

DISGUISE, IDENTITY, AND FEMALE CROSS-DRESSING IN
SELECTED WORKS OF TIRSO DE MOLINA

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The theater of Gabriel Téllez, better known as Tirso de Molina, frequently contains elements of female disguise and cross-dressing. In this study, the author examines four plays by Tirso de Molina in which female disguise is central to the plot. (*La celosa de sí misma*, *El celoso prudente*, *Don Gil de las calzas verdes* and *El amor médico*) In these texts, the use of female disguise is a means by which the female character is able to circumvent the conventions of society and gain a freedom to act that would otherwise be impossible. The danger that arises from this use of disguise is twofold. The first is the possibility of the premature revelation of the disguise. The second is that the character may lose herself in the disguise and act against her own interests. Both are examined here. Despite the potential dangers of disguise, in each play Tirso de Molina creates a strong

female character who is able to manipulate events to achieve her goals. The author makes use of Jungian terminology and Foucauldian concepts of power and observation to examine the use of female disguise and cross-dressing as a power strategy, rather than in terms of sexuality, as is common in Lacanian approaches. Disguise in these plays is revealed to be a means to correct injustices and to achieve results that would otherwise be unobtainable.

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