Passing as Morisco:

Concealment and Slander in Antonio Mira de Amescua's *El mártir de Madrid*

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ABSTRACT

This essay analyzes the notion of 'passing' in Antonio Mira de Amescua's play El mártir de Madrid (1610) and how it unveils the effects of concealment and slander in a hegemonic Christian society dealing with religious, ethnic, and gender anxiety in the aftermath of the expulsion of Moriscos from Spain (1609). Drawing upon contemporary studies on the concept of 'passing,' the essay reflects on what happens when pretending to belong to a religious affiliation, an ethnic group, or the opposite sex yields negative consequences for the character who is trying to pass. Besides examining different instances of 'passing' related to ethnicity, religion, and gender, the essay pays attention to the historical events that inspired Mira de Amescua's play; i.e. the martyrdom of the Spanish Pedro Navarro in North Africa (1580) after having passed as Muslim and returned to Christianity. In addition, the essay identifies several contemporary sources and puts them into dialogue with the play.

In 1580, a native of Madrid named Pedro Navarro was martyred in Morocco. Although little is known about how he was taken captive or how long he lived in North Africa, he became a symbol of devotion and religious zeal. A secret practitioner of Catholicism, Navarro was captured and sentenced to death by Islamic authorities as he attempted to return to Spain. Even after his tongue was cut off, he continued preaching the Catholic faith. His loyalty to the Church, however, is striking because Pedro Navarro also embraced Islam and passed as Muslim during his captivity. The sensational details of his martyrdom arrived to Spain through a report sent by the ambassador of Phillip II in Morocco, Pedro Venegas de Córdoba, who unsuccessfully advocated on his behalf. Soon after Navarro's execution, his story had already been integrated into historical accounts and religious treatises throughout Spain. In effect, narratives about martyrs were popular and had an enormous influence in early modern Spanish. Alejandro Cañeque posits that stories about martyrs were powerful tools that, in the hands of religious

orders, served to both combat the Protestantism in Europe and Islam in the Mediterranean, and, on the other, try to consolidate and expand Hispanic imperialism and colonialism in Asia and America (18). He places martyrdoms in Islamic lands at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries, and labels them as belonging to the "*frontera de la infidelidad*" ("infidels' frontier" 21). In his opinion, the literature of captives helped draw attention to the war against Muslims after the 1581 peace treaty between Philip II and the Ottoman Sultan Murad III (134-36). Pedro Navarro's martyrdom was a powerful reminder of the Spanish captives who were murdered by Muslims.

Inspired by Navarro's martyrdom, in the beginning of the seventeenth century, playwright Antonio Mira de Amescua composed *El mártir de Madrid* (1610), a play about a Spanish nobleman, also named Pedro, who becomes a renegade after being attacked by Moorish pirates.[1] Contrary to the original story, the events occur in the Muslim city of Algiers, where Pedro turns against his own family members, who were also taken as captives in the same attack: Pedro imprisons his own father, flirts with his brother Fernando's fiancée, Clemencia, and suffers the advances of the Moorish king's sister, Celaura. In the end, the renegade again embraces Christianity, but the king of Algiers still orders his death. Although the play is based on a true story, the playwright is not interested in providing an accurate account of the events or in presenting the challenges of Christian captives in North Africa.[2] Instead, he crafts a performance on religious, ethnic, and gender passing in the midst of the expulsion of Moriscos from Spain.

Mira de Amescua's focus on religious, ethnic, and gender passing in the midst of the Morisco expulsion is not a coincidence. Born between 1574 and 1578 to Melchor de Amescua y Mira and Doña Beatriz de Torres Heredia in Guadix, a city with a considerable amount of

Moriscos, he was aware of the presence of Moriscos in Spain. He later studied both in Guadix and Alcalá de Henares before moving to Granada to finish a degree in law. In 1606, he moved to Madrid, where he was the contemporary of some of the main writers of the period, such as Lope de Vega, Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, and Miguel de Cervantes. In 1609, he was named Champlain of the Cathedral of Granada and, at the end of the year, was asked to go Italy for the appointment of the Count of Lemos, Pedro Fernández de Castro, to Virrey of Naples. Lemos was the son-in-law of the duke of Lerma, Francisco de Sandoval y Rojas, who was king Philip III's *valido* ("favorite") and the main promoter of the expulsion.[3] By 1616, Mira de Amescua had returned to Madrid, where he was in charge of approving literary works and participated in poetic competitions. In 1631, he returned to Guadix to work at the Cathedral. He died around 1636.[4]

In this essay, I analyze how the notion of passing in *El mártir de Madrid* unveils the effects of concealment and slander in a hegemonic Christian society dealing with religious, ethnic, and gender anxiety in the aftermath of the Morisco expulsion (1609). The play centers on the unease provoked by the possibility of being identified as a Muslim or Morisco during a period when the Spanish monarchy was dealing with the assimilation of the descendants of Muslims who had been forced to convert to Christianity at the end of the fifteenth century. I use the term "Morisco" to distinguish the descendants of Muslims forced to convert to Christianity at the end of the fifteenth century from Muslims who invaded the Iberian Peninsula in the eighth century and ruled until the Conquest of Granada in 1492. However, as L. P. Harvey has observed, there is an ideological bias inherent in the word: "*Moro* and *morisco* were names that *other people* had for them, not the name they used for themselves" (5; emphasis in original). Drawing upon contemporary studies on the concept of passing, I reflect on what happens when pretending to belong to a religious affiliation, ethnic group, or the opposite sex yields negative

consequences for the character who is trying to pass. The characters I examine include Pedro, who passes as Muslim to avenge his father; the *gracioso* Trigueros, who passes as Morisco to have more freedom in captivity; and Clemencia, who passes as a man named Félix to flee from an undesirable lover. In this essay, I do not analyze Pedro's passing as his own brother, Fernando. Although this passing is important to the development of the plot, it does not destabilize or call into question notions of religion, ethnicity, or gender. Neither does the passing reflect on issues of class or age. Rather, it serves to deceive Clemencia and to warn spectators of Pedro's inclination to implement the technique.

This essay seeks to contribute to the dialogue about conversions, voluntary or forced, in the Mediterranean during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by addressing the nuances created by those who can pass as members of different ethnicity, religion, or gender. Departing from the staging of the historical figure of Pedro Navarro, Mira de Amescua's play invites us to reflect on the fluidity of cultural identity at a moment when Spain perpetuated a discourse that regarded Moriscos as a unified enemy that must be expelled from the territory. In fact, José María Perceval has argued that the dominant ideology consolidated a unique view of Moriscos in order to better attack them discursively. Moreover, this essay engages with those interested in Christian-Muslim relations in the early modern Mediterranean, and, particularly, in Spain.

Before analyzing these three examples of passing, I want to emphasize that I use the term passing in a broad sense. Nancy E. van Deusen correctly asserts that generally

> we associate the term passing with the history of and literature about African-descent people in the United States and the attempts to cross pre-determined color markers. But scholars now generally consider passing to be a broader 'semantic container,' whereby someone adopts the guise of another group, gender, class, age or sexual orientation (86).

Mira de Amescua seems to be aware of the interconnection between ethnicity and gender in a period that, despite lacking the contemporary terms "intersectionality" and "passing," shows an increased interest in questioning fixed categories. It is therefore not surprising that he composed a fascinating play about mixed identities in a moment when Philip III (1598-1621) promoted the idea of a unified Catholic Spain, a view that accelerated the need to drive out Moriscos, who were seen as practitioners of Islam and therefore embodied the failure of assimilation to Christianity. This project was not unanimous, as different political and social groups, factions and individuals had different views on how to accomplish assimilation and how to proceed with the expulsion. Critic Trevor Dadson has noted the particular complications of expulsion: "It was precisely because there was this opposition that the government supporters and its propaganda machine swung into action" (2). In other words, apologists of the expulsion were working intensely to respond to dissident voices. In this regard, I follow Barbara Fuchs's assertion that passing functions as "a challenge to the strictures of Counter-Reformation orthodoxy" (x). At the same time, it is not a coincidence that this playwright insists on exchanges and displacements between Madrid, Valencia, and Algiers, stressing the centrality of the Mediterranean region and its influence in destabilizing these identities. As Daniel Viktus observes, the "Mediterranean littoral in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was a place where identity—in terms of political and religious affiliation was frighteningly unstable" (36). Interestingly, instances of passing in the play occur outside of Madrid, indicating the centrality of political legislation on religious unity and gender expectations vis-à-vis the reality of multicultural society at the margins. Thus, Mira de Amescua's play contributes to the corpus of literary works that insist on the fluidity of categories and present more nuanced perspectives to intense debates related to

religion, politics, and gender, such as narratives of captives and biographies of martyrs that include, for instance, examples of cross-dressing.

The incorporation of passing into literary works reflects its status as a larger cultural phenomenon. In particular, the recurrence of "passeurs" in literary texts speaks to the existence of real subjects who blurred the distinctions between cultural categories. Serge Gruzinski's term, *passeur*, is useful to understand the in-between of these subjects. These subjects had the ability to move between different worlds, establishing networks of communication. They moved between languages, customs and accounting techniques. To offer some examples, Nancy E. van Deusen presents the case of Violante/Beatriz, a *mulatta* (Black or of Black ancestry) who was passing as a deceased *india* (Amerindian woman) in order to avoid being sold as slave. She was able to make this claim because, according to Deusen, in sixteenth-century Spain "color was mutable" (86). In terms of gender, the famous example of Catalina de Erauso is illuminating. Known as the "monja alferez" ("the lieutenant nun"), Catalina passed as a man, Alonso Díaz, dressing in masculine clothes and hiding her feminine attributes to fight in the Americas.[5] This phenomenon was not exclusive to early modern Spain. Passing recusants in England had to hide their faith and passing subjects in the Americas had to negotiate different and contrasting views.[6]

In staging Pedro's conversion to Islam during his captivity in Algiers, Mira de Amescua highlights an experience that affected thousands of Spaniards during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in North Africa. Although some conversions were forced by enslavers, voluntary conversions of captives were common; establishing an affiliation with Islam gave captives an opportunity to thrive under adverse circumstances. As Daniel Hershenzon posits, "conversion could be a strategy that enabled captives to improve their living conditions and might eventually remove them from the system of slavery" (37). Bartolomé and Lucile

Bennassar further argue that some of these men were *hombres de frontera* ("border men") who did not encounter deep differences between Islam and Christianity (180). In the play, it is not a crisis of faith, coercion, or monetary gain that motivate Pedro's conversion. Rather, it is his realization that his father, Álvaro, does not regard him as highly as his brother, Fernando: "que vives de amor tan ciego/ de mi hermano, yo reniego:/ ¡Moro soy, pierdo a Cristo!" (vv. 1877-79) ("since you are so blindly in love/ with my brother, I renounce my religion. / I am Moor; I reject Jesus Christ"). Thus, Pedro was an outsider to his family even before embracing the new religion. After converting, he recognizes himself as a renegade and demands to be called Hamete. His actions hurt his father to the point that Álvaro calls him a monster: "¿Posible es que padre he sido/ deste monstruo? Estoy corrido/ de ser yo quien lo ha engendrado" (vv. 2383-85). ("Is it possible that I have been the father/ of such a monster? I am ashamed/ of being the one who fathered him.") At the same time, converting allows Pedro to obtain a social position that grants him freedom of movement in Algiers. With this new status, he has the audacity to send his family to the dungeons after a battle at sea. In addition, he becomes the object of affection of Celaura, the king's sister. Although this relationship could strengthen his position in captivity, he simultaneously remains loyal to his love for Clemencia, his brother Fernando's fiancée.

While Pedro's conversion occurs during his captivity in North Africa, it is important to note the long history of conversion—voluntary and coerced—in Spain that started in the Middle Ages. These conversions had an impact on society, as Mercedes García Arenal has demonstrated in the collection of essays, *After Conversion, Iberia and the Emergency of Modernity*:

> [the] integration of religious minorities destabilized traditional categories of religious difference and produced novel forms of social and political identity, while the strategies deployed for the assimilation of the Spanish multi-confessional past transformed the very

> conditions of early modern scholarly inquiry, in terms of writing both the history of Spain and the history of its languages. (1)[7]

In early modern Spain, mass baptisms promoted by Cardinal Cisneros between 1499 and 1502 raised new questions on the sincerity of these conversions to the point that Augustinian discourses of coercion and ritual efficacy became a lingua franca, as suggested by Seth Kimmel (20). Thus, Pedro's conversion addresses the instability of faith that was common not only in captivity, but throughout the Peninsula. Although this essay focuses on Muslims characters, one should keep in mind that thousands of Jews converted to Christianity as well. David Nirenberg has demonstrated how the conversion of many thousands of Jews to Christianity between 1391 and 1415—a time period marked by massacres, forced disputation, and segregations—produced a violent destabilization of traditional categories of religious identity (6).

Contemporary studies on passing that have explored the motivations leading a subject to embrace another race or gender do not fully speak to Pedro's situation. Nadine Ehlers identifies as central motives the desire to escape social disadvantage, pursue a prohibited interracial relationship, and gain an economic advantage or certain social rights (57). Werner Sollors mentions other underlying reasons, such as a love of deception, preparation for acts of political subversion or revenge, and the investigation of white criminal misconduct (251). However, Mira de Amescua's emphasis on complex paternal dynamics adds a new dimension to the factors that influence passing. In stressing familial tension, he rewrites the story of Pedro Navarro, as family conflict does not appear in any of the accounts of Pedro Navarro's martyrdom. In *Teatro de las grandezas de la Villa de Madrid, Corte de los Reyes Católicos de España* (1623), Gil González de Ávila mentions that Pedro Navarro was the son of one of Philip II's accountants or someone with a similar occupation (25). However, sources tell little about the life of Navarro before his

captivity in Algiers and much less about his relationship with his father. The conflict between father and son is a recurrent motif throughout the play, and one can easily argue that this theme responds to the playwright's motivation in adapting the story. Indeed, Pedro's return to Christianity at the end of the play is linked to paternal absolution. Thus, he can be seen as the prodigal son who, in returning or abandoning his passing, recovers not only his previous faith, but his family as well.

It is after seeing how his servant, Trigueros, defends his religion by showing a willingness to become a martyr that Pedro decides to embrace Christianity one more time:

> ¿Qué es esto, Dios? Un criado
> humildemente nacido,
> ¿esta constancia ha tenido?
> Y yo que más obligado
> os estoy, ¿os he negado? (vv. 2686-90).
> ("What is this, God? How can a humble servant have been more faithful than me? And I, who owes you so much debt, dared to deny you?")

He then adds: "sepa agora un pecador/ volver con alma piadosa/ a la mano generosa" ("now this sinner/ will come back with a pious soul/ to the generous hand"; vv. 2720-23). This second conversion illustrates the constant fluidity of religion in the Mediterranean and the distinction between religious practice and imposed dogma. Subjects could change their religious affiliation at their convenience because, more often than not, religion was identified by external signs. For Pedro, being Muslim means looking like a Muslim, not accepting Islam. There are no mosques, no readings of the Quran, and no allusions to Islamic practices in the play. Pedro never recites the *shahada*, the profession of faith of Islam that converters must utter, nor is there any

indication of other cultural habits related to Muslims, such as circumcision. Because Pedro never fully becomes an Islam practitioner, he passes as Muslim. He mimics the external signs of Muslims living in Algiers. His religious conversion is superficial.

Given that passing as Muslim means looking like a Muslim, clothing plays an important role in the staging of the martyr. In effect, Pedro's passing ends when he ceases to wear his Moorish costume. The act of undressing implies leaving behind a religion that he had adopted but not put into practice: "¡Vil vestido,/ decid mi grande mudanza!" (vv. 2738-39) ("Vile dress/ speak of my great conversion"). By throwing the garb on stage, the playwright uses a powerful symbol that defies the rigidity of religious doctrine and illustrates how religion maintains itself through the repetition of signs and behaviors. As Miguel González Dengra puts it: "Para reflejarlo, no encuentra Mira de Amescua mejor forma de plasmar el arrepentimiento que despojar al personaje de la indumentaria musulmana que lleva puesta, como si al hacerlo fuera también despojándose de la religión que *erróneamente* había profesado" ("Arrepentidos," 210) ("In order to show it, Mira de Amescua does not find a better way to stage repentance than to take off the character's attire, as if he were also peeling off the religion he *erroneously* practiced".[8] In *Segunda parte de la historia general del mundo, de XI años del tiempo de Felipe II* (1601), Antonio Herrera y Tordesillas highlights the martyr's nakedness at the moment of death: "llegado al lugar del martyrio, le cortaron la lengua, porque no hablasse mas, y desnudo le enclauaron entrambas manos en una puerta" (280) ("once he arrived to the place of martyrdom, they cut off his tongue so he could not talk anymore, and naked, they nailed his hands to a door"). In a similar fashion, Pedro's undressing exposes his passing and reveals his desire to again embrace Christianity. Without any more garb to take off, Pedro's last layer of clothing becomes Christianity, a layer that others cannot take away from him. In a period that strongly

associates clothing with social class, ethnic group, and religious affiliation, being naked is to challenge any system of classification.

Despite the superficiality of the conversion, passing as Muslim makes a difference to Pedro's faith. After his passing, he embraces Christianity with more conviction and commitment. Thus, one can interpret passing as trans-forming. As Sara Ahmed observes,

> the act of assuming an other (imaginary) identity is not just reforming, it is trans-forming. But passing is not becoming. In assuming the image of an-other, one does not become the other. The fit does not constitute a proper identification. It is not a painless merger. Passing, to this extent, makes a difference: the subject does not stay the same through passing. (96)

After passing as Muslim, Pedro has to prove his religious loyalty. He is not automatically a good Christian; he must become a martyr who dies and passes to the afterlife in order to demonstrate that Christianity is his true religion. In this regard, it was important for the sources on Pedro Navarro's martyrdom to stress his religious adherence in Algiers, as Gil González Dávila's summary of Pedro Venegas de Córdoba's report indicates: "Hamete envió a justificarse con Fray Pedro de Ávila de la Orden de San Francisco de Paula confesor de Venegas y le dijo como era en secreto cristiano y, aunque había renegado quería reducirse a su fe y suplicaba a Pedro Venegas que le oyese" (26) ("Hamete wanted to justify himself to Fray Pedro de Ávila de la Orden San Francisco de Paula, Venegas's confessor, and told him that he was a Christian in secrecy and, even if he denied his religion, he wanted to convert again and, therefore, he begged Pedro Venegas to hear him out"). Regarding Pedro Navarro's maltreatment of Christians, he adds: "Diole licencia; vino a su posada; certificole en secreto, que si había tratado mal a los cristianos, era más con apariencias que obras, por asegurar a los moros que no se recelacen de él" (26) ("He

gave him permission. [Pedro Navarro] came to see him; he secretly confessed that if he had mistreated Christians, it was more in appearance than in actuality, so as not raise suspicions of Moors"). Later sources, like Jerónimo de Quintana's *A la muy antigua, noble y coronada villa de Madrid* (1629) and Antonio de León Pinelo's *Anales de Madrid desde el año 447 al de 1658* (1971), make similar claims. In post-tridentine Spain, Pedro Navarro's connection to Islam must be presented as a forced abjuration and not as a real conversion.

Mira de Amescua nuances this portrayal in his characterization of Pedro. Before Pedro's first conversion, or, more accurately, passing, he is labeled by Clemencia as a "moro cristiano" ("Christian Moor"): "¿Quieres, las[c]ivo y tirano, / que el cuerpo en poder de un moro/ dé el alma a un moro cristiano?"(vv. 1389-90) ("Do you, lascivious tyrant, want my body, now in charge of a Moor, to give its soul to a Christian Moor?") This label, "Christian Moor," prepares spectators for Pedro's conversion to Islam; at the same time, it addresses the complexity of a latent Christianity. Yet, how can one be Moor and Christian at the same time? Is it possible to escape the Christianity/Islam binary? Was the playwright alluding to Moriscos caught between assimilation to Christianity and their Islamic heritage? Can Pedro's return to Christianity after passing as Muslim be read as a cautionary tale on the attempts to assimilate Moriscos?

As Pedro oscillates between two religions, he becomes a dangerous subject who must be punished to restore order. Given their ability to reveal the instability of the system of classification, passers must be punished and reinserted back to their original positions. In her study on racial passing, Ehlers posits that when

> a breach is detected, however, the workings of *corrective* disciplinary punishment become evident. For if a liminal subject is identified as having attempted to pass-as-white-, they are categorically *reinserted* back within the logic of binary understandings of

> race. It is for this reason that the phenomenon of passing cannot be viewed as a liberatory or subversive enterprise. (76)

In the play, Pedro's return to Christianity causes discomfort and rage. In disbelief, the king of Algiers wonders: "¿Burlas de Mahoma?" (vv. 2798) ("Are you making fun of Muhammad?"). In effect, Pedro's conversion to Islam can be seen as an act of mockery; the king correctly interprets the religious passing as a trick. His anger is exacerbated by the ease with which Pedro passes as Muslim.

The recognition of the passing leads to Pedro's death; in the end, he is crucified. By revealing his real faith, Pedro loses the protection that pretending to be a Muslim can offer. Curiously, his execution is less spectacular than Pedro Navarro's martyrdom in North Africa. In staging the punishment, Mira de Amescua minimizes gruesome details in order to stress Catholic symbols. As Gil Dávila reports: "Sacaron à Pedro Nauarro en camisa con vnos calçones de lienço, y le lleuaron cerca de la Sagena, clauaronle pies y manos en vn madero [. . .] La turba libre ofendida desto, le maltratò tirandole lodo, y piedras: y porque no les predicasse le cortaron la lengua" (26) ("They brought Pedro Navarro out in a shirt and linen underpants, and they took him close to the Sagena, nailed his feet and hands to a log [. . .] Angry, people threw mud and stones at him; they cut off his tongue so he could not preach"). In *El mártir*, these details are omitted. The didascalia is clear in this: "Descubren a Pedro crucificado en la puerta por la frente" (481) ("They find Pedro crucified on th4 door with a nail in the forehead"). In this regard, Mira de Amescua's staging is closer to Herrera's account and, to a certain extent, evokes the illustration of Jesuit Bartholomaeu Riccium's *Triumphus Iesu Christi Crucifixi* (1608). This parallel between the martyr and Christ is not exclusive to narratives focusing on Pedro Navarro. It was commonplace in stories about captives. As Cañeque argues "la vida cotidiana de los

cautivos de Argel no es sino una re-presentación y actualización de la Pasión de Cristo" (153-54) ("the quotidian lives of captives in Algiers is a representation and an update of the Passion of Christ"). Besides Riccium's *Triumphus Iesu*, it seems that the story of Pedro Navarro was popular among the Jesuits.[9] It appears in Francisco de Castro's *Latin Epistles* (1605). Although it is unlikely that Mira de Amescua consulted these works, it is interesting to note that the dates approximate the expulsion of the Moriscos. Another mention close to these dates appears in the *Jornada de Africa,* written by the Portuguese Jerónimo de Mendoza (1607). The origins of these sources seem to be the Portuguese Augustinian friar, Frei Tomé de Jesús, also known as Frei Tomé de Andrade. In the prologue to the Spanish translation of Frei Tomé de Jesús' s *Os Travalhos de Jesús* (1620), Alexo de Meneses suggests that the preaching of Portuguese had an effect on Pedro Navarro during captivity. Another aspect to take into consideration is the influence of Jesuits on Mira de Amescua's works, particularly on *El mártir*. Asenjo Sedano argues that Mira de Amescua consulted the libraries of Jesuits (28). In effect, Jesuits have a strong presence in Guadix from the last decade of the sixteenth century when they founded a *Colegio* and Church in honor of Saint Torcuato.[10]

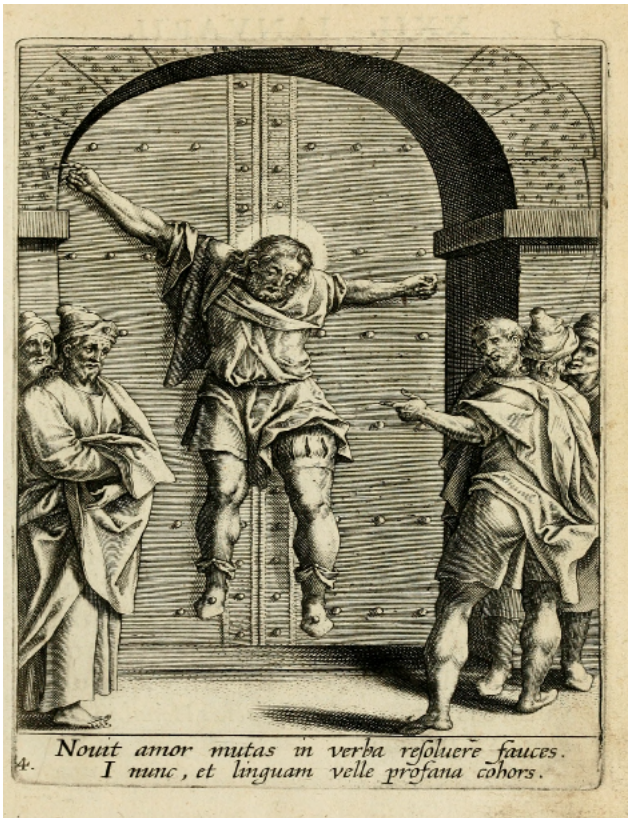

Figure 1: The martyrdom of Pedro Navarro in Riccium's Triumpus (1608)

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Nailed to a door, Pedro will no longer be able to deceive others. It seems that Mira de Amescua is more concerned with presenting orthodox views of Catholicism than staging marvelous doctrinal performances. Indeed, his biblical and saint plays are austere when compared with *comedias* from the period that deal with similar issues. Miguel González Dengra asserts that the lack of theatrical effects in Mira de Amescua's *comedias de santos* is due to his disinterest in everything that deviates from the plot and his lack of concern for the staging of plays ("La escenografía, 3"). González Dengra makes an effort to show how theatrical effects appeared in dialogues and stage directions; however, Mira de Amescua's plays do not take advantage of all the tools at his disposal. In the play, it is enough to present Pedro Navarro as a

Christ-like figure. As the playwright crafts a performance focused on religious, ethnic, and gender passing, it is hardly surprising that the play ends at a point in which there are no more opportunities to pass as anyone else.

Pedro's passing develops concurrently to others. One of the variations that the playwright introduces to the original narratives about the Christian martyr is the inclusion of the *gracioso*, Trigueros. Passing as a descendant of Muslims who were forced to convert to Christianity at the end of the fifteenth century in Spain, this servant gains the favor of the king of Algiers and becomes an influential figure. His new social status grants him power over his former master's brother, Fernando. When Pedro, Fernando, Clemencia, and Trigueros are attacked by Moorish pirates at the end of the first act, Trigueros pretends to be Zulema. The first feature he changes to facilitate his passing is his speech: "Ser un morisco/ que venir chiquito al teta/ de Fátima y ser catevo/ en Marruecos" (vv. 1066-69) ("I am a Morisco/ that learned the faith of Fatima at a young age/ and became a captive in Morroco"). In contrast to Pedro's ideologically charged garb and Clemencia's visually excessive clothing, Trigueros does not change his wardrobe. However, he easily alters his language. This transformation is hardly surprising because, as Javier Irigoyen-García points out, the "absence of sartorial characterization seems to indicate that the Morisco stereotype during most of the sixteenth century was primarily based on speech rather than sartorial appearance" (167). The use of Arabic after the Conquest of Granada was a point of contention. The monarchy attempted to forbid the use of Arabic names, speech and books on several occasions (1511, 1526, 1567). However, there was not a universal approach on how to address the language, as several policies were at play. Patricia Giménez-Eguibar and Daniel I. Wasserman Soler argue that "in order to understand Spanish Catholic attitudes towards the Arabic language, we must consider that some—if not many—individuals espoused stances far

more complex than a general support for or opposition to the use of Arabic" (254).[11] In theater, Moorish jargon was used by lower-class characters to reproduce the most salient traits of Spanish speakers who dealt with the interference of the Arabic language. In contrast to noble Moors, these speakers could not master standard Castilian and were usually portrayed as less assimilated. Thus, using Moorish jargon places Trigueros in a particular ethnic affiliation and socio-economic class that do not conflict with his previous position as Old Christian. The issue of language is so crucial to his passing that the character even seems to reflect on his language acquisition. In Algiers, he tells the story of a captive who promises to teach an elephant to speak, knowing that at some point one of the participants—the king, the elephant, or himself—will die before the animal acquires language proficiency. Paloma Díaz-Más traces the origins of this story to Miguel de Cervantes's *La gran sultana*. As she explains, "Cervantes acertaba (¿sin saberlo?), porque el mismo cuento tiene un gran arraigo en la tradición de ese mundo islámico que en sus obras está representado como tierra de cautiverio: la Constantinopla turca como trasunto del Argel de su propia experiencia de cautivo" (274) ("Cervantes was right [without realizing it?] because the same story has its roots in the tradition of the Islamic world, which in his works is represented as a land of captivity: Turkish Constantinople as an image of the Algiers he experienced as a captive"). Díaz-Más has identified several plays that mention or stage the story, such as Lope de Vega's *El príncipe perfecto* (1616); Francisco Leiva Ramírez de Arellano's *Cuando no se aguarda y príncipe tonto* (before 1675); and Juan Ruiz de Alarcón's *Quién engaña más a quién* (before 1634). Thus, it seems that playwrights associated the story of the talking elephant with the world of Spanish captives in Muslim lands. Unlike the elephant, Trigueros can speak Moorish jargon fast. This emphasis on speech is important not only to his

portrait as a Morisco, but also to his characterization as *gracioso*, a character whose cunning remarks are essential to the plot.

Most plays with Morisco characters who spoke Moorish jargon were produced in the midst of or after the expulsion. In the same manner, it was more common to have characters passing as Moors, a generic term that usually denoted Muslims living in Spain before the Conquest of Granada (1492). During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it was more acceptable to idealize the Moors who lived before the Conquest of Granada as vanquished nobles than to romanticize their descendants as unassimilated subjects. One can easily find examples of Old Christians passing as Moors in theater since, as Fuchs posits, "in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries it was quite fashionable for Christian Spaniards to dress as Moors [. . .] Moorish attire paradoxically functioned as a sign of national identity—an identity predicated on the erasure of Spain's Moorish past" (6). Lope de Vega was particularly fond of this device: *El favor agradecido* (1593), *El argel fingido* (1599), *Los cautivos de Argel* (1599) *El piadoso veneciano* (1599-1608), *La inocente sangre* (1604-08?)*, Los melindres de Belisa* (1606-08), and *El hidalgo Abencerraje* (1605-08) all include characters who pass as Muslims or Turks.[12] At the same time, one can also find plays where Moriscos pass as Old Christians. The best example appears in Pedro Calderón de la Barca's *Amar después de la muerte* (1633), where the Morisco Tuzaní pretends to be a Christian to avenge the death of his lover, who has been killed during the Second Rebellion of Alpujarras (1568-71). Like Pedro in *El mártir*, Tuzaní does not raise suspicions. However, the passing of the *graciosos* are more ambiguous, as they call into question issues regarding assimilation. Both Trigueros and Alcuzcuz present the two extremes of passing—the inability to pass successfully, which results in the recognition of others, and the ability to pass successfully, which results in not being recognized by the members of one's own

community. In any case, they share their use of Moorish jargon and their restraint for crossing class boundaries.

Mira de Amescua's decision to stage a character passing as Morisco during a historical moment when Moriscos were facing deportation is striking. *El mártir de Madrid* came out at a time when it was clear that embracing Islam could be dangerous and was certainly not as desirable as implied through the idealized characterization of Moors of past literary texts. In regard to the dramatic representations of Moorish characters in Lope de Vega's theater, Thomas E. Case posits that Moriscos were not suitable dramatic material (145). In contrast, noble Moors from a period before the Conquest of Granada in 1492 were preferred precisely because they were defeated enemies and their representation served a different purpose. Staging a character who passes as Morisco at the beginning of the seventeenth century allowed Mira de Amescua to take advantage of the potentialities of the "moriscos graciosos" before playwrights decided not to stage them anymore. The playwright recognizes that while Moriscos were not suitable characters for theater, they could still offer dramatic tension. As one of the few plays that stage an Old Christian passing as Morisco, *El mártir* invites spectators to rethink the ways playwrights stereotypically portray this group. Through Pedro's journey, Mira de Amescua questions what it means to be a Moor, as we see when Pedro questions Trigueros's ethnicity: "Sabes, Trigueros, que siento/ que eres moro" (vv. 1313-14). ("You know, Trigueros, I believe you are a Moor") Trigueros is successful in his passing to the extent that others, like Pedro, start believing that the *gracioso* has assumed a new identity. In effect, in order for passing to be successful, traces of the previous identity must be minimized or completely erased.

In a sense, the dramatization of this transformation suggests a desire to highlight the cultural practices of those who have been expelled or are no longer a part of Spain. While the

playwright does not necessarily lament the departure of the Moriscos, he is aware that their expulsion had led to a decrease in their depiction as dramatic characters. Although the idea of passing as Morisco would have been able to be more aptly staged when Moriscos were no longer a threat to daily interactions on the Iberian Peninsula, their theatrical presence dropped at the time. This decline was likely a way to avoid addressing threats to diversity and inclusion, a theory that becomes more salient if we read Mira de Amescua's play in the same light that Fuchs reads Cervantes. According to Fuchs, "Cervantes foregrounds passing as a way to question the fixity of cultural identity precisely in ambiguous episodes of rescued captives, renegades, escapes from the Moors, and so forth. Their identities veiled, even constructed, by disguise, the characters who pass complicate what it means to belong within Spain" (4). Plays set in the Mediterranean were ideal to address crisis of identity. As Ellen M Anderson notes about Cervantes's writing: "It is therefore especially in his stories and plays about Christian captives of Moslem corsairs where we can expect to find some clues about the interplay of identity and role, of self and other, crucial aspects of his construction of gender." (41). Along these lines, challenging the fixity of cultural identity is the most prominent feature of *El mártir de Madrid*.

In addition to showing the possible advantages of staging a Morisco character, Trigueros's passing underscores the tensions of the period. In *Anxiety of Sameness in Early Modern Spain,* Christina H. Lee examines the reactions and responses to those who have crossed traditional boundaries of identity. She writes,

> Moriscos are expected to be acculturated enough to communicate, socialise, and provide meaningful services to Old Christians, but are seen as being a threat to the well-being of their community if they are suspected of desiring to become an exact cultural reflection to the Old Christians. (177)

In *El mártir*, Mira de Amescua twists the representation of this anxiety, applying it not to Moriscos who pass as Old Christians, but to Old Christians passing as Morisco in a moment when Spain was getting rid of this community. Trigueros's passing is so successful that he must reiterate that he is not a Morisco or a Muslim to those who know his previous identity.

In spite of its efforts, the expulsion did not end the presence of Moriscos in the Iberian Peninsula. As William Childers argues, the "expulsion of the Moriscos no longer marks the 'definitive' absence of the Muslim minority" (171). Instead, this period is the beginning of a long parenthesis. Some Moriscos were indeed allowed to stay, while migrants from the Mediterranean were supported by the Hispanic Monarchy for defending the Christian faith. Victoria Sandoval Parra argues that Philip II and, to lesser extent, Philip III, created a *sistema asistencial* ("aid system") to help English, French, Irish, Turks, and other groups who fled to Spain to escape religious persecution. This system offered rewards such as monetary compensation, position assignments, letters of recommendation and patrons to those who showed their religious loyalty. As she writes, "Lo cierto y verdadero es que el sistema nacido de manera eventual pronto se convirtió en un mecanismo articulado de atracción y soporte de refugiados de diversas procedencias" (278-79) ("The truth is that this system, which was born over time, soon turned into an articulated mechanism of attraction and support for refugees of different origins").[13] The policy is one of several that make clear the ambivalence of the Spanish Monarchy towards expulsion and social segregation during this period.

During the expulsion era, Spain's obsession with Jews and Muslims created an atmosphere of suspicion in which many were accused of being Morisco. In extreme cases, these accusations could end with the incriminated person being processed by the Inquisition. In others, they were empty insults aimed at laughing at the person's expense or damaging their reputation.

Although one must be cautious in connecting the author's life with the play's events, Mira de Amescua had to prove his purity of blood when he was a candidate for a chaplaincy position at the Royal Chapel of Granada, the same year that the Spanish monarchy announced the first decree of the expulsion towards Moriscos who lived in Valencia (1609). Roberto Castilla Pérez offers a possible reason for the scrutiny of his heritage, explaining that Isabel Hernández, one of Mira de Amescua's grandmothers, had Morisco ties: "Le tocaba algo de morisco natural de los originarios de esta villa" (84) ("He had a bit of Morisco in him from those who were native to this village"). Since Williamsen and Linares date the composition of the play to 1610, the year that coincides with the decree of expulsion for Moriscos in Castile and Extremadura, it would not be unreasonable to read the play as a reaction to the accusation against him.

Mira de Amescua was not alone in staging the widespread anxiety caused by these accusations. Lope illustrates their scope in a play written during the expulsion of the Moriscos, *La villana de Getafe* (1610-14). In the *comedia*, Félix is accused of being the Morisco Zulema. This affects his future marriage to Ana, whose father, Urbano, wants to see her married to Pedro. According to Francisco Márquez Villanueva, Lope himself was accused of being Morisco for having composed several Moorish ballads: "Y sin embargo, Lope sufrió también esa clase de ataque, si bien con cierto sesgo juguetón y de escaso peligro, además de relacionado muy de cerca con el *Romancero* nuevo" (308) ("And nevertheless, Lope also suffered from that type of accusation, even if somewhat playful and not very dangerous, along with being very closely related to the new *Romancero*"). These accusations were serious threats in the aftermath of the expulsion; if one couldn't prove pure blood, they could be banished. Antonio Sánchez Jiménez provides some nuances to the attacks against authors of Moorish ballads by putting them in the context of literary polemics: "La literatura, y no la política, es la que revela la coherencia de

estos movimientos, pues hacerse el promorisco o el antimorisco dependía de la situación literaria" (181) ("Literature, not politics, is what reveals the coherence of these movements, since being pro- or anti-Morisco depended on the literary situation").

Similar accusations or suggestions appear in other plays composed by Mira de Amescua. For instance, in *La casa del tahúr* (1616), Roque suggests the possibility of reading Marcelo Gentil as a Moor: "Eso fuera ser tú moro,/ pues venías a adorar/ el zancarrón de Mahoma" (vv. 2448-50) ("That means you are a Moor/ since you came from venerating/ Muhammad's bone"). In the play, there is no sign that Marcelo could be associated with Moorish origins. Clearly a joke about his last name, the attribution should not be taken lightly. These lines are telling of how easy it was to make a defamatory accusation. In another play previously attributed to Lope, *El palacio confuso* (1629?), Barlovento tells the story of a man who did not respond after being called a "heretic," a "Moor," and a "traitor." As soon as the accuser added that he was also a "thief," a "Lutheran," and a "famous Castilian," he replied. The accuser laughed, informing him that he responded to the worst adjectives. However, the man knew that silence was the safest answer to the accusation of being a Moor (vv. 2990-3000). In *El mártir*, Trigueros spends a great deal of time and energy convincing others that he is not of Muslim ancestry. Still, while feigning to be a Morisco was effortless for him, affirming that he was an Old Christian proved arduous. Just as it was necessary for captives to emphasize their Christianity to other Christians in captivity, it was also crucial to do so once a captive gained freedom and arrived to a Christian land. That is, returning to a Christian land required further proof of remaining faithful despite the pressure faced to embrace Islam while abroad. Daniel Hershenzon affirms that depositions of renegades who returned to Spain followed a similar script: they opened with the subject's initial objection to conversion and continued with the exertion of physical pressure and punishment on

him to make him succumb; his recitation of the *shahāda*, the Muslim profession of faith; and his requirement to wear the clothing of a Turk (34). In other words, as the Bennassars summarize, inquisitors asked a renegade to report the "discurso de su vida" (349) ("history of his life"). In these speeches, renegades explain the pressure they experienced in captivity to convert. In the case of Trigueros, because the scrutiny starts even before he sets foot in Spain, he must insist that he was merely passing as Morisco. He asserts: "Ya he dicho que no soy moro./ La lengua solo fingí" (vv. 2564-65) ("I already said that I am not Moor./ I just pretended to speak like one"); "En el alma soy cristiano/ y moro en la gabaneta" (vv. 2616-17) ("In my soul, I am a Christian;/ in appearance, a Moor); "en que soy moro miente" (v. 2865) ("he lies in saying that I am a Moor"); and "Nunca mi ley he negado" (v. 2637) ("I have never denied my religion"). In the end, the king of Algiers forgives him and decides not to condemn him to death even after learning of Trigueros's passing (vv. 2878-79). The sparing of Trigueros's life is curious since his situation is similar to Pedro's. What makes Trigueros different? Can it be possible that passing as Morisco is not as dangerous to the king of Algiers as passing as Muslim? Did the king of Algiers understand the particularities of Moriscos as a community split between Christianity and Islam?

In defending himself against the accusations that he was Morisco, Trigueros asserts that if Pelayo thought he was actually Morisco, the Spanish national hero would have chosen him as a servant. Though Trigueros is willing to transgress ethnicity and religion, his remark indicates that he does not dare cross the divide of social class. In her analysis of narratives and dramas of the era, Lee explores how lower-class characters, whom she terms "imposters," offer a reflection on their realities:

> "The fictional narratives and dramas of low-born passers allow the target reader or audience member to peek into the otherwise mysterious lives of these imagined impostors

> and proffer the false sense that he or she has an insight on the well-shielded secrets of their deceptive performances." (47)

However, as Amy Williamsen points out, "A transgression against social rank was more difficult to sustain than a gender pass" (247). Despite gaining some power and freedom of movement in Algiers, Trigueros never ceases to be a servant. In fact, social class and gender are not as important to him as nationality. To support his claim that he is a Spaniard, he tells the story of a madman who considered himself more Galician than Moor (vv. 2580). By sharing this anecdote, he defends his right as a Galician passing as Morisco in North Africa and, more importantly, draws attention to the many layers that intersect in the classification of a subject.

By dramatizing both Trigueros, an Old Christian who passes as Morisco, and Pedro, an Old Christian who returns to Catholicism after being a renegade, Mira de Amescua illustrates the wide variety of religious assimilation and fluidity in the Mediterranean. On one hand, Trigueros never abandons his religion and gets angry when others question his true faith. In North Africa, he is a "Morisco" who practices Christianity in clandestine. On the other, Pedro is able to return to Christianity after having embraced Islam. As Williamsen and Linares observe, "Pedro finally realizes the enormity of his sins when he is faced with the exemplary behavior of Trigueros" (87). Yet, it is problematic that the character who seems to defend Christianity through the entire play is the one who easily passes as Morisco and, ultimately, as Muslim. This contradictory characterization indicates the possibility that Moriscos could be "good Christians" despite having a different background and language.

Mira de Amescua's choice to set *El mártir* in North Africa emphasizes that in his play, such allegations will not end with the banishment of Moriscos. His decision to replace Morocco with Algiers can be explained by the number of narratives based on martyrdoms in the Ottoman

Empire that circulated Spain during these years. In general, in early modern Spanish theater, Algiers seemed to arouse more interest than Morocco.[14] In particular, only two years after the play was composed, Diego de Haedo published *Topographia e Historia General de Argel* (1612) in Valladolid, a five-part compilation including the *Diálogo de los mártires de Argel*.[15] The dialogue that Haedo presents between Antonio de Sosa and Jerónimo Ramírez consists of thirty accounts of Christian martyrs in Algiers, which helps contextualize Mira de Amescua's choice to set his play in Algiers and, more importantly, his decision to place a Spanish martyr in Islamic territory. The Bennassars also highlight the prominence of the city in accounts of renegades: "la primacía de Argel es evidente, fulgurante" (389) ("the primacy of Algiers is evident, conspicuous"). Cañeque observes that the struggle between Muslims and Christians in the Mediterranean affected thousands of captives, some of whom went on to create literature focused on martyrs. He argues that it is at this time that "Argel se convierte en el lugar por antonomasia del cautiverio Cristiano y, por extensión, en *locus* martirial" (21) ("Algiers had become the *locus* of martyrdom"). Lastly, Miguel de Cervantes's *El trato de Argel* and the later *Los baños de Argel*, which initiated the genre of captivity plays, might have influenced Mira de Amescua.

The third instance of passing in the play, which we have yet to discuss, comes through Clemencia, who pretends to be a man named Félix. In order to flee from Pedro—who, unbeknownst to her, is passing for her soon-to-be husband, Fernando—she dresses as a man and leaves her house with Don Juan, reminding us that passing works better when one is away from home. Although the passing of Clemencia as Félix is not directly related to ethnicity or religion, it illustrates the advantages and disadvantages of pretending to be someone else in the complex space of the Mediterranean. In theater of the period, particularly Spanish *comedias*, cross-dressed women were a popular trope. Influenced by Italian sources, playwrights capitalized on the

potentialities of this device in plots centered on lying and dissimulation. In her classical study on early modern Spanish theater, Carmen Bravo Villasante observes that Mira de Amescua had a particular fondness for the subject (86). *El mártir* is a great example of how he puts the fluidity of gender in dialogue with religious and ethnic deceit. As the typical *mujer vestida de hombre*, Clemencia wears Spanish breeches (*gregüescos*), voluminous shorts that were in style and probably introduced by Greek, Albanian, and Hungarian mercenaries fighting in the Turkish army. Carmen Bernis clarifies that "los primeros gregüescos presentaban como novedad frente a los calzones populares, no sólo su forma, sino las pequeñas cuchilladas que algunos de ellos tenían en toda su superficie" (102) ("the first Spanish breeches presented a novelty in contrast to popular pants, not only in their form, but also in the small stripes that some of them had on the surface".[16] Besides functioning as a gender marker, the use of *gregüescos* in an Islamic city like Algiers serves as a reminder of the Christian habits that Spanish captives should never fully abandon. Indeed, Clemencia's clothes contrast with Pedro's. Ironically, despite Trigueros's eventual suggestion that she be undressed, which we will soon discuss, the breeches are not as easy to take off. The connection between attire and religion implies that a strong commitment to Catholicism underlies her decision to remain in masculine garments during her captivity in Algiers. Meanwhile, Pedro's garb connects Islam to female attire and, by extension, feminizes Muslim representation. The feminization of Muslims projects Spain's own unease regarding what was perceived as the feminization of Spain itself. Sydney Donnell points out that the "cultural anxiety surrounding the feminization of Spain was a long-standing problem, revealing the essentialized understanding of femininity that was associated with the body politic, especially during moments of extreme vulnerability" (49). In this manner, Clemencia provides a stark contrast with the expected behavior and image of a noble man such as Pedro.

Clemencia's passing, however, is not as successful as the others in the play. The king suspects that Félix is indeed a woman: "Juzgué con nuevos desvelos/ mujer a Félix, de suerte/ que el sol si a miralla advierte/ me daba en los rayos celos" (vv. 2202-05) ("I judged with new doubts/ that Félix was a woman, in a way that/ if the sun would look at her/ its rays would make me jealous"). In order to answer the king's question on whether Félix is female, Trigueros brings back the issue of religion, emphasizing that nothing is what it seems in Algiers. Even friars pretend to be Moriscos in captivity:

> A Espania ver de mil modos,
> dondes como el frailesicos
> acá le ver de moriscos
> e ser embostes por todos
> al fin estar openión." (vv. 2242-45)

("In Spain you can see a thousand times/ men as friars/ and here as Moriscos/ and all are lies told by all/ at least that is my opinion"). This criticism is consistent with conversions by members of the Church who became renegades. As the Bennassars remind us, voluntary conversion to Islam by a religious person became proof of the superiority of Islam (298). Certainly, as these critics point out, members of the Church had different reasons to convert:

> El abandono de las obligaciones de la orden y de los votos, las mujeres, el matrimonio, el dinero y la perspectiva de una vida fácil, e incluso de un puesto de jenizaro, empujaron hacia el Islam a la mayoría de esos religiosos, pero nunca, al parecer, la menor preocupación de orden teológico. En cambio, otros acusados reconocieron sin reticencia que se habían sentido atraídos por la religión musulmana. (299)

> (Negligence in following the obligations and vows of the [religious] order, women, marriage, money, and the perception of an easier life, and even the possibility of a position as a janissary, motivated religious people to embrace Islam, but motivations were never, it seems, based on theology. In turn, other accused converts recognized, without reluctance, that they were attracted to the Islamic religion.)

Indeed, Mira de Amescua portrays Algiers as a place of passing that challenges any previous affiliation.

To answer the king's question, Trigueros recommends that he check for himself by undressing Félix: "Quetar el cinta al gregüescos" (v. 2253). ("Take the band of the gregüescos"). As expected, the joke angers the king. However, more than making spectators laugh, this suggestion creates complicity with them, as they know or can imagine what it is underneath Félix's short pants. In this sense, vis-à-vis Clemencia's passing, Mira de Amescua places the public in the same position as Pedro and Trigueros; their critical distance from the stage allows them to understand the workings of passing in a way that the king does not. Amy Robinson suggests that "what may be available to the in-group is the visibility of the apparatus of passing—literally the machinery that enables the performance" (721). Moreover, Robinson reminds us that perverts see passing because of their familiarity with "codes of deception" (722). She names this figure "drag" and distinguishes it from "dupe": "the in-group clairvoyant reads the apparatus of the pass in the tension between the passer's textually acknowledged identity and her assumed performance" (726). Linking gender to ethnicity, Trigueros can easily see the flaws of Clemencia's passing because he is good at faking an ethnicity to which he does not necessarily belong. In other words, Trigueros successfully masters the expectations of ethnic performance, but Clemencia remains oblivious to the inner workings of masculinity.

When Trigueros addresses the *cinta* (band) to reiterate the playwright's use of clothing as a trope for switching genders, he reminds spectators that gender passing conceals something that is always hanging, waiting to be uncovered or revealed. Certainly, passing does not constitute an essence. Yet, it is puzzling that the king falls in love with Clemencia as she passes as Félix, bringing back the issue of feminization and applying it to the Islamic world. While Clemencia's passing stresses the instability of gender, the king's infatuation with her reveals the complicated mechanism of desire. The king is condemned to desire Félix perpetually because he cannot possess someone who does not exist. His desire is surprising to characters, particularly Pedro, who expresses his suspicion; only the king's sister fails to recognize Clemencia's passing and tries to use Félix to make Pedro jealous. Indeed, she succeeds in her plan, but for the wrong reasons: Pedro thinks that Celaura is an intermediary between the king and Clemencia.

Whereas Clemencia's passing helps her to escape from an undesirable lover, it does not allow her to thrive and be safe in North Africa. She is equally desired as a woman in the Christian world and as a man in the Islamic. Yet, her passing raises questions on gender in the same manner that Pedro and Trigueros's respective passings question the traditional binaries of ethnicity and religion. In this regard, Clemencia embodies Judith Butler's observations on gender as a performative act and not as an inherent attribute or essence of the subject: "Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of natural sort of being" (45). Clemencia's failure to pass as a man becomes, in this context, a reflection on the mechanism of gender construction itself more than a measure of how well she enacts her role as a man. After assuming her new identity, she tells Trigueros: "En hábito de hombre voy" (v. 759) ("Dressed as a man I go"). This stress on sartorial distinction highlights the very act of repetition that lies at

the heart of gender formation. Mira de Amescua masterfully illustrates this dynamic, as the Spanish word "hábito" can be used both to specify costume and to refer to continuous practices or behaviors.

Clemencia's cross-dressing can also be understood through the framework of Margorie Garber's theory on transvestites. Garber posits that one of the cultural functions of the transvestite is to mark a "displacement, substitution, or slippage: from class to gender, gender to class; or, equally plausibly, from gender to race or religion. The transvestite is both a signifier and that which signifies the undecidability" (37). Indeed, the *gregüescos* are not used exclusively to address issues of gender; they also address notions of ethnicity. As already mentioned, the *gregüescos* were probably introduced by Greek, Albanian, and Hungarian mercenaries fighting in the Turkish army. Wearing *gregüescos* in the Muslim world implies returning to the place where Spanish soldiers first saw them. At the same time, the costume is appropriated not by characters who fight for the Turks, but by captives of Muslims in the Ottoman Empire. This gives the *gregüescos* an ideological charge that points to the troublesome relationship between Spaniards and Turks during the era of the expulsion of Moriscos from Spain. As the many interrelated facets of passing that I have analyzed have shown, the inclusion of the phenomenon in *El mártir* can best be understood through an intersectional lens.

The conclusion of Mira de Amescua's play, which stages Pedro's martyrdom, can thus be interpreted as a plea in favor of religious assimilation at the moment when Spain was evicting Moriscos on the grounds of their inability to truly convert to Christianity. It is precisely after passing as Muslim that Pedro becomes the most fervent defender of the Christian faith. Reading the play in this way adds a complex dimension to the relationship between Mira de Amescua's theater and the "Morisco problem," which he foregrounds in several plays in addition to *El*

mártir. In particular, *La máscara de la expulsión de los moriscos* (1617) was staged at the duke of Lerma's palace to celebrate the role he played in the decision to expel thousands of Moriscos from Spain. As mentioned earlier in the essay, also known as Francisco de Sandoval y Rojas, the duke was king Philip III's *valido* ("favorite") and the main promoter of the expulsion. In his analysis of the dependence between court politics, imperial policies, and national identity in *La máscara*, Lucas A. Marchante-Aragón observes that "*The Masque of the Expulsion of the Moriscos*, one of the few items of crown-sponsored artistic production documenting and celebrating this event, lay embedded in performances of typical imperially charged content within a frame that reinforced the same message" (108). The contrast in the way the two plays treat Moriscos and Muslims is striking; as Marchante-Aragón states, "The masque of 1617 was articulated through an assumption of the Moriscos' radical difference. This was performed through the de-authorization of any interpretation of similarity" (112). Meanwhile, *El mártir* emphasizes the ease with which Spaniards could pass as Muslims or Moriscos.

In spite of their differences, these two pieces go hand-in-hand. It is possible that the playwright took advantage of the public interest in debates about the expulsion during the two decades following the event to bring back a play that he could have composed earlier. It is not a coincidence that the oldest surviving manuscript of the play, housed in the National Library of Spain, was dated two years after the staging of *The Masque*, i.e. 1619. In addition to 1619, the manuscript also includes licenses from 1622, 1623, and 1641. Moreover, several critics believe that the play was composed before the date that appears in the manuscript. Vern Williamsen offers the most convincing argument to support his claim that *El mártir* belongs to Mira de Amescua's early works. He posits that the play was probably written around 1610, before the playwright's trip to Italy:

> The figures for quintillas and romances, in particular, are similar only to those found in Mira's early pieces. In addition, the plays exhibit a concurrent lack of silvas (a form consistently present in the plays written by Mira after his return from Italy in 1616), and a reduced usage of versos sueltos (an omnipresent strophe in the poet's earliest plays) (37).

It makes sense that the play was written during the aftermath of the expulsion and remained relevant as debates continued to explore whether to support or to condemn it.

The passings in *El mártir de Madrid* reflect the perpetual fluidity of ethnicity, gender, and religion in the Mediterranean. From Clemencia's passing as a man in Valencia to Trigueros's passing as Morisco in Algiers, the act of pretending to be another is always in flux not only because the characters are displaced from Spain to North Africa, but also because the categories they embody are not fixed. In this sense, as Ahmed observes, passing can be connected to movement: "Passing, by definition, is a movement through and across. Passing as the literal act of moving through space (in which there is no moment of departure or arrival), can be linked with passing as a set of cultural and embodied practices (passing for the other)" (94). In other words, one cannot inhabit the space nor the image of another to the extent that Ahmed posits that there is a "crisis of reading" over the gap between an image that is already assumed and an image that is yet to be assumed (94). Thus, identity is an unstable category.

While passing as a Moor was a popular device in literary works before and after the expulsion, pretending to be a Morisco between 1580 and 1620—or being accused of being one—could have negative consequences. On one hand, there was a ludic display of and attraction for exotic subjects with the awareness that the so-called Moors who had once ruled the south of Spain were vanquished at the Conquest of Granada (1492). On the other, the enemy was closer and less identifiable due the massive conversions promoted by Cardinal Cisneros at the end of

the fifteenth century. Due to these circumstances, the last decades of the sixteenth century and the first of the seventeenth brought increased slander against those who were supposedly concealing their true identities; i.e. Moriscos in disguise. This created an atmosphere of suspicion and fear that was strengthened by the Inquisition and intensified the need to conceal practices that were not read as Christian. Henry Kamen reminds us that the "fear generated by the tribunal, in short, usually had its origins in social disharmony. The records of the Inquisition are full of instances where neighbors denounced neighbors, friends denounced friends, and members of the same family denounced each other" (230).

The autobiography of Captain Alonso de Contreras is one of several stark examples of the intense scrutiny of the Morisco community in the Iberian Peninsula during the expulsion era. Blurring the distinction between history and fiction, Contreras relates how he was accused of being the king of Moriscos for hiding the fact that several weapons were found in the house of a Morisco in the town of Hornachos.[17] He explains that he had decided to keep the weapons a secret after having a fight with his own captain, Pedro Jaraba del Castillo, over a woman. The subsequent accusations against him resulted in his incarceration and forced him to leave Madrid. His story reflects the larger scrutiny of Moriscos in the town of Hornachos, one of the most resistant communities to the process of assimilation, whose inhabitants were expelled in 1610.[18] The connection its inhabitants have with their Islamic background was so deep that they became a cohesive group after the expulsion and founded a separate republic in the town of Salé in Morocco

The accusations of being Morisco were not exclusive to Spain; the culture of slander and concealment moved across the Atlantic as Moriscos forged a new life in the Americas. In *Forbidden Passages: Muslims and Moriscos in Colonial Spanish America*, Karoline P. Cook

posits that while "free Morisco emigrants to Spanish America may have sought to escape the increasing tensions with Old Christians in Spain, peninsular attitudes and suspicions also crossed the Atlantic, taking on new dimensions in the Americas" (80). Of the examples she offers, that of Nicolás de Oliva is perhaps the most pertinent to this essay. A *buñolero* ("maker of buñuelos/buns"), a profession associated with Moriscos, Oliva was accused by Pedro de la Portilla of being a Morisco due to his color and trade. Portilla bolstered his accusation by adding that Oliva spoke of Muhammad and walked around in the type of short, open breeches that were common to Moriscos. However, complicating matters, Cook mentions that Bernal de Reyna observed that Portilla and Oliva were involved in a dispute over Oliva's *estancia* and a debt (98). Although these personal circumstances call into question the veracity of Portilla's accusations, Cook contends that contextualizing them in the broader history of the expulsion of Moriscos remains important: "Oliva's case was unfolding at the time of the expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain, when Moriscos were increasingly being racialized in the writings of the expulsion" (97). While several Moriscos were passing as Christians, the atmosphere of suspicion and fear that originated in the expulsion promoted a culture of slander and concealment that extended well beyond the Peninsula.

Mira de Amescua understood extremely well the limitations of passing; his characters pretend to pass as someone else but never fully assume the images they want to project. At the same time, he knew that the act of assuming those images was dangerous and could put lives in jeopardy. In interactions with others, these new identities are questioned, mocked, or misunderstood. In particular, passing in the play unveils the effects of concealment and slander in a hegemonic Christian society dealing with religious, ethnic, and gender anxiety in the aftermath of the expulsion of the Moriscos.

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NOTES

[1] Critics do not agree on the source of Antonio Mira de Amescua's *El mártir de Madrid*. José María Bella proposes that it was inspired by the works of Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas (1601). Vern G. Williamsen and Henry A. Linares discard Herrera as a source. The story of Pedro Navarro, also known as Pedro Elchi or Petrus Helcius, appeared in Gil González Dávila (1623), and Gerónimo de Quintana (1629). I contend that the original source was a report sent by the ambassador of Phillip II in Morocco, Pedro Venegas de Córdoba. However, I have been unable to find this document. For historical alterations in Mira de Amescua's play, see Miguel González Dengra ("La fabulación"). On the fluidity of historiographical and literary texts when it comes to the treatment of news/current events and recent history, see Aude Plagnard's *Une épopée ibérique*.

[2] On captivity in North Africa and the vicissitudes of Christians forced to convert to Islam, see Friedman, Bennassar, Garcés, and Hershenzon. For some accounts by captives, see Sosa, Galán, and Gracián de la Madre de Dios.

[3] All translations are mine.

[4] On Antonio Mira de Amescua's life, see Asenjo Sedano and Castilla.

[5] On Catalina de Erauso, see Velasco.

[6] On *passeurs*, consult essays published in *Serge Gruzinski, le passeur persévérant*.

[7] On conversion, see García-Arenal and Yonatan Glazer-Eytan.

[8] Italics in the original.

[9] For Frei Tomé's role in preaching captives and participating in polemics with Jews in Morocco, see Carsten L. Wilke's fascinating *The Marrakesh Dialogues*.

[10] See Rodríguez Domingo and Gómez Román, and Soto Artuñedo.

[11] For studies on this complex topic, see Gilbert ("A Grammar of Conquest" and "Transmission"). For the use of indigenous languages in the Americas, see Wasserman-Soler ("Lengua"). On Moorish jargon on stage, see Sloman, Case and Congosto Martín.

[12] Dates provided are taken from Morley and Bruerton.

[13] See also the essay by José Javier Ruiz Ibáñez.

[14] In the database *Teatro español del Siglo de Oro*, one can find 484 occurrences in 160 entries related to Algiers, but only 109 occurrences in 58 entries related to Morocco.

[15] For the historical context of this work, see the edition by Emilio Solá and José María Parreño (1990) and Garcés's introduction (2011).

[16] For an illustration of *gregüescos*, see Ricium's image.

[17] The manuscript can be found at the Spanish National Library (MSS/7460).

[18] See Fernández Nieva, Mayorga, Mira Caballos, and Sánchez Pérez.