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# ABSTRACT OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS

# MUSIC AS MORAL EDUCATION AND POLITICAL PROPAGANDA IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the dialogic role of music in early modern English drama and in texts about music, with a focus on its function as secondary political propaganda and moral education. The principal methodology of this dissertation is new historicism (Greenblatt; Smith, Simon, *Musical Response in the Early Modern Playhouse, 1603–1625*), with influences from a variety of methodologies, because music—like the theatre—is multivocal, like a polyphonic system, so my methodology is interdisciplinary. The principles and concepts discussed are available to the art historian, historian, and musicologist, just as they are to the feminist critic or scholar of performance studies. Another area of research on which my methodology is based is the history of emotions (Hultquist, "Early Modern Terms, Concepts and Practices of Emotions"), because both the theatre and musical performance rely on the emotions provoked in the audience (theatre audience or music listeners) during the spectacle. Music was used in the theatre for a variety of purposes: to generate meaning that would lead to moral education of the audiences through character interaction; to foster political propaganda; or, more interestingly, to subvert the overtly propagandistic messages and subtly satirize characters and situations through songs and their lyrics, and by means of references to the power of music.

This dissertation will answer a set of fundamental questions in the first part, which analyses early modern non-fictional printed texts about music: 1) How extensive and consistent was the practice of using music publications as moral education and political propaganda in late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England? 2) How did music publications function as propaganda and serve to further moral education? 3) What types of music publications functioned as propaganda, and what types of music texts served as moral education? 4) Did the contemporaries recognize the value/use of music as propaganda and moral education? The answers to these questions will provide a strong foundation on which future research can be based. Doing so will also help to establish the study of music and politics / propaganda in early modern England as a significant subfield of musicological and literary research. The second part of this dissertation analyses the production of musical meanings in dramatic representations, in plays by William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Thomas Dekker, John Marston and Thomas Middleton. The models initiated by my analyses of the uses of music (through the songs' lyrics) and musical metaphors in a corpus of plays and masques shape a cogent perspective that would enable other researchers to approach

other works in search of answers to the questions concerning the uses of music as political propaganda and moral education in the early seventeenth century.

I argue six main points in this dissertation: 1) that music publications served extensively and consistently as secondary political propaganda and were used in moral education from the beginning of intense music publication in England (ca. 1580s) and throughout the seventeenth century; 2) that in addition to being used simply as a means of conveying propagandistic messages to readers or audiences, music eventually developed political significance itself and became a valuable symbol that could be utilized propagandistically; 3) that no type of music publication was exempt from functioning as a vehicle for propaganda and moral education; 4) that contemporaries did recognize the value of music and its use in moral education; 5) that music served as propaganda for a variety of social groups, especially pamphlet writers, poets and playwrights, and Anglican clergymen; and 6) that music in the theatre transgresses social boundaries and reaffirms the value of music as social harmony. By proving these points, this dissertation also adds an entirely new dimension to our understanding of the works in question, both those that are well known (published treatises and pamphlets on music, as well as drama), those that are presently almost completely unknown (broadsides and woodcuts), and to our understanding of early modern English theatre's response to musical environment.

I propose the following definition of propaganda, drawing mainly on Stanley Cunningham's *The Idea of Propaganda*: propaganda is fundamentally dishonest and manipulative; it is, therefore, a form of pseudo-communication. Unlike rational discourse, which clearly states its goals or claims and argues logically from verifiable evidence to support them, propaganda manipulates consumers by bypassing their rational thought processes with covert/unclear arguments and/or appeals to their fears, desires, faiths, identities, or emotions generally. This process of manipulation can be intentional (what I call primary propaganda) on the part of the author, or unintentional (what I call secondary propaganda) as the result of unclear and/or irrational argumentation. In either case, once disarmed of their reason, consumers become passive resources, fields of soil in which to propagate the covert or unclearly presented ideas conveyed via propaganda, rather than equal partners in a rational discourse. Therefore, propaganda is a form of discourse, using discursive strategies such as metaphor (and other rhetorical figures, such as metonymy, synecdoche, comparison, hyperbole); evaluative attributions of negative or positive traits; allusions, evocations and implicature.

The first chapter of this doctoral dissertation discusses speculative music interpreted as a form of moral education by a number of authors in England, in the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries. From the corpus of five selected texts, the analysis focuses on the ways in which music was an essential component of the ideological culture which defined the morality of the period. Each subchapter explores the key points of intersection between music (and its role in shaping morality) and education in early modern culture, trying to answer the question "How can music be 'moral'?" The analysis of Henry Peacham's 1622 courtesy book *The Compleat Gentleman* (1.1), follows the path of music and philosophy; the argument is that music was essential in fashioning identity. However, as I argue, Peacham's theoretical praise of music—heavily influenced by philosophical and musicological treatises of his time—inserts a note of scepticism in the general appreciation of musical education; while he accepts the role of music in fashioning a young person's identity, other factors are also important: the educator, the environment and the scope of education. Peacham's main points about music can be summarized as follows: (1) music is vibration and it depends on the size of the object being sounded; (2) music depends on environment; (3) music is related to language and rhetoric; (4) music has a profound effect on the human mind, and therefore it can be related to poetry.

The subchapter related to music and moral fable (1.2) analyses the anthology of classical fables translated from Greek and Latin into English by author and churchman Thomas Blague, entitled *A Schole of Wise Conceytes* (1569), in search of answers concerning the emotional significance of music as opposed to its monetary value. The analysis is focused on the fables "Of a Gnat," "Of a Swanne" and "Of a Couetous Ambassador." All these three fables refer to the tension between pecuniary value and the value gained through emotion in the context of music. The subchapter concerning music and social class (1.3), debates the housekeeping manual in verse *A Hundreth Good Pointes of Husbandry* (1570) by Thomas Tusser, which indicates that music is suited to several purposes; it is not only the exclusive privilege of the upper classes, but it should be part of common people's education and it is present at popular festivals. I argue that Tusser demonstrates the beneficial role of music in shaping human personality across social class and gender.

The subchapter concerning music and religion (1.4) debates the relationship among drama, music and religious change during the sixteenth century in England, as shown in the anonymous treatise *The Praise of Musicke* (1586), attributed to John Case, who looks at music not only as an

art, but also as a science. I argue that Case's justification for musical education and the enjoyment of all kinds of music was an anti-Puritan innovation in the perception of music's role in shaping personality because the treatise helps looking at music from various perspectives. Case's doubleness of discourse reveals both a physical and a spiritual/psychological aspect in his assessment of the importance of music for moral education.

The subchapter concerning music and pleasure (1.5) discusses an episode from the collection of wonderful tales of monsters and natural oddities by Pierre Boaistuau, entitled *Histoires prodigieuses* (1560), translated into English by the sea-captain Edward Fenton as *Certaine secrete wonders of nature* (1569), which draws on classical legends, biblical tales and historical sources. The subchapter debates the use of music as entertainment during a banquet offered by Cleopatra in order to entice Mark Antony (as mentioned in Plutarch), in comparison with what Shakespeare makes of this scene in the tragedy *Antony and Cleopatra*. While in Boaistuau Cleopatra's rhetoric is compared to wonderful music and becomes a sign of female enticement to subdue male power, in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* this banquet scene on the barge is narrated by Enobarbus and the narrative achieves dramatic power through emotion.

The second chapter, entitled "Music as Political and Religious Propaganda in Non-Fictional Texts in Early Modern England" (2), looks at broadside ballads and pamphlets to debate whether music might have been used as a means for propaganda in the period. Both genres could be interpreted as providing occasions for secondary propaganda, publicizing music as a useful and educational activity, but only when employed for the right purposes. As I argue, emerging new ideas showing the change in understanding the role of music in human life have contributed to a transformation of musical performance from mere entertainment or religious practice to a form of mediated secondary propaganda.

The first subchapter of chapter 2, entitled "Broadside Ballad and Music Propaganda: *A gratification vnto Master Iohn Case*" (2.1) discusses the lyrics of the ballad *A gratification vnto Master Iohn Case* (1589), with music by William Byrd and lyrics by Thomas Watson. Both the broadside ballad and Case's musical treatise display a moralizing tone when it comes to the praise of music's beneficial effects. Moreover, the ballad song appeals to the readers' and listeners' emotions because of the music enclosed in the score. The covert (secondary) propagandistic message, therefore, is an added value to the popular ballad song.

The subchapter entitled "Woodcut and Anti-Music Propaganda: *The Daunce and Song of Death*" (2.2) examines the anonymous broadside woodcut entitled *The Daunce and Song of Death* (1569), which was used to popularize the ideas about the medieval dance of death, but also the anti-music appreciation concerning the role of music as entertainment and its power in detouring the soul from its spiritual track. The published English version of the woodcut refashions the late medieval allegory of the *danse macabre* as a reformist satire. I argue that this woodcut challenges the traditional medieval framework through the dynamic character of the black-and-white drawings. The way in which the traditional theme is framed in the woodcut is reformist because music and dance are seen as triggers of spiritual enfeeblement. This iconographic use of a musical theme can be interpreted as a form of anti-music secondary propaganda, made popular via intermedial dissemination.

The subchapter entitled "Anti-Music Propaganda: *The Schoole of Abuse*" (2.3) discusses the anti-music pamphlet *The Schoole of Abuse* (1579) by Stephen Gosson, in the context of the Puritan attack of the theatre. Gosson is concerned with the misleading quality of art, which has the power to appeal to the senses and imagination, so that reason is subjugated and the person is deviated from the path of virtue and morality. Yet Gosson was against the misuse of art in general, and of theatre in particular, and not necessarily against music in itself; it was just the misuse of music that was harmful to the human soul. I argue that Gosson is not necessarily against music in general, but against the temptations for the senses derived from unsuitable interpretations of music by various kinds of theatre audiences.

A similar view, yet in a different key, can be discerned in the subchapter entitled "Protestant Propaganda: *The Anatomie of Abuses*" (2.4). In his *The Anatomie of Abuses* (1595), pamphleteer Phillip Stubbes satirizes certain aspects of popular culture which he believes are immoral and in need of reform. However, as I argue, the vituperative satire is softened by the spatial allegory of placing the target of his invective in the country of "Aligna" (an anagram for Anglia), but still a faraway imaginary place. The dialogic mode of argumentation—between Philoponus and Spudeus—gives the pamphlet a theatrical quality and makes readers question the validity of the views expressed, thus diluting the anti-music propagandistic argument. The theatrical discourse destabilizes the anti-theatrical statements. In this way, there is no definite propagandistic message to this pamphlet, even if the invective seems to be directed against music and the arts.

Chapter 3 of this dissertation, entitled "Shakespeare and Musical Representation," examines the production of musical meanings in six Shakespearean plays, *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*. I discuss musical imagery, songs, symbols and music played in order to show the ways in which the period's ideas about music were represented on stage in dialogic format, through the characters' voices. I argue that music is in close dialogue with the action on stage and forms an essential part of the dramatic interaction. Shakespeare uses musical motifs and music itself (played by the theatre's skilled players) to reinforce the tenets developed during the dramatic action. Music in the theatre, therefore, is linked to the listeners' emotions and the audience's expectations. Music may function as ideological propaganda within the world of each play, but it may also provide moral education, either for the characters in the play responding to emotions or for the receptive audience viewing a particular production. Rather than functioning as merely decorative elements in a particular scene, the musical passages or musical metaphors suggest aspects of political propaganda, economic success, or interiority.

In the first subchapter of Chapter 3, entitled "Production of Musical Meanings in *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*" (3.1), I discuss the ways in which music is used dramatically in two Shakespearean Roman plays, *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, drawing on Plutarch. In the two Roman plays, centred on political action and ambivalent sets of values and spaces (East–West, Egypt versus Rome), the metaphor of the jarring harmony dramatizes the disruption of expected synchronisation and the instability of the political world. While in *Julius Caesar* music is used as a highly emotional background interrupted by disharmony and broken instruments, in *Antony and Cleopatra* the disruptions and iniquity of politics and civil war are aligned with dissonance, false music and cacophony of sounds interpreted and danced on by drunken politicians. Music, therefore, becomes a symbol of gross dissolution and political disharmony, which destabilizes the expected view of harmonious power.

The second subchapter of Chapter 3, entitled "Broken Harmony in *The Merchant of Venice*" (3.2), examines the meanings of music as fragmented harmony in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. The metaphorical allusions to the harmony of music are set in contrast with the dissonant sounds of hatred in commercial Venice. While the space of Belmont, the character of Portia, and romantic love are associated with the harmony of music, in the commercial world of Venice there is no harmony and there are no musical scenes. I argue that these two apparently

incompatible theatrical spaces of Belmont and Venice are linked through the tension between the opposing ideas of harmony / disharmony in music. The dynamic quality of Shakespearean theatre is polyphonic in the sense that, in *The Merchant of Venice*, several voices are heard, through different characters set in diverse circumstances, in two symbolic locations that typify harmony/ disharmony associated to music. Music informs, I suggest, poetical rhetoric by increasing the intensity of emotions conveyed through words.

The third subchapter of Chapter 3, entitled "Healing Music in *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*" (3.3), analyses the musical allusions, songs and symbols in Shakespeare's romances, *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*, in the context of music seen as part of a psychological healing process, which comes with time and knowledge. Music and allusions to music in these plays can function as indirect and covert theatrical propaganda, attuned to the politics of the time, but also as individual musical parts, in which music has healing power over the mind, attuned to each character's psychological status. Allusions to music in the romances are like the music of the mind, suggesting interiority. Music at the end of each play is not only a representation of final harmony, but also a sign of communal enjoyment involving audiences and the theatrical troupe.

Chapter 4 is entitled "Ben Jonson's Masques and Subversive Stage Songs" and examines the lyrics of songs in *The Masque of Blackness*, *The Masque of Beauty*, *The Masque of Queens*, and *Oberon, The Fairy Prince*, analysing the rhetorical function of songs and singing bodies on stage, as well as women's engagement with the song genre as performers of songs. I argue that the lyrics display an apparent role of political propaganda—in praise of the Jacobean rule and the royal family—but actually they are a subversive form of praising the autonomous role of the author in fashioning his art, which endures beyond royalty and political power. Music reinforces the visual and aural iconicity of theatrical representation and subverts the obvious politically propagandistic message. The use of music in the masque gives rise to equivocation rather than a strictly one-way interpretation.

The first subchapter of chapter 4, entitled "Female Power: *The Masque of Blackness*" (4.1), discusses the meta-theatrical meanings of the songs in Jonson's *The Masque of Blackness* (1605), while the allegorical geography emphasizes aural entertainment. The meta-theatricality of the masque is offset through the fact that the mythological and allegorical setting highlights the immortality of royal power, while the function of the members of royalty as merely players

disaffects the high expectations connected to monarchy. Ben Jonson dismantles the view that the masque is a stable and entertaining activity. The embedded metaphors highlight the evanescent quality of theatrical performance and the indirect moral injunction occurs through the very process of listening to charming music, which works like an incantation.

The second subchapter of chapter 4, entitled "Playful Cupids: *The Masque of Beauty*" (4.2), examines the theatrical meanings of the songs in Ben Jonson's masque. The suggestive metaphors of beauty and love are associated with femininity in the songs, represented by the ladies as players, while the blindfolded Cupids' high-note songs play jokingly on ideas of Neoplatonic love, embedded into musical childish voices. The lyrics of the lively dialogic songs suggest meta-theatricality through the idea that the persuasive power of music is just as powerful as the rhetoric of rhymed words. Music is the symbol of final harmony in the couple, in the Neoplatonic line. Rather than revealing the superficial value of courtly love, expressed through music and poetry, the lyrics of the songs in *The Masque of Beauty* integrate the values of life with the meanings of theatrical performance, in a complex world in which men and women have their rightful place in society. While, apparently, music in *The Masque of Beauty* is used as a form of political propaganda for the power at the court of James I, the submerged joking tone of the lyrics turn music into moral fable, with the sobering reminder that all earthly power and majesty end in death.

The third subchapter of chapter 4, entitled "Power of Poetic Fame: *The Masque of Queens*" (4.3), examines the Jonsonian masque performed at court in 1609, with the Queen and her ladies in the cast. The masque plays on James's interest in magic, as a mistress witch and her eleven disciples engage in magical dances and songs. This antimasque is followed by the masque proper, which consists of a presentation of twelve virtuous queens, whose presence is a pale representation of the colourful witches in the antimasque. The harsh and poisonous music accompanying the witches' songs (trumpets and cymbals) is set in opposition with the noble queens' songs, accompanied by gentle music of lute, violins and cornets. The jarring music of the witches' dance is opposed to the celestial harmony of the virtues' palace. The irony embedded in the lyrics of *The Masque of Queens*—as well as the careful scholarly notes connected with demonic magic and the ways in which music should be interpreted—suggests Jonson's subtle way of asserting his authorial power over the playscript.

The fourth subchapter of chapter 4, entitled "Satire and the Prince: *Oberon, The Fairy Prince*" (4.4), examines the Jonsonian masque published in 1611, with Prince Henry in the cast,

from the perspective of its submerged satirical tone, in total contrast with the apparently propagandistic message of praising Prince Henry, son of James I. The symbolism of the map of the British Isles, suggesting James's aspirations for union of England and Scotland, is associated with classical figures to create an idiosyncratic tableau. The celebratory songs and bouncy music have a satirical note because they are interpreted by a grotesque chorus of satyrs. Music and lyrics may be used to further political propaganda in *Oberon, The Fairy Prince*, but the dramatic context belies the triumphant tone and highlights the satirical note in the dialogic mode.

Chapter 5, entitled "Songs and Emotion in Elizabethan and Jacobean City Comedies," analyses the function of songs to elicit a variety of emotions, in accordance with the character's state of mind, as evidenced in four Jacobean city comedies by Thomas Dekker, John Marston and Thomas Middleton. As the action develops, the value of music is asserted by various characters, while songs are interpreted by marginal characters—servants, prostitutes, mad people and women. This is because lunatics and women were believed to respond to emotion more readily than men. However, men also sing in these comedies, but these men are in a highly-strung emotional state. Music is not only a form of alleviating the tense conflicting scenes in the city comedies, but songs are manifestations of human agency; they contribute to delineation of character and help to promote the overall plot. Songs and music in city comedies, therefore, trigger the social performance of emotions in the theatrical world.

The subchapter entitled "Femininity, Brothels and Music: *The Honest Whore, Parts One* and *Two*" (5.1) discusses *The Honest Whore, Part 1* (1604) by Thomas Dekker in collaboration with Thomas Middleton and *The Honest Whore, Part 2* (1605) by Thomas Dekker to show that music is an empowering form of spiritual achievement and education, even if the songs are interpreted by servants, prostitutes and lunatics. Apparently, songs are means of seduction and enticement, while moral feminine behaviour involves the acceptance of music as a form of spiritual self-improvement. Dancing in the accompaniment of music is not only a symbol of merriment (which could lead to distraction from the serious matters in life) but also a sign of final reunion in the community. There is a double-voiced empathic role of music in the two plays discussed: music is at once seduction and it has a morally redemptive effect.

The subchapter entitled "Harmony's Two Sides: *The Dutch Courtesan*" (5.2) analyses the ways in which musical harmony typifies the inner concord of the soul in John Marston's comedy, despite the fact that many characters encounter disruptions of this private synchronization. Even

if the courtesan Franceschina has musical talent and she sings accompanied by her lute, her personality is marred by jealousy and spitefulness and she cannot attain inner harmony. Her song is like that of a siren, who lures seamen to destruction, and can be interpreted as an ontological "voice" defining her courtesan profession. Yet her song of the nightingale is sad and reveals Franceschina's vulnerability. Alternatively, the chaste Beatrice in *The Dutch Courtesan* does not sing, but her voice is a kind of music embodying chastity, and her lover has a romantic serenade played under her balcony, showing the power of music to express the emotion of love.

The subchapter entitled "Chastity and Harmony: *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*" (5.3), discusses the role of music in Thomas Middleton's city comedy, where the Cheapside area of early modern London is associated with chastity and fertility. Music as a vehicle for seduction is opposed to musical education as a means of improving character, as well as to the expression of heartfelt emotion through song. Singing is a sign of a carefree life (which others call cuckoldry, as in the case of Jack Allwit) and a symbol of sexual prowess (as in the case of Touchwood Senior), as singing is seen as a temptation of having sex outside marriage. Funeral music marks the final moment of death, as the coffins of Moll Yellowhammer and Touchwood Junior are brought on stage, but this is only apparent death and the requiem music turns into merry wedding dance in the end.

Many texts of the period—such as pamphlets, broadsides, treatises about music, as well as drama—used ideas about music and actual songs and music in the plays, which functioned as a form of secondary pro-music or anti-music propaganda. The theatre uses musical metaphors and songs to generate meaning that would facilitate the reception of moral education in the audiences, but it also satirizes the exceeding exploitation of music for moralistic purposes or for seduction. Songs in the theatre are apparently used to foster political propaganda, but also to subvert the overtly propagandistic messages and subtly satirize characters and situations via the songs' lyrics and through references to the immortal power of music. Music in drama is not only represented as a morally edifying aspect of culture meant to provide decent education to characters but also as an essential factor of human agency. Characters sing in moments of deep emotion of joy or grief, or when they experience moments of psychological insecurity. Music performed in the theatre represents and targets selfhood, according to the principle *ut theatrum musica*, like music, so theatre.

There are three significant ways in which music and songs are used in plays by William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Thomas Dekker, John Marston and Thomas Middleton and all involve character agency related to emotion: (1) music and songs are used by guileful females as seduction and self-presentation, but it also has a morally redemptive capacity; (2) songs are an expression of sensitivity or insecurity during emotional moments of joy and grief; and (3) music is associated with meta-theatricality. In the first case, female characters are supposed to sing for seduction, but their songs are mostly performed in the intimacy of their parlour and they express their inner fears and vulnerability through song, but also the wish for moral improvement. Though educated in music, on the other hand, morally chaste female characters do not sing for seduction, but they sing for self-presentation and in moments of deep grief. Thirdly, since the theatre is an expression of social life, the songs embedded in the plays can be associated with meta-theatricality, drawing attention to the circumstances of performance; in these cases, songs are orchestrated as plays-within-the-play and show an awareness of the presence of the audience, whether directly or not.

Music in early modern English drama may be associated with contaminated morality, moral reform, filial compassion, social harmony, or deep-seated emotion—whether love, joy or grief—through the metaphor of the tensed heart's strings as a metonymy of extreme emotion. Whatever the case, music in the theatre is used for specific dramatic purposes. It does not function exclusively as propaganda—because the audiences cannot be manipulated into believing certain precepts through the intercession of music—and it cannot provide moral education directly, through the songs and music played during the performance. Rather, music is an indirect mediated way of transmitting subliminal messages to the audiences, in accordance to the specific dramatic purpose. Just as, in real life, performed music appeals differently to various people, in the theatre music is an essential metaphor conveying a similar meaning: the theatre is not real life, it is *like* real life; music is mediated expression of emotion and it is as close to the manifestation of individual feeling as possible.

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