

The Spanish Gipsy Under Spanish Eyes

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I

The *Spanish Gipsy* was performed at Whitehall, Charles Prince of Wales being the only member of the royal family present, on 5th November 1623. The Cockpit company (Lady Elizabeth's) performed it.¹ Throughout, the Cockpit theatre referred to is the Drury Lane Cockpit.

The Cockpit company was run by one of the most successful and ruthless company managers, Christopher Beeston. As an impresario, Beeston was notorious for breaking and reforming his company of actors. Another aspect of his ruthlessness was his control of play texts. In 1637, the Lord Chamberlain forbade the printing of a list of plays held by Beeston without Beeston's permission, a sort of copyright arrangement.² Christopher Beeston died in 1638, at which his son William, in some sort of uneasy financial partnership with Beeston's widow, took over as property-owner and theatre manager until falling foul of the Master of the Revels, Sir Henry Herbert in 1640, and being imprisoned. He apparently recovered his position in 1641.³ William Beeston's company, Beeston's Boys, performed *The Spanish Gipsy* in 1639. An edict of the Lord Chamberlain, 10th August 1639, confirmed ownership of a list of plays to Beeston, amongst which was *The Spanish Gipsy*.⁴ The play therefore remained under known Beeston family control for almost two decades. Since the play was judged valuable, it must have been popular.

Parliament closed the theatres in 1642. Perhaps the most astute publisher of that time, Humphrey Moseley, entered and advertised *The Spanish Gipsy* in 1653, and acquired the copyright as transferred from one Richard Marriott on June 11th 1659 (Stationers' Register).⁵ Two quarto editions of the play were published in 1653 and 1661. Authorship was attributed to Thomas Middleton and William Rowley.⁶

In common with numerous plays in the Beaumont and Fletcher canon (for example, *The Chances*, *Love's Pilgrimage*, *Rule A Wife And Have A Wife*) *The Spanish Gipsy* dramatises Cervantes' fiction, in this instance two exemplary novels. These plays enjoyed repeated court performances and revivals.⁷ The King's Men held ownership of the Beaumont and Fletcher canon. Since both companies, Beeston's and the King's Men, were rivals for Court performances, we may fairly infer that they commissioned plays with an eye on Court taste. James Shirley, dramatist to Beeston's company, drew upon Spanish source material for perhaps half his plays; the Beaumont and Fletcher canon is conservatively judged to be one third Spanish resourced.⁸ Arguably Spanish source material was a key element in meeting Court taste for dramatic entertainment, and Cervantes' fiction an important part of it. It is therefore logical to enquire why Cervantes' fiction and especially his exemplary novels, were so attractive to acting companies seeking prestige and income from entertaining the Stuart Court before the Civil War; and to an enterprising publisher like Humphrey Moseley, once the Interregnum had destroyed the copyright control imposed by the Lord Chamberlain. In modern slang, dramatised Cervantes was 'hot property'.

Peter Dunn has recently argued that Cervantes' fiction commonly manipulates a romance paradigm characterised by such elements as journey, quest, ordeals and return; in this fictional world, a central figure has a mission or purpose in life, chance equals providence, trials are endured, rewards attained, an original order is restored, and the ending effects a fresh social integration. Shipwrecks, captivity, multiple coincidences, sudden reversals of fortune, can all be explained away by reference to God's inscrutable design. Dunn drily comments that such a romance paradigm may have reflected

an aristocratic caste's fantasies about itself and its world⁹;

but he adds, I think justly, that Cervantes employed this romance structural paradigm with sophistication as a normative fiction and metaphor for order.

It seems entirely plausible that English dramatists turned to Cervantes' shorter prose fiction for plots in order to satisfy 'an aristocratic caste's fantasies about itself and its world'. However, as *The Spanish Gipsy* demonstrates, Cervantes took risks with the paradigm which his English dramatists did not.

A second possible reason for quarrying Cervantes' prose is that many of his stories highlight caste and honour and imaginatively confirm the ideology of home produced conduct books, whereby honour was a closed system of reciprocal obligations between a gentleman and his kinsmen, society was patriarchal, a patriarch's first responsibility was to protect the collective family good name, only gentlemen had honourable obligations, and the ultimate source of all honour was the King, who was the fount of honour:

were there no princes, there would be none to confer honour.

In the Civil War, the importance of honour drove many gentry to support the King in despite of sympathy with Parliament and Puritanism.¹⁰ Charles I revived the Order of the Garter and Spenser's *Fairie Queen* was amongst his favourite reading.

II

The Spanish Gipsy has a double plot and strictly neither is subsidiary to the other. It is therefore a composite stage adaptation of two Cervantes' exemplary novels, *The Force of Blood* [*La Fuerza de la Sangre*], a title obviously ambiguous in both languages; and *The Little Gipsy Girl* [*La Gitanilla*].¹¹ Both stories deal with the force of blood that is to say, the sex drive and its containment amongst aristocrats; there is a common basic fictional paradigm. A first young aristocrat commits a rape, the incident which opens the play, before marrying the raped woman; a second, abandons his aristocratic home to become a gipsy in order to marry the young gipsy girl with whom he has fallen in love. Both young women are in fact revealed to be of the same aristocratic caste; and marriage re-establishes social harmony. Both plots revolve around the same ideological postulates: female chastity, endogamous class marriage practices, and honour; and around multiple coincidences and sudden reversals of fortune that create narrative and situational variety but confirm the active and supportive intervention of an overarching Christian Providence. Such material does indeed point to entertainment intended for a caste fantasising about itself.

The stage adaptation involves fundamental changes and reworkings. The different locations of the ori-

ginal stories, Toledo, Madrid, Murcia, are reduced to one, Madrid itself; and it is the *corregidor* or chief magistrate of Madrid, the senior royal representative, who effects the dual harmonious resolution. Madrid is

the enchanted circle of Spain
Act II scene i 25-26;

and the King of Spain, the fount of honour and chivalry whose

beams of grace
Act III scene ii 30-31,

shine on all.

The rapist is renamed Roderigo, a change suggesting that the original audience knew the Spanish ballad of the last King of the Visigoths, whose act of rape precipitated the Moorish invasion and his downfall. Cervantes' cruel and insensitive youth who goes on an Italian tour, becomes a rapist filled with guilt and remorse, who sets out to find his unknown victim, disguising himself first as an Italian, then joining the troupe of gypsies. The rape victim does not fall pregnant and give birth to a son, at seven years old injured in a horse race, but is herself injured by a horse and for medical treatment, brought to the very same room where she had been raped. On recognising the bedroom and garden, she confesses all to her rapist's father, producing as conclusive evidence the family crucifix taken from the rapist's bedroom. The rapist's father is none other than the *corregidor* of Madrid. He kneels in penance, dishonoured and through the device of a play within a play, performed by the troupe of gypsies, exposes his son. In Cervantes, the rape victim confesses to her rapist's *mother* who in due course, masterminds her son's recall from Italy and the marriage.

The gypsies, as the play text pointedly and perhaps repetitiously observes, are Spanish not English, hence the title *The Spanish Gipsy*:

our stile has higher steps to climb over, Spanish gypsies, noble gypsies.
Act II scene i 9-11.

These gypsies are not low-life rogues, thieves or street entertainers but entertainers of the nobility:

Be not English gypsies, in whose company a man's not sure of the ears of his head, they so pilfer.

Act II scene i 38-39.

These gypsies may accept gifts but may not steal. Certainly in Cervantes' original story, the young nobleman-turned-gypsy does all in his power to prevent theft and return stolen goods; but this troupe of gypsies are all disguised aristocrats and their retainers, their socially responsible leader having taken up the life to escape punishment for killing another nobleman in a duel. As in Cervantes, the little gypsy girl is indeed the *corregidor's* daughter; but in the play, the mother of the gypsies is in fact his sister, the father of the gypsies, his brother-in-law. The gypsies of the play are not then the low life figures of convention in England or Cervantes' gypsies amongst whom social distinction does not exist, all property is held in common and, notwithstanding chaste monogamy, women enjoy remarkable independence; but aristo-

crats and their retainers in carnival guise, as the song, dances, palm reading and play acting all serve to emphasise. Cervantes' young nobleman-turned-gypsy reverts to caste in defence of his honour and kills a soldier, thus precipitating the story's dénouement; in the play, there is a less grave wounding followed by rapid reconciliation. Cervantes' original gypsy girl has been stolen as a baby; the *corregidor*'s wife actively intervenes on her behalf only to discover that she is her own daughter, a written document, some trinkets and two joined toes constituting verification of the old gypsy woman's testimony. The girl had then lived an aristocrat at real risk of losing caste amongst gypsies and had displayed vigorous independence. In the play, the *corregidor* is a widower—there is no wife to intervene—and since the mother and father of the gypsies are revealed as none other than his own sister and brother-in-law, to whom he had formally committed his lost daughter, the girl had never been at serious risk of losing caste. In the play, yet again, her birth is verified by a family crucifix.

There are three subsidiary aspects of the play, of some importance, which are completely absent in the Cervantes short stories. First the character of a foolish ward, under guardianship of the rape victim's parents; he and his servant join the gypsies and appear a dramatic device to enlarge a sense of aristocratic carnival. Second, a young man who had been a suitor to the rape victim must reconcile himself to losing her; but rather awkwardly for the plot, in parallel he has successfully petitioned the King of Spain for the recall from banishment of his father's murderer. This last is none other than the father of the gypsies. There is then a scene in which the audience witnesses an act of forgiveness over revenge in pursuit of honour, and the renunciation of a duel. Third, the wounded man and the jealous young woman who provoked the fight, express public regret and reconciliation and marry. The play, then, contains three betrothals.

Both of Cervantes' mothers, crucial to reconciliation and the restitution of harmony, are suppressed in the dramatic version, and instead a single male governor controls his rapist son and agrees to the marriage of his daughter now restored from her gypsy life. Those remarkable moments in Cervantes when for example his gypsy girl makes a vigorous declaration of sexual equality and independence and lays down strict conditions for her aristocratic suitor, or the rapist's mother's severe attack upon her son's conduct, incidents that cloud the romance world by intimating other moral grounds for human behaviour than the merely chivalrous, are simply cut out. Indeed the play's gypsy girl is treated with cloying condescension: 'a pretty little toy' (Act III scene ii, 80), 'a pretty child' (Act V, scene iii, 17). The dramatisation suppresses the human richness of Spanish originals in favour of patriarchy and absolutism. The topic of duelling is treated strictly in conformity with King James's proclamation of 1613 and the formal legal position.

Men subject to th' extremity of law
Should carry peace about 'em to their graves.
Act V scene i 132-133.

The double use of the crucifix to identify caste and register associated values of chastity and honour, hints in the direction of providence and the doctrine of divine right; the *corregidor* is, after all, the King in all but name and like James himself, he is a widower. Whereas Cervantes, against the background of racism peculiar to Spain at that time, treats blood as the carrier of both social status and racial purity, the dramatisation against the English background of great social change and new money, betrays anxiety at

'disparagement' alone, that is marrying downward in the social class structure: the *corregidor* of Madrid, not yet recognising his own daughter and believing her still to be a gipsy, puts down her plea to marry an aristocrat with the words

Yes, where the parties
Pledg'd are not too unequal in degree,
As he and thou art.

Act V scene iii 9-11.

The play's presentation of female sexuality conforms closely to Lisa Jardine's account in *Still Harping On Daughters*:

It is the male characters who perceive free choice on the part
of the female character as an inevitable sign of irrational lust, and
as the inevitable prelude to disorder and disaster....

the absence of sexuality early became ... the ultimate icon of female virtue¹²:

Ask her that's mine accuser: could your eyes
Pierce through the secrets of her foul desires,
You might without a partial judgment look into
A woman's lust and malice.

Act V scene i 141-144;

I crave your pardons;
He whose I am speaks for me.

Act V scene iii 76-77.

Male sexuality is treated more tolerantly:

Best men are molded out of faults -

the rapist is socially recuperated when able to marry his victim.¹³

III

Prince Charles and the Earl of Buckingham, wearing false beards and carrying pistols, set off for Spain on 17th February 1623 to court the Spanish Infanta María, arrived in Madrid 7th March and returned to London on 6th October 1623. According to one contemporary, Charles 'understood Greek, Latin, French, Spanish and Italian, which three last he spoke perfectly'¹⁴; hence presumably, Charles' confidence in going to Madrid to court the Infanta in person; and the episode in Madrid when Charles reportedly scaled a garden wall to speak with the princess suggests life become chivalrous art.¹⁵

The Spanish Gipsy was acted at Whitehall on 5th November 1623, a month after Charles' return. Three nights before, on 2nd November 1623, the court had seen a performance of Fletcher's *Rule A Wife*

And Have A Wife, which also dramatises a double Spanish source, one of which is a Cervantes exemplary novel and, as the title indicates, deals comically with marital power relations.

The text of *The Spanish Gipsy* as transmitted appears dovetailed for a particular audience. The subject matter is hispanophile, Act II Scene i, in which the gipsies first appear, being especially significant in this respect:

English and Spanish Court élites are effectively assimilated, cultural difference between English and Spanish gipsies is resolved in favour of the latter, English gipsies are rogues, Spanish gypsies are aristocrats; the vocabulary of the text itself is hispanized even quoting low life slang in Cervantes –cacoquismo, germanía, pickaroes– expressions that must have assumed some understanding in the audience; there is the overworked Jacobean stage joke that

We Spaniards are no great feeders (line 51);

Spain's financial generosity is celebrated (in fact the country was bankrupt and Buckingham had been very annoyed at the poor level of hospitality in Madrid¹⁶); there is a suggestion that Spanish members of the audience will

throw down gold in musses (line 101)

for good female impersonation by a boy actor:

Thou art my noble girl: a many dons
Will not believe but that thou art a boy
In woman's clothes.

(lines 97-100);

this again may be a reference to Spaniards in the audience. As Charles would have noted at his weekly plays in Madrid, the Spanish theatre had actresses; and *The Spanish Gipsy* ends with a dance and the couplet:

On, brides and bridegrooms! to your Spanish feasts
Invite with bent knees all these noble guests.

Indeed, many passages invite metatheatrical interpretation:

A time may come when we, besides these pastimes,
May from the grandoes and the dons of Spain
Have leave to try our skill even on the stage
And then your wits may help us.

Act III scene i 105-108;

and

T'is great pity,

Besides your songs, dances, and other pastimes,
 You do not, as our Spanish actors do,
 Make trial of a stage.

Act III scene ii 224-226;

Isn't an ass? give it to a lawyer, for in Spain
 They ride upon none else.

Act IV scene i 24-25;

there appears to be an express reference to King James' jester Archie Armstrong, who accompanied Charles and Buckingham to Madrid and caused much bad feeling amongst some members of the English delegation for his outspokenness:

The jester that so late arriv'd at court,
 And there was welcome for his country's sake,

Act III scene ii 250-251;

since the Castilian language is praised for its elegance (Act II scene ii 140) and the Spanish King identified as the fount of all honour (Act III scene ii 26-32), it is plausible that members of the Spanish diplomatic mission in England were part of the audience; the text appears shaped by calculated sycophantic gestures in their direction. Such an accumulation of hispanophile stage courtesies and knowing witticisms suggests a sensitivity to Anglo-Spanish negotiations.

In fact, as Carlton, a recent biographer of Charles I points out, the Spanish match had already slipped out of reach and eight weeks later, January 1st 1624, Charles saw a play by Fletcher, put on by the King's Men, called *The Wandering Lover*. Carlton comments:

[Charles] had decided to leave his old love and go looking for a new one.¹⁷

IV

Bullen accepted the 1653 quarto attribution to Middleton and Rowley; and *The Spanish Gypsy* comes immediately after *The Changeling* in Volume 6 of Bullen's edition of Middleton's works.

Since the 1920s there has been growing doubt about this ascription of authorship; nowadays, scholars no longer accept it. A standard work on the problems of authorship in the Middleton canon by reference to internal evidence is the doctoral study of David Lake who employs statistical analyses. He also makes two interesting points for this discussion:

the copy used by the printer in 1653 was not a prompt book but probably an authorial fair draft lightly annotated for theatrical use, or a scribal copy of such a draft;

the attribution to Middleton and Rowley could have been a deliberate fraud, the publisher Richard Marriott (for Humphrey Moseley) trying to profit by the recent publication of *The Changeling*; Lake concludes:

on available evidence, it is best to attribute *The Spanish Gypsy* to Ford and Dekker.¹⁸

As already noted, *The Spanish Gipsy* remained in the ownership of the Beeston family for certainly almost two decades and that ownership was fiercely defended. After Parliament closed the theatres in 1642, sheer poverty must have broken ownership and released plays for publication. The Cockpit was used as a school in 1646; and the military stopped a performance there in January 1649, the same month as Charles I's trial and execution. Subsequently Christopher Beeston's widow and son disputed the rights to the theatre and with each other and failed to secure the tenancy at the Restoration.¹⁹

In the 1639 edict confirming ownership of an inventory of plays on William Beeston, we find the following ordering:

*“The Changeling: A Fair Quarrel: The Spanish Gipsy”*²⁰

Since the first two plays were of known authorship, Middleton and Rowley, an unasccribed fair draft in a common bundle could have resulted in innocent assimilation, especially as *The Fair Quarrel* had first been published in 1617. Further, the text itself of *The Spanish Gipsy* strongly hints that the same group of actors had originally performed *The Changeling* (Act II scene i, 104-112) and Henry Herbert's Office-book confirms that *The Changeling* had been played by the same company at Whitehall ten months before on Sunday January 4th 1623, 'the prince only being there'; there is also a common italianate name for a comic character, Lollio (see *The Changeling Dramatis Personae* and *The Spanish Gipsy* Act IV scene iii, 15). Indeed, the plays were so linked that as Bullen noted, in old editions the setting of *The Spanish Gipsy* was assimilated to that of *The Changeling*, namely Alicante. As editor Bullen corrected this.²¹

Middleton is an unlikely candidate for authorship for several reasons: plays associated with his name show an interest in strong female protagonists, an opportunity which the author of *The Spanish Gipsy* clearly ducked in his adaptation from Spanish sources; and above all else, we have his autograph copy of *A Game At Chess*, the first long run of the English stage, a transparent hispanophobic political allegory, ridiculing the Spanish monarchy and the former Spanish ambassador in London, Gondomar, savagely attacking the Roman Church and in its final scene, consigning the whole Spanish nation to hell. The play directly attacked the abortive Spanish marriage. The play's run was cut short by James on the appeal of the Spanish ambassador. *A Game At Chess* was first staged on Friday 6th August 1624, just nine months after *The Spanish Gipsy*. Common authorship defies belief.

But is Dekker's candidacy even for the comic scenes of *The Spanish Gipsy* any stronger? Like Middleton, with whom he had a long collaborative association, Dekker in those works attached to his name, had a history of anti-Spanish, indeed virulently hispanophobic writing (e.g. *Sir Thomas Wyatt* and *News from Hell*). One of his plays called *Match Me In London* was licenced by Buc without fee on 21st August 1623 as 'an olde Playe' at the height of hysteria against the Spanish marriage; its setting in Seville and Cordoba belies its title, and it crudely matches City tradespeople against a corrupt hispanophile court. Dekker is an equally unlikely candidate.

It is truly astonishing that the candidacy of Thomas Heywood has not received serious attention. Heywood and Christopher Beeston were longstanding friends and residents of Clerkenwell.²² Beeston, like other actors, had written a verse commendation to Heywood's *An Apology for Actors* (1612). There was a professional association between these two men for some three decades. Two traditional 'facts' of Heywood's life, that he wrote nothing for the stage 1614-1624 and that he retired from acting in 1619²³ are highly dubious; in the 1633 preface to *The English Traveller* he claims to have had 'either an entire

hand, or at least a maine finger' in two hundred and twenty plays; and Clark, still the most authoritative account of Heywood's life, repeats the tradition of Heywood's retirement, contradicts Fleay's supposition that Heywood was acting at the Cockpit in 1623-24, then contradicts himself by admitting that in the 1630's Heywood was perhaps still an actor of minor parts. Indeed Clark dates both *The Captives* and *The English Traveller* to the early 1620's partly by reference to a change in style which he attributes to imitation of Fletcher.²⁴ In the absence of evidence to the contrary, it would be safer to assume Heywood's ongoing involvement with the theatre, if only to earn his daily bread. He continued to write for money until shortly before his death. Heywood was middleclass, royalist, Anglican, conventional, humane, a chivalrous feminist and timid, as his career and writings confirm; such characteristics make him an ideal candidate for authorship of *The Spanish Gipsy*.

In common with the Prologue to *A Challenge For Beauty* and *An Apology for Actors*, *The Spanish Gipsy* exhibits some knowledge of theatrical conditions elsewhere in Europe and other theatrical traditions:

So, so; a merry tragedy! there is a way
Which the Italians and Frenchman use,
That is, on a word given, or some slight plot,
The actors will extempore fashion out
Scenes neat and witty.

Act IV scene ii 37-40;

the different Spanish tradition of women actresses has already been mentioned; the double plot accords with several other plays by Heywood (e.g. *The Captives*); did the dramatist himself take the part of Sancho, the foolish gentleman and ward to Don Pedro? Apparently he did, for Sancho's servant Soto tells the audience

That's our poet, he stands for a cipher.

Act IV scene ii, 31;

the reference to the poet (dramatist) as a cipher, fits perfectly with To The Reader, Heywood's prefatory remarks to *The English Traveller* (? acted 1627, published 1633):

True it is, that my Playes are not exposed unto the world in Volumes, to beare the title of *WORKES* (as others) one reason is, That many of them by shifting and change of Companies, have been negligently lost, Others of them are still retained in the hands of some Actors, who think it against their peculiar profit to have them come in Print, and a third, That it never was any great ambition in me, to bee in this kind volumniously (sic) read.

This indeed is the statement of a poet cipher. Heywood could have been playing a part like Sancho in *The Spanish Gipsy* in 1623. Neither is it a surprise that *The Spanish Gipsy* should have come into the printer's hands in 1653, twelve years after Heywood's death, with unattributed authorship; other such plays also performed at the Cockpit in the mid 1620's appear to be by his hand; Bullen discovered *The Captives* (licensed 3rd September 1624) in 1885 without title or author's name²⁵; and Clark argues convincingly that *Dick of Devonshire* (? licensed 18th July 1626) is similarly by Heywood, though again it has no authorial attribution.²⁶ The pro-Spanish posture of this last play connects with *The Spanish Gipsy* too:

many of our Kings and noblest Princes
 Have fecht their best and royallest wives from *Spainye*,
 The very last of all binding both Kingdomes
 Within one golden ring of love and peace...²⁷

Heywood (if he is the author) here writes of the marriage of Philip II and Mary Tudor in terms that neither Dekker nor Middleton would have used; the quarrel arising from 'a cast of hawks', not in Cervantes but in *The Spanish Gipsy* (Act II scene ii) strikingly resembles a similar event in Heywood's *A Woman Killed With Kindness* (Act II scene iii); in respect of marriage as an institution, women's physical frailties and Spanish abstemiousness in eating, there are striking parallels between *The English Traveller* and *The Spanish Gipsy*²⁸; the scenes of agnorisis in *The Spanish Gipsy* and *The Captives* are surely by the same dramatist²⁹; there are spellings apparently peculiar to Heywood: "grandoes" for "grandees" and debosh'd or debosh't for "debauched"³⁰; there is surely an echo of *The Fair Maid of the West* in the line:

send him to Muly-Crag-a-whee in Barbary
 Act IV scene i 22-23;

and there are the striking similarities in expression and sentiment between *The Spanish Gipsy* and *An Apology for Actors*: plays are the entertainment of Princes, actors should be gentlemen of quality; drama is presented as a European wide phenomenon and theatre as an index of cultural sophistication; Spanish practice is singled out; royalty is revered. Above all, there is one word which would seem confirmatory: Madrill, Heywood's preferred form of Madrid. Bullen's footnote describes it as an old form of Madrid. The Arabic etymology renders this description impossible. The form appears peculiar to Heywood. It occurs seven times in the play. The Prince Charles could not have failed to notice.³¹

V

In 1659, after the death of Oliver Cromwell and with a prospect of the restoration of some London theatrical life, perhaps the most successful publisher of the period, Humphrey Moseley, acquired full ownership of *The Spanish Gipsy*. The quarto was republished in 1661. He had similarly acquired ownership of a canon of plays attributed to Beaumont and Fletcher and published them in 1647. Fletcher had been a particular favourite of Charles I and his plays, a theatrical staple of the 1630's. During the interregnum Moseley met the market for play reading and amateur theatricals at home. Moseley knew his market and Dryden confirms that he got it right; in 1668 the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher still dominated the London stage.³² Moseley died in 1660 and his widow passed away, comfortably off in Tunbridge Wells in 1673(!).

The Restoration gave the ideological paradigm and values of *The Spanish Gipsy* a new lease of life, albeit against the background of a dissolute pleasure-seeking court very different from that of Charles I. Aphra Behn's *The Rover*, subtitled *The Banished Cavaliers* (1677), is a key text in identifying how this paradigm ran on. It is obviously derivative and harks back to pre-Civil War drama, and especially the Beaumont and Fletcher canon and a play like *The Spanish Gipsy*.

Whatever claims may be made for the novelty of a woman writing to earn her bread, no claims can be made for originality in *The Rover*, as Behn's contemporaries pointed out. It is based upon an unacted play by Thomas Killigrew, written during the Commonwealth and set in Madrid. Behn transfers the setting to Naples, also at that time ruled by Spain. The three central marriageable females (that is, possessing caste, virginity and wealth) dress as gypsies to go out on the streets of Naples at carnival time to transact with males. The atmosphere of *The Rover* is explicitly hispanophile and Catholic; the vocabulary includes Saint Iago, vows, Rome, saints, confession, abbesses, nuns, nunnery, rosary, Capuchins, inquisition, confession, Toledo sword, donships, viceroys, galleys, the Prado, patacoon [silver dollar], shame-room [runaway slave] and picaroon. English and Spanish aristocratic castes are assimilated. Key patriarchal values are encapsulated in Belvile's declaration

Nay, touch her not. She's mine by conquest, sir,
I won her by my sword.

Act IV scene ii³³.

In the best Beaumont and Fletcher style, a young woman is a 'toy' or a 'child', terms also used in *The Spanish Gypsy*.

The refugee cavalier Willmore who describes himself as impoverished, continues the tradition of the 'copper captain', a penniless military adventurer on the look out for an heiress.³⁴ He is, however, an eligible gentleman who picks up one of the masquerading women, 'a gypsy worth two hundred thousand crowns' and in the rest of the play variously refers to her as 'the gipsy', 'a dear gipsy', 'a little gipsy', 'an errant gipsy', and in his final negotiation with Hellena, expresses willingness to turn gipsy in order to sleep with her.³⁵

Behn's sympathies are further emphasised through the comic character Blunt, an Essex squire who has followed the refugees to Naples. According to Belvile

[Blunt was] educated in a nursery, with a maid to tend him till fifteen, and lies with his grandmother till he's of age: one that knows no pleasure beyond riding to the next fair, or going up to London with his right worshipful father in Parliament-time; wearing gay clothes, or making honourable love to his lady mother's laundry-maid, gets drunk at a hunting-match, and ten to one then gives some proof of his prowess - A pox upon him, he's our banker, and has all our cash about him, and if he fail, we are all broke.³⁶

This is an overt attack upon the mercantile city party of the Whigs; Blunt is dull, sexually immature, cowardly, a 'tame' man and his family, newcomers to political power. His character echoes Cacafofo [Shitfire] in *Rule A Wife And Have A Wife* and anticipates Bob Acres in *The Rivals*.

Blunt gives the play a comic climax; in his efforts to become a real swashbuckling cavalier and join in the Neopolitan escapades, he is contemptuously unsuccessful with females selected by higher caste males and dresses as a costume Spaniard. He cannot be the real thing, gentry. Blunt's dressing up recalls earlier sumptuary legislation whereby breaching a dress code was a

symbol of the threat to order which was perceived ... in the entire shift from feudal to mercantile society.³⁷

Blunt serves as a focus for caste neurosis, the fear of disparagement, when real power and wealth are

slipping away.

Both Charles II and James II loved *The Rover*, saw revivals and at James' request, Behn wrote a sequel. Charles II was the last British monarch to wed an Iberian princess; and James, the last to wed a Catholic queen. After 1688, the taste for Beaumont and Fletcher's plays declined; and when performed, they were heavily edited. The same occurred with *The Rover*. *The Spanish Gipsy's* theatrical history effectively ended. Names reminiscent of caste hegemony like Lovelace and Rochester appear demonised in a literature for a predominantly middle class female readership.

NOTES

¹ Bullen, A.H., *the Works of Thomas Middleton*. New York, 1964, [originally published 1904] (Volume VI). See notes on page 115.

² Gurr Andrew, *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642*. Cambridge University Press, 1985, pages 60-62.

³ Bentley, Gerald Eades, *The Jacobean And Caroline Stage*. Oxford, Volume VI 1968, Theatres, pages 68-77.

⁴ Bentley, G.E., *op.cit.* Volume I Dramatic Companies and Players 1941, pages 330-335.

⁵ Reed, J.C., "Humphrey Moseley, publisher", *Proceedings and Papers of the Oxford Bibliographical Society* (1927-30), Oxford Volume II, Part II, pages 57-142. See page 122.

⁶ Bullen, A.H., *op.cit.*, page 115.

⁷ Steele, Mary Susan, *Plays and Masques at Court During the Reigns of Elizabeth James and Charles*, Cornell, copyright Yale, 1926.

⁸ Forsythe, R.S. *The Relations of Shirley's Plays To The Elizabethan Drama*. Columbia, 1914, reissued, Benjamin Blom, 1965, page 10; and Wilson, E.M., "Did John Fletcher Read Spanish?" in *Philosophical Quarterly* XXVII, II, April 1948, pages 187-190, final paragraph.

⁹ Dunn, Peter N., "Shaping Experience: Narrative Strategies in Cervantes" in *Modern Language Notes*, March 1994, Volume 109 no. 2, pages 186-203. The quotation is on page 191.

¹⁰ Marson, J.G., "Gentry, Honour and Royalism in Early Stuart England", *The Journal of British Studies*, November 1973, Volume XIII No. 2, pages 21-43. The quotation comes from a footnote, page 35.

¹¹ Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel de, *Novelas Ejemplares*, vols. I and II, Sieber H. (ed), *Ediciones Cátedra*, Madrid, 1992. There is an excellent translation of *La Gitanilla* in Jones C.A., *Cervantes' Exemplary Stories*. Penguin Classics, reprinted 1984. Both stories are also available in: Ife, B.W. (ed) *The Exemplary Novels*, Hispanic Classics, Aris and Phillips, Warminster, 1992, Volumes I and II.

¹² Jardine, Lisa, *Still Harping On Daughters*. Harvester 1983, pages 72 and 77.

¹³ Clark, Sandra *The Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead 1994. See Note 22, Chapter 4, page 178.

¹⁴ Sir Thomas Herbert's words in *Threnodia Carolina*, quoted in Pickell, M.B., *Charles I as Patron of Poetry and Drama*, Müller, London, 1936, page 18.

¹⁵ Howell, James, *The Familiar Letters*, Jacobs, Joseph (ed), London 1892, Book I, Section 3, XV, XVIII, XIX. It is clear from Howell's account that Charles' fluency in Spanish is assumed. The incident referred to is in Letter XVIII.

- ¹⁶ *Calendar of State Papers Domestic Series*. London 1858, Volume CLIII, page 103, October 23rd 1623; and Grice Hutchinson M., *Early Economic Thought In Spain*, London, 1978, Chapter 4.
- ¹⁷ Carlton, Charles, *Charles I, The Personal Monarch*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1983, page 50.
- ¹⁸ Lake, David J. *The Canon of Thomas Middleton's Plays*, Cambridge University Press, 1975, page 230. Andrew Gurr accepts this ascription, *op.cit.*, page 219.
- ¹⁹ Bentley, G.E., *op.cit.*, Volume VI, pages 75-77.
- ²⁰ Bentley, G.E., *op.cit.*, Volume I, page 331.
- ²¹ Bullen, A.H., *op.cit.*, page 116.
- ²² Clark, Arthur Melville *Thomas Heywood*. Oxford 1931, pages 58-60.
- ²³ See Baines, Barbara J. *Thomas Heywood*, Twayne Publishers, Boston 1984, Chronology and pages 2-3.
- ²⁴ Clark A.M., *op.cit.*, pages 88, 91-103, 105, 119-120 and 279-280. Clark does not appear to have fully integrated his evidence and opinions.
- ²⁵ Brown, Arthur (ed) *The Captives*, Malone Reprint 1971, vii.
- ²⁶ Clark, A.M., *op.cit.*, Appendix II.
- ²⁷ Clark, A.M., *op.cit.*, page 284.
- ²⁸ Compare *The Spanish Gipsy* Act V scene iii 90ff and *The English Traveller* in *the Dramatic Works of Thomas Heywood*, New York, 1964 page 9; *The Spanish Gipsy* Act III scene ii 293 and *The English Traveller*, *op.cit.*, page 93 and *The Spanish Gipsy* Act II scene i 51 and *The English Traveller*, *op.cit.*, page 12.
- ²⁹ Compare the final scene of *The Spanish Gipsy* and pages 88-89 of the Malone Reprint of *The Captives*.
- ³⁰ Bullen, A.H. (ed), *op.cit.*, Act II scene i 28 and footnote; and Act IV scene ii 66 and *The Captives* in *op.cit.*, page 10, 246.
- ³¹ Heywood, Thomas *An Apology for Actors*;; London 1612 in The Shakespeare Society reprint, London 1841, pages 11, 40, 43-44, 54, 55 and 60. Madrill is on page 60; it also occurs in *The Spanish Gipsy*, Act I scene i 40 and 58, Act II scene i 53, Act III scene i 20, Act III scene ii 81, Act III scene iii 11 and Act IV scene iii, 169.
- ³² Dryden, John, *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* in Grant, Douglas (ed) *John Dryden*, The Penguin Poets, Penguin Books, 1955, page 199.
- ³³ Behn, Aphra, Todd, Janet (ed), *Oroonoko, the Rover And Other Works*, Penguin Classics, 1992. The quotation is from page 211.
- ³⁴ See *Rule A Wife And Have A Wife*, dramatis personae and *The Spanish Gipsy* Act II scene i 240.
- ³⁵ Behn, A., *op.cit.*, Act V scene i, page 242.
- ³⁶ Behn, A., *op.cit.*, Act I scene ii, pages 172-173.
- ³⁷ Jardine, L. *op.cit.*, Chapter 5. The quotation is on page 162.