

A tune to the Teatro: The Relationship between Spanish Theatre of the Golden Age and modern day music. / Una melodía al teatro: la relación entre el teatro Español del siglo de oro y la música moderna.

By Emily G. Brown

Abstract: For my thesis, I have decided to study Miguel de Cervantes' famous play, "El retablo de las maravillas", and choose specific, key scenes and interpret them through song. I will be discussing the significance of the themes of the play and how the songs I have chosen illustrate the relevance of the play to modern day society. In addition, through the usage of various articles from theatre and music theorists, I will be analyzing the role and importance of music in theatre and how music tells a story. At the conclusion, I will explain the connections of contemporary music and old theatre and how the play relates to and is meaningful to the modern day.

Keywords: Spanish, Miguel de Cervantes, Music, Theatre, Theory, Perception

What do a four-hundred year-old Spanish play and modern day music have in common? Many would not think much, but when comparing the themes and messages of a specific play with contemporary music, one can witness the connections and similar ideas involved. My thesis statement is based on a course I took with Professor Isidoro Janeiro called, “Golden Age and Colonial Literature”. The course is taught in Spanish and discusses the theatre of the Spanish Golden Age while touching on theatre theory from various philosophers, Spanish, and from other parts of the world as well. Throughout the semester our class focused on the play, “El retablo de las maravillas” by the Spanish playwright, author, and poet, Miguel de Cervantes. Our class frequently used the play as a reference point when discussing theatre theory and aspects of the Spanish Golden era. In addition to having short written assignments about various theory readings, our class time was spent in groups writing and directing our own interpretation of the famous play. In my individual group, we decided to do a modern adaptation of the play and have it take place in a local bar. My role in the group was to discuss how the music of the play has an impact on how the themes are perceived. I later chose modern day songs that related to the themes of the play and would help the audience better understand the overall message. The process of reading and understanding the messages and themes of the play were quite interesting for all members of the class. When first reading the play I personally did not understand that it was supposed to be humorous due to the use of old Spanish spoken by the characters. When the class was asked to read an English translation of the play, I had a better comprehension of the themes and dialogue and was fascinated by how the themes of the play can relate to our own modern day society. This feeling of relevance is what sparked my interest in the play and my final project for the course.

My group's presentation is what initially inspired my thesis statement. Much like my modern take on our individual adaption of the play, I decided to choose contemporary songs that I felt best related and relayed the themes of the play to the modern day audience. Although the songs I chose are songs mainly from the nineteen seventies and nineteen eighties, I believe their lyrics and messages related to the play which is dated to be over four- hundred years old. The main argument of my thesis is how extraordinary it is that a play written in the sixteen hundreds can be related to the music of the modern day. In my thesis, I will be discussing the significance of the themes of the play and how the songs I have chosen illustrate the relevance of the play to modern day society, in addition to discussing the role of the music and how it tells the story. Music is so significant in playwriting because it allows the viewer to feel certain emotions without watching a scene, for example, music could simply be playing and can invoke all different types of emotions, in that audience members can have varying emotions depending on how the music makes them feel. At the conclusion of my thesis, I will explain the connections of contemporary music and old theatre and how the play still relates to modern day society, with themes of intolerance, foolishness, thus allowing it to be meaningful to the modern audience.

Miguel de Cervantes is undoubtedly one of the most infamous Spanish writers. Born in fifteen forty-seven in Spain, the author, poet and later playwright, released numerous pieces of literature, most notably, his novel *Don Quijote de la Mancha*. An interesting aspect of Cervantes concerning his playwriting was that although he had been writing and publishing his sonnets and books since the latter end of the fifteen hundreds, he did not release his plays to the public until

sixteen hundred fifteen, about two years before his death. He has even been said to not want to release his plays which included eight comedias o comedy themed plays and eight entremeses, or short plays that were written with the intention to not be acted out but read. Although many may know Cervantes due to Don Quijote, his plays are equally as recognizable, and boundary-defying in terms of theme and concept. During Cervantes' time or during the Golden Age in Spain, many authors used a traditional writing mold that conformed to the unrealistic standards of the ideal man. Authors like Lope de la Vega and Garcilaso de la Vega used this writing mold to discuss how one should strive to be in life, Cervantes, on the other hand, wanted to tell stories with a more realistic message that the public could relate to. An example of this traditional writing mold is exemplified in the romance novel, *Amadís de Gaula* by the Spanish author Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo. In this novel, Rodríguez de Montalvo tells the story of Amadís and how he is, "...the prototypical invincible hero, courteous, of noble birth and spirit, whose deeds and heart are moved solely by thoughts of his lady" (Gerli, 181). In *The Cambridge History of Spanish Literature* edited by David T. Gies, Gies discusses the various types of literature produced from Spain through sections of Spanish writing history discussed by different authors. Gerli later goes to state how Amadís', "...fighting prowess is tempered by courtly values and idealized love to produce a sentimental, heroic vision that came to embody a sixteenth-century aristocratic ideal" (181). This "idealized" writing model gained much popularity in Spain and the goal of Cervantes was to break away from this, and in doing so, based his plays on actual truth and real-life situations. In "El retablo de las maravillas: Cervantes' "Arte nuevo de deshacer comedias", Gerli discusses the aims of Cervantes while writing his plays and his apparent jabs at society and traditional Spanish writer Lope de la Vega. Gerli states how Cervantes deliberately goes against

the traditional role that women possessed during his time by having his two female characters discuss “inappropriate” female topics:

The dialogue between Teresa Repolla and Juana Castrada is a burlesque of the de rigueur female declarations of happiness, honor, modesty, and chastity which saturate the co- medias villanescas... though here, rather than make affirmative protestations of womanly virtue in the context of the rustic life, Teresa and Juana admonish each other about commonly shared sexual and genealogical secrets, hence high- lighting the need to guard against carelessness during the production. (Gerli, 485)

This type of dialogue between two female characters was unheard of during Cervantes’ time and caused controversy amongst the public with his writing (Sevilla Arroyo, XXII).

In the introduction of his book of all of Cervantes’ comedies and entremeses, author Florencio Sevilla Arroyo additionally discusses Cervantes’ method of writing his plays and how, “Para Cervantes, la comedia habia de ser... espejo de vida humana, ejemplo de costumbres y imagen de la verdad (Sevilla Arroyo, XXII). The quote translated says how Cervantes wanted his comedies to be a “mirror of human life, an example of customs and image of the truth of human behavior” (XXII). This reigns true with his “Retablo” because the characters illustrate typical human behavior of conformity and intolerance, along with deceit in order to achieve one’s goals. Edward Friedman explains how:

This deviation from the conventional loci of performance demonstrates Cervantes's search for a release from the formulas and the constraints of popular theater. Lope's comedia legitimizes the norms of society, while Cervantes's interludes expose and ridicule the conformity

and hypocrisy inherent in the operative social codes and, by extension, in the literary canon.

(813)

Cervantes' goal is to have the audience witness the critique of his society instead of idealizing and covering up the intolerance and conformity. Not only did Cervantes write his plays in a style that focused more on the reading of the text than the staging and acting, but he also desired to discuss the wrongdoings of his society even if his plays would not have been as well as Lope de la Vega's. Although Cervantes' *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, was renowned by the public, his eight Comedies and Entremeses were not as embraced with open arms. According to Friedman, Cervantes' remaining sixteen plays were deemed, "nunca representados" (Friedman, 324). The reason for this was due to Cervantes' different technique he used when composing his plays, and when being compared to Lope de la Vega and his "comedia nueva". Due to this Cervantes' plays, many critics, "...have more often maligned Cervantes's comedias than praised them. With prominent expectations, directors have regularly avoided the plays" (324). This Friedman states has been due to "closed-mindedness" in that people were so accustomed to the traditional playwriting technique that Cervantes did not use.

"El retablo de las maravillas" is such a groundbreaking play due to Cervantes' depiction of the everyday behavior of men, from people tricking others for money, to people attempting to conform through ridiculous measures and tactics. This entremes, or short play solely intended to be read and not staged, the satirical theme is based on the fault and deceit of one's fellow man in order to appear elite and superior with society. A key aspect of the play that is one of the core ideas of my thesis is the idea of perception and how music in theatre allows a person to perceive

different messages and themes to understand the play as a whole.

“El retablo de las maravillas” or “The Marvellous Puppet Show”, tells the story of two con-artists who trick a local town for money with their “mystical” play. The two tricksters, Chirinos and Chanfalla, go to the town with a plan to trick the townspeople for money using their “Retablo” or a “magical” play. During the play the two-state how only “pure-blood” Christians and those born in wedlock are able to see the play: “...que ninguno ver las cosas que en él se muestran que tenga alguna raza de confeso, o no sea habido y procreado de sus padres de legítimo matrimonio; y el que fuere contagiado destas dos tan usadas enfermedades, despídase de ver las cosas, jamás vistas ni oídas, de mi retablo” (801, Cervantes). Due to this, the townspeople while viewing the play, play along and lie saying they can see scenes in order to prove their religion to others to avoid persecution. The play ends with the Quartermaster coming to warn the Governor about an attack and states how he cannot see a specific scene that the others claim to witness, thus having the others believing he is Jewish. The Quartermaster out of anger then destroys the play and Chirinos and Chanfalla escapes with their money.

This play is very telling of what Cervantes and therefore Spain was experiencing in everyday life, being religious persecution. In April of fourteen ninety-two, King Fernando II of Aragon and Queen Isabella I of Castille ordered for the expulsion of the Spanish Jewish population. Many historians have multiple explanations as for why the expulsion occurred, some believing that the expulsion was enforced to have “religious and political unity” (Gilmour, 236) in Spain, therefore having Spain being an entirely Christian country (236). Another reasoning for

the expulsion according to Nicola Gilmour is due to the “conversos” (238), or people who had converted to Judaism from Christianity which included the measure of eradicating the Jewish populations in order to keep Christians from converting. Jewish citizens additionally were blamed and persecuted due to the various roles and employment they held in Spain which included “tax collectors and money lenders” (238). This combined with religious persecution by the Catholic church became another reason for the expulsion of the Jewish population by the monarchs. Although exact numbers of how many were expelled from Spain, numbers range from 40,000 to 400,000 (238), illustrating regardless of the number, a large percentage of the Spanish population had been forced to leave their homes due to intolerance.

To further explain the concept of music and its importance in the theatre I will touch upon a few of my fellow classmates’ group presentation about the play as well. In their presentation, titled, “Pense: Menos que una tarea más que una lección”, they chose the theme of racism and used a classroom as their setting of the play during the modern day. The group chose to have four groups that were given a sum of money by their professor to exhibit favoritism. Each group had a leader of a specific ethnicity with stereotypical traits. Leader A was a white male who was respectable and hardworking, Leader B was a Latino male who sold drugs, Leader C was an Asian male, very intelligent and practiced kung-fu, while Leader D was African and did not know much about technology. In addition to these traits the group leaders also had stereotypical attire such as a rosary and baggy pants for Leader B and a jade bracelet for Leader C. The presenting group later discussed how stereotyping and racism in their version of Cervantes’ play, is still very much present today, therefore, being relatable to the modern day

audience. An interesting focal point one group member decided to focus on was the stage lighting of the play. Light color, much like different types of music, allows a person to feel different emotions as opposed to another color. (Bailey, et al) An example of this could be how red can make someone feel angry while pink may allow some to feel in love. The group later used different colors of light to further describe the situation of each scene to the audience. In a scene where there was distress the group chose to use black, in another scene where the students were interacting in a friendly manner, the color yellow was used which is associated with happiness and tranquility. After listening to the groups' presentation I immediately thought of the film "Crash", the two thousand and four motion picture directed by Paul Haggis depicts various stories of people of differing religions, race, and age, forcing to interact and empathize with one another. After viewing the film, one is able to get a better understanding of lives outside of their own, and how many people struggle to keep themselves afloat. "Crash" ultimately allows the viewers to empathize with people unlike themselves through themes such as racism, prejudice, and bigotry, thus affecting the viewer's positively by implementing acceptance and tolerance of differences. Much like the play, the film brought about many ideas and issues that still are present in today's society, this being racial and religious differences amongst people and how to communicate through those differences. Much like observing a play from the audience or outside point of view, the film allows the viewers to witness the racial stereotyping and how inhumane and unjust it is.

In terms of the importance of music, one group member of the presentation discussed the importance of music in the play and its numerous functions. My classmate spoke about how

music helps to develop the narrative of a play including describing the scenes and revealing emotions of the characters. In addition, once one dissects the song playing in terms of composition, this also affects the emotions the audience can feel while listening to the specific song. For example, aspects of the song such as the time signature, tempo, rhythm, and tone, can influence the way a person can feel while listening. A faster-paced song may allow someone to feel anxious, or energized while a slower paced song can feel more calming or melancholy (Bailey, et al). An interesting concept that was mentioned in this presentation was the idea of silence. One may not think music in theatre and silence go hand in hand however, silence plays a large impact on setting the scene in a play like “El retablo de las maravillas”. By a specific scene having silence and no music playing, it allows the audience to focus on what is happening in the scene, particularly the dialogue between characters, instead of listening to the music playing (Bailey, et al). I found this idea fascinating due to a lack of music during a play being equally as important as the music itself. Both allow for further development of the scenes and overall play and a clearer message to the audience of the theme of the play.

This idea of conformity and the fear of being mislabeled connects to the theme/thesis of another group presentation in the “Golden Age and Colonial Literature” course. “El karaoke de las maravillas” or “The Karaoke of the Marvels”, presents the idea of the irony of what classifies a person to be truly American (Guevara, et al). The group sets their presentation in an American bar with a stereotypical dress. This dress included the over usage of the United States flag and even the Confederate flag which the group quoted to be very ironic due to the fact that the Confederate flag symbolizes the split between the United States during the Civil War (Guevara,

et al). What the group wanted to address was how there is no “true” American, only stereotypes that people have. This relates to the “real Christian” idea in the play; there is no legitimate way to show that one is a “true Christian” because it does not exist, much like the idea of the “true American” (Guevara, et al). The music that the group chose to play in the bar were songs of what it meant to be the “true American”. One song was “40 hour week” by the country band Alabama. This song tells the working day and everyday life of the hardworking American. The music video for the song shows men hard at work during the day, and then relaxing at night with a cold beer in hand, illustrating the idea of what it means to be an American.

The idea of perception is a concept that people have pondered and studied since the time of the Greek philosophers. Later during the 20th century in Spain, the philosopher José Ortega y Gasset wrote an essay in the year nineteen twenty-five. The essay titled, “Ensayo de estética a manera de prólogo,” is about the perception of an individual. The author discusses the way in how a person sees things differently than another. An example of this is when a person listens to music or watches a play. That person will have different feelings because he/she processes things differently like thoughts or emotions. In addition, the essay talks about the use of “el yo” or “I/me”. A question that the essay asks is how do I perceive the outside world and how does it affect my perception? This conceptualization of oneself is a key idea through all of the essay and applies to all people. After I finished reading the paper, I immediately thought of the English phrase, “Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder”, and how this phrase applies to the idea of perception. During the essay, Ortega y Gasset talk about the concept of beauty and how beauty is not only a material thing or a person. The author states that, “... no digo que la decoración o

industria artística se halle exenta de belleza: digo solo que su belleza no es solo belleza--.”

(Ortega y Gasset, 155) The English translation of this phrase would be, “...I did not say that the decoration or artistic industry is free of beauty, I say that its beauty is not the only beauty” (155).

The line resonated with me because there are connections with the English phrase about one person’s opinion of beauty. The words, “...it’s beauty is the not the only beauty” (155), are true because, although a person can not believe what I believe is beautiful, it does not mean that it still is not beautiful. It is all opinion and perspective.

Another idea that the essay presents is the concept of “El yo” or “I/Me”. In the section titled, “Yo, y mi yo”, or “I and my I”, the author discusses the idea of how we can feel things but can’t see them. To elaborate, Ortega y Gasset say that we feel pain, love, and hate, but we do not “see” (159) the loving or hating. This concept is interesting because it discusses that in this act of pain, love, and hate, we are mourners. On the other hand, when we are presented with another mourner, we become executives because that mourner becomes, “una imageIn, una cosa u objeto que (tengamos) delante” (159). I find this concept very stimulating because I agree. When we feel emotions, we cannot physically see them so we mourn alone, but we are the executives of the situation. However, when we see a person that is in pain, this person becomes a thing or object because we do not feel the pain and therefore feel in charge of the situation. The person/object is now viewed and perceived differently by us or the observer and takes on a new form or sense of being. This is like how the author wants to say that this pain is more real to us when we are the ones experiencing it. This realism is crucial in understanding one another and how we process the world around us.

When experiencing theatre, it is given that when one sees a play that they experience it differently than the person next to them. “The Eiffel Tower: and Other Mythologies”, by Roland Barthes is an essay of the author’s thoughts of the Eiffel Tower through the eyes of the character Maupassant. During the essay, Barthes discusses the history of the Eiffel tower and how it represents the city of Paris and ultimately, the country of France. Barthes states how the tower is special because although it is a tourist attraction that thousands come to visit, originally it was a monument with no usage whatsoever, especially during the time of its architect, Gustave Eiffel. Eiffel discussed how the tower had many scientific uses such as, “...aerodynamic measurements, studies of resistance of substances, physiology of climber, radio-electric research, ...”, but the tower never had been used as such (Barthes, 6). In addition to this fact, Barthes talks about the importance of space in the tower and how there is no museum inside and nothing to see inside in general (7). This concept is very interesting especially for the tourists because usually when one goes to a monument or a tourist attraction, there is space to enter, however with the tower this space is nonexistent. The tower is an open monument and Barthes says is a group of lines. (7-8,15) This idea illustrates the complexity and singularity of the tower in that there is no other monument like it and it is in a certain sense, a mystery. The Eiffel tower may not have an actual purpose except for being a symbol of France, but it is obvious that it has special properties unique to itself that no other monument has.

“The Eiffel Tower”, and the idea of perception are intertwined in that to understand the

tower, one must perceive it in multiple ways. For example, the tower for the people that live in Paris may only be a tower that they pass by daily, however, for a tourist, it is the tower of Paris. In addition to this, the tower gives many different perceptions depending on if the viewer is on the ground or the tower itself. When on the tower, one can see much of Paris and has unique views. However, when on the ground, one can only see the tower itself instead of much of Paris and beyond. Originally, the tower did not have any purpose except to just be a monument but like the play which when originally published was not received well, the tower gained appreciation over many years. (5-6) Although both works of art, being the tower and the play were not as respected back at their time of origin, they now are infamous and are well known all over the world. The Eiffel tower can be applied to the concept of “I” of Ortega y Gasset because like the tower, the essay is all about perception. Without perception, it would be very difficult to process different and unique things like a work of art, a play or a building like the Eiffel tower. The perception of oneself is key in understanding the outside world and to allow one to be an individual. When one views a play, they will process each aspect differently because they have had experiences unique to them that allow them to see concepts in specific ways. This is one of the ideas that make the theatre unique to experience.

The first song I chose relates to the first scene in the play where Chirinos and Chanfalla discuss their plan to trick the townspeople. The song I chose was “The Joker” by “The Steve Miller Band”. The song is about a man who is “always on the run” (The Steve Miller Band) and drifts from town to town. I thought this song would be ideal to start the play because it sets up

the motives of the two tricksters. The chorus of the song: “Cause I'm a picker / I'm a grinner / I'm a lover / And I'm a sinner / Playin' my music in the sun / I'm a joker / I'm a smoker / I'm a mid-night toker / I get my lovin' on the run,” (The Steve Miller Band) illustrate the connection with Chirinos and Chanfalla being jokers and being “on the run” (The Steve Miller Band). This song was the first song that immediately came to my mind when thinking of the play and although that may not be the case for other listeners, I find it unique that this song is able to translate the first opening scene of the play. This “translation” concept is fascinating because of how my perspective of how the scene should be portrayed would be completely different from another person, however, due to the songs representing how we would individually interpret them, there are no wrong “translations”. Perspective is key when comprehending “El retablo”, and Sevilla Arroyo states how perspective is a central idea of the play: “De ese modo, el perspectivismo entra a la liza dentro del entremes; pero se ve contrastado además por la óptica diferente del espectador-lector real, que percibe el cruce de enfoques diferentes” (Sevilla Arroyo, LIV). Perspectivism is all throughout the play and is contrasted due to the different optical views of the observer/reader, allowing different points of view for each spectator.

The second song applies to the scene when the townspeople and the tricksters are discussing the rules for viewing the play. These rules include being a true Christian and being born to married parents, this scene illustrates one of the key themes of the play being religious intolerance and persecution. The song that applies to this scene is “God is Gonna Cut You Down” covered by Johnny Cash, originally written by the artist Odetta. (Google Lyrics) This song is unique in that it does not directly tell what is happening in the scene but illustrates the

feelings of the townspeople against people of the Jewish faith. Although this song when listened to primarily may not have many connotations with the play, I deemed it unique due to the song referring to how the townspeople and Chirinos and Chanfalla were referring to Jewish people, being that they are not practicing the “correct” religion and therefore will be punished by God. The song talks about being reprimanded for one’s sins by God, the music video also includes multiple Christian imageries including crosses and churches. The lyrics, “...working in the dark against your fellow man” (Johnny Cash), also resonated with me in that the townspeople are trying to ostracize Jewish citizens and exclude them because of their faith. Another interesting aspect of this song is that it can be applied to Chirinos and Chanfalla: “Go tell that long tongue liar / Go and tell that midnight rider / Tell the rambler / The gambler...” (Johnny Cash). The lyrics talk about how “the rambler”, “the gambler” and “the long-tongued liar” (Johnny Cash), will finally get what is coming to them by God, which possibly Chirinos and Chanfalla would encounter if they were caught.

The third song I chose discusses the scene when the Townspeople viewing the play lie and play along with Chirinos and Chanfalla and state how they can feel and see the “invisible” acts happening throughout the play. The fact that they claim to see these acts eludes to the elitist idea that they are all true Christians because if not they would not be able to see the play. A song that I deemed fit for this scene is “Jumping Someone else’s Train” by “The Cure”. This song discusses the concept of needing to conform to society and how a person, “won’t leave any trace” (The Cure) amongst the crowd. I wanted to use this song to illustrate the connection between the conformity of both the townspeople and the message of the lyrics and how

following someone else's train allows one to keep a low profile instead of standing out amongst the crowd. The lyrics: "Don't say what you mean / You might spoil your face / If you walk in the crowd / You won't leave any trace / It's always the same / You're jumping someone else's train..." (The Cure), not only relay the message of conformity to the audience but additionally bash the concept by stating how conformity is not unique and will make one vanish amongst the masses.

For the final song, I chose to elaborate on the final climactic scene between the townspeople and the Quartermaster. In this scene the Quartermaster confronts the play viewers on how he cannot see this dancing woman that they all claim to be watching, thus having the viewers to believe he is of the Jewish faith. In this scene, Juan Capacho and the Mayor quote, "Basta: de ex il[l]is es." ... "De ex il[l]is es, de ex il[l]is es"¹ (810, Cervantes). He later destroys the play out of anger of being accused of being non-Christian. The song "Black Magic Woman", by Santana, tells how a man is tricked by a magical woman who "put a spell" on him so he "couldn't see" (Santana): Got a black magic woman / Got a black magic woman / I've got a black magic woman / Got me so blind I can't see..." (Santana). I thought this song was an interesting choice because although the scene becomes violent with the destruction of the play, the song gives a lighter feeling to the scene while still illustrating what is taking place during the play.

The importance of music in the theatre cannot be underestimated. Its usage allows one to comprehend various messages and ideas without specific dialogue between the characters. Music

¹ De ex il[l]is es: 'converso de los judíos', (810)

has much significance because it can be applied to any situation and has different meanings for each listener. In the play, “El retablo de las maravillas”, by Miguel de Cervantes, the story of Chirinos and Chanfalla and their trickery of some rural townspeople, has themes that transcend time. Because the play still has relevant themes, I was able to use contemporary music to identify what is happening during the scenes as well as their themes. Some of these themes included persecution, intolerance, and deceit. I found songs from this century that discussed these themes and ideas and illustrate that these ideas of the play are still relevant in our society today. A source that I found to help me explain my thesis and its relation with the play was the book, “Musicality in Theatre: music as a model, method, and metaphor in theatre-making”, by David Roesner. In his book, Roesner talks about the importance of music in theatre, and how music can allow a person to feel different ways depending on the type of music and the person who is listening. The idea of perception is essential because a person can interpret the music differently than the person who is sitting next to them. The music can allow a scene to feel happy, sad, or angry to a viewer thus giving different perceptions to the audience. In his book, Roesner talks about the theory of Tia DeNora, a music sociologist, and how music can tell about the characters, setting and overall play. Roesner states, “I would argue that part of the strategic use of music and musicality that DeNora sees shaping social identities can also be applied to the creation of dramatic characters, stage personae and performative presence. DeNora’s formulation of ‘musically composed identities’ could thus also refer to fictional on-stage identities: we will see that not unlike respondents to her ethnographic case studies, who ‘ “find themselves” in musical structures’, theatre practitioners have similarly used musical structures to find characters or non-fictional performative qualities, both in order to create these, but also to make them

repeatable...” (Roesner, 15-16). This discusses how music can change one’s perception and how the audience can use the music to identify with and relate to the characters of the play. The music in theatre is key in helping the audience understand what the play is attempting to say. Whether it is a serious or comical scene, the music can tell different stories for each person who is listening. My role in my presentation is to show how music can tell the modern day audience the story of a 400-year-old play and still be relevant to society.

To continue on the idea of the music telling specific ideas about the play, the setting is another key idea to explain the themes of the play just as the music does. The setting in the play is in a rural town during the time in Spain when people of the Jewish and Islamic religions were being persecuted by Christians. This piece of history is crucial in understanding the play because it tells of how society was during the play and the time of Cervantes as well. Although on the surface the “simple” setting is that the play takes place in a town and later in the home of Juan Castrado, the setting says much about the play in that the town is one that persecutes people of other religions and believes that Christianity is above all other religions. This is explained in better detail when the Quartermaster goes to Castrado’s home and states he cannot see the dancing woman, which leads the townspeople to believe that he is Jewish. The Quartermaster out of anger destroys the play illustrating the offense he felt for being labeled as Jewish. This additionally connects to what Spain was experiencing during Cervantes’ time being that the expulsion of the Jewish population was not too far behind the birth of Cervantes.

The concept of silence is such an intriguing study. Silence, as defined by The Oxford

Living Dictionary, is the “Complete absence of sound” (Oxford Living Dictionary), and this is what many may simply regard it as. In an essay by Professor Isidoro Arén Janeiro, Professor Janeiro discusses the importance of silence in regards to “El retablo de las maravillas”. In his piece titled, “El teatro, el objeto estético, y la complicidad del público en El retablo de las maravillas”, Janeiro combines theatre, the aesthetic object, and the complexity of the public in discussing “El retablo” and introduces theatre theory regarding the audience’s experience while watching the play. Throughout his essay, Professor Janeiro reveals the significance of silence in the play and how the use of silence is what allows Chirinos and Chanfalla to ultimately trick the townspeople with the “Retablo”. For example, in the essay, it is discussed how the townspeople simply go along with everything Chanfalla and Chirinos say out of fear to not be persecuted as a person of the Jewish faith. By the townspeople blindly following and partaking in everything the two tricksters say and do, that fear becomes more and more apparent through their actions.

(Janeiro) In one paragraph Janeiro states, “No obstante, continúa el silencio cómplice que permite la farsa avance como alude Castrada:...y pues sabes las condiciones que han de tener los miradores del Retablo, no te descuides, que sería una gran desgracia.” (8) When translated, this sentence says how the tricksters’ scheme is able to be carried out and advanced due to the silence or the compliance of the townspeople with Chirinos and Chanfalla's demands and objectives for viewing the play. This idea can be connected to my fellow classmates’ presentation because of the idea of how the lack of music is just as telling of a character’s motives as having music playing during the scene as well. This complete compliance of the townspeople during the play connects to the theme of conformity in order to avoid persecution. Although this absence of sound is not specifically applied to a scene in the play, a song that immediately came to mind

after reading Professor Janeiro's essay was, "The Sound of Silence", written by Simon and Garfunkel. This song's lyrics such as

People talking without speaking / People hearing without listening / People writing songs that voices never share / No one dared / Disturb the sound of silence / "Fools" said I, "You do not know / Silence like a cancer grows / Hear my words that I might teach you / Take my arms that I might reach you... (Simon & Garfunkel)

I found this song very applicable to the play due to these lyrics suggesting how people will blindly follow one another in order to not disturb the silence or the status quo of society. The song later mentions how, "The words of the prophets are written on the subway walls and tenement halls" (Simon & Garfunkel), alluding to the fact that the real feelings of society are forced to be hidden due to them disrupting the everyday routine.

To give a brief background on why I chose to do this topic as my thesis statement is due to my combined love of the Spanish language, literature, and culture with my passion for music. After traveling abroad to Spain in the fall of twenty seventeen, I fell in love with the people and culture. My experience of learning the Spanish language has also inspired me to write a thesis regarding Spanish. I find it fascinating to be able to speak multiple languages and being able to communicate with new people in different ways. My love of music started at a young age and began to blossom the beginning of high school when I joined a local music school as a guitarist and later vocalist. I have had the opportunity to travel across New York and Connecticut, performing with other students and sharing our love and passion for music. Personally, I believe playing music and speaking another language are intertwined due to the ability to communicate

to someone in a way other than your first language. Much like classic literature, music is timeless and can tell much about society without saying a word. Literature and music go hand in hand in that both are forms of art that allow the communication of one's expression. Whether it's communicating in a second language or playing with others musically, the ability to perform both of these skills has helped me become the person I am today.

To conclude my thesis, theatre and music are both timeless forms of art that have been practiced since well before the time of Cervantes. One may associate the phrase, "History repeats itself" to this concept because of how a Golden Age play can be connected and share themes with contemporary music. What allows Cervantes' play to be so relatable is that he broke away from his society's traditional themes in terms of idealism and nobility. By Cervantes writing about more realistic themes, we as an audience are able to better relate and connect. Overall, although "El retablo de las maravillas" may have been harshly critiqued and excluded from the classic, famous plays of history, it contains modern day, continuous themes that all people can relate to, no matter what language they speak and where they come from.

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