decisively unsettles the world of the play. Ana’s subversive absence, coupled with the miraculous redemption of her *honor* in the play’s denouement, have made her traditionally “untranslatable.”

Using Thematic interventions that US dramaturg Susan Jonas calls “Simultaneity” and “Riffing,” “Empowering the Oppressed” and “Admitting the Victim,” UK translator Nick Dear sidesteps the pitfall of warping Ana into an invisible nonentity who magically takes center stage at the last minute to guarantee the play a happy ending. His *Last Days of Don Juan* insistently re-creates Ana’s unsettling presence throughout the play, maintaining her disruptive impact right through the denouement. Dear’s results challenge translators in the US to Target Ana’s subversiveness for re-presentation on US stages.

Even more than Samuel Beckett’s Godot, the *Burlador* and *Tan largo’s* Ana is a tour de force on the theatrical possibilities of absence. An elemental Woman of Air, a fantasia on the effects of *ayrarse* in the female gender (embodying the humor “Choler” in a *dama*), a stage re-presentation of the social class “Impoverished Diplomat,” the *comedia’s* Doña Ana never physically appears onstage. Yet she drastically unsettles the seen world of the play. A “Voice” (possibly hers) wafts through a *celosía* [the “jealousy” bars over a
window] to entrust a letter from Doña Ana into Don Juan’s hands for delivery to the Marqués de la Mota’s (Fernández 36, 79). It’s a letter that radically alters the course of dramatic events. Lines screamed offstage, in a voice that her Dad says belongs to Doña Ana, sound the emergency alarm that blows Don Juan’s cover as the Marqués in disguise, and precipitate the Burlador/garañón’s fatal swordfight with Don Gonzalo (Fernández 40, 82). Behind-the-scenes lobbying efforts by Ana (reported by Alfonso XI in person) generate an ongoing investigation into Don Gonzalo’s death, engineer a pardon for prime-suspect Marqués de la Mota, and effectively pin the blame for the Comendador’s murder on Don Juan (Fernández 55, 92).

Ana affects the action, all right, unsettling it to the bitter end. In the final moments of the comedia, after Don Juan’s damnation, after revelations at court have blown the lid off the scandalous extent of the Burlador’s burlas, and even after Catalinón has driven home the lesson of the drama one last time (“quien tal haze, que tal pague” [there, but for the grace of God, go you ...]), there is a curious twist in the play’s tail.

Catalinón the gracioso reports a last-gasp message from Don Juan his galán: “que a doña Ana no devia, / honor, que lo oyeron antes / del engaño” to quote the Burlador; “que a doña Ana no ofendió, / que le conocieron antes” in the words of Tan largo (Fernández 60, 94). Both versions of the reprieve purportedly restore Don Gonzalo’s daughter to the status of virgo intacta, undamaged goods on the marriage market. Don Juan “owed her no debt of honor,” he “did her no offense,” because they “figured out his next trick before he put it on stage,” they “recognized him even before he dropped his disguise.”

Catalinón’s news sounds, on the surface, like a happy-ending come home, and it’s certainly welcomed as such by the characters onstage. But can anybody, onstage or off, really buy Ana’s recuperation at face value? If Ana’s honor wasn’t sullied in the first place – if her social respectability, her moral uprightness, her nuptial desirability, her unquestioned status as an unimpeachable “good girl” wasn’t besmirched – why did Don Gonzalo spill his blood to wash it clean, fundamentally altering the mood of the comedia’s burlas?
If a disclaimer from Don Juan could have restored Ana’s value as a virgin, why didn’t her professional-Diplomat Daddy use his negotiation skills to work out a public proclamation to that effect? Instead, Gonzalo unsettlingly becomes a Dead Man, the Muerto whose last words from beyond the grave give Catalinón’s eyewitness account some real news to pass on: “quien tal haze que tal pague” and its consequences for everyone who’ll listen [Thought Don Juan had a good deal going, didn’t you? Guess what – you’re guilty as Hell yourself!].

For that matter, if Ana’s honor could survive Don Juan’s penetration into her bedroom, one-on-one, at night, then why did this renewable virgin start screaming “homocida de mi honor” [my honor’s assassin] at him at the top of her lungs, at the top of the Duel scene (Fernández 40, 82)? Why does the comedia go out of its way to make this dama’s unsettling transgressiveness – her plan to force her father’s hand by sleeping with her cousin, her active participation in her father’s death – the center-point of the plot, if the action’s linchpin can be unjointed through a smooth retraction?

Probing how plots play on honor-themes has been an approved method for assessing comedia’s performance impact since Lope de Vega first defined the genre. In his Arte nuevo de hacer comedias en este tiempo [Ways of Writing Hit Plays Today] (1609), the man who invented comedia advises:

> Equivoque and the uncertainty arising from ambiguity have always held a large place among the crowd, for it thinks that it alone understands what the other one is saying. Better still are the subjects in which honor has a part, since they deeply stir everybody ...

(Dukore 203)

As Lope’s association of honor with ambiguity suggests, the Burlador and Tan largo generate dramatic power by treating honor as a commodity whose value – unfixed but unfailingly interesting; even interesting because of its unfixedness – skillfully lures the audience into re-examining its own values.

Nor is the Burlador and Tan largo unique in this respect. Many famous comedias build bravura features of their performance scores around engineering thought-provoking adjustments in how honor is defined. Surely redefinition is what makes honor-speeches deeply stirring – i.e., central to Production’s
Conceptualization – in comedias on the order of Lope’s Romeo and Juliet play (set in English by Cynthia Rodriguez-Badendyck as Castelvins and Monteses), Tirso’s Don Gil de las calzas verdes (part of the Gate Theatre’s famous Golden Age series as Laurence Boswell’s Don Gil of the Green Breeches), Calderón’s Love After Death (Roy Campbell’s translation for Amar después de la muerte), and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz’ Los empeños de una casa (aka, in David Pasto’s English, House of Trials).

Seeing honor as an element in comedia’s makeup that thrives on constant renegotiation – the way that the Burlador and Tan largo spin out the theme (Fernández 19, 55, 66, 92) – promises to help translators re-conceive honor’s performance impact in US stagings, a perplexing problem in translating comedia’s experience. Understanding honor as a generator of stage-presence that depends on reiterations, refreshments, and readjustments to produce its effects helpfully allies it with contemporary performance mechanisms that play on cultural anxieties, mechanisms such as drag.

In her luminous analysis of Vested Interests, Marjorie Garber observes that, today, the thrill of cross-dressing depends on transvestite performance periodically re-invoking “category crisis” (Garber 16-17). The rules of the game require regular refreshment, clearly re-drawing the line that is being crossed. Drag that succeeds in “passing,” or gender impersonation that crosses the line once and just stays there, loses its punch (Garber 32).

Similarly, honor becomes a living driver of the dramaturgy in the Burlador and Tan largo through periodic re-definitions of what constitutes the possession of honor, in each dramatic situation, at every dramatic crux, right Now (Fernández 48, 89). Yet the expectation that the first Don Juan play treats honor reverentially, and the concomitant practice of taking everything that anybody in the play has to say about honor completely seriously, like an article of faith, is a problem that’s deeply inscribed into Burlador and Tan largo translation.

The endless honor-speeches in Golden Age drama stand as abundant evidence that comedia loves honor-adjustments. Watching characters finesse or fail at negotiating “category crises” in their honor rankings was a game that
comedia audiences could play and replay with the gusto that contemporary Americans accord to reliving epoch-making plays from the Superbowl.⁹

There’s a tradition in Golden Age translation that treats honor as nothing like a game, however. Missing the aesthetic thrill – the what if – that drives even the most horrific dramatic experiences crafted by honor (i.e., Calderón’s famous wife-murder plays), some translators end up handling honor like a moral absolute. They conceptualize this value for production not as a cultural point of contention which comedia productively engages, but as a set of clearly-stated, rigidly-enforced, universally-credited cultural rules that comedia helps to reinforce (see Edwards 11, 22-23, 93, 96, 101-103; Martín 39, Defourneaux 32-36, Díez Borque 119-20).

Closely allied to the view that comedia always and forever enacts a disruption in social order that ends in order’s reinscription (Edwards 64-65, 172), this outlook expects honor to act as a fixed system of behavioral verities. It conceives of honor as a cultural “given” that dramatists can import into the world of a play to assign its characters swift, determinative moral standings – the comedia equivalent of a deus ex machina.

Edwards’ notes to his Trickster offer an instructive preview of Ana in the Denouement, constructed from a rigid-honor, restoration-of-social-order point of view. In this eminent editor-translator’s opinion,

the various marriages, arranged or otherwise, signify the restitution of harmony and order. Throughout the play Don Juan constantly denies the importance of marriage as a social institution, for in following his impulses and desires he represents the anarchic force of sexuality outside marriage. The King, the representative of God on earth and the source of society’s well-being, attempts to restore order where Don Juan disrupts it. (Edwards 172-73; cf. 64-65)

In the Burlador and Tan largo, however, honor on stage must represent something very different from infallible conformity to a pre-ordained, precisely defined, a priori system of everlasting rules about people and their behavior that’s licensed to brand characters with moral labels, like an arm of the Inquisition set up in the mind of the audience. Surely the honor-reversal so
craftily planted in *Burlador* and *Tan largo’s* final inning is planted there to unsettle both the idea that rigid assumptions about *honor* rule in the world of this play and the royal notion that Don Juan’s divine removal authorizes a return to status quo.

Catalinón’s assertion after-the-fact that Ana survived her *burla* with *honor* intact is calculatedly incredible. The dramaturgy invites you to doubt the miracle, to shake your head at its sit-com slickness and poke beneath the surface for what the play is “saying without saying” (playwright Bances Candamo’s term for inserting prods to thought beneath the smoothly-polished surface of *comedias*; see Dixon “Spanish Renaissance Theatre” 167). No one who’s been paying attention to the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* can swallow Ana’s miraculous socio-moral recuperation without straining. After all that’s happened in the play, the suggestion that the Wizard can wave his wand and everybody can get merry because ding dong the Wicked Witch is dead, comes as a calculated insult to your intelligence.

The spur to thought is calculated, but it’s hard to respond to if you’ve been conditioned to believe that *comedias* end in Order Restored, even when the Order is supposed to have undergone some sort of chastened cleansing. In fact, the assumption that *comedia* characters enact a reinscription of accepted order has severely hampered transmitting Ana’s Absence for dynamic re-production in English.

This is not to say that translators have shown themselves unwilling to erase Ana’s presence. On the contrary, her capacity for using convention as a cover for subverting the comfortable conclusions that conventions seem to support – the way she upsets the notion of “happily ever after,” for example, through the very machinations she sets in motion to secure her marriage to Mota – has made translation all too willing to hustle Doña Ana firmly into the background.

Ana seriously upsets the picture of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* that tradition expects to see. In a world where Father is supposed to Know Best, she’s patricidally rebellious. Her insistence on giving herself away to the man of her own choice, on her own timetable, leads directly to the death of the Daddy that
Ana shockingly damns in the first words in the play that are indisputably hers: “Mi padre infiel” [My faithless father], the salutation in her letter to the Marqués de la Mota (Fernández 37, 79). In a world where undoing Wrongs purportedly stands as the top Patriarch’s Divine Right, Ana makes King Alfonso look foolish (see Fernández 50, 89; 56-57, 93). She dares to enforce her own political will behind the scenes – getting the Queen involved in a high-profile assassination investigation, no less. The ever-widening wave of social embarrassments set in motion by Ana’s burla sounds an unsettling pedal-tone for the King’s marry-go-round music, betraying its grand conclusion into a disquietingly deceptive cadence.

The best thing to do with Ana, from a rigid-honor, Order-Restored point of view, is to promote her Absence, vigorously, by removing her from active involvement (even offstage) in practical politics. Indeed, Synoptic and Composite translators have so eagerly erased this dama from English versions of the Burlador and Tan largo that the more notice they take of Ana, the more completely they undo her unsettling effect on the play’s denouement (see especially Kidd 2, 26-27, 33; and Alvarez 162-63, 170-171, 209). Tradition decrees Doña Ana’s cultural unsettlement “untranslatable,” and silences the dialog she sets in motion between this Golden Age comedia and core values of the Spanish Golden Age.

Thematic praxis, fortunately, has taken a radically different tack. Employing strategies that Susan Jonas recommends for re-conceptualizing production, Nick Dear energetically inscribes Ana into the performance center of The Last Days of Don Juan. He Thematically re-creates the Burlador and Tan largo’s structural idea of a character who makes fundamental changes in the world of her play by manipulating unseen forces, and faithfully records her disruptive effect along three dramatic axes:

- a disturbingly passionate connection between Ana and Gonzalo (daughter and father),
- a startlingly domineering connection between Ana and Mota (intended bride and intended groom), and
an unsettling disjuncture between honor and marriage (a disconnect that disables any plan for neatly closing the plot with a tidy crop of I-do’s).

Each axis of disruption provides an opportunity to observe another facet of Thematic Targeting at work,

- recovering performance information from the margins of the Spanish text,
- generating new dramatic diction from the original dramatic ideas, and
- translating all three dimensions of a dama’s characterization for representation in English.

Prominent among the strategies that Dear deploys are interventions that Jonas explicates as “Simultaneity” and “Riffing.” Jonas identifies “Simultaneity” as a process of complicating the performance of canonical plays by “creating a simultaneity of scenes, scripted and unscripted” in order to “bring ... perspective into the staging” and “restore marginalized voices.” Illustrations from her own practice include productions of Measure for Measure where interpolated sonnets and silent vigils keep the true love between Claudio and Juliet always in the audiences’ view. This method for giving explicit performance-score expression to traditionally suppressed aspects of the action is particularly useful, Jonas notes, for staging dynamic re-visions of Absence: “Where exhausted ideology has prescribed absence, we can give presence” (255).

Closely allied to “Simultaneity” is a dramaturgical intervention Jonas calls “Riffing.” This technique she describes as a process of textual improvisation guided by dramaturgical theme:

I enlarged upon authorial intentions, as if the play were the melody and I were jazz-riffing on the theme, with all of history as the music at my disposal. In this, I have been greatly influenced by the Irondale Ensemble’s textual collidings, particularly one that riffed thematically on the outlaw motifs in As You Like It, so that Rosalind, Pretty Boy Floyd, and Herbert Hoover seemed equally at home in the Forest of Arden. (Jonas 256)

Just as Laurence Boswell grounds a methodology for translating classic plays into the “now” by re-generating diction (“the very surface of a play”) out of a deep exploration of character (see Johnston 282–83), so Jonas’ strategy of “Riffing”
maps out a method for pouring the life of a play into a fresh, flexible linguistic skin that is organically re-generated from a deep exploration of thought. This technique’s capacity for Targeting a play’s themes for reception by specific audiences (e.g., people whose approach to Rosalind can be enriched by reference to Herbert Hoover, or Pretty Boy Floyd) holds special promise for transmitters of the Burlador and Tan largo’s distinctive dramaturgy of ideas.

“Simultaneity” and “Riffing” help Dear translate the thought-structure of the Burlador and Tan largo into thought-provoking contemporary English performance, by hauling pivotal excerpts from Ana’s offstage life emphatically onstage, and by elaborating motivations implicit within her characterization into explicit performance statements. Note that in this regard, Thematic translation uses the same invigorating manipulations of plot and diction to translate the Burlador and Tan largo into English that Tan largo exercises in re-conceptualizing dramatic action from the Burlador for re-production.

Dear anchors the first act of his two-act translation with a prime example of reinvigorating Doña Ana’s role, through thematically Riffing it into the spotlight of the dramaturgy’s Simultaneous “Now.” He translates the most significant reported fact about Don Gonzalo’s fatherless child in the Burlador and Tan largo – that she tirelessly pursues her father’s accused murderer – into first-person action onstage in this riveting curtain-ringer:

**SCENE TEN**

_A stonemason’s yard in Seville. The Stonemason and his Mate work on the statue of the Commander, but so far all they’ve hewn from a huge block of granite are his feet. Enter Dona Anna, in mourning._

**DONA ANNA:** Those feet . . . I remember them paddling in the river . . . or booting the flanks of our horse . . . I want revenge, Father. I dream of it, I pray for it, I think of nothing else. I will know no peace till the insult is returned. I am witch-like in my purpose, I’ll sacrifice to any god, consort with demons, lie with wolves, I’ll summon
dervishes, astrologers, banshees from the deserts of Arabia, I must know who he was!
The man in red. I cut myself, I write in blood, I eat bad meat, I pick through dirt, I beg you, please, dear Father – come back and take revenge!

Exit Dona Anna. The Masons watch her go, then once more chip away at the stone... And fade.

END OF ACT ONE

(Dear 44-45)
Every thought in Dona Anna’s totally fabricated diction is luminously faithful to the original comedia. In fact, Dear’s riff succeeds in making hitherto intransmissible facets of the Burlador and Tan largo’s thematic makeup into eloquently stageable performance text. The palpable current of sexual longing in the daughter’s lament for her father’s feet “paddling in the river... or booting the flanks of your horse” translates a disturbingly passionate connection between Ana and Gonzalo (daughter and father) that tradition considers “untranslatable.”

There are direct, disquieting suggestions in the Burlador and Tan largo that Doña Ana’s connection to her father crackles with erotic content. In Tan largo, the “Comendador mayor” [Chief Commander] describes Ana to Alfonso in these remarkable terms:

Señor, sola vna hija
a mi vejez de baculo preuengo,
en cuya frente rayos ensortija
el Sol, por quien sossiego y vida tengo;
en ella mi vejez se regozija,
y en ella mis trabajos entretengo.
[My only chick, Sir, is one little girl, the rod and staff of my march toward the valley of the shadow of death. Her face could make the sun stop what he’s doing and salute. She’s headquarters for everything I care about, my one and only reason for soldiering on.}
She puts the lead back in this old man’s pencil. She’s my R&R.]
(Fernández 71)

In the Burlador, it’s El Rey de Castilla [King Alfonso] who most explicitly calls attention to the closeness of this father-daughter relationship, making what for contemporary American ears is a distinctly queasy equation between Ana’s protective parent (now deceased) and her prospective bed-partner (currently incarcerated):

Doña Ana con la Reyna, me a pedido
que perdone al Marques, porque doña Ana,
ya que el padre murio, quiere marido,
porque si le perdio, con el le gana:
[Miss Ana, with the Queen’s support, has petitioned me to pardon Mr. Mota. Seems Miss Ana, now that Daddy’s dead, can’t wait to have herself a Hubby, since what she lost with the one ... she can recover with the other.] (Fernández 55)

The power of Anna’s impassioned “I cut myself, I write in blood, I eat bad meat, I pick through dirt, I beg you, please, dear Father – come back and take revenge!” derives not from the translator’s untrammeled fertility of invention, but from his faithful re-articulation of passions deeply sublimated into the original text.

The idea that a lover-like attachment binds Ana to Gonzalo – fueling her bitter rebellion against his plans to give her away to a stranger, her deeply-felt guilt at his death, and her dogged pursuit of his killer – is not the only facet of the Burlador and Tan largo’s thought-structure that shapes the Last Days’ Act One, Scene Ten. Every beat of Dear’s extraordinary act-closer – a transmission of dramatic experience that tradition would emphatically not even call “translation” – springs directly from a theme in the original play.

The “witch-like purpose” that Anna pursues in Last Days translates the Spanish theme of other-worldly influences on Don Juan’s career in the Burlador and Tan largo – an idea reflected in the diction of Don Pedro and Catalinón, the characterization of the Statue, and the climax of the plot (see Martel 247 and 288, 306, 316). Anna’s implacable intention to “know who he was! The man in red” foregrounds the theme of identity that the Burlador and Tan largo works into
the warp and woof of the play through Don Juan’s riddles, disguises, impersonations, mirrorings, and teasing hints of intimacies left incomplete (see Edwards 4, 10, 106, 128, 144). Her invocation of a Dead Man’s involvement in his killer’s punishment calls into performance the theme of people reaping what they sow, the idea that links Catalinón’s avisos to Aminta/Arminta’s wedding vows, and the comedia’s plot to its cathartic impact (see López-Vázquez 245, 253, 303, 308).

Dear generates Anna’s act-closing speech by giving these formative ideas—the original play’s thematic DNA—performable re-production in present-day terms. His thematic translation re-articulates Doña Ana the Absent into Dona Anna the Avenger, and re-creates her disturbingly passionate connection to her father in dynamically producible acting terms.

In the second half of The Last Days of Don Juan, Dear clones new performance moments from the Burlador and Tan largo’s genome-themes, to translate Ana the Golden-Age Agent of the Air into Anna the Latter-Day Medium of the Unseen. He accomplishes this reinvigorating translation by applying dramaturgical techniques that Jonas calls “Admitting the Victim” and “Empowering the Oppressed.”

Jonas extracts “Admitting the Victim” from the perception that “Sometimes ‘as-is’ depiction of stereotype, uncomfortable as it can be, provides frank observation. The strategy then can be to embrace the archetype with empathy” (261). “Admitting the Victim” makes classic victimization stageworthy by re-presenting it with the same investment of imagination and emotion that canonical heroism receives.

Jonas maps out a more aggressive method for revitalizing stereotype via “Empowering the Oppressed,” which rejuvenates canonical texts through “the attribution of strong motives to weak behavior” (261). This strategy teaches dramaturgs to step inside disempowered characters and ask “Why would I behave that way?” in order to translate “weak ‘feminine’ behavior ... to a position of strength.” As a talented orator brings clichés to life by re-charging them with first-person freshness and significance specific to the occasion, so both of these
dramaturgical techniques work to recuperate stereotypical characterizations through playing their limitations in real time, and to the hilt.

Dear deploys these strategies to re-create a startlingly transgressive connection between Anna and her intended groom, the Marquis of Mota. It’s possible for contemporary Americans to read traditional translations of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* without getting enough performance information out of them to be certain that the rendezvous Doña Ana sets up with the Marqués de la Mota is a sexual hookup. The Bainbridge College theater “lab” definitively proved that point. Theater people approaching the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* through *The Last Days of Don Juan* fare better.

In a remarkable elaboration of Ana’s behind-the-scenes quest for her father’s killer, Dear puts this startling tête-à-tête between Anna and Mota onstage:

DONA ANNA: *(To Mota)* . . . I have something rather precious and I want to know if you want it. *(She kisses him hard.)* I have heat and moisture, spit and artistry. My fingers dawdle in forbidden places. My tongue knows several languages, including Arabic and French. My thighs can grip like wrestlers’ arms, and lock our hips together. I’ll lick the sweat from off your skin, from every crack and crevice. I’ll be dirty. I like sin. I offer filthiness. You want it?

MOTA: Mmm . . .

DONA ANNA: Do you want it?

MOTA: Yes!

DONA ANNA: Give me a name!

MOTA: . . . Don Juan.

DONA ANNA: Don Juan.

*(Dear 64, ellipses scripted)*

Dear generates this re-staging of a leading female character’s offstage life by strategically “Empowering the Oppressed” and “Admitting the Victim.” He
grows the dialog out of the unsettling connection between the couple, and lets Anna’s strong motives dramaturgically transform her “weak ‘feminine’ behavior ... to a position of strength” (Jonas 261). This archetypically absent character accomplishes what no man in the play can do. She overmasters male “collusion” (Dear 64). She single-handedly breaks the “code of honour among men” (Dear 63).

The transgressiveness that Last Days makes public about Doña Anna transmits thematic material about Doña Ana that even close students of the Burlador and Tan largo’s diction may miss, but which is demonstrably central to the role’s characterization, and the comedia’s dramaturgy. Anna’s connection to Mota in Last Days foregrounds a shocking sense of sexual adventurousness and a disquieting delight in spiritual occultism in a character who dares to play the Witch, and to impersonate the Bawd. Can this be a faithful reflection of the invisible, indirect, formally innocent (and finally officially exonerated) Doña Ana?

Yes indeed. Dear’s thematic translation, in fact, more accurately transmits the transgressiveness of Don Gonzalo’s daughter than any close transliteration of the comedia’s diction published for performance to date. In the Burlador and Tan largo, Ana’s letter to Mota opens with the appalling phrase, “Mi padre infiel” – a bombshell on the order of “Daddy, God damn him as a doublecrossing daughter-dicker, God blast him as a pagan heretic, God fry his greasy Al Qaeda ass in Hell” (Fernández 37, 79; on infiel, see Covarrubias 736).

For a Golden Age audience, this salutation endowed Ana’s plan to give herself away to Mota with patricidal overtones from the outset. Her plot was more shocking, and more serious, than a preemptive strike at a dictatorial decree. Her red-cape rendezvous embodied a direct frontal attack on the old boy system of Daddy-knows-best “collusion” that uneasily ruled the empire.

Alone among the butts of Don Juan’s burlas, Doña Ana possesses a protective second sight. As Don Juan inherits Ana’s curse on the infiel, finding himself hand-in-hand with the Statue, about to be blasted to Hell like a rank unbeliever, he tries to exempt himself from Other-worldly wrath with an arresting statement about Doña Ana’s Otherness. “A tu hija no ofendi,” he
witnesses, “que viò mis engaños antes” [I’m not guilty of wronging your daughter – she foresaw my well-laid plans] (Fernández 93, 59). This Last-Judgement testimony endows the Dead Man’s daughter with kinship to the Statue as well as to Don Gonzalo. She embodies supernatural perception, a Numinous-Other ability to see beyond the visible. Beyond the grave of social death, she lives, and wields a Witch’s weird ability to spell-bind the living.

Dear’s Thematic exploration of the *comedia* turns this vital character information into text that the actor playing Ana can perform. Judging by Dear’s example, translating the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* Thematically offers translators powerful tools for shedding the blinders of philological literalness and getting down to the essential business of re-creating characters equipped to challenge convention, shock assumption, subvert oppression, and explode stereotype in lively re-stagings of this canonical play – stagings that speak resoundingly to Right Now.

Just as *Tan largo* devotes a whole scene to depicting a significant event that the *Burlador* leaves to the audience’s imagination – Mota’s spill-the-beans release from prison, engineered through Ana’s silent intervention (Fernández 92-93) – so the translator of *Last Days* transmits central ideas from the original play, by setting actions onstage which both of the original printed texts set offstage. Neither the *Burlador* nor *Tan largo* shows Isabela dressing for her wedding, for example, but that activity is clearly required in conceptualizing production for both of the *comedia*’s original performance plots (see Fernández 55, 92).

*Last Days* makes the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*’s Doña Ana come alive in English by filling gaps in the original scripts’ dramaturgy, pulling marginalized moments for character development and peripheral points of view to the performance center of the play. Dear re-creates Ana’s disruptive impact on the connection between honor and marriage by making her the catalytic agent who transforms Isabella’s quiet dress-for-the-wedding scene into a noisy gender revolution.

Offstage in Golden Age Spain, women were so subject to phallocratic authority that in mixed company, they were officially expected to sit silent on the
floor (Defourneaux 147-48, 153; Calvo 52-57). Though not literally silenced, women attending corrales without male escort were formally marginalized in the theater audience, confined within the cazuela [the “stewpot,” a balcony “cage” set apart for single women’s occupancy] (see Dixon “Spanish Renaissance Theatre” 147, Starkie xli-xlvi, Defourneaux 136, Calvo 78-80). Cazuela customers were physically distanced from the stage, and emblematically separated from influence on the mainstream audience (see Allen 81, 89-90). How can you translate this classic cultural mindset – so deeply ingrained that it doesn’t have to be spoken – into lively performance terms for a radically different “Now”?

Jonas suggests deploying dramaturgical strategies of “Re-Contextualization,” specifically techniques that inculcate an active sense of “period” within the production – a sense that encourages the audience periodically to step out of the world of the play and into critical thought. Notes Jonas, “My purpose in rendering ‘period’ is not to invite the audience to lose itself in another place and time, but to regard the past as an artifact that must be processed to yield comparison and contrast, by putting it in a new context” (Jonas 249-50). One way of doing this, she adds, is to play up the “pastness” of the canonical script, “dramatizing the relationship between the play and its period, and the distance between that period and our time” (Jonas 251).

In Last Days, Ana’s invasion of Isabella’s dressing-room performs a critical sense of “period.” Tisbea and Aminta are watching a maid deck Isabella in white, all three women mourning their loss of opportunity and marketability, the narrowing of their already narrow world, when Ana bursts on the scene:

Enter Dona Anna.

DONA ANNA: I know where he is!
ISABELLA: Don Juan?
DONA ANNA: Don Juan! I know where he is!
TISBEA: How do you know we seek him?
DONA ANNA: Every woman seeks him. He has a bill to pay. Come on! He’s hidden in a church!
AMINTA: I’ll kill him!

Exit all.
(Dear 78-79)
Dear translates Doña Ana’s behind-the-scenes political savvy into Dona Anna’s galvanizing effect on a meeting between all four of the Burlador and Tan largo’s female leads. This meeting takes place in the Palace, in the room designated for Isabella’s transformation into the royally-sanctioned Bride of Don Juan. Anna’s impact on the assembly is absolutely decisive – thematic dynamite. The women track Don Juan to the church, where they’re just in time to see him “sink out of sight into hell” (Dear 83).

In damnation’s aftermath, at the spot where tradition (despite the Burlador and Tan largo’s best efforts to the contrary) insists on inscribing a neatly closed resolution cued by the miraculous recuperation of Ana’s honor, Dear scripts a clear disjunction of marriage from Anna’s sense of self-worth. Anna is the first to speak after Don Juan’s disappearance:

DONA ANNA: He’s gone.
AMINTA: Yes. I hope to God he never comes back
DONA ANNA: He’ll only come if we invite him.

...  
AMINTA: What happens now, without him?
ISABELLA: I return to the Alcazar. I am a widow! Octavio is mine. Come with me, all of you. I will see you well apportioned.
AMINTA: What, with Batricio?
TISBEA: Anfriso?
DONA ANNA: The dissolute Marquis?
TISBEA: Isabella – have you ever met the Duke Octavio?

(Dear 83-84)
Here, Anna’s action – claiming responsibility for Don Juan’s effect on her life (“He’ll only come if we invite him”), casting scorn on the idea of compensatory marriage (“The dissolute Marquis?”) – decisively derails any plan for neatly closing the plot. In Last Days of Don Juan, Anna remains an unsettling influence to the very end of the play.
Much could be said about Thematic translation’s impressive transmission of Ana’s complexity, the three-dimensional layering of Woman of Air onto Woman of Choler complicated with Woman of Political Know-How. *Last Days* makes this character’s elemental association with *ayre* [air] a direct source of performance power, scripting a Dona Anna who literally communes with the unseen powers of the Air: “I call to all my allies, come, convince them of their folly! Flutter, and crawl, and fill their brains with truth!” (Dear 62). Dear’s Thematic rendering of Ana transmits the character’s characteristic humor, too, staging an Anna who embodies *ayrarse* – the mercurial mood changes, the obsessive compulsions, the brown studies that mark the disposition of Choler (see Covarrubias 741, Dear 62-63).

*Last Days* throws Anna’s status as a civil servant into high relief as well, giving it center-stage buildup in a dazzling display of political efficacy. Her entrance in Isabella’s vesting quickly, effectively opens the door to female agency. She electrifies her fellow-women with revolutionary knowledge (“I know where he is!”), unites them through a cooperative global vision (“Every woman seeks him”), raises their feminist consciousness with a sharp reminder of oppression (“He has a bill to pay”), and leads them gloriously forward to re-forge their fates (“Come on! He’s hidden in a church!”). Under Anna’s influence, women’s positions change from passive commodity to active agency. Their prospects transform from predictable oppression to adventuresome self-realization.

The designated focus for this case study is not the transmission of multidimensionality, however, but the faithful re-creation of unsettlement – the transgressive unease that Doña Ana keeps in motion across the whole arc of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*, throwing the establishment’s family-values image off kilter with her disturbingly passionate connection to her father; upsetting officialdom’s air of authority with her frankly exploitative, sexual designs on her cousin; and vitiating the sense of closure so shoddily built into the denouement with her incredible recuperation of *honor*. Tradition considers Ana “untranslatable,” because this ostensibly absent *dama*’s role is a very potent, present antidote to the poisonously simple picture of this play that tradition would like to put on stage.
Thematic translation dynamically recovers Ana’s disruptiveness. That strongly recommends Thematic translation’s Targeting techniques to US translators, who have yet to try them out on a thoroughgoing Thematic treatment of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* Targeted for staging in the United States.

3. Americanizing Musicality and Re-conceptualizing the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*’s “Untranslatable” Artistic Integration

This case study samples Thematic translation’s potential for Targeting the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*’s musicality for transmission to the US today. The site is Derek Walcott’s superlative *Joker of Seville*, the most imaginative incarnation of the world’s first Don Juan play produced in English so far, an awe-inspiring achievement on the page, and (judging by the way that eyewitnesses to its performances in the Caribbean and Canada still talk about it over a quarter of a century after the fact) an unforgettable experience on the stage. Narrowly focusing attention on the *Joker*’s musicality is justified by the discussion’s expansive aim: to produce an example of translation that re-creates the Spanish script’s own loose-jointed but magnificently coordinated method of artistic integration, making its locality and musicality and metatheatricality all sing in the same key.¹²

I begin this highly selective survey of the *Joker*’s musicality with a quick analysis of songs in the dramatic experience of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*. I proceed to collate little-known lead sheets and orchestral accompaniment tracks to reconstruct a partial musical score for the *Joker of Seville*. In-depth examination of one song – the opening production number, “Sans Humanité” – lets me establish the fundamental techniques that the translation uses to revitalize the *comedia* through music. Coupled with a survey of musical effects that run through the entire reconstructed score, these hard-to-come-by production materials let me point out ways that Walcott (in collaboration with Galt MacDermot, composer of *Hair*) re-conceptualizes the *Burlador* and *Tan
largo as an integrated book musical (the kind of American “musical play”
popularized by Show Boat and Oklahoma!). The survey closes with practical
suggestions for reviving the first Don Juan play in the US today, based on Walcott
and MacDermot’s 1970s Caribbean model.

You can’t read the Burlador and Tan largo without realizing that music is
an integral part of its construction. Seventeenth-century printings of the playtext
identify five sets of lyrics that are to be sung in performing the comedia:

- a four-line canción that paves the way for Tisbea/Trisbea’s “Fuego!” alarm
  (Fernández 31, 72),
- a two-line estribillo that frames the scene where Don Juan dons the Marqués
de la Mota’s capa de colores (Fernández 39-40, 81-82),
- a four-line estribillo that launches the celebration for Aminta and Batricio’s
  wedding in Dos Hermanas (Fernández 42, 83-84),
- twelve lines of redondillas with which Don Juan’s servants regale the Statue
  at supper (Fernández 53, 91),
- and two quatrains of romance which the Statue’s servants sing to reciprocate
  at supper #2 (Fernández 59, 93; see also Edwards 68, 102-108, 116-18, 164,
  186).

These songs pour indispensable dimensionality into the first Don Juan’s
story,

- building suspense (before the Pescadora finds out she’s been fooled),
- framing pivotal events (during the the Marqués de la Mota’s cape caper),
- linking dramatic shifts (when Don Gonzalo’s funeral cortege morphs into
  Aminta’s wedding procession), and
- spotlighting thematic developments (as the two supper songs accelerate the
  Burlador’s identity quest to its eye-opening final awakening).

Music soups up the play’s performance mix with intensity and clarity.
Songs helpfully spell out the beat-structure in difficult scenes, marking the
beginning, middle, and ending of the interaction where the Marqués personally
coaches Don Juan in how to pass himself off as Mota, and punctuating each legal
step in the knot-tying at Dos Hermanas that the Burlador will so punctiliously
unravel. Characters repeatedly mention how songs make the action’s impact
visceral, comprehensible, and immediate for them, and presumably for their audience as well (see, for example, Fernández 39, 42, 59, 81, 83). Translators, performers, and producers of the *comedia* will swiftly realize that putting the play’s songs onstage intact will materially assist their making the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* accessible across cultural boundaries.

All the evidence indicates that music was an integral part of the first Don Juan play’s dramatic experience – as organic an ingredient in the show as the songs in an American musical. The hit tune mentality of American musical theater, however, did not exist in 17th-century Spain. Songs could travel from the stage to every musical corner of the country, but those songs (like the plays that introduced them) were consciously shaped by “borrowing and recomposition,” by the re-presentation of “popular or even folk elements” in “*glosas* (or glosses)” on “well-known tunes” that characterized the “*estilo español*” (see Stein “Spain” 330, 333, 338-39).

Theater composers in the age of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* saw themselves as Richard Rodgers in reverse – not creators of new tunes that would become instantly popular, but artists who reworked “a well-known tune ... into a new polyphonic setting.” As Louise K. Stein points out, their musicality put them harmoniously in step with 17th-century playwriting (indeed, with 17th-century Spanish art in general):

Spanish poets, dramatists, artists and musicians exploited popular and traditional lore (themes, characters, modes of address, expressions, refrains and tunes) in order to give their creations a sense of immediacy and verisimilitude. The songs on well-known texts, the *romance nuevo* and the new theatrical form of the *comedia*, together found an essential public forum in the commercial theatres that were opened in several Spanish cities in the last decade of the sixteenth century and the first of the seventeenth. Vocal music (songs and sung dances) was brought to the theatres as an expressive and structural resource of the *comedia nueva*. The identifiable quality of many of the texts and tunes helped to bring the audience closer to the action on stage, and the
simplicity of the musical settings made them appropriate for the level of both performers and audience. Perhaps because of their success in the public theatres, the well-known songs (many of which are preserved in the cancioneros) dominated secular music at least during the first half of the seventeenth century, and stayed in fashion into the eighteenth. (Stein “Spain” 339-40)

“Well-known tunes” have certainly shown potential in US productions of the Burlador and Tan largo. In 1989, for example, Lynne Alvarez’ translation of the comedia inspired a production at the Source Theatre in Washington, DC. Reviews from DC describe a music-and-theater Mozart-and-Molina collage – cousin to the organically musical re-conception of the play that Galt MacDermott and Derek Walcott achieve in The Joker of Seville. As Joseph McLellan, writing for the Washington Post, records experiencing Don Juan of Seville in the nation’s capital:

This production, although not an opera, draws special energy and focus from its operatic connection. [Director Joe] Banno emphasizes the links of one work to the other by using Mozart recordings as incidental music – mostly from “Don Giovanni” but also from a horn concerto, “A Musical Joke,” “Eine kleine Nachtmusik” and a strange, disembodied adagio for glass harmonica. Sometimes the music is deliberately distorted; Don Ottavio’s aria “Il mio tesoro,” for example, is played at double speed at one point to stress the fact that the scheming, morally opportunistic character in the play is less sympathetic than his wimpish but idealistic counterpart in the opera.

The strangest happening in the play’s incidental music is the series of transformations experienced by “La ci darem,” from “Don Giovanni” – the ultimate operatic seduction number in which the hesitations and final precipitate plunge of the music echo exactly what is happening in the minds of the characters.

“La ci darem’ is played every time there is a seduction scene – about half a dozen times, and each time we use a different
version,” Banno explains. “It’s arranged in every way possible, including a Euro-trash rock version. And we had a local group, Rock Creek, do a blue-grass version for the wedding scene. There is also Liszt’s piano paraphrase, which we use as an intermezzo.”

Perhaps the most successful use of Mozart’s music in the play is the most succinct: the chilling chords that Mozart wrote for the moment when the statue comes to life and challenges Don Juan. They fill the same spot in the play, and any music love will wonder whether the scene could have the right impact without them. At this moment, it almost seems that Mozart is reaching back to give a hand to his source. (McLellan G1).

The “constant little shocks of déjà vu” that McLellan describes eerily replicate one aspect of the Burlador and Tan largo’s musicality. Seventeenth-century Spanish theater music’s calculated conventionality, built around the recurrence of “well-known tunes,” was precisely calibrated to arouse “constant little shocks of déjà vu.” Comedia musicality accounts for another dimension of McLellan’s experience that merits replication by future translators, too – to wit, the intertextual effect of Mozart “reaching back to give a hand to his source.” Intertextuality between Don Juan and the “well-known tunes” associated with him has inspired at least one memorable exploration of the Burlador made in the USA. In 1994, Minneapolis’ Theatre de la Jeune Lune produced Don Juan Giovanni, “in which” (reports Misha Berson for American Theatre) “a ghostly operatic Don Giovanni haunts his theatrical counterpart while the latter is on a road trip,” to considerable critical and popular acclaim (Berson 20).

“Well-known tunes” gave voice to the first Don Juan play’s musicality. Incorporating “well-known tunes” into the Burlador and Tan largo shows great promise for reviving the play in the US today. Yet “well-known” remains the adjective least apropos for describing translation’s traditional approach to reproducing this comedia’s musicality. The translation history of the Burlador and Tan largo’s songs is the story of completely unknown, inaccessible, and inconceivable tunes. Tradition has decreed this rich vein of the comedia’s stageworthiness, too, “untranslatable.”
Standard practice for translating the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*’s songs is to put their words in English and ignore the fact that they once had melodies. The assumption of “untranslatability” that underlies this practice becomes visible in translations that interpolate their song lyrics from sources quite foreign to the first Don Juan play, or erase song lyrics from their performance text altogether. In Schizzano and Mandel’s *Playboy of Seville*, for example, two of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*’s five carefully-scripted song texts have been utterly suppressed in order to insert Elizabethan love poems, lifted out of *England’s Helicon* (Schizzano and Mandel 72, 77). In Alvarez’ *Don Juan of Seville*, a translation developed in collaboration with composer Liz Swados, the pivotal song at the second dinner party is rendered totally textless, reduced to a stage direction stipulating that “(*The servants sing*)” (Alvarez 206).

*Don Juan of Seville* provides a perfect example of *comedia*’s musicality standing just out of reach for US performances of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*. Alvarez has made it abundantly clear that she considers music a powerful asset to playwrighting. Certainly *Lynne Alvarez: Collected Plays, Volume I* shows a deep respect and a pronounced talent for making music “work” onstage. Six of the seven original plays published with *Don Juan of Seville* (that is, all of the other full-length works in the collection) feature music as a prime mover in the dramaturgy – music as the passion and/or occupation of a central character, music as a pivotal element in the performance score, music as an experience that prepares or delivers special illumination, and/or music as the guiding metaphor of the plot. Music is fundamental to the way Lynne Alvarez writes plays.

In this playwright’s view, moreover, music stands at the heart of translation – an irresistible bridge to cross-cultural communication. Alvarez writes regarding the music in *Don Juan of Seville*:

> Everyone springs awake when we hear music. I believe it draws the audience in immediately – plus it’s always so evocative of the time period or the mood of the scene. For me it works better than props and stuff. ... The director, Carey Perloff, is the one who brought in Elizabeth Swados and knows about the musical approach ... . In most of my plays I am very specific about what music should be
used and how. I love music and I love to use it – but in this case – it was much more collaborative with the director. (e-mail of 20 February 2001)

But the music that made Don Juan of Seville’s audiences “spring awake,” working “better than props” and generating rare praise for the translation’s production from The New York Times (see Hampton C3:5: “Elizabeth Swados has composed some pleasant music for the show”) – that music has been irretrievably lost. Writes composer Liz Swados, “I truly don’t have a clue as to where that music is. Maybe Carey has a tape? I wasn’t in the habit in those days of keeping my stuff catalogued and God knows where it’s all buried. Sorry” (e-mail of 4 March 2001).

Even where translators’ talents have taken specific aim at transmitting the full impact of the Burlador and Tan largo’s musicality into today’s performance terms – in the collaboration of Alvarez with Swados, and Walcott with MacDermot – the comedia’s musicality remains “untranslatable,” because the results of those translations remain stubbornly inaccessible. Swados’ music is “buried.” MacDermot’s score runs hers a close second.

Bruce King’s massive biography of Walcott may attest to an “LP album of The Joker of Seville,” but just try to find that recording to treat yourself to an ear-opening lesson on what music can do to bring the play to life (King 325). No collection, catalog, or research respository I’ve consulted has gotten me one step closer to hearing this original cast recording.

Direct contact with the composer won me an 11-track, 33-minute CD of Joker music. This custom-burned Kilmarnock Record/MacDermot Music release contains instrumental accompaniments to about one third of the translations’ songs – no voices, no lead sheets, no identifiable melody lines, just keyboard, guitar, flute, saxophone, and rhythm instruments cranking out backup for the songs’ performance.

Years of feelers put out through friends in Canada followed up by two trips to Toronto opened access to a sheaf of lead sheets from Hart House Theatre’s North American premiere of the Joker (1980). This 50-page compilation contains printed melody lines, chord structures, and handwritten production notations for 16 of the translation’s songs.
Seven of the songs in the lead sheets from Toronto also appear on MacDermot’s accompaniment CD. By overlaying the lyrics from Walcott’s published playtext with the melodies from the lead sheets and the accompaniments from the CD, I have reconstructed a glimpse into how music worked in the Joker of Seville. The results are revolutionary. They describe a breathtakingly inventive, compellingly accessible method of translating the first Don Juan play into contemporary American musical theater. Theater traditions that see music as the reverse of integral to theater translation – a separate process, an optional add-on, a self-evident feature that performers instinctively understand how to handle – stand as formidable silencers to this resoundingly vibrant source of stageworthiness, in the Burlador and Tan largo (and, for that matter, in the Joker of Seville).

Piecing together a soundscape through the silence that tradition imposes, it’s possible to identify two aspects of Walcott and MacDermot’s practice that summarize their methodology for translating musicality. The song that concludes the Joker’s Prologue – “Sans Humanité” – offers a site for probing the depth of the translation’s Thematic use of music. And an audio survey of the range of music represented by the CD and the lead sheets yields a resonant summary of the translation’s musical breadth.

Close study of “Sans Humanité” shows its music enhancing the Joker’s performance in five major ways:

- by locating the action immediately,
- by engaging the audience in the playmaking actively,
- by articulating the dramatic structure subliminally,
- by engineering surprises craftily, and
- by advancing the plot economically.

The tune sets the world of the play’s creation to the instantly familiar cadences of a Caribbean calypso, packing a maximum of impact into a minimum of music. The song falls into three successive sections, each based on only two or three chords. The opening section spells out F and B-flat triads (the tonic and subdominant of the key), first in jubilantly rising, and then in gently falling phrases (A and A’). The second section, equivalent to a Broadway show tune’s
“bridge,” suspends the melody over a C-7 chord for two phrases before finally resolving to F (B and B’). The final section brings the tune back to home base over a I, IV, I, V, I progression, highlighting its ending with hemiola to the title text “sans humanité” (C and C’; see MacDermot lead sheets 4-5). All told, the structure A A’ B B’ C C’ is repeated to generate four stanzas for the song (see MacDermot lead sheets 4-11).

Stanza one features Rafael’s introduction of “all the cards in the pack, / Ace, King, Queen, Joker, and Jack” (Walcott 9) – an introduction that instantly locates the world of the translation. The melody’s built-in familiarity as conventional, upbeat calypso roots the performance immediately in the Caribbean. This strategy makes the characters populating the translation – the “dead man” played by the Ace, the desire embodied in the Queen of Hearts, and the multidimensionality of the Joker, who’s “really the boss” and “can change to elation each grave situation” (Walcott 9) – seem instantly familiar, lively, and accessible, too.

The second stanza opens this world to the audience and invites audience members to play active parts in it. Setting the anti-sentimental, seriously satiric tone of the performance, the Ace of Death glosses “sans humanité” as “without pity, that’s what it mean,” and tells the audience, “If you chant that response to me, / and shout it without pity, / you go start off the action, to our satisfaction” (Walcott 9). The whole cast encourages the audience to take him at his word. Modeling involvement in the world of the play through music, they all close the stanza with a rousing choral “Sans humanité!”

Stanza three maps out in miniature the kind of experience that this performance will present. The strophic structure of the song (reinforced by the call-and-response structure of the audience’s involvement) maps out a periodic structure for the play, already foreshadowed in the way that the A’ section of the tune writes itself as a palindrome for A. Every verse begins with an F-major triad that spells itself up and down, describing a return-to-home-base arc that organizes large and small installments in the action. The A-A’ and B-B’ sections of the melody, moreover, end with rhythmic accelerations – even eighth notes where syncopated quarter notes would be expected – while the C-C’ section ends
with a hemiola (an extended triplet feeling in a duple-meter cadence). These rhythmic stingers in the tail of the tune subliminally map out an accelerating, surprise-ending structure for the translation.

Elements of dramatic surprise are engineered into stanza three as well. Rafael uses the song’s third verse to conjure up theatrical visions of Naples and Seville, calling on “dim, majestical time” to help him (Walcott 9-10). The fact that he sings his invocation to Time emphasizes the performance’s diachronicity; the way the melody sets the text shifts the syllabic stress in “majestical” to “ma- jes-TIC-al” (see MacDermot lead sheets 8). Shifty overlay of text and tune echoes the unassimilated meeting of cultures built into the accompaniment. “Sans Humanité” features a vocal line that’s pure calypso over an orchestral mix that’s aggressively County & Western. The song’s performance lays a vocal track reminiscent of Bob Marley’s “I Shot the Sheriff” over a backup band that could accompany Patsy Cline’s “Crazy.” This surprising cultural mix prepares the translation’s intersection of worlds new and old, and sets the stage for the imaginative stretches that make the intersections work:

Tell the stars over old Seville,
when we kill, we don’t really kill.
Look, our swords are all sticks and our duels just stickplay,
sans humanité! (Walcott 10)

The final stanza of the song economically advances the plot. Rafael’s lyric sets the scene for “Isabella undressing / … / to play with Octavio in bed, / but she draw the Joker instead” (Walcott 10), fast-forwarding the Joker’s Scene 1 straight to the thematic heart of the Burlador and Tan largo’s first scene. “She blow out the candle” and “she start off the scandal, / sans humanité!”

The Joker’s opening production-number re-produces the Burlador and Tan largo’s satiric approach (represented by “sans humanité”) to familiar issues (represented by the calypso tune) that affect everybody (represented by the total-theater chant). A deep look into “Sans Humanité” shows that musicality can translate aspects of the comedia hitherto considered “untranslatable.”
A broad overview of the score’s other songs adds more evidence that music holds a key to unlocking the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*’s stage potential. Even in a limited selection of songs from the *Joker*, it’s possible to see music:

- creating connections between characters,
- complicating thought patterns,
- mixing traditions,
- exploiting conventions, and
- generating dramatic unity.

In each of these regards, musicality translates more layers of the *comedia*’s “untranslatable” stagecraft.

For example, the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* set up a subtextual connection between Catalinón and Tisbea/Trisbea that traditional translation has found it impossible to convey. The Pescadora is the only woman in the play who inspires the *gracioso* to show off, to go gaga about beauty, and to express a lasting sense of regret (Fernández 25-26, 39, 53, 69-70, 80, 91). Clearly, the funny man is smitten by the fishergirl. But since he never says so in so many words, tradition finds this connection “untranslatable” (see, for example, Starkie 196, 201, 208, 211, 213, 214, 217, 223, 227, 235, 246, 249).

By using a tune instead of words, Walcott and MacDermot neatly re-create the triangular relationship that intimately connects Catalinion, Tisbea, and Don Juan. The first melody in the *Joker*’s score – heard even before “Sans Humanité” – associates a specific musical idea with Don Juan: a pattern of eighth notes in 6/8 time repeating a sequence of rising thirds (*do-re-mi, do-re-mi, do-re-mi-do*). In the song “Sevilla,” sung by the Chorus in Spanish, then reprised by Juan in English, this rising-thirds motif sets to music the words that identify Juan as the Burlador/Joker (see MacDermot lead sheets 2-3, Walcott 7-8). Catalanion and Tisbea proceed to sing high-profile variations on “Sevilla,” where their own versions of the rising-thirds motif musically connects them to Don Juan, and to each other. (See Catalinion’s “It is Night” and “By the Shimmering Harbor of Naples,” MacDermot lead sheets 11a, 12-14 and Walcott 13; and Tisbea’s big decision number “Do I Flee,” MacDermot lead sheets 29-32 and Walcott 35-36.)
This musical link instantly and audibly translates a web of relationships that word-for-word transcription of the Spanish dialog misses completely. Tisbea’s appropriation of the “Sevilla” theme is particularly telling. Performance-sensitive criticism of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* has shown that Tisbea/Trisbea’s stage verse anticipates her attraction to Don Juan. Speaking her lines aloud prefigures Don Juan’s arrival, since in Spanish the Pescadora’s virtuoso monolog is built around the vowels in Don Juan’s name (see Rose 53). (The same point could be made about the Spanish poetry that prepares Don Juan for his tete-a-tete with Amínta/Armínta, but criticism hasn’t gotten that far yet; cf. Fernández 46, 87.) Tradition has considered this important character-connection information “untranslatable.”

With the elegance and economy of Spanish verse, Walcott and MacDermot’s music re-creates the subtextual performance links that connect Tisbea/Trisbea to Catalinón and to Don Juan. “Do I Flee” melodically tracks Tisbea’s progress from ivory-tower virgin to woman in the grip of a defining-moment conflict. MacDermot starts the number with a rare recitative, setting “If from the darts of Cupid’s bow, / I, Tisbea, am immune” with the austerity of plainchant. Then you hear Juan and Catalinón invade her consciousness, as her solo quotes the rising-thirds motif that both of them have sung, wrestling it into a different time signature and tonality to deal with the question “can this be lust?” (cf. MacDermot lead sheets 29, 32).

Another lively side of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* that tradition has scuttled as “untranslatable” is its political lampoonery. By presenting Don Juan’s dad as the Karl Rove of his day and making the Statue a walking satire of the sitting head of state, this *comedia* makes questioning authority an indivisible part of its performance score. Faithful transcription of the script’s diction can’t begin to capture that.

The *Joker*’s music can. Walcott and MacDermot’s performance score gives Juan’s uncle Pedro a delicious song that ridicules authority with vim and vinegar (see MacDermot lead sheets 37–39, Walcott 51–52). Musically, “The King of Castille” allies itself with a cluster of songs that establish an audible mode of philosophical inquiry in this translation. The melody line of Pedro’s solo mimics
plainchant, in the way that it settles on one note for most of a phrase and then finishes the thought by dipping down one note before ending back up on the chant-tone. That audio style allies Pedro’s musico-political critique to “O Brave Fat Lady” (a song where Juan satirizes the political clout of carnality in a convent; see MacDermot lead sheets 15-18 and Walcott 20-21) and the recitative of Tisbea’s “Do I Flee” (another place where philosophical questioning intersects with practical politics).

Musicality opens channels for the Joker to transmit the Burlador and Tan largo’s delight in provoking thought. Walcott and MacDermot’s methodology can devote whole production numbers to critiquing ideas – witness Catalinion’s satire on the “U.S.A.,” slave-trading, and colonial exploitation in “El Capitan” (see Walcott 32-33, compare MacDermot lead sheets 22-28). Their musical-theater technique can put ideas in dialog with one another; Juan quoting “Sans Humanité” in his solo “They Don’t Know Who” pits the Joker’s belief in Physicality against a communal experience of Soul (see MacDermot lead sheets 19-21 and Walcott 30). The musical scoring can wrap turning points in the action indivisibly around pivotal ideas in the culture, linking (for example) the ritual deaths of Gonzalo and Juan to the “freedom” celebrated in “Little Red Bird,” the song that frames the two death scenes (see MacDermot lead sheets 51-52 and Walcott 68, 151).

Music re-creates the first Don Juan play’s “untranslatable” but irresistible invitation to re-think establishment politics. It also recaptures the comedia’s “untranslatable” mix of cultural traditions – the blend of action-adventure, soap opera, saint’s play, French farce, historical fantasy, literary parody, low comedy, and Apocalyptic wakeup-call that the Burlador and Tan largo bring to the stage. A particularly rich instance of the Joker juxtaposing traditions crops up in the convent-chant-cum-calypso-get-down scored for “O Brave Fat Lady.”

MacDermot starts this song with Nuns chanting “Brevis est amor in nostra vita” [Love in this life is woefully short-lived], in classical Gregorian style (MacDermot lead sheets 15). The composer shifts musical traditions, mimicking the form of a Calvinist chorale to set Juan’s challenge to the nunnery’s Abbess. He adopts the angular, rigidly sequenced phrases of a mock hymn-tune to set “O
brave fat lady, waiting to get laid, / go, spread this gospel to those in your
charge: / teach them that righteous beauty is betrayed, / not by false men, but
by that lecher, Age (Walcott 20). The accompaniment adds another layer, from
another musical tradition. Under Juan’s chorale, MacDermot scores a lush
orchestral tango, complete with slap-bass rhythm licks and a jazz flute’s
improvisations (MacDermot lead sheets 16-18, MacDermot CD track 10). The
result is a song as richly textured as the Burlador and Tan largo’s performance
score.

In addition to mixing literary and dramatic traditions, the first Don Juan
play distinguishes itself – and boosts its stageworthiness – by expertly
manipulating theater conventions. There’s good reason to believe, for example,
that a Statue showing up for supper excited Abbott-and-Costello expectations in
early-17th-century Spanish audiences. Certainly Lope de Rueda’s great paso The
Mask (published in 1567) builds a slapstick climax around a simpleminded
servant mistaking his master for a recently deceased gravedigger. Lope de
Rueda, Lope de Vega’s famous predecessor, gets big laughs by having his dialogue
explore what delicacies dead people eat (Listerman 45-46).

Cervantes’ entremeses [one-act plays], moreover – printed in 1615, within
a decade of documented performances of the Burlador and Tan largo – mine the
same vein of comic expectation. Cervantes’ Entremés del Rufián Viudo, Llamado
Trampagos [A Pimp Remarries in One Unnatural Act] brings the legendary
gangster Escarramán to life as a stone-like visitor from another world to start the
deus-ex-machina dance that ends that play in laughter (Morley 41, Honig 51,
Smith 37). And his Entremés de la Cueva de Salamanca [What a College
Education’s Good For, or An Appetite Is a Terrible Thing to Waste] spins itself a
hilarious climax out of convincing a suspicious husband that his wife’s guests are
denizens of Hell who’ve come to dinner (Morley 189, Honig 138, Smith 125).

Manipulating the expectation of Dead-Man-at-dinner hilarity – feeding it
with Catalinón’s Weekend at Bernie’s fright gags, then ripping the rug out from
under it with the Statue’s terrifying Silence of the Lambs interactions with Don
Juan – the Burlador and Tan largo builds a more resonant, surprising, and
multidimensional climax. Similarly, the Joker’s music raises expectations in order to exceed them, exploding convention with thematic breakthroughs.

“Big Foot Bertha” lets the Joker compress 350 lines of Spanish into one powerhouse of a song, made all the more powerful by MacDermot’s expert manipulation of musical convention. For generations, American musical-theater composers have used a “blue note” – the temporarily lowered note in the scale that makes the “man” in “Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man of Mine” sound jazzy and full of yearning – to communicate soulful desire (see Block 28–29, 33). MacDermot uses a pair of “blue notes” in “Big Foot Bertha,” but he uses them to mock Soulful desire with Bodily realities.

The first blue note in the song kowtows to convention. Setting the words, “Where’s Helen, who didn’t like men to hurt her / in the same place twice again?” MacDermot slides the melody line for “same place” cooly up to touch the blue note of the scale, playing with the idea of soulful desire (MacDermot lead sheets 42, Walcott 57). That makes the second blue note in the song note all the more surprising. Setting the text, “Friends, that was in another country, / and besides, the wench is dead,” MacDermot attacks “wench” with a direct hit on the blue note – a hit emphasized by a strong, chromatic contrary motion in the harmony underneath it (MacDermot lead sheets 43, Walcott 58).

The second verse of the song repeats the pattern, flirting with convention by sliding into the blue note at the end of “Helen and Jane got mixed up in a murder, / and besides, they were getting plain,” then knocking your socks off with an in-your-face direct hit on the blue note with the anything-but-soulful finish to “Life is a joke, but it ain’t so funny / when that dingaling goes dead!” The convention promises soulful longing, then delivers a jab at bodily long-gone-ness. It appropriates the blues to play black humor, getting you emotionally opened to wallow in a torch song’s sentimentality, then socking you with a satiric vision of your own mortality. This contravention of musical expectation carries the translation’s thematic point.

The Joker makes the Burlador and Tan largo’s project of inducing self-correction an immediate and accessible performance reality for Caribbean audiences in contemporary theaters. “Big-Foot Bertha” advances the comedia’s
agenda on many levels at the same time, even finding a way to make “port of Spain” protrude in a song crafted to revive Don Juan in Port of Spain, Trinidad – literally bringing the point of the play “home” (see MacDermot lead sheets 43, Walcott 6, 57).

Musicality makes the unity of the play transmissible, too. The Burlador and Tan largo appear so loose-jointed and episodic on the surface that some translators have questioned whether they possess any dramatic unity to translate. For example, Oscar Mandel’s thought-provoking preface to the Composite Playboy of Seville reasons:

The episode of the Statue does not partake of the inevitability which we admire in great drama. Don Juan must be punished; and he must be punished by the hand of God – so much is understood. But this does not mean that the instrument must be the monument of one of his victims; a lightning bolt would have served God as well. And even less were two dinners called for. In short, a showman’s flair, not an aesthetic or a religious imperative, led Tirso to the popular ballad. Moreover, cunningly though the invented episodes of Don Juan’s wicked life and the traditional tale of the Double Invitation are sewn together, the stitches show. As Don Juan pursues his infamous career, breaking hearts and heads, the victims and their friends and relatives collect to harass him. They plot their vengeance; they are ready to strike. Whereupon the Statue interposes and nullifies all their work. An action carefully prepared for fails to materialize. This is the error of false anticipation committed by Tirso and all those who used his plot. In Tirso’s case the critics have covered the mistake with a patch. The dramatist, they assure us, is saying that human vengeance is out of place or is ineffective, and that God himself, setting aside human attempts, must mete out a just retribution. But it would have been better if Tirso rather than the critics had made this point. For Tirso’s Statue does not lift a finger to stop the mortals. It goes about its business,
and at the end the victims are amazed (and a little disappointed?) to find that nothing is left for them to do. (Mandel 42)

Where Mandel’s diction-centric analysis finds “false anticipation” and slapdash stitching, production conceptualization finds thematic unity. The “episode of the Statue” seamlessly completes Don Juan’s identity quest. The Burlador’s punishment “by the hand of God” preaches the same lesson to those who “plot their vengeance” that it uses to judge the garañón’s behavior. Unbroken, performance-dictating thematic threads run through the comedia from start to finish, organically connecting its parts into a designedly integrated whole.

Musicality translates an artistic unity that tradition has found “untranslatable” (indeed, debatable) in the Burlador and Tan largo. Music builds a power into the Joker that highlights the play’s original connecting threads. By reprising songs, by writing songs that talk back and forth to each other melodically and harmonically, by filling the show with songs that not only function on-the-spot, but fit together to form a complete musical score, MacDermot translates the comedia’s artistic integrity into forms that are performable today.

How the music in American musicals works to “serve, ignore, or contradict dramatic themes and ideas, both in specific scenes and in the shows as a whole,” is a brand-new question in theater studies (Block 8). In 1997, Geoffrey Block’s Enchanted Evenings broke new ground by analyzing “music’s power to express dramatic themes” in fourteen “book” musicals from Show Boat (1927) to West Side Story (1957). Block’s study demonstrated that close attention to melodic structure, harmonic pattern, and performance placement could replace “unhelpful generalities about its power to convey mood” with concrete evidence of music’s contribution to a musical’s artistic cohesiveness (see, for example, Block 27-34 on “Musical Symbolism and Dramatic Meaning” in Show Boat).

Using Block’s methodology of probing melodic structure, harmonic pattern, and performance placement, I can demonstrate how Galt MacDermot’s music captures the Burlador and Tan largo’s “untranslatable” sense of dramatic unity, and re-expresses it in forms that communicate to American audiences today. MacDermot’s setting of “Little Red Bird” provides an excellent case in
point for appreciating this achievement (see MacDermot lead sheets 51-52, MacDermot CD track 4, Walcott 68 and 151).

The *comedia* unifies itself:

- by building subtextual family resemblances into apparently disparate episodes,
- by making each episode build to a surprise ending which (in turn) accelerates progress toward the surprise ending of the whole play, and
- by structuring the action to travel full-circle through an array of episodes back to home base.

MacDermot replicates this approach to organic unity in “Little Red Bird,” point for point.

- The song’s melody/harmony mix gives it an absolutely unique flavor that subliminally stresses its family resemblance to the rest of MacDermot’s score. “O Little Red Bird” puts a gently-moving, stepwise tune with the simplicity of a folk hymn, over a rockin’-reggae calypso accompaniment that bops along at 175 beats a minute. The clash of styles is both unique for this piece, and characteristic for this score (compare especially “O Brave Fat Lady” and “Manzanares”).
- The song’s rhythmic structure builds surprise into its ending while emphasizing its family resemblance to other surprise-ending songs (see especially “Sans Humanité” and “El Capitan”). “Little Red Bird” lays down an 8-bar phrase in cut time that repeats itself in 6- and 3-bar condensations, speeding up final cadences right where musical-theater convention would lead you to expect a slow-down for a big-finish ride-out. This rhythmic dash toward the climax is highlighted by starting each half of the song with a gathering tone – a two-bar B for the first half of the verse, reduced to a B held for only three-quarters of one bar at the top of the verse’s second half.
- The song’s strophic delivery brings it audibly back to home base. Judging by the accompaniment laid down on the CD (and the Hart House performance notes scribbled into the lead sheets), “Little Red Bird” is scored to be sung repeatedly when it’s performed. This foregrounds a periodic effect that this tune shares with all the other songs in MacDermot’s score. The *Joker’s* music
brings dramatic ideas full-circle in small- and large-scale ways, completing melody-lines by recycling phrases from earlier in the song, and then building songs by repeating whole verses of the melodies that are generated by this system of recycling.

Only two songs in the score get reprised in performance (i.e., brought back for repetition later in the show), and the reprises stand back to back, as the translation’s finale ultimo. In the Joker’s first run at the Trinidad Theatre Workshop, the reprise was limited to “Sans Humanité” – a decision that made the translation travel full-circle literally, bringing its first production number back to do double duty as its last production number. The translation’s second, history-making and widely-toured staging (1975) measured the big circle in its structure thematically rather than literally (see King 322). This time, MacDermot and Walcott added a reprise of “Little Red Bird” to close the show. First stated as a solo by Juan, a Thematic translation of his inclinación soliloquy, “Little Red Bird” foregrounds the Burlador and Tan largo’s impact on individual audience members with the refrain,

\begin{quote}
  \textit{every heart has the right to its freedom,}
  \textit{every heart has the right to its freedom.}
\end{quote}

(Walcott 151, MacDermot lead sheets 52)

The musicality of MacDermot’s score translates the dramaturgy of the Burlador and Tan largo. The Joker’s apparently random, \textit{sui generis} songs share a melodic and harmonic vocabulary that makes them fundamentally a part of the same unique theatrical experience, just as the comedia’s superficially discrete episodes act out a thematically unified progression toward energetic self-correction. The Joker’s songs even transmit the circularity of the Burlador and Tan largo’s subtextual structure, bringing individual songs back to their starting points the way the comedia rounds out individual burlas (e.g., starting and ending the cape caper with the cape changing hands), and bringing the whole play full-circle musically the way the comedia structures a full circle thematically, taking its final scene back to the problem that ends the first one (Don Juan has
been here, and miraculously disappeared: all the King’s horses and all the King’s men can’t put the status quo back together again).

Translating the world’s first Don Juan play into an American musical holds magnificent promise for making the play accessible today. Walcott and MacDermot’s technique re-produces traditionally “untranslatable” performance aspects of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*, from the *comedia’s* subtextual connections between characters, to its complex thought patterns, its challenging mix of performance styles, its exciting manipulation of dramatic convention, and its organic approach to generating unity.14

Unfortunately, the same musical-theater conventions that Walcott and MacDermot use to make the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* accessible to contemporary audiences makes the *Joker of Seville* impossible to produce. The translation’s book and score have never been published together, nor are they likely to be. US producers literally can’t get their hands on this musical to produce it. Even if they could, the *Joker’s* extraordinary performance demands – 23 roles for actors, plus four dancers and seven onstage musicians – would prove prohibitive for most US repertory theaters, and the translation’s Caribbean re-contextualization would turn out to be distancing for most US audiences. Certainly performances of the translation in Toronto (1980) and Boston (1994) have aroused as much puzzlement as delight (see Beach, Berman; King collects reviews of the Caribbean productions 578-79).

What can US translators borrow from the *Joker’s* songs, then? What insights into Americanizing the first Don Juan play can they extrapolate from Walcott and MacDermot’s thematically brilliant but physically inaccessible Caribbean translation?

- An understanding that musicality is central to the *Burlador* and *Tan largo’s* makeup.
- Evidence that the *comedia’s* musicality can be translated into idiomatically American performance terms.
- And a model to follow in translating the Spanish play’s musicality – a model to follow not literally, but thematically.
Walcott and MacDermot were aiming at a new musical theater synthesis in the *Joker of Seville* – a logical extension of MacDermot’s nontraditional work in *Hair* and Walcott’s interest in Caribbeanizing Brecht (Bordman 658-59; King 315, 320). That’s why the *Joker* designedly popularizes its melodies, structuring them to sound instantly familiar, and performing them with live audience participation (King 318, 321). That’s why the *Joker’s* songs are brief and frequent, spicing the action with a musical counter-text. That’s why the score’s orchestrations are transparent and transportable, featuring the kind of guitar, flute, and saxophone sounds that a traveling troupe of actors could carry with them.

The thematic core of Walcott and MacDermot’s musicality is ripe for imitation in the US today.

- Following MacDermot’s example of setting songs to instantly-familiar tunes, US translators can set the first Don Juan’s songs to widely popular US melodies that “talk back” to their texts – the cultural equivalent of the “well-known tunes” that the first producers of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* used to stage the play. This can provide translation with a new art for making the play’s songs accessible.\(^{15}\)

- Following the *Joker’s* model, US translators can use music to re-create a wide range of performance impacts beyond the *comedia’s* formal songs. Well-known American tunes can equip translation with a new art for:
  - establishing time periods (including the *Burlador* and *Tan largo’s* dialog between national origins and Now),
  - underscoring special effects (such as the duel and the Statue’s appearances),
  - linking characters and events subtextually,
  - conveying stylistic variety (as when Don Gonzalo’s funeral procession meets Aminta/Arminta’s wedding march), and
  - recovering the bravura effect of rhetorical display (e.g., staging production numbers to translate the Comendador’s travelog, Tisbea/Trisbea’s opening monolog, and the 11:00 scene’s stirring conclusion).
Profiting by the obstacle to production posed by Walcott and MacDermot’s formally challenging and physically inaccessible score, US translators can incorporate music directly into their performance text, in forms that allow great flexibly in staging. This kind of musicality can revolutionize translation with new arts for utilizing:

- songs that can be sung a cappella or with improvised accompaniments (“to the tune of Amazing Grace”),
- brief musical quotes that datestamp dramatic effects (“Who delivered her letter? The answer, my friend, is blowin’ in the wind ...”), and
- sound effects which could be realized by voices, instruments, or recordings – from the stage, from the audience, or both (“Sousa’s Washington Post March carries the cortege across the stage, while Alfonso’s spin-doctors strong-arm everyone they can overawe into chanting support for the party line. They punctuate each phrase in the march with ‘Alfonso Once!’ ‘Alfonso Forever!’”).

Translating the Burlador and Tan largo’s musicality revolutionizes the Burlador that the Joker of Seville revives. Through instantly-familiar, audience-involving, texturally multitasking musical effects on the order of “Sans Humanité,” Walcott and MacDermot recapture vital facets of the first Don Juan traditionally considered “untranslatable.” They bring to life his ironic tone (“sans humanité” as unsentimental mockery), his mythic scope (“sans humanité” as super-humanity), and thematic thrust (“sans humanité” as a Body estranged from Soul, passion divorced from compassion), all at the same time, in one magnificently performable bundle of musical impacts. Adapting Walcott and MacDermot’s technique can make the first Don Juan’s musicality accessible for re-production in the US, fundamentally re-charging this commedia for 21st-century representation.

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1 Starkie’s Playboy provides a prime example of translation standing knee-deep in notations at the bottom of the page. Most of them contain wonderful
information about context that richly merits performance. None of them get articulated into the *Playboy*’s performance text.

So it’s delightful to learn, in note #1, that Ripio uses a parody of a famous phrase from *Don Quixote* – “*hidalgo de solar conocido* (a gentleman of a well-known house)” – to demolish Octavio’s pretensions to heartache about Isabel. But the question that the *Playboy* gives Ripio to ask doesn’t translate the joke into a form that any American audience is likely to get: “Should I not be ‘a fool of a well-known house’ / To be so woebegone because I love / A woman who loves me?” (188).

Starkie’s note #2 summarizes Ovid’s account of Galantis getting turned into a weasel as punishment for gossiping about Alemene. This is juicy stuff. But the juice needs to percolate up into the dialog, where the *Playboy* leaves Octavio stranded, prosing on dry as dust:

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You distill poisoned words that paralyze
My heart and force me to unseal my lips:
Just as the weasel in the mating time
Does through the ear conceive, and when its young
Are born, it’s through the mouth they are brought forth. (190)
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The actor playing this scene, and the audience listening to it, get the worst of both worlds: a passionate injunction against gossip dessicated into an encyclopedia entry about weasels, and the encyclopedia entry so antiquated that its description of weasels is ludicrously unperformable.

Note #13 provides historical background on The Marquis of La Mota’s beloved “Candilejo” – background pregnant with parallels to the *Playboy*’s story. Theatregoers at performances of the *Burlador* in Seville, Starkie suggests, would know that the Candilejo was infamous as a slum where nobles had indulged in “nocturnal adventures,” and notorious as the home of a common woman who had convicted a king of scandal, and noteworthy as the site of a statue set up to commemorate a murder. In the *Playboy*, these fertile points of contact are smothered in a footnote (209). Instead of breathing new life into Starkie’s flat acting script, they’re suppressed into stillborn scholarship.
When Don Juan doublecrosses The Marquis, seducing his friend from La Mota into parting with his cape by promising to impersonate him in a confrontation with an angry whore, Catalínón asks the Playboy, “So you threw your cloak to the bull?” Starkie notes (#16), “This is a proverbial expression for risking all on a last effort” (217). He doesn’t translate his insight on the context into text that’s primed for performance, however. He throws the actor playing Catalínón the merest hint that the line could be delivered as a jibe, and leaves audiences who are unfamiliar with Spanish proverbs or uninitiated in the mysteries of bullfighting with no dramatic signposts for reading the scene whatsoever.

The Playboy provides all the hardware, for example, for understanding that Octavio raises the subject of weasels during his tete-a-tete with Don Pedro in order to warn Pedro that malicious gossip leads to major consequences (190). But the Playboy doesn’t follow through, to let Octavio say “God gets gossips in the end” or even “Weasels, like gossips, make babies with their tongues.” It puts the weasels in the dialog, and puts the background that decodes the warning at the bottom of the page.

Similarly, the Playboy can prove that the little copper coin which Catalínón wouldn’t wager on Batricio and Aminta’s chances for a happy wedding is intimately connected to the action of the play. It knows that the cornado was issued during the reign of Alfonso XI (the Burlador’s own King of Castile), and that its name suggests hanky-panky behind a husband’s back (223). But the script buries this insight, too, at the bottom of the page, resisting the insight’s urge to express itself inactable American terms.

What an impact “I wouldn’t give a two-bit whore’s small change for their chances” could have at this pivot-point in the play – or “Don’t bet a $3 bill from a hen-pecked hubby on this pair,” or “This wedding’s worth about one red cent in a Red-Indian red-light district.” Rather than perform the contextual riches it uncovers, though, Starkie’s translation tepidly relegated them to footnotes. Failure to follow through intrepidly in translating context accessibly damns the Playboy to a stage effect of timidity.
See also Oppenheimer 12, 15, 17, 21-22, 25, 28-29, 34, 36, 46, 53, 66, 73, 79-80, 85, 87, 89.

Studying the Burlador/Tan largo’s translation has convinced me that traditional distinctions between “translations,” “adaptations,” and “versions” are counterproductive. The criterion of literal philological transcription that Victor Dixon invokes to set “translation” apart from less exacting ways of re-expressing classic Spanish playtexts into English breaks down under Dixon’s own analysis; he insightfully notes that word-for-word transcription can never produce actable text (see Dixon “Translating” 95). Jean Graham-Jones’s notion of translation as a continuum is more helpful for practitioners trying to revive comedia for performance in English. I focus this study on the processes that shape transmitting a performance text from Spanish to English, regardless of what the outcome may be called – i.e., the processes of Decoding, Re-coding, and Targeting performance information. In the conclusion, I will introduce the idea that all the cross-lingual transcriptions I have studied are “translations.” What distinguishes them is which essential element(s) of the original they choose to place in the transcription’s foreground: the plot, the characters, the theme, the dialog, the music, or the spectacle.

Catalinón’s first scene onstage, for example, features a speech where he tells Tisbea/Trisbea that he expects to be made a Count the minute he gets Don Juan to Seville – a magnificent wrinkle in the comedia’s social ordering that has sent tradition scrambling in a dozen different directions (see Fernández 25, 69; and compare Campbell 248, O’Brien 91, Alvarez 143, Walcott 40, Dear 18; Starkie 194, Oppenheimer 17, Edwards 41, Schizzano and Mandel 59, Kidd 12).

Manipulating the gender of the role foregrounds the gracioso’s functionality as a thickener of the play’s thematic textures. In Dear’s Targeted reproduction, the role’s unruly mixture of morality, comedy, theatricality, and social compulsion – part Pat Robertson, part Groucho Marx, part Sammy Davis, Jr., part Michael Moore – sizzles with production vigor, ready to be set loose onstage.
The gracioso enhances the Jean Claude Van Damme sides of the Burlador with his own likeness to the Cowardly Lion.

Dear’s Thematic praxis captures the full-bodied flavor of the dinner scenes’ comedy, bringing the perspective of too-too-solid-flesh to bear on ominously out-of-this-world dining experiences – a texture that’s evidently too subtle for philological transcription to re-produce.

Funny as it is, this spoof on connoisseur cuisine misses the opportunity to pick up some thematic strands that stand out in the original. The ingredients of the house wine in Spanish, for example, are not “vinegar, phlegm, and donkeys’ piss,” but “Hiel, y vinagre” [vinegar and frost] (Fernández 59, 93) – a contents disclosure statement that told 17th-century audiences that the potation Catalinón was taste-testing had been imported straight from Hell. In a corral, performance of this passage must have raised both giggles and shudders, much like the response that Catalina’s interaction with the Statue-as-Sommelier is bound to raise today. But the original’s reaction is more deeply rooted in the world of the play, and in the values of the culture that contains it, than the recreation is. The vintage served up in the Burlador and Tan largo is a better-aged brew, smacking as much of impending moral reckoning as it does of gross-out reality TV.

The long-running series of pundonor plays that attract so much horrified attention in Golden Age drama studies provides a particularly compelling example of the gamesmanship involved in putting honor onstage. Point-of-honor honor-adventure extravaganzas specialized in pushing a point of honor to an imaginatively thrilling extreme. It’s imperative to note that this genre took the stage as unburdened by any imperative to reflect real life as an Indiana Jones movie (cf. Rodriguez-Badendyck 8-9).

The last-minute recuperation of Ana’s honor is the cultural equivalent of a referee reversing a critical call from the second game in a World Series, on prime-time television, during the wrap-up color commentary after a history-making nineteenth inning decisively finished game three. Nobody is going to stand for that crap. Recognizing it as a crock, they’re going to demand an
investigation, big-time. Which is precisely why the reprieve for Ana’s honor has been scripted into this intentionally incompetent imitation of a happy ending.

11 In 21st-century US terms, Ana’s salutation reads something like “My father, who’d sell America to the Arabs.”

12 Musicality is just one of the performance-enhancing languages expertly spoken by the Burlador/Tan largo which translation traditionally renders mute. Running beneath, through, and above the word level of the Burlador and Tan largo are levels of discourse as vital to the stageworthiness of the play as bone structure, blood, and sunlight are to radiant skin. For example:

- The comedia’s geographical settings only rarely surface in the dialog that actors speak, but they frame the playscript’s words with contexts that give them meaning. Locality is the bone structure of the play.
- The comedia’s songs run right through the spoken “skin” of the play, musically pacing, recapitulating, and connecting the action that the written script records. Musicality feeds the drama with moment-by-moment vitality; it’s the capillary action that fills the “skin” of the piece with lifeblood.
- The comedia’s sense of itself as a piece of theater plays above the surface of the play from start to finish, transforming the experience of hearing it from dull and dusty to deliciously sunlit. The Burlador and Tan largo stage illuminating performances within the larger performance of the play, gleefully poking fun at other forms of art, and aggressively assigning life-changing value to theater-making skills. Metatheatricality is the play’s thematic sunlight.

Yet tradition considers all of these indispensable performance elements in the play “untranslatable.”

Tradition has excused translators from paying any attention whatsoever to the Burlador and Tan largo’s locality – witness the profusion of undigested placenames in “14th-century Spain” dismissively listed as the backdrop for translation after translation of the first Don Juan. (See Campbell 234, O’Brien 81, Starkie 182, Alvarez 127, Kidd 2; Schizzano and Mandel equate geography with the fluid generality of staging in a coral, see 48; Edwards footnotes locations
as a matter of historical interest, see 6; Oppenheimer considers locale too
immaterial to merit mentioning.) Yet geographical setting contributes one of the
“given circumstances” that fundamentally inform every performance re-animated
by Stanislavski’s method (Stanislavski 51; Dear provocatively links the *comedia’s*
geopolitical world to Margaret Thatcher’s England, see 4-5). Even more
importantly for any translator committed to re-producing the original Don Juan
faithfully, location is a vital element in *comedia* construction.

In the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*, location is a vital element in the
dramaturgy, because the setting functions like a scene-partner – the kind of
scene-partner that good actors dream of, who make scenes pop with theatricality,
variety, and immediacy. Locality endows Don Juan’s story with immediacy,
because his itinerary takes him on a junket through the hottest geopolitical hot
spots in his world. Locality endows his performance with variety, because (like
New York or New Orleans, Miami or Minneapolis, Peoria or Podunk in US urban
typology today) the sites that Don Juan visits add specific flavors to his journey.
Locality front-loads his story with theatricality, because the Burlador/*garañón*’s
travels import a rich and expertly-chosen smorgasbord of subcultures, customs,
and patois into the cultural construct “Seville.”

Making all of this *comedia* available for production today means
perceptively re-conceptualizing the play’s locality. Walcott is the first translator
to attempt this feat.

Metatheatricality is as rich a vein of production vigor as locality for the
*Burlador/Tan largo*. The *comedia*’s plays-within-the-play feature bravura
display of skill on the order of Don Pedro’s masterful retellings of How Isabela
Got Caught In the Act (see Fernández 19, 21-22, 65, 67-68). Targets of the
*comedia*’s literary satire include the stylish poetry in Tisbea/Trisbea’s inner
monolog, the pastoral fantasy in the wedding at Dos Hermanas, the epistolary
novel in Ana and Mota’s forbidden romance, and the travelog in Don Gonzalo’s
report from Lisboa. The monumental statuary in the Dead Man’s visitations from
Beyond and high-profile references to painting (including the face-painting that
actors use) lampoons the graphic arts.
A striking aspect of the Burlador/Tan largo in Spanish is how the script’s metatheatrical elements drive home its theme. The theater-making skills of mirroring, rehearsal, and impersonation empower the self-recognition that impels self-reformation. The script is constructed to exhibit its artistic unity in performance. Walcott’s success in making his Caribbean localities, his musical theater melodies, and his metatheatrical special effects pursue the same artistic objective – to trace the never-ending human struggle to reconcile Body with Soul through Don Juan’s story – provides a benchmark for future translators to follow in replicating this comedia’s artistic integration.

13 A prime example of Walcott’s technique surfaces in the third scene of the translation, where the Burlador’s shipwreck off the coast of Tarragona (which takes place offstage in Fernández 24, 26, 68-70) becomes the Joker’s voyage of discovery to the “New World” (very much onstage in Walcott 32).

In the Caribbean re-contextualization, this junket takes on both accessible political significance and electric performance flair. Walcott and MacDermot make the shipwreck a musical-theater production number, featuring Catalinion (Juan’s black Moorish slave, who was taken as spoils in a war that cost too much to fight; see Walcott 45-46) as its triple-threat star. The journey that Catalinion relates, in song, dance, and story, locates Don Juan at the cutting edge of present-day concerns about colonial subjugation and US hegemonic domination. Sung beneath “a sail with a cross” and supported by “a gang of chained SLAVES,” the Moorish slave’s big solo starts out this way:

CATALINION

El Capitán was a quaking wreck,
el first mate muy borracho,
los crew, who staggered round the deck,
didn’t know arse from elbow.

(A dance begins with CAPTAIN, MATE, CREW, and SLAVES)

El cargo was a reeking lot
of Negroes, coon and bimbo,
who screamed the blues, when they were not
top practicing el limbo.

(SLAVES do a limbo dance, and are beaten.

CATALINION begins to undress. The sea gets rough)

But they said, when we said: “It’s more
to us like cries of anguish . . .”

CAPTAIN and CREW (Sing)
Theese ees a Spaneesh sheep, señor,
and they do not speak Spanish!

CAPTAIN (Sings)
Out of great suffering, we know,
they make their songs and dances.
These galley slaves who learn to row
in time will bless their chances.

Listen:

SLAVES (Sing)

Hey, hey, hey!
Is the U.S.A.

Once we get dere,
we gonna be O.K.!

(Walcott 32-33, compare MacDermot lead sheets 22-28)

Catalinión’s song is a tour-de-force of locality bringing thematic points home to roost. Fueled by high-energy lyrics, intense dance, and rambunctious storytelling, “El Capitán” impels its audience toward thinking seriously about suffering and aesthetics, slave trading and musical theater, and America as the Land of Opportunity. Two more verses develop the theme – the Joker’s musical score is built on repeated stanzas of instantly-familiar tunes – lampooning the glory of colonial expansion in general (“They say Columbus find this place / by accident, he lucky. / Same accident in our case / except all drown, except me;” Hart House prompt text, cf. Walcott 33) and US hegemony in particular.
The number builds to “A loud wave. Shipwreck. JUAN, almost naked, nearly drowned, climbs onto CATALINION’s back” (Walcott 34). Catalinion completes his song with the reflection,

I am the one slave to survive
this shipwreck with my master.
But I’m not sure, now I’m alive
which is the worse disaster.
For this new world, its promised feasts,
is nothing but the old one,
as long as men are beasts, and beasts
still bear their master’s burden.

(Walcott 34; MacDermot lead sheets 26-27)

Then the Slaves put a stinger on the number with one last rousing rendition of “Hey, hey, hey! / Is the U.S.A. / Once we get dere, / we gonna be O.K.!” (Walcott 34, MacDermot lead sheets 27-28).

Walcott’s translation Targets the Burlador/Tan largo’s geopolitically sensitive transition from Nápoles to Tarragona for dynamic performance today. Reading just the lyric of Catalinion’s production number, you can hear a critique of the “new world” (like the nova civitas written into Naples’s name) devolving into “the old one” (like the antique glories inscribed in “Tarragona”). The production forces that Walcott musters to make this critique unforgettable onstage serve to invigorate it exponentially.

The melody line of the song, for example, drives home the satiric devolution of new world promise (“U.S.A.” as the idealization of “O.K.”) into a restatement of old world privilege (where “beasts / still bear their master’s burden”). The Slaves’ “Hey, hey, hey” produces the longest sustained note in MacDermot’s score: a D above the bass cleff that’s held for two and a half bars (see MacDermot lead sheets 23, 25, 27). The harmony under this excited pedal tone moves inexorably downwards, from a D chord over A, to a G chord over G, to a D-7 chord over F-sharp, to a G-7 chord over F-natural, before bottoming out in C. This chromatically descending bass line – harmonic erosion undercutting the
Great Black Hope for a share in the Land of the Free – satirizes the Slaves’ optimism as effectively as their drowning does.

A superb example of integration surfaces in the song that the Queen of Hearts sings to liven up Batricio’s wedding reception. The ballad speaks directly to the River Manzanares, giving a geographical feature an active role in the wedding celebration:

O River Manzanares,
Run, run and ask my love
if her brown sapodillas ripe, in
that little orange grove;
...
Yes, yes, yes, Manzanares,
I know you can’t run back
to tell me, you’re a river,
but my mind is a river
and rivers have one track.
I want those sapodillas,
I want them, Manzanares,
I want that orange wine,
you hear me, Manzanares?
Say: I coming downriver,
for what she said was mine.
(Walcott 99)

The river that the Burlador and Tan largo invites to its wedding reception – the “Guadalquiuides de vino” [wine by the Mississippi River-full] that Gaseno/Gazenno has laid down for his guests’ conspicuous consumption (Fernández 43, 84) – traditionally ends up in English translation as a footnote, “untranslatable” (see Oppenheimer 53). Walcott’s Thematic strategy of re-location not only personifies the Manzanares, but puts the Joker’s river at the center of the Joker’s drama.
MacDermot’s setting for “Manzanares” is a searching exploration of “I want,” a thematic journey to source-springs of passion, the place where desiring starts to flow. The composer uses a motif already associated with passionate desire to set the words “I want those sapodillas” and “I want that orange wine, you hear me, Manzanares?” (MacDermot lead sheets 49-50). The motif describes a wailing rise that lifts the voice to the top of the scale (sounding la-ti-do in the key), followed immediately by an ear-catching fall to the bottom of the scale (sounding mi-re-do in the key).

This is a vocal figure that’s quite distinctive, both in the wideness of the interval that it encompasses at its center (the drop of a major sixth), and in the sharpness of reversal in direction that it describes (starting sharply up, then turning markedly down). The one other place this vocal motif sings out in MacDermot’s score is in “Tisbea Went and Bathe,” the “revivalist” production number that localizes the story of the Joker’s New-World Eve wrestling with a serpent imported from the Old World (see Walcott 42-44). There, the passionate desire motif sets the central exclamation in the chorus “Tisbea went and bathe, / a swordfish take she maid. / Tisbea, oh! Oh, oh! / Fire in the water!” (see MacDermot lead sheets 33, 35).

What’s particularly interesting about the passionate desire motif’s re-statement in “Manzanares” is its demonstration of how powerfully locality can theatricalize a performance’s theme. Walcott centers his Joker around the idea that Don Juan enacts an archetypal estrangement between Body and Soul. As the Joker puts it in response to De Mota’s “You must love or have loved someone,” Almost. Once.

... Her name’s L’Alma. That business ended quite well; we’re friends, of course – body goes one way, soul goes this; it’s been an amicable divorce. (Walcott 59)

The translation develops psychological roots for this estrangement. Juan’s father Don Diego attributes the Joker’s disruptiveness to the untimely passing of
his “dead mother,” claiming “her very stone would crack / with sorrow at these jokes you make / on women! Hurt one, you hurt her!” (Walcott 66). Juan himself suggests an Oedipal aspect to his makeup when he confesses to Octavio (who’s disguised as a friar in the church appointed for the Joker’s meeting with the Statue),

That sky, your painted paradise,
those dark clouds absorbed my mother
and brought rain to my father’s eyes.
Since then I have loved no other.
I’ve given my life to this question,
this joke that everybody’s heard:
whether our body’s need is sin? (Walcott 137)

Just as the Joker endows locality with symbolic as well as physical and psychological resonance, so the translation assigns archetypal stature to performing its central character’s inner conflict. Juan’s second solo (in the translation’s third scene) establishes his sense of himself as Myth:

They don’t know who I was before,
but they guess who I am, after;
but before they are sure, and require more,
I leave them, limp with laughter.
For once around is ground enough
for any virgin’s pleasing,
so she can give to her true love
with appetite increasing.
His love is trusting, true, and his
the shoulder which she cries on,
but all her tears are for what disappears
with me on the horizon. (Walcott 30)

By locating the action on All Soul’s Eve, the translation foregrounds the Mythic scale of the Joker’s history (Walcott 5, 8, 149-51), and prepares the archetypal force of Juan’s final song, which opens “There! Look! My soul! / Ascending
through the air / ... / In this dark moment everything is clear, / and I am glad, I
am glad to be dying, / to be dying . . . ” (Walcott 147).

The Production Conceptualization at the root of Walcott’s translation, then – the perception that Don Juan represents an archetypal tension between Body and Soul – is clearly articulated in the translation’s psychology, symbology, and diction. That’s not enough for the “total theatre” that Walcott and MacDermot perceived at work in the first Don Juan play, however (King 322). To appropriate the synthesis of performance arts at work in “the American musical with its use of dance, music, and lyrics as a form of total theatre and a way to reach larger audiences, while offering a play that was highly stylized, anti-naturalistic, like Oriental theatre, like Brecht;” to revolutionize “the Broadway musical into a vehicle for serious drama,” the translation had to “explain less and let the songs carry more of the significance” (King 322).

“Manzanares” does just that, brilliantly. Personifying a place, it playfully exploits the theatricality of total theater’s locales. Setting the passionate desire motif at the center of the musical’s dialog with the personified place makes locality unforgettably, unguardedly, and intuitively “carry significance.”

The music for “Manzanares” sounds a vocabulary of passion that multidimensionally advances the play’s thematic agenda. The printed text describes the estrangement of Body from Soul as the basic human problem that Don Juan emblematizes. This “passionate desire” motif acts out a lamentable separation – a wailing rise to the tonic at the upper range, followed by a sobbing fall to the tonic at the lower range – and indelibly integrates it into the translation’s performance. “Manzanares” inscribes into the performance score pieces of melody that mirror each other and run toward the same resolution, but are separated by the biggest leap in the score’s melodic vocabulary. The song makes the play’s theme into total theater.

MacDermot saw revolutionary potential in American musical theater “developing towards oratorio,” revitalizing itself through cross-pollination with an older musical tradition (King 315). Adopting familiar American tunes to set the Burlador and Tan largo’s songs would let US translators revolutionize the
comedia’s performance by cross-pollinating it with the earliest form of musical theater ever presented in the United States – the ballad opera (see Bordman 1-3). Ballad opera uses familiar tunes (e.g., “Yankee Doodle Dandy”) to make its impact direct and immediate, and its tone deliciously satirical.
CONCLUSION:
NEW WAYS OF MAKING COMEDIA ACCESSIBLE
IN THE UNITED STATES TODAY

From its first sentence, this selective investigation of translation problems has been moving toward two goals at one time. It’s been diving into the Burlador and Tan largo, looking for whole systems of stageworthiness that have been lost in translation, getting up close and personal with the play. And it’s been grappling with the idea of theater translation, worrying the traditions that make it harder to carry dramatic ideas across cultural boundaries, and wondering about what makes great translation work.

Two quests have kept the inquiry moving, through Conspectus investigations of Synoptic translations in search of new ways to Decode Don Juan’s sex life, through Stereopticon perspectives on Composite translations testing new ways to Re-code complexity into damas, and through Production Conceptualizations in Thematic translations to find new ways to Target “untranslatable” performance effects for re-production in the US today.
Linking every site selected for study, every analysis of a translation’s inner workings, every stethoscopic sounding of the printed text, every maneuver to undermine a stymieing preconception about the Burlador, has been movement toward

- a bigger picture of “the Burlador and Tan largo,” and
- a deeper understanding of what “translating theater” means.

Entire fields of inquiry have been bypassed along the way. There wasn’t space to go into Don Juan de Marco or Don Juan in Chicago in the depth even their relative shallowness deserves, or time to spend appreciating the spicier, more challenging flavors of the Chicano Don Juans (Bierman, Morton, Solís). Case studies of locality, sports, and metatheatricality got put on hold for later. A great deal could be written about bilingualism as an exciting new methodology for reviving Don Juan – indeed, I have written it, but found it didn’t fit the focus of this journey. There is important work to be done regarding character names. This trip couldn’t even squeeze in a close look at “Catalinôn” (Crapola? The
Trots? Scaredy-Cat?), much less “Ripio” (Chitchat?), “Mota” (Dr. Kink and Mr. Hide?), “Gonzalo” (He-Man?), or “Arminta” (Little Miss Muffet?). Absolutely vital junctures in the dramaturgy – the cape caper, the turning point in Aminta/Arminta’s decision to switch grooms on her wedding night, the competing versions of Don Juan’s shipwreck – have flown past with just a kiss and a promise.

“The Burlador and Tan largo” and “translating theater” have gotten a better than a kiss and a promise in these pages, but so far they haven’t gotten center stage. Now is their time. Since this study has had a double-headed obsession – a play, and a process for reviving it – a double-header conclusion seems appropriate.

The first heading in my New Art speaks to the academy. In the tradition of Lope de Vega’s classic Arte nuevo de hacer comedias en este tiempo [Playwriting Brought Up to Date] (1609), “Teodora’s Tooth” takes advantage of a unique opportunity to lay out the rationale for a respectful but radical departure from tradition. Lope’s grasped a (possibly bogus) opportunity to address a learned society about playmaking (Dukore 198, Rodriguez-Badendyck 50). I lay hold of the opportunity to explore with you what happens when Conspectus, Stereopticon Perspective, and Production Conceptualization converge on a “site with teeth in it” (the Golden Age expression for a textual crux).

Teodora’s Tooth is representative of altogether too much of the Burlador and Tan largo’s dramatic terrain: a site packed with performance information that traditional translation has buried alive. In a series of numbered propositions (the form Lope adopted for his Academy regards), I conclusively demonstrate how a nontraditional, multidimensional new approach to translation can transform textual bare bones into a wealth of performance information. Half a dozen lines that no translation in print has made sense of for staging can tell actors precisely what they need to know to bring the relationship between Don Juan and his bosom buddy Mota vibrantly to life onstage.

The second heading in my New Art – “Ben’s Sampler” – speaks to theater companies in the United States. You don’t have to look deeply into production history to realize that good plays blossom through repeated performance. That’s
why Lope de Vega did most of his talking about playmaking to *autores* [actor-managers], in the form of radically experimental playscripts. It’s time for the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* to enter US repertory, and stay there. Better translations of the play will spring up as the play ripens onstage.

The passages in my Sampler are designed to fertilize that process, even to fast-forward it through a time-lapse overview of a staging’s development. To that end, the collection features an accessible, familiarly American translation of a song; a contemporary recontextualization of a special effect; a transmission focused on the play’s theme; and an extended excerpt from a scene which takes note of the original’s metatheatricality, polychronicity, and freewheeling integration of performance elements.

**Teodora’s Tooth**

In 17th-century Spain, a passage from a play that was notoriously difficult to understand could be called a textual site with “teeth” in it (Covarrubias 471: “Tener un lugar dientes, es ser dificultoso el sentido dél”). It is ironically appropriate that one of the most intransigently obscure speeches in the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* is a puzzlingly-put remark (a mordent witticism? a loose jest? a false history, calculated to put the “bite” on an easy “mark”?) about a tooth.

The tooth has some connection with Teodora (did it belong to her? was it pulled by her?), a sex worker whose presence in Seville adds piquance to the reminiscences, fire to the ambitions, and a curiously erotic intertextuality to the careers of Don Juan and the Marqués de la Mota. Teodora, it appears, has just had quite a summer, escaping a nasty infection by the skin of her teeth. How teeth come into the picture, however – whose teeth they are, what happens to them, and (most pressingly) what the dental allusion means for putting dramatic “bite” into performances of this notoriously difficult to produce *comedia* – is anything but clear for people approaching the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* through English translations.

The translation history of Teodora’s tooth is full of connecting threads, but remarkably free of any performable consensus about how a tooth works its way into the story, why the tooth matters for the storytellers, or what the tooth-tale
could mean for staging the play. The barrage of testimony about Teodora is as contradictory and discontinuous as eyewitness accounts of a plane crash. Nevertheless, every version – whether Synoptic, Composite, or Thematic in its approach to translating the *Burlador*, or *Tan largo*, or both – has something to say about:

- how Teodora changes,
- how a tooth changes hands, and
- how flowers get involved in the process.

Common threads in the crazy quilt of what translators see in the story of Teodora can be categorized by subtle shifts in focus. The history of translating this curious episode in the play arcs
- from a fascination with the tooth changing hands,
- through a debate about the flowers that get involved,
- to arrive at an exploration of the changes in Teodora that the Marqués de la Mota describes.

While small, the focal shifts appear to be stubbornly time-sensitive. When a translation was written proves to be a better predictor of how its translator will handle Teodora’s tooth than whether the translation itself is fundamentally Synoptic, Composite, or Thematic in orientation. Surveying this slice of translation history in detail foregrounds the need for (and a step toward) a multidimensional approach to translating the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*.

1. **Changing Hands**

   What really happened with Teodora and the tooth? Through the 1950s and ‘60s, the central issue in that question turned on how the tooth changed hands. Roy Campbell heard the Marquis of la Mota saying:

   Why, this summer
   She cured herself of the French ill
   That seemed about to overcome her,
   Sweating it out in streams, until
   She is grown so tender and polite
   She pulled a tooth for me and quite
   Surrounded me with heaps of flowers. (Campbell 1959, 266).
There is a change in Teodora – she shows improvement, physically and socially. Flowers get involved, heaps of them. But the heart of the story here is Teodora pulling a tooth. It’s not clear whether the tooth she pulls is one of her own (a kinky present for the flower-decked Marquis?), or one of his (a dominatrix who’s a dentist on the side?), but by gum that tooth gets pulled.

O’Brien and Starkie follow Campbell’s lead, right down to the ambiguities. In O’Brien, the original owner of the tooth remains unclear, but the tooth stays at the center of the story. His Marquis recalls of Teodora, “This summer she managed to slake the French disease in a river of sweat. She’s grown so docile that she even pulled a tooth for me and showered me with flowers” (O’Brien 1963, 101). In Starkie, too, the tooth retains the central focus. Starkie’s version makes it clearly Teodora’s tooth, but the purpose of the flowers is clouded in an even deeper weirdness. For Starkie the Marquis recounts, “I’ve been told / She has now cured herself of Gallic pox / By melting it away in streams of sweat, / And she’s become so skittish and so coy / That yesterday she fired a tooth at me / Enveloped in a bunch of fragrant flowers” (Starkie 1964, 209).

In these mid-20th-century translations, the central point worth stressing in the story seems to be the tooth that changes hands. But what is Mota’s point in telling this story in the first place? How does his tale of a tooth-transaction advance the plot, color his characterization, or even fit into the scene? (Is dental extraction 17th-century code for oral sex?)

2. Handling flores

In the wake of the ’60’s flower children, drug culture, and free-love revolution, Oppenheimer shifts the focus of this story away from how the tooth changes hands, to how flowers get involved in the handling. Oppenheimer’s Mota tells it like it was, with the frankness of a Flower Child piecing together psychedelic flashbacks from a communal happening: “It’s like this: / This summer she shook syphilis / by sweating water like a well; / it’s so recent she’s soft, not well, / and the day before yesterday / her tooth fell out, while she did pay / some kind of compliment to me” (Oppenheimer 1976, 36-37).

Here, Oppenheimer takes the “flowers” not literally, but in their socially activist sense of “fancy trimmings” – a connotative possibility that Edwards later
worries over in a footnote: “It is not clear whether the flowers are real or whether
the word flores is being used in the sense of ‘compliment’” (Edwards 1986, 86).
As Tan largo will soon attest, it’s not clear whether flores of any kind play a truly
integral part in this story, but at least Oppenheimer’s “compliment” gives the
actor playing Mota something completely intelligible to say.

What remains impenetrable, however, is the character’s reason for saying
what he says. What response from his audience is Mota trying to rouse? (“Ick!”?
“Kinky!”? “What a slut!”? “What a stud!”?) What relationship between the
recuperant and the complimentee, between Oppenheimer’s Marquis de la Mota
and the world in which he lives, comes to life through this flourish? The “flowers”
get a fresh, active, and clarifying centrality in the story’s telling, but how does this
flora-centric re-vision of Teodora’s tooth intelligibly connect the story with the
play?

3. A Change of Heart

In the ‘80s, the focal point in this oddly-framed slice from the Marqués de
la Mota’s life shifts to some sort of change in Teodora. It’s within a catalog of
noteworthy women, after all, that Teodora’s dental adventure cuts loose. Don
Juan cues the conversation with the question, “¿Que hay de Seuilla? …
Mugeres?” [What’s new in Seville? Catch me up on the Ladies!] (Fernández 35,
78). Since Don Juan’s feminist interest gets his old pal’s update off and running,
it stands to reason that developments in a female subject should be central to this
account.

So Edwards and Alvarez – who otherwise understand the play very
differently (Edwards reading a social-restoration drama where Alvarez sees a
marriage comedy) – agree that a turn towards tenderness in Teodora takes center
stage in the curious history of her tooth. For Edwards, the episode starts with the
urgency of an emergency hanging by a thread: “A narrow escape this summer
from the pox. / She sweated over that and now she’s cured, / A tender piece of
ham, so appetising! / She gave me a nice present yesterday: / A tooth of hers
she’s cut quite recently, / And with it a beautiful bunch of flowers” (Edwards
1986, 87). For Alvarez, the story is a stirring testament to the resilience of Youth:
“She’s sweating off the French disease. / But she’s still young and tender. / Just today – she threw me a tooth / wrapped in a flower” (Alvarez 1989, 161).

These takes on Teodora stress her marketability. As a commodity, she’s “tender” (and thus desirable) or ironically “tough” (and thus unmarketable). But how does the tooth play into Teodora’s commodification? Is cutting a tooth evidence of her (shockingly extreme) youth? Is the Marqués involved in kiddie porn (or worse, if Teodora’s infection is venereal)? Is the association between youth and Teodora’s tooth an ironic slam at her pretending to be tenderer than she really is? Is Mota archly telling his audience that this woman, so long in the tooth as to be dropping her wisoms (and/or so scurvily riddled with sexually-transmitted disease as to be shedding her incisors), is trying to pass herself off as a juvenile, a fresh, wholesome, spring chicken, cheap at twice the price?

The questions raised by these translations are particularly pressing, since they point towards ways that the story of the tooth could root itself organically into the scene and play. The women discussed before Teodora – Inés and Constanza – have been critiqued in terms of moribundity and gullibility. Inés has retired to Vejel (Old-Folks City), and Constanza confuses a comparison to the “Golden Girls” with a compliment about her being a “good-time girl” (Fernández 35, 78). The woman who follows Teodora in the catalog – Julia from Lamp-Smash Street – will embody devaluation due to imperfect packaging (Starkie 209). Julia uses makeup like a weapon of mass destruction, and has downsized her prices in response to market pressures created by outsourcing. Reading Teodora’s story as a comment on gullibility about Time, then, could connect the tooth with a through-line in the scene. It could even, given Don Juan’s damnable confidence that there’s loads of time to repent ... later ..., make the tooth a grisly warning to the unheeding Burlador/garañón.

Unfortunately, Edwards and Alvarez leave the story raising questions, rather than driving any of these provocative connections home. Their focus on Teodora’s tenderness does not go far enough to bring the other elements of the story – the transmission of the tooth, and the flowers that accompany its transmission – into line with a coherently-told, contextually-enhanced, compellingly actable understanding of Teodora’s tooth.
4. Supra-Synoptic Views of the Tooth

   The truth about this pesky tooth does not become noticeably clearer when approached from a Composite or Thematic point of view, rather than the Synoptic viewpoints surveyed so far. Synoptic translations of the Burlador are united by consonantly practicing the same orientation to the task of translating the first Don Juan play. They define themselves by excavating acting text from an edition of the Burlador de Sevilla y Convidado de Piedra, and carefully replicating its storyline and dialog in English. They initiate no active, interrogatory contact with Tan largo me lo fiáis. Characteristically, Synoptic translators enter into no critical investigation of the Spanish text whatsoever. Their work, like the writers’ of the New Testament gospels named for Matthew, Mark, and Luke, is totally absorbed by the project of setting out the incidents in story, clearly and (chrono)logically.

   Composite translations distinguish themselves by taking an active interest in Tan largo, whether through making their own conflation of Tan largo with the Burlador (as Adrienne Schizzano and Oscar Mandel do), or through choosing a composite edition of the texts to translate (as Michael Kidd does). The Composite approach is reminiscent of the “gospel harmonies” generated by New Testament scholars, who sequence episodes recorded in different gospels and reconcile differences in the way the same episodes are reported, to present a fuller, recombinant picture of all the incidents in one place.

   Thematic translations take a radically different tack on recorded incidents. As the fourth gospel is infinitely more interested in the symbolic meaning of conversations and the anagogical progression of revelation than in the chronological organization of events, so Thematic translations focus on the ideas encoded in the Burlador and Tan largo. Following a theme, developing a character thrust, articulating a meta-theatrical insight, Thematic translations may rearrange the traditional storyline, re-script the received dialog, or abandon them altogether.

   Given this striking difference in approach, it’s surprising to find that Thematic and Composite translations of Teodora’s tooth strongly resemble Synoptic translations that were produced during the same time period. Both
Dear (translating Thematically in 1990) and Kidd (translating Compositely in 2004), for example, adopt Edwards’ and Alvarez’ late-20th-century emphasis on changes in Teodora as the heart of the story, though they disagree about what the pivotal change in her history is.

Dear sees a recuperation in progress, an outlook compatible with his Recuperate-the-Feminist reading of the play (see Dear 4-5). So his Teodora “Spent the summer sweating out the pox. Putrid. But better now. Sent me one of her teeth wrapped in lilies” (Dear 1990, 33). For Kidd, text imported from *Tan largo* points toward the symbolic death of women as the through-line of the play. He titles his translation *The Ladykiller of Seville*, and tells the story of Teodora as a near-death experience: “She had a bout this summer with v.d., which she survived only after sweating up a storm. She’s still so debilitated that the other day I saw her lose a tooth when she smiled at me” (Kidd 2004, 24).

Given these wildly disparate understandings of Teodora’s tooth – comprehensible in themselves, but by no means reconcilable as parts of the same performance vehicle – what is an actor to make of this tale? Where can directors find a firm, defensible footing for putting this speech onstage? How can dramaturgs shed light on decoding this story’s original dramatic impact, and responsibly get down to the business of re-coding it for effective performance in the US today?

5. **Sublimated Dentistry: Walcott’s Song and Dance**

The most performable version of the Marqués de la Mota’s fantasia on the women of Seville yet to hit print is Derek Walcott’s extraordinary treatment in *The Joker of Seville*. Here, Teodora’s tooth as a literal entity dissolves. What remains is an unforgettable production number:

**JUAN and DE MOTA**

*(Sing)*

*Whatever happened to Big-Foot Bertha?*

*What has become of Jane?*

*Where’s Helen, who didn’t like men to hurt her in the same place twice again?*

*Where are the hags we found so pretty*
in every port of Spain?
But more than all that, where is Lucy,
who took us both to bed?
Friends, that was in another country,
and besides, the wench is dead.

WHORES
Better forget about Big-Foot Bertha,
she doesn’t work this beat again.
Helen and Jane got mixed up in a murder,
and besides, they were getting plain.
Life flies so fast, and youth is over,
and Lucy is on the wane.
So take what you see, and thank life, honey,
cause life begins in bed.
Life is a joke, but it ain’t so funny
when that dingaling goes dead! (Walcott 1978, 57-58)

This is Thematic translation with a vengeance – sex-centric, as views on
Teodora synthesized in the 1970s tend to be, but even more importantly centered
around the task of integrating the story of Teodora into the play’s performance
core. Here, Teodora’s tooth disappears, so that its point – the idea that life is a
time-limited offer, and that Body can’t forget its uneasy love affair with Soul; the
electric, shocking, and competitive eroticism that runs through the relationship
between these men; and the underworld realpolitik at work just beneath the
surface of the play’s upper crust – can come to glorious fruition onstage.

In Walcott’s Joker, the story of Teodora makes resonant, re-producible
stage sense. (Technically, “Whatever happened to Big-Foot Bertha?” stands
outside the range of performable translation, since Galt MacDermott’s music for
the production number is unavailable by any ordinary means of access, but that’s
another story.) Walcott makes sense of the story by transmitting not the physical
details of its events (“Teodora,” the “tooth,” the “flowers”), but the dramatic
dynamism of its impact (what Walcott calls “the music and drama of the Spanish
verse;” Walcott 1978, 4).
Translators bringing Don Juan to life in the US (as Walcott was transplanting him for production in the Caribbean, “whose music and language have one form;” Walcott 1978, 3) can follow the model of Walcott’s Thematic approach, and abandon the Burlador and Tan largo’s text to re-produce its theater (its Production Conceptualization). But is this the only way to make convincing sense of Teodora’s tooth? Playing the meaning of the moment in the 21st century can mean erasing all traces of the terms that 17th-century actors used to perform it, but must it mean that? Is there no way of translating Teodora’s impact without extracting her tooth (or her) from the performance text?

6. Boswell’s Wheel

Translator-director Laurence Boswell describes a method of translating Golden Age theater that uses a thematic basis (like Walcott’s) without necessarily displacing the dialog that originally recorded the dramaturgy (as Walcott does). Approaching comedia from what he calls “the relationship base,” Boswell tells this story about transmitting theater across textual barriers:

Faced with a blank sheet of paper, the first time I tried to create a script, I found I could give a character almost any word which would make a kind of sense of the relationship they were in and would kind of relate to the original language. ... And I thought I couldn’t be that imprecise, so I then learnt the whole story and got in touch with the characters, with the rhythm. The physical rhythm of theatre for me is like a dance, a three dimensional structure which happens in time. Then when you go back to the specific moment, the choice of words goes from infinity to two or three, because that character couldn’t use that word at that moment. That is how I come at it, like someone who is making a wheel, as it were, trying to look at the hub of the play. (qtd. in Johnston 1996, 283).

Boswell’s wheel suggests that the rambunctious rightness of “Big-Foot Bertha” – Walcott’s vivid transmission of three-dimensional character, dynamic relationship, galvanizing idea, and driving energy – can be captured without losing sight of “Teodora.” His hub-of-the-dance analogy, in fact, describes translation as a dual-focus project that generates new-language words for
characters to speak by arriving at a multidimensional understanding of what they said in the original language. The translator’s choice of words achieves authority by conflating a big picture (“the whole story”) into a little one (“the specific moment”).

Schizzano and Mandel, the first editors to attempt conflating Tan largo into the Burlador in English, take an ultimately unsuccessful, but eminently instructive, step toward assembling a composite “whole story”/“specific moment” approach to Teodora’s tooth. In order to learn the “whole story,” they lead the way back to the original printed versions of the Marqués de la Mota’s tale.

7. Two-Rooted Tooth

Getting to the root of the tooth-tale requires a first-person visit with the original printed versions of the play, because editors have been poking bits of Tan largo into this sore spot in the Burlador since the variant script was (re)discovered in the late nineteenth century. The only way to appreciate – and to improve on – Schizzano and Mandel’s noble failure is to take the whole story back to the very beginning. Reading from left to right, then, in the probable order of their printing (though there is impressive scholarship arguing for Tan largo’s precedence in composition), here are the primary records regarding Teodora’s tooth.

The facsimile edition Transcribed from Tan largo, of the Burlador reads: the same passage reads:

d. Iu. Y Teodora? Mot. Este verano d. Iu. y Teodora? Mar. Este verano se escapó del mal Frances, se escapó del mal Frances [this line left blank for comparison] por vn rio de sudores y está tan tierna y reciente y está tan tierna, y reciente, que ayer me arrojó un diente que antes de ayer me echó vn diente embuelto entre muchas flores en medio de mil fauores.

(Fernández 35) (Fernández 78)

As you can easily see, there are divergences between the texts in four of the six lines.

Both conversations begin with a question from Don Juan about Teodora (line one), Mota’s cue to open the topic of her brush with the “mal Frances” [the
“French Curse”] over the summer (line two). The opening two lines are the only pair in the passage that both printings reproduce precisely.

Line three – “por vn rio de sudores” [by virtue of a river wrung from sweat] – exists only in Tan largo. This line supplies as much medical detail as we get about how Teodora escaped “the French Ill.”

Line four turns to developments in Teodora’s history even more recent than “this summer.” This blast from Don Juan’s (and the Marqués de la Mota’s) past is now (in the wake of the “French complaint” – and even because of it?) remarkably “tierna,” and either “recente” or “reciente.” The script piles up a potent concatenation of adjectives here. “Tierna” means “soft, malleable, docile” in its primary 17th-century usage. It also carries a strong sexual undercurrent. Covarrubias attests, “Tierno algunas veces sinifica el que está apasionado, y de allí enternecerse” [Tierno sometimes describes a man who’s enflamed with passion, and “tenderized” that way] (Covarrubias 961). Tan largo’s “reciente” means “fresh and squeezably soft, like bread that’s just been baked;” the Burlador’s “recente” doesn’t turn up in dictionaries, but it suggests both the verb recentar [to knead bread dough, making it soft for baking] and the noun recental [a suckling lamb, also spelled rezentar] (Covarrubias 898, 909).

Line five brings us up to “yesterday” (in the Burlador) or the “day before” (in Tan largo), where the tooth at long last makes its appearance. “Un diente” stands pointedly at the end of the line, the object of two differently-focused but similarly-framed verbs.

The Burlador’s arrojar records that Teodora “shot out” the tooth; “ARROJAR,” according to Covarrubias, “Es echar de sí alguna cosa con ímpetu y furia, como arrojar la lança, la saeta o la piedra, etc.” [Arrojar means to throw something from you with impetus and zeal, like hurling a spear, shooting an arrow, or pitching a stone, etc.] (Covarrubias 152). Tan largo’s echar – the verb that Covarrubias uses to define arrojar – comes from the Latin root of “eject;” Covarrubias completes the definitional circuit he launched with arrojar by defining “ECHAR” as “arrojar o apartar de sí alguna cosa” [Echar means to throw something off or get it away from you] (Covarrubias 491).
Like *tierna*, *echar* can sound sexual overtones. Covarrubias attests that “Echarse con una muger” [to echar yourself with a woman] means “conocerla carnalmente” [to know her carnally] (491). Even more significantly, for our purposes, *echar dientes* means “to cut teeth” (Cassell’s 354). When an infant first begins to “throw out teeth” or to “shoot out hair,” when an adolescent begins to “launch a moustache” or to “eject a beard” – all these evidences of juvenile maturation can be idiomatically expressed by *echar*.

Which brings us to the freshly-cut tooth. What is the significance of *un diente*? Covarrubias’ extended consideration of “**DIENTE**” touches on three points of particular interest to seekers of the truth about Teodora (470-71):

- Teeth are a measure of humanity. Unique among earth’s creatures, humans acquire teeth in three stages (incisors, canines, and molars), replace their teeth completely as they mature, and acquire wisdom with a set of wisdom teeth.
- Teeth are a measure of strength and longevity. Men commonly have more teeth than women – and outlive them – because teeth correspond to “la esperma formativa del cuerpo” [the sperm that forms the body].
- And teeth can be a measure of personal qualities, ranging from your age, to your personality, to your lineage. Teeth, for example, express both the tenderness of those quick to smile and the toughness of the long-in-the-tooth. Your hometown is the place where “me nacieron los dientes” [birthplace of your teeth]. There’s even a special rank of Roman nobility dubbed “Dentatos” [Teethed].

One other point should be stressed about line five. The verb is preceded by the personal pronoun *me*, and thereby hangs a tale of many a translation option. *Me* could conceivably stand as the direct object of *arrojar/echar*, meaning something like “she threw me away like an old baby tooth.” More probably, *me* functions as an indirect object of the verb, meaning something along the lines of “she cut a new tooth for me.” As with English ("it likes me not," “will no one whip me this scurvy cur from the door," “you freakin out on me man,” “oo baby, slice me some a dat!”), this object’s indirection can open a very wide range of connotations.
Line six wraps the speech, either in a multitude of “flowers” (to follow the *Burlador*), or “amidst a thousand favors” (in *Tan largo*’s words). Again, the dictionaries are worth consulting. Even in 20th-century Spanish, *favores* can mean “love-tokens from a lady” (*Nuevo* 488). As Gwynne Edwards (in a footnote) and Max Oppenheimer, Jr., (in actual words scripted for an American actor to say) have already shown us, *flores* can mean “compliments” as well as literal “blossoms.” In Covarrubias, the “**FLOR**” can mean still more.

Covarrubias’ *Tesoro de la Lengua Castellana o Española* (1611) associates *flores* with virginity and freshness; as a bud cut from its branch loses its joyful luster, so a maiden who’s been manhandled becomes “deflowered” (601). *Flor* describes the cream of the crop, the best and the brightest of anything, and particularly the bright promise of youth (esp. in reference to adolescent males). There are darker shades of meaning, too. *Flor* symbolizes the brevity of human life, it lends the cover of its name to a game used by card-sharps, and it has a particular association with “farfantes burladores.”

“Flor, entre farfantes burladores,” Covarrubias tells us, “llaman aquello que traen por ocasión y escusa, quando quieren sacarnos alguna cosa como dezir que son cavalleros pobres, o soldados que vienen perdidos, o que han saldo de cautiverio, y desas flores son tantas las que ay en el mundo, que le tienen desflorado” [In the argot of poor-mouth imposters, the cover story they use to carry off their scams and panhandlings is called a “*flor*” – so they’ll tell us they’re computer whiz-kids who’ve been out of work since the tech sector went belly-up, or veterans who’re suffering post-traumatic stress syndrome, or War-on-Terror P-O-Ws who lost everything while the government negotiated their release – they’ve got enough of these little *flores* in circulation to deflower the world] (Covarrubias 601).

Finally, *flor* has a specific association with love-fests: “Esparzar flores era ordinario en los sacrificios y en los regozijos y fiestas en las mesas de los combites” [Scattering flowers used to play a regular role in religious festivals – also in civic celebrations, plus decorating the tables for dinner guests at special parties] (Covarrubias 601).
8. Divergent Visions of “Best Text”

Comparing these facsimile texts makes immediately evident the fact that the translations we’ve surveyed, from Roy Campbell’s *Trickster of Seville* (printed in 1959) to Michael Kidd’s *Ladykiller* (premiered in 2004), spring from a composite patrimony. Translations’ recurrent references to Teodora “sweating out” the French Malady descend from *Tan largo*. The slew of allusions to “flowers” derives from the *Burlador*. In all these cases, translators inherited this particular conflation of elements in Teodora’s story from editors of the first Don Juan play in Spanish.

The three Spanish-language editions selected as a reference cluster for this project were chosen from a field of twelve recent printings of the play in Spanish. Only one of this fresh dozen of *Burladors* – Luis Vázquez’ extremely conservative critical edition, printed in 1989, in vehement reaction against López-Vázquez’ assertion that *Tan largo* had preceded the *Burlador* in date of composition, and that Andrés de Claramonte had authored both versions of the first Don Juan comedia – only Vázquez prints a Spanish script that does not conflate elements from both the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*, to create what a text-editor might term “the whole story” of Teodora’s tooth (Vázquez 1989, 183).

Here’s how Spanish-language editions of the first Don Juan play printed in the US today record the Marqués de la Mota’s account:

D. JUAN. ¿Y Teodora?

MOTA. Este verano

se escapó del mal francés

por un río de sudores,

y está tan tierna y reciente,

que anteayer me arrojó un diente

envuelto entre muchas flores.

(Martel 272, Edwards 86, López-Vázquez 195 excises the “se” from “se escapó”)

When it comes to Teodora’s tooth, then, standard editorial tactics see “the whole story” as a textual melange – a composite assembled from words taken from both of the play’s 17th-century printings.
Spanish-language text-editors traditionally privilege the *Burlador* when the printings diverge, incorporating elements from *Tan largo* only to “correct” the 1630 text. For Schizzano and Mandel, however, “*Tan largo* is the more important of the two texts” (Mandel 1963, 41). So “the first attempt in any language, including Spanish, to present a conflated text of Tirso’s play” – Schizzano and Mandel’s *The Playboy of Seville, or Supper with a Statue*, printed in Nebraska in 1963 – hears “the whole story” of Teodora’s tooth this way:

DON JUAN:  And Theodora?

MARQUIS: This summer she cured herself of the French disease by sweating it out. And now she is so affectionate that day before yesterday she pulled a tooth of mine – whispering gentle words all the time. (Mandel 1963, 68)

Clearly, Schizzano and Mandel’s different synthesis of *Tan largo* and the *Burlador* makes for some fine differences in their *Playboy’s* understanding of this passage. Their conflation reshades precisely how Teodora changes; she’s become “affectionate.” Their composite (produced in the 1960s, when transmission of the tooth took center stage in the story’s translation) centrally recomposes how the tooth changes hands; Teodora pulls one of the Marquis’ teeth for him. Their “best text” rearranges how “flowers” get involved in the transaction; privileging *Tan largo’s favores* over the *Burlador’s flores*, they hear Teodora “whispering gentle words” through the entire extraction experience.

Unfortunately, this excellent and original compilation of texts – crystalline in its clarity as a freestanding unit – marks no progress whatsoever toward the project of making whole-story sense of Teodora. Is she supposed to represent the Golden Age equivalent of laughing gas? a shrew memorably tamed? a tooth-fairy? What does she mean to the Marqués de la Mota? to his audience onstage (Don Juan and Catalinón)? to their audience in the corral? How does she connect, either with the “hub” or with the “wheel,” either with the “specific moment” or the “whole story” of the play?

9. **Textual “Accuracy” vs. Dramaturgical Inclusiveness**

This is not a question of “accuracy” in translation. Every English-language version of Teodora’s story we’ve surveyed stands on sound linguistic grounds.
Not one of them technically misrepresents the grammar, syntax, or lexicography of the *Burlador* or *Tan largo*. Yet not one of them offers producers of the first Don Juan play anything intelligible to put on stage.

Boasting double-barrel insight into the original dialog, Composite accounts of Teodora’s tooth certainly turn out longer than the tale in the *Burlador*, but are they any more complete? Do they point the way towards any performable consensus about whether the tooth was pulled, fired, thrown, sent, lost, or newly sprouted? Do they lead to any stageable clarity about what Teodora’s byplay with the tooth is meant to signify, for her, for Mota, or for Don Juan – a gesture of politeness, a sexual overture, or a demonstration of docility; debilitation, rejuvenation, or recuperation; reconciliation in progress, necrophilia in the offing, or *memento mori* in the ascendant? Do “best text” approaches connect the Marqués’ news bite in any meaningful way with the scene, or with the play? They do not.

The strategy of folding textual variants together proves incapable of generating an authoritative “whole story” for this perplexing dramatic moment. In the hands of superlatively expert, explicitly performance-friendly, encyclopedically visionary text-editors working over an extended period of time – from Schizzano and Mandel (published in 1963) to Alfredo Rodríguez López-Vázquez (published in 1995) – compare-and-conflate methods of textual interrogation have brought students of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* not one step closer to cracking the performance code for this lugar que tiene dientes [*textual site that bites the big one*].

Traditional text-editing magnificently fails the test of Teodora’s tooth. It leaves translators in precisely that state of overwhelming, undifferentiated potential that Laurence Boswell recalls facing: “I could give a character almost any word which would make a kind of sense of the relationship they were in and would kind of relate to the original language” (qtd. in Johnston 1996, 283). Boswell won his way of out that impasse of imprecision, you’ll recall, by building a dual-focus perspective on the language he was translating. He learned to filter the little picture – “the specific moment” where the words demand utterance –
through a long-range lens locked in on the big picture – “not just words, but also character, voice, experience ... the whole story” of the play.

What happens if you build a dual-focus perspective on Teodora’s tooth from the variations in the Burlador and Tan largo versions of her story? Rather than erase, collapse, or simplify divergences in the original printed versions – the stated objective of traditional text-editing – could you use little-picture differences in the words that the Burlador and Tan largo choose, as lenses to lock in on the big picture of the performance moment they record? It’s the contradictions in a metaphor, we’re told, that empower a statement like “the lady is a tramp” to carry a meaning bigger than the literal capacity of its words. Could the contradictions in these dual texts construct a Stereopticon, revealing bigger meanings in the story through the variants in its telling, filling out this moment with subtextual depth and resonance, clarifying and directing its performance?

10. Stereopticon: Double-Eyed, Double-Density Dentistry

Three things pop into focus when you put one eye up to the Burlador, the other eye up to Tan largo, and look at Teodora’s tooth with both eyes open. First, it becomes shockingly apparent that this story centers around sex. Second, it becomes chillingly evident that the story dances with death. Third, it becomes intriguingly clear that the story reads into the performance record vital character information about the Marqués de la Mota, and his relationship with Don Juan. Allow me to develop these three insights.

Looking through the textual variants helps you see subtext, because when you stop trying to choose between flores and favores, you can see that what connects them is their testimony regarding prurient interests. The two different words share one common focus: sexual innuendo. This common ground establishes subtext, centering this story around sexual braggadocio. Together, flores and favores set Teodora and her tooth firmly within the context of love-tokens (favores) exchanged at an intimate dinner for two (the kind of fiesta where Covarrubias suggests scattering flores as appropriate table décor). In this setting, the story’s other sexual allusions resonate seductively. Of course the French Affliction is an STD; you shake it the same way young studs get rid of the hots in summertime: a quick trip down Sweat River. Of course tierna means “all
loosened up with lust and glad to see me,” and diente represents every ounce of esperma formativa the Marqués can muster. The ejaculatory force of arrojar/echar is no accident, either, although it may be premature. What gives the sex its shock, after all, is the fact that Teodora passes as a juvenile, so young she’s still cutting adult teeth during the amatory aftermath of a bout with VD.

Similarly, reading the dramatic moment through the differences in dramatic diction makes it clear that Teodora’s tooth dances with death. Rather than iris down your options with some arbitrary, limiting choice between arrojar and echar, this Stereoptic outlook pulls the two terms into potent, eye-opening interaction. Focused through each other, both verbs describe an eerily Death-dealing birth – the sudden cutting, the miraculous out-shooting, of Teodora’s brand-new tooth. This Maculate Conception is chilling because it masks Mortality, and isn’t meant to cover it completely. The repeated attestations to Teodora’s extreme youth – the lamb-likeness in recente, the pre-adolescence of tierna, the recuperative powers attested to by ayer and reciente – are mordantly molded to reflect the specter of Death, grinning through her “baby” tooth. The mal Frances is fatal – no human dodge can cure it – a tooth-loosening disease that ends with bodies coffined in flowers, swaddled in a thousand funeral favors. Behind ayer lies antes de ayer, and the death rattle of the raddled whore is all the more audible for being wrapped in the verbal trappings of a virgin giving birth.

Playscripts record words for actors to say (easy: there they are in print). What makes those words meaningful are the relationships that they record (elusive: there they are under the surface of the text). Variations in the word record can help you read the relationship record more clearly. In the case of Teodora’s tooth, both the story’s kiddie-porn kink and its Calaca Flaca [Mother of Skeletons in Mexican Day of the Dead celebrations] ghoulishness are concocted to express the Marqués de la Mota’s delight in meeting Don Juan, after a long and (to hear Mr. Mota tell it) agonizing separation. A third benefit of examining Teodora’s tooth Stereoptically is the formative way it focuses how this new character fits into the world of the play, within 30 lines of his first entrance. Taken together, divergent views about Teodora’s tooth can enrich your picture of
how the Marqués de la Mota views himself, and what Don Juan really thinks of his long-lost pal.

The Marqués thinks he’s one-up on Don Juan, and he absolutely revels in that feeling. That’s why he drives his position as possessor of Seville’s juiciest “dish,” the superior informant to the woefully out-of-date (and recently-returned-from-exile) Don Juan, one step farther with the “dig” about Teodora’s tooth. Tenorio may hold the reputation of Seville’s gran Burlador, but Mota is the man who was able to wrap up an adventure with Teodora (a woman who makes her living by fooling men of the world into taking her for virginally pre-pubescent) with a whole flurry of flores, the stock-in-trade (according to Covarrubias) of farfantes burladores. The seeds of Mota’s delight in perros muertos [the trick of double-crossing a streetwise sharpster], the specific brand of burla that backfires on him when he gives Don Juan his cape to wear, are planted right here.

Mota sees himself, moreover, as Don Juan’s successful rival, and can’t wait to rub his triumph in. That’s why he covertly calls attention to how long Don Juan has been out of circulation – Teodora’s mal, after all, was sweated out over the summer, while Juan was cooling his heels in Naples, condemned to the sidelines in Seville’s sex olympics because he let himself get caught fooling around with a noblewoman in Spain (see Fernández 18-19, 64). That’s why the Marqués obliquely boasts about what a busy beaver-chaser he himself has been during Don Juan’s forced vacation. Zorrilla didn’t need to re-conceive the story of Don Juan to root his Don Juan Tenorio (1844 – the play that planted Don Juan in Mexican culture, as an integral part of Día de los Muertos observations, which are still producing new Don Juans in Chicano USA) in a contest between rival seducers. The seeds of that contest– and of Mota’s faux woe at the fact that he’s succeeded, since her very recent return from Lisbon, in lighting the noble Doña Ana’s fire – are planted right here, in the mil favores that punctuate the story of Teodora’s tooth.

Read multidimensionally, Mota projects himself as Don Juan’s one-up rival. His relationship with Don Juan is competitive and emulatory; he wants to out-burla the official Burlador. His attachment to his friend is also curiously submissive and erotically charged. He lets Don Juan broach the subject of
women in general and Teodora in particular, then brags about his own ongoing sexual contact with a subject intimately known to Don Juan – a classic example of homosocial bonding. Teodora plants the idea of an active erotic element in Mota’s attraction to his bosom buddy and hero. She paves the way to seeing a *ménage à quatre* in the friends’ association with Two Sisters from Tolù (a foreshadow of the nuptial relations in the town of Two Sisters that the Burlador will soon intercept). She sets the stage for Mota’s reaction when Don Juan brings the news that Doña Ana has decided to make her cousin Mota the thief of her virginity; the Marqués passionately lavishes kisses on ... not Ana, but her messenger (Fernández 38, 80).

A dual-focal perspective on Teodora’s history sheds multi-directional light on the play’s relationships. Reading the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* stereoptically, rather than editorially suppressing their differences, it becomes clear that Don Juan is leading the Marqués on, expertly pushing his buttons to expose the character traits embedded in the name “Mota.”

Since the rediscovery of *Tan largo*, editors and translators have been fiddling with the mechanics of Mota’s entrance, this time not micromanaging which words a character would sound best saying, but pursing their lips about which characters say what words. A conversation between Don Juan and Duke Octavio/Otavio is in progress when the Marqués makes his entrance. When it becomes apparent that Mota’s appearance is imminent, that conversation abruptly breaks off. Someone – in the *Burlador*, it’s Don Juan; in *Tan largo*, it’s the Duke – remarks that he must behave discourteously. The other party to the conversation-in-progress – in the *Burlador*, it’s the Duke; in *Tan largo*, it’s Don Juan – replies with the assurance that if his interlocutor should ever need anything (arm, sword, or other social necessity), he need only speak the word.

What these variant line assignments hold in common – the dramaturgical constant beneath the divergences in dialog – is that fact that Don Juan masterfully hustles Octavio/Otavio offstage, so he can have the Marqués de la Mota all to himself. The Burlador has taken the joke on the Duke (Don Juan stole Octavio/Otavio’s identity to arrange a scandalous afterhours meeting with the
Duke’s fiancée in the King of Naples’ palace) as far as it can go at the moment; it’s time for some homeboy fun.

Teodora provides a miniature specimen of Don Juan having fun with Mota. Spoken aloud onstage (information that literally-minded translation into English instantly obscures), “Teodora” tickles the ear of listeners with its likeness to “te adora” – “she adores you, stud.” Not only does Don Juan’s quizzical “y Teodora?” raise the question of “who loves ya, baby?” as the Marqués’ immediate instigation for telling the story of Teodora’s tooth, but it sets a goal of passionate attachment against which the infinitely more fully developed episode of Doña Ana will be measured.

Don Juan expertly pushes Mota’s buttons. You open the quickest, most revealing window on the Marqués’ guiltiest secrets by subliminally turning the conversation toward sexual conquest, and then just letting the windbag brag. You nudge this would-be stud toward talking about the woman who matters most in his laughably inflated conception of himself by building a subliminal picture of the ideal wife in the names of the women you mention: Inés, the eponymous incarnation of a saint; Costança, the embodiment of constancy; Teodora, a gift directly from the hand of God; Blanca, pure as the driven snow; Hermana, a girl made doubly yours, by familial as well as affectional identification with your interests. You see him at his silliest by holding up a mirror and letting him primp.

Playing with the Marqués’ view of himself, Don Juan reveals what it means to be a “Mota.” Set against the backdrop of the famous Castle Mota in Medina del Campo, this Mota’s foolish inconsequentiality is bitingly hilarious. He brings onstage the fussy obstructiveness of motas, those tiny knots that the first warp threads can leave in cloth fresh from the loom, which women tweeze away with burlingirons. He enacts the insubstantial, figurative mota that the by-product of burling cloth lends the Spanish language: “una cosa tan pequeña que no tiene consistencia, por lo qual se la lleva el aire” [something so small that it has no stability, but gets carried away by every breath of air] (Covarrubias 816). His characterization is profoundly marked by the peculiar kind of mobility expressed in motolito, a term descended (according to Covarrubias) from a mota,
and signifying both “ignorant” and “easily deceived” (Cassell’s 573, Nuevo 704).
His title of Marqués over all of la Mota establishes a claim that he rules over an “Eminencia pequeña y aislada” [an exaltation that is tiny and distinctly out-of-the-way] (Nuevo 703).

11. Translation: Transmitting Performance Impacts

Studying Teodora’s tooth through the double perspective supplied by the Burlador and Tan largo leads to clarity about the story’s point and insight into the storyteller’s character. Stereopticon text analysis gives theater people equipment for re-producing this scene onstage that is vigorous and playable, in the dynamic mold of Walcott’s thematic translation. Whereas Walcott’s translation, however, magnificently re-produces the interconnections between characters, the shocks in the twisting plot, and the driving dramatic ideas of the original story, without re-cycling a word of its dialog – Walcott’s express aim is limited to havesting from the original only “the pace of its scenes and its meter” (Walcott 1978, 3) – a Stereopticon approach to translation opens the possibility of capturing dramatic vigor without wholly abandoning connection to (and performance information embedded in) the original’s linguistic “skin.”

“Language,” Laurence Boswell reminds translators, “is the very surface of a play” (qtd. in Johnston 1996, 283), so translations that deal only with a play’s words can at best penetrate its dramaturgy skin deep. The fact is, of course, that even translations of the Burlador and Tan largo that define themselves as explicitly linguistic projects – Composite-translation experiments in the mold of Schizzano and Mandel’s Playboy chief among them – achieve their most stageworthy successes by creatively overreaching their stated linguistic limitations.

It is high time that the field of theater translation squarely faced this fact, and owned up to it in the terms that govern translation discourse. The inspiration, instruction, and insight that 50 years of US translation history with the Burlador and Tan largo can offer producers of the first Don Juan play in the US today are not advantages derived from literal “fidelity to the text.” Rather, they are the result of adventurous readings of subtext, context, and supertext, applied to challenges in staging the play.
O’Brien’s energetic re-articulation of morality-play structures in the script, for example, clearly yokes his handling of dialog to a supra-textual, meta-
theatrical agenda. Starkie’s painstaking effort to frame Don Juan’s words in revealing literary and socio-political contexts encourages, in its turn, aggressive re-contextualization of the play for American productions. Oppenheimer’s sporadic use of American slang, uneven and imperfect as it is, models the linguistic re-production of a dramaturgical effect – the calculated clashing of time periods, to engineer historic illumination on the world we live in now. Alvarez’ project of re-producing a marriage comedy in a polyglot argot goes far deeper than the Spanish words she literally transcribes; her script re-energizes a specific vision of the play in performance. Kidd’s translation is distinguished even more fundamentally by his experimental approach to translating character names than by his choice of which edition of the Spanish text he’ll translate.

In the light of this fact of translation history – that performable theater translation of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* in these United States has invariably been rooted in subtext, that translation which promises to re-invigorate Don Juan in the US has inalienably been guided by supra-literal insight into (and privileging of) the text’s dramaturgical functions, and that stageworthy translation of this *comedia famosa* has frequently adopted literary forms that are the reverse of technically faithful to their originals – it behooves 21st-century translators of this Golden Age classic to shake loose the shackles of classic reservations about invasive translation practices and get busy liberating this extraordinary script for re-emergence onstage. Contrasting Composite-Text technologies for handling the story of Teodora’s tooth with Stereopticon approaches to transmitting the dramaturgical effect of the Marqués’ story provides a case study of what’s at stake.

“Best-text” conflation argues that “whole story” must be reduced to all the story that both texts can tell, when they’ve been harmoniously combined. This effectively eliminates evidence from the performance record, in order to produce and then to translate a smoothly “harmonized” version of the tale. It raises the banner of textual accuracy (a problematic flag for Teodora’s story to advance under: is there a *mal Frances* that leads to the loss of teeth? must a playtext be
medically “real” to become comprehensible?), while acknowledging that the goal of textual fixity is neither achievable nor even desirable (see Mandel 40).

A Stereopticon approach to telling the “whole story” of Teodora’s tooth is more inclusive in its methods and less conflicted about its results. It uses the differences between textual variants to map subtextual points of similarity, establishing communities of performance impact by approaching them through variations in the performance record. It seeks to elicit and to incorporate all the evidence that textual and contextual discrepancies can supply, in order to grasp and then transmit “the choreography of the characters, the relationship base” which is encoded in each dramatic moment, and which resonates through the comedia as a whole (Boswell, qtd. in Johnston 1996, 283). It sets in motion the muscle and bone beneath the linguistic “skin” of the play, in order to decode the way the play works onstage, so that ways of moving, seeing, conceiving, and challenging can be re-coded, for target audiences in culturally-specific moments of the present day.

12. Translating Text with no Apparent Context

Longstanding confusion about how to translate Teodora’s tooth – the startling absence of consensus about the facts of the case, much less what they mean for the scene in which they occur and the plot which they advance – offers future translators extremely helpful insight into the hindrance that “accuracy” poses to theater translation. Experts have, quite accurately, made mess after mess of Teodora’s story because they have found themselves devoid of the context they need to make sense of it. The problem is not a lack of text – there are more than enough words to go around, taking the story in a dozen different directions. The real lacuna in this case is not missing words, but a missing sense of what the dramaturgy’s up to.

What actually “works” within text-editing technique to bring theater dialog alive for production is quite different from what the methodology of Composite-text translation preaches. The gospel of translation through conflation promises a “best text” that’s conceived (one could almost say “virgin-born”) by combining the choicest lines from the Burlador with the choicest lines from Tan largo. The Composite dialog that results, we’re told, will certify its accuracy and authority by
advancing dramatic strength through erasing dramatic ambiguity (Mandel 40-41).

In places where the play’s dialog seems to spring out of nowhere, however, as in the case of Teodora’s tooth, it becomes clear that text-editors rely on dramatic ambiguities to guide their best-text choices. It’s certainly through their talent for dramatic duplicity – their dual-focal grasp on the double-tongued interaction between irony and sincerity, between the whole character of the speaker and the duplicitous connotation of the specific word spoken, between the particular moment onstage and the whole project of the play – rather than through their awesome capacity for linguistic accuracy, that Schizzano and Mandel make moments of their Playboy come brilliantly to life.

When Schizzano and Mandel follow Tan largo’s lead in making Octavio’s role climax in an oath to transform himself into Isabela’s avenger, for example, it isn’t the accuracy of their text reconstruction, but the active nature of their character development that endows the result with dramatic “oomph.” When their Playboy replicates Tan largo’s structure by having Isabela speak the words that spearhead a feminist revolt against Don Juan, the line reassignment reinvigorates performance possibilities not because it re-establishes accurate text, but because it resonates through the “character, voice, experience ... the whole story” of the play (Boswell, qtd. in Johnston 1996, 283). When their conflation chooses to echo the passionate terms which Tan largo adopts to express human interconnectedness, and to replicate Tan largo’s repeated opinion that “love is a deceiver” (“todo amor es cautela;” Mandel 1963, 83; cf. López-Vázquez 1990, 224), the Playboy’s dialog comes alive because it complicates the world of the play with a stageable dilemma, not because it simplifies the text of the play through an editorial dialectic.

13. Accuracy vs. Duplicity

In these instances, incorporating new dialog from Tan largo succeeds in re-animating Schizzano and Mandel’s Playboy because it serves to electrify a character’s connection to a dramatic moment and illuminate the character’s role in the play as a whole. In these instances, traditional text-editing is doing the work of Boswell’s wheel, rounding out the moment by connecting it to the arc of
the “whole story,” truing the rim through reference to the hub (see Johnston 283-86). What empowers text-editing to translate new truths into these performance moments is not its stated commitment to accuracy, but its unspoken capacity for duplicity, the clarity of transmitting two points of view (big picture and little picture) on the story at one time.

Where this duplicity is lost, traditional text-editing founders. With no context to dictate textual choice, translators very quickly and quite irrevocably find themselves stuck up a linguistic creek without a paddle, marooned in unmapped (and apparently unmappable) dramatic territory, fair game to get trapped in the jaws of that jurassic monster of indecision that antedated Boswell’s wheel, and can still chew the prospect of conceiving a convincing translation to bloody bits. They find themselves, in short, in territory where characters can open their mouths and speak “almost any word which would make a kind of sense of the relationship they were in and would kind of relate to the original language” (Boswell, qtd. in Johnston 1996, 283).

Embracing the variations in the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*, rather than editing them out of the picture, points translators toward firm ground for constructing a sense of context in places where contextual understanding of the specific dramatic situation is by no means pre-existent, self-evident, or traditionally prescribed – as well as in passages where foregone conclusions about the context are blockading the process of re-envisioning revival of the play effectively. Instead of positing a “best text” fathered by rejecting ambiguity, this Stereopticon model for sub-/con-/meta-/textual investigation seeks out points of difference in the performance information that the text records, welcoming their divergences as keys that can unlock the double helix of the play’s DNA. Using the text’s apparent flaws to empower its re-construction builds new insight into the script as a performance document on the same ground that traditional text-reverence cuts out from under performance research. Judging by the lesson of Teodora’s tooth, these “inaccuracies” hold the text’s brightest, most brilliant promise for putting Don Juan back onstage with his original brilliance and “bite.”

And what will the Burlador sound like with his teeth back in, in the passage about Teodora’s tooth? Like a silver-tongued seducer expertly pulling
strings in his relationship with Mota to lure the Marqués toward a public revelation of private secrets. Knowing his friend for Burlador wannabe, he’ll mirror Mota tripping himself up with his own duplicity, and the scene will read like this:

Don Juan: Didn’t you leave any of the girls for me? Bet you got nowhere with Miss Theodore.

Mota: Guess again, my friend. Miss Theodore spent the summer getting over her virgin bout with v.d. I was very attentive, of course. Flowers every day, now that she’s officially deflowered.

Don Juan: You’re killing me, man. My reputation is in ruins. You’ve broken all my records.

**Ben’s Sampler**

I started this journey armed with the same assumption that most of the translators that I’ve studied carry with them, wherever they work: the idea that theater translation is fundamentally about transmitting stage diction. That’s why I found works like Derek Walcott’s *Joker of Seville* so shocking, on first encounter. I end this *jornada* trying out techniques for strategizing the first Thematic translation of *Tan largo* and the *Burlador* in a contemporary US idiom. What turning points marked the shift in direction between starting point and final destination?

First, I started noticing irrelevancy in the quandaries that kept worrying my fellow traditionalists – case in point, the everlasting “verse versus prose” debate, which can never be resolved because it asks all the wrong questions. “Is verse a more authentic vehicle than prose for carrying Golden Age *comedia* into English?” Unanswerable, because the question is misaimed. Golden Age poetry didn’t function like a suit of armor, an inflexible skin that the play put on to wear from start to finish through a show. Classic Spanish stage versification was flexible and alive, literally the breath of the *comedia*, changing every beat because it was the beat. It was the artistic convention par excellence of its time, and a tremendous way to show off. Translators who think they’re demonstrating
“fidelity to the text” when they imprison Golden Age theater’s living language in a straightjacket of inalterable English verseforms are, I’ve come to believe, the victims of a disastrously misguided views about the “integrity of the text.”

Then the missed cues in “literal” translations started bothering me. Translation after translation, for example, transcribes an unperformable complication into the cape caper, misreading (in earnest attempt to preserve every word of the original) the action that the original is putting onstage. In the name of “fidelity to the text,” these translations completely misconstrue the “bravo” that the Spanish uses to establish Mota’s intention to outdo Don Juan in trickiness. Taking “bravo” as a literal noun rather than a thematic adjective, translation inserts a “ruffian, pimp, or hoodlum” into the scene, who hopelessly confuses the picture of who’s pulling a fast one on whom in this crucial exchange (see Fernández 40, 81; and cf. Campbell 274, O’Brien 106, Starkie 216, Alvarez 169, Dear 40). In the light of such unintentional infidelities, Walcott’s “liberties” seemed less intrusive.

Finally, studying Walcott’s work through other people’s eyes opened mine to a new way of looking at his accomplishment. It started me wondering, “What would it mean, to make a Thematic translation of Tan largo and the Burlado in the United States today?”

What follows are experiments testing some limits in partial answer to that question. I wanted to see how it would work, to put US readings of classic Spanish themes at the forefront of pivotal scenes. I wanted to play with re-creating the comedia’s active sense of geography and cyclical, parallax time. I wanted to mess around with character names, give Catalinón some contemporary wisdom literature to carry around with him, and get down and dirty with some of the playwright’s polyglot textures and metatheatrical structures (storytelling, and a sense of show within show within variety show, some of the shows exploiting instantly recognizable formula formats). Here was my chance to try out ways of articulating the comedia’s social critique, its integral use of music, its cultural savviness, and its expert manipulation of audience relations. Just for a moment, Don Juan could become a gadfly on the fly in my home town, the sexiness of the script could come downstage and flirt without sitting in the driver’s seat (infinite
suggestion, but no action), and some risks could be taken with bringing the moral lesson home.

The results, like lots of baby steps, are clumsy and unsure, overblown and self-indulgent, reaching for things way beyond their grasp. But are they “faithful to the text”? Intensely! Traveling the arc from “Absent Classic” to “New Art” has led me to think of theater translation as a multidimensional process something like a Rubic’s Cube. Translators produce different translations by turning different “faces” of the play to the fore, as the focus of a translation settles on a playscript’s plot, or its characters, or its theme, or its speeches, or its variations in tonality, or its spectacle. I arrange the entries in this Sampler accordingly, focused on different elements of the play I’ve come to know as the “Burlador/Tan largo.”

Music

Adapting 17\(^{th}\)-century Spanish theater’s practice of using “well-known” tunes for songs, I’ve translated the comedia’s closing musical number to the tune of “Amazing Grace.” This is the Statue’s dinner-music for Don Juan, just before their final handshake.

\begin{quote}
\textit{Amazing pace!}
\textit{How fleet the time}
\textit{we live, we laugh, we long!}
\textit{We spend our borrowed days}
\textit{the debt comes due, we pay}
\textit{as quick as this short song.}
\end{quote}

Spectacle

One of the \textit{Burlador} and \textit{Tan largo}’s most elusive special effects is Ana’s absence from the stage. But isn’t a disembodied lover a resonant idea in an age of cybersurfing, webcams, cellphones, and text messaging? Here’s a sample of Ana for the 21\(^{st}\) century, translating the interception of her message to Mota.

Let me give you a lightning orientation to the scene. Time is officially Vietnam war, though anachronisms crop up by design. This translates the original’s diachronicity. The game-show references are style guides, shifting
performance conventions through popular American genres. This translates the original’s smorgasbord of genres. “Dr. Kink” is Mota, “General Wastemolerand” is Gonzalo, “#2” is Catalínón (whose inspirational reading matter is a translation for the original’s proverbs and quotations). Note the interpolations of music, Don Juan’s racy relationship with the audience (sexy, but not sex-driven), and the main character’s mirror-like facility for changing images.

**The Nearly-Wed Game**

**SETTING:** DC (White House)

_Exit Dr. Kink, an Afro-American advocate of “Make Love Not War.”_

Don Juan: *(summoning Number Two)* ¡El Segundo! A word in your private ear, mi odorífero Número Dos . . .

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to trail our friend Dr. Kink around to the White House service entrance. Yep, now that Alfie Once’s appointed General Wastemolerand as his private bodyguard, the Chink and his cyber-child are installed in 1600 PA Ave. So high-tail it behind El-Kink-ola into the ass-end of the President’s Residence – (just like him to make a rear entry through the servants’ quarters) – and find out everything he’s up to. Hey! And make it, like he’d say *(as Kink)* “dy-no-mite, cat– out of sight!” _That_ should be a piece of cake . . . with him wearing those big-ass Foster Grants and carrying that glow-in-the-dark glove, J. Edgar Hoover could infiltrate his business without even changing his suit (three-piece, with matching skirt and a double-breasted blouse).

#2: I’ll need a dollar to get past the Hare-Krishna flower children – maybe more if I meet some Jesus freaks.

Don Juan: Bless them with something priceless from your reading list. What tract you toting around this time?

#2: This no tract – it’s an autographed copy of Dr. King’s “I Have a Dream” speech. *(as MLK)* “I have a dream today – a dream that one day

Don Juan: Dream on, Dr. King – just do it where you can hear what Dr. Kink’s got going on.

*(#2 exits; Juan enjoys a moment of copacetic groovin’ with the audience)* Is he gone? . . . dreamy. “Peace, perfect peace, with loved ones far away,” as the old hymn sings.
(his cellphone vibrates) Oooo! I’m feeling some “good, good, good, good vibrations!” (to one particular audience member, any gender) You feeling them too, cutie? Looks like it. (Mae West) Why don’t you drop backstage and see me after the show. I’d love to hear your personal response to my . . . performance.

(cellphone vibrates again; Juan switches to James Brown) There it goes again! “Wow! I feel good! Nah-nah-nah-nah-nah-nah-nah-nah-nah-nah! Like you know that I should! Nah-nah-nah-nah-nah-nah-nah-nah-nah-nah- I feel goo-ood!”

(cellphone vibrates once more) Oh – it’s my cellphone! I had it set to “vibrate” for the show. All you folks have your cellphones and pagers switched off, don’t you? Or set to the silent-moaning mode? Umm-hmm. Your seatbacks and tray tables all in the full upright position, ready for takeoff? Good – you can listen to announcements and follow instructions. Now let’s listen to this.

Voice: What’s your 10-20, good buddy?

Don Juan: That would be 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Rose Garden privacy post #1022, good buddy.

Voice: Good. Can you get 10-51 towards the Lincoln Bedroom side of the fence?

Don Juan: 10-4, good buddy. That would be a big 10-17 as I’m ambling insouciantly in that direction?

Voice: Cybernet reception is better at that 10-27. You’ve got a major text message coming through via weblink to this cell. 10-6.

Don Juan: For me, good buddy? 10-12! (make that 10-13 on AOL . . .) But are you sure you’ve got the right party? Nobody even knows I’ve got this number yet. Just switched my service this afternoon. Free evenings and weekends, bankable minutes, crystal clear reception all the way to Golden Age Spain and back with no roaming charges, ever . . .

Voice: Put it in a Fax, man, I got bitten by a three-year contract with Sprint, and this call is costing me my firstborn child. You’re good buddies with Dr. Kink, right?

Don Juan: 10-4, good buddy. We’re real good buddies, if you know what I mean, good buddy. Been that way since we were in Boy Scouts together.
Voice: 10-28. That’s all I needed to know. The text message is for him. Pass it on, carefully. And very 10-19. Homeland Security has blocked my access to his line. Got that, good buddy?

Don Juan: Got it. This is Juan 10-Oreo, over and out.

(to audience) Can you believe this? Security leaks, from inside the nation’s securest residence! A woman, too, unless my ears deceive me . . . or Eleanor Roosevelt’s moved back in the White House.

(blips. The AOL “you’ve got mail” sounds from cellphone.) Aha! Sounds like the top-secret text message has arrived.

. . . Wanna take a peek? My new CyberMundo service by AltaVisión has a special digital-projection feature that’ll let us all see it at the same time . . .

I know she said it’s a sensitive message for his eyes only, but that just makes it more intriguing, doesn’t it? To blow his cover, or not to blow her covergirl routine . . . how to decide?

Light bulb! We’ll do it The American Way –

(game-show host) “Let’s Take a Vote!” All in favor of exercising our USA Patriot-Act privileges of keeping a protective eye squinted at what dark-skinned men with scraggly beards are up to, raise your voices and say “I!”

(audience votes. Juan schmoozes the electorate.) Nice eyes, sweetheart. Those baby blues win you the red-blooded right to vote twice . . .

(back to electioneering) Now, all you pusillanimous nay-sayers who’re opposed to this free exercise of a great American tradition, COME ON DOWN! . . . and line up for one of the booths where they’ve got the butterfly ballots ready for you to take a stab at punching out a chad – oops! Polls just closed! Guess that means election’s over, and the I’s got it!

(to the schmoozee) Especially yours, dreamboat.

(Double Jeopardy) Time to punch the button and open someone else’s mail!

A chorus of cyberblips and booting-up chirps as the projection screen fades in and the message appears. The projection screen can be set up during the entire length of the election. The message appears framed in a chatroom or Instant Messenger border, using cyberspeak symbols and abbreviations, which the Voice articulates as literally as possible: ☺ as “smiley face,” :? as “query face,” LMAO as “L-M-A-O,” “r/t as “r forward-slash t,” etc. The Voice’s delivery combines a hint of an R2D2 etherworld timbre with the artfully artificial-intelligence inflections of an automated voice-messaging system. (Think “You’ve. . . Got . . . Mail” meets the FedEx 1-800 lady.)

Voice: From Daddyslildevil@b&d.gov to Cuddlybuns4u@hotmail.com. Date stamp: 5.527 minutes ago.
Message type:  URGENT – TOP SECRET – CONFIDENTIAL – DO NOT REPLY.
WARNING: IF YOU ARE NOT THE INTENDED RECIPIENT OF THIS MESSAGE, DO NOT PROCEED! SEVERE CIVIL AND CRIMINAL PENALTIES WILL BE IMPOSED!
Message reads:
saw you got inside, dream weaver – trust you to penetrate their tightest security LOL – but daddy wouldn’t let me see you 😊, so I’m using IM instead 😊.
hacked into POTUS’ personnel files this evening and guess what (:? ) . . . found out that Alfie O and my paternal unit have cut a dirty deal (:!). they’re gonna marry me off to somebody else 😊😊😊!!!
Secret Security agent dawdled by with a donut before I could get a name on the groom-elect ( :< ), but if they think i’m standing for this they’ve got themselves another think coming ( :> ). the very idea of doing it with anybody but you makes me hurl chunks, and then LMAO 😊😊😊😊😊!!!!!
you are the sunshine of my life, even if raindrops keep fallin’ on my head.
i’ll never forget the night you left this message on my voicemail: “you are so beautiful . . . to me.”
or the way you whispered “we’ve only just begun” at the end of our first webcam session.
now’s my turn to tell you “ain’t no mountain high enough to keep me from getting to you babe,” because “i am woman hear me roar.”
so if you’re ready to upgrade this relationship from data-entry on your Palm Pilot to a date in r/t . . .

**Pop-Up Voice:**  ENLARGE YOUR PENIS!
MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE on 100% herbal cure! CIALIS at a tithe of downtown drugstore costs!
FREE DELIVERY! NO PRESCRIPTION NECESSARY!!
Log on NOW to onlinedruglord.us.net!!!

Don Juan:  Don’t you just hate those annoying pop-up ads?

VoiceL  . . . so if you’re really serious about no hookup without an LTR, meet me at the close-circuit gate to the Rose Garden tonight at 10:00 sharp AOL-time.
i’ll sneak you into the Oval Office, and we’ll put old POTUS and Daddy Dearest in a spot where they can either get caught with their pants down in public, or announce my engagement to the man of MY dreams.
gotta log off quick– ANOTHER CIA virus-check about to boot up.
won’t say brb, cause I’m dreaming about you on YOUR back (:!).

won’t say ttyl, because The Greatest Love of All takes actions, not words ☺.

won’t say ty, cause that’s about to be YOUR job, even on Rainy Days and Mondays (we’ll figure out some ways to keep them from getting you down ☺(_ASC))).

i’ll just say that you’re webmaster of my IM world, and that’s why I’M your everlovin’ ‘puter puta, CyberGirl@aol.com.

Don Juan:  Well if that don’t beat the Dutch!

Sounds like Daddy Wastemolerand’s little cyber-sweetie’s about to get herself in Dutch, by hanging up her knickerbockers in a very sensitive location and going Dutch with my bosom buddy Dr. Kink on a good ole All-American double-cross. (*“hearing” encouragement from the audience*)

What’s that? Did I hear you whimpering for me to get involved? (*listening to the silence*) Yeeees, I’d recognize that lovely timbre anywhere: the voice of the Silent Majority, soon to become a Moral Majority making Family Values march to the tune of the Religious Right.

Have no fear, you eager defenders of free enterprise! (*televangelistically, sacrificing himself on the altar of God and Country*) I hear your call, I share your values, and I will respond! We’ll make these enterprising sinners’ sins trip them up in public! Yes!

(*inspiration strikes*) I know! (*delighted laugh*) Let’s revive the old Identity-Switch Maneuver – another installment of the gag I pulled on the Dixie Debutante way back at the beginning of the show! But watch! This time it’ll be richer, riper, and more resonant. I promise – partly because you know the guy I’ll be impersonating (and isn’t he a trip?, just begging to be ripped off!) – and partly because the stakes riding on the scam are so much higher. Her dad’s Time magazine’s 1970 Man of the Year, for God’s sake, and her date’s set for Oval Office!

This’ll make ol’ Tricky Dick’s Watergate caper look like kid-stuff. And speaking of kid-stuff, our chicken-hawk ripe for the plucking must be flapdoodling his way back in this direction, ‘cause (Johnny Carson Show) hEEEEeeeeddddddddddddddddddddddddddddddA’s Two-y!

**Light-Night TV**

#2:  (*Enters in a Washington Senators baseball cap, bat, and gloves. Takes warmup swings over Carson theme music.*)

Thanks, Johnny!

Well, folks, we’re moving toward the home stretch for the 1971 World Series, and haven’t the Washington Senators got their hands full just trying to stay in the game?
**Thought**

What the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* says to a translator – the translator’s perception of theme – is the single most influential factor in setting a translation’s agenda. For me, the first Don Juan play is all about inducing energetic self-correction. That makes all the difference in this sample acting text for Don Juan’s final love-fest with the Statue. You’ll notice that I read the scene as designedly didactic. That’s my take on the nine-beat construction of the *comedia’s* damnation, followed by the rehashes that Catalinón delivers to the audience in the *corral* and the audience on the stage.

**Damnation**

Statue: You laughed at them. But you never looked inside yourself.

DJ: They were hypocrites, every one of them. They deserved everything they got.

Statue: It takes one to know one, Juan. That’s the point. Don’t you get it? God’s ways are not a crapshoot – they’re as invitational as a sprouting seed – just that marvelously mysterious, and just that magnificently understandable. You could understand yourself that way, but you frittered your time away poking fun at other people’s shortcomings.

DJ: They deserved it. They were hypocrites and self-deceivers. They were corrupt cover-ups, every single one of them.

Statue: And it takes one to know one. That’s the point, Juan. Don’t you get it? The point of life isn’t laughing at the corruption around you. It’s correcting the corruption inside you. That’s what “Take up your cross and follow me” is all about. You got so busy nailing up the country’s sacred cows – and Lord knows, there are plenty of them -- you forgot to crucify your own.

DJ: What I did was all corrective. Cover up corruption, and the rot intensifies. The only way to make this country clean again is to rip the makeup off its zits and get some light and air in circulation.

Statue: You’re right. And while you’ve been fooling people into bringing their dirty laundry to light, where the sun can bleach it clean while everybody sees it for what it is, who’s been checking *your* drawers...
for cleanliness? It takes one to know one, Juan. That’s why God says “Vengeance is MINE!” Knowing others’ weaknesses is God’s call to know your own. You mirrored them, warts and all. Who mirrored you?

DJ: I loved you! I might have killed you, but I loved you. I kept my word to you! I made myself vulnerable to you.

Statue: You loved me because I’m the fears of your own heart – the place you’ve never looked for laughs. I am testicular cancer. I am your mother finding out you’re carrying AIDS. I’m being alone, forever. And now, I’m your worst fear come true. I’m the end of the line, before you’re ready for me.

DJ: You can’t take me yet – my work’s not done. They’re still pretending it all never happened. They’re staging a huge cover-up right now, about to marry everybody off in a huge, happy-ever-after Disney World lie!

Statue: The yardstick is the same for everybody – what did you make of the time you had? How do you measure up?

DJ: I made the self-righteous pillars of this lip-service free and democratic society into laughing-stocks!

Statue: And yourself? What have you made of yourself?

DJ: I’ve never stopped growing – not one minute, during the whole play. I’ve grown from the man who laughed at people’s follies in the bedroom to the man who laughed at people’s fallacies in the boardroom to the man who laughs at the fear of Death. I’ve invested in my identity!

Statue: So you’ve built an exposé that doesn’t stop at sex – that scathingly guffaws at social climbing masquerading as democracy, and influence-peddling passing itself off as good governance, and fads pretending that they’re moral improvement. Is that all you have to show for your time on earth?

DJ: Isn’t that enough?

Statue: Hear me, Don Juan. Now you hear the truth, from one who loves you the way a soul kept incommunicado loves the man who lets it speak again. Squandering your life to laugh at others is as wasteful as someone watching this whole play and never investing one moment in thoughtful self-examination. The mirth you feel at
seeing others’ secret flaws exposed is a down-payment on the joys of self-correction. That is why laughter echoes, and starts to heal.

DJ: I see! And I start to grow again – from gadfly making sacred cows take exercise, to surgeon cutting the pus out of the boils on the body politic, to student and corrector of myself.

Stature: Too late! Time’s up!

DJ: Just a year to make amends –

Stature: Tan largo . . .

DJ: to next Ash Wednesday . . .!

Statue: Tan largo . . .

DJ: Five minutes more!

Statue: Tan largo . . .

DJ: Don’t be like me! Don’t let your clear-eyed perception of corruption all around you blind you to corrections needed in yourself! Remember me! Remember me!

Cat: Oh, God – does this mean I’m doomed, too? Is my inner Don Juan bound to get me in the end? I’ve got to talk to Dr. Phil. There must be something I can do!

**Plot, Character, Diction**

Discovering *Tan largo*’s twinship with the *Burlador* is a defining moment in Don Juan studies. It resulted in the first conflation of the two texts, made in the USA in 1963. It opened Stereopticon perspectives on subtext for this investigation. And it stands as a lasting reminder to translators that the play is not coterminous with the details of its plot, characters, or diction. Too many differences in plotting, character positioning, and wordsmithing crop up between the *Burlador* and *Tan largo* for a narrow worship of surface details to survive real familiarity with the two original versions of this great play.

This translation of the *comedia*’s opening scene seeks to pour the old play into a new skin – skin that will send the fine wine of the first Don Juan play’s stagecraft singing through the veins of US audiences today. We start in
Reconstruction Tallahassee, the cultural equivalent to Naples under Spanish rule. Like this study of translation problems, we end in medias res, at a point of high suspense ...

**Tallahassee, 1865**
The Only Embattled Capital of the CSA to Survive Unsacked Meets Reconstruction
**A Minstrel Olio**

*The Rotunda of the Old Capitol. Mid-night moonlight through the shutters paints zebra stripes across a cold marble floor. A Tara staircase rises in the background. Two statues on pedestals – the Confederate Governor, and a Soldier from the Battle of Natural Bridge – flank the rotunda’s circle, interacting (in all but imperceptibly slow motion to begin with) with the State Seal blazoned on the floor, the chandelier suspended from the ceiling, and the starlit skylights in the dome.*

*Sounds approaching from below, rising toward floor-level. Giggles, like lace rippling up and down a genuine lady's pantaloons when she runs on tiptoe in a hoopskirt. A deep, masculine guffaw.*

**Miz Izzy:** *(deep Southern accent – Scarlett O’Hara at her most genteel, relocated one capital city farther South)*

Shhh, Buddy! Hush, now!
I’ve told you and I’ve told you we have to be quiet as churchmice in here. Governor Broward’s strict as a tent-meetin’ preacher about just sayin’ no to any hanky-panky under the sacred dome of Florida’s Capitol.
You remember that glorious speech he made just before the Battle of Natural Bridge . . .

**Governor Statue:**

*Tallahassee stands proud and pure by the grace of God – the only capital in the Confederate States of America that Yankee hands ain’t stained – and why? Because there ain’t no moral rot under this here rotunda!*

**Miz Izzy:**

Remember them brave little boys and plucky old men marching out to meet the Union invaders? Giving their natural lives at Natural Bridge to save Southern womanhood from interracial rape and involuntary mixing of the races!

**Redneck Soldier:**

*C’mon, boys! Better dead than seeing our women wed to niggers!*

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Let’s fight so’s our lily white poontang stays pure, sweet, and untwanged!”

Juan:  
(as Buddy) Sugar – you sure you’re ready for that string to be plucked . . . here . . . tonight?

Izzy:  
Oh Buddy – I ain’t never been so sure of nothing since Big Mama told me it was my calling to carry on the line!  
(wedding vows) I want to be the vessel for sprouting your seed . . . right now . . . right here . . .
I want to seal my vow on the Seal of the Great State of Florida, between the steamboat pulling into port and the Indian maiden dropping kernels of corn under that sabal palm at sunrise. I only wish there were a mockingbird to sing . . .

Juan:  
Maybe this can make it up to you, sweetheart – ain’t no bird singing, but ‘tis a ring.

Izzy:  
Oh Buddy – your Mama’s engagement ring? The Dukes Black Diamond?! It is, it is! I can feel it in my hand, cold and hard as General Sherman’s black heart.
Slip it on my finger . . . oh, I want to see it there! (Gasp) Landssakes, Mr. Beauregard Uppshot Dukes IV, what is that I’m feeling with my other hand, hard as a diamond, but somewhat huger?
Honey! We are going to be so happy together!
(Martha Stewart flash of inspiration) Wait just a second! Since I’m going to be carrying a torch for you, kind sir, all the rest of my born days after our little romp in the rotunda, I think it’s only fair to make you hold your horses while I light up one of the Governor’s genuine Florida orange-blossom United Daughters of the Confederacy candles, so I can get a real good look at what’s coming to me!

Juan:  
(as himself) You could do that – but then I’d have to kill you.

Izzy:  
Honey (laughter tinged with doubt)– that’s not funny.

Juan:  
You’re right – it’s no joke.

Izzy:  
Buddy? All of a sudden, dreamboat, you sound a little . . . peculiar . . .

Juan:  
(laughs)

Izzy:  
That’s not the way my Buddy laughs. Who are you?
Juan: Let’s just say I’m . . . no Buddy.

Izzy: You ain’t my Buddy? Great God Almighty, man, who are you then?

Juan: (silence)

Izzy: (hyperventilating) Tell me . . . tell me you ain’t a field hand!

Juan: (as a minstrel-show Mr. Bones) Yassum, Missy, I’s handy in the field, I’s handy in the house, I’s handy ‘tween your meals, I’s handy ‘twixt your vows, I’s handy anywhere you need a hand toward the Promise’ Lan’!

Izzy: Sweet Jesus, what have I done? I been standing on the brink of mixing races here. . . ! (faint thread of a voice) Help! Help!

Juan: (Brer Rabbit meets Roger Rabbit) Oh please, Miz Scarlett, don’ call them guards! Don’ let ‘em make up a lynch gang and cubber dis baby wid tar! Do whatever you wants wif me, whatever you wants in de whole wide worl’, but puh-puh-puh-puh-please, Miz Scarlett, don’t let ‘em sell me down the ribba as a fiel’ hand!

Izzy: Git yo’ han’ off me, boy!

Juan: Mercy! Mussy, Miz Melanie! This fiel’ hand just wanting to feel yo’ sof’ white han’!

Izzy: (resurrected by rage — that Irish upstart from Atlanta is a longstanding social rival) My name’s Miz Izzy! That’s Isabela Lillie-Mae Living-Stone Duchess, of the Naples Duchesses, to be precise! And you are?

Juan: (Spanish grandee) “Un hombre sin nombre.” (Statues murmurously echo the riddle.)

Izzy: “Nombres nombre”? What’s that supposed to mean?

Juan: (as conquistador) It’s Spanish.

Izzy: I know it’s Spanish. Some of my best friends are Spanish — just look at the Governor’s wife — her folks have been here forever, came over with the conquistadors — nice people, fine people — white as us, they’re some of the ones that stayed pure-blooded — and a perfect lady to boot,
which is more than I can say for some of the English-speaking women
who’ve slept in the Governor’s bedroom.
but that don’t mean I speak her native tongue!

Juan: It’s a riddle.
Could mean “nobody.”
(Statues echo “No Buddy”)
Could mean “anybody.”
(Statues echo “Any Body”)
¿Quién soy? Un hombre sin nombre.
(Statues echo “Un hombre sin nombre”) 
I’m . . . whoever you want me to be.

Izzy: (flooded with relief) So you’re Spanish, too, then – a conquistador!
I bet you’ve come to help the Confederacy throw off the yoke of Yankee oppression/imperialism!

Juan: (as himself) Don’t count on it, sweetheart. . .

Izzy: (flushed with the scent of a conquistador conquest) My Buddy sent you, didn’t he? I have reason to believe he’s acting as an undercover agent for the Confederacy, you know: Mr. Beauregard Uppshot Dukes IV.
We’re engaged – well, good as – and something tells me he sent you, to me, with a message!
You’ve been undercover with him, haven’t you?
You’ve been sharing risks with my Buddy . . . maybe even . . . sleeping in the same berth as my Buddy . . .

Juan: (as jigaboo) ’s God ‘s my witness, Miz Izzy, I don’t know nothin’ ‘bout berthin’ no Buddies!

Izzy: I don’t believe you’re Spanish – I think that was just some kind of diabolical put-on! To me, you sound black as the history of U. S. Grant, headed straight for Hell, just like Ulysses!
Step into the moonlight! I want to see your face!
(Juan appears in jigaboo mask)
Sweet Spirit of Stonewall Jackson! It’s the Ace of Spades, and he’s come here to get me! Somebody stop him! Please! . . . somebody!
(fading out, verging on the vapors)
“Please! . . . somebody!” . . .
I said “Please! . . . somebody!” . . .
(Drama Queen in a royal rage)
I’m calling for HELP in here!
Guard boys! Get off your dusky butts and get them in here,
on the double!
(Enter Guards, a line of Keystone Kops in grey-blue uniforms and
jigaboo masks)

Guards: Yassum, Missy!
We’s heah, Missy!
Jew rang, Missy?
At yo’ suhvice, Missy!
(They form a ragged cordon.)
(they echoed with each erk-screech and pratfall)
Anything for Southern womanhood!

Governor’s Voice: Soldiers of the Confederacy – TEN-HUT!

Izzy: O my God! The Governor!

Izzy freezes into a statue of Southern Womanhood, on a pedestal, in the circle of
the rotunda with the statues of the Governor and the Unknown Soldier. Juan,
still in jigaboo mask, makes himself a statue of Uncle Remus, on yet another
pedestal.

Enter Governor Broward as – to borrow P. G. Wodehouse’s description of Beech
the Butler at Blandings – “a dignified procession of one,” to the tune of “Old
Folks at Home” (aka “Way Down upon the Suwannee River”), Florida’s state
song. The Governor has an ornate silver candelabrum with a small bonfire of
candles arranged in a spiral, like a piece of wedding furniture, in one hand – a
telegram from the war front in the other. Guards pull themselves into a chaotic
parody of order, salute, and kazoo “Old Folks At Home” as the music for the
Governor’s march onstage. Governor stands below Governor statue. Guards
line up beneath Unknown Soldier statue.

Governor: (to Guards) Password?

Guards: Anything for Southern womanhood!
(They salute Izzy’s statue)

Governor: Make that “anything a-tall!” (Improving on the Guards’ salute)

Guards: Anything for Southern womanhood – “anything a-tall!”

Governor: Music to my ears. Now here’s some for yours:
Soldiers of the Confederacy! The eyes of the nation – indeed, the
eyes of the whole civilized world – are turned towards Tallahassee
tonight!
At this critical juncture in history, the fate of a Presidency stands
poised in your patriotic hands.
I’ve just received word that every other state in the Confederate States of America has been finally and officially bush-whacked . . . but the battle is not over! Au contraire, my friends! The battle has just begun!
The Republican Government of Law hangs in the balance! The survival of States’ Rights is at stake! The innocent children of pregnant Chads – thousands of them – look to us to save them from untimely, partial birth!
Our President’s glorious mission to keep Free Enterprise tax-free faces mortal danger! Florida is his last White Hope.
You whipped the Yankee imperialists at Natural Bridge. Are you ready to do it again, men?

Guards: Yes, sir!

Governor: Are you prepared to lay down your lives, so that government of the people, by the preachers, for the profits shall not perish from this land?

Guards: Yassuh boss – we is! We’s just that thang!

Governor: Can I tell your President that you’re behind him 101%, that you feel his compassion and you’ll finance his conservatism, that you stand ready to marry your moral values to his in War, in Peace, and in sacrificing liberties on the high altar of National Securities . . . that come what may you’re ready to say “All the Time, Every Way, Jefferson Davis for the CSA!”

Guards: (overlapping)
I solemnly swear to do my best to do my duty to God and my Country . . .
Amen! Preach it, brother! Shandalalike-a!
Yi-yi-yi-yi-yi-yi-yi-yi! (Chicano grito)
Play dat funky music, white boy!

Governor: If you’re with me, boys . . .

Guards: Dass us!

Governor: . . . absolutely with me . . .

Guards: Tight as white on rice!

Governor: . . . then it’s time to take a solemn vow we’ll make the Southland rise again . . . someday, somewhere, somehow. (Guards shuffle their feet and murmur discreet demurrers. Carried away by riding the
tide of history, Governor doesn’t notice. Takes his candlestick to
Izzy’s statue)
Here . . . at the foot of everything we’re fighting for . . . we offer our
lights, our lives, and our pursuits of happiness . . .
(Izzy sneezes)

Oh hello, Sugar – what are you doin’ here?

Izzy: Governor Broward, I cannot tell a lie. I’m here to lay my all on the
altar of my Country.

Governor: Mighty fine to hear you say so, honey-chile, but whatever could you
mean?

Izzy: Oh Governor Broward, I came to do what I can for the Cause.

Governor: What do you mean, honey-chile? Things aren’t so desperate that
the President ‘d expect nothing of women – well-bred white
women, that is to say – except, of course, stimulating the economy
on the domestic front!

Izzy: I came here . . . tonight . . . to give my body to make future soldiers
for the CSA.

Governor: Here? In the sacred precincts of the Capitol’s rotunda?
(Izzy nods)
I see! Well, Izzy, that’s very self-sacrificing of you. President Davis
needs soldiers, of course, and needs ‘em bad, like war Presidents
before him, and war Presidents after him . . .
(Izzy accidentally-on-purpose flashes the engagement ring)
Is that the Dukes Diamond /you’re wearing/ on your ring finger,
sugardumpling?
Would you look at that? Huge, hard, and black as a Radical
Republican’s plans for Reconstruction!
(Sly dog chuckle)
Am I to conclude that my naughty little debutante snuck in here/to
sacrifice herself for her County by the light of a harvest moon at a
private engagement party with Mr. Beauregard Uppshot Dukes IV?
Do I hear wedding bells in the upshot? Where’s Buddy?
(humming “Here Comes the Bride,” the Governor searches the
rotunda with his candelabrum. Finds Uncle Remus statue)
What’s this? A new statue in the rotunda?
(Reading inscription – which Juan might magically produce for
his instruction)
“Uncle Remus” . . . O I love those well-told stories from the Old
South – ‘bout time this Capitol had some Culture!
(Starts singing “Zippedy doo-dah, zippedy ay . . .” As Governor
-turns to conduct the Guards in the theme song from Disney’s “Song
of the Southland,” Juan blows out candles)
. . .! (pregnant pause)
What was that?

Izzy: That? O that was probably just . . .

Governor: Shhh! (s-l-o-w-l-y turns to examine Juan statue, whose face is
-averted)
Who’re you?

Izzy: Now don’t you go getting any wrong ideas, Governor . . .

Governor: I said “Shhhh,” woman!
Who’re you, sir?!
(Juan’s face turns, letting the Governor see the mask, and take in
the full horror of a jigaboo rendezvous)
Isabela Lillie-Mae Living-Stone Duchess, I’m ashamed of you!
Sneaking into the Capitol to consort with a field hand?!?

Izzy: But that’s not what I did – or not what I thought I’s doing!
It was supposed to be Buddy! I got a message from him – all coded
in official CSA cipher, written in disappearing ink on onionskin
paper (just melts in your mouth, it does, sweet as a field-ripe
Vidalia) – And it said /saying meet him here, at that private
entrance in the basement you and me had to use that time when
Florida’s First Lady, Mz. Columbia Delgado Broward . . .

Governor: Yes, yes, yes, yes, child – no need to go into all that right now.
How in Hades am I gonna squash this scandal?
Guards! Arrest that boy! Slap him in chains – immediately, if not
sooner!

Guards quick-step to Juan’s pedestal, producing chains. Juan steps off pedestal
and, with his matching jigaboo mask, blends right into the phalanx. Melee.

Governor: Soldiers of the Confederacy! Ten-HUT! (chaotic order restored,
Guards in a ragged line, Juan apart, in a Jolson-Mammy pose)
What in blue blazes is going on here?

Guard: We’s doing just what you tole us, boss – we’s underwhelming him
wid shock an awe – only trouble is, all us niggers looks de same!
Which one we spose to oppress?

Governor: Idiots! The one wearing the Suwanee-Ribber Smile on his face!
Guards: (overlapping, as they turn to identify and admire Juan’s Jolson-Mammy grin) Smart strategery boss! Now dat’s using de man’s head, using de man’s own head agin him! Never misundermesdimate the power of de white man! A mine is a turrible thang to waste!

Governor: Well?

Guards: Welsuh, boss?

Governor: Git him!

As Guards approach Juan, he dissolves out of Jolson-Mammy and mirrors their attack postures, again blending into the crowd. Melee, to the tune and tempo of Gershwin’s “Swanee,” one of Jolson’s hippest hit tunes. Melee ends with Guards chained into a chorus line, grinned huge Swanee grins, Juan in the middle. They break into chain-gang production number – (part Mel Brooks’ Blazing Saddles, part Minstrel-Show shuffle-dance – of Stephen Foster’s “Camptown Ladies.” Big finish, with hold for applause.

Uncle Sam’s Voice: Soldiers of the Reconstructed Union – Ten-HUT!

Enter Juan’s Uncle Sam, Presidential envoy to the Sunshine State, which is as of this moment officially under Reconstruction. The spitting image of the figurehead in the famous “I want YOU” posters – an American icon incarnate – Uncle Sam makes his entrance to the strains of “Glory, Glory, Hallelujah,” the chorus from the “Battle Hymn of the Republic.” As Sam enters, the Guards (now models of efficiency) flip their jigaboo masks and uniform insignia in crisp unison movements, transforming themselves into a crack unit of Union troops.

Governor: Who’re you, sir?!? And what have you done to my soldiers?

Sam: My name is Samuel Peterstone-Rock Tenorio, President Abraham Lincoln’s ambassador to the Sunshine State, lately in Rebellion, but this evening Reconstructed into the indissoluble Union of the United States of America.

Governor: Tenorio? Sounds foreign. You one of them conquistadors, come to hep us cast off the yoke of—

Sam: President Lincoln sent me to smooth the way for Florida’s reconstruction into the Union. You might say I’m here to tell you who you are. You are now ex-Governor of the Sunshine State, lately in Rebellion, but as of this instant Reconstructed into the indissoluble Union of the United States of America.
Izzy: Good God Almighty, you don’t mean to say we’ve lost the War?

Sam: Correct, madam. General Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomatox this afternoon at 0800 hours, and Mr. Jefferson Davis departed for Canada early this evening at 1300 hours. I would have been here earlier, but the 1700 hours’ rains slapped 25 miles of gridlock on the road down here from Georgia.

Izzy: Then mine and Buddy’s unstained family names, the sacred Southern Cause, everything I’ve worked for and all I’s prepared to sacrifice my all for . . . they’re all Lost?

Sam: That would be a strong Affirmative, young lady.

(Izzy faints off the pedestal, spectacularly – into the arms of Juan, still wearing the jigaboo mask, and now the only blackface character on stage)

Governor: God bless the CSA!

Sam: That’s the USA now.

Governor: I cain’t scarcely take it all in! The Confederacy surrendered . . . Reconstruction started . . . and a field hand man-handling Southern womanhood’s fairest bud, all in one fell stroke? It’s too much change, too fast, for flesh-and-blood to bear!

Sam: War is Hell, ex-Governor. And while I personally think that every Rebel in this redneck Sunshine State ought to find Hell pure Heaven compared to Reconstruction, President Lincoln sees it otherwise. His instructions are to bend over backwards to help make Florida’s transition back into the Union smooth and amicable.

Governor: That’s very gentlemanly of Mr. Lincoln, sir.

Sam: Isn’t it, though? So what can I do to help?

Governor: Arrest that nigger.

Sam: Which Negro would that be, ex-Governor?

Governor: The boy acting so free and easy with Miz Izzy.

Sam: You mean that man there, that strapping-big black buck, all rippling with muscles and oozing male hormones and flinging that debutante Duchess around like a she was a blow-up doll model in a daguerreotype studio?
Governor: That hardened criminal there, sir.

Sam: Hand over the woman, son. You’re under arrest.

Juan: Nawsuh . . .

Sam: What did you say, Boy?

Juan: I said “Nawsuh . . .,” sir! Massah Lincoln done freed de slaves, sah! ¡Ahora somos libres, como todos los otros Americanos! ¡Vive el Presidente Lincoln!

Sam: Mr. Broward, will you take charge of the lady for a minute? I need a word in private with this . . . freedman.

(During Sam’s private conversation with Juan, the Governor and the Guards revive Izzy and attempt to retore her to her place on a pedestal)

Sam: Who are you?

Juan: Who do you think I am . . . Uncle Sam?

(lifts the jigaboo mask momentarily)

Sam: For the love of Pete, Don Juan, what are you doing here?

Juan: Reconstructing Southern womanhood.

Sam: What’s that smart-aleck answer supposed to mean? You better watch your step here, young whippersnapper. I could have you lynched in a second in this city, no questions asked.

Juan: Just carrying on a family tradition, Uncle Sam. Miss Duchess wanted to make all the people who were saying she’d never finagle Buddy Dukes into marrying her look like fools, so she . . . concocted a plan to get seduced in the Capitol tonight. Turned out Buddy couldn’t make it – some kind of CSA emergency, undercover. To keep the lady’s scam from going sour, I showed up instead.

Sam: (with growing locker-room ribaldry) Snitched his britches, eh?

Juan: Learned it from the best, sir.

Sam: Caught him with his trousers down . . .

Juan: . . . changing costumes in a daguerreotype studio . . .
Sam: . . . then slipped yourself into his pants so you could get into hers with one smooth move! *good laugh*

Juan: You’re way ahead of me, Uncle Sam.

Sam: From what I hear, you’re catching up fast. Tell me, word around Washington is that pure-bred Southern white snatch has got a twang no poontang on the face of creation can match. Is that the God’s honest truth?

Juan: Ask me no questions and I’ll tell you no lies.

Sam: “Don’t ask, don’t tell, don’t pursue,” eh? I hate that pansy-ass policy.

Juan: Hey, I’m just in it for the thrill of the chase.

Sam: You’re in it, all right. Up to your eye-balls as near as I can see. How do you think you’re going to get out of it, smartypants?

Juan: I’ll catch the Underground Railroad to Washington.

Sam: You think Lincoln will have you there, after all the trouble you caused with the Spanish ambassador’s daughters?

Juan: Then I’ll go underground here.

Sam: Sure. And get eaten alive by enough bloodsucking insects, carnivorous reptiles, and poison-spitting plants to make Hieronimous Bosch rethink how he painted the tortures of the damned. No, what you do is head for Texas. Whole state’s full of Wacos. You’ll fit right in.

Juan: You think of everything, sir. How shall we make my exit?

Sam: *(takes Juan to edge of stage)* You got the guts to jump off this balcony?

Juan: I’ve been born again in the USA, Uncle Sam. I’ve got rumgumption enough to try anything.

Sam: Good boy! Then let’s use the grand finale from El Corrido de la Migra Nigra y el Niño Fecho-de-Brea!

Juan: ¡Ay, caramba! ¡Qué burla tan graciada! *(Juan flips his jigaboo mask over to its Mexican Migrant face, transforming himself into a Wetback)*
Sam: You play the Rabbit. I’ll be the Fox.

Juan: And the Tar Baby?

Sam: Aw, hell – pretend it’s my left leg. (Sam pins on an oversized “Border Guard” badge and assumes his Samuel Legree persona – part Ringmaster, part Brer Fox, part Yanqui Inquisitor. Snapping his fingers to make a rope descend from the ceiling) ¡Un lasso, por favor! (Summoning an audience for the show) Ladeeez and genlemen, your attentioooon please!

Juan: (Affixing himself, piece by piece, to Sam’s left calf. Both actors color this installment in the Olio with touches of heavy Chicano accents) ¡Madre de Dios – mis manos! ¡Mis pies! ¡Mi ever-lovin’ cabeza, too! ¡Estoy completamente charrasqueado aquí – hhhhelp! hhhhhhelp! I’m all stuck up!

Sam: So, Conejo – and you thought you were so smarrrrt!

Juan: Por favor, Mr. Fox, do with me cualquier cosa que te gusta, pero no me tires en el patche de espinas allí (gesturing toward audience with his head, momentarily freed).

Sam: (slamming Juan’s head back to his leg and grasping lifeline end of rope) Then I theen’ I’m gonna drown you, gazapo.

Juan: ¡Ahógame, señor – (submarine submerging) aOOgah, aOOgah! ¡Anégame – me Nigra! call Migra! Drown me jus’ as deep as you please, but please, please, Mr. Señor Fox, no me eches dentro de ese pinche patche de espinas allí!

Sam: (attaching Juan to the rope) Call me by my Southern name – Samuel Legree! (Governor, Guards, and Izzy form a backup chorus for Legree, holding candles and whistling the first phrase of “Dixie”) Hol’ on tight, Li’l Liza, you’s tryin’ to ‘scape crosst de ice! (swinging Juan’ rope out over edge of stage) De dogs is right on yo’ heels, and they ain’t no sign a Uncle Tom! ¡Tío Thomas! ¡Tío Thomas! (Chorus bays) Watch out, Migra Nigra! You’s fallin’ th’ough – Lawsamussy, you’s in a sea of Red Tape even Moses couldn’t part! (dipping Juan on rope, Chorus’ line of candles counterbalancing his motion) Don’t make waves now, don’t rock the boat, and Uncle Sam’ll keep you ‘float – he’ll haul you back to status quo! (reeling Juan in) See, boys? We’s got us back – a Wetback!
Juan: ¿Porqué?

Sam: Porque tu eres una Migra Nigra, coño. Meester Rabbit outsmart heemself for once. But is he smarting? No! Reckon I'll have to wheep you, Conejo!

Juan: ¡Zúrrame, tío! ¡Dame azotas hasta que me eschorche la piel! Scorch me good, Mr. Fox, but p-p-p-please no me pinches con las pinchaduras del pinche patche de espinas cerca de los pinchaúvas allí!

Sam: (grasping end-length of rope to make whip) Call me by my eSpanish name: Zorro! (snapping a Z in the air) Tu Presidente Fox wheeps up new visions of your life, before and NAFTA! (Chorus whistles second phrase of “Dixie,” makes Z shape with candles at each ¡Ay!) By some strokes of good luck,

Juan: ¡Ay!

Sam: Uncle Sam is here to bring those visions down to earth. You see,

Juan: ¡Ay!

Sam: don’t want you living here – my brother – but

Juan: ¡Ay!

Sam: don’t want to live without the things you do, my brother, so

Juan: ¡Ay!

Sam: I’ve elected you the whipping boy for cosas donde me conviene quejar, sino nunca cambiar! You accept the nomination?

Juan: ¡Ay!

Sam: ¡Les’ elect us el Sr. Conejo la Migra Nigra! All in favor say . . .

Juan: ¡Ay!

Sam: DIS-qualified! This no-bunny cannot run! He hasn’t even got a green card!

Juan: ¿Cómo?

Sam: You ate it? Who you theen’ gon’ swallow that story, Mr. Wild Hare? We been too easy on you. I see I’m gonna have to hang you!
... a point of high suspense ...
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My first exposure to Don Juan was in high-school Spanish class. Our teacher – one of the most lively, intellectually awake people it’s been my privilege to meet – was introducing us to Spanish stagecraft by having us read Zorrilla’s *Don Juan Tenorio* out loud in class. It was love at first sound-bite, deepened and made more intelligent by nuggets of information about the first Don Juan, the Burlador, a character Mrs. Miller was getting to know in classes she was taking at FSU, as she worked on her master’s degree.

The Burlador was still on the syllabus when I got to FSU. My *Diez Comedias del Siglo de Oro* dates back to undergraduate days, during which I tattooed the space around the printed lines of *EL BURLADOR DE SEVILLA* with exclamation points, cross-references by the gross, and my absolute moral certainty about how the play worked and why Don Juan went to Hell. Page knowledge, every bit of it, though I did catch a whiff of Spanish drama on the stage during my first meander through my home-town U. The Spanish honor society sporadically put on plays (this was long before the Latino/a theater movement had heard of our sleepy Southern town). I got to play Herod in the *Auto de los Reyes Magos* – an absolute dream role for an actor.

Playing Herod made me have to learn more about early theater, up close and personal, so I spent several years after my leisurely BA (five majors, four honors theses, and still a slew of “Intro to …” courses I really wanted to sample) in Toronto, sitting courses in the Center for Medieval Studies (and occasionally in the Pontifical Institute for Mediaeval Studies) by day, and working on plays with the PLS by night. It was heaven. I was Lucifer and God in the first processional staging of *The York Cycle* since Queen Elizabeth the First suppressed the mystery plays. I was Mankynd in *Mankynd*, on video for the National Endowment. I was Arthur in *Camelot*, and I was deeply torn. Just as the foreign student differential fees (Ontario’s “out of state tuition”) tripled, my University of Toronto advisers told me I had to choose between being an academic and being an artist.

I was back at Florida State, auditing my first formal class in acting, before the summer’s end. Between stints with dinner theaters, theme parks, and
Shakespeare festivals – magnificent centers for grounding your craft – I bounced back to Florida State for another round of classes. That’s how I happened to be on hand when Richard Schechner blew into town as a Hoffman Professor in the FSU School of Theatre, on a mission to open the Lab Theatre with the world premiere of Richard Schechner’s Version of Molière’s Don Juan.

Schechner saw Don Juan as a playground for ideas. He wanted a complete feminist countertext, to interrupt and argue with the action at crucial points. And he wanted a mini version of Don Giovanni to build a musical countertext. That’s where I came in. I’d been cast as Elvire’s brother – a role we played as a kind of latter-day Robert E. Lee – and the producers knew I played piano, too. There was no music budget, but there was an opera program across the street in the School of Music ...

So I came to know three Don Juans at once – Molière’s Dom Juan, Mozart and da Ponte’s Don Giovanni, and Richard Schechner’s Don Juan (whom he cast as an undergraduate and a grownup community actor, playing the role in tandem, and occasionally on the stage together). Days I spent rustling up musicians, watching Giovanni on video, selecting installments from the opera to propose to Richard, scoring musical passages that he’d approved, and memorizing lines from Schechner’s reworking of Molière. Nights I spent in rehearsal, learning how to conduct an orchestra in a space with no pit (the harpsichord that a professor let us borrow was suspended below the light booth), building counterpoint between the music and the playtext, and drinking in the world’s best master class in low comedy as Richard coached his Sganarelles (another double-cast, tag-team role). It was mindboggling, influential enough in Schechner’s career for him to feature the work in followup presentations and publications.

Reviving Molière’s Don Juan was high art, but it wasn’t high income, so I was back on the road ASAP, replenishing the coffers in the Alaska tourist market so I could build up funds for another adventure with Theater. The adventure came in the form of a gig with the Orlando Shakespeare Festival, where contact with actors from the New England Shakespeare circuit put me in touch with the idea of a “dramaturg.”
As introduced backstage at the OSF, “dramaturg” was not a complimentary term. Two veterans of a New Jersey Shakes production of *Hamlet* had scathing things to say about the dramaturg’s eggheaded notes to actors and high-art talkbacks with audiences. I thought the garden imagery in *Hamlet* sounded interesting – more to my taste, in fact, than endless rounds of poker in the dressing room – but didn’t think deeply about dramaturgy till I got back to Florida State and found they were living there, in increasing numbers.

Enter graduate school, where Don Juan cropped up on the menu yet again – first, in a class about French and Spanish drama team-taught by Michael Zelenak and Jean Graham-Jones (I wrote a comparison of Molina and Molière), and then in a Golden Age drama course under David Darst (where the discussion was in Spanish, and the natives were infinitely patient with my pidgin). As comps approached, Don Juan was back in the picture. *Comedia* emerged as focal point for my exams, Professors Graham-Jones and Darst were recruited for my committee, and Don Juan peppered the landscape in many versions (I had to create a season of Spanish Golden Age plays for a hypothetical theatre company, and defend it). When prospectus time rolled around, strategizing the Burlador’s re-production seemed the natural choice.

The choice has been infinitely rewarding – for the opportunities it’s given me to batter my brain against great ideas, to collaborate with generous people of great learning, and to taste the joy of “scholar” (a new role for my resume). Stuart Baker, my mentor in dramaturgy’s methods, warned me at the outset and often along the way that the gravest challenge in a writing project can be its solitude. I’m glad I’ve had a host of people to keep me company, folks as inviting, and as elusive as the populace of the *Burlador* and *Tan largo*. I’m glad I’ve gotten to explore a discipline as engrossing and various as dramaturgy. I’m glad I’ve had models of vigorous theater-making like Teatro Latino (under Jean Graham-Jones’ direction) to keep the more cerebral aspects of the research grounded. I’m glad that readers on the order of Carrie Sandahl (and her writing group) have been willing to listen to the things that I dug out of Don Juan’s scripts, and tell me when my writings made sense.
Is it over? That would seem unlikely. Don Juan keeps coming around, and there’s something a little different in his hand each time. This project started with a gleam in Michael Zelenak’s eye, which grew into a play to read, then a production to watch, then a premiere to participate in, then a translation history to research and write, and it wouldn’t stop till it turned into a survey of translation problems to invent, a translation to strategize, and an anthology to start. Is it vintage? Oh, yes.

You start out thinking you’re going to change the world. (“Don Juan Revolutionized in New Translation!”)

You end up, of course, changing yourself. (“Think it out. Put it simply. Try again.”)

Not the worst lesson for a theater person to take home – especially a theater person who’s danced the identity tango with Don Juan. For it is in changing ourselves that we make better theater, and take our best shot at changing the world.