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In my research, I examine dramatic representations of the descendants of Muslims who were forced to convert to Christianity in Spain at the end of the fifteenth century and how theater became a medium for the construction of minority identities affected by the emergence of Spanish imperialism during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. While most literary studies about the period center on the idealization of the Moor or Muslims before the Conquest of Granada in 1492, my work explores plays about the descendants of these idealized Moors or Muslims, also known as Moriscos, who endured a long process of religious and cultural assimilation in Spain. By scrutinizing these performances, my publications consider how theater was influenced by historical events and, at the same time, how theater shaped public attitudes and endorsed royal policies that affected members from members of this ethnicity.

Since my arrival at Ohio University, I have maintained an active research agenda. My scholarly portfolio consists of seven (7) publications: two essays published in refereed professional journals; two essays accepted by refereed professional journals; one essay submitted to a refereed professional journal; one chapter published in a peer-reviewed edited volume; and another chapter accepted by a peer-reviewed edited volume currently under contract. In recent years, my research has taken on a new spin and, in order to understand dramatic representations of Moriscos, I have sought other ways for it to intersect with history, religion and, to a lesser degree, gender. The Moriscos' expulsion from Spain in 1609 was a significant event that impacted theater by regulating how this community had to appear on stage in order to comply with official discourses. Given that most scholarship on the expulsion centers on its economic consequences, I have been interested in approaching the expulsion from a literary point of view while taking into consideration the historical background.

Before joining Ohio University, I explored the old conundrum of the unsuitability of the expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain for theatrical representation. My peer-reviewed article, "La expulsión de los moriscos en *El gran Patriarca don Juan de Ribera de Gaspar Aguilar*: un festejo a medias," published in the *Bulletin of the Comediantes*, uncovers the ideological underpinnings of why the expulsion of the Moriscos was celebrated politically but not represented on stage. In contrast to treatises in support of the expulsion, this play offered another angle on the avoidance of theatrical representations of the event by finding implicit ways to show public dismay over the expulsion. My analysis broadens our understanding of

the still prevalent notion that early modern Spanish theater was a medium of propaganda by showing that theater pieces can also be places of political contention and disagreement.

Upon joining Ohio University, I continued with this line of inquiry. Instead of analyzing how plays supported or criticized the deportation of Moriscos from Spain, I have focused on how these plays illustrate the fear, anxieties, and uncertainties of a period distinguished by intense political, religious, and economic debates. My peer-reviewed article, “Staging the Unspeakable: Slavery, Torture, and the Expulsion of Moriscos in *El Hamete de Toledo*,” published in *ehumanista/Conversos*, compares a play about a Muslim slave published around the time of the banishment and its adaptations after Moriscos were settled in different parts of Europe and North Africa. This essay analyzes Lope de Vega’s *El Hamete de Toledo* (1608-1612) and its adaptations by Luis de Belmonte y Bermúdez, Antonio Martínez de Meneses (1652), and three anonymous authors working in collaboration (1668). My analysis aims to demonstrate that the impact of the banishment in early modern Spanish theater is more pervasive than commonly thought.

The interest in exploring the fear, anxieties, and uncertainties surrounding the expulsion during the early modern period have led me to consider factors that go beyond religious matters. My peer-reviewed book chapter, “Staging Strikes, Depicting Merchants, and the Morisco Problem in Valencia,” accepted for the edited volume *Social Justice in Spanish Golden Age Theater*, argues that by staging economic inequality and depicting merchants in a society based on debt, Gaspar Aguilar’s *El gran Patriarca don Juan de Ribera* aims to highlight spectators’ obsession with blaming Moriscos during the time of their expulsion and indirectly contradicts the official propaganda by showing how economic factors affected religious conversion. By focusing on poor labor conditions and unequal compensation of workers in a society that increasingly relies on credit, I posit that the play indirectly does justice to Moriscos, recognizing them as scapegoats of social unrest, but also confronts spectators with problems that afflict them regardless of their religious affiliation. My analysis addresses one of the few examples that depicts the staging of a strike in early modern Spanish theater.

The focus on political, religious, and economic factors in the analysis of these plays has convinced me of the need to call into question the idealization of Muslim characters during a period of their descendants’ persecution as it was portrayed on stage. My peer-reviewed article, “Un romance gallardo: notas sobre la maurofilia literaria en *Los moriscos de Hornachos*,” accepted for publication in *MLN (Hispanic Issue)*, contrasts the glorification of Muslims from the past in the ballad that appears in the first scene with the negative portrayal

of Moriscos throughout the entire play. By examining comments made by characters related to the proliferation of ballads about Moriscos, I contend that the play reveals the shortcomings or inadequacy of staging Muslim characters in an idealized manner, as these representations did not address explicitly or in a propagandistic fashion the debates surrounding Moriscos in the midst of the expulsion.

My interest in examining representations of Moriscos in theater from a historical perspective has led me to investigate the possibility that Moriscos staged their own plays or continued reading or staging performances after their expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula. Given that Muslim countries lacked a theater tradition in the Western sense during the seventeenth century, answering this question illuminates our knowledge of cultural exchanges in the Mediterranean region. My peer-reviewed article, “Theater Reminiscences: The Politics of Memory after the Expulsion of the Moriscos,” published in the *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*, scrutinizes how theater reminiscences helped Moriscos to strengthen their sense of community in North Africa after their expulsion from Spain (1609-1614). By tracing references to theater in two Spanish manuscripts written in Tunisia, I posit that instances of remembering are viewed as a strategy for Moriscos to celebrate their past but also to recognize their hybrid status in their new lands. This essay makes a significant contribution to the growing body of literature on texts published by Moriscos in exile as most of these texts still need to be examined. The essay was awarded the *Matthew Stroud Comedia Article Prize* in 2019 by Association of Hispanic Classical Theater, an award granted to an outstanding article published by a member of the association during the previous three years.

After confirming the familiarity of Moriscos with Spanish *comedias* —as plays from the early modern period are more commonly known— I decided to analyze one of the few examples of theater performances staged by Moriscos in Spain. Given that staging a play could have been a dangerous enterprise for Moriscos due to the blurred distinction between religious ritual and theater, most of these plays were staged in secrecy or their scripts confiscated by the Inquisition. My peer-reviewed book chapter, “Dangerous Performance: Francisco de Arellano’s *Auto de la destrucción de Troya*,” published in the edited volume *Living the Comedia: Essays Celebrating Amy Williamsen*, examines a play staged in celebration of the defeat of the Spanish army in Tunisia. I contend that only reading the play through the lens of performance studies can shed light on why the Spanish Inquisition, an ecclesiastical tribunal established to suppress heresy, forbade its author to stage it. In this regard, the rewriting of the Trojan War could be considered a dangerous performance for what it did, what it implied, and what it provoked in the audience and the inquisitors. By

approaching the play as performance, I argue that the staging of *Auto de la destrucción de Troya* (1574) allowed Moriscos to use Spanish theater in order to make associations with their social circumstances, arouse compassion toward those vanquished at war, and addressed cultural practices that strengthened their sense of community.

As some Moriscos were secretly practicing Islam during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a period in which Spain imposed Catholicism as the national doctrine, religion became an important aspect to consider in the analysis of almost any piece of literature composed in Spain. The impact of religion motivated me to explore dramatic representations of the Prophet Muhammad during the period. My peer-reviewed article, "Staging Muhammad: A Subversion of the Hagiographic Genre in *Vida y muerte del falso Profeta Mahoma*," accepted for publication in the *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, argues that the author's use of *comedia de santos* [plays about saints], a theatrical genre intended to emphasize the holiness of Christian characters, in a play about Muhammad unveils the historical tensions and anxieties of Spain's Muslim past. Drawing on theories about ideology, I propose that *Vida y muerte del falso Profeta Mahoma* (1642) is more a reflection on Spain's hybrid and ambivalent religious culture than a dramatization of Muhammad's life.

Fascinated by the possibility that *Vida y muerte del falso Profeta Mahoma* was written by the playwright Antonio Mira de Amescua as suggested in an inquisitorial record, I read his biblical plays, *comedias de santos*, and other plays with references to Islam and Muslims. One of the plays that struck me was *El mártir de Madrid*, which stages the martyrdom of the Spanish captive Pedro Navarro in North Africa (1580) and portrays the main character as passing for a Morisco. This unusual representation, both dramatically and historically, led me to explore several instances of disguising or impersonating in the play and their connection with the expulsion of the Moriscos. My article, "Passing for Morisco: Concealment and Slander in Mira de Amescua's *El mártir de Madrid*," submitted for publication, 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.

I am currently working on a monograph that expands on topics related to my original research on dramatic representations of the descendants of Muslims who were forced to convert to Christianity in Spain at the end of the fifteenth century and how theater became a medium for the construction of minority identities affected by the emergence of Spanish imperialism during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In my monograph, tentatively

entitled *Domestic Enemies: Moriscos in Early Modern Spanish Stage* I challenge studies that consider Moriscos from a religious or racial perspective by interpreting several plays from a legal point of view. I analyze plays composed by Pedro Calderón de la Barca, Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, and Gaspar Aguilar with Moriscos characters. Besides providing a brief historical background, the introduction explains how conflicts between Christians and Muslims that were resolved on the battlefield during the Middle Ages turned into legal battles during the early modern period. Unlike the religious antagonists who threatened the distinctive beliefs of Christians, Moriscos posed a legal question that problematized the unstable political and juridical structure of the Spanish monarchy at the time. In the first chapter, “Staging the Legal,” I analyze an anonymous play, *Los moriscos de Hornachos*. This play is about the strong presence of Moriscos in one of the most conflict-ridden communities in Spain at the end of the sixteenth century: the town of Hornachos, whose expelled population founded the Republic of Salé, the now modern city of Salé, Morocco. In the second chapter, “The Limits of the Law,” I delve into the staging of the legal case of the Morisco Román Ramírez. I contend that Juan Ruiz de Alarcón’s *Quien mal anda en mal acaba* depicts the limits of the law by considering unresolved residual issues at the time of the verdict, such as the fear and anxiety provoked by the Moriscos. The third chapter, “The Return of the Religious Enemy,” looks at Gaspar Aguilar’s *El gran Patriarca don Juan de Ribera* and expands on findings in my previous publication about this play. My chapter expands on the role of law and religion in the expulsion of the Moriscos to illustrate how a religious point of view attempts to cover up the legal procedures and consequences of a political measure. By celebrating the banishment as the biggest achievement of the historical figure of Juan de Ribera, the play reintroduces the concept of the religious enemy who minimizes the role of baptism and conversion. In the fourth and final chapter, “Law and Sovereignty,” I examine the staging of the rebellious Moriscos of the Second Revolt of the Alpujarras in Pedro Calderón de la Barca’s *Amar después de la muerte* as a reflection upon the execution of the law, the violence it produces, and the resistance it provokes.

My research agenda for the next 5 years will strengthen the transatlantic component of my work. Since my work focuses on the construction of minorities affected by the emergence of Spanish imperialism during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, I am interested in understanding how the construction of Amerindians on stage resembles and differs from the representations of Moriscos. Therefore, I will combine my academic research on Spain and my interest in Puerto Rican history in order to explore the topic of Orientalism in a monograph tentatively entitled *Spain’s Legacy: Specters of Orientalism in Puerto Rico*

(1875-2020). This project will address the presence of Orientalism in Puerto Rico, a place overlooked in several studies that have focused on the influence of the Arabic culture in different Latin American countries during the Spanish colonial era and, later, during the nineteenth century. In the first chapter, I will study Francisco Mariano Quiñones' *Nadir Shah: novela persa* (1875) and contextualize Puerto Rican literature from the nineteenth century within the Orientalist fashion imported from Europe. In the second chapter, I will focus on the works of Alejandro Tapia y Rivera and how his obsession with the Oriental world led him to learn Arabic and place his novels in Oriental settings. In the third chapter, I will interpret Luis Lloréns Torres's first poetry book, *Al pie de la Alhambra* (1899), to emphasize how Lloréns Torres was surrounded by a series of intellectual writers in Granada and consequently published a book with Oriental undertones before becoming one of the "Puerto Rican national authors." Drawing upon some of the tenets of cultural studies, the fourth chapter will pay attention to artifacts such as names, food, and buildings, in order to explore instances of Orientalism as they appear in other realms besides literature. For example, I will seek to contextualize the plaque from the Quran at the front of the Ateneo of Puerto Rico or the Moorish architecture of Casa de España. In the fourth and fifth chapters, I will study the popularity of Turkish soap operas in contemporary Puerto Rican society and the fascination with the Arab world through the complex case of José Padilla during the War in Afghanistan; Padilla, a United States citizen, born and raised in Puerto Rico, was convicted of aiding terrorists. This study brings a new perspective to the conversation on Orientalism since it gives nuances to the imperialist element that Edward Said identified in his seminal work, *Orientalism* (1978).

In sum, my research makes a contribution to the study of early modern Spanish theater. By scrutinizing dramatic representations, my publications propose new ways of reading plays with Muslims characters and give nuances to the prevalent view of Moors as idealized subjects in Spanish literature during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Moreover, my publications examine the influence that plays staged in Spain had, both inside and outside of the Iberian Peninsula, in communities of Moriscos. As one anonymous reviewer wrote about one of my publications, "Texts published by Moriscos in exile are in need of further analysis and the author would make an important contribution to diasporic studies, broadly speaking, and Spanish early modern cultural studies, more specifically." In the future, I will expand on the research on Moriscos and early modern Spanish theater. I hope to continue developing ideas and contributing to the dialog in the discipline about the role of Moriscos in early modern Spanish theater.