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Stars, Astrology, and Mystery in Microdramas of Early Modern English and Spanish Theatre

Las estrellas, la astrología, y el misterio en los microdramas del teatro inglés y español de la Edad Moderna temprana

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ABSTRACT

This essay examines the significance of stars, astrology, and mystery in early modern microdramatic theatre of England and Spain. First in the Medieval period, there are references to the stars and signs in religious plays, and as this era evolves into the Renaissance, concurrently these astronomical references and themes appear in secular dramatic pieces as well. As the Baroque epoch begins, references to astrology, stars, and other mysterious objects increase in frequency in plays, sometimes forming their own microdramas within a full-length drama, for example, in a comedia. In both England and Spain, there are many reasons why the stars, signs, and mystery are so prevalent in theatrical texts. Here, terminology of both the dramatic and astronomical disciplines will be defined; noteworthy examples from each literary period will be analyzed; and essentially, it will be shown that the vast, mysterious universe can be found in miniature in the microdramas of early modern theatre of England and Spain.

PALABRAS CLAVE: astrology, astronomy, stars, microdrama, theatre.

RESUMEN

Este ensayo examina la importancia de las estrellas, la astrología, y la astronomía en el teatro moderno temprano microdramático de Inglaterra y España. Primero, en el período medieval, hay referencias a las estrellas y los signos en las obras dramáticas religiosas y, a medida que esta era evoluciona hacia el Renacimiento, al mismo tiempo estas referencias y temas astronómicos aparecen también en piezas dramáticas seculares. En el barroco, las referencias a la astrología, las estrellas, y otros objetos astronómicos aumentan en frecuencia en las obras de teatro, formando a veces sus propios microdramas dentro de una drama de larga duración, por ejemplo, en una comedia. Tanto en Inglaterra como en España hay muchas razones por las que los astros, los signos, y la astrología tienen tanta presencia en los textos teatrales. S definirá la terminología de las disciplinas dramática y astronómica; se analizarán ejemplos notables de cada época literaria; y esencialmente, se demostrará que el universo infinito se puede encontrar en miniatura en los microdramas del teatro moderno temprano de Inglaterra y España.

KEYWORDS: astrología, astronomía, estrellas, microdrama, teatro.

In the trajectory of both English and Spanish early modern theatre, one notes the importance of stars, astrology, and astronomy, beginning as early as the Medieval era. They are prevalent first in religious dramatic texts, and as the Renaissance approaches, they appear in secular plays as well. By the Baroque era, references to stars, astrology, and astronomy in all types of dramatic texts, including microdramas, blossom in number. Whether on England's North Sea coast or Spain's Mediterranean coast, there are countless reasons why the stars were so important and therefore, why they are woven into so many works of theatre. When they are pulled out one by one, along with other astronomical and astrological references, the statements often form their very own microdramas, some lasting a scant handful of verses or others, a short metatheatrical sequence. Here, across both temporal and geographical boundaries, the stars, astrology, and astronomy in microdramas will be navigated. First by defining what these universal objects are, along with different dramatic terms including monologue, soliloquy, and metatheater, the foundation will be laid for the exploration of the microdramas found in Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque theatre of England and Spain. By examining the ample variety of monologues, soliloquies, and metatheatrical situations with astronomical and astrological references, to objects such as the stars, planets, comets, and the like, their power and influence over the characters will be apparent, hastening the unfolding dramatic action, often to a surprising conclusion. In short, the infinite universe in miniature will be found in microdramas of early modern theatre of England and Spain.

To explore in detail this premise, the terminology being deployed should be defined first. What forms the body of any dramatic text, whether a full-length play or a short microdrama, are the words, which in turn come together to construct dramatic devices, and it is upon these devices that the dramatic action unfurls, often grows increasingly more complex, and ultimately enfolds itself into a veritable, perhaps confusing, conclusion. In *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*, Keir Elam explains an important function of dramatic devices:

> These premeditated and "composed" forms of actor-audience persuasion are in effect *metadramatic* and *metatheatrical* functions…. They appear to be cases of 'breaking frame'… but in practice they are licensed means of *confirming* the frame by pointing out the pure facticity of the representation. (1988, p. 90)

The dramatic devices, individually and also in their totality, help to shatter the glass (or fourth) wall that supposedly separates the actors on stage from the spectators in the audience, thereby allowing direct and effective communication between them. That is to say, the dramatic devices represent unique tools that the playwright can employ to rope the audience into the dramatic world, thereby enhancing their experience. In «Asymmetry and the Spectator's Experience in Calderón's *El médico de su honra*,» Robert Johnston explains: «A character's words and deeds must be seen as polysemic signs that invite interpretation according to a context which does not finish developing and changing until the end of the play» (1992, p. 61). Often the words of a character end up forming a soliloquy, monologue, or, together with other characters' words, create metatheatrical situations and microdramas.

In its basic definition, a soliloquy is an extended discourse delivered by a character who is alone on stage, merely believes him or herself to be alone, or pretends to be alone. (The soliloquy differs from the monologue, which is normally an extended

speech spoken by one character on stage and other characters are listening; more below here). The soliloquy itself consists of multiple subcategories, such as the revelatory soliloquy, dialogical soliloquy, soliloquy of direct address, double, triple, and even quadruple soliloquy, actional soliloquy, informative soliloquy, commentative soliloquy, monological soliloquy, and descriptive soliloquy. As a dramatic device, the soliloquy has several functions, all of which are directly linked to the spectators and their direct communication with the actors/characters on stage. Through the soliloquies, the spectators hear a character's secrets; learn about the character's private, hidden emotions; discover the interior motivations of that character; hear his or her hopes and dreams, or sometimes their devious plans or revenge tactics; etc. In theoretical terms, Manfred Pfister states: «The soliloquy is based primarily on a convention, an unspoken agreement between author and receiver, which – unlike conditions prevailing in the real world – allows a dramatic figure to think aloud and talk to itself» (1988, p. 131). In other words, José Luis García Barrientos explains that the soliloquy:

> …"funciona" en el vector comunicativo externo: sólo en el mundo ficticio está el personaje solo y habla para sí; en el teatro está ante el público y habla, sin duda alguna, para él. De esta orientación se deriva, claro, la función del soliloquio teatral como expresión del *interior* (pensamientos, intenciones, afectos…) y de la *verdad* del personaje, frente a las manifestaciones externas, más o menos embusteras, de su máscara social; función cuya importancia es de primer orden para la construcción dramática. (2003, p. 64)

A soliloquy often reveals a series of "unspoken" thoughts, and it can also be considered a form of talking to oneself. It is in these regards that the soliloquy differentiates itself from the monologue, which is an extended discourse delivered by a character who knows that s/he is in the presence of other characters. Both the monologue and soliloquy are classified as a speech that monopolizes the dramatic dialogue. Specifically now, a monologue is simply an extensive discourse delivered by one character and at least one other character is listening (as well as the spectators). There are many subcategories, or variations, of the monologue, including the accidental monologue, internal monologue, informative monologue, descriptive monologue, actional monologue, dialogical monologue, commentative monologue, soliloquial monologue, double monologue, and triple monologue. In terms of complication by variation, the simplest and most common monologues are the informative, descriptive, actional, and commentative monologues, whereas the other types of monologues (internal, accidental, dialogical, soliloquial, double, and triple) are vastly more complex. As a dramatic device, monologues perform the many functions explained above about the soliloquy, all of which are directly linked to the spectators. In their totality with all of the other dramatic devices, monologues help to shatter the glass (or fourth) wall that allegedly separates the actors on stage from the spectators in the audience, thereby allowing direct communication between the two groups. In this intermediary space, between the actor and spectator, communication occurs, thus achieving a measurable actor-spectator relationship, based upon communication between the two groups. In his book *Genius and Monologue*, Ken Frieden explains:

> Monologue may be understood either as a static opposition to communicative dialogue or as a dynamic swerve away from prior conventions of discourse…. More significantly, monologue signals the active break from norms of ordinary language and is thus allied with innovation, deviant discourse, and creativity.... Monologue is, then, a set of literary and rhetorical forms that represent and accomplish individuality. (1985, p. 20)

Frieden further explains that one should not limit individuality to the definition of establishing individual discourse, but rather, individual language should compose a repertoire of various types of discourse, whether common or not (1985, p. 21). He subsequently states: «"Internal monologue" and stream-of-consciousness techniques purport to represent, or even to transcribe, fictional characters' internal speech» (169). The internal monologue allows the characters and spectators alike to listen to the thoughts and emotions of the characters, and essentially, that is the soliloquial monologue.

Comparable to the similarities between the soliloquy and monologue, there is crossover and parallels between metatheater and microdrama. They are both short in duration and they are both stand-alone dramatic pieces. In its most simplistic definition, the term microdrama, or occasionally called minidrama, is a dramatic scene which is expressed succinctly, with one (or possibly two) characters, a conflict, and a moment of illumination. In his seminal book on the topic, *Microdramas: Crucibles for Theater and Time*, John Muse explains: «a microdrama is a play crafted to be considerably shorter than its audience's likely horizon of temporal expectation» (2017, p. 2). Typically, a microdrama is its own theatrical piece, whereas metatheater is usually a play-within-a-play. The most popular and well-known example of metatheater occurs in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, when Hamlet invites Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to the palace to perform a play. Metatheater, however, is the most dynamic dramatic device, and it is not limited to this sole situation. Other metatheatrical situations or circumstances include roleplaying, crossdressing, reverse crossdressing, multiple identities, mistaken identities, meta-imitation, and a host of other metatheatrical events, such as a concert, masquerade ball, carnival, dance, puppet show, etc., within a play. Like the soliloquy and monologue, as a dramatic device, metatheatrical situations have multiple functions, all of which are directly linked to the spectators, including the shattering of the glass wall. It is again in this intermediary space, between the actor and spectator, that direct communication does indeed take place, thereby allowing the spectator to feel like an active participant in the dramatic production. In each variation, the deployment of metatheater in the play creates multiple levels of dramatic circumstances in which reality and illusion melt and become one. Metatheatrical situations often generate complex structures of language, discourse, and dramatic action. Perhaps one of the first scholars to research and publish on metatheater was Lionel Abel, whose work was followed by subsequent critics. Abel examined dramatic works ranging from classic Greek tragedies to contemporary theatre, as well as plays by both Shakespeare and Calderón, which is significant for this present study. Abel classified all of these plays as follows:

> theatre pieces about life seen as already theatricalized. By this I mean that the persons appearing on the stage in these plays are there not simply because they were caught by the playwright in dramatic postures as a camera might catch them, but because they themselves knew they were dramatic before the playwright took note of them. (1963, p. 60)

Moving from dramatic terminology to words used in early modern plays to describe the skies, explain events, and predict the future, there are several key terms that reappear frequently, such as star (and the Spanish equivalents, estrella and astro), astrology (astrología), and astronomy (astronomía). According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, a star is «a natural luminous body visible in the sky especially at night… a self-luminous gaseous spheroidal celestial body of great mass which produces energy by means of nuclear fusion reactions.» Further explanations of what a star is include

someone who is preeminent in their field; an exceedingly talented performer; or often when used plurally, a configuation that astrology believes influences destiny or fortune. In fact, astrology itself is said to be «the divination of the supposed influences of the stars and planets on human affairs and terrestrial events by their positions and aspects» (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). The origins of astrology are as early as the second millenium B.C., and all cultures, stretching from the Chinese and Hindus to the Mayas, designed elaborate ways to predict earthly events from their celestial observations. Western astrology spread from 19th-17th B.C. Mesopotamia to Ancient Greece, Rome, and the Islamic world. Today, astrology is often considered to be people's horoscopes, which attempt to describe one's personality and predict important life events, based on celestial objects' positioning. Thus, the difference between astrology and astronomy is significant, astronomy being: «the study of objects and matter outside the earth's atmosphere and of their physical and chemical properties» (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Although the fields were analogous initially, they have grown worlds apart and astronomy is widely considered to be the first natural science. Astronomy scientifically studies stars, planets, moons, asteroids, comets, and literally, everything in the universe. With all of the above in mind, now it is time to explore the stars, astrology, and astronomy in early modern microdramas of England and Spain.

Early European theatre is typically religious in nature, and the Medieval cycles of dramatic texts from both Spain and England are no exception. In the trajectory of English and Spanish theatre, beginning with the Medieval period, one notes the importance of stars, astrology, and what will someday become astronomy (it is broadly accepted that it is not until the 18th century A.D. that the two disciplines are completely separate). As Giangiacomo Gandolfi explains in «Stars and Theatre: From Renaissance Stage Astrologers to Astronomy-Flavored Science Plays»:

> At the beginnings of European Modern Theatre, when medieval plays were leaving space to more sophisticated representations aware of the classical Greek and Latin heritage, science and wisdom were often present on the stage through the recognizable figures of physicians or astronomers, but also through magicians and necromancers. Such figures clearly overlap at the time in the popular imagination, despite the well known social differences between the academic culture, the esoteric tradition of wizards and occultist and the world of charlatans and street healers. (2018, p. 274)

A very popular Medieval play, or actually, microdrama, in many European countries was the re-enactment of the Three Wisemen, or Kings or Reyes. In the sense that it is an extremely short fragment or scene lifted out of the Bible, it can be seen as metatheatrical; however, because in many examples across countries and languages the short play stands on its own, technically it is a microdrama (albeit with more than two characters). There is a conflict, with Herodes and in some examples of the play, amongst the Rabbis and even debate amongst the Kings, and there is always the moment of illumination, following the star of Bethlehem, literally the star and figuratively the newborn infant Jesus. The anonymous 12th century *Auto de los Reyes Magos* contains numerous monologues and soliloquies, which along with other dialogue, form this microdrama, which is an amplification of the biblical scene. Gaspar, Melchior, and Baltasar want to find and visit the recently born infant Jesus; there is conflict with Herodes; and finally, the consensus is that the Reyes will go to Belén, to pay homage to the newborn Jesús. Speaking of the star and describing astronomically its appearance, Gaspar opens the short play with the following verses, in form of a soliloquy:

¡Dios criador, quál maravila,
no sé cuál es aquesta strela!
Agora primas la é veída;
poco timpo á que es nacida.
Nacido es el Criador
que es de la gentes senior?
Non es uerdad non se que digo,
todo esto non uale uno figo;
otra nocte me lo cataré,
si es uertad, bine lo sabre. (v. 5-10)

God the creator, what a marvel,
I do not know what star this is!
Just now for the first time I have seen it;
it has been born only a little while.
Has the Creator been born,
who is Lord of all the peoples?
It is not true, I do not know what I say;
all this is not worth a fig.
Another night I will look at it,
if it is true, I surely will know it. (v. 5-10, author's own trans.)

In addition to the theme, the polymetrical versification in these verses, and throughout the rest of the play, has led critics such as Aurelio Espinosa to observe the similarities of the *Auto de los Reyes Magos* to Old French and Latin works. This portion of the soliloquy reveals to the spectators that the infant has been born, and the information is repeated seven verses later, «nacido es Dios» (v. 15). However, there is an indisputable degree of doubt, for the sixth verse forms a question. Gaspar wonders whether the star could possibly be another signal, but then he states, «Achesto es i non es al» ("This is and is not it"; v. 14), thereby apparently attempting to resolve his doubt. At the end of the soliloquy, Gaspar proclaims, «Ala ire o que fure, aoralo e, / por Dios de todos lo terne» ("There I will go, I shall adore him, / by the mercy of God of all"; v. 17-18).

Upon concluding his speech, Gaspar exits and Baltasar enters, pondering the star as well:

Esta strela non sé dónd vinet,
quín la trae o quín la tine.
¿Por qué es aquesta sennal?
En mos días non vi atal.
Certas nacido es en tirra
aquel qui en pace i en guerra
senior a a seer da oriente
de todos hata in occidente.
Por tres noches me lo ueré
i más de uero lo sabré. (v. 19-28)

I do not know from where this star came,
nor who brings it or who owns it.
Why is this a sign?
In my days I have not seen such a thing.

Surely born on earth
is he who in peace and in war
shall be lord of all from the East
as far as the West.
For three nights I will watch it,
and then more truly I will know. (v. 19-28, author's own trans.)

Like an astronomer, Baltasar explains that he has seen the star over three nights. He repeats Gaspar's announcement of the infant's birth, so this soliloquy is informative for the spectators, rather than revelatory, as Gaspar had disclosed the information. Baltasar continues his speech with a moment of doubt: «En todo, en todo es nacido?» ("Above all, above all, is he born?"; 29). His skepticism is of a reasonably smaller degree than Gaspar's doubt because he does not dwell on the matter as long as Gaspar does. Baltasar's discourse closes as an actional soliloquy, in much the same manner as Gaspar's: «ire, lo aorare, / i pregare i rogare» ("I will go, I will adore, / I will pray, I will beseech"; 31-32).

Baltasar leaves and then Melchior arrives, reciting in form of a soliloquy:

¡Ual Criador! Atal facinda
fu nunqas alguandre falada
o en escriptura trubada.
Tal estrela non es in celo,
desto s io bono strelero;
bine lo ueo sines escarno
que uno omne es nacido de carne,
que es senior de todo el mundo,
asi cumo el cilo es redondo
de todas gentes senior será
i todo seglo iugará. (v. 33-43)

O Creator! Such a deed
was never at any time spoken of
or found in writing.
Such a star is not in the sky,
regarding this I am a good stargazer;
well, I see it without doubt
that a man is born of flesh,
who is lord of all the world,
just as the sky is round,
of all peoples he will be lord
and he will rule forever. (v. 33-43, author's own trans.)

Melchior questions himself as an astrologer, in terms of his reading of the star, as compared to the first two characters. Furthermore, this soliloquy contains an even smaller degree of doubt than Gaspar and Baltasar's soliloquies, as when Melchor states: «Es? non es? / cudo que uerdad es» ("Is it, is it not? / I believe it is true"; 44-45). Similar to the preceding soliloquies, Melchor's concludes as an actional soliloquy because he believes that the infant has been born and he is going to follow the star to find his birthplace. Curiously, Melchor is the only one of the three Reyes who does not employ the word 'aorar' in the final verses of the speech, even though he is the one who expresses the least amount of doubt.

As a chain, these three soliloquies set into motion the dramatic action and rope

the spectators into the play (although presumably they are familiar with the biblical story, when witnessing a performance in the church, perhaps the spectators are able to suspend their disbelief and enter the dramatic world for the duration of the play). They capture the interest and curiosity of the audience, which is an important function of all dramatic devices. The Three Kings, and now the spectators too, are influenced by the power of this star. One major factor that links the very first spectators of *Auto de los Reyes Magos* in the 12th century to audiences even in today's 21st century world is that many of these same stars are still shining in the universe, and that underscores the veritable importance of astrology and astronomy, both thousands of years ago and today. Although stars and planets are alive, their longevity far outlasts an individual human life, and perhaps that is part of the attraction for astrologers-astronomers and playwrights alike. Gaspar, Melchior, and Baltasar are familiar names to many people, as is King Herodes. In *Auto de los Reyes Magos*, when Herodes, he begins a speech as a soliloquy:

> ¿Quin uio numquas tal mal?
> ¡Sobre rei otro tal!
> ¡Aún non só io morto
> ni so la terra pusto!
> ¿Rei otro sobre mí?
> Numquas atal non ui.
> El seglo ua a çaga,
> ia non sé qué me faga.
> Por uertad no lo creo
> ata que io lo ueo. (v. 107-16)
> --------
> Who has ever seen such a wrong?
> Another king reigning above me!
> I am not yet dead,
> nor have I been laid in the earth!
> Another king over me?
> I have never seen such a thing.
> The world is going backwards;
> I no longer know what to do.
> In truth, I will not believe it
> until I see it with my own eyes. (v. 107-16, author's own trans.)

In the soliloquial portion of the passage, Herod speaks openly about his impassioned desire to be the supreme king. It is a revelatory soliloquy because the spectators learn of his ambitious, egotistical nature and witness his anger that there could possibly be another king on earth greater than himself. At this juncture, the soliloquy becomes a monologue when the *mayordomo* enters, as Herodes says, «Uenga mio maiordoma, / qui mios aueres toma» ("Have my butler come in / he will take care of it"; v. 117-18).

After this verse, Herodes continues commanding, and the following portion of the speech is a monologue:

> Idme por mios abades,
> i por mis podestades
> i por mios scriuanos
> i por meos gramatgos
> i por mios streleros
> i por mios retóricos

dezirm' an la uertad, si iace in escripto,
o si lo saben elos o si lo an sabido. (v. 119-26)

Go get my abbots,
and my authorities
and my scribes
and my grammaticians
and my astrologers
and my rhetoricians
ask them for the truth, if it is in writing,
or if they know it or if they have known it.
(v. 119-26, author's own trans.)

Herod has ordered his *mayordomo* to assemble these people, including the "strelero/astrologer," and thus, for the *mayordomo*, this is an actional monologue. However, for the spectators, this is an informative monologue, because they learn not just about the court of Herodes, but also about the future dramatic action of the play, which occurs outside of the performance area, as the *mayordomo* searches for everyone. Curiously, the *Auto de los Reyes Magos* reverses the order of the two audiences of Herodes. In the Gospel narrative according to Matthew, Herod meets with his scribes and priests before calling the *Reyes Magos* to court, but in the play, the *Reyes* came to advise Herod before the others arrive at court. Furthermore, verses 102-06 in Herod's address are the exact words of Herod from the Gospel: «He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage."» (Matt. 2.8). To find the child, the *Reyes* will follow the star, which in itself has become more than a symbol in the play; rather, it is a non-verbal character. The stars in the sky are patterned, and throughout time, humans have traced these outlines into words. Amongst the constellations, the planets, asteroids, and comets, it is perhaps the Star of Bethlehem which has had the most recognition. The *Reyes Magos* have been given their command, which they already planned to do: follow the star and find the child, Jesus, the purported savior.

When stars cross, sometimes it is for the good, and yet sometimes, it is doomed. That is for the astrologers to foretell and for people to believe — or not. Although the *Reyes Magos* took another route, and arrived and payed homage to the newborn Jesus, the outcome is not always certain. As the Medieval period gradually evolved into the Renaissance, there are still plays and microdramas of a religious nature in Spain, such as the early *Églogas* by Juan del Encina. In the recent article «Astrology and Astronomy in Renaissance Works,» Ruobing Zhai explains that:

> During that era of transition, people were keen on having a clearer idea of what the future held for them. Anything that existed and was in a position to give them any glimpse of the future was treated with a lot of care. It is this idea and ability of Astrology to give people the ability to make predictions that made it flourish. Despite the fact that it lacked some elements of perfection and was in some way uncertain, they still remained relevant to the then society and the history of that time tend to favor astrology. (2023, p. 220)

Further north in England soon was born the prolific playwright in 1564, William Shakespeare, and many of his dramatic works reference the stars, astrology, and what has since become astronomy. Although *Hamlet* is best known for the famous soliloquy by Hamlet himself, as well as the metatheatrical sequence launched by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, invited by Hamlet to put on a play at the palace, it is surely *Romeo and*

Juliet that is driven by the stars. In *Lire le théâtre*, Anne Ubersfeld discusses the relationship between the dramatic text, its representation, and the audience, elucidating that the dramatic text contains gaps which must be filled in by the performance (1977, p. 24) and then interpreted by the spectator. In terms of spectator reception, Ubersfeld states: «Le spectateur est obligé, non seulement de suivre une histoire, une fable (axe horizontal), mais de recomposer à chaque instant la figure totale de tous les signes concourant à la représentation» (1977, p. 45). At a performance of *Macbeth*, for example, the spectator must not only follow the plot of the play, but must also be aware of the icons, indexical signs, and symbols, which may appear constantly throughout the course of the production. In addition to interpreting these "signs" on their own, the audience is offered great assistance by dramatic devices for their total understanding and enjoyment of the play. In *Romeo and Juliet*, the dramatic devices are in abundance, and stars, astrology, and astronomy figure in many of them.

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* opens with a prologue, which is another dramatic device that sometimes offers background information about the plot, or it can simply serve as an entertaining device to capture the audience's attention before the play begins. Proclaimed by the Chorus, the prologue serves as an introduction and in this case to a certain extent, a summary of the forthcoming dramatic action:

> Two households, both alike in dignity
> (In fair Verona, where we lay our scene),
> From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
> Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
> From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
> A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life;
> Whose misadventured piteous overthrows
> Doth with their death bury their parents' strife.
> The fearful passage of their death-marked love.
> And the continuance of their parents' rage,
> Which, but their children's end, naught could remove,
> Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;
> The which, if you with patient ears attend,
> What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend. (Prologue, v. 1-14)

The critics Earley and Keil explain: «What the Chorus *never* tells us is the original cause of the feud. But what he/she does tell us is that Romeo and Juliet ("star-crossed" by fortune) will suffer as a result of consequences. They themselves are not tragic, but are victims caught up in circumstances that are» (1988, p. 187-88). Already in verse six, the audience is alerted to the situation of the star-crossed lovers, which the very first spectators, and certainly contemporary spectators as well, would readily understand and sympathize with unreservedly. Commonly accepted as having coined this neologism, "star-crossed lovers", Shakespeare's expression is based upon the idea that the positions of the stars govern, and indeed control, people's destiny.

The idea of star-crossed lovers is immediately amplified in Scene 2, when Count Paris, who has been promised in marriage to Juliet Capulet, is speaking to her father. Capulet invites Paris to a feast at his home that evening:

> At my poor house look to behold this night
> Earth-treading stars that make dark heaven light.
> Such comfort as do lusty young men feel
> When well-appareled April on the heel
> Of limping winter treads… (1.2.24-48: Act 1, Scene 2, verses 24-28)

Not only does Juliet's father remark upon the stars, but he also references the month and season, which are overseen by the stellar constellations and the position of planet Earth in relation to the sun. Paris accepts the invitation to Capulet's party, and Romeo Montague, whose family has been fighting with the Capulets, hears about the feast and decides to attend with his friends, all in disguise. Upon arriving, his friend Benvolio says they are too late, but Romeo proclaims:

> I fear too early, for my mind misgives
> Some consequence yet hanging in the stars
> Shall bitterly begin his fearful date
> With this night's revels, and expire the term
> Of a despisèd life clos'd in my breast
> By some vile forfeit of untimely death.
> But he that hath the steerage of my course
> Direct my sail! On, lusty gentlemen! (1.4.106-113)

Here is where the love triangles become more complicated: at the feast he hopes to see his beloved Rosaline, but upon catching a glimpse of Juliet Capulet, he falls instantaneously in love with her. Little did Romeo know, in his dialogue above, that he would foretell their future.

Before their untimely deaths, however, the dramatic action continues to develop and heighten in tension, often effectuated through the use of dramatic devices. Unique to a handful of playwrights in England and Spain at this point of global literary evolution, Shakespeare is one of the dramatists who advances the use of dramatic devices to new pinnacles, such as monologues, soliloquies, and most particularly, metatheater. In fact, one of the most famous scenes in *Romeo and Juliet* is metatheatrical and when separated from the text in its entirety, it becomes a microdrama in and of itself: the legendary balcony scene. Curiously, it opens with a soliloquy pronounced by Romeo, and his speech ends up forming a double soliloquy. Essentially, a double soliloquy begins as a single character's private discourse, and then another character enters and starts to deliver a soliloquy, too. There can be slight variations here, such as if one of the characters becomes aware of the other's presence, but still pretends to be alone. A double soliloquy constructs multidimensional levels of language: the two characters may be speaking at the same time, perhaps regarding different situations, in opposing tones of voice, all of which causes confusion for the spectator. Or, they may alternate and speak a few lines each, which eventually produces an intertwined discourse that is a dialogue unto itself. At the opening of Act 2, Scene 2, Romeo approaches Juliet's window and says:

> He jests at scars that never felt a wound.
> [*Enter* Juliet *above at her window*.]
> But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?
> It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.
> Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
> Who is already sick and pale with grief
> That thou, her maid, art far more fair than she.
> ……
> Her eye discourses; I will answer it.
> I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks.
> Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
> Having some business, do entreat her eyes
> To twinkle in their spheres till they return.

> What if her eyes were there, they in her head?
> The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,
> As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven
> Would through the airy region stream so bright
> That birds would sing and think it were not night. (2.2.1-6; 13-22)

Earley and Keil analyze the speech as follows:

> Romeo's soliloquy is in the form of a courtier's address. He pays homage to Juliet's beauty, virginity, solitude, and distance. He likens her looks to the celestial spheres…. The verse is further elevated by the fact that Romeo delivers his words *upwards* to Juliet's position on the balcony or upper stage. Note, too, that the speech is also being addressed to the heavens. (1988, p. 193-94).

Without knowing whether Juliet can hear or not, Romeo continues speaking.

After Romeo's soliloquy lasts several more verses, he hears Juliet sigh. Romeo speaks again, and then Juliet begins to talk, without realizing that he is present:

> JULIET. Ay me!
> ROMEO. She speaks!
> O, speak again, bright angel, for thou art
> As glorious to this night, being o'er my head,
> As is a winged messenger of heaven
> Unto the white-upturned wond'ring eyes
> Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him
> When he bestrides the lazy puffing clouds,
> And sails upon the bosom of the air.
> JULIET. O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?
> Deny thy father and refuse thy name;
> Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
> And I'll no longer be a Capulet.
> ROMEO. [*Aside*.] Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this? (2.2.25–37)

In this part of the scene Romeo, who was delivering his own soliloquy, decides to let Juliet continue her soliloquy, which is all about Romeo's name and identity, and he eventually interrupts her. The multiple levels of language inherent in this short microdrama are complex. Romeo speaks the first line and Juliet appears at her window.

When Juliet continues delivering her solilquy, she still does not know that Romeo is there. In this case, the character is essentially delivering a monological soliloquy because she believes herself to be alone (or simply pretends she is). Her soliloquy concludes:

> 'Tis but thy name that is my enemy.
> Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
> What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot,
> Nor arm nor face, [nor any other part]
> Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!
> What's in a name? That which we call a rose
> By any other word would smell as sweet;
> So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,
> Retain that dear perfection which he owes
> Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,
> And for thy name, which is no part of thee,

Take all myself. (2.2.38–49)

Throughout the entire microdramatic sequence, the spectators have been listening in on the private thoughts and emotions of the two characters, first with Romeo endowing his love for Juliet with all of the stars of the night sky and then with Juliet declaring her love for him.

Enduring more than 400 years, Shakespeare's balcony scene in *Romeo and Juliet* contains some of his most famous verses. As Stephanie Mercier explains, «the playwright's combination of high and low registers, prose and verse as well as musicality… have proved both a challenge and an opportunity for cultural encounter» (2021, p. 17). In further analysis, Mercier states that this scene has the ability to:

> showcase the accessibility of Shakespeare, since they provide contemporary spectators with strategies to negotiate their individual identities; they provide the means with which to establish an analysis of the common location, orientation, and social, cultural, and political implications of Shakespeare in today's global society. (2021, p. 17)

As the dramatic action continues and the double tragedy draws nearer, particularly poignant is Juliet's soliloquy in Act 3, filled with references to stars and the sky:

Come, gentle night; come, loving black-brow'd night,
Give me my Romeo, and, when I shall die,
Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine
That all the world will be in love with night.
And pay no worship to the garish sun. (3.2.20-25)

In addition to the image that Juliet somewhat garishly paints for the spectators, the words offer foreshadowing, as well as echoing Romeo's own words from earlier in the play.

Finally, in Act 5 of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, there is a dialogical soliloquy delivered by Romeo. The dialogical soliloquy is when a character seemingly holds a conversation with him or herself, while vacillating between two points of view. The dramatic figure can either take on two (or more) separate personalities or refer to him or herself in the second or third person. In considering a particular issue, the character may act in different ways: if the character is in love, he or she may appropriate a tender, solicitous personality or an excited, passionate one. As Pfister explains: «the speaker of a soliloquy may address himself as 'you', which can then produce a conflict between several viewpoints ('contextures') in one and the same soliloquy – such as the contrasts between body and soul, heart and mind, duty and desire, past and present» (1988, p. 128). In the case of Romeo's final soliloquy, the contrast is also between life and death. Immediately before drinking the poison, Romeo desperately proclaims:

O, here
Will I set up my everlasting rest,
And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
From this world–wearied flesh. Eyes, look your last!
Arms, take your last embrace! and, lips, O you
The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss
A dateless bargain to engrossing death! (5.3.109–15)

Romeo does not actually acquire multiple personalities, but he does address various body parts in the second person. Additionally, this soliloquy displays in full force for

the spectators the heightened emotions which Romeo has before dying. As one of the longest speeches in the play (nearly the same length as Mercutio's famous Queen Mab monologue), Romeo's tomb scene soliloquy covers such vast emotional territory that performed on its own, it is a microdrama, ending wretchedly with his final, dying kiss on Juliet's lips.

As tragic as *Romeo and Juliet* is, there are moments of comedy and levity, and that is exactly what will be found as we reach the Baroque and shift focus onto one of Pedro Calderón de la Barca's comedias, *El astrólogo fingido*. Captured right there in the title is astrologer, and this is axis upon which the entire play functions. In his article «Zodiacal Plays: Astrology and the *Comedia*,» Frederick de Armas explains, «Spanish culture of the period was permeated by Roman notions of the Calendar, the planetary week, and the zodiacal month. It should thus come as no surprise that astrology was an important component in Spanish literature» (2011, p. 60). The metatheatrical sequences are essentially microdramas that can stand on their own as dramatic playlets. There is also a vast variety of monologues and soliloquies in which there are multiple references to planets, stars, and astrology, or in short, the infinite universe in miniature, in the form of microdrama. The word "estrella" appears eight times in the play; "astrología," ten times; and "astrólogo" is said 19 times, and obviously in the title as well. *El astrólogo fingido* opens with María and her maid Beatriz, who is explaining that Juan, with whom María is in love, is leaving Madrid. It is during the subsequent scene that the first astronomical reference is made, to the sun. Juan compares María's eyes to the sun, a trope which will be used 12 more times throughout the play: «Con licencia me atreví / a entrar donde ardiendo están / dos soles» ("With consent, I dared to enter where two suns burn"; v. 137-39; this edition of the play numbers the verses 1-3367, rather than by act and scene). Curiously, it is used more frequently in the *Primera Jornada*, and disappears nearly completely in the *Tercera Jornada*. In fact, during the *Primera Jornada*, other than "sol/soles" (sun/suns), the only other two words related to astronomy and astrology that appear are "hado" (fate), which Juan says in his extensive monologue about unrequited love: «cruel rigor, hado infelice!» ("cruel rigor, unhappy fate!"; v. 216), shortly followed by "estrella" (star). Giving up on María, Juan exclaims:

> Y, viendo al fin que es en vano
> que un desdichado porfíe
> contra su estrella y que es bien
> que te obedezca y me prive
> de verte, pues tú lo quieres. (v. 217-21)
> --------
> And, seeing at last that it is in vain
> for a wretched soul to strive
> against its star and that it is right
> that I obey you and deprive
> myself of seeing you, since that is your will. (v. 217-21, author's own trans.)

With that declaration, María has a change of heart, but really it is a new approach, as she has loved Juan all along. Through her maid Beatriz, Juan will come to María's house at night, to visit her secretly. With that the dramatic action unfolds, as Diego enters with his servant, along with other characters, and secondary plots emerge, with Violante and Carlos as well, all forming a succession of love triangles. Diego also loves María, but soon will have to acquiesce and become the fake astrologer.

As the title of the comedia is *El astrólogo fingido*, it is logical that the word astrologer is used with regular frequency, first appearing the *Segunda Jornada*. The lies are piling up, and now Diego knows about Juan's secret visits to María's house because her maid Beatriz told her own beloved Morón (Diego's servant), about Juan and María, and then he told Diego. In order to protect Beatriz from taking the blame, Morón spins a lie and says to María:

> Sabe, pues, que mi señor,
> este que presente ves,
> un grande astrólogo es,
> puedo decir el mejor
> que se conoce en España. (v. 1155-59)
> --------
> Know, then, that my master,
> the one you see here present,
> is a great astrologer;
> I could even say the best
> known in Spain. (v. 1155-59, author's own trans.)

What ensues is a series of statements about Diego and all of his (fake) accomplisments, including how he divined the truth about María's love affair with Juan, as well as the first reference to the planets and zodiac signs, which Morón says Diego learned from a genie: «Aqueste al fin le enseñó / los planetas y los signos» ("In the end, it was he who taught him the planets and the signs"; v. 1179-80). Shortly thereafter, Diego launches his own monologue (from verses 1192 to 1316, it is one of the longest speeches in the play), in which he explains his history – or actually, his story – as it is not true. Saying that he was noble born, as well as good with a sword and a pen, he went abroad to fight and to write. In Naples, he met the famous Giambattista della Porta, noted scholar and playwright who also published *Magia Naturalis* in 1558. The book covers a wide variety of subjects, such as astrology, alchemy, meteorology, and both natural and occult philosophy. According to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Porta was one of the "professors of secrets," and his writings, including his dramatic texts, were very influential, certainly to Shakespeare and presumably to Calderón as well.

As Diego's extensive speech continues, it becomes an astrological monologue, perhaps the first in Spanish theatre. Regarding Porta's fame and astrological science, Diego states:

> Por ventura conocí
> a Porta, de quien la fama
> me dijo alabanzas mil;
> este, a quien no reservó
> dudoso suceso el fin;
> porque en su ciencia tenía
> presente lo por venir,
> a quien planetas y signos
> en sus astrolabios vi,
> tan obedientes que nunca
> lo pudieron encubrir
> el más inconstante efeto,
> ¿qué mucho, si desde allí
> tasaba de cuántas luces
> consta el celestial zafir? (v. 1222-36)

By chance I came to know
Porta, of whom Fame
sang a thousand praises;
he, whose end was spared
the uncertainty of fate,
for within this science
he held the future ever-present;
he, in whose astrolabes I saw
the planets and the signs
so obedient, that never
could they conceal from him
even the most fickle outcome;
is it any wonder then,
if from that vantage point
he could reckon just how many lights
form the celestial sapphire? (v. 1222-36, author's own trans.)

After bemoaning his own bad luck and misfortunes, Diego explains how much he learned about astrology:

Duró
dos años que estuve allí
aquesta amistad, y en estos
con estudiar y asistir
llegué no sé si a saber
—estoy por decir que sí—
la astrología tan bien
que pudiera competir
con él mismo, a quien mil veces
envidia y espanto di. (v. 1255-64)

It lasted
two years that I was there,
this friendship, and in those
studying and attending,
I realized, I don't know if I knew
—I'm inclined to say yes—
astrology so well
that I could compete
with him, whom a thousand times
I envied and dreaded. (v. 1255-64, author's own trans.)

Diego then explains that he has revealed himself as an astrologer, in order to protect Beatriz.

Amplifying the lie, and ensuring her protection, Beatriz says that she has heard from many people that Diego is an astrologer, and in a monologue María explains the following to Diego:

Señor don Diego, no quiero
tener de vos qué temer,
si el respeto considero
que a una principal mujer

debe un noble caballero.
Y quien tan bien conoció
la fuerza de las estrellas
bien verá en sus luces bellas
que no puedo torcer yo
lo que dispusieron ellas.
Sólo un consuelo me dais,
que es ser tan noble y discreto,
pues con esto aseguráis
mi honor y vuestro secreto. (v. 1331-44)

Señor Don Diego, I wish
to have no cause to fear you,
considering the respect
that a noble gentleman
owes to a lady of high rank.
And you, who so well discerned
the power of the stars,
will see within their lovely light
that I cannot alter
what they have ordained.
You grant me only one solace:
which is to be so noble and discreet;
for thereby you safeguard
my honor and your secret. (v. 1331-44, author's own trans.)

Of course, figuratively the star here is María herself, and the planets that revolve around her are Juan and Diego. Shortly thereafter, María's father Leonardo arrives on the scene, and the lies multiply exponentially. María explains that her cousin told her about an astrologer who could prophesy about her marriage, and she tearfully introduces Diego to her father. She is crying and Diego explains, «Díjela que había de ser / muy pobre su casamiento, / y su merced lo ha creído» ("I told her that her wedding would be very humble, and she believed it"; v. 1394-96). Although privately concerned about this prediction, Leonardo states the following aloud:

También yo en mi mocedad,
si he de deciros verdad,
alguna cosa estudié
y con deseos pequé
en esta curiosidad,
Don Ginés de Rocamora
Me enseñó tiempos atrás. (v. 1426-32)

I, too, in my youth,
if I am to tell you the truth,
did study a thing or two,
and, driven by desire, I sinned
in this very curiosity.
Don Ginés de Rocamora
taught me, some time ago. (v. 1426-32, author's own trans.)

Similar to Diego and his reference to Porta, Leonardo mentions having studied with

Ginés de Rocamora y Torrano, who according to Oppenheimer's note in this edition of *El astrólogo fingido*, was a «cosmógrafo español… leía y explicaba en su casa la ciencia de la esfera… dió a luz su obra intitulada *Esfera del Universo*» ("Spanish cosmographer… he read and expounded upon the science of the sphere in his home… and published his work titled *Sphere of the Universe*."; 256-57). Leonardo invites Diego to his house so that they can discuss astrology sometime (v. 1448).

The dramatic action continues to progress and build in tension, with additional characters taking part in the microdramatic situation of Diego being an astrologer, spreading the news about his predictions and success. Another secondary character, Antonio, delivers a monologue to Carlos about Diego:

> Este hombre que aquí ves
> tan humilde, tan modesto,
> tan reportado y compuesto,
> el hombre más docto es
> que tiene la astrología. (v. 1601-05)
> --------
> This man whom you see here
> so humble, so modest,
> so reserved and composed,
> is the most learned man
> that astrology possesses. (v. 1601-05, author's own trans.)

Upon hearing more about Diego, Carlos then encourages his secret beloved Violante to seek Diego's intervention, so that she can see Juan in a vision (Violante believes that Juan truly left Madrid, as she has received his letters thus stated). Diego realizes that he can conjure up this vision because he knows that Juan is still in town, and his prowess and success in astrology will be proven (but actually, it will really just add to the mountain of lies). However, Diego cautions Violante:

> y aqueso no es tan fácil
> como a vos os parece
> ni astrólogos lo hacen,
> porque representar
> a la vista la imagen
> de un hombre que está ausente
> es magia y castigarle
> podrán a quien lo hiciere,
> si alguno hay que lo alcance,
> porque es es una ciencia
> que ya no sabe nadie. (v. 1926-36)
> --------
> And that is not as easy
> as it may seem to you,
> not even astrologers can do it,
> because to conjure before the eye
> the image of a man who is absent
> is magic, and he who attempts it
> may well be punished,
> if indeed, there is anyone
> capable of achieving it,
> because it is a science

that no one knows anymore. (v. 1926-36, author's own trans.)

The microdramatic scene is set with Violante's letter to Juan, delivered by Diego. Although directed towards Shakespeare's plays, Katherine Walker's comments about astrologers as performers certainly applies to Calderón's comedia and Diego the fake astrologer as well:

> They have their props, their cues, and their rehearsed lines. But the diversity of sources and authors who take up astrology as the butt of criticism points us to a very important fact—most individuals in the period believed in astrology. While not an astonishing revelation, it is one that we have to continually remind ourselves of, or we lose the dramatic force of moments in which characters desperately read the heavens in an attempt to grasp the implications of their behaviors or desires. (2020, n.p.)

Juan needs to maintain his ruse of not being in Madrid, so he complies with the vision/visit to Violante, who is frightened that he seems so real, and subsequently, Juan blames his friend Carlos for setting it up, out of jealousy. With that, the *Segunda Jornada* ends.

The *Tercera Jornada* of *El astrólogo fingido* sees an increased and more equal use of astronomical and astrological terms, as well as the height of dramatic climax and the ensuing denouement. At this point, María secretly gives her diamond Cupid jewel to Juan, and it figures crucially in the dramatic action, in fact becoming its own little melodramatic microdrama. Her father Leonardo enters, catches Juan in his house visiting his daughter, and he is still concerned about the Diego the Astrologer's prophecy that his daughter will marry poor. Juan continues his lie, telling Leonardo that he has only just returned to Madrid, feigning business to conduct with him, so that he can visit María. When Juan leaves, Leonardo asks María why she is sad, and she says it is because she lost her diamond jewel. Thus, Leonardo decides to employ Diego's skills to find it. María, who has unwittingly set this into motion on her own, laments:

> ¿Hay más pena, hay más crueldad
> de estrella siempre enemiga,
> que sólo en mi agravio diga
> un astrólogo verdad? (v. 2375-78)
> --------
> Is there greater sorrow, greater cruelty,
> from an always hostile star,
> than that an astrologer speaks the truth
> only when foretelling my misfortune? (v. 2375-78, author's own trans.)

Briefly Leonardo returns, asking María at what time the jewel vanished, and she naively says between 11 and 12, which sets quickly into motion the action. Her maid Beatriz instructs Morón to tell Diego everything, as Leonardo is on his way to consult with him about the jewel. Morón, impressed by Beatriz's own skills at manipulation, delivers an astrological-astronomical monologue:

> Cuanto mejor es tener
> por esfera una mujer,
> que volverse un hombre loco
> pensando en los celestiales
> Orbes, Culebras, Dragones,
> Osos, Tigres, y Leones
> y otras imágenes tales,
> pues sin observar los puntos

de aquella esférica bola,
hoy en una mujer sola
se pueden ver todos juntos. (v. 2408-18)

How much better it is to have
a woman as one's sphere,
than to go mad
pondering the celestial
Orbs, Serpents, Dragons,
Bears, Tigers, and Lions,
and other such images;
for without observing the points
of that spherical globe
today in one woman
one may behold them all at once. (v. 2408-18, author's own trans.)

Morón will inform Diego that Juan has the diamond jewel, so that he and Beatriz are exonerated of any blame.

In an unanticipated twist, the message will arrive late to Diego, but meanwhile, other stars are twirling on stage. Antonio approaches Diego first, to congratulate him on his incredible fame, but despondently Diego replies:

De que no hay hombre a quien dio
duda cualquiera suceso
que por ruego o por favor
no me venga a preguntar
el fin de su pretensión. (v. 2436-40)

For there is no man, however
doubtful the outcome of his affairs,
who does not come to me,
whether by plea or by favor,
to inquire into the success of his suit. (v. 2436-40, author's own trans.)

The truth of these words explodes in example, as next Violante comes to Diego, begging him to help her, since she has discovered that Juan loves someone else:

Testigos son
de su amor tantas estrellas
que en la muda confusión
los miran, que por ser claro,
no se fiaron del Sol. (v. 2544-48)

Witnesses to his love
are so many stars that, amidst
the silent confusion, gaze upon them,
stars which, by virtue of their own brightness,
place no trust in the sun. (v. 2544-48, author's own trans.)

In fact, she implores Diego to make them fall out of love and into hatred, «que se olviden y el rigor / de los celos los abrase. / Mueran, pues muriendo estoy» ("May they be forgotten, and may the rigor / of jealousy consume them. / Let them die, for I am dying"; v. 2558-60). Albeit morbid, her words underscore the extreme belief in the power of astrologers and magicians, amongst the spectators as well (and perhaps they

identify with her emotions as well). Diego is trapped and must deceive Violante, insisting that Juan loves her, so that she will leave. Essentially, the series of love triangles form their own chain of microdramas, all intertwined by the characters.

When Leonardo finally arrives at Diego's side, he asks for help in finding the lost, or stolen, diamond. Without having received the message about Juan having the diamond, Diego sees no solution other than to admit that he is not a real astrologer:

> ¿Cómo tengo de decir
> que en mi vida no he sabido
> si son los planetas siete
> ni si son doce los signos,
> si el zodíaco guarnecen,
> si anda el sol por su epiciclo,
> por la eclíptica o por dónde? (v. 2764-70)
> --------
> How am I to say
> that in my life I have never known
> whether there are seven planets
> or whether there are twelve signs,
> whether they adorn the zodiac,
> or if the aun travels along its epicycle,
> along the ecliptic or where? (v. 2764-70, author's own trans.)

However, Leonardo believes he is being humble, which makes him think even more highly of Diego's expertise. Morón enters, whispers the news about Juan having María's diamond, and Diego begins a monologue to Leonardo:

> Yo he pretendido
> disimular hoy con vos
> mi estudio por no deciros
> cosas que os han de pesar;
> mas, puesto que habéis querido
> saberlo, yo esta mañana
> toda la figura he visto,
> que su prima me avisó
> de cómo se había perdido:
> un hombre, que en vuestra casa
> hoy vestido de camino
> ha entrado, tiene la joya,
> y, pues tanto habéis querido
> saberlo, no me culpéis
> si os pesare de lo dicho. (v. 2808-21)
> --------
> I sought to conceal my inquiry
> from you today, lest I speak words
> that would cause you pain;
> yet, since you insisted
> on knowing the truth,
> this very morning
> I have seen the full picture,
> for her cousin informed me
> of how the item was lost:

a man who entered your home
today, dressed in traveling attire,
is the one who holds the jewel,
and so, since you were so intent
upon knowing this, do not blame me
if you now regret what has been said. (v. 2808-21, author's own trans.)

Leonardo interrupts Diego's monologue, explains that he knows the man who has the jewel, and leaves. The diamond Cupid effectively has become a non-verbal character, and on a certain level, the entire situation with the jewel functions of its own accord as a microdrama.

Subsequently, Leonardo finds Juan, and he initially decides not to accuse Juan of stealing the diamond jewel. As the dialogue develops, however, Leonardo explains:

Yo he venido, don Juan, vamos al caso,
buscándoos (ciego estoy), porque he sabido
que una joya tenéis que hoy se ha perdido
en mi casa (turbado,
qué presto su delito ha confesado). (v. 2951-55)

Let us get to the point, I have come, Don Juan,
seeking you out (I am blind), because I have learned
that you possess a jewel which today was lost
from my home (how flustered,
how swiftly he has confessed his crime). (v.2951-55, author's own trans.)

Leonardo continues by stating that he does not blame Juan, but rather the hand that gave him the jewel (which he does not know, but it is his daughter's, María). As an aside, Juan moans, «Triste estrella / es la mía!» ("A sad star, that which is mine"; v. 2959-60), and soon thereafter explains to Leonardo that he has the jewel and that the fake astrologer deceived Leonardo (v. 2976-77). Continuing, Juan explains that although he was born into the nobility, he is poor:

Pues que mi bien dispones,
por quitarnos de tales ocasiones,
honra la humildad mía
con tu hija, señor, doña María,
y cesará con esto la ocasión
que en tal lance nos ha puesto tú mismo. (v. 3001-06)

Since as you deem best
to spare us from compromising situations,
you honor my humble self,
sir, with your daughter Doña María,
and with this shall cease the very cause
that you yourself have cast us into. (v. 3001-06, author's own trans.)

Leonardo does not accept Juan's proposal to marry María, believing that it is merely Juan's attempt to get away with the jewel theft. With that, Leonardo storms off, but Violante and her maid enter. Violante asserts her love for Juan, who rebuffs her strongly and exits.

Finally, Juan and María meet again, discuss her father and the jewel Juan is accused of stealing, and then they pledge their love, with María referencing the stars and planets in her monologue:

Don Juan yo tuve la culpa
pues que por satisfacerle,
hice por la joya estremos,
que obligaron a que fuesse
a un astrólogo, que ha sido
contrario de tu amor siempre.
Pero aunque planetas, signos,
y estrellas en sus celestes,
globos influyan rigores,
y contra ti se concierten,
no ha de dejar de ser tuya,
la que por suyo te tiene,
y la que te da su mano. (v. 3177-89)

Don Juan, the fault was mine,
for in my desire to please you,
I went to such extremes for the jewel
that I was compelled to seek out
an astrologer, one who has been
an adversary to your love.
But though the planets, signs,
and stars, from their celestial
spheres, cast down their harsh influences
and conspire against you,
she shall not cease to be yours,
she who holds you as her own,
and who now gives you her hand. (v. 3177-89, author's own trans.)

With these words and Juan's, they become secretly engaged and the dramatic action rapidly unfolds to its somewhat anticipated denouement, for the comedia's typical spectators. After it is revealed to all that María willfully had given her beloved Juan the diamond Cupid jewel, in order to avoid disgrace and attempt to retain their family honor, Leonardo agrees to his daughter María marrying Juan. Then, each character in turn exposes how they learned the details of Diego's supposed astrology and predictions. Curiously, unlike many other comedias, the other characters, such as Carlos and Violante, and Beatriz and Morón, are not officially married off, so their fates remain unsealed. It is ironic because indeed, this play was about astrology, albeit fake. In the end, Diego offers the concluding verses:

¿Alguno obligarme puede
a más que no adivinar?
Pues yo juro eternamente
de dejar mi astrología.
Esta boda se celebre
para que con su contento
suplan las faltas que tiene
un *astrólogo fingido*,
si tantas perdón merecen. (v. 3359-67)

Can anyone compel me
to do nothing but guess?
For I swear to eternally

> forsake my astrology.
> Let this wedding be celebrated
> so that through its joy
> it may make amends for the failings
> of a feigned astrologer,
> if, indeed, such faults deserve forgiveness. (v. 3359-67, author's own trans.)

What will remain forever unproven was the intention of Calderón, to unseat the powers of astrology in his day, to protect the Catholic church, or to offer simply entertainment. Perhaps it is a mixture of these and more. Regardless, *El astrólogo fingido* is unique amongst the canon of comedias in 17th-century Spain. Like Shakespeare and Lope de Vega before him, Calderón often wrote plays on topics and themes that were current, and sometimes took a detour into uncharted territories, akin to the skies of the universe which remain unexplored.

To conclude, it seems that throughout history, human beings have been influenced by the power of the stars and their appearance, so it is natural that dramatists incorporate these themes into their plays and characters as well. As early as the Medieval era, stars, astrology, and astronomy appear in dramatic pieces in England and Spain, and undoubtedly in early modern theatre of other European nations and countries throughout the world as well. By the Renaissance period, the astrological and astronomical references increase exponentially in number, such as in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. As the drama genre continued to evolve and grow progressively more complex in the Baroque, with the deployment of additional dramatic devices used with further frequency, entire plays were written with astrology and astronomy as the main theme, major dramatic action, and countless sub-plots. Frederick de Armas concludes that *El astrólogo fingido* and other Baroque comedias «exhibit their power in zodiacal plays that mirror both the above and the below, weaving celestial lights and earthly times into an intricate pattern that is in itself a mirror of life» (2011, p. 75). Mixed in throughout each literary period is the notion of carving out monologues, soliloquies, and metatheatrical situations, to have them stand on their own as individual microdramas, complete with characters, conflict, and a moment of illumination. Ultimately, this serves as the perfect metaphor for stars themselves, which often shine so brightly, and in the end, one certainly can consider dramatic texts, with their plethora of monologues, soliloquies, and metatheatrical scenes, to serve as a reflection of the infinite universe in miniature, simply through the use of microdrama.

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