

# **THE SPANISH MATCH THROUGH THE TEXTS: JONSON, MIDDLETON AND HOWELL**

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This is the story of one of the most romantic episodes, when, in March 1623, Prince Charles, accompanied by the Duke of Buckingham, made the dangerous journey across France to Madrid to meet the Infanta. Made precipitously and with the king's reluctant permission, the journey must be interpreted with attention to the English effort to restore the Palatinate to Frederick. The earl of Bristol (Digby), in Madrid as a special ambassador, had been sending reports to James of Philip's willingness to proceed with the royal marriage and to assist the English in procuring the restitution of Frederick's territories. Yet, events in Germany, where catholic troops were consolidating their conquest of the Palatinate, seemed to belie the Spanish promises. Both James and Charles, the latter influenced by his desire to marry the Infanta, wanted to believe Bristol's reports. In fact, however, Charles and Buckingham arrived in Madrid in pursuit of impossible objectives. Olivares ruled the seventeen-year-old Philip IV as well as the nation, and he brought the king to his own opinion: that there should be no change in Spanish policy and no marriage. And Buckingham played the same part.

The negotiations for the Spanish Match lasted for too many years and found too many enemies to have a happy end. This time, the efforts to settle peace and friendship between Spain and England did not get a positive result. Religious and political interests were involved in this Match. If we add the traditional enmity between the two countries we shall be able to understand the feasts and the jubilation of the English people

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when they saw their Prince again back in England and without a Spanish bride. It found expression in drama. So also did popular resentment of King James's inability to give effective aid to his son-in-law in the Palatinate. For a time Parliament and leading members of the Court were allied in distrust and resentment of Spain. This process has been studied by Loftis.<sup>1</sup> James Howell, an exceptional contemporary witness, makes a different approach in his *Epistolæ Ho-Elianæ*.

To this period of unity belongs *Neptune's Triumph for the Return of Albion*, a masque prepared by Jonson and Inigo Jones, celebrating Charles's safe return, and intending it for performance at court on Twelfth Night, 1623/24. Attention to *Neptune's Triumph* reveals that Jonson was well informed about Prince Charles's journey to Madrid. The Poet, speaking the argument in the opening scene, explains that Neptune - King James in Jonson's allegory - recently sent Albion (Charles), with Hippius and Proteus (Buckingham and Cottington) as companions on a journey of "discovery" through Celtiberia (that is, through France to Spain). Jonson refers to the Spaniard's efforts to prolong Charles's residence in Madrid and to convert him to Catholicism:

... what the arts were, used to make him stay,  
And how the *Syrens* woo'd him, by the way,  
What Monsters he encountered on the coast,  
How neare our generally Joy was to be lost,  
Is not our subject now.<sup>2</sup>

The mythological reference to sirens tempting Charles gains force when we recall that marriage to the infanta María would have been his reward for becoming a Catholic.

In February 1626 Jonson referred again to Charles's courtship of the Infanta in his *Staple of News*. It is a moral allegory about the power of money to corrupt individuals and institutions.

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<sup>1</sup> LOFTIS, J. (1987): *Renaissance Drama in England and Spain. Topical Allusion and History Plays*. Princeton University Press, Princeton. See Chapter Five: "Prince Charles's Spanish Courtship and the Palatinate." Different passages are taken from here. It has a complete bibliography on the theme of the Spanish Match.

<sup>2</sup> *Ben Jonson*, ed. Herford, P. and E. Simpson, 7: 686. In LOFTIS, p. 164.

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A character in the play is identified in the *dramatis personæ* as “Pecunia, *Infanta of the Mynes*”. She is described as “*Cornish Gentlewoman*” and hence ostensibly infanta of the tin mines of Cornwall. And she is called Aurelia Clara Pecunia, names which resemble not those of María but her aunt, Isabel Clara Eugenia, daughter of Philip II and, at the time of the play, governess of the Spanish Netherlands.

Thomas Middleton, in one play at least, was even more audacious than Ben Jonson. His *A Game at Chess* (August 1624) is the boldest political play that appeared on the London stage before 1642, and perhaps the only play of the era that caused a foreign ambassador to threaten to leave the country. It was so successful that, as we are told in the title of the Quartos, “*it was acted nine days together at the Globe on the Bankside*”. Undoubtedly the play could have continued much longer if it had not been suppressed by the authorities. “*There were more than three thousand persons there on the day that the audience was smallest*”, according to the indignant testimony of the Spanish Ambassador, who added: “*There was such merriment, hubbub and applause that even if I had been many leagues away it would not have been possible for me no to have taken notice of it.*”<sup>1</sup> And John Chamberlain wrote that the play was “*frequented by all sorts of people old and young, rich and poor, masters and servants, papists and puritans, wise men etc., churchmen and statesmen ...*”<sup>2</sup>

These quotations say of the extraordinary popular success Middleton had with this political allegory. The Spanish monarchy and especially its ambassador were held up to ridicule, the Roman Catholic Church savagely satirized and in the final scene the whole Spanish nation was consigned to hell.

This play was even more offensive than its sources. Some parts of it are drawn almost to the words from anti-Catholic and anti-Spanish pamphlets such as Thomas Scott’s *Vox Populi* (1620), Thomas Robinson’s *The Anatomie of the English Nunnerie at Lisbon* (1622), John Gee’s *The Foote Out of the Snare* (1624). Middleton took over anecdotes, allusions,

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<sup>1</sup> WILSON E. M. and O. TURNER (1949): “The Spanish Protest Against *A Game at Chess*.” *Modern Language Review*, 44: 480.

<sup>2</sup> *The Letters of John Chamberlaine* (1939), ed. N. E. McClure. Philadelphia, 1939, II, 578.

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and whole passages from these tracts and brought them to life in the speeches of the characters in his living chess game.

Harper, in his edition of *A Game at Chess*, points out at another source:

The second principal source of this play is the historical visit of the Prince of Wales to Madrid. Middleton took advantage of the great popular outburst of relief and rejoicing when the Prince returned without a Spanish Bride, and it was easy for him to represent the frustrated end of the negotiations as a “checkmate by discovery” by the White Knight (Charles) and the White Duke (Buckingham), i.e., a discovery of the perfidious design behind the Spanish negotiations, the intention of converting the future King of England to Roman Catholicism.<sup>1</sup>

In the confused state of popular feeling about Spain and Rome, two of the most notorious public figures of the day were vaguely associated with the visit to Madrid as important players in the great Catholic chess game. The focus of Middleton’s satirical attack was on the Count of Gondomar (the Black Knight), Spanish Ambassador in England until 1622 and one of Spain’s most skilled diplomatists. Gondomar’s personal peculiarities made him an easily identifiable figure. His famous fistula is cruelly mocked throughout the play and the players actually managed to acquire his well known litter and “chair of ease” and thus “they counterfeited his person to the life”. Middleton’s character-sketch is, of course, almost pure caricature, but the verve and ebullience of the Black Knight do capture what was apparently a true characteristic of the man whom the public regarded as “the mightiest Machiavel-politician”. Gondomar’s successor as ambassador in England, Don Carlos Coloma, wrote a detailed report of *A Game at Chess*, August 10, to Olivares. Coloma’s letter reveals his indignation over the play, which he saw in performance; the letter provides as well a contemporary’s account of what passed on the stage. The King’s Men continue to act a play so popular that at least 3.000 persons have attended each performance:

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<sup>1</sup> HARPER, J. W. (1966): *Thomas Middleton: A Game at Chess*. Ernest Benn Limited, London: 13.

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The subject of the play is a game of chess, with white houses and black houses, their kings and other pieces, acted by the players, and the king of the blacks has easily been taken for our lord the King, because of his youth, dress and other details. The first act, or rather game, was played by their ministers, impersonated by the white pieces, and the Jesuits, by the black ones.

Coloma mistakenly thought that a new game of chess began in each act and that, like Spanish plays, this one had only three acts:

... the Count of Gondomar ... [was] brought on the stage in his little litter almost to the life, and seated on his chair with with a hole in it (they said), confessed all the treacherous actions with which he had deceived and soothed the king of the whites, and, when he discussed the matter of confession with the Jesuits, the actor disguised as the Count took out a book in which were rated all the prices for which henceforth sins were to be forgiven. ... In these two acts and in the third ... they hardly shewed anything but the cruelty of Spain and the treachery of Spaniards. ... The last act ended with a long, obstinate struggle between all the whites and the blacks, and in it he who acted the Prince of Wales heartily beat and kicked the "Count of Gondomar" into Hell, which consisted of a great hole and hideous figures.<sup>1</sup>

Coloma's summary account of the play may be supplemented by attention to Middleton's climax: the representation of Prince Charles's and Buckingham's sojourn in Spain. Here it becomes apparent that the Black Knight's primary objective has been the entrapment of the White Knight (cf. 3.1.247-8) The former boasts to his king of what he regards as the master stroke of his embassy: his negotiations for the White Knight and the White Duke to make the journey to Madrid (4.3.137-39). He expects to achieve his objective, the re-conversion of England to Catholicism, through the conversion of the White Knight. By their "discovery" of the Black House's intentions, the White Knight and Duke win the game of chess.

And they feign very successfully, leading the Black House to attempt openly to convert the White Knight. In doing so, the Black Knight reveals their territorial ambition, the goal to be reached by their master

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<sup>1</sup> Loftis, 177.

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plan. In his temptation of the White Knight, he refers to the “universal monarchy”:

... Your ambition, sir,  
Can fetch no farther compass than the world?  
WHITE KNIGHT: That's certain, sir.  
BLACK KNIGHT: We're about that already;  
And in the large feast of our vast ambition  
We count but the White Kingdom whence you came from  
The garden for our cook to pick his salads;  
The food's lean France larded with Germany,  
Before which comes the grave chaste signiory  
Of Venice, served in capon-like in whitebroth;  
From our chief oven, Italy, the bake-meats,  
Savoy, the salt, Geneva, the chipped manchet;  
Below the salt the Netherlands are placed,  
A common dish at lower end a' the table  
For meaner pride to fall to; ... (5.3.80-93)

All this, before he describes the second course. The White Knight and Duke lead him to acknowledge the heinous crimes long attributed to Catholics by their Protestant foes. Believing that he has succeeded in converting the White Knight, the Black Knight overreaches himself:

Now y'are a brother to us; what we have done  
Has been dissemblance ever.  
WHITE KNIGHT: There you lie then  
And the game's ours - we give thee checkmate by  
Discovery, King, the noblest mate of all. (5.3.158-61)

Middleton follows Scot in the Black Knight's soliloquy about collecting naval intelligence:

BLACK KNIGHT:  
But more to inform my knowledge in the state  
And strength of the White Kingdom! No fortification,  
Haven, creek, landing-place 'bout the White coast  
But I got draught and platform, learned the depth  
Of all their channels, knowledge of all sands,

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Shelves, rocks, and rivers for invasion proper'st;  
A catalogue of all the navy royal,  
The burden of the ships, the brassy murderers,  
The number of the men, to what cape bound. (4.2.60-68)

But neither Gondomar nor anyone employed by him collected the kind of naval intelligence the Black Knight refers to. Gondomar had English informants who told him what he wanted to know.

Spanish hopes for a successful invasion turned largely on the expectation that the invaders would receive major assistance from English Catholics and Catholic sympathizers. Middleton's Black Knight has sounded the political temper of Englishmen throughout the island:

Again, for the discovery of the inlands,  
Never a shire but the state better known  
To me than to the best inhabitants,  
What power of men and horse, gentry's revenues,  
Who well affected to our side, who ill,  
Who neither well nor ill, all the neutrality. (4.2.69-74)

As an after-thought Middleton combined his satire of Gondomar with other amusing caricatures.

James Howell belongs to the group of English who lamented the breaking of the Match. He was an exceptional witness because he was in Madrid at that time, negotiating with the Spanish Court the devolution of a ship taken by the Viceroy of Sardinia. He writes about all this in his *Epistolæ Ho-E•lianæ*. I have selected the most interesting parts of it.

When he arrives, he discovers the different attitudes of the two countries and gives an exceptional account of the different interests involved in the negotiations:

The English Nation is better look'd on now in Spain than ordinary, because of the hopes there are of a Match, which the Merchants and Commonalty much desire, tho' the Nobility and Gentry be not so forward for it: So that in this point the pulse of Spain beats quite

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contrary to that of England, where the People are averse to this Match, and the Nobility with most part of the Gentry inclinable.<sup>1</sup>

Jonson's "Pecunia, Infanta of the Mines" is depicted in a different way by Howell:

She is a comely Lady, rather of a Flemish complexion than Spanish, fair-hair'd, and carrieth a most pure mixture of red and white in her face: She is full and big-lipp'd; which is held a Beauty rather than a Blemish, or any Excess, in the Austrian Family; it being a thing incident to most of that Race; she goes now upon sixteen, and is of a tallness agreeable to those years.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, Howell observes how Rome's protagonism was always obscure:

You write that there came Dispatches lately from Rome, wherein the Pope seems to endeavour to insinuate himself into a direct Treaty with England, and to negotiate immediately with our King touching the Dispensation, which he not only labours to evade, but utterly disclaims, it being by Article the task of this King to procure all Dispatches thence.<sup>3</sup>

As "*the Spaniard is a rational Man, and will be satisfy'd with Reason*,"<sup>4</sup> Howell points out, all affairs went on fairly in Spain, especially that of the Match:

... Touching the two points in the Treaty wherein the two Kings differ'd most, viz., about the education of the Children, and the exemption of the Infanta's ecclesiastic servants from secular Jurisdiction; both these Points are clear'd; for the Spaniard is come from fourteen years to ten, and for so long time the Infant Princes shall

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<sup>1</sup> JACOBS, J. (1890-2): *Epistolæ Ho-Eliaæ. The Familiar Letters of James Howell*... Published by David Nutt in the Strand, London: 154. From now on we shall refer to them as *Epistolæ*.

<sup>2</sup> *Epistolæ*, 155.

<sup>3</sup> *Epistolæ*, 161.

<sup>4</sup> *Epistolæ*, 157.



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remain under the Mother's Government. And for the other Point, the ecclesiastical Superior shall first take notice of the offence that shall be committed by any spiritual person belonging to the Infanta's family, and according to the merit thereof, either deliver him by degradation to the secular Justice, or banish him the Kingdom, according to the quality of the delict: and it is the same that is practis'd in this Kingdom, and other parts that adhere to Rome.<sup>1</sup>

Howell reports about the dangerous journey undertaken by the Prince of Wales and the reactions at the Spanish Court:

The great business of the Match was tending to a period, the Articles reflecting both upon Church and State being capitulated, and interchangeably accorded on both sides; and there wanted nothing to consummate all Things, when, to the wonderment of the World, the Prince and the Marquis of Buckingham arriv'd at this Court on Friday last, upon the close of the Evening. ... His journey was like to be spoil'd in France, for if he had staid but a little longer at Bayonne, the last Town of that Kingdom hitherwards, he had been discover'd; for Mons. Gramond, the Governor, had notice of him not long after he had taken Post... They alighted at my Lord of Bristol's House, and the Marquis (Mr. *Thomas Smith*) came first with a Portmanteau under his Arm; then (Mr. *John Smith*) the Prince was sent for, who stay'd a while on t'other side of the Street in the dark. My Lord of Bristol, in a kind of Astonishment, brought him up to his Bed-chamber, where he presently call'd for Pen and Ink, and dispatch'd a Post that night to England, to acquaint His Majesty how in less than sixteen days he was come safely to the Court of Spain.<sup>2</sup>

There are some changes with the Prince being in Spain:

We daily hope for the Pope's Breve or Dispensation to perfect the business, tho' there be dark whispers abroad that it is come already; but that upon this unexpected coming of the Prince, it was sent back to Rome, and some new Clauses thrust in for their further advantage. Till

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<sup>1</sup> *Epistolæ*, 161-2.

<sup>2</sup> *Epistolæ*, 164.

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this dispatch come, matters are at a kind of stand; yet His Highness makes account to be back in England about the latter end of May. God Almighty turn all to the best, and to what shall be most conducive to His Glory.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the Prince is attended in the Spanish way, which included comedians and the baiting of bulls, and longs for meeting the Infanta in a quiet place:

Among other Grandezas which the King of Spain conferr'd upon our Prince, one was the releasement of Prisoners, and that all Petitions of Grace should come to him for the first month; but he hath been wonderfully sparing in receiving any, especially from any English, Irish, or Scot. There is all industry used to give the Prince and his Servants all possible contentment; and some of the King's own Servants wait upon them at Table in the Palace, where, I am sorry to hear, some of them jeer at the Spanish fare, and use other slighting speeches and demeanor. There are many excellent Poems made here since the Prince's arrival, (and as an example listen to this stanza by Lope de Vega):

Carlos Estuardo Soy  
Que siendo Amor mi guia,  
Al cielo d'España voy  
Por ver mi Estrella Maria.

There are Comedians once a week come to the Palace, where, under a great Canopy, the Queen and the Infanta sit in the middle, our Prince and Don Carlos on the Queen's right hand, the King and the little Cardinal on the Infanta's left hand. I have seen the Prince have his Eyes immoveably fix'd upon the Infanta half an hour together in a thoughtful speculative posture, which sure would needs be tedious, unless affection did sweeten it: it was no handsome comparison of Olivares, that he watch'd her as a cat doth a Mouse.

Not long since the Prince, understanding that the Infanta was used to go some mornings to the Casa de Campo, a Summer-house the King hath on t'other side the River, to gather May-dew, he rose betimes and

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<sup>1</sup> *Epistolæ*, 166.

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went thither, taking your Brother with him; they were let into the House, and into the Garden, but the Infanta was in the Orchard: and there being a high partition-wall between, and the door doubly bolted, the Prince got on the top of the wall, and sprung down a great height, and so made towards her; but she spying him first of all the rest, gave a shriek, and ran back: the old Marquis that was then her Guardian came towards the Prince, and fell on his knees, conjuring His Highness to retire, in regard he hazarded his Head if he admitted any to her company; so the door was open'd, and he came out under that wall over which he had got in.

I have seen him watch a long hour together in a close Coach, in the open street, to see her as she went abroad: I cannot say that the Prince did ever talk with her privately, yet publickly often, my Lord of Bristol being Interpreter; but the King always sat hard by to overhear all.

The Spaniards generally desire it (the Match); they are much taken with our Prince, with the bravery of his journey, and his discreet comportment since; and they confess there was never Princess courted with more gallantry.

There was a great Show lately here of baiting of Bulls with Men, for the entertainment of the Prince; it is the chiefest of all Spanish Sports; commonly there are Men kill'd at it, therefore there are Priests appointed to be there ready to confess them. It hath happen'd oftentimes that a Bull hath taken up two men upon his horns with their guts dangling about them; the horsemen run with lances and swords, the foot with goads. As I am told, the Pope hath sent divers Bulls against this sport of Bulling, yet it will not be left, the Nation hath taken such an habitual delight in it.<sup>1</sup>

Rome, always Rome. More difficulties were added when Pope Gregory, a great friend to the Match, was dead and they could not proceed further till the Dispensation were ratified by the new Pope Urban:

The long-look'd-for Dispensation is come from Rome, but I hear it is clogg'd with new Clauses; and one / is that the Pope, who allegeth that the only aim of the Apostolicall see in granting this Dispensation was the advantage and ease of the Catholics in the King of Great Britain's Dominions, therefore he desired a valuable Caution for the

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<sup>1</sup> *Epistolæ*, 167-170.

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performance of those Articles which were stipulated in their favour; this hath puzzled the business, and sir Francis Cottington comes now over about it.<sup>1</sup>

As the Dispensation does not arrive, the Prince prepares for his journey back to England, while the Infanta receives her first classes of English:

I shall to it again closely when he is gone, or make a shaft or a bolt of it. The Pope's death hath retarded the proceedings of the Match, but we are so far from despairing of it, that one may have wagers 30 to 1 it will take effect still. He that deals with this Nation must have a great deal of phlegm; and if this grand business of State, the Match, suffer such protraction and puttings off, you need not wonder that private Negotiations, as mine is, should be subject to the same inconveniences.<sup>2</sup>

... Since our Prince's departure hence the Lady Infanta studieth English apace, and one Mr. Wadsworth and Father Boniface, two Englishmen, are appointed her Teachers, and have Access to her every Day.<sup>3</sup>

Howell points out the different attitudes and behaviour the English showed in Madrid:

Besides, there is some distaste taken at the Duke of Buckingham here, and I heard this King should say he would treat no more with him, but with the Ambassadors, who, he saith, have a more plenary Commission, and understand the business better. As there is some darkness happen'd 'twixt the two Favourites, so matters stand not right 'twixt the Duke and the Earl of Bristol; but God forbid that a business of so high a consequence as this, which is likely to tend so much to the universal good of Christendom, to the restitution of the Palatinate and the composing those broils in Germany, should be ranvers'd by differences 'twixt a few private Subjects, though now public Ministers.

Mr. Washington, the Prince his Page, is lately dead of a Calenture, and I was at his burial under a Fig-tree behind my Lord of Bristol's

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<sup>1</sup> *Epistolæ*, 171-2.

<sup>2</sup> *Epistolæ*, 182-3.

<sup>3</sup> *Epistolæ*, 184.

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House. A little before his death one Ballard, an English Priest, went to tamper with him; and Sir Edmund Varney meeting him coming down the stairs, out of Washington's Chamber, they fell from words to blows, but they were parted. The business was like to gather very ill blood, and to come to a great height, had not Count Gondomar quash'd it, which I believe he could not have done, unless the times had been favourable; for such is the reverence they bear to the Church here, and so holy a conceit they have of all Ecclesiastics, that the greatest Don in Spain will tremble to offer the meanest of them any outrage or affront. Count Gondomar hath also help'd to free some English that were in the Inquisition in Toledo and Seville; and I could allege many instances how ready and chearful he is to assist any Englishman whatsoever, notwithstanding the base affronts he hath often received of the *London Buys*, as he calls them. ... And I am sorry to hear how other Nations do much tax the English of their incivility to public Ministers of State, and what Ballads and Pasquils, and Fopperies and Plays, were made against Gondomar for doing his Master's business.<sup>1</sup>

... There was an ill-favour'd accident like to have happen'd lately at the King's House, in that part where my Lord of Carlisle and my Lord Denbigh were lodg'd; for my Lord Denbigh late at night taking a pipe of Tobacco in a Balcony, which hung over the King's Garden, he blew down the ashes, which falling upon some parch'd combustible matter, began to flame and spread: but Mr. Davis, my Lord of Carlisle's Barber, leap'd down a great height and quench'd it.<sup>2</sup>

And Howell suspects that there is no interest in achieving and agreement:

Yet there is one Mr. Clerk (with the lame Arm) that came hither from the Sea-side as soon as the Prince was gone; he is one of the D. of Buckingham's Creatures, yet he lies at the E. of Bristol's House, which we wonder at, considering the darkness that happen'd 'twixt the Duke and the Earl; We fear that this Clerk hath brought something that may puzzle the business. Besides, having occasion to make my Address lately to the Venetian Ambassador, who is interested in some part of that great Business for which I am here, he told me confidently it would

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<sup>1</sup> *Epistolæ*, 172-3.

<sup>2</sup> *Epistolæ*, 175.

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be no Match, nor did he think it was ever intended. But I want faith to believe him yet, for I know St. Mark is no friend to it, nor France, nor any other Prince or State besides the King of Denmark, whose Grandmother was of the House of Austria, being sister to Charles the Emperor.<sup>1</sup>

The Lord of Bristol leaves the negotiations of the Match and new obstacles appeared until an end almost everybody desired, the rupture of the negotiations. Howell reports of rumours about an agreement with France:

Touching the procedure of matters here, you shall understand, that my Lord Aston had special audience lately of the King of Spain, and afterwards presented a Memorial, wherein there was a high complaint against the miscarriage of the two Spanish Ambassadors now in England, the Marquis of Inojosa and Don Carlos Coloma; the substance of it was, That the said Ambassadors, in a private audience His majesty of Great Britain had given them, inform'd him of a pernicious Plot against his person and Royal Authority, which was, That at the beginning of your now Parliament the Duke of Buckingham, with other complices, often met and consulted in a clandestine way, how to break the Treaty both of Match and Palatinate; and in case His majesty was unwilling thereunto, he should have a Country-house or two to retire unto for his recreation and health, in regard the Prince is now of years and judgment fit to govern. His Majesty so resented this, that the next day he sent them many thanks for the care they had of him, and desir'd them to perfect the work, and now that they had detected the Treason, to discover also the Traitors; but they were shy in that point. The King sent again, desiring them to send the names of the Conspirators in a paper sealed up by one of their own Confidants, which he should receive with his own hands and no soul should see it else; advising them withal, that they should not prefer this discovery before their own honours, to be accounted false accusers: they reply'd, That they had done enough already by instancing in the Duke of Buckingham, and it might easily be guess'd who were his Confidants and Creatures. Hereupon His Majesty put those whom he had any grounds to suspect to their Oaths: And

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<sup>1</sup> *Epistolæ*, 185.

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afterwards sent my Lord Conway and Sir Francis Cottington to tell the Ambassadors that he had left no means unessay'd to discover the Conspiracy; that he had found upon Oath such a clearness of ingenuity in the Duke of Buckingham, that satisfy'd him of his innocency: Therefore he had just cause to conceive that this information of theirs proceeded rather from malice, and some political ends, than from truth; and in regard they would not produce the Authors of so dangerous a Treason, they made themselves to be justly thought the Authors of it: And therefore, tho' he might by his own Royal Justice and the Law of Nations, punish this excess and insolence of theirs, and high wrong they had done to his best Servants, yea to the Prince his Son, for thro' the sides of the Duke they wounded him, in regard it was impossible that such design should be attempted without his privity, yet he would not be his own judge herein, but would refer them to the King their Master, whom he conceiv'd to be so just, that he doubted not but he would see him satisfy'd; and therefore he would send an Express to him thereabouts, to demand Justice and Reparation.

This business is now in agitation, but we know not what will become of it. We are all here in a sad disconsolate condition, and the Merchants shake their heads up and down out of an apprehension of some fearful War to follow.<sup>1</sup>

... You have had knowledge (Sir Kenelme Digby) (none better) of the progression and growings of the Spanish Match from time to time; I must acquaint you now with the Rupture and utter Dissolution of it, which was not long a doing: for it was done in one Audience that my Lord of Bristol had lately at Court, whence it may be inferr'd, that 'tis far more easy to pull down that rear up; for the Structure which was so many years a rearing was dash'd, as it were, in a trice: Dissolution goeth a faster pace than Composition. And it may be said, that the civil actions of men, 'specially great affairs of Monarchs (as this was) have much analogy, in degrees of progression, with the natural production of man.<sup>2</sup>

... There is a buzz here of a Match 'twixt England and France; I pray God send it a speedier Formation and Animation than this had, and that it may not prove an abortive.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Epistolæ*, 190-1.

<sup>2</sup> *Epistolæ*, 191-2.

<sup>3</sup> *Epistolæ*, 193.

*The Spanish Match through the Texts*

Buckingham in London. Howell accuses both Buckingham and the Spaniards of being responsible for the breaking of the Match:

I am now casting about for another Fortune, and some hopes I have of employment about the D. of Buckingham. He sways more than ever; for whereas he was before a Favourite to the King, he is now a Favourite to Parliament, People, and City, for breaking the Match with Spain. Touching his own Interest, he had reason to do it, for the Spaniards love him not: But whether the public Interest of the State will suffer in it or no, I dare not determine; for my part, I hold the Spanish Match to be better than their Powder, and their Wares better than their Wars; and I shall be ever of that mind, That no Country is able to do England less hurt, and more good than Spain, considering the large Trafic and Treasure that is to be got thereby.<sup>1</sup>

... Among other Nations, the Spaniards is observ'd to have much phlegm, and to be most dilatory in his proceedings, yet they who have pried narrowly into the sequel and success of his actions, do find that this gravity, reservedness, and tergiversation of his have turn'd rather to his prejudice than advantage, take one time with another. The two last matrimonial Treaties we had with him continu'd long; the first, 'twixt Ferdinand and Henry VII. for Catherine of Arragon seven years; that 'twixt King James and the now Philip IV. for Mary of Austria lasted eleven years, (and seven and eleven's eighteen); the first took effect for Pr. Arthur, the late miscarry'd for Pr. Charles, and the Spaniard may than himself and his own slow pace for it; for had he mended his pace to perfect the work, I believe his Monarchy had not receiv'd so many ill-favoured shocks since...<sup>2</sup>

I would like to finish my essay with a quotation taken from Loftis:

Prejudice and fear combined to distort Englishmen's perceptions of Spain; pride, ambition, intolerance, and prejudice distorted Spaniards' perceptions of England. Other forces as well conditioned the history portrayed in Spanish and English drama.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Epistolæ*, 213.

<sup>2</sup> *Epistolæ*, 407.

<sup>3</sup> Loftis, 221.



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As we have seen, other Englishmen lamented the rupture of the negotiations. But they did not have the same influence upon the popular feeling as drama did.

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