

A woman with dark hair, wearing a black hat with a veil, is holding a large, white, lace-patterned fan. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is dark and out of focus.

EDITED BY
SUSAN PAUN DE GARCÍA
& DONALD R. LARSON

THE
Comedia
IN ENGLISH
TRANSLATION &
PERFORMANCE

Colección Támesis

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THE *COMEDIA* IN ENGLISH
TRANSLATION AND PERFORMANCE

Tamesis

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THE *COMEDIA* IN ENGLISH
TRANSLATION AND PERFORMANCE

Edited by

Susan Paun de García and Donald R. Larson

TAMESIS

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PREFACE

One of the significant developments in recent years in studies of Spanish Golden Age theatre has been an increase of interest in how the plays of that astonishingly rich genre have been, are being, and might be performed. No longer are plays examined only as literary texts, but also as living works of theatre, combining spoken words, gesture, movement, music, and spectacle. Analyses written from that point of view are now quite common in the professional journals, and there is even a new periodical – entitled, appropriately enough, *Comedia Performance* – that concentrates exclusively on matters of performance. Many of the articles that have appeared in the last fifteen years that may broadly be categorized as performance-oriented discuss theatre practices, both of the early modern and modern periods; others attempt to imagine virtual representations of individual works; still others comment on productions of specific plays. Surprisingly, however, very few of those studies deal with the performance of Spanish plays in English translation, the focus of this volume.

Such an omission is all the more remarkable in that Spanish *comedias* – verse plays in three acts with a wide range of themes and characters, and a blending of comic and tragic tonalities – have appeared on the stages of the English-speaking world with increasing frequency in recent years. One may point to numerous student and amateur productions, but in addition to these there have been notable professional stagings, including those incorporated into the internationally known Siglo de Oro Drama Festival, held annually at the Chamizal National Memorial in El Paso, Texas, and those that were mounted by the Royal Shakespeare Company during its “Spanish Season” in the summer of 2004. Considered as a whole, all these productions, whether undertaken by professional or non-professional organizations, suggest a fascinating array of questions. What is the best way to translate the language of the Spanish original texts into modern English? Are verse translations preferable to those written in prose, and if so, what kind of verse? Should translations be “faithful” or should they aim at conveying the “spirit” of the original? Which kinds of plays “work” particularly well on the contemporary stages of English-speaking countries, and which “work” less well? Which values and customs of the earlier period can be assumed to present no difficulties for modern audiences, and which require some kind

of decoding on the part of translators, directors, and actors? Which kinds of staging are suitable, and which are not? To what degree, if any, should one aim for authenticity? And so on.

In this volume, we include seventeen essays, all of them heretofore unpublished, that deal with these and related matters. About a third of them are authored by individuals who have translated Spanish *comedias* into English; another third are written by those who have served as directors or dramaturges of particular productions; and the final third come from critics and scholars who have attended, and reflected upon, specific performances. The contributors represent a number of different countries – principally, the United States, but also Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Israel. Among them are both university professors and practicing theatre professionals, all widely known in their fields. Some essays are theoretical in nature, while others are analytical; in contrast, some pieces are more recollective, even anecdotal. The individual essays of the contributors reflect their own experience and opinions, as well as their own tones and registers in writing. While many articles are in agreement with one another, others suggest varying, even opposite opinions about translation, production, and perception of the *Comedia* in general and the particular plays they discuss. It is our hope that the diversity of voices and multiplicity of points of view that they bring to the subject of Spanish classical theatre in English will appeal to a variety of readers beyond the limits of academic circles.

The range of plays covered in the volume is limited in part by the experiences and interest of the contributors, resulting in what may be perceived as an overlap of some essays. Rather than regard this as repetition, we hope that the reader will enjoy and benefit from the multiple points of view of directors, translators, and viewers of the same works, even of the same performances.

While we have grouped the essays in four sections – Overview, Translating and Adapting, Directing and Contextualizing, Viewing and Reviewing – we imagine that readers may wish to read them at random and not necessarily in the order in which we present them. For those who are not conversant with the vagaries of Spanish verse forms used in the *Comedia*, however, we suggest that they turn first to Dakin Matthews's essay, which contains a useful and succinct survey of those forms.

The Spanish *Comedia* in English:

An Overview of Translation and Performance

By way of a general orientation, we begin the volume with a survey of translation and performance of the *Comedia* in the English-speaking world over the centuries, from the early seventeenth to the present. While of necessity such a review must be selective and not exhaustive, the essay attempts to identify and discuss obvious trends, some of which flourish and then wither, others of which persist across time and space. In this introduction, we discuss

significant translations and professional performances, in the British Isles, the United States, and Canada.

Translating and Adapting the *Comedia*

This section contains six essays by translators of the *Comedia*, some veterans and some newcomers. While the approaches to the task differ widely, all of the writers wrestle with the same fundamental issues or problems: that the original plays are in verse, that they are texts meant to be performed, and that they are from another culture and another time.

In *Translating Comedias into English Verse for Modern Audiences*, Dakin Matthews shares his insights into these and other questions, offering an explanation of the decisions he has taken in terms of translating into polymetric verse, translating for performance, and translating culture in the five versions he has created of plays by Tirso de Molina, Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, and Agustín Moreto.

Also concerned with verse translations is Victor Dixon's piece, *Translating the Polymetric Comedia for Performance (with Special Reference to Lope de Vega's Sonnets)*. Dixon posits the supreme importance to the *Comedia* of polymetric poetry, and specifically the sonnet, both sonnets in general, and in particular those of Lope de Vega, who set the model by example. For Dixon, sonnets are much more than ornamental "arias"; they are windows into character, feelings, and motives,

In *Lope de Vega in English: The Historicised Imagination*, David Johnston discusses plays by Lope as well, but focuses on the problems, challenges, and opportunities of translating historical theatre. For Johnston, a play's existence in time becomes an itinerary between past and present, rather than the excavation of a bounded site, and the series of translations that form this itinerary take place in and across these various temporal engagements. Johnston's discussion focuses on the issues of translating the language of the *Comedia* so that it can be performed and experienced as precisely such an itinerary.

In her essay *Found in Translation: María de Zayas's Friendship Betrayed and the English-Speaking Stage*, Catherine Larson examines two interrelated aspects of the staging of Zayas's *La traición en la amistad* on the English-speaking stage. The first treats the task of translation itself, from lexical issues to metaphoric "translations" of a seventeenth-century Spanish context into one that can be understood and appreciated by twenty-first-century United States audiences. The second has to do with the ways that the words on the page come alive in production, illustrating the distance between academic understandings and those of theatre practitioners.

Dawn L. Smith's essay *Transformation and Fluidity in the Translation of Classical Texts for Performance: The Case of Cervantes's Entremeses* is a reflection on the nature of translating Golden Age dramatic texts for performance in English. Based on her personal experience of translating Miguel de

Cervantes's *Ocho entremeses*, this study focuses on some key questions: How does the process of translating for performance evolve to reflect the "sensibilities" of successive audiences? How "true" can a translated version remain to the original text? How do recent translations compare with other versions of the *Entremeses*?

In *Translation as Relocation*, Ben Gunter discusses the importance of location as a way of exposing the dramatic possibilities and performance cues encoded within Golden Age plays' geographical, political, and social settings. For Gunter, translating location can forge connections between seventeenth-century playwriting conventions and twenty-first-century staging practices. Practicing translation as relocation offers translators a concrete way to use "given circumstances" to get in touch with characters and bring them to life precisely, vividly, and completely.

Directing and Contextualizing the *Comedia*

This section offers five essays by directors, dramaturges, or translators who have been intimately involved with a performance of a *comedia* in English. While some discussions focus on the praxis of bringing a play from the page to the stage, others expose challenges that must be faced in presenting early modern works to (post)modern audiences.

Michael Halberstam's *Rehearsing Spite for Spite* discusses the process of putting together a production of Dakin Matthews's adaptation of Moreto's *El desdén con el desdén*. Halberstam chronicles the tension, challenges, and rewards of breathing new life into an old text. He recalls the difficulties he and his company encountered in preparing for and staging the work, and reflects on the similarities and differences between working with the Spanish *Comedia* and Shakespeare.

In *Directing Don Juan, The Trickster of Seville*, Anne McNaughton discusses her experiences in staging Tirso's play for a modern, English-speaking audience in North Hollywood, generally unacquainted with seventeenth-century Spanish drama. She addresses the problems involved and resolved in the process of making the "Trickster" and his world come alive. As well, she defends some of her directorial decisions that have been challenged.

Isaac Benabu's essay, *Directing the Comedia: Notes on a Process*, discusses two *comedias* that he has directed, both involving advanced drama students. In his commentary on Pedro Calderón de la Barca's *The Surgeon of His Honour* he focuses on pragmatic issues such as blocking a classical text that has few explicit stage directions, and how movement and placement affect the audience's interpretation of the work. Benabu compares some of his experiences in staging this play and those encountered with a production (in Spanish) of Tirso's *El burlador de Sevilla*.

Jonathan Thacker's essay, *Tirso's Tamar Untamed: A Lesson of the Royal*

Shakespeare Company's Production, examines the character of Tamar in the light of past criticism and productions, but focuses on how it was specifically Simon Usher's direction of *Tamar's Revenge*, a production in English, that enabled a radical re-presentation of the Biblical character to emerge. Thacker sustains that one could not easily imagine such a staging in Spain, with its lack of a performance tradition in classical theatre.

In *The Loss of Context and the Traps of Gender in Sor Juana's Los empeños de una casa / House of Desires* Catherine Boyle studies the translation, production, and performance of *Los empeños de una casa / House of Desires* by the Royal Shakespeare Company in 2004. As translator of the playtext, Boyle examines how Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz plays with and subverts gender, and how codes of modern performances can direct the audience towards an easier interpretation of gender roles, particularly masculinity.

Viewing and Reviewing the *Comedia*

This section presents five essays by literary critics who reflect on specific performances of four Golden Age plays in English: Tirso's *Don Juan*, Lope's *Capulets & Montagues* and *Peribáñez*, and Zayas's *Friendship Betrayed*.

James A. Parr's *Tirso's Burlador de Sevilla as Playtext in English* compares two notable translations of the original *Don Juan* play, both of which have been used in connection with recent stagings: Gwynne Edwards's earlier rendering and Dakin Matthews's more recent version. Parr compares key passages to the Spanish original, using Luis Vázquez's critical edition, to see how well these translations – one British, one American – capture the sense and sensibility of the original, and whether a rendering in prose or in verse offers a more stage-worthy product.

In *Anne McNaughton's Don Juan: A Rogue for All Seasons*, A. Robert Lauer observes that in his experience modern renditions of *Don Juan*, whether theatrical, cinematographic, or operatic, tend to disappoint. For an early modern work to be successful on the contemporary stage, at least two things must be in place: a poetic text that is true to the spirit of the work, and a production that manages to express it. Lauer offers as an example of such success the 2006 staging of Tirso de Molina's *El burlador de Sevilla*, translated into English by Dakin Matthews and directed by Anne McNaughton. In his review of the performance, Lauer analyzes, among other things, the delivery of long soliloquies and the characterization of royal figures.

Susan L. Fischer's *Aspectual, Performative, and "Foreign" Lope / Shakespeare: Staging Capulets & Montagues and Peribáñez in English and Romeo and Juliet in "Sicilian"* applies some of the ideas of Jonathan Bate and W. B. Worthen to (post)modern performance of the *Comedia* in English. Fischer considers the question: How do our ideas about the *Comedia* inform our understanding of the limits of performance? The notion of the text as a fixed site of authority has become controversial; nonetheless, our understanding

of *Comedia* performance – in the work of actors and directors, as well as of performance scholars – retains a surprising sense of the possibility of being “faithful” to *the* text.

In *Zayas's Comic Sense: The First Performance in English of La traición en la amistad* Sharon D. Voros considers María de Zayas's sense of comedy as reflected through secondary characters in the play. While Zayas includes the traditional *gracioso* role (León), Voros contends that the character Belisa is his female counterpart. Voros remarks on the ways that in a recent Chamizal production director David Pasto highlights Belisa's evolution from subservient companion to aggressor who physically attacks her rival Fenisa. Voros comments on the significance of Belisa's argument with the *gracioso*, and highlights the controversial fight scene with Fenisa, as well as the use of stage props that often work at cross purposes with the text.

Barbara Mujica's *María de Zayas's Friendship Betrayed à la Hollywood: Translation, Transculturation, and Production* comments on the complexities involved in decoding and reconstructing a play from a different century and culture and by an atypical playwright – in this case, a woman. Mujica examines the theoretical and practical challenges faced, and how the Washington Women's Playwrights' production of *Friendship Betrayed* attempted to solve them. Special attention is given to: making the context (a seventeenth-century homo-social environment) intelligible to modern Americans; bringing pertinence to the moral issues raised by the play; staging the play in a non-*corral* space; and the use of props, music, and other paralinguistic elements.

These essays, while different in their approach and focus, all reflect on the same questions of faithfulness and freedom, of constraints and communication, of theory and practice. Clearly, in view of the current interest in performing Spanish *comedias* on the English-speaking stage, the time is ripe to examine the various issues involved. Among those who will sit up and listen, we fully expect, will be not only students and teachers of Spanish and English classical theatre, but also directors, producers, actors, and general readers of all sorts.

Note to the Reader

In the text that follows, all quotations in foreign languages are followed by an English translation, except in those instances where the meaning is obvious. We have likewise given an English equivalent for all Spanish titles, normally only the first time that a title appears within a given essay. In some cases, the same play may appear with variant English titles, depending on the preference of the author of the essay.

We have elected not to standardize spelling, preferring to allow authors to maintain their individual American or British voice.

Rather than provide a glossary of terms related to Golden Age theatre, we have included these within the index, where we have indicated pages where the reader can find explanations or definitions.

CONTRIBUTORS

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Anne McNaughton was a member of the first graduating class of the Drama Division of The Juilliard School, and a founding member of John Houseman's Acting Company. She was the Artistic Director of the Valley Shakespeare Festival in Northern California, and an Associate Director at the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, California Actors Theatre, San José Repertory Theatre, and Berkeley Stage Company. She is a founding member of both the Antaeus Company and the Andak Stage Company in Los Angeles. There she has directed four Spanish *comedias*, all of which were subsequently brought to the Siglo de Oro Drama Festival in El Paso, Texas.

Barbara Mujica is a Professor of Spanish at Georgetown University, past President of the Association for Hispanic Classical Theater (AHCT), and Editor-in-Chief of *Comedia Performance*, a journal devoted to early modern Spanish theatre. She has written extensively on mysticism, the pastoral novel, and seventeenth-century theatre, has published a number of novels and short story collections, and is currently working on an anthology of early modern Spanish theatre. She has edited several collections of essays dedicated to the *Comedia*, and she is the director of El Retablo, a Spanish-language theatre group.

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Susan Paun de García is Associate Professor of Spanish at Denison University. She has written articles on María de Zayas, on the seventeenth-century *Comedia*, and the post-baroque *Comedia* of the early eighteenth century, particularly the work of José de Cañizares, of whose *Don Juan de Espina* plays she published a critical edition. As Second Vice President of the Association for Hispanic Classical Theater, she also oversees the Association's committee for the *Comedia* in English.

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Jonathan Thacker is Faculty Lecturer at University of Oxford, and Fellow and Tutor in Spanish at Merton College, Oxford. Adviser to the Royal Shakespeare Company during their 2004 season of Spanish Golden Age plays, he is the author of *Role-Playing and the World as Stage in the Comedia*, the recently published *A Companion to Golden Age Theatre*, and numerous articles dealing with early modern Spanish literature. He has also translated Cervantes's *Exemplary Novels* and Tirso de Molina's *Damned for Despair* (in collaboration with Laurence Boswell).

Sharon D. Voros, Professor of Spanish and French at the United States Naval Academy, is the author of *Petrarch and Garcilaso: A Linguistic Approach to Style* (published under the name Sharon Ghertman), *Looking at the Comedia in the Quincentennial*, with Barbara Mujica, and *Aquel breve sueño: Dreams on the Early Modern Spanish Stage*, with Ricardo Saez. She is currently conducting research on Leonor de la Cueva y Silva and has written on Lope de Rueda, Calderón, Lope de Vega, Ana Caro, and María de Zayas. She is Treasurer of the Association for Hispanic Classical Theater and book review editor for *Comedia Performance*.

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Introduction

The *Comedia* in English: An Overview of Translation and Performance

SUSAN PAUN DE GARCÍA AND DONALD R. LARSON

The *Comedia* in English is hardly a new phenomenon. Soon after appearing on the boards in Spain, many plays found their way across the Channel, some directly, others by way of France. Given the popularity of Spanish plays in the seventeenth century, it seems ironic that reviewers today consistently marvel at the fact that the rich dramatic tradition of the Golden Age is little known and rarely performed. The two favorites, *Fuenteovejuna* and *Life Is a Dream*, have of course been included habitually in modern anthologies for study, but until recently even they had little presence on the English-speaking stage, either in translation or adaptation. However, as we will show in this brief overview of translation and performance, the turn of the millennium saw a marked increase in interest, and consequently a proliferation in productions by professional companies not only of these two standbys but of a surprising number of other *comedias* as well. Many of the same reasons that attracted seventeenth-century playwrights and audiences to the genre can help to explain its reemergence of late. What we will emphasize in the present discussion is not only the sameness, then and now, of the process of creating an English playtext from a Spanish original, but also the newness of some of the trends that have led to a number of successful productions in the last twenty-five years.

Despite this success, the inconvenient truth of the matter is that the *Comedia* is still produced infrequently in the English-speaking world. Four centuries ago, however, it was a source for more English plays than we might suppose. A few of these come from the first half of the seventeenth century. The vast majority, however, are products of the second half. Interestingly, virtually none of these plays, whether of the first part of the century or the last, derive from works of the dark and brooding sort that many modern audiences associate with Spanish theatre. Rather they spring from *comedias de capa y espada*, amusing cloak and sword plays, with their plethora of plots

and fast-paced action. It is these plays of “Spanish plot,” to use Dryden’s term, that initiated what John Loftis has called the “the Spanish strain in [English] drama” (*Plays* 3).¹

What is it about Spanish theatre that allowed it to be assimilated with relative ease into English theatre? We should note, first of all, that the conventions of Spanish and English plays (and the stages upon which those plays were performed) were strikingly similar in their periods of formation.² Both dramatic traditions played to the *mobile vulgus* (although performances were attended by all social classes). Both favored dual and even multiple plots. Both – concomitantly – early on jettisoned the Unities. Clearly, there are many parallels, and they have been widely noted over the centuries, particularly by the British themselves and by the French. In his *Of Dramatick Poesie*, for example, Dryden remarked that both Spanish and British plays had more plot than their French counterparts.³ Taking up the same point, but less sympathetically, Voltaire commented that the two traditions, as exemplified by their leading figures, were equally barbarous: “Calderón est aussi barbare que Shakespeare” (quoted in Besterman 83).⁴ Later, Shelley would also make identification between the two: “a kind of Shakespeare is this Calderon” (quoted in Jones 115).

Nevertheless, while similarities between the two dramatic traditions abound, there are also significant differences that often make translation less satisfying than adaptation. For one, the *Comedia* is a polymetric verse drama, with particular stanza forms that have few equivalents in the English tradition. The favored eight-syllable line of the *Comedia* is shorter and quicker

¹ In the discussion that follows regarding the influence of Spanish theatre upon English theatre in the seventeenth century it will be very evident that we are greatly indebted to the work of others. We should mention, particularly, the pioneering study of John Loftis, *The Spanish Plays of Neoclassical England*, his later “La comedia española en la Inglaterra del siglo XVII,” and G. E. Bentley’s monumental *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*. Other studies that we have drawn from will be noted in the appropriate places.

² For a detailed discussion of the parallels between Spanish and English theatres in this period, as well as the social, political, literary, and theatrical contexts that shaped them, see, particularly, Cohen, *Drama of a Nation*. Also useful is Cañadas, *Public Theaters*, especially pages 1–75. Specific aspects of the points of contact between Spanish and English theatres are treated in various essays in the collections edited by Louise and Peter Fothergill-Payne, Fischer (*Comedias*), and Sullivan, Galoppe, and Stoutz.

³ “Another thing in which the French differ from us and from the Spaniards, is, that they do not embarrass, or cumber themselves with too much plot; they only represent so much of a story as will constitute one whole [...]” (quoted in Loftis, *Plays* 13).

⁴ Writing to the members of the Académie Française in 1776, Voltaire seemingly laid the blame for the barbarism in Shakespeare on Calderón’s predecessor, Lope de Vega: “La vérité, qu’on ne peut déguiser devant vous, m’ordonne de vous avouer que ce Shakespeare, si sauvage, si bas, si effréné, et si absurde avait des étincelles de génie. [...] Vous savez qu’alors l’esprit de l’Espagne dominait en Europe, et jusque dans l’Italie. Lope de Vega en est un grand exemple” (quoted in Loftis, *Comedia* 102).

than the ten or eleven syllables typical of English drama, making it difficult for the translator to reproduce the original metrics without sounding stilted, even unspeakable. (As evidenced by the essays included in this volume, some modern translators have attempted to maintain an eight-syllable line and/or original rhyme schemes, while others have opted for prose.)

Another difficulty for translators – and their audiences – is the pervasive presence in Spanish seventeenth-century drama of the theme of honor, defined not as conscience, or a sense of right and wrong, but as the esteem of others or public reputation.⁵ As we will see, adaptors of Spanish plays, for whom such an understanding is irrelevant or even repugnant, frequently either downplayed considerations of honor when producing their own works or eliminated them altogether. The result, of course, is a text with a considerably altered moral structure.

A final problem for translators is the predilection of Spanish dramatists for long sections of exposition and other kinds of monologue, passages that today are often deemed “unactable.” Sometimes in the seventeenth century these were cut altogether when creating an English play; at other times they were folded in pieces into the dialogue. Either way, what came of the modification was a more frenzied pace, with a less reasoned development of character and/or a less suspenseful plot.

As is the case today, in earlier periods turning Spanish plays (or in some cases their French or German derivatives) into English plays often involved two steps: first, a literal translation and then a literary transformation. In this process the literary author-adaptor is faced with some key decisions, the chief of which is the degree to which she or he will be “faithful” to the original. Many authors stray into the realm of the “refundición,” modernizing or adapting to accord with the taste of the audience. (Of course, modern directors and producers can do this to the source text in the original language as well, adjusting, cutting, changing the time frame through costuming in order to achieve a dynamic new production.) Others stay closer to the original.

We have said that the great majority of English plays that owe their genesis to Spanish theatre come from the second half of the seventeenth century. That is not to say that there are no works from earlier decades that derive from *comedias*.⁶ *Love's Cure, or The Martial Maid* (pub. 1647)⁷ is an example of

⁵ This concept of honor is examined extensively in Péristiany, ed., *Honor and Shame*, and, more recently, Bowman, *Honor*. For a brief discussion, see Donald R. Larson, *Honor Plays* 1–16.

⁶ Unfortunately, none of the plays that can be related to Spanish sources are from the pen of Shakespeare. Despite many efforts over the years to assert such a connection, the project today remains what Henry Thomas called it in his Taylorian Lecture of 1922: “Much Ado about Nothing.”

⁷ John Fletcher, to whom the play is sometimes attributed, at least in part, died in 1625, but his works were not published until twenty-two years after his death. As Darby has explained,

such a work (Bentley, III 363–6). A play of uncertain authorship and indeterminate dating, although evidently of the first part of the century, its principal plot is taken from Guillén de Castro's *La fuerza de la costumbre* (*The Force of Habit*).⁸ Another work indebted to Spanish originals is Philip Massinger's tragicomedy *The Renegado, or The Gentleman of Venice* (lic. 1624; pub. 1630 [Bentley, IV 811–15]), which draws upon two works of Cervantes that were inspired by his imprisonment in North Africa: "The Captive's Tale," a novella intercalated in the First Part of *Don Quixote*, and *Los baños de Argel* (*The Bagnios of Algiers*). The second of these is regarded as Massinger's major source. Finally, James Shirley based two of his plays on comedias. They are *The Young Admiral* (lic. 1633, pub. 1637 [Bentley, V 1168–70]), drawn from Lope de Vega's *Don Lope de Cardona*, and *The Opportunity* (lic. 1634, pub. 1640 [Bentley, V 1060–2]), taken from Tirso de Molina's *El castigo del pensequé* (*The Penalty for Jumping to Conclusions*). *The Opportunity* is a particularly interesting work, illustrating a modality of translation/adaptation that in the second half of the century would become standard practice. Shirley translated many of Tirso's passages literally and maintained the plot intact, but he eliminated monologues and asides, with the resulting effect of quickening the pace of the action and heightening the comicity. At the same time, he maintained many marks of the Spanish comedies: nocturnal scenes, rapid succession of incidents, and plot devices such as false identity, coincidences, and intrigue. Other elements of "Spanishness," however, are eliminated or "Englished."⁹

Aside from these four works there appear to be no others from the first part of the seventeenth century that can be said with assurance to derive from comedias.¹⁰ To be sure, many works from the period have been dubbed "Spanish plays," or "Spanish romances," but these were derived not from theatrical sources but from prose fiction. In 1665, Loftis reminds us, Sir Robert Howard had dismissed the "Spanish Plays" as "nothing but so many Novels put into

information about the authorship of plays in this period comes from two principal sources, although neither was necessarily accurate: the title-page of the published text, and the Register of the Stationers' Company (425).

⁸ Bentley says that "nearly everything about the play is in a state of confusion" (III, 364). The convoluted history of the scholarship on *Love's Cure* is discussed in Erickson.

⁹ On the sources of *The Renegado*, see Rice, but also Edwards and Gibson II, 2–4. The parallels between the texts of *Love's Cure*, *The Renegado*, *The Young Admiral*, and *The Opportunity* and their Spanish counterparts are discussed extensively in Loftis, "Comedia," which also has helpful bibliographic notes regarding the sources of the four plays.

¹⁰ One must, of course, tread carefully in these matters, because given the sheer quantity of Golden Age plays, many of them unknown or virtually unknown in modern times, one cannot ever be entirely certain that no works that have served as models for English plays have escaped detection. Sleuthing the sources is, of course, complicated by the fact that English playwrights in the seventeenth century very seldom acknowledged their indebtedness to earlier works, foreign or otherwise.

Acts and Scenes, without the least attempt or design of making the Reader more concern'd than a well-told Tale might do" (*Plays* 13n36). Howard's slighting tone aside, there is much truth in what he says. As Rudolph Schevill, Gerald E. Bentley, and, more recently, Trudi Darby and Agapita Jurado Santos have shown, English theatre, particularly during the reigns of James I and Charles I, did draw heavily on Spanish novels and novellas, coming to them often through French translations. An early example is John Fletcher's *The Fair Maid of the Inn*, a work based on Cervantes's *La ilustre fregona* (*The Illustrious Kitchen Maid*) that was acted at Blackfriars in 1622.¹¹ Later examples abound, including plays by Massinger and William Rowley, as well as others that resulted from the collaboration of Fletcher and Francis Beaumont. Of all these, it was Fletcher in particular who had a predilection for plots borrowed from Spanish stories, especially those of Cervantes. Indeed, of some fifty plays that he is estimated to have written, alone or with others, possibly as many as seventeen are derived from Spanish works, either through translations or directly.¹² Among these *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife* (1624; based on *El casamiento engañoso* [*The Deceitful Marriage*]) and *The Chances* (1625; based on *La señora Cornelia*) were extraordinarily popular, the latter appearing on the boards consistently from its debut until the end of the eighteenth century, the former almost never NOT playing from 1659 to 1800.

Loftis notes that since novels and novellas in prose are easier to read than plays in verse, it is not surprising that playwrights drew more widely upon the former (*Plays* 26–7). Evidently, their extensive borrowing from those texts had to do also with the fact that many of them were available in English translations. As Dale B. J. Randall has pointed out, between 1543 and 1657 over "a hundred titles, editions, and issues" of translated fiction appeared, averaging about one per year (5). While there is evidence that early influence of Spanish prose was courtly in nature, after the defeat of the Armada interest in Spain and in Spanish literature increased substantially, as witnessed by the greater numbers of works translated directly from the original and read by all levels of society, from romances of chivalry to picaresque novels. Perhaps the richest period in the Anglo-Spanish literary relationship is the final years of James I, a period marked not only by an increased interest in the study

¹¹ Also based on Cervantes's tale was the play, sometimes attributed to Lope, which bears the same title as its source. Some have thought that it, too, entered into the composition of *The Fair Maid of the Inn*. The matter hinges on whether or not Fletcher knew Spanish, for, at the time he wrote, the play had not been translated either into French or into English. See E. M. Wilson.

¹² Fletcher's indebtedness to his sources, both in those plays that he wrote alone and those that he wrote in collaboration with others, is examined in the introductions that accompany the collected works in the multi-volume edition for which Fredson Bowers served as general editor.

of Spanish but also more translations, as well as a number of Spanish textbooks.

Heightened English attention to Spanish literature in the early years of the seventeenth century also had to do with greater travel between the two countries,¹³ especially after the establishment of an English embassy in Madrid. Under the Catholic Stuarts, relations with Spain, interrupted during the reign of Elizabeth I, were reestablished in the person of the Duke of Nottingham who, in 1605, took a five-hundred-person entourage to Spain to ratify a peace treaty with Phillip III (Stoye 325–90). A permanent embassy was established at the Spanish court, with Sir Charles Cornwallis as the first ambassador. Cornwallis was succeeded as ambassador by Sir John Digby, whose secretary was James Mabbe (1571/2–1642?), like Digby, a former student at Magdalen College, Oxford.¹⁴ Arriving in Spain in 1611, Mabbe subsequently spent several years there, acquiring a command of Spanish such that he became the most successful translator of Spanish literature of the period, producing most famously *Guzman de Alfarache* (1622), *Celestina* (1631),¹⁵ and six of Cervantes's *Exemplary Novels* (1640).

A somewhat later visitor to Madrid was Sir Richard Fanshawe, who, according to the memoirs of his wife, Lady Ann Fanshawe, first came in 1632 and then returned in 1635 when he was appointed secretary to the new ambassador, Lord Aston. Lady Ann writes that Sir Richard – who in the future was also to serve as ambassador to the Spanish court – was one of several young Englishmen who came to Spain in the early 1630s for the specific purpose, at least initially, of learning the language (*Memoirs* 113). Since the period when they were in Madrid coincided with the final years of Lope's career and the high tide of Calderón's fame, it is not unreasonable to assume that they would have returned to England with reports of plays that they had seen in the city's *corrales*, or open-air theatres. Nevertheless, with the few exceptions already mentioned, and despite a great interest in Spanish literature in general, those reports did not immediately stimulate adaptations

¹³ Some of the best-known translators from the Spanish either toured Spain or lived there for a time. See Randall 17n35 for interesting sources regarding seventeenth-century travel to Spain.

¹⁴ "It is not astonishing [...] to learn that James Mabbe [...] was first a student and later an administrator at Oxford. More specifically, he was of Magdalen, a college which seems to have shown a particular Hispanic interest" (Randall 15). For an account of Mabbe and his life, see Russell.

¹⁵ In a 1634 edition containing both his *Guzmán* and *Celestina*, Mabbe's dedicatory epistle is signed: "Don Diego Puede-ser," a literal translation of the name James Mabbe. In these preliminary materials, he provides the following evaluation of his translation: "I have in the undergoing of this translation, shewn more boldness than judgment. For though I doe speak like *Celestina*, yet come I short of her; for she is so concisely significant, and indeede so differing is the idiome of the Spanish from the English, that I may imitate it but not come neere it. Yet have I made it as naturall, as our language will give leave" (quoted in Allison 159).

of *comedias* on English soil. And, of course, after 1642, when the Puritan-controlled government closed theatres by Act of Parliament, there was little or no incentive to do so. Eighteen years later, however, when the theatres reopened, the situation was quite different. Now English playwrights began increasingly to look to the *Comedia* for inspiration, centering their attention, as we have pointed out, particularly on the *comedias de capa y espada* that enjoyed tremendous popularity in Spain throughout the entire seventeenth century. As Loftis has shown, this new-found interest in Spanish theatre can be directly related to Charles II and his travels in the 1650s (*Plays* 30–63).

Forced to flee the British Isles in 1651, following the turbulent period of the English Civil Wars that resulted in the execution of his father, Charles I, at the hands of his Parliamentary enemies, and the subsequent abolition of the monarchy, Charles spent the next nine years in penurious exile on the Continent.¹⁶ He resided first in Paris, then in Cologne, Bruges and Brussels in the Spanish Netherlands, and, for a brief period, in Spain itself. Attending him at various times were his brothers, a number of soldiers attached to the Royalist cause, and a band of loyal courtiers, among whom were several men who were later to play a role in the importation of Spanish *comedias* to the English stage, including Lord Bristol, Sir Richard Fanshawe, Thomas Killigrew, Sir William Davenant, and Sir Samuel Tuke.

Charles's stay in Paris coincided with the pervasive influence of Spanish theatre upon French theatre, and it is logical to assume that, as an avid lover of the stage, he saw there at least some of the many adaptations by, among others, Antoine Le Métel d'Ouville, Paul Scarron, and Thomas Corneille of Spanish plays, among them works of Lope, Tirso, Calderón, Pérez de Montalbán, Ruiz de Alarcón, and Rojas Zorrilla.¹⁷ Charles would have had no difficulty with the language of these plays, for he spoke it fluently, having as a youth spent extended periods in France. How well he knew Spanish is another question, although it is likely that he had at least some facility, for Spanish was the language of the court in Brussels during Charles's residence there, and he must have heard it on a daily basis.

It is also possible that, while there, he attended theatrical performances in Spanish, because, as Rennert has noted, companies from Spain were touring in the Netherlands at that time (339).¹⁸ Even had he not, Charles could not have escaped becoming aware that Spanish influence upon the theatre in the Low Countries was nearly as great as its influence upon French theatre, with

¹⁶ On Charles's wanderings on the Continent between 1651 and 1660, see, among other sources, Hutton.

¹⁷ Le Métel had actually lived in Spain, and it was he who blazed the path that was followed by his French contemporaries. On Spanish contributions to French theatre at this time, see Lancaster, Parts 2 and 3, *passim*.

¹⁸ See also Sullivan, *German Lands* 45–7.

many Dutch plays of the time resulting from translations or adaptations of works by Lope, Calderón, and others.¹⁹ Did Charles also see some of those works in Spain during his visit there in 1659? We do not know, but it is tempting to speculate that he did, for on his return to England, he displayed an intense and abiding interest in Spanish theatre.

Charles's return was made possible by the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, following the death of Oliver Cromwell and the subsequent disappearance of the Protectorate he had headed. Shortly after Charles's coronation, he received petitions from Sir William Davenant and Thomas Killigrew for permission to form theatrical companies, and he promptly granted their requests (Nicoll 276, *London Stage Pt 1*: xxi–xxx). The resulting companies were known, respectively, as the Duke's Company and the King's Company, and within a short time they came to enjoy a monopoly on the presentation of theatre in London. As is to be expected, the majority of the works mounted by the two groups were, in their first years of existence, revivals of plays that had been introduced before the closing of the theatres in 1642. Often, of course, they were considerably adapted to reflect both the changing tastes of the public and the evolving conditions of performance: covered theatres, moveable scenery, women actors, and so on (Dobson 44–5). Interestingly, one of the plays that was revived when the theatres reopened was Shirley's *The Opportunity*, presented by the King's Company at the Vere Street Theatre in London in November, 1660; another was his *The Young Admiral*, performed by a group called the Red Bull players, at Oxford during July, 1661; the latter play was also performed at court in November 1662, apparently by the King's Company.²⁰

A flourishing theatre cannot exist primarily on revivals, however, and there soon came to be a steady demand for new works. One consequence of this demand was that English playwrights and companies, interested in supplying their public with something truly novel, began increasingly to look for inspiration at the *Comedia*, and in particular, at *comedias de capa y espada*. Thus it was that the plays of "Spanish plot" came into being.²¹ Works of this nature, which were very much in the vein of the French adaptations of Spanish works that Charles might have seen in Paris during his exile there, have been characterized by the editors of *The London Stage* in the following succinct fashion: a "kind of play, based upon a Spanish source, [that] placed its emphasis upon

¹⁹ See van Praag, *passim*.

²⁰ Dates of performances of Restoration plays are taken from *The London Stage, Part 1* and *Index to the London Stage*. Information in the former is arranged chronologically (i.e., theatre seasons are covered year-by-year), and in the latter alphabetically.

²¹ For a brief discussion of the development of plays of "Spanish Plot" in this period, see Hume, especially pages 369–71 and 378–80. The matter is treated in greater detail in Loftis, "Comedia española," and extensively in Loftis, *Plays*, *passim*.

a rigid code of conduct, had a plot filled with intrigue, and emphasized one or more high-spirited women in the *dramatis personae*" (*Pt 1*: cxxiii). The editors might have added that the works were normally set in Spain, that the complications of the action typically turned on matters of honor (rather than on efforts to gain or preserve wealth, as in many later Restoration plays), and that their happy endings, like those of most Spanish romantic comedies, were characterized by the working out of poetic justice (*Casines* 27–39).

The first of the plays of "Spanish plot" to appear on the London stage, and one of the most consequential, was Sir Samuel Tuke's *The Adventures of Five Hours*. An adaptation of *Los empeños de seis horas*, today generally assumed to be by Antonio Coello although in the seventeenth century attributed to Calderón, *The Adventures* is sometimes said to have been written at the suggestion of Charles II himself (Nicoll 180). If the story is true, then Charles's suggestion was an excellent one, for the work proved to be enormously successful, possibly because it fit snugly into the mold of Fletcherian comedy, still very popular at the time (Corman 57–9). It was premiered by the Duke's Company at Lincoln's Inn Fields on 8 January 1663, and by the end of that month had achieved a run of thirteen performances.²² One of those in attendance, both at the play's opening and at a later performance, was Samuel Pepys who, in his *Diary*, pronounced it "the best, for the variety and the most excellent continuance of the plot to the very end, that ever I saw" (quoted in *London Stage, Pt 1*: 61). In subsequent years, *The Adventures of Five Hours* was performed twice at court, and was given numerous revivals, including one as late as 1767.

How well Tuke knew Spanish is a matter of conjecture, although he could have learned it during the time that he spent in Flanders with Charles. It is likely, nevertheless, that in making his adaptation of *Los empeños* he received at least some assistance from his friend, George Digby, Lord Bristol, who did indeed know Spanish very well, having spent his first twelve years in Madrid where his father served as ambassador. Lord Bristol was himself responsible for one surviving adaptation from the Spanish, *Elvira, or The Worst Not Always True*, from Calderón's *No siempre lo peor es cierto*, as well as two lost works that would also seem to have been adapted from Calderón: *'Tis Better than It Was*, presumably based on *Mejor está que estaba*; and *Worse and Worse*, probably derived from *Peor está que estaba* (Loftis, *Plays* 78–83). The production history of *Elvira* is unclear, although the editors of the *London Stage* suppose that it might have premièred in late November 1664. As for *Worse and Worse* and *'Tis Better than It Was*, in his *Roscius*

²² Tukes's text of 1663, along with a later revision (1671), was published in 1927, along with Coello's *Empeños de seis horas*, in an edition prepared by A. E. H. Swaen. For the role of *Adventures* in establishing the vogue of the "Spanish plot" on the English stage, see Corman, 55–9.

Anglicanus (1708) John Downes affirms that they were presented by the Duke's Company between 1662 and 1665, while Pepys, for his part, speaks in his *Diary* of attending a performance of the former play at Lincoln's Inn Fields in July, 1664 (*London Stage Pt 1*: 78). There was a further performance of *Worse and Worse* at court in November, 1666. Neither of the two plays appears to have been printed.

A play that is sometimes said to be an adaptation of a Spanish original is Thomas Porter's *The Carnival*, which was probably premiered in the spring of 1664, and thereafter achieved some popularity. As Loftis has shown (*Plays*, 83–7), the plot of the work does indeed resemble that of a standard *comedia de capa y espada*, but no specific source has as yet been identified. Better known today is *Tarugo's Wiles; or The Coffee House*, by Thomas Sysderf who, like many of the Cavalier dramatists, may have learned Spanish while serving in the Spanish Netherlands. An adaptation of Moreto's *No puede ser el guardar una mujer* (*There's No Guarding a Woman*), it combines elements of the cloak and sword play with others that typify the *comedia de figurón* (similar to the Jonsonian comedy of "humours"). Presented by the King's Company at Lincoln's Inn Fields on 7 October 1667, it thereafter enjoyed a modest run, although Pepys considered it "insipid" (quoted in *London Stage, Pt 1*: 120).

As Allardyce Nicoll has pointed out, it was Moreto who, after Calderón, had the "nearest ties of kinship to the Restoration playwrights" (180). Another dramatist who looked to him for inspiration was John Leanard. A playwright of modest gifts, he was the author of *The Counterfeits*, an adaptation of Moreto's *La ocasión hace al ladrón* (*Opportunity Makes the Thief*) that follows the original so closely as to be little more than a translation. Unfortunately, Leanard's play fails completely to convey the sparkle of its source, and after being introduced by the Duke's Company at the Dorset Garden Theatre in May of 1678, it seems to have disappeared from the stage entirely.

The most successful version of a Moreto play in the Restoration period is John Crowne's masterpiece *Sir Courtly Nice; or It Cannot Be*, another adaptation of *No puede ser*. A prolific and popular playwright, Crowne's career bridged the Atlantic, for in his youth he lived in Massachusetts for several years, during which time he attended Harvard College. Undertaken at the suggestion of Charles II himself (Loftis, *Plays* 157), *Sir Courtly Nice* is a freer reworking of its source than Sysderf's *Tarugo's Wiles*, shifting the locale of the action from Spain to London and broadening the comicity of the heroine's jealous older brother, turning him into a quintessential English fop. The result was one of the most popular and witty of all Restoration plays, boasting clever twists of plot and dialogue that Bevis characterizes as "tasty" (96). Intended for performance by the United Company, an amalgamation of the King's Company and the Duke's Company, in February 1685, *Sir Courtly's* première was of necessity postponed because of the death of

Charles on the 6th of that month. The first performance finally took place on 9 May 1685, at the Drury Lane Theatre. Subsequently, it was presented at court in November 1685, and again in November 1686, and it was revived innumerable times throughout the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Sir Courtly Nice is something of an anomaly, for it comes relatively late in the Restoration period and is substantially and directly derived from its Spanish source. Most other plays of the final decades of the century that show indebtedness to Spanish plays (not prose) either take only certain elements of their plots from them or, if they borrow more substantially, it is indirectly, by means of intermediaries, such as earlier English adaptations of *comedias*, or, as frequently happened, French plays and novellas based on *comedias* and *novelas*. At the same time, many plays of the time that relate in some fashion to Spanish models reveal the increasing influence in those years of neo-classical dramatic theory which urged, among other things, the simplification of intrigue and greater attention to characterization.²³ Such measures supposedly served the didactic function of theatre, so important to the neo-classicists, but instruction cannot be provided without delight, one especially pleasing form of which, as the dramatists were discovering, is witty repartee. The result of this new approach is that plays that in the early 1660s would have been cast in the mold of “Spanish plot” were now being conceived, like *Sir Courtly Nice*, as comedies of manners or wit. The new model, clearly, was Molière.²⁴

The various tendencies mentioned are already evident in several plays of the late 1660s and early 1670s. The first of these was William Davenant’s *The Man’s the Master*, an adaptation of Paul Scarron’s *Jodelet, ou le maître valet*, which was in turn based on Rojas Zorrilla’s *Donde hay agravios no hay celos* (*Where There Is Offense There Can Be No Jealousy*). It was premièred on 26 March 1668 by the Duke’s Company at Lincoln’s Inn Fields, and was performed several other times that spring. Although Pepys was not impressed – “most of the mirth was sorry, poor stuffe” (quoted in *London Stage, Pt 1*: 132) – others must have been, for it was revived later in the century, and even on three occasions in the eighteenth century.²⁵

Of greater importance, nevertheless, in the history of English theatre were four other works of these years, two of them by John Dryden, the best-known

²³ These and other related matters can possibly help to explain the popularity of Moreto, whose plays were more akin to the English comedy of manners than Calderón’s.

²⁴ On the influence of Molière on English theatre in this period, see Wilcox, Suckling, and Hughes (117–22). On the overall development of Restoration comedy, see, particularly, Nicoll (168–235) but also Bevis (71–102) and Hughes (30–77, 113–51, 185–239, 331–57, 377–423).

²⁵ On the relation between *The Man’s the Master*, and the French and Spanish works from which it derives, see Rundle, “D’Avenant’s *The Man’s the Master*.” Rundle’s contention that Davenant was directly acquainted with *Donde hay agravios* is disputed by Loftis (*Plays* 95).