Entering in the Italicized: A Transnational Study on Crossdressing and Stage Direction in Shakespearean Comedy and Spanish *Comedia*

A Thesis Presented

By

Karla Gaitan

To

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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ABSTRACT

What does it mean to come in for someone? Cross-dressed bodies have unique stage directions when it comes to printed materials from the seventeenth century and those nuances have been lost or hidden in our modern-day anthologies. This project lies at the intersection between book history, gender studies, and transnational studies in order to observe the presentation of stage direction on the page and how that space reflects contemporary attitudes towards female cross-dressing. Although there are similarities on the surface between Shakespearean comedies and Siglo de Oro comedias, it is only in comparing them transnationally that one can see the radical differences between the two national stages. By reading the page visually, the superficial, plot driven similarities pales in comparison to the disparities in the stage direction expressed on the physical page. I will be examining these plays within three visual paradigms: Place & Space / Fluidity, Presence / Non-Presence, and Duality / Hybridity. Through these paradigms, I have observed that Shakespearean comedies tend to restrict moments of cross-dress within explicit stage directions and depend heavily off of implicit stage directions located within the dialogue, while Spanish comedies allow not only for more moments of cross-dress, but also for detailed descriptions of the cross-dressed body. I have come to the conclusion that by limiting the explicit stage direction and using male alter-egos in moments of cross-dress, the stage direction is an expression of English anxieties over the cross-dressed body and the transgression of gender boundaries. The Spanish stage directions, on the other hand, do not shy away from multiple moments of cross-dress and this in turn reveals a less anxious society and expresses positive attitudes towards freedom, rather than restriction, over the female body.
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Note on the Text

Before I delve into the details, I wanted to clarify the manner in which I choose and use the archival texts found in this project. Since this project is transnational, there was a difference in the access I had to archival pieces from the Spanish plays versus the English plays. For each of the Spanish plays (Don Gil de Las Calzas Verdes, El Vergonzozo en Palacio, and La Vida es Sueño), I was lucky enough to find one printed edition for each play from the seventeenth century that was digitized in the Hispanic Digital Library, or the digital collection of the National Library of Spain. With the Shakespearean comedies, thanks to Internet Shakespeare Editions, I had access to many different versions of Merchant of Venice, As You Like It, and Twelfth Night. Since this is a comparative project though, I wanted to make sure the space within this project was used equally. Therefore, I will be only using samples from the First Folio, specifically the facsimiles from Brandeis University, for all my material evidence and in-text citations for all three plays. Although the first quarto was the earliest printing of Shakespeare’s plays, only Merchant of Venice appears within that collection; therefore, the first folio is the earliest printing available with all three plays present. Within my in-text citations, I will be maintaining the original spelling and punctuation, as far as possible. This will make my citations appear grammatically incorrect at times, but since this project is working with visual archival material, I wanted to maintain the authenticity of the text. Lastly, in order to capture the Spanish text as exactly as possible, I will be providing my own translations within brackets next to the quotes rather than using a published translation. While published translations try to maintain not only the language, but also the rhythm and patterns of the lines, I am working on a more literal level, therefore wanted to provide more literal translations to further add context to my project.
Introduction: What Does It Mean to *Come in for*?

What does it mean to come in for someone? The moment Portia enters the courtroom, she no longer enters as herself. Cue “Enter Portia for Balthazar.” (179). What does it mean to change one’s gendered clothing, even more one’s identity, in order to enter a familiar space? In Shakespeare’s stage directions, Portia and Rosalind both *come in for* someone else when they cross-dress in *Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It*, but are they not still their own person under that disguise? The bigger question in this situation is can they be female in moments of cross-dress and shifting gender performance? Within our modern anthologies of Shakespeare, whether it is Norton or Arden, we have forgotten these original stage directions for the sake of clarity. We lose the perception of the cross-dressed body, because what is stage direction if not action and movement on the stage? Janette Dillon contends that “a play is as reliable a witness to the cultural concerns of a society as is a non-fictional record” (Dillon 5). While Dillon’s focus is more on the ceremonial space in non-fictional records, I want to focus more on the visuality of stage directions in printed editions from the seventeenth century. I will explore how stage direction as an artifact of cultural concerns rewards those concerns within society. When we watch *Merchant of Venice* performed, we are not told when someone walks in or who is to speak the next line, but we watch it in action. When we read, *Merchant of Venice*’s stage directions give us a visual perception of what is happening on stage and can even dictate how something

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1 Although the page numbers throughout the first folio are notoriously inconsistent, I will be using them as markers for identification for the quotes provided. When there is not a page number present, I will be stating whether it is the verso or the recto of page with pagination available for citation.

2 Janette Dillon strives to provide as full of a picture as possible to capture the momentous significance of details that we tend to ignore with time in order to recover a more precise and nuanced sense of their contemporary significance when it comes to space and ceremony. For more information look to *The Language of Space in Court Performance, 1400-1625*. 
may be presented on stage. In the end, stage direction is what makes a play something real, visual and performed, rather than just words on a page.

But do we read stage direction the same way we read the lines spoken or is it its own category? Catherine Larson explains two ways in which stage directions can be read:

On the one hand, they promote a more realistic and more plausible reading, because they clarify the links between dialogue, action, and dramatic space. On the other hand, the act of pausing to read a stage direction temporarily halts the flow of the dramatic action, diminishing the mimetic quality of that reading by interrupting at the level of the plot.

(Larson 182)

The dual manner of reading stage direction that Larson defines is how I want to situate my project. I want to focus on how stage direction is working in partnership with the lines spoken, or what I will be referring to as the content, while still serving as a visual interruption on the page that halts the flow of reading. To further nuance this conversation, I want to connect the visuality of the stage direction in the material text to another crucial moment of stage materiality: cross-dressing. Within these moments of cross-dress, a transnational comparison of English and Spanish plays reveals how stage direction can serve as meta-commentary for cultural anxieties or freedoms that were expressed in printed form and may further contextualize how these bodies were presented on stage. The plays in question for this project will be Shakespeare’s Merchant of

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3 Visuality refers to the ways in which vision is constructed in various ways: ‘how we see, how we are able, allowed, or made to see, and how we see this seeing and the unseeing therein (foster 1988: ix). Another phrase with very similar connotations to visuality is scopic regime. Both terms refer to the ways in which both what is seen and how it is seen are culturally constructed. For further definition of the term, look to Gillian Rose’s Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretative of Visual Materials.
Venice, Twelfth Night, and As You Like It on the English side and Pedro Calderon de La Barca’s La Vida es Sueño, Tirso de Molina’s El Vergonzoso en el Palacio and Don Gil de las Calzas Verdes on the Spanish side.⁴

While both these cultures share similar comedic plots and tropes of the cross-dressed female, the manner in which these characters vary nationally in stage direction and on the stage is something to take note of. While cross-dressed characters, like Portia and Rosalind, must come in for someone in the explicit stage direction, Spanish heroines, such as Doña Juana and Rosaura were able to come in as themselves dressed in male clothing. On the stage, the English were accustomed to an all-male cast and banned the appearance of women on stage because it was thought to compromise their modesty during Renaissance times. While Spanish morality was far more restrictive of woman’s behavior in comparison, actresses still appeared on the Spanish stage with the explicit approval of civil and religious authorities. The one caveat was that Spanish theatres required actresses to be married.⁵ Not only does the stage directions on the material page vary greatly between both cultures, but the physical bodies on stage that represented women were also different in gender when it came to the English and Spanish stages.

Visually, stage direction serves as an interruption on the page. It is a moment of pause to give context and shape perception of what is occurring on stage through action. According to Gillian Woods, “the stage direction is both text and action: it can be read, interpreted, edited, glossed, heard, seen and made. … Stage directions may exist in all these arenas, or may be missing in action: realized on stage but absent in text, or vice versa. Stage directions mutate in their different forms. Stage directions are thus fundamentally mutable, enigmatic and various”

⁴ Although The Gentleman of Verona fits into the paradigm I propose with Julia, the cross-dressing female lead, for reasons of space, I was unable to include this play within this project.
⁵ Stephen Orgel, in his book Impersonations, discusses these differences amongst European theatres and explores the reasoning behind the longevity of the all-male stage in England during Elizabethan times.
Stage directions’ many forms, therefore, go further than just context and direction of staging but express the very parameters of what can be presented on stage socially. When stage directions are implicit in the play text but not given as explicit stage directions, the plot and the dialogue are able to dictate the actions of the play more than the stage direction. For example, Rosalind is cross-dressed for a majority of the play, but only once does the explicit stage directions state that she comes in for Ganymede out of the eight-stage direction present during her cross-dress. When there is no explicit stage direction present to dictate the visual aspects of staging, that ambiguity may allow the status quo, in relation to the persecution of female cross-dress and the banning of females on stage, to influence the visual image of a body cross-dressed on stage. In contrast, when it is made clear within the explicit stage directions when one is dressed as a man or woman, this may change our perception of cross-dressing itself. Doña Juana, in Don Gil de las Calzas Verdes, has explicit stage directions for every moment she switches in between female and male dress which expresses a consistent liberty to go from one form to the other. It is through stage direction that we can examine these differences in the cross-dressing comedies of the Spanish and the English during the seventeenth century and further explore how the space of stage direction is used to express societal concerns over the fashioning of the female body, the power that came with cross-dressing, and the disruption of gender binaries.

I contend that stage direction serves as a moment of interruption on the physical page in the manner that it is formatted and serves as a space, in the Certeauvian sense; that is to say that “space is a practiced place. In relation to place, space is like the word when it is spoken, when it

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6 Martin Banham, in “‘The Merchant of Venice’ and the implicit stage direction,” discusses how identifying and exploiting the hidden stage direction in an Elizabethan text can not only inform a production of a play but can bring us closer to the challenges that comes with working in a contemporary playhouse. Within this article he discusses the use of implicit or hidden stage directions within the text versus explicit stage directions that are far and few between.
is caught in the ambiguity of an actualization, transformed into a term dependent upon many different conventions, situated as the act of a present (or of a time), and modified by the transformation caused by successive contexts” (de Certeau116-117). Attending to this spatial marking can give us insight into how these cross-dressed females used the space around them or how the space/place dictated their boundaries, which in turn may tell us more about the early modern views of gender dynamics and cross-dressing. Janette Dillon argues that the meanings of place and space are “made through a negotiation between materiality and consciousness” with negotiation being the key word (8). Although Dillon is referring to the real physical space of the English court, I want to extend this to the material page and the consciousness of the content or the lines spoken. While these plays have been probed in historical and literary readings, I want to demonstrate in a close reading of the stage directions how these two national stages and pages differ not only in presentation, but in the amount of space it takes up visually on the page when it comes to explicit stage directions in relation to cross-dressing. Stage direction I believe lies at the crux between gender studies and visuality, and by visually reading these non-spoken, printed stage directions, we can further our understanding of the bodily and sartorial female freedoms and limitations present within moments of cross-dress.

Marjorie Garber speaks of the transvestite being an interruption, a disturbance, a third, or a crisis category. I am taking this notion one step further in arguing that the stage direction itself, in regard to cross-dressing, is the manifestation of the transvestite interruption that Garber discusses. If stage direction is the interruption, Shakespearean comedies tend to avoid such a disturbance present on the page, in order to not fuel anxieties over the cross-dressed body. On the other hand, the Spanish plays create more opportunities for the exploration of cross-dress and the female body with the consistent presence of explicit stage directions, or interruptions, throughout
their plays. Using stage direction as my focus, I will be looking at contemporaneous editions of English and Spanish comedies, all printed within the seventeenth century, as a manner in which to compare these supposed atypical comedies that look so similar. With this lens, it has become clear that the representations of cross-dress are radically different and were therefore fueled either by already existing anxieties, on the English side, or hopes for bodily freedom, on the Spanish side, that may have created a different perception of the cross-dressed female on the physical stage and the page.

Although they come from two very different national stages, both the English and the Spanish plays share similar comedic elements. All these plays either end in marriage or on the road to marriage, have an empowered female who gains more power, or gains a path to survival, through cross-dressing, and all share comedic tropes, such as the female characters falling in love with the male/female counterpart. Even if these plays share many generic features, the way in which each of the female characters cross-dress within the stage direction impacts how the printed page is perceived and visualized and remind us of the difference in bodies on the stage that represented female characters. While there were women on the Spanish stage, there were still boys on the English stage representing female characters. I will be approaching this material with close readings of both implicit and explicit stage directions, as well as by exploring how the stage direction visually interacts with the content itself to see how both affect our perception of cross-dressed women on the stage between English and Spanish early modern comedies. Rather than examining these plays by placing them into singular English-Spanish binaries, I will be placing them into the visual field that I found either reinforce or break down gender binaries. For example, the dual identity of Portia/Balthazar versus the hybrid body of Rosaura dressed as
female carrying a sword and a dagger offer two very different perceptions of the cross-dressed body.

The first paradigm is *Space & Place / Fluidity*. For the discussion of space and place I will drawing on Michel De Certeau and Janette Dillon’s definitions of space and place. De Certeau explains space as a practice place in which space and place both have different purposes but are interconnected, while Dillon wants to make it clear that there is not a simple opposition between place as material and space as perceptual. Rather than having the explicit stage direction create movement and change, place and space work together in Shakespearean comedies, through the implicit stage direction, to dictate when a female may or may not be cross-dressed. Spanish plays allow for female characters to go back and forth in different spaces and far more often than not. In the case of Nerissa, it is the masculine space/place of the courtroom that dictates when she is cross-dressed, while Doña Juana chooses when she is dressed as a woman or a man depending on what she needs in order to accomplish her plan. That type of fluidity allows for more physical presence on the page.

The second paradigm is *Presence / Lack of Presence* of stage direction on the physical page. With stage direction about cross-dressing females, the amount of detail or the amount of space it may take up on a page visually changes how we read that page. With more space also comes a bigger physical interruption on the page. While characters such as Portia, Rosalind, and Viola only have one mention of cross-dressing within the stage direction, Doña Juana and Rosaura have multiple, which takes up more space on the page. This in turn presents a far more hybrid page in terms of the ratio between content and stage direction.

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7 For further explanation and definition of space/place look to *Practice of Everyday Life* by De Certeau. To further explore the complications that come with such a binary look to Dillon’s *The Language of Space in Court Performance, 1400-1625*. 
This brings me to my third and last paradigm; *Duality / Hybridity*. On the page itself, it can appear as if our cross-dressed females are either male or female, or it can be presented as if they were both as once. When Serafina, in *El Vergonzoso en Palacio*, cross-dresses she merely comes in as herself dressed in man’s clothing within the stage direction. She does not need an alter-ego in order to cross-dress within the stage direction. Female cross-dressers within these Spanish comedies simply come in dressed as a *mujer* or an *hombre* and this in turn adds a sense of hybridity on the page with their female body on the physical stage, their female name and body in the fictional world and that name itself present in male garb. On the other hand, English plays tend to create a duality between the ever-constant presence of our protagonist’s name or abbreviation in the speech heading, while still presenting the alter-ego in the stage direction. While it is Portia, or Por, that consistently shows up in speech headings, it is as Balthazar she appears, thus presenting a dual identity on the page. Although this may not be consistently observed throughout the whole play, it does reveal that stage direction is a space in which these gender dynamics can either be represented as a binary or as hybridity. Overall, in exploring stage directions through these three paradigms within contemporary seventeenth century comedy, I strive to explore stage direction as meta-commentary on the social situations during the early modern era, as well as to use stage direction as a tool to work transnationally in order to recover a more precise image of cross-dressing female heroines.

**Literature Review**

This project lies at the intersection of three scholarly fields: gender studies, book history, and transnational studies. I will be going over the contributions of each field separately and how each contributes to my project. One of the fields that garners a great deal of attention
when it comes to Shakespeare and plays of the Golden Age from Spain, particularly the comedies, is gender studies. The cross-dressed protagonist or lead female has been a point of interest within this field since the seventies and the goal has been to contextualize this trope and further complicate this concept of gender and sexuality. Marjorie Garber, for example, argues for a *third* mode, in which “transvestism” articulates a place of possibility. This third category of transvestism serves as what she calls a category crisis, or a failure of definitional distinction. This is a borderline that is permeable and allows for border crossing from one distinct category to another. She claims that this crisis category marks displacement from the axis of class, race and gender.\(^8\) In all, she states that transvestism is a space of possibility structuring and confounding culture: the disruptive element that intervenes, not just a category crisis of male and female, but the crisis of category itself’ (Garber 17). While Garber tends to look at transvestism as a whole as the disruptive element, I would like to extend this idea of disruption to the material text by asserting that stage direction involving cross-dress is the manifestation of this interruption and serves as its own category of crisis.

Rather than focus on the character of the cross-dresser, Stephen Orgel and Michael Shapiro look into the English anxieties that produce cross-dressing. In *Impersonations*, Orgel wants to further explore the question of why the English stage was the last European one to convert from an all-male playhouse and he comes to the conclusion, using historical and literary analysis, that the preservation of all-male acting companies was a way to contain female sexuality because English society felt that was a far more threatening force than homosexuality in the theater. Similarly, Shapiro is also concerned with the anxieties of cross-dress when it comes to Elizabethan

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\(^8\) Marjorie Garber goes into further detail about what she means by the third category in relation to the third world, the third actor, and third dimension in the Lacanian sense within *Vested Interests: Crossdressing & Cultural Anxiety*, pg 16-17
England. Using both theater and social history, Shapiro connects Shakespeare’s works with controversies over cross-dressing and gender. He views the female page as a theatrical way to confront, avoid, or exploit the representation of women both on stage and in society. Both Shapiro and Orgel are concerned with how these anxieties were connected to the cross-dressed figure, and in this project, I want to extend the field of examination to stage direction itself to demonstrate that this space is an artifact of these concerns when it comes to gender roles.

To cap off this discussion of gender studies in the Shakespearean world, I wanted to discuss a portion of a foundational text in gender studies, *Gender Trouble* by Judith Butler, and its relation to costuming and the fashioning of the body that Robert Lublin discusses in his book *Costuming the Shakespearean Stage*. Butler argues “Gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts. The effect of gender is produced through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and styles of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self” (Butler 179). Early modern theater and especially cross-gender casting on the English stage complicate the notion that gender was directly connected to sex or genitalia during this time. Gender can be further complicated with the attention to clothing and direction within plays. Each of these cross-dressing heroines use the stylization of their body in order to cross-dress and their *masculine* behavior is a repetition of acts that would be done by a man. Of course, Butler is discussing this in a sense that gender is an illusion created by these acts, but these heroines are using these stylized actions in order to pass.

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9 For a deeper look into how Shapiro contextualizes the transvestite performance, the cultural attitudes, and theatrical practices look to *Gender in Play on the Shakespearean Stage: Boy Heroines and Female Pages*. 
Something essential to cross-dressing and passing as the other sex is clothing, which is ironically left out of a lot of explicit stage direction on the material page. Lublin argues that costuming mattered a great deal to the English theatrical enterprises and that in the end “costumes contributed as much as dialogue to the staging of the early modern theatre” (7). He discusses the complex manner in which sex is visually and materially constructed on the stage and asserts that the sartorial choices of the time served to construct these notions of sex and gender as much as the spoken lines did. 10 It was these choices that the staging of a play would make to express gender, and it was stage direction that would inform these decisions as well as clothing. Lublin claims that “the rule of the stage was that one’s natural apparel asserted the wearer’s sex according to contemporary visual codes. And yet, there are instances in which the clothing appropriate to a character’s sex included elements belonging to both men and women” (36). The manner in which these heroines fashion themselves is telling of the gender perceptions of the time, but what happens when the stage direction leaves space for ambiguity, like they do in English plays? I argue that these ambiguities in the explicit stage direction left space in which gender norms may take form in costuming rather than highlighting the aspects of hybridity present in cross-dressing. Lublin here is arguing that clothing contributes as much as dialogue does to the staging, but one element he is forgetting to mention is stage direction and how that may affect clothing choices made on the stage. Stage direction is an artifact of the time and also a way to influence the times and it should not be ignored in the conversation of gender and the fashioning of the body.

Turning now to Spanish comedias, the female cross-dressed character or la mujer varonil is a very common trope within dramatic works in Spain and Melveena McKendrick’s work is

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10 Robert Lublin’s *Costuming the Shakespearean Stage*, is an in depth look at costuming and the historical details of costuming as well. Look to this for more information on how these sartorial choices no only informed the stage but the society around it.
foundational to the origin, history and variations of *la mujer varonil*.\textsuperscript{11} While her study of *the avenger*, the woman who cross-dresses to avenge her own honor or some cases her lover, and *la mujer esquiva (the clever woman)* directly relates to my study of Rosaura, Doña Juana, and Serafina, it is her notion of the relationship between dramatic form and social norms that offers helpful context. She discusses how the stage appearance of heroines dressed in masculine clothing freely through society has led past scholars and commentators to assert that these features were common in Spanish society. While she demonstrates that this claim is not true, she touches on something important when it comes to the presence of the cross-dressed female: the possibility she represents. As McKendrick puts it, “Golden-Age drama may not accurately reflect the reality of woman’s position in society, but it may reflect contemporary concern about wisdom of allowing changes in that position” (44). It is woman’s potentialities and possibilities that are present within the absurd plots of these comedies, but they are explored within the limits of what was socially conceivable. By the standards of their time, these Spanish dramatists were enlightened, but playwrights such as Lope de Vega were “not prepared to emancipate [women] from [their] dependence on the male” (330). While McKendrick creates a history of the *mujer varonil* in theatre and categorizes this character, I want to expand on her work and her argument by applying it to stage direction. Stage direction is a space in which these possibilities for female freedom were present and by examining this space of the material text, one can see that this attitude towards women is even present in the italicized.

Since McKendrick’s analysis, the character of the cross-dressed female has only been further complicated. Anita Stoll discusses the concept of the cross-dressing female in two other Tirso de

\textsuperscript{11} Melveena McKendrick’s book, *Woman and Society in The Spanish Drama of the Golden Age: A Study in the Mujer Varonil*, goes into detail about how we define the term mujer varonil, which she states almost defies translation. She defines the mujer varonil as the woman who departs in any significant way from the feminine norm of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
Molina comedies, namely *El Amor medico* [Love, the Doctor] and *El Aquiles* [Achilles]. Through the examination of these two plays, Stoll comes to the conclusion that “while the ending reinforces the heterosexual power structure, a social construct, the protagonist who disrupts gender patterns provides a role model which questions the ostensible conclusion” (Stoll 87). She argues that metadrama is the key to understanding the performative representation of gender, “since the distance between gendered body and gendered clothing already provide a step toward self-referentiality” (87). Stoll goes beyond the superficial ending of marriage in these plays and looks at the cross-dressed figure herself and what influences she has on the text and the performance. Extending Stoll’s analysis to stage directions can show how not only performance but print can challenge patriarchal corrections of gender disruption and cross-dressing and uncovers the female freedoms expressed by the cross-dressed body on the stage. While Stoll uses textual analysis, I am using stage direction to see beyond the surface.

Jonathan Thacker discusses the importance of metatheatre as well when it comes to role-playing and the Golden Age drama. In his book, *Role-play and the World as Stage in the Comedia*, Thacker uses the metaphor of *theatrum mundi* to examine how and why playwrights of the sixteenth and seventeenth century created characters who dramatize themselves by performing new roles and inventing new plots. He argues that in comedy, dramatist saw these role-playing roles as a means by which they could comment and critic the society in which they lived. Since social life relies upon metatheatrical role-play to function and to establish social truths, “by showing the ease with which role-play can be manufactured, available roles exploited, Golden age drama challenges the status of the roles which do exist in society” (Thacker 18). Although

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12 Thacker defines metatheatre as the dramatist creation of characters who are aware of the theatricality of life, who can act, who can play, who refuse to view themselves as predictable actors in a monolithic system of prescribed behavior. pg. 3
Thacker’s book goes beyond the subject of cross-dressing by discussing the concept of self-expression and escapism, his connection of role-play to the *comedia* explores why these cross-dressing characters existed. While Thacker focuses on the importance of metatheatricality, I will be focusing on the importance of stage direction as a meta commentary on the contemporary society around it.

In contrast to the scholars I have mentioned above, Robert Bayliss argues that the critical landscape of the *Comedia* needs to be revised in light of the many female playwrights that were producing during the seventeenth century. His study advocates for the reconsideration of the critical function of these female writers in the now gender inclusive field of *Comedia* scholarship. Through his comparison of *Don Gil de las Calzas Verdes* to Ana Caro’s *Valor, agravio y mujer*, he calls into question the *female agency and feminism* of the male dramatists during the time and believes that these dramatists “deserve the same degree of feminist critique and scrutiny as any other work in the patriarchal canon” (Bayliss 305). He believes that the role of gender subversion in plots involving female crossdressing needs to be reformulated due to the fact that we have an authentic *punto de vista feminino* now to measure against the legacy *capa y espada* plays written by male playwrights.\(^{13}\) He believes that to “read the disparity between the real-world oppression and enclosure of women and the mundo al revés [world in reverse] of the *Comedia* as the championing of female autonomy and agency is to ascribe twentieth-century values to seventeenth-century culture” (320). That view only seemed plausible when women playwrights were in the margins, but now that they are present within our scholarly community, we should look to them to set the record straight about female freedom. While I do believe that the inclusion of female playwrights is necessary to expanding our view of female agency and feminism at the

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\(^{13}\) *Capa y Espada* plays are a name for comedies specifically because the Spanish *comedia* technically involved all forms of drama.
time, I don’t believe that the plays of male playwrights are completely obsolete in contributing to this understanding. There is still much to learn from these comedies and to think that what we have learned from capa y espada plays is entirely anachronistic is plainly wrong. Examining both in tandem can further nuance the concept of cross-dressing and female agency during the early modern era and both are necessary to gaining a better handle of the societal views of the time.

Within this project, I want to look at the use and presentation of stage direction in early printings and the study of stage direction has slowly been moving out of the margins. Stage direction and speech headings both share a similar narrating quality, therefore their presence within the scholarly community shares some commonalities. William B. Long resists this concept of varying speech-headings as mistakes and wants to contextualize these as part of the process of the changing hands from playwright, to the theatre, to the private patron. His argument is that playwrights and the theatre had no concern over regularizing speech headings, but rather than just looking at them as mistakes, they should further look at varying speech-headings as “vestigial remains of that planning, left by playwright and used by players” (Long 25). He refers to speech headings as archeological remains that provide evidence for the times of theatre before, an argument I would like to extend to stage direction. Similarly, McLeod touches on the importance of how we read these parts of the document. He says, “the ideal unity we read into such a text runs up against a fragmentation or a multiplicity that we actually read. It is a problem of interpretation whether such supposed traces of construction are to be swept under the rug in production, as if they were mere noise, or whether they are to be attended to as messages—as discontinuities in tone, or in action, or in what interested me most here, individual characterization” (McLeod 136-137). It is this mode of interpretation and attended messages that
I am tracking with stage direction in order to understand not only more about the theater, but about the society surrounding it.

Although speech-headings and stage direction are similar, in the sense that they make the fictional text a performance, the scholarly world began to take notice that they differ in form and function. In her examination of the function of stage direction, Patricia Suchy argues that “stage direction, although considered by most to be a natural utterance, existing apart from the text's fictive dialogue, can be read more appropriately as part of a play's fiction” (71). Stage direction occupies a liminal zone between the literary text and the mise en scene, or the design of the stage. These moments are not meant to be said aloud, but are meant to be performed, therefore serving as a form of narration, belonging to both realms of disasclalia and dialogue.14 Suchy touches on the work of Michael Issacharoff as a starting point for her research into the function of stage direction by describing his two categories that were considered instructions within the playscript: didascalia and dialogue, describing how Issacaroff’s model “relies on a dialectic relationship between the didascalia and the dialogue”(Suchy 74). However, stage direction, according to Suchy, moves past Issacaroff’s model and must be considered in the totality of the theatre event, rather than just inscriptions on the page. The stage direction itself as an utterance “is not inherent in the utterance itself, but rather governed by conventional understanding in the specific context in which it is uttered” (Suchy 77). While I agree that stage direction works in tandem with the play’s fiction, stage direction can be extended further to explore the stage on which it was uttered. While Suchy wants to make an argument that stage

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14 Suchy goes into depth about the actual function of stage direction and how it is connected to the literary text using concepts of Speech act theory and following the taxonomy that Issacharoff created. For further reading, look to her article “When Worlds Collide: The Stage Direction as Utterance”
direction is just another part of the play, I want to go beyond the fiction to look at the real-world implications.

Another manner in which stage direction has been examined is through its connection to the author and the author’s intention. This has led to conflicts over how our modern texts should be edited and the problems that come with removing, adding or moving stage directions.\(^\text{15}\) Allan Dessen has explored this further in his article “The Elizabethan-Jacobean Script-to-Stage Process: The Playwright, Theatrical Intentions, and Collaboration.” Dessen attempts to answer the question we all want to know when it comes to Shakespeare: Does the stage direction provide some form of authorial voice or are they signals of a conversation between a playwright and a theatre practitioner?\(^\text{916}\) After moving beyond enter-exit and what he calls traffic control, the problems in definition and exploration for him increase because “most playscripts of this period is not explicit detail about to stage a given moment but some combination of 1) silence and 2) coded signals directed at playhouse professionals” (396). Dessen comes to the conclusion that rather than presenting a strong authorial voice, stage direction is an artifact of a collaborative theatrical process and when we read these playscripts today, we enter into the middle of the conversation between the playwright and the player. Dessen expresses hope that we can recover some elements of vocabulary to better understand this conversation, but nonetheless concedes

\(^{15}\) Phillip Parry, in “Minding the Gap: Shakespeare and the Modern Editor,” discusses the struggle of the modern editions with stage directions. While Parry does agree that stage-directions in early texts of Shakespeare’s plays under-prescribe individual production and performance outcomes, while stage directions in “collaborative” modern editions are in danger of over-prescribing them. His conclusion is some gaps are meant to left open because there is a lot of weight that can be contributed to a single word.

\(^{16}\) Dessen discusses how recent scholarship have “debunked the notion of an orderly promptbook as an anachronism and demonstrated that a high percentage of stage directions are authorial in origin (see especially the work of William B. Long), but he struggles to find definition and detail in these stage directions for there was no information about costumes, make-up, or props, which were all presumably the province of the actor.” pg 396. For more information on the work of William Long he references look to his article “Stage-Directions: A Misinterpreted Factor in Determining Textual Provenance.”
that we will always be eavesdroppers.\textsuperscript{17} A big question in stage direction, especially with Shakespeare, has always been whether these are artifacts of his thinking. This is not my concern because at this point in the contemporary printed literature, so many hands have touched the supposed original manuscript that it is impossible to state if this text is in its original form. Dessen’s mistake in looking at these stage directions is underplaying the importance of entrances and exits. The second mistake he made is not seeing meaning in the silences. This is extremely important in understanding what may be uttered and what cannot, and it is within these “basic” moments that I am exploring the complicated gender issues at play within these cross-dressing dramas.

While explicit stage directions have garnered attention, another form of stage direction has come to light through scholarship: implicit stage direction. Martin Banham examines Act 5 of \textit{Merchant of Venice}, in order to express the concept of implicit action. He believes that identifying the hidden stage direction in an Elizabethan text will not only inform any production of the play but will brings us closer to the challenges and opportunities that were present in contemporary playhouses. He looks at the flirtatious speeches of Lorenzo and Jessica for another kind of language at work, the language of movement. He suggests that “by applying our theatrical imagination we can draw out of a text information concerning the nature of performance assumed by its writer and performers that is not separately offered as explicit stage directions” and calls this implicit stage direction (274). While Banham’s article gave me the vocabulary I needed in order to speak about how the content is dictating actions within the plays I have chosen to examine, I do think that there is value in exploring why there is such a disparity

\textsuperscript{17} In order to gain a better understanding of the vocabulary and the origins of this vocabulary in stage directions Alan Dessen and Leslie Thomson created a dictionary called \textit{A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama 1580-1642}. 
in explicit stage directions versus implicit stage directions in Shakespeare’s works and this project attempts to answer that question in part.

Picking up where Suchy left off, Linda McJannet further explores the form and voice of stage directions and how they are an important aspect of dramatic discourse within Elizabethan drama. McJannet argues that the form and voice of Elizabethan stage directions create their invisibility and unobtrusiveness and these qualities are the source to their relative authority amongst performers. She proposes to “examine Elizabethan stage directions from the point of view of their voice and address, their conventions as an effective verbal and graphic code” by describing “their characteristic visual deployment, their grammar, and their rhetorical stance” (28). McJannet is the only one to look at the visual aspects of the stage direction and to take into account their grammar and placement. It is in this application of stage direction visually in which I base my project, and this reveals the power of stage direction when it is examined on its own, garnering its own authority.

The most recent and comprehensive collection of essays regarding stage direction, *Stage Directions and Shakespearean Theatre*, was just released in 2017 by Gillian Woods and Sarah Dustagheer. This collection strives to brings the importance of examining stage direction in the scholarly world to the forefront. Woods claims that stage direction is both text and action and its many forms make it fundamentally enigmatic. The challenges that come with examining stage direction not only come from their various form, but from their uncertain origins, which in turn makes them appear suspicious. “Ranging from basic(exit/enter) to the spectacular (‘a hand from out a cloud threateneth a burning sword’),” Woods claims that stage direction is rich with interpretative possibilities and are eccentric in language (7). The point of this collection is to bring to light an important aspect of scholarship that has been overlooked, a larger project to
which I hope to contribute with my examination of cross-dressing females. Laurie Maguire’s article within this collection discusses how stage direction “mediate between the bare boards of the early modern stage and the imagined location. They mediate between the reader’s experience and the viewer’s, whether explaining relationships or describing costume and disguise” (Maguire 47). She claims that it is the boundary between the fictional world of the play and the theatrical presentation that stage direction not only polices but enables. It is this boundary that I want to explore, using stage direction to better understand the society surrounding the stage.

On the Spanish side, there has been far less inquiry on stage direction and the use of it as a tool for analyzing a text. A manner in which stage directions within Spanish texts are analyzed is as evidence for what the material stage looked like and how playwrights pulled off effects and visuals on the stage. Rather than stage direction being used to examine relationships between author and theater or form, it is used as material proof for what occurred on stage. Don Cruickshank, Margaret Hicks, and Dawn Smith all examine staging and scenic effects of golden age era plays. Cruickshank’s strives to investigate how Calderon dealt with moving images in his staging and his stage direction in order to create the illusion on stage and after some analysis of the text, he states that it is painting, whether it is in the backdrop or the props, that plays a considerable role. Even in the stage direction, it refers to directions of behavior for character who “should be ‘en la forma que la pintan [in a form that they are being painted’” (29). Hick’s examines how darkness is perceived on a very bare stage in full daylight and comes to the conclusion that “the dialogue and explicit stage directions supply ample evidence of this audio-visual strategy for invoking stage darkness, thus allowing the modern reader a glimpse of a now

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18 For further reading look to Cruickshank’s “All Done with Mirrors: Calderonian Experiments in Staging,” Hicks’ “Stage Darkness in the Early Plays of Lope de Vega,” and Smith’s “A Study of Staging and Scenic Effects in Two ‘Comedias de Tramoyas’ by Tirso de Molina”
obsolete stagecraft” (228). Smith wants to draw importance to the staging of the *comedia* and analyzes these effects on three levels: effects produced on the level of the platform stage, effects produced on the upper levels of the *fachada* and effect produced by painting or decorating the *fachada*. She comes to the conclusion that the two Tirso plays both use a similar combination of effects “involving every level of the performance space and that each level has a corresponding symbolic significance” (99). She also concludes that Tirso both required and expected to command this stage through the direction and wanted to command a more technically accomplished effect than in the play he had written twenty to thirty years earlier.

What all these articles have in common is in the manner in which they use stage direction as technical proof to how the stage was set up and how effects were pulled off in contemporary times. Rather than stage direction being used introspectively, it is used as material and technical evidence of the physical staging. I strive to use stage direction to look past the stage, towards the audience and the attitudes of the material cross-dressed body on the stage, ultimately analyzing stage direction for its visual qualities on the printed page itself.

Isaac Benabu focuses on the problems surrounding the reading of play texts, or “theatrical readings,” which he defines as a reading that is cognizant of the target to which the text is addressed to: the performance itself. Through his analysis of the opening of Tirso de Molina’s *El Burlador de Sevilla*, Benabu contends that the opening of a play is the most challenging part for a playwright, perceived by the audience as the beginning of the play and a result of careful staging. Through the analysis of contemporary playtexts, using the lens of a theatrical reading, it has become possible to decode the didascalia in order to highlight a dramatist’s approach to this problem. He states that “these directions are inserted into the playtext, specifically or by inference, they address a particular type of stage, an actor well-
acquainted with the conventions of the comedia-form if not with the specificities of a particular dramatist's writing, and they are always there in order to elicit a planned response indispensable for an audience's grasp of the unfolding plot. These performance signs are traceable through the play text, perhaps through what have been called the ‘gaps’ or ‘spaces’ in the text, from complementary directions” (193). Benabu provides an in-depth analysis of how the play opens through the directions and the gaps and reveals how Tirso carefully crafts directions and uses these methods in order to create an engaging and successful opening. Benabu is one of the few critics who look at stage direction and attempt to decode it in relation to what the play is attempting to accomplish in the context of the performance. While I want to move beyond the performance itself, the decoding of the didascalia and the examination of the spaces on the page is one of a few ways in which I will be examining the stage direction in relation to cross-dressing females and hope to gain insight to the perception of cross-dress and gender during that time through this examination.

Like Benabu, Catherine Larson also understands stage direction as a manner in which the performance can be written and expressed. In her study, she examines the material page that the reader encounters when reading a playscript, with an emphasis on the stage direction, their relationship to the staging of the comedia in classical and contemporary staging, and their function within the specific text of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz’s Los empeños de una casa. She contends that the stage direction comprises of an integral part of theatrical semiotic, therefore a better understanding of their function can serve as a guide to better integrating a performance text. She goes over how over how stage directions can either be explicit, expressed as specific directions, or implicit, when the dialogue or situation mandate particular staging

19 For further reading, look to “Writing the Performance: Stage Directions and the Staging of Sor Juana's Los empeños de una casa.”
choices. While some plays written in Golden Age provide more detailed and useful stage directions than others, Larson asserts that “in the majority of comedia manuscripts or printed texts, the types of explicit stage directions that do exist offer a minimal amount of useful information” (Larson 183). She argues that the explicit stage directions and the interior staging evidence exist in a complementary relationship, and even a seventeenth-century play with minimal explicit directions can reveal itself more fully when placed into context with the dialogue. The stage direction must be analyzed to serve as a force of textual authority when staging the classics in modern-day. While Larson is mainly concerned with the re-staging of the classics and the performance aspects in relation to these Golden-Age plays, it is the manner in which she treats stage directions that is essential to my understanding. I first want to contest her reading on the lack of stage direction and contend that Spanish stage direction does not look so minimal when compared to English plays, and Spanish stage direction about cross-dressed females look particularly detailed and fruitful. Secondly, the combination of both implicit and explicit stage directions serves to gain a fuller image of the play text, but what happens when there is a disconnection between the implicit and the explicit? There is also much to be learned from the visual presence of the explicit stage direction on its own when it comes to using stage direction to analyze attitudes off of the stage. Finally, Larson overlooks the form of implicit stage direction as part of the dialogue and the fact that it is read as part of the dialogue means that it will be read differently, and possibly carry less authority when it comes to action on the stage.

While studies in gender and book history have expanded with time, what needs more contributions and attention from the scholarly community is transnational studies. A model for transnational work on English and Spanish theater is Susan L. Fischer. According to her
colleague Bárbara Mujica, Fischer “has broken down barriers—disciplinary, national, and
temporal—and forged connections between textual criticism and performance practice, Calderón
and Shakespeare scholarship, classical theater and modern sociology, and psychology and
political theory” (Mujica 1). While Fischer’s work has focused on many comparisons between
English and Spanish plays, they have been focused on performance, translation, and literary
analysis. In the realm of transnational studies, the focus has been on translation, interpretation,
and literary analysis. To date, no one has explored transnational questions regarding gender
studies or book history in order to add context to the early modern era.

This thesis seeks to position itself in the intersection between materialism, gender studies,
and transnational studies. This project not only further explores the question of gender by
looking at pieces other than the historical and the literary, but also uses stage direction, a
component that has been overlooked, as a key piece of evidence that serves a significant role as
meta-commentary to the society around it. Examining how stage directions can actually connect
questions of gender and book history and exploring their function across cultures and national
theatrical conventions, can shed new light on both disciplinary and national traditions. Although
Susan Fischer has begun the task of transnational work in early modern theater, there is still a lot
to be done in exploring different cultural stages in contrast to further paint a better and more

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20 Fischer’s book Reading Performance: Spanish Golden Age Theatre and Shakespeare on the Modern Stage is all
about how plays are translated to stage and how that differs between Spanish and Anglo-American Stages. She
also has written articles comparing English and Spanish plays, such as “Tirso’s festive Comedy: *El Vergonzoso en
calacio* and *As You Like It,*” in which she discusses how Tirso’s play can further be illuminated by considering it in
the context of its Elizabethan counterpart, especially with regard to the seminal issues of love, the pastoral, and
the search for individual identity. Fischer also edited a compilation of essays about transnational work in a book
called *Comedias del Siglo de Oro,* in which most articles take on a binary way of comparing plays from two different
national stages. Overall Susan’s work has added greatly to the field but has stayed within the realm of theatre
studies and literary analysis. See also, Barbera Mujica’s *Shakespeare and the Spanish Comedy: Translation,
Interpretation, Performance,* which was inspired by Fischer’s work and explores transnational topics in relation to
translation, interpretation and performance, but do not pay much mind to the material aspects within this area of
study.
precise picture of early modern theatrical practices. I strive to use this transnational topic of comedies to develop stage direction as a tool in which we may visually look at gender and explore the dynamics of performance, identity, and perception.

From the Beginning: The Comedy / La Comedia

In order to understand the differences seen through English and Spanish stage direction, we must look at them first for their similarities, which is originally what drew me to this project. A common character or trope that is consistently present is the cross-dressing female. Within the Spanish culture this character is called la mujer varonil, and within the English tradition Shapiro calls her the boy heroine. This female character, who would still be played by a young boy on an English commercial stage, was the empowered comedic figure who took control of her new received power in order to meet her goal. For the most part this goal in the end would be a heterosexual relationship that involved either marriage or an engagement. Stephen Greenblatt argues that “characters like Rosalind and Viola pass through the state of being men in order to become women” (92-93). With the context of this binary that Greenblatt lays out, on the

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21 McKendrick describes the mujer varonil as the woman is not only masculine in her dress but also in her acts, her speech or even her whole attitude of mind. She finds it the best means of establishing the nature of that feminism which has been attributed to nearly every 17th century Spanish dramatist at the time. McKendrick establishes that the mujer varonil existed in many forms pre-Lope theatre and states that there are six different types: the bandolera(female bandit), the mujer esquiva(the clever one), the amazon, the leader, the warrior, the scholar, the bella cazadora(beautiful huntress), and the avenger. I believe that when it comes to some of the Spanish female subjects I will be discussing, they can be a combination of some of these types. For further information look to Woman and Society in the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age.

22 Shapiro’s interest lies deeply in the theatrical layer of cross-dress in context with the literary cross-dress, so in turn a boy cross-dressed as a woman cross-dressing as a boy. For more detail about boy heroines and a specific analysis of moments of female cross-dress for multiple Shakespearean plays please look to Gender in Play on the Shakespearean Stage: Boy Heroines and Female Pages. pg 7.

23 Within a chapter of Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England, called “Fiction or Friction”, Stephen Greenblatt argues for a far more binary view of female cross-dressing on the English stage. It is merely a state, rather than any gender mixing, that these characters go through in order to reach patriarchal means of marriage.
surface, all the female heroines I have chosen pass through this state of being a man in order to
reach marriage and become a woman again. Since Greenblatt argued for this very binary view of
cross-dress, other scholars, such as Marjorie Garber, Michael Shapiro, and Stephen Orgel, not
only push for further contextualization, but strive to further complicate this binary of gender.
Garber introduces us to the third category of the transvestite or cross-dresser that serves as not
only an interruption, but as a disturbance. Orgel further explores the female cross-dresser within
the context of an all-male cast and comes to the conclusion that a female cross-dressed and
empowered is far more dangerous than the homosexual emotions that arise from placing boys in
positions of desire. Lastly Shapiro, examines the popularity of the female page as a theatrical
tool of either confronting or avoiding issues involving a women’s place within a patriarchal
society. While Orgel and Shapiro search for more contextualization on the popularity of the
cross-dressed heroine, Garber searches for a way to break the binary of women and man when it
comes to the cross-dressed figure. With The plays I have chosen, The Merchant of Venice,
Twelfth Night, As You Like It, La Vida es Sueño, El Vergonzoso en Palacio, and Don Gil de Las
Calzas Verdes, I look to further complicate the concept of how we look at gender within these
plays and also to provide a new way in which to analyze this tension and anxiety over cross-
dressing between these two very different national stages.

As I began to examine the plays in which I was working with, I believed that placing
them into binaries between the Spanish and the English plays would be the most fruitful. There
was an instant connection between Rosaura (La Vida es Sueño) and Portia (Merchant of Venice)
due to their heroic tendencies to enter spaces designated only for men to meet their goals. Doña
Juana (Don Gil de Las Calzas Verdes) and Rosalind (As You Like It) paired so well in their

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24 For further reading see Garber’s Vested Interests, Shapiro’s Gender in lay on the Shakespearean Stage and
Orgel’s Impersonations.
humor and romancing motives while cross-dressed. Finally, Serafina (*El Vergonzoso en Palacio*) and Viola (*Twelfth Night*) connected in moments of entering spaces of male activity, such as the theater and a duel. However, the more I pushed on these binaries, the more I began to see all these plays as a network rather than pairings. If I only compared Doña Juana to Rosalind, then I wouldn’t see the connection to Portia’s cleverness in planning or Viola/Cesario’s delicate attractiveness to other female characters such as Olivia. In limiting the comparison to one play, there are missed opportunities to see the variations between the ways these plays may manipulate common tropes differently. I will focus on three key components common within comedy: 1) the recently empowered cross-dressed females, 2) similar comedic tropes throughout the play, such as the desirable female falling in love with our cross-dressed heroine and 3) the resolution of marriage or the promise of marriage. Although marriage at the end can be seen as a comedic trope itself, this is the only trope that occurs in every single play I have chosen. All of these plays were written in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century and first published between 1600-1635. They were produced in societies that were extremely moralistic and religiously focused on a woman’s behavior and piety. The goal of this project is not necessarily to answer why these plays are different, but to further explore how these plays differentiate not only through plot and close-reading, but also how they vary visually on the page in order to reflect gender freedoms or constraints. I aim to prove that the stage direction is not only a location in which gender fluidity and cross-dressing can either be expressed or repressed, but also to reveal

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25 Although the Spanish theater allowed women on stage, only married women were allowed to participate. It was frowned upon for an unmarried woman to be on stage and Serafina would be in that category.

26 First dates of publication for each play: *Merchant of Venice* 1600, *As You Like It* 1623, *Twelfth Night* 1623, *La Vida es Sueño* 1635, *Don Gil de las Calzas Verdes* 1635, and *El Vergozoso en Palacio* 1621. Stephen Orgel discusses the social situation surrounding women in the theater in *Impersonations*. He talks about the English equation of actresses with whores and that would impede them from performing on the stage, but the Spanish offering a striking parallel because their morality was far more restrictive of women’s behavior than English morality, but actresses still appeared on stage with the caveat that they were already married.
how stage direction itself may be a reflection and an influence on the perception of women and cross-dressing women in the theater and beyond. I will focus in particular on the striking visual and graphic differences between Spanish and English presentation of stage direction and through comparative readings of the difference these practices make for understanding these plays, reconsider gender binaries, and complicate the most common comedic tropes.

Stage direction serves a multitude of purposes whether on the page or on the stage. How we read stage direction on the page influences not only us as readers, but those who are using this copy as source material for their performance. Stage direction itself serves as a bridge between the two spaces: the literary and the theater. Jean Howard’s book, *Theater of a City*, is “in part investigating the process by which, to use de Certeau’s language, plays helped to transform specific places into significant social spaces, that is, into environments marked by the actions, movements and daily practices of inhabitants” (3). While Howard’s recent study is focused on London’s representation within the theater, to further explore city spaces in the real and literal world, I want to extend her theory of space to the visuality of the page and the movement on stage. Stage direction itself is a significant social space in which most is marked by action and movement which gives us context of the lives of those alive during the early modern theater. According to Gillian Woods, “stage directions are produced by the pen of the playwright or others involved in the making of performance and text (the book-keeper, the printer), the mind of the reader, the notes of the editor and, of course, on the stage of the playhouse in the rehearsals of the theatre company, in the bodies of the actors and in the sensory experience of the audience” (2). When it comes to how we read stage direction though, it comes down to the purpose it may serve on the physical page itself: as an interruption. Reading the stage direction creates a moment of pause from the lines spoken out loud to a moment in which action is able to take center stage
in which the expression of moving bodies is possible. When I speak about the physical page, I am speaking about the three critical pieces that create a play format: the content or the dialogue, the speech tags, and the stage direction. These three components are often differentiated by space and by font. While most lines of content are written in non-italicized font, most times than not, stage direction and speech headings are italicized to differentiate what is spoken and what is not. For stage direction there is one extra formatting tool that further differentiates it: spacing, which allows one as a reader or actor to pause and to give a moment to the action unrolling. The function of stage direction and speech headings creates an interesting dynamic with the content because it serves the purpose of the silent narrator. Wood discusses how stage directions “highlight the ways that a play is stretched between text and performance,” and it is within that stretched space that stage direction serves to bridge the gap between what an audience saw on stage and create a mimetic quality for those reading (5). However, something different is occurring when we read than when one acts in or sees a play. The visual allows us to read these three aspects almost simultaneously, and they all serve the readability of the page. Shapiro discusses how virtually all spectators responded in some way to the “layering of gender identity, to skillful and precise oscillations between them, and to the awareness, residual or activated, of the actor’s own identity, so that the play boy or rather boy actor/female character/ male disguise, conveyed an impression of depth” (7). He calls this effect "theatrical vibrancy." I want to borrow this notion and apply it to the visual effect by which we understand the different layers of the functions on the page as readers as a form of literary theatrical vibrancy. While the text is at times read as one unit, each of these components serve different purposes for what we understand from these plays. Within the subsections, I will be examining these plays within these visual material paradigms: Place & Space / Fluidity, Presence / Non-Presence, and Duality /
**Hybridity.** Each of these concepts will be discussed in great detail below in order to understand how these binaries between the English and Spanish plays lead to further understanding on how gender and cross-dressing is perceived within these plays.

**Place & Space / Fluidity: Exit and Entry Points of the Cross-Dressed Body**

Within each of these sets of plays, cross-dressing occurs for different reasons and in different manners. Through examining the stage direction there seems to be a huge difference on how we learn when a woman is cross-dressed or not and it is crucial to how we understand her intentions and what dictates this change in clothing or identity. Within English plays, it is the places/spaces cross-dressed women enter that dictate when they change into their male alter ego and the moments they leave that specific place/space or enter a new place/space, they change back without any notification within the stage direction that is present on the page. The Norton Anthology and other popular editions, of course, have added extra details of clothing and cross-dress, often pulled out of implicit stage direction, to make Shakespeare more readable, but in early printings, such a clarification was not provided. 27 Martin Banham discusses the concept of implicit action or implicit stage direction, within *Merchant of Venice* specifically, and suggests that by “applying our theatrical imagination we can draw out of a text information concerning the nature of performance assumed by its writer and performers that is not separately offered as explicit stage directions” (274). Although there is a decent amount of implicit stage direction located within *Merchant of Venice, As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night*, I argue that it is the

27 When a certain stage direction is not included in the original text, the Norton Anthology adds brackets with helpful information that cannot be found in the original source text for these plays. An example is that within *Merchant of Venice* with the Second Edition of the North Anthology of Shakespeare’s works, it states at 4.2 “Enter Portia and Nerissa [still disguised]” (pg 1168). Those brackets neve show up in the original source material and is meant to serve the difference between what was originally printed and what was not.
physical places/spaces within the fictional world of the dialogue, such as the courtroom or the Forest of Arden, that dictated when Portia, Nerissa, Jessica, Rosalind, and Viola cross-dressed rather than the implicit or explicit stage direction or their own agency. While these women all turn these places into spaces that become useful and pleasurable to them when they are dressed as men, it is the places and the social contexts of space in relation to that places that dictate the actions of these women. While they did make the decisions to cross-dress themselves, which is made explicit within the text, it is the places they enter that force their hand for survival and take some of the agency or choice out of their hands. While this is apparent within the content itself, it is not very present within the stage direction, as specific stage direction is sparse as these women cross-dress into men and back. On the Spanish side, the presence of stage direction is consistent, and these women are not limited to a place in which they can cross-dress but are given the freedom and fluidity to cross-dress whenever and wherever they deem necessary to reach their goal. Rosaura, Doña Juana, and Serafina in a sense all possess a fluidity to their discretions in change and the stage direction is there to explicitly dictate, for the most part, when they change into male form and when they change back. They are not limited to places but make these places within the fictional world a space in which they can consistently change and digress from the norm. This lends a fluidity to gender and gender play within these Spanish works and this difference can be seen by looking materially at what occurs within each of these plays.

Before I enter into the material evidence, I wanted to touch on the intentions of these female characters to cross-dress to add further context to the material evidence and how it functions in partnership with the content and the stage direction. Within Merchant of Venice,
Portia, Nerissa, and Jessica all cross-dress in order to achieve their goals of either escaping or entering a space that was not open to females. Jessica, of the three women in this play, chooses to cross-dress to escape her home and to marry Lorenzo, a Christian. In a sense, Jessica is cross-dressing for love, but I believe the truth is that she is cross-dressing in order to escape her father and enter Belmont and Christian-controlled spaces. The only manner in which she can get there safely with her identity hidden from those who know her, or her father, is to dress as Lorenzo’s torchbearer. She does not relish in this transformation for she says, “For if they could, Cupid himelfe would blu[h] / To see me thus transformed to a boy” (170). It is the situation that calls for it and rather than by choice, but by circumstance she must cross-dress to marry Lorenzo. To understand how Portia and Nerissa’s cross-dress is in a sense survival, we have to look at the implications of her marriage that come with the death of Antonio, for Portia does not give us much in words for why they must be men, but rather on how good of a man she would be with her “thou[and raw tricks of the]e bragging lacks” (170). When Nerissa asks, “Why, shall we turne to men?” she responds with “Fie, what a que[tions that? / If thou were nere a lewd interpreter: / But come, Ile tell thee all my whole deuice / When I am in my coach” (177). The homosocial relationship of Bassanio and Antonio, and to an extent Graziano, is one that should not be taken lightly for the importance of male bond is something that is very present within this play. Being very clever, Portia understands the stakes that come with this trial. She must cross-dress in order to save Antonio for two reasons: 1) to save her marriage, for Bassanio will not recover from such a loss, which I argue will in turn destroy their relationship and 2) to trick

29 For all close readings of the lines spoken itself or content I will be using the first folio because while Merchant of Venice is the only one in the first quarto, all three of the Shakespearean comedies are within the first folio.
Bassanio and Graziano in order to assert her and Nerissa’s dominance and create security in their relationships.

Rosalind, in *As You Like It*, cross-dresses with Celia in order to survive within the Forest of Arden, for Duke Frederick had banished her from the court for “Beautie prouoketh theeues sooner then gold” (187). It is her choice to cross-dress as a man while Celia stays female for “Were it not better, / Because that I am more then common tall, / That I did suite me all points like a man” (187). She decides to hide her womanly fears in order to keep her and Celia safe within the forest. As far as Rosalind’s intentions go, fear and survival are the motivating factors for her cross-dress and the sole reason she cross-dresses as a man rather than a woman.

Viola, the one who arguably embodies her male identity the most, like Rosalind finds herself in an unknown land in which a single female would not be safe on her own. As Viola mourns the possibility to join Olivia’s court, for she will not allow anyone to see her, she says for “O that I eru’d that Lady, / And might not be deliuered to the world” (255). She must cross-dress to enter Orsino’s court and survive the unknown land of Illyria until it is safe to reveal her true identity. She asked the Captain to “Conceale me what I am, and be my ayde, / For such disguise as haply shall become / the forme of my intent” (256). She chooses to look like a man to survive in Illyria until she has found Sebastian and could reveal her identity safely. With each of the English female characters, for the most part cross-dressing comes with some form of survival mixed with humor and love.

On the Spanish side, females cross-dress with more agency, but it is for a similar means to an end: survival. The difference is the focus on honor and the meaning of honor itself within the Spanish culture. For Rosaura from *La Vida es Sueño* and Doña Juana from *Don Gil de las Calzas Verdes*, the reason they cross-dress is for their own honor. Their lovers have promised them
marriage and then abandoned them for more wealth. They have been betrayed and they hope to get revenge to an extent, but also attempt to regain their honor themselves. Being a woman that has already been ‘used’ is perhaps even less acceptable within the Spanish culture than it is for the English, since the loss of one’s virtue is also the loss of one’s honor, in a culture that privileges honor above all. In a sense this is survival for these women, because honor itself is necessary to a woman’s survival during the early modern period in Spain. They are worth nothing if they do not have their virtue. Like Nerissa, Doña Juana’s servant Quintana asks her “Que peligro te disfraça / de Damie[ela, en varo?[What danger makes you disguise yourself / from a lady into a man?]” (1635 283). Unlike Portia though, Doña Juana gives Quintana the whole story of how Don Martin captured and broke her heart by going to seek the love of a richer woman, on his father’s order, named Doña Ines as a man named Don Gil, cross-dressing in class rather than in gender. She cross-dresses for “a vi[sta tendo de andar / de mi ingrate don Martin, / malogrando quanto hiziere[In sight I must stay / of my ungrateful Don Martin, / in order to foil all his plans]” (1635 Verso of 284). Although she must save her honor in order to survive within society and its rules, she herself is seeking a way to save it. Although this seems similar to the manner in which Portia saves her marriage, the biggest difference is that Doña Juana doesn’t need to cross-dress if she wants to foil her lover’s plan, while Portia needs to cross-dress to enter the court. She as a female could have told Doña Ines the truth, but the point here is to teach him a lesson. Both Portia and Doña Juana want to teach their lovers a lesson, and must cross-dress in order to deceive them, but there is a distinct choice on how Doña Juana

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30 For each of the translations, I will be translating them myself instead of using a published version. For the Spanish plays I only have one material document for each. All the material evidence and quotations for Don Gil de las Calzas Verdes will be from a copy printed in 1635.
chooses to save her honor versus how Portia must go about her plan in order to even save Antonio.

Similarly, from La Vida es Sueño, Rosaura chooses to save her own honor from Astolfo, her seducer who has betrayed her. During early modern times in the Basque region of Spain there were ways of getting justice against the seducers who had promised marriage, but it required the support of her family. Rosaura went on her own to restore her honor with the sword of her father, who she has never met. When she unknowingly meets her father, one Clotado, for the first time, she tells him “vengo a Polonia a vangarme/ de vn agranio [I have come to Poland to avenge myself / from a dishonor]” as she unsheathes her sword (1640 por). This reveals to Clotado that this is his “son” for that is his sword. Although Clotado is her father and he supports her mission for vengeance and retrieving her honor, it is Rosaura with the initiative to get it back her way. The key is that these female Spanish heroines are depicted as saving their honor their way and these plays emphasize their choices and agency.

Within El Vergonzoso en Palacio, Serafina has far more light-hearted reasons for cross-dressing, namely she attempts to cheer up her sister who is scorned by love by putting on a play in which she is dressed like a man. When Doña Juana asks her “Que aquíto de versa hazes, / que en verte aí no te ofendas [You are really going to do this / You’re not offended to see yourself like this]”, her response is one of confidence in her decisions. Serafina responds with, “Fie[tas de

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31 In a study done by Renato Barahona, he examines early modern criminality through legal documents in the Vizcaya and Basque provinces. He specifically focuses on sexual crimes and dedicates a whole chapter on lawsuits concerning the crimes of estupro or ravishment and defloration. This type crime was very common in the Basque legal system and showed a whole other side to the world of courtship. *Sex Crimes, Honour, and the Law in Early Modern Spain: Vizcaya, 1528-1735*.

32 For the in-text citation, there was no page number located on the back or front of the page, so I have placed the catch word located at the bottom of the page. All material evidence and quotations will be coming from a copy printed in 1640. Although I could find more copies of this play than the other Spanish plays, I wanted to keep it even on the research end.
Carne±tolendas/ todas paean en disfrazes. / De±eome entretener defre modo, no te abombre / q
apetezca el trage de hombre, / ya que no lo puedo tener [Everyone dresses in disguises for
Carnival/ I desire to entertain myself this way and it shouldn’t surprise you / that I like men’s
clothing, since I can’t be one]” (1631 54).33 She does not need a reason or purpose to cross-dress
other than she enjoys it and she gets pleasure from acting. She even uses Carnival, an event
linked with socially approved costumes and disguise, in order to make her own cross-dress
normal and socially acceptable. It is her decision for the sake of entertainment that she does this,
which gives us a character who is the most surprising of the three. There are no examples of a
female to male cross-dress for such light-hearted reasons on the English stage. The fact that this
center presents herself with such a confident demeanor in her cross-dressing, gives us an
example of a female character who does what she desires and does not get punished for it. While
her reasons to cross-dress are related to entering the space of the theater, the ghost of her male
self stays present through a portrait drawn of her dressed as man, requested by the man that is in
love with her, Antonio. Her cross-dressed self is present throughout the rest of the play;
therefore, her cross-dressing is no longer just restricted to the theater but has entered the space of
heterosexual/homosexual love, the same way in which Viola/Cesario enter the space of
heterosexual love in Orsino’s court.

How do these intentions come across visually? These intentions mix concretely with when
and how these women cross-dress, which becomes evident on how and when stage direction is
used. In the pages ahead, I will be focusing on moments of entrance and exit as critical
commentary on how cross-dressing was portrayed on both stages. Linda McJannet proposes that

33 All material evidence and quotations for El Vergonzoso en Palacio will be coming from a copy printed in 1631
and it was originally printed a collection called Cigarrales de Toledo.
“an entrance defines the boundaries of each scene, and thus highlights the essential elements of the play’s dramatic structure” (139). She also claims that they are the most visible and memorable stage directions due to their authoritative form. They “create a powerful, impersonal voice whose instructions are hard to overlook, resist, or ignore. This authoritative voice signals the start of a new scene to a lay reader, and it seems well calculated to capture the attention of players and other theater professionals” (166). With entry points having such an authoritative voice, why is it that it is rarely used for moments of cross-dress? Portia, Rosalind and Viola all have repeated moments of cross-dress, but the actual action of cross-dress is only mentioned once for each of them within the stage direction and there is no stage direction given to their re-entry as female. McJannet discusses how these entry points are codified to be authoritative, but I argue that they are also codified in order to maintain the gender binaries in place during the seventeenth century. Rather than having authoritative, explicit stage directions dictating when Portia, Nerissa, Jessica, Rosalind, and Viola cross-dress, it is the very places/spaces they enter and exit that control their movement between male and female. We therefore need to take these static settings seriously as if they were implicit stage direction for female characters. My argument is that some spaces are coded male, such as the courtroom, therefore it is the place/space that forces cross-dress rather than our female heroines choosing to transgress societal norms.

Let us begin with Portia, who enters the courtroom dressed as a man and saves Antonio from Shylock’s wrath. She intends to not only save Antonio from death, but to trick her husband in return with the ring plot that gets us to the comedic ending of this play. Within the First Folio,  

McJannet also discusses the manner in which Entries and exits maintain this authoritative tone. Entry directions preserve the Latin diction and syntax and their grammar and rhetoric thus distinguish them from the voices of the dialogue. For further reading and detail look to *The Voice of Elizabethan Stage Directions*. 
published by Jaggard and Blount, the stage direction reads “Enter Portia for Balthazar.” (179). While this is indicative that Portia is dressed as a man, there is no mention of clothing itself within the stage direction and instead an alter ego is placed within the stage direction. The concept of identity and the duality of the situation is something I will touch in further detail within the Duality versus Hybridity section, but something to note right now is that this is the only mention of Portia cross dressing in the stage direction within the whole play. From this moment, there is still one more scene within the courtroom and Act 5. Although she changes back into female garments when she returns to Belmont, there is no mention within the stage direction of her changing back into her clothing. It is the place/space that Portia enters that indicates when she is cross-dressed as a man or dressed as herself. The stage direction is not what dictates when she transgresses, but it is the place/space itself that dictates these moments, which would account for how little stage direction is present. When Portia is still in court, she is still Balthazar, and this is the reason there is no indicator in 4.2 that she is still cross-dressed, and the stage direction reads, “Enter Portia and Nerissa.” (181). Once she returns to Belmont in Act 5, there is no need for stage direction because now that she has left Venice and the space of the courtroom, she no longer is Balthazar and is Portia once more. The use of places and spaces instead of stage direction to dictate when she can be a woman and when she must be a man is indicated by the social space she enters and that in turn is dictated by the English social norms present within Shakespeare’s plays. By having the space/place rather than stage direction dictate who Portia is at that moment, it implies a form of repression and control over the female body rather than emphasizing Portia’s agency in this situation. During the early modern era, spaces dictated behavior and dress consistently and space outside the theater were spaces of performance themselves as Janette Dillon argues in *The Language of Space in Court*
Performances, 1400-1625. Garber in one of her opening chapters of *Vested Interests*, discusses the manner that sumptuary laws dictated class and gender during those times. Although her argument is that Malvolio has a bigger transgression than Viola, because he was attempting to transgress class, I want to highlight how much anxiety was still present about the female to male cross-dress and the power structures that are disrupted through dress.  

35 This anxiety is exactly what is present by having the space/place dictate Portia’s cross-dressing, rather than presenting her transgressions within explicit stage directions.

While Portia’s transgression at least offers some form of identity switch once she enters the court, presumably coming in as Balthazar, Nerissa is even left further in ambiguity within the first folio of the play. Within the First Folio, the stage direction reads, “Enter Nerissa.” There is no mention of her coming in dressed as a messenger or a man or a boy. Although Portia states earlier that Nerissa and her will be “in such a habit, / That they shall thinke we are accomplished”, one would think that some stage direction would be dedicated to the actual moment Nerissa cross-dresses (177). Instead all we have is her entering as herself in the stage direction, which leads me to again assert it is the place/space that assumes Nerissa is dressed as a man and that is why she is allowed to enter the courtroom. It is within this moment that makes me really question why that within what is considered the real connection between the stage(real) and the page(fiction) would there be such ambiguity and it leads back to a supposed anxiety over the female to male transvestite. Somehow womanhood needs to be the most durable category when it comes to the stage direction, because even transgressions within that space would provoke cultural anxiety, therefore it must be repressed. By not giving Nerissa any agency over

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35 There is further evidence of these cross-dressing anxieties when we look at examples such as the pamphlet of Hic Mulier, published in 1620, the historical figure of Mary Frith, or as she is better known Moll Cutpurse, or looking at Thomas Dekker’s and Thomas Middleton’s *The Roaring Girl*. 
her crossdressing and instead this decision being dictated by both Portia implicitly and the actual place/space, the courtroom is the only thing that decides her transgression. This makes me believe that Nerissa, more than Portia, is representative of this anxiety of the cross-dressed female that was felt so strongly during the early modern period.

Like Nerissa, Jessica follows a similar formula in which she cross-dresses within the stage direction. Jessica’s stage directions reads as so when she cross-dresses to leave with Lorenzo: “Ieffica aboue.” (170). There is no mention of Jessica being dressed in boys clothing within the explicit stage direction and it is completely dependent of the content and the implicit stage direction. Here is another situation in which the content and space/place are in disconnect with the stage direction. Although the content speaks about her cross-dress with lines such as “So you are ñweet, / Euen in the louely granñh of a boy”, it is entering the street/public with Lorenzo that she must hide herself. Here we are talking about a very complicated tapestry of the social within the spatial geography of the Jewish ghetto. The physical street late at night is never safe for a woman, but it is the social space that makes this truly scandalous and dangerous for Jessica. Jessica is entering multiple spaces that would be considered taboo: She is entering a Christian space as the torchbearer for Lorenzo and a space of adultery and whoredom by betraying her father and running away with no blessing and no marriage as of yet. While the spatial movement doesn’t seem as significant as Portia’s or Nerissa’s transgression, Jessica herself is entering a significant space of change and risk that dictates her cross-dressing. Although she chooses to go with Lorenzo, she must cross-dress as a boy to leave her father and enter into Christianity and marriage for reasons of safety. When she is seen in Belmont, there is no stage direction in relation to her cross-dressing back into woman’s clothing because she has made the transition safely now. Belmont is a space dominated by women and dominated by female dress. What we
have here is another example of how these plays are not allowed to utter the details or visual of a female cross-dressed in boy’s clothes within the explicit stage direction and it is space/place that directs these transgressions rather than the stage direction itself.

Like *Merchant of Venice, As You Like It,* has moments of cross-dress out of necessity and survival. Rosalind finds herself in a moment in which she needs to decide her own fate. Although Celia also cross-dressed within this play, because she cross-dresses in class and not in gender, I wanted to focus on Rosalind as our leading *lady.* In order to survive being banished by her uncle, she must escape into the forest of Arden. In order to stay safe though, she must cross-dress as a man because the forest of Arden is not safe for two women on their own. Out of this moment, Ganymede is created. While I will touch on the importance of name and naming in the *Duality / Hybridity* section, it is important to note that Rosalind created this identity. She made-shifted her tall figure into one of a man and named herself Ganymede, which is not another character present within this fictional universe, like Balthazar. It is Duke Frederick that forces her out of the court, forcing her to make this decision. In entering the space/place of the forest of Arden, this makes dressing as a man a necessity for Rosalind, who even states, “(Maides as we are) to trauull forth Ío farre?”(187). Her agency is over-shadowed by the forced circumstances and change of locale. When she first enters the forest, like Portia, she is identified for someone: Ganymede. The stage direction reads “*Enter Rosaline for Ganimed”*(191). This 2.4 stage direction is the only time we ever see Ganymede’s name in the stage direction. While the text at times hints that Rosalind is still cross-dressed, like in 3.2 in which Corin says “Heere comes yong Mr *Ganimed*” right before the stage direction states “*Enter Rosalind. ‘,* this is another

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36 This isn’t the full stage direction. The rest of the stage direction includes Celia and Touchstone, but for the sake of focus, scope, and space, I have only included the stage direction only for Rosalind.
situation in which the stage direction is completely detached at times from the content. In a way, the content is providing us with implicit stage direction, but why isn’t the explicit stage direction being used as frequently? The explicit stage direction is a reflection of the lack fluidity that is present within these Shakespearean comedies, for it is the place/space of the Forest of Arden that dictates Rosalind’s cross-dress and that only became visible by analyzing the explicit stage direction in relation to plot. For the majority of the play, Rosalind is Ganymede, but every bit of stage direction after 2.4, there is no mention of his name, only Rosalind. So how do we know when Rosalind turns into Rosalind again if we never leave the Forest of Arden? Like Jessica, Rosalind in entering a social space of significance: marriage. In 5.4, the stage direction reads “Enter Hymen, Rosalind, and Celia. / Still Musicke.” (206). From the stage direction, one would think that Rosalind is still Ganymede, following the pattern that the rest of the play has set up, but the difference is that she enters with Hymen, the god of marriage. Rosalind is entering the space of marriage; therefore, she must come in dressed as a woman and as herself. Like Portia, Rosalind changes back into a woman, but there is no notification of the physical action of change located within the stage direction. It is Hymen who speaks “Good Duke receiue thy daughter, / Hymen from Heauen brought her” (206). The god of marriage and the act of marriage has retrieved Rosalind’s female identity, rather than Rosalind retrieving it herself. While I would like to note that Rosalind is the one who sets up these marriages successfully, it is the way that she transitions back, through the presence of Hymen, that removes some of agency so utterly present within Rosalind’s character. By having Hymen be the first name present within than the stage direction instead of Rosalind, it also puts forward who is bringing in whom and that Hymen, the god of marriage, is running this ceremony, rather than Rosalind. This amount of ambiguity within the explicit stage direction present within the printed editions of the plays leaves so much
to be desired of these cross-dressed females and the lack of accessibility to their cross-dressing within this space limits gender fluidity and brings to light the anxious nature of the English society.

Of all the female leads that cross-dress, Viola, of *Twelfth Night*, is only leading lady to not transition back into a lady by the end of the play. While her stage direction is different from both Portia’s and Rosalind’s, the pattern of her stage direction at her entry point follows in similar fashion to what we have seen previously. Like Rosalind, Viola cross-dresses in order to survive in the foreign land of Illyria. She has no choice but to join Duke Orsino’s court for Lady Olivia would not receive anyone. While she gives her reasons to cross-dress in 1.2, cross-dress stage direction becomes available the moment she enters again in 1.4. The First Folio reads “*Enter Valentine, and Viola in mans attire.*” (257). While Viola does not come in for someone, which I will discuss later on, she does come in mans attire, so us as readers know she has cross-dressed under her own identity because of the stage direction. Like Portia and Rosalind, her cross-dressing is only mentioned once in the entire play within the explicit stage direction, while it is alluded to multiple times within the content and her alter-ego, Cesario, is also only present within the dialogue as well. While other plays have multiple places and spaces though, Viola is introduced to us on Illyria after the shipwreck and the play never leaves Illyria. Therefore, why would Viola change back into a woman if the new place/pace she has entered stays the same? The only indication of future change from Viola that we receive is when Orsino speaks the notorious line, “*Giue me thy hand, / And let me ſee thee in thy womans weedes.*” (274). Although the promise of marriage is present, the marriage itself does not occur, therefore Viola does not enter a new space, like Rosalind, but rather stays within the same space she has been the whole time. What further nails the stagnant nature of space/place is Orsino’s comment about
Viola’s love before he mentions her *womans weedes*. He looks over to Viola and says “Boy, thou haft haide to me a thousand times, / Thou never hould’ft loue woman like to me.”(274).

Although we know Viola is not a boy by this time in the play, Orsino still calls Viola boy. Viola is still Cesario in his mind, for Cesario, too, loved him and that love that Cesario instilled in him stays with Cesario, for Viola never turns back into herself. Although the content offers a reason for why Viola doesn’t change back, which is the captain has hidden her clothing, it doesn’t really matter. I don’t think Viola will ever only be Viola while she stays in Illyria. It is the constricting place/space of Illyria that forever locks Viola into her cross-dressed form.

Instead of coming in for someone else, Spanish *comedias* have cross-dressed women come in as themselves dressed as a *mujer* or an *hombre*. Within *comedias* of Golden Age in Spain, there is far more movement, fluidity and freedom to go between male and female garb. This not only applies to the content, but also in the manner the stage direction is written and presented on the page. The reason I have chosen fluidity as the word to oppose space/place is due to the nature in which these women move and function within the spaces they chose to be in. This explicit stage direction itself allows for more freedom and fluidity when it comes to gender. Within *Don Gil de las Calzas Verdes*, Doña Juana is a leading lady that exhibits this type of fluidity within content and the stage direction. In order for Doña Juana to not only get revenge against Don Martin, the lover who scorned her, she creates a clever plan to make the woman he was going to woo under the name of Don Gil fall in love with her instead as Don Gil. The play opens with her and her servant Quintana. The stage direction reads, “*Sale doña Iuana de hombre, con calca, y vestido todo verde, y Quintana criado. [Enter Doña Juana, dressed as a man, wearing breeches and dressed all in green and Quintana the servant]*” (1635 283). The first thing we see directly after “ACTO PRIMERO. [Act One]” is this stage direction and it sets the tone for
the play. Although this play does push this comedy to a level of absurdity, “it combines the soberly realistic with the outrageously fantastic, exploiting the comic possibilities of the tension between the two” (Minter 43). This moment is one of possibility within the stage direction and the presence of the female cross-dressed body allows for this sense of freedom for women when held in comparison to the stage directions present within the Shakespearean dramas. Although there are moments in which only Doña Juana’s name is mentioned in the stage direction with no mention of her cross-dress, it is within the frequency of the cross-dress and when she cross-dresses that we see this fluidity present and alive. It is at moments of transition in which we see explicit stage direction mentioning Doña Juana’s state which allows for more significant entry points of cross-dress throughout the whole play. To add another layer to her cross-dress, when she dresses as female within this play, a majority of the time it is dressing as a woman named Elvira, who is also a made-up identity that Doña Juana creates to further bamboozle Don Martin and foil his plans. Within this play she goes back and forth between her female and male disguise nine times within the stage direction, and there are more times that her identity is spoken about within the content as implicit stage direction as well. Although she is in this new place/space within this play, there are multiple locations the places/spaces that Doña Juana visits in one of her two disguises without the restriction of space/place defining when she is one versus the other. While the play opens on a bridge in Segovia, where she is already cross-dressed, a majority of the action takes place within Madrid. While in Madrid the amount of fluid movement between both disguises is unprecedented but is meant to function for her plan to work. Doña Juana’s stage direction is either “Sale doña Juana de hombre. [Enter Doña Juana dressed as a man]” or sale “doña Juana de muger. [Enter Doña Juana dressed as a woman]”, but the fact that she does both so often is movement and freedom that do not see on the English side within printings of stage
direction during the seventeenth century (1635 291). Such fluid movement is not allowed for Portia, Viola, or Rosalind, and even more so, no back and forth movement is recorded within the stage direction. It is this freedom to write these actions, even in an absurdist comedy, that leaves some form of hope for bodily freedom for the cross-dressed female as a clue within these early printings.

As for Rosaura, from *La Vida es Sueño*, she also is entering a new space, Poland, but that does not stop her from switching from male to female dress. The stage direction itself, like in *Don Gil*, is far more fluid in its gender dynamics and allows for its female characters to switch from one to the other when it is convenient or necessary for them. Rosaura travels to Poland with Clarin, her servant to enact revenge against her seducer, Astolfo. In the time she reaches Poland, she comes across Seguismundo, the imprisoned prince, and Clotado, the king’s servant and her father, which does not learn about till the end of the play. Once Clotado gets involved in her plot for avenging her honor, although she does know that he is her farther, Rosaura poses as Clotado’s niece and becomes a lady in waiting to Estrella. Although this play involves far less stage direction and cross-dressing than *Don Gil*, it still allows for three moments of fluidity that continue the action for Rosaura in this play. The play opens with “*Sale en lo alto de un monte Rosaura en abito de hombre de camino, y en representando los primeros versos va bajando* [Enter Rosaura at the top of the mountain, dressed as a man of the road. As she speaks the first verses she is going down the mountain]” (1). Like *Don Gil*, this play opens with a cross-dressed female character with a purpose. While *Don Gil* opens with Doña Juana crossing a bridge, Rosaura is coming down a mountain, which can both be seen as moments of transition. Although this is at times considered a subplot of the rest of the story, involving Seguismundo being imprisoned by his father, who fears the prophesy that says his son will kill him, it takes the
forefront of the first page and is intermixed often with Seguismundo’s story. In order to be able to stay in this court, once she and Clarin are pardoned by the king for finding Seguismundo’s tower on accident, she poses as a woman in order to continue her plan of revenge. Rosaura’s stage direction reads, “Sale Rosaura Dama. [Enter Rosaura dressed as a lady]” (Verso of pg 12). Although there is some stage direction of Rosaura, like Doña Juana, that does not include a description of her cross-dressing, it is in moments of transition that explicit stage direction is used to express moments of change. This in turn suggests that the explicit stage direction is not opposed to expressing change in clothing and gender every time Rosaura changes into a different genders clothing. In the final piece of stage direction in relation to her cross-dressing, Rosaura is seen in a moment of war, where she asks Segismundo if she can fight for his side in order to get revenge against Astolfo for dishonoring her. He allows her to fight for his side against the king and Astolfo, but Rosaura comes out neither as a cross-dressed nor full on as female within this last piece of stage direction. When she enters, it states “Sale Rosaura con baquero, espada y daga. [Enter Rosaura with a woman’s gown, a sword, and a dagger]” (Verso of pg 22). Although she comes in dressed in a baquero, or a women’s gown with waist and sleeves, her accessories are definitely not female. The sword and dagger are both very masculine objects and show a hybrid identity, for regaining her honor means more than anything else. Rosaura is able to move from one form of dress to another to, in the end dressing closest to what I believe is herself, a woman out to fight for her honor, and such cross-dress is not only allowed but expressed directly within the explicit stage direction. This fluidity throughout the play is not only refreshing but expresses the possibility of freedom for dress and more freedoms when it comes to the bodies of females within the patriarchal society of Spain.
While Rosaura and Doña Juana are two women fighting for their honor, which equals their survival in the society they exist in, they fluctuate from one gender to the other to accomplish their plans. Serafina, on the other hand, only cross-dresses once in the entire play. The manner and reasoning for her cross-dressing, though, makes this transgression even more powerful, for she decides to cross-dress because she enjoys acting and enjoys cross-dressing as a man because she cannot be one. So, while this concept of gender fluidity does not apply in the amount of times it shows up, it can apply in the attitude that Serafina herself has towards her actions. The stage direction reads, “Sale doña Serafina vestida de hombre, el veíldo fea negro, y con ella doña Juana. [Enter Doña Serafina, dressed in men’s clothing, in a black tunic, and with her is doña Juana.]” (54). Juana herself is uncomfortable with Serafina’s desire to act, and more specifically her desire to dress as a man in doing so. It is at times hard to distinguish which Juana does not like more, the acting or the cross-dressing, but when Serafina asks “En ella qual es lo malo que fientes?[ What could you possibly find wrong with this]”, Juana responds with “Solo que tu representes [Only the representation of you on stage]”(54). Serafina does not understand why this is such a big deal and responds with “Porque, fi folo han de vella / mi hermana, y tus damas? calla / de tu mal fuído me admiro [ Why, if the only one who are going to see/ is my sister and her maids/ I can’t believe you’re so uptight about this](1631 54). This casual inclusion of cross-dressing and a woman who finds acting pleasurable within a plot of lovers, class, and marriage is not only surprising, but unprecedented. She does not see her actions as taboo and is of the understanding that she can dress as she wants because there shouldn’t be a limitation on her entertainment. Although there is less back and forth between gendered identities
within the stage direction, it is the manner in which this moment of cross-dressing is presented that allows us to see the fluidity in its casual nature of cross-dressing inclusion and Serafina’s attitude towards it.

_Presence / Lack of Presence: The Visuality of Space on the Page_  
While close reading the words within stage direction can give us insight into how it is presented, what further provides insight is looking at the physical placement and presence of stage direction on the material page. This not only influences how we read, but what we see. Due to the manner in which something is spaced or formatted, stage direction can draw the eye and serve as an interruption on the page from the standard structure of the lines spoken or the content. The way stage direction is formatted is meant to draw the eye, because the information that stage direction offers, which is separate but connected to the content, is supposed to give context before you read the dialogue between characters. Lynda Barry discusses, in _What It Is_, how “images are found by/ in/ through action between inside and outside” (15). It is within this space I argue that stage direction is doing more than just providing context to the page. It is there to serve as a reminder of the real and provokes a form of simultaneous reading between words and the visual. Not only is the image of physical page in front of you, but one simultaneously reads the stage direction as an image and an action. Although you read the stage direction simultaneously with the content, I believe it is read differently than the content itself, for we know that these words are not spoken but are actions. They relay to a visual image, an action, an imagined _real_ stage rather than the fictional world of the play. Stage direction is the silent narrator and its presence gives us insight into what we see rather than what we read. In this case these words represent
action and perspective to an extent on the stage, what we should be imagining if we were sitting in the theater.

What happens though when there is more or less presence of this stage direction? It becomes very clear that the Shakespearean comedies tend to prioritize the content, or implicit stage directions, rather than creating explicit stage directions. Stage direction tends to take up very little room in a majority of the English plays. Although stage direction spacing draws attention to that space, the lack of descriptiveness doesn’t necessarily paint a picture of action on stage. The lack of physical presence on the page and lack of physical space taken on the page when it comes to moments of cross-dressing reflect a society almost too anxious to include it in such a detailed form due to its connection to the real world of the theater. As a side note, while stage direction is connected to a real theater, it is still connected to space in which there were far more liberties to manipulate and subvert certain aspects of society. Even within this space of the real, though, English printers are too anxious to allude to the female cross-dressed body, while the Spanish revel in detail in comparison. The difference is seen very clearly with how often cross-dressing is brought up in stage direction and the ability to express the detail of their state within the space. Physically, Spanish stage direction about females cross-dressing takes up more room than the English stage direction by a long shot. I believe that stage direction signals the presence or lack of gender fluidity within a society and its presence or lack of presence on the physical page serves as a clue into how woman cross-dressing may have been perceived during that time and how the theatre itself was influencing the society around it.

Janette Dillon compares the ceremonial descriptions of court to the ceremonial descriptions in Henry VIII and this is the one Shakespeare play with the most stage direction in general which encompasses a lot of the ceremonial proceedings of the court.
As I have mentioned before, the English stage has dedicated very little space to stage direction in relation to women cross-dressed on stage. Many of the moments that could have been used to describe the situation have only been placed in the content as implicit stage direction and there is a huge disconnect between the content and the explicit stage direction itself. Perception, though, is created by what is read. It is difficult to know what source material was used in which theatre or to print which book, but one thing that has been argued most recently is the concept of the authoritative version. Bibliographers such as Randall McLeod argue against this deep-seated need for the clean edited version, like the edited versions of Alexander Pope in which “editors act, they do not explain” (142). McLeod believes that “Pope played fast and loose with the evidence of Shakespeare’s text, suppressing the artistic variation of names that contradict the editorial notion of unity” (134). While this is discussion of speech tags, it can easily extend to stage directions, which often vary, and those variations are often taken as mistakes, anomalies, and inconsistencies. This is an opportunity to learn about the theatre and the people surrounding them. This is exactly where the scholarly inquiry for my project lies. The stage direction chosen for these versions of Shakespeare are not merely there to be looked over, but to be looked into as an artifact of its time. For characters such as Portia and Rosalind, the cross-dressed body itself is not on the page for a majority of the play. Even in there
one moment of cross-dress within the stage direction, they come in for someone else rather than change their habit or clothing.

From the moment Portia cross-dresses in Act 4.1, there is not another mention of her cross-dressed for the rest of the play. The amount of space that “Enter Portia for Balthazar” takes is not much in comparison to the size of the page and the amount of words present on a single page of the first folio, as you can see in figure one.

**Figure 1:** William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, William Jaggard, Edward Blount, L. Smithweeke, and W. Aspley, London, 1623, p. 179. Located at Brandeis University.

The extra space left above and below still creates a moment of interruption, but it is still hidden amongst the content. To have no notice of her cross-dress in the next scene while she is still in court or any notice of her changing back once she gets to Belmont opens up the question: do we sometimes forget that Portia is not Portia at the moment due to the lack of presence of her cross-dressing on the page? Unfortunately, there is not an easy answer to this, for as readers we know Portia is cross-dressed in the court due to the context, but visually we are stunted. However, Portia, who at least gets some form of stage
direction in relation to her transformation, is the lucky one. Characters such as Nerissa and Jessica never receive any form of stage direction in relation to their cross-dress. No space at all is given to the presence of the female cross-dressed body when you are not the lead, which reveals another dynamic lying under the italicized. There is no need to casually include Nerissa or Jessica’s cross-dress, for they are merely supporting characters. Therefore, it is clear that there can be no presence at all of a casually cross-dressed female, even if it is related to the plot. If that isn’t anxious behavior on the part of English editors or theatre practioners who may have understood stage directions relationship to the real, then I don’t know what is. With so little presence given to cross-dressing, which is the crux in which the plot and outcome of this play relies on, the physical printing of the play is giving little notice to the cross-dressed body in the stage direction, and consequently on the imagined real stage.

A similar treatment of stage direction in relation to cross-dressed females is seen within As You Like It. Rosalind is Ganymede for a majority of the play. From Act 2 to Act 5 she is Ganymede. While she makes Orlando pretend Ganymede is Rosalind for their love lessons, she is still dressed as Ganymede for those lessons, therefore she is still cross-dressed as a male for almost the entirety of this play. Why is there only one mention of her “coming in” for Ganymede? Only in Act 2.4 do we see “Enter Rosaline for Ganimed,” when she first is presented to us, the reader or audience, in the forest of Arden. A similar conundrum of visual remembrance is brought to our attention again as a woman cross-dressed for a majority of the play is given so little stage direction in relation to the detail the content is given. In order to navigate this play, one must read the lines to understand when she is or is not dressed as male, but even then, it is

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38 Julia, from The Two Gentleman of Verona, is the female lead and also cross-dresses, but there is no indication of her cross-dress within the explicit stage direction of the first folio. The complete lack of any explicit stage direction strips away the centrality of Julia’s cross-dressing to the plot.
left fairly ambiguous. This goes unnoticed for the most part, because our Norton editions have taken the guesswork out of these situations with edits and brackets placed within the *original* stage direction. As a contemporary reader of the time though, Rosalind’s cross-dressed body is all but forgotten within the stage direction of this play and the reader is steeped in this ambiguity. While contextually we know Rosalind is still Ganymede, visually we are left with a lack of stage direction guiding us to the image and action associated with those words and left to look for the clues in the text rather than faced with a cross-dressed body in the forefront of the stage direction, spaced out and italicized.

Viola, of the three ladies, gets the most descriptive stage direction, but there is not one mention of Cesario, her male alter ego within said stage direction. When she comes in, she comes in “*mans attire*” rather than coming in for Cesario in 1.4 (257). Of all of the cross-dressing females, Viola embodies her male alter ego the most, and so it is shocking that Cesario is nowhere present within the stage direction. For almost five whole acts, there is one mention of Viola in mans attire and the rest of the stage directions to follow is “*Enter Viola*” (260).³⁹ While there is not a moment of exit for Viola-as-Cesario, for she stays in her manly attire through the end of the play, this whole play is even more heavily invested and plot dependent off the cross-dress than *Merchant of Venice* or *As You Like It*. If that is the case, why so heavily ignore it within the stage direction? Logically, one would think it is because she is not transitioning from one to other there is no need to designate that space, but visually it tells a different story that is interconnected with the fluidity of this situation. Viola is not allowed to switch back and forth in identity, out of safety, and must stay Cesario. By not having it appear at all in the play though we will continually read Viola visually, for that is the only name present in the stage direction. With

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³⁹ This is for the most part true except for one moment in 1.5 or on page 258 in which the stage direction reads “*Enter Violenta*.”
a play that provides so many images of a cross-dressed woman within the content and the implicit stage direction, it would be dangerous to also prioritize this within the explicit stage direction as well. The page needs to appear as female as possible to counteract the amount of hybridity that Viola expresses with her actions and cross-dress.

Viola, Rosalind, Jessica, Portia, and Nerissa are all restricted by space and because content and implicit stage direction is prioritized over explicit stage direction, there is no need for stage direction within these plays. In other words, there is no need to present the cross-dressed body in the center, spaced out, and in the italicized to interrupt the story, for the cross-dressed body is not supposed to be at the center to stoke the anxieties of English society. For these women never truly switch identities in the eyes of these editors, with the exception of Viola. Her connection to Cesario runs deeper than all the others and this will be further explored within the next section. Overall, very minimal space is designated to stage direction within these Shakespearean comedies due—I argue—to not only the lack of fluidity allowed to these moments of gender crossing, but also due to the prioritization of the content over the stage direction, rather than the two working in tandem.

Stage direction takes up more space physically on the Spanish page than on the English page. When it comes to how often stage direction is used, how it is used, and the manner in which it is expressed, the comedias from the Siglo de Oro manage to give more of a priority to the action and the images presented on the imaginative stage. Although content, of course, will still occupy a majority of the page, it is important to note the amount of space taken and how more often it is used within these plays. This in itself not only creates a greater image for the reader but serves as a bigger interruption for the content. With more space being taken, and the
use of the italicized font to separate action from spoken word or content, stage direction in this case takes its time to create a fuller image of what we may have seen or imagine on stage and gives us a better perception of cross-dressed women in the theater. Both Don Gil and La Vida es Sueño open with detailed stage direction about the female characters’ cross-dress, as you can see in Figure 2 and Figure 3. Not only is it detailed, but it opens the whole play and is located in a very prominent spot.

**Figure 2:** Tirso de Molina, *Don Gil de las Calzas Verdes*, Maria de Quiñones a costa de Pedro Coello, y Manuel Lopez, Madrid, 1635, p. 283.

Located at the National Library of Spain

**Figure 3:** Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *La Vida es Sueño*, La viuda de Juan Sanchez a costa de Gabriel de Leon, Madrid, 1640. Located at the National Library of Spain.

For La Vida es Sueño, which is pictured in figure 3, this stage direction is located below the character list and the title. The way it is positioned is in a manner in
which to draw the eye. The text is not only centered and has a space above and below it, but it also places the lines into a specific tapered format. The first line is the longest, the second line is shorter, and the third is shortest, bringing our eyes to the center of the page. It also makes the stage direction even more impactful by slowing down our pace of reading by centralizing the stage direction in that funnel formation. In similar formation, but on a smaller scale, Don Gil’s stage direction, pictured in figure 2, also draws the eye and slows our pace with the funneled formation. While *La Vida es Sueño* starts with one column, *Don Gil* starts with two. After the list of speakers, there is a space, then the beginning of the first column with the stage direction. There is also a space in between that and the content and this stage direction is also funneled. The opening structures of these plays already force a reader to slow down to read the stage direction so as to give the context necessary for the play, and it places this action of cross-dressing front and center. Rosaura’s story is even considered a subplot to Segismundo’s arc, yet her cross-dressing is still the one to open the play.

Within the rest of the play there are plenty of instances of cross-dress that take up physical space on the page. While combined the Shakespearean comedies I have explored only have three instances in which cross-dressing is mentioned, *Don Gil* itself has nine instances for just Doña Juana and *La Vida es Sueño* has three for Rosaura, with two of them being detailed. Overall, the Spanish page tends to prioritize stage direction more than the English page and spends more time expressing the cross-dressed body on stage. This extra presence on the page creates more moments of interruption, but also more moments in which the reader pauses and could pause to think. Allowing this type of presence of the cross-dressed body to be so active within these works through the stage direction allows for a perception of more bodily freedom for the cross-dressed females of these plays. Although it is difficult to tell whether this
influenced audiences, this does create a moment of opportunity or possibility rather than restriction. This presents a different perspective and different experience for the reader and allows more images to come to forefront as action is connected to the content.

While Doña Juana and Rosalind tend to have more stage direction about their cross-dressing present on the page, Serafina only has one instance of it, because she only does it once. Although it only happens once, the manner in which it is presented also creates a disruption of the page and makes one as a reader pause. These pages carry a lot of text, and at times stage direction can get lost amongst all the content, but this stage direction does not.

Figure 4: Tirso de Molina, *Del Vergonzoso en Palacio*, Geronymo Margarit, y á su costa, Barcelona, 1631, p. 54. Located at the National Library of Spain.

This play, pictured in Figure 4, is printed with two columns and the location of this stage direction is at the very top of the page on the left column. Before the content begins, we have the stage direction in italicized font and up top. The only thing above it is the heading which reads “PRIMERO. Lib. I.”. It also tapers, like Don Gil and La Vida es Sueño, but there is not extra spacing like at the
beginning of the play. Even without the extra spacing, though, this stage direction takes up three whole lines to describe not only that Serafina is dressed like a man, but what exactly she is dressed in. The amount of space and detail dedicated to stage direction is very different from what we see on the English page, when it comes to crossdressing females, and it allows us to see what was a priority when it came to describing the visuals of the stage. The freedom to describe a body and clothing in such a way shows that these printings were not shying away from the cross-dressed body, but in turn were emphasizing them and making them as present as possible.

Duality / Hybridity: Who Do We Really See?

I opened this project with the question of what it means to come in for someone. The impetus for this comparative thesis was the question of why the female leads in Shakespearean comedies need to come in for someone when the Spanish leads can come in as themselves just dressed in men’s clothing? Between the English and the Spanish, we are looking at two different physical pages and two different perceptions of cross-dressed women that is only visible if we take the time to not only examine the stage direction, but to see the effects it has on the rest of the page and on how we read. What are we really seeing when we look at a page with stage direction involving female cross-dress? When we look at the English page, we are left with a certain duality always present that pits content and contextual knowledge against the visual. Although we know it is physically Balthazar in the court, Ganymede in the forest, and Cesario in Illyria (once Viola joins Orsino’s court), due to the lack of persistent stage directions, Portia, Rosalind, and Viola
are always strongly present. Are we reading two identities at once when we look at the page, or are these names that they \textit{come in for} just a strategy used to avoid expressing the details of a female body fashioned in male clothing? Either way, the English page is always dualistic visually, for they can either be Portia or Balthazar, rather than both female and male at the same time. With the Spanish page, these women take on alter egos and change their dress, but there is never a doubt that these women are who they are throughout the whole play. Within the stage direction they come in as themselves either dressed as a man or as a woman, rather than coming in as their alter ego. The Spanish text visually does not want us to ever think that these female leads are anyone but themselves, rather that they are hybrid when it comes to their dress. The page doesn’t necessarily look male or female but both genders can be present at once to create a visual hybrid, rather than one imposed with binaries. Doña Juana is allowed to be in green breeches within the stage direction dressed as man, pretending to be a man named Don Gil, while still present as female on the page within the stage direction and the speech tags, although her speech is coded grammatically as male in the dialogue when she is cross-dressed. The fluidity of her transformation is what allows this level of hybridity on the page where the clothing of male and female can be attributed to a female character and the female character does not need to be anyone else to do this. This hybridity can be comparable to the manner in which Garber speaks about the transvestite as a third category or a crisis category.\footnote{Though Garber touches on this third category in performance, I am further expanding it}
cover the visual level of the hybrid page. Within this section, I will be exploring how the naming of an alter ego changes how we view characters through stage direction and in the content and how a page can physically be gendered through the use of speech headings and stage direction. Overall, looking at both these sets of comedies in this light allows us to see the nuances very present on the page that could not only change the perception on how these cross-dressing females are read and presented, but also be a reflection of contemporary society itself.

Let us begin by discussing the use of naming and the names chosen for our cross-dressed heroines. Instead of Portia coming in dressed like a lawyer’s clerk, she comes in as someone else\(^4\). When Portia enters the courtroom, the stage direction lets us know that she is coming in for Balthazar. Who is Balthazar and where did that name come from? In Scene 3.4 the stage direction in the first folio, reads “Enter Portia, Nerissa, Lorenzo, Jessica, and a man of Portias.” (176). Although he is not named within the stage direction, later in this scene, after Lorenzo and Jessica leave, Portia calls him Balthazar and the speech tag itself reads “Balth.” (177). It is Balthazar who brings the letter to Belario and brings Portia and Nerissa the proper clothing to disguise themselves. That is not all that Portia gets from Balthazar, for she also takes his name once she is in court. Although he is a servant and of lesser standing, he is still the correct gender for the courtroom. Therefore, she uses her money and resources and his name to create a new Balthazar that carries the authority in the court. By using a name that is already present

\(^4\) Rowe published in 1709 had Portia coming in as a lawyer’s clerk. There seem to have been a shift come the 18\(^{th}\) century which could use further exploration why the shift to dress came rather than identity.
within the play, Portia’s role as Balthazar takes on an even strong dualistic nature, for Balthazar already exists. Not only is there a dual nature between Portia and Balthazar, but one between the real Balthazar and the Balthazar of court.

Rosalind, like Portia, also chooses her name, but it is one of mythological and social meaning. According to classical mythology, Ganymede was the name of a gorgeous young man who was beloved by Jove, king of the gods. In turn Jove carried him off to heaven and made him his cupbearer. It was also used as a slang term for a young man who sold sexual services or were kept by older men. According to the OED, Ganymede means “cupbearer, a youth who serves out liquor.” So, while Rosalind has chosen to be a man to keep herself safe, the name she has chosen for herself lends itself to the homosexual emotions that will occur during the love lessons with Orlando.

Cesario is the only alter ego without a clear definition or background. Viola could have easily gone with her brother’s name, but she is still hoping that he is alive. Cesario is close to the word Caesarean, in which the OED defines as “the delivery of a child by cutting through the walls of the abdomen when delivery cannot take place in the natural way, as was done in the case of Julius Cæsar”. From this definition, I feel as if Viola created a name that relates to creating another person from the same person, the same way birth does, but it is cut with cloth rather than skin. Why create all these different identities for these women if they are only crossdressing to survive in the spaces

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42 Footnote within the Norton Edition pg 1636 footnote # 4
43 The term of Caesarean in relation to birth was used in 1615 according to the OED definition.
they are in? What is so offensive about the female simply changing into men’s clothing? By creating a different identity, our lead heroines are even further detached from the physical cross-dressing because they are not themselves, but an alter-ego. At the same time though, the presence of them as themselves is stronger than the presence of their alter-ego. This is the exact duality that is in the back of our mind as we read knowing that they are someone else in the fictional world, but only seeing the names of Portia, Viola, and Rosalind as readers.

It is this dual personality that we see and read simultaneously that creates this dual presence on the page itself between the content and the visual. If we were to take the context out that the content provides, what would we visually see of our heroines? Other than the specific scenes in which Portia and Rosalind first cross-dress, which is where we see the page in its dual nature with the alter ego name in the stage direction and the heroines’ names in the speech headings, the pages of these plays in relation to cross-dressing look very heteronormative. Most of the stage direction for Rosalind and Portia read with their name and their names only. In 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1, 4.3, 5.2, and 5.4, the stage directions all include “Enter Rosalind” and have no mention of Ganymede, even though she is still Ganymede in each of those scenes (195). In 4.2, the scene directly after Portia’s entrance in court, the stage direction reads “Enter Portia and Nerissa.” (181). When only the visual components of the page are taken into account, then it is clear that the page appears very female because it is only their names and no mention of cross-dress that we see for a majority of the moments they are their alter-egos. It is the contextual
knowledge from the content and the one moment of cross-dressing in the stage direction contrasted with the visual nature of the page that creates this duality.

If this is true for Rosalind and Portia though, what of Viola? She follows a similar pattern for the majority of the play by entering only as Viola while still being Cesario, but here I want to discuss a moment of hybridity rather than the pattern I just presented. When Viola enters for the first time as Cesario, the stage direction states “Enter Valentine, and Viola in mans attire.” (257). We do not have a moment of duality of another identity in this moment, but one of hybridity. Why put a moment of hybridity for Viola? Here we do not see Viola entering in for someone else, but herself entering in men’s attire, or the simultaneous representation of two genders. This lends itself to the manner in which the Spanish represent their cross-dressing female heroines and this hybridity, in the same printed edition as others, is a not only an anomaly but a moment of freedom.

While the English page for the most part presents a duality, the Spanish page presents a form of fluidity and the image of the hybrid woman, or as Garber puts it, a crisis category. The difference is the Spanish did not shy away from this hybrid woman who not only would take her honor into her own hands but would chose to cross-dress on her own accord to win that honor back. Winning back her honor was a form of survival, but it is the manner in which they went about it that shows real initiative rather than just means of survival. If she wasn’t winning her honor back, she was using the stage and cross-dressing as entertainment, for even Doña Juana was having fun disrupting the plans of her jilting lover. Each of our leading ladies present this hybridity in different forms,
but each form takes on a similar effect; it leads us to see the performance of gender not as one solidified category, but one that can take different forms and serves on a spectrum. Before I examine each play for the presentation of hybridity, I want to clarify a huge difference from the start about identity and names within these Spanish works. For Rosaura and Serafina, there is no alter ego in which they are coming in for within these plays. Rosaura is never asked for her name but is just called a foreigner when she is dressed as a man, and once she disguises herself as a lady in waiting, she is known to Clotado as Rosaura and the rest as a servant. Serafina is merely playing a part of a prince within a play called “La Portuge[a cruel” (1631 Verso of 54). The prince is given no name, therefore Serafina does need and alter ego to cross-dress even in a moment of meta-theater. Each of the leading cross-dressing females within a Shakespearean comedy would need an alter ego, and with the exception of Viola, this alter ego would show up in the stage direction instead of change of clothing or dress. As for Doña Juana, she is taking on the role of Don Gil, but she has multiple alter egos rather than just one. While she cross-dresses herself as Don Gil, she also pretends be a woman named Elvira. At any given moment, Doña Juana may switch from being Don Gil to being Elvira to being herself again. The manner in which Doña Juana treats her identity is not necessarily as an alter-ego but as another part of herself. When Caramachal mourns the “loss” of his master Don Gil, she makes it clear that “que ñoy tu don Gil, / viuo e toy en cuerpo,y alma, / no ves que trato con todos, / y que ninguno e[panta?[ I’m your Don Gil / I’m alive in soul and body./ Can you not see speak with them all/ and no-one’s been scared” (1635
This clear difference in the manner in which Doña Juana sees herself compares to the manner in which Orsino sees Viola, namely as Cesario, but not as Viola sees herself. For Doña Juana and Don Gil are the same person in body and soul.

While the English page tends to prioritize the female identity over the cross-dressed one on the page, the Spanish page itself does not necessarily present a masculine image or a female image, but a combination of both. It is this hybridity that creates an image on the page, one of a different category, one of hybridity. With Doña Juana, she is constantly changing from one to the other throughout the whole play in order to pull off this complicated and entertaining ruse. Often you will see Doña Juana “de hombre”, while still having her name within the stage direction and her name, or the abbreviation of her name, as the speech tag. The page, rather than looking female, looks mixed, because we have elements of both male and female in play at once. The only one that shares a similar hybridity on the English side is Viola, because Cesario’s name never shows up in the stage direction, even though “he” is the one present for a majority of the play. On a single page, there is a moment as Doña Juana coming in dressed as a man in the stage direction, speech tags with her name, and reference to Don Gil in the content. All at once, her identity is impossible to pin point and that is the takeaway from this analysis; her gender is not set in a binary and instead is set on a spectrum. It is these different forms of gender and identity on the page, in comparison to the very singular female page within the English comedies, that create a huge difference in the perception of this cross-dressed body and allows for more freedom. Although Doña Juana is herself
this whole play and the decision to cross-dress comes with its own form of agency, the page itself shows a hybrid identity visually.

I want to note that not every page is hybrid within these texts. Like the Shakespearean comedies, there are some pages where no switch occurs, therefore the page will only have Doña Juana or Rosaura present within the stage direction and the page will look specifically female. The difference comes down to how often these differences show up in their presence and the matter in which they are represented. Serafina herself possesses this hybrid image by cross-dressing as a man and then having a portrait of her dressed male floating around throughout the entirety of the play. Most of the pages within this work paint Serafina as female, for only her name and the speech tags is an abbreviated form of her name are present. It is in the moment that she cross-dresses with the snippets of her “acting male” in which this hybrid image emerges. Rather than a dual image, like with Portia and Balthazar or Rosalind and Ganymede, we receive an image of Serafina being both. She is not only dressed as a man playing a man on stage, but she is still herself according to the stage direction and the speech tags. What even further nails this hybrid image is the portrait that is painted of her dressed as a man that was commissioned by Antonio, her admirer. This portrait eventually reaches her hands and she falls in the love with the image of herself. Not only is the stage direction vying for this hybrid image, but the content itself is too. This is a moment in which the stage direction is in connection with the content, putting forward a connected message. This hybrid image of Serafina is one that is neither just male or female but both. For she
is still female under all the clothing and her speech tags are still female, but the image and action itself is male.

This hybridity is alive within each of these plays and further complicates the gender binaries present during this time and within these works content, but it still provides the male and female aspects of dress in separate categories of men and woman. What if we combine those categories? This gender binary further becomes complicated with the final image of Rosaura. She only has three moments of change: 1) in the beginning where she is “en habito de hombre,” 2) when she becomes a lady in waiting and is dressed as a dama, and 3) as herself in her most honest form in a dress with a sword and a dagger. (1640 1). It is this last change that I want to focus on in this section discussing hybridity, for Rosaura becomes the image of hybridity herself. After she gains the possibility of fighting on Segismundo’s side against Astolfo, she does not come in dressed as a man again, as she did the beginning the play. This time she comes dressed “con baquero, espada y daga.[with a woman’s gown, sword, and dagger]” (1640 Verso of 22). She is no longer trying to enact her plan as anyone else but herself, with her dress being very feminine and her accessories being very male. It is in this moment that hybridity is alive and well within the stage direction and allows for the perception of the cross-dressing female to go past these binaries. She is no longer a male or female identity or dressed in garb relating to one gender or the other, but instead encompasses both and provides a wider spectrum on the performance of gender as a whole. Rosaura is the emblem of hybridity and she is the lingering interruption in which we stop to watch and listen.
Conclusion: This is Only the Entrance

It has become clear that the differences in stage direction is not something to be overlooked. It is a way in which we can further explore the social issues and expectations during early modern times and it provides a new way to explore the gender dynamics present within each of these plays that include cross-dressing females. Gillian Woods recently created a collection of essays that explore the importance of stage direction and states that the purpose of this book is to explore the action of “lingering on stage directions, rather than skimming over them to reach less conceptually awkward speeches” in order to “gain a fuller understanding of how a play works, in both textual and theatrical forms” (7). The only way in which we could have observed the difference between the English anxieties and the Spanish freedoms is comparatively through the stage direction. Printed stage direction made it possible to open up a new channel in the exploration of gender when it comes to cross-dressing females and also added to the transnational knowledge that is still being built in today’s scholarly communities. Printed stage direction is the connection to the real world of the theater and of perception and gives us a view of the societal limitations present between the English and the Spanish stage.

But this project is only the beginning when it comes to visuality and gender. In plays such as Guillen de Castro’s La Fuerza de La Costumbre, it is the use of accessories and mannerisms placed within the stage direction that dictate the performances of gender within this play, for the sister and brother were both raised in the wrong gender construct and are attempting to relearn the correct ones. What does it mean when it is no longer clothing or identity that defines your gender, but mannerisms and accessories? Furthermore, how does Beaumont and Fletcher’s Love’s Cure or the Martial Maid, an English translation of this play differ? It is in this
visual and comparative manner in which we should be using stage direction to further push the binaries of gender into a spectrum when we look at works from the 16th and 17th century. In the end, stage direction lies at the intersection of book history, gender studies, performance studies, and transnationalism, and should be used more often in such a fashion in order to further understand the nuances of the early modern world.
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