

# A CAROLINE VIEW OF SPANIARDS AND PORTUGUESE ON THE STAGE: THE DRAMATIC REPRESENTATION OF IBERIA IN JAMES SHIRLEY (1596-1666)

Luciano García García  
Universidad de Jaén

## ABSTRACT

This essay endeavours to analyse James Shirley's depiction of Spanish types in his dramatic works with a view to concentrating on the construction of national identities. Considering first the historical conditioning factors that made possible the Shirleian view, it surveys six of this dramatist's plays with Iberian settings and types according to the way they have been regulated by genre conventions. Then it briefly examines some of the types appearing in other plays by Shirley. Having done this, one perceives that the Shirleian view prefigures the generally attentive though somehow condescending image which was soon to be the norm during the following centuries.

KEY WORDS: James Shirley, national identities, Anglo-Spanish relationships, 17th century, Elizabethan, drama.

## RESUMEN

Este artículo aborda la representación de los tipos españoles en las obras dramáticas de James Shirley dentro del campo de la construcción de las identidades nacionales. Teniendo en cuenta en primer lugar los factores históricos condicionantes que hicieron posible la visión shirleiana, pasa revista a las seis obras dramáticas con localización y tipos ibéricos según su regulación por géneros. Después revisa brevemente algunos de los tipos españoles que aparecen en otras obras dramáticas del autor. El artículo revela que la visión shirleiana prefigura la imagen interesada y atenta, aunque algo condescendiente que iba a ser la norma durante los siglos siguientes.

PALABRAS CLAVES: James Shirley, identidad nacional, relaciones angloespañolas, drama, isabelino, siglo XVII.

From a communicative perspective, national identity may be defined as a discursive process in which different lines of force crisscross and aim at creating collective imaginaries<sup>1</sup> which simultaneously include and exclude. This process, given the dialogical nature of discourse<sup>2</sup> itself, is typically a social practice which is never completely monolithic and in which different agents, both individual and collective, struggle for hegemony both within people's individual consciousness



and within broad layers of groups of people and people's actions in societies, either in material or ideological terms. However, it seems clear that, as in the case with deconstructive hierarchies, there is no way out of this process of building individual and national hegemonic identities<sup>3</sup> through an inclusive and exclusive process, though, of course, this process may be resisted and relativized in both directions.

In seventeenth-century England (and Spain) there was no alternative either. Both nations, trapped in their social and historical circumstances and in the conditions of their respective dominant discourses, were engaged in a process of constructing identities of their own driven by the thrust of absolutist states. Furthermore, as mentioned above, they had no alternative but to do so both through inclusive and exclusive discursive practices. In this way the imaginary of the national identity was constructed against the other, and we can say that this imaginary owes a lot in both countries to the discursive practice of inclusion (we are who we are) and exclusion (we are what they are not). Yet, sometimes the discursive practice in relation to the other may become inclusive by either acquiring a better understanding of the other, which prevents counter-definition (we are what they are not) or by assimilating some of their values. As part of the exclusive practices, it was therefore unavoidable to construct images of the other which, in the event of historical upheavals, could fit into a national imaginary and reinforce each country's own national sense of identity. Both countries constructed images of the other to reinforce their respective national identities. Consequently one can see not only the deprecatory imaginary of the English portraying the Spaniards as religiously fanatical, proud, cruel and scheming, but also the view of the Spaniards depicting the English as piratical, heretical, and hypocritical,<sup>4</sup> with the implied assumption that the respective discourse community, either the English or the Spaniards, is free from the imputation thrown upon the other, not being therefore, as the case might be, fanatical, proud, cruel, scheming, piratical, heretical, or hypocritical.<sup>5</sup> However, as already mentioned, as discourse itself is by its very nature dialogic, there is a margin for inclusive or positive views of the excluded other, i.e., the other is seen somewhat as "the us." This is so much so since the Spaniards and the English, on

---

<sup>1</sup> The imagined character of nationalism has been aptly pointed out by Anderson (5-7). For the discursive aspect, though mainly applied to the closely connected phenomenon of ethnic identity and racism, I have profited from the theory of Critical Discourse Analysis as expounded by van Dijk and Fairclough, though I do not share their explicit political bias.

<sup>2</sup> See Bakhtin's notion of the dialogic nature of discourse in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*.

<sup>3</sup> Recent books by King or Huntington, and all the political debate and events surrounding nationalism, especially after the 1989 demise of Communism in Eastern Europe and the rising issue of immigration, should make us aware that the subject of nationalism is and will be a life-long issue.

<sup>4</sup> See Cruickshank, for instance, for the imaginary of both on each other, and Herrero García (454-86) for the views of the Spanish on the English.

<sup>5</sup> Note how both "nations" accused each other of the same vice (scheming and being hypocritical), though under different pretexts.

account of their common European and Christian stock and their belonging to the white race and Christendom,<sup>6</sup> might sometimes be presented as the “other us,” that is, not the irreducible alien, the perpetual enemy,<sup>7</sup> the absolute other. Not to mention the fact that on English soil (but not reciprocally on the Spanish one) there was a somewhat influential minority of so-called hispanophiles that could assuage the negative dominant prototype of the Spaniard.<sup>8</sup> And to this one must add the fact that Spain enjoyed a certain prestige as a leading European power in the first half of the seventeenth century. One can state that not only in the case of Spain but also possibly in the treatment of other minorities and foreign groups, there are interstices for potential interpretation of inclusive or positive views, in much the same way as the dichotomy conformity vs. subversion proposed in the domain of Cultural Materialism and New Historicism.

In seventeenth-century England, drama was no doubt one of the social discursive forms which greatly assisted the creation of ideology and the circulation of stereotypes and prejudices as far as national identity is concerned.<sup>9</sup> Attesting to this fact we have numerous examples of theatrical activity often dealing with both

---

<sup>6</sup> There is much evidence of a professed proto-racism in Spanish (and European) letters, which we cannot discuss here. Suffice to note the general preference for the white-faced blonde type of woman in the Petrarchan tradition, the glorifying in a vague Gothic ancestry of the general Spaniard (“*hacerse de los godos*” was a set phrase of the time for one to pass himself off as a descendant of the ancient Goths), the pride taken by both aristocracy and plain people in being “*castellanos viejos*,” with no mixed blood of Moors or Jews, and the general high esteem for Basques and natives of the Cantabrian region on the same account. The English themselves were praised for their fair physical appearance (contrasted sometimes with their alleged inner ugliness) by Spaniards (Herrero García 466-86), the topic of English fairness going back to Pope Gregory the Great and his famous *dictum*: “*non Angli, sed angeli*,” “Not Angles, but angels!” However, the issue is not a simplistic one, since in its proto-form the phenomenon was not wholly articulated, but distorted and alleviated by Christianity, there have always been literary exceptions in favour of the black-haired, black-eyed lady, the (white)-Moor and even the exceptional black hero, and the Spaniards, as seen from the English side and from their own point of view, were aware of being “tawny” or “swarthy.” In this respect the commentary by James Howell (*Epistolae Ho-Eliaanae. Familiar Letters*, Book I, ix, 109) about the general preference of the Spaniards for Don Carlos before his royal brother, King Philip IV, for being the former “black-hair’d and of a Spanish hue” rather than of a “Flemish” complexion is rather telling. Howell finishes his commentary thus, “for one shall hear the *Spaniard* sigh and lament, saying, O when shall we have a King again of our own Colour!”

<sup>7</sup> See Marienstrass (105-17).

<sup>8</sup> References to the hispanophile minority in England have not been the subject of any extensive study as far as I know. A great deal of information can be found in history books (Gardiner), in general books about Anglo-Spanish literary relations of the time (Underhill, Ungerer, 1956 and 1965), literary or political biographies (Russell, Huxley, Burner, Barbour), and books dealing with the topic of the English Catholics (Havran, Gillow). What is without a doubt is that this minority exerted a great influence in the Stuart Court.

<sup>9</sup> Another literary or at least written discursive form was pamphleteering which displayed a more clearly hispanophobic attitude than drama, and Shirleian drama in particular. See Onega Jáen, Bellany, Raymond, and Demetriou Demetriou.



national and international politics, and vice versa.<sup>10</sup> In this respect, James Shirley (1596-1666), a Caroline dramatist, is significant because he best exemplifies a change of perception in relation to the English imaginary of the Spaniards, which, without being blatantly positive, redirected the views of Spanish characters towards a feeling of harmless humour and even complaisance.

This was possible in part because the European political atmosphere had already changed during the Jacobean and the Caroline period with some notable ups-and-downs. Broadly speaking, after the peace signed with Spain by James I, the socio-political background to Caroline drama (1625-1642) may be seen as suffering three fluctuations of fortune, going from the enthusiastic attempt to accomplish the so-called Spanish match (till 1624) to a sudden reversal of attitude with the Anglo-Spanish war of 1625-1630, and finally, a peaceful period of coexistence due to mutual exhaustion and concern for other more urgent matters. All of this work against a backdrop of popular anti-Hispanism which found most of its supporters within the English Parliament and, in general, among the merchants of the city, the puritan preachers and the middle-classes of London. At any rate, relations between the English and the Spaniards during the Caroline reign were much less dramatic than during the previous Elizabethan period, once the danger of real invasion epitomized by the Armada had definitively faded away, and a certain interplay of alliances had been essayed. To this one must add a perception, not wholly ungrounded on the part of the English people, that Spain was a power kept in check by its many enemies.<sup>11</sup>

This being so, and also taking into account that James Shirley, the playwright under discussion, partook of a proven relationship with the hispanophile<sup>12</sup> circles of the court and has been the author most extensively related to Spain in his dramatic practice,<sup>13</sup> it is not surprising that his representations of Iberian characters and things mainly Spanish were in general either neutral (though slightly humor-

---

<sup>10</sup> Of the complex interrelation of drama and politics in the representation of the Spanish character, we can mention such contemporary controversies arisen due to the representation of plays such as *A Game at Chess*, by Thomas Middleton in 1624, but no doubt other politically loaded plays such as *Sir Thomas Wyatt* (Dekker and Webster), *Believe as You List* (Massinger), or *Lust's Dominion* (Dekker, see López-Peláez Casellas) were highly influential in constructing a negative image of the Spaniards. See also Heinemann and Limon for *A Game at Chess*.

<sup>11</sup> See the words of the anonymous author of the pamphlet *Considerations* (c. 1617) in Demetriou Demetriou (79 and 254-55); James Howell, though in general hispanophile, sometimes voices the sense of decline and exhaustion felt inside and outside of Spain during the period of Phillip III and Phillip IV.

<sup>12</sup> See Burner and Bas among many other specialists on Shirley, who, however, focus more on his Catholicism.

<sup>13</sup> In 29 of the usual 38 play Shirleyan corpus, there are socio-textual allusions to Iberian kingdoms. On the other hand, most of the accepted bibliography about Shirley agrees on his Catholicism, though with varying degrees of certainty. See, for instance, Nason (31-34, 158-162), Baugh, Radtke, Armstrong (xiv-xvii), Morillo, Taylor, Riemer (3-35), Bas (27-36, 497-509), Lawless, Lucow (13-37), Wolf, Burner.

ous), or positive. But something that must be noted immediately in this respect is that his positive view is never uncompromising or direct, but rather oblique, depending mainly on conventional and genre mechanisms of dramatic representation.

Another thing that needs clarification is that the term that best defines the image projected by Shirley of the Peninsular types is Iberian rather than Spanish. And this is so, not so much because of the fact that Portugal was also represented,<sup>14</sup> but rather because in many instances there was little awareness of the contemporary state which at the time was denominated Spain. Thus, of the five Shirleian plays with an Iberian setting (*The Maid's Revenge*, 1626; *The Doubtful Heir*, 1640; *The Court Secret*, 1642; *The Brothers*, 1626? or 1641; and *The Cardinal*, 1641) only two of their backdrops come close to the physical space which might loosely have been termed Spain (*The Brothers* and *The Court Secret*). The other three plays either take place in Portugal as a separate state (*The Maid's Revenge*) or are anachronistic representations of kingdoms, either real or imagined, of pre-modern Spain in much the same way as the Iberia of Beaumont and Fletcher's *A King and No King*.<sup>15</sup> Characteristically, the *The Doubtful Heir*, a palatine tragicomedy, is set in the kingdom of Murcia against a background of political and romantic rivalry with the neighbouring countries of Valencia and Aragon; and the tragic action of *The Cardinal* unfolds in the kingdom of Navarre which is confederated and at war with Aragon. Even the Spain represented in *The Court Secret* is set against a political network of matrimonial alliances between princes of the independent states of Spain and Portugal, just when this country had begun a revolt to regain its independence.

Of the five plays mentioned above, two fall clearly within the scope of the palatine tragicomedy (*The Doubtful Heir* and *The Court Secret*). The treatment accorded to the Spanish characters, and to the characters of any other nationality for that matter, is in line with the conventions of the palatine worldview. They are constructed as representative of a class and its ideals not as nationals of a country. Thus, from the point of view of national identity, they are neutral. They are characters of high birth, undifferentiated and undistinguishable from other characters of high birth in tragicomedies which take place in Italy, France or Denmark. This is so much so, that they could be easily interchangeable for the characters of any of the other palatine Shirleian (or non-Shirleian) tragicomedies such as *The Young Admiral* (Sicilian and Napolitan setting),<sup>16</sup> *The Coronation* (Greek, Epire), *The Imposture*,

---

<sup>14</sup> We must not forget that Portugal was part of the Spanish State during most of Shirley's life and career.

<sup>15</sup> However, on account of characters' names and the other country mentioned in this play (Armenia), it is more likely that the Iberia referred to here is the one usually termed as the Caucasian Iberia, more or less coinciding with eastern and southern parts of modern Georgia. The audience was probably little aware of this, for the main purpose of these names was to suggest remoteness and exoticism proper to palatine tragicomedies and tragedies. The term "Iberia" clearly suggested these two features.

<sup>16</sup> *The Young Admiral*, however, is based on a Spanish palatine tragicomedy by Lope de Vega, *Don Lope de Cardona* as was first revealed by Stiefel. Shirley changed the Spanish setting (the



(Italian, Mantua), and *The Politician* (Danish). Of course, the main purpose of this type of tragicomedy is not to illustrate national characteristics, but to publicize the values of the European aristocracy of the time: an idealized worldview, exalted language and lofty speeches (in the serious subplot), political struggle for power, conflict between duty and love, defence of one's honour, knightly punctilio, noble generosity and lenient punishment of the wicked characters, etc.<sup>17</sup> The function of the Spanish names and alleged Spanish nature of the characters is to add a touch of remoteness and exoticism which is part of the stock and trade of this kind of tragicomedy. The characters, in accordance with the ideological tenets of this kind of genre, are noble and lofty to the extreme both in actions and words, and are possessed with a knightly sense of honour which, though very fitting for Spanish characters, is a common idealized and unreal feature of European decadent aristocracy in this dramatic genre.

However, an important side effect of this generic constraint for the construction of the image of Spaniards on the English stage was that, as far as the highborn characters were concerned, irrespective of whether they bore Spanish names or not, they were presented as equal to the national English aristocracy. This was something feasible because the European nobility was traditionally used to intermarriages and to international alliances, and, of course, doubts as to their belonging to the white race and to the political space then called Christendom was completely out of question. In this respect, as pointed out in footnote 16, the diffuse proto-racism permeating Spanish society of the time took for granted that the nobility was not at all mongrel and descended from pure stock, preferably Gothic, Castilian or Basque; farmers or "labradores" took even more pride in being descendants of old Castilians ("castellanos viejos"). Apparently, the European society of the time thought so as well, at least in respect to Spanish aristocracy. An interesting touchstone to decide whether this racial-religious sense of sharing is really a feature of the European palatine tragicomedy would be to test whether there are examples of Muslim, African, American or Oriental settings in this genre. The answer is *no*, as far as I know, though shortly afterwards (Dryden, Aphra Behn, Montesquieu...) the fashion for Orientalism was to rage.

Even though *The Court Secret* has been classified in this essay as belonging to the palatine genre, one must acknowledge that this play is not as neutral as *The Doubtful Heir*, since it contains a good deal of Iberian characterization far beyond the Spanish names. Characters such as Antonio, Maria, Clara, Manuel, Piracquo, Roderigo, Carlo, Mendoza, etc. sometimes escape the dull neutrality of the tragicomic genre to appear as somewhat conforming to Spanish commonplaces which were beginning to come into fashion at the time: the passionate and decorous Spanish

---

action takes place in Valencia and involves the kingdoms of Aragon and Sicily), though he kept most of the names of the Spanish characters.

<sup>17</sup> See García García, "Towards."

lady represented both by the Infanta María and by Clara, the politic gravity of the Spanish nobleman Mendoza, who, though honest, shows a sombre undertone when it comes to keeping the court secret (he thinks of poisoning his own innocent servant to avoid the revelation of a state secret), and the adventurous nobleman-pirate Piracquo who conforms to the idealized Spanish nobleman-turned-bandit or *desperado* by a personal *vendetta*. Significantly enough, *The Court Secret* is, indeed, the play which displays the largest catalogue of Spanish socio-textual items only second to *The Brothers*, including a very characteristic:

The king shall knight thee too of Calatrava.  
How will it joy my heart to write to thee,  
Al senor illustrisimo don Pedro! (II, ii, p. 455)

In this play there is a curious anachronistic episode in which Carlo, Prince of Spain, appears disguised as a moor to conceal his identity in order to prompt his subject Manuel, who otherwise would be reluctant, to fight him in duel. It is difficult to fit this bizarre and isolated appearance of a moor on stage into the palatine Madrid of Habsburg Spain. But surely this is one of the earliest and few instances where the Moorish inheritance of Spain is mentioned by a foreign writer. This play can be summed up by saying that, though a courtly or palatine tragicomedy, *The Court Secret* is remarkable because it displays an atmosphere and characterization which is Spanish enough to make it distinguishable from the usual neutral remoteness and exoticism of the typical Fletcherian tragicomedy.

Shirley sometimes displays Spanish names in several of his comedies (notably in *The Lady of Pleasure*: Celestina, Isabella, Mariana and Bellamaria). However, there are no clear-cut Spanish characters in these types of plays, with the exception of *The Brothers*. In this play we are presented with a well-documented Spanish setting and Spanish characters in abundance. The play falls very nicely within one of the genres in which Shirley remains original and by which he has been edited in modern times<sup>18</sup>: his pre-comedy of manners as a dramatic genre in between the Jonsonian comedy of humours and the ensuing comedy of manners of The Restoration.<sup>19</sup> *The Brothers* has been variously defined as “a comedy of manners” (Nason 292) or “primarily a comedy of London life and manners, thinly disguised with Spanish names and setting” with “almost a romantic treatment of the fortune of the lovers in the major plot,” and a “poetic quality of many passages in its most important scenes” (Nason 339); a “romantic comedy” (Forsythe: xiii, Index); and a “realistic comedy” (Bas 876, Index). The main plot involves the wise manoeuvring of Don Ramyres, father to Fernando and Francisco, to ensure the right choice of his

---

<sup>18</sup> Of his three “commercial” or more easily available plays (*The Cardinal*, *Hyde Park* and *The Lady of Pleasure*), the last two are pre-comedy of manners.

<sup>19</sup> See Chapter XII, “Shirley et la comédie de la Restauration” (Bas 433-481) for a useful account and re-evaluation of the subject of Shirley and the comedy of manners. See also Roeloffs.

two sons in matrimony. Apparently, he is driven by ambition to marry his elder son Fernando to the rich heiress Jacinta, on account of which he disinherits Fernando on discovering that he is secretly courting Jacinta's poor cousin Felisarda. He then bequeaths his wealth to his second son Francisco, who happens to be in love with Jacinta. The ambitious Don Carlos, Jacinta's father, casts out Felisarda from his household, where she had been taken in, and, in view of Fernando's disinheritance, plans to marry his daughter to the rich libertine Don Pedro. Don Ramyres dies very opportunely so that his younger son Francisco may receive the inheritance and obtain the approval of Don Carlos, who, after a series of incidents allows the marriage of his daughter to the newly moneyed Don Francisco. Once the wedding has taken place, Don Ramyres appears from his concealment in a convent and approves the second wedding of Fernando to Felisarda. Indeed, through this stratagem of feigning his death Don Ramyres has secured the marriage of his second son Francisco to the rich heiress Jacinta. At the same time he has put Fernando's piety and his beloved's virtue to the test, has restored his eldest son's inheritance, and has made sure that love and the free choice of lovers triumphs over the ambition and base calculation of fathers (Don Carlos).

The summary of the main plot (there are two other subplots besides, one of these being comic) and the style of language used suffice to appreciate the enlightened and reforming spirit with which Shirley addresses two increasingly important issues of the time, manners and marriage. In this respect one dares say that the backdrop of *The Brothers*, just like many other plays by Shirley, is as far progressive as a growing urban and middle-class London society might demand in the existing forms of pre-comedy of manners. This play presents a Spanish atmosphere which is much more progressive than the contemporary, much less enlightened and less middle-class influenced society of Madrid, politically still in the hard grip of the Ancient Regime. An important consequence of the projection of the Spanish imaginary on the English mind is that, as a consequence of this view, this comedy displays a view of the contemporary life of Madrid under a Caroline light, bringing closer the characterization of the Spanish society to the English mind. This is so much so that, when read by an average Spanish reader such as myself, *The Brothers* produces a special "optic" or anachronistic effect. One has the impression of witnessing a futuristic Madrid, as far as characters, conversation, manners and themes are concerned, which was to come into existence in the discourse of Spanish literature more than one hundred and fifty years later in such eighteenth century Spanish playwrights as Moratín, Jovellanos, or Trigueros. Be that as it may, what is important once again is that Shirley is able to deploy a discursive strategy which is inclusive rather than exclusive.

On the other hand, it is in *The Brothers*, that we find the most accomplished example of Spanish characterization and location with surprisingly precise details such as the mentioning of Spanish habits and particular places in Madrid, notably the Church of San Sebastián. Nonetheless, it is a comedy, and many of the allusions to Spanish characters, always referred to in the comic subplot, are of course comical and old topics abound. Thus, in the prologue and the epilogue, we find two of several Shirleian allusions to the many real or supposed Spanish plots and to





the Armada, which show the comic but rather relaxed mood in which the English now perceived their old and harmless enemy. I quote both the prologue and the epilogue:

PROLOGUE.

[...]...Nay, then, Have at you, master Poet: —Gentlemen  
Though he pretend fair, I dissemble not,  
You're all betrayed here to a Spanish plot;  
But do not you seem fearful; as you were  
Shooting the bridge, let no man shift or stir,  
I'll fetch you off, and two hours hence you may,  
(If not before) laugh at the plot and play.

EPILOGUE

*Spoken by Don Pedro*

So, so; your danger's over, and the state  
Secure, as when our fleet, in eighty-eight,  
Was fir'd and scatter'd: to confirm it true,  
Here is don Pedro, taken prisoner too;...<sup>20</sup>

It is in revenge tragedy, however, where Shirley gives the most unfavourable account of Spanish (and Portuguese) characters, although it must be said that always in compliance with the rules of this genre that started with a strong stereotype of Spain in *The Spanish Tragedy*. Thus *The Cardinal* is a typical example of the bloody and double or even treble revenges in a foreign land, usually of the Mediterranean, i.e., Italy (cf. *The Traitor*) or Spain. There is a slight local colour in the story with the involvement of two federate countries (Navarre and Aragon) and also in such characters as Don Columbo, characterized as the haughty Spanish soldier with an excessive sense of his own honour bordering sheer jealousy, but also noble and honest; the Cardinal, his uncle, who is as Jesuitical as he is an Italian Machiavellian, and Rosaura, the prototype of a passionate Spanish lady found earlier in the Beatrice of Middleton's *The Changeling*. All in all, this is a revenge play with a Spanish veneer but through which the old conventions attributed to the stereotyped Italian characters can be discerned. Two negative vices commonly attributed to Spaniards, are also to be found, such as their extreme arrogance, as exemplified by Don Columbo, and such as the scheming, shrewd nature of the Spanish prelate and ruler, exemplified by the Cardinal, the king's favourite. Columbo is bestowed with some good qualities (he is straightforward, and extremely brave and dies honourably in a duel), whereas the Cardinal is a complete villain. This fact exemplifies the Machiavellian schemer typical of the revenge tragedy mixed with politics, and which

---

<sup>20</sup> When the title of the citation is not singled out in the Section "Works Cited," it is to be understood that the quotations are taken from the Gifford and Dyce edition of Shirley's dramatic works.

not even Shirley could escape. The theme of revenge is twisted here to incredible extremes, and for a character that, despite being a Cardinal, contrives the poisoning of Rosaura even at the moment of death, the Cardinal must be considered an arch-villain. There is also an offended noble soldier, Hernado, who as part of the redress of the affront inflicted on him by Don Columbo kills the latter in a duel and, out of love for Rosaura, takes on himself the task of exacting revenge on the Cardinal. Several other themes related to the palatine genre appear here: a punctilious sense of honour, courtly intrigue, and the vindication of the noble soldier against the politician. As mentioned previously, one can state that the Spanish view offered here is conditioned by the expectations of the genre and in view of this some of the characters must be drawn very radically. Even so, with the exception of the Cardinal, there is no completely negative character. Most of them show a veneer of Spanish values.

The characters in *The Maid's Revenge*, one of Shirley's earliest plays (1625-26), could be vaguely termed Iberian. It was quite difficult even for Shirley to set up clear distinctions between Spaniards and Portuguese and the only true Iberian characterization appears once again out of the previous rivalry between relatives and the resolute will for revenge of the two sisters, Catalina and Berinthia and the so-called mild and amiable (Portuguese?) characters of Antonio and his sister Castabella. In any case, the action takes place in Portugal, and all the characters might be identified as Portuguese. This is the plot as summarized by Nason (174-176):

deals with two noble families of Portugal: the one consisting of the old lord Gaspar de Vilarezo, his two daughters, Catalina and Berinthia, and his son Sebastiano; the other, of Antonio and his sister, Castabella. Antonio loves Berinthia; but, finding that her father insists that Berinthia shall receive no suitors till her older sister is married, he pretends to pay court to Catalina. The latter falls in love with him and then discovers his duplicity. She locks up Berinthia, and arranges to have her carried off by Antonio's rival and then poisoned. Antonio, warned by his servant, arrives first upon the scene and bears off Berinthia to his own castle, where his sister Castabella receives her in all honor. Sebastiano, who is at once Berinthia's brother and Antonio's dearest friend, comes to demand satisfaction, accepts their explanation, and remains to woo Antonio's sister, Castabella.

Catalina, however, insists upon revenge. At her instigation, old Vilarezo orders Sebastiano, on pain of a father's curse, to kill Antonio; and here we have the tragic situation: two young men, close friends, each about to marry the other's sister, compelled to fight to the death over a matter in which they, personally, are in absolute accord. Despite the imploring protests of Berinthia and Castabella, their brothers and lovers fight. Both seconds are slain, and then Antonio.

The final act deals with Berinthia's revenge upon her brother and sister, whom she holds jointly responsible for the death of her lover. She poisons the latter, stabs the former, and then stabs herself. Meanwhile Castabella, sister of the dead Antonio, has come, disguised as a page, to offer her services to her mourning lover. Scarcely has she arrived ere Sebastiano falls by Berinthia's hand: Castabella is left with the aged Vilarezo to mourn the dead.

As can be seen, there is little that can be termed Portuguese or Spanish. The plot and the localization were imposed on Shirley by his textual source, "The Tri-



umphs of God's Revenge Against the Crying and Execrable Sin of Murder" by John Reynolds (1621). Some details, which shall be dealt with below when discussing characters, seem to point to a Portuguese characterization, but the tragic drive of this revenge tragedy provoked by Catalina's hurt feelings and the revengeful nature of both sisters, belong rather to the general design of the revenge play.<sup>21</sup> There are, however, two allusions to "Spanish figs." The first occurrence refers to "the contemptuous gesture of biting the thumb or of enclosing it between other fingers" (Carter 62), or Spanish "higa" from "hacer la higa":

*Ant.* You are the noble count *de monte Nigro*.<sup>22</sup>

*Count.* I care not a Spanish fig what you count me... (I, ii, 33-34, p. 14)

The second, to the famous poison that together with the "Italian sallad" were two of the most notorious banes used to dispatch an annoying enemy.

*Sharkino.* A rat, hive him his bane, would you destroy a City, I have *probatinus* of *Italian* Sallestes, and our owne Country figs shall doe it rarely... (III, ii, 18-20, p. 19)

Indeed, in *The Court Secret*<sup>23</sup> there is a sombre allusion to this poison, including the Italian salad, as we have already seen above when dealing with Mendoza in this play. But, in spite of these cultural references, which seem clearly demanded by the plot, there is no particular reference to the treacherous characters of either Portuguese or Spaniards.

As far as the characters are concerned Shirley made use of about seventy names which clearly are or might be Spanish,<sup>24</sup> though this needs some clarification. As happens with the geographical setting, some of the names share both a Spanish and a certain classical and fashionable resonance all used in the whole of Western Europe (Cassandra, Rosinda, Berinthia, Leonora, Cleona, Clariana) especially for such common genres as the tragicomedy or the pastoral. Besides, some names such as Antonio or Alberto may equally be Italian, Portuguese, or Spanish. And to this one must add the fact that Shirley sometimes characterizes clearly Spanish types with Italian or Portuguese names (Columbo, a clear Spanish type in *The Cardinal*, "Gonzales" instead of "Gonzalo," with a Portuguese spelling in *The Traitor*, to make a casual allusion to no other than Gonzalo Fernández de Cordoba "El Gran Capitán") or the English version of what might be something like a Spanish

---

<sup>21</sup> However, research into the sources used by John Reynolds might render more substantial evidence about the Portuguese characterization of this play.

<sup>22</sup> Underlined in the original.

<sup>23</sup> When in IV, i, 483 (Gifford & Dyce edition) the servant Pedro is threatened by his master, Mendoza, with death for expressing his desire to make love to his master's daughter, he retorts him thus: "*Ped.* I told you this afore; but do not do't, sir, now/ I rather look for it in the next sallad,/ Or in my morning's draught: there's spice in your closet;/ Or we have Spanish figs."

<sup>24</sup> See García García's "Presencia" (448-450).

name learnt by hearing it (Morulla in *The Sisters*). But of course, there are distinctively Spanish (or Iberian) names scattered through the Shirleian dramatic canon such as Don Carlos, Luys, Ramyres, Sebastiano, Catalina, Cardona, Diego, Violante, Alonzo, Alberto, Sancho, Ferdinand, Rodriguez, Celestina, Allegre or Pacheco, Count Montenigro (Portuguese), and Valasco (Portuguese).

The above-mentioned elements, together with elements of vocabulary and material and spiritual culture or historical reference concur with touches of psychological characterization of the Spanish types alluded to render a general appraisal of them. Thus, very frequently, the use of such commonplaces as the long surnames of Portuguese and Spanish characters, titles such as “signior,” “signor,” “signiour,” “senor” (once in all the Shirleian canon), “senora,” “don,” “donna” and forms of polite address, not only characterize the types as Spanish (or Italian for that matter), but give a hint to one of the most repeated attributions to the Iberians of the time, their excessive formality and ceremoniousness in addressing one another. Also such commonplaces as the double-barrelled surname of both Portuguese and Spanish, which still strike the ear of modern English and Americans, must be taken into consideration. Thus, characteristically, in *The Maid’s Revenge* we have the following dialogue in the comic subplot:

*Ansilva.* May I beg your name, sir?

*Diego.* No begger sweet, would you have it at length, then

My name is Signior *Baltazaro Clere Mautado*,

But for brevity’s sake they call me *Diego*.

*Ans.* Then, Signior *Diego*, once more you are welcome.

*Die.* *Bazelez manes Signiora* (...) <sup>25</sup> (Shirley-Carter, II, i, 24-29, p. 18)

Probably what was at the back of Shirley’s and his audience’s mind and what makes Diego’s answer comical is the huge gap between the pompous deployment of title and surnames and the naked fact of a name that equates the character with a humorous or/and derogatory “diego” or “Don Diego,” i.e., “a name for a Spaniard”<sup>26</sup> (OED).

Thus, in *The Brothers*, we find:

*Car.* Don Pedro de Fuente Calada coming hither,

With Don Alberto, and my son? (II, i, p. 214)

---

<sup>25</sup> Spanish: “Beso las manos, señora.”

<sup>26</sup> The *OED* does not explicitly attribute a clearly derogatory connotation to the word “diego” or “Don Diego,” though it lists immediately afterwards a negative meaning of “Don Diego” as a verb (“to cheat or ‘do’”), and it documents the term with a quote from Webster and Dekker’s play *Sir Thomas Wyatt*, dated 1607: “A Dondego is a kind of Spanish stockfish, or poor John.” Thus, even if the *OED* does not ascribe a pejorative meaning till it acquired the modern form “dago” “in the south-western section of the United States,” it is clear, as the quote following will show, that “diego” or “Don Diego” were already tinged with a derogatory meaning.

The difference of treatment, even if comical, is evident if we compare these two instances of mild and sympathetic criticism of the alleged pomposity of Spanish and Portuguese forms of address with some abusive clichés such as can be found in Dekker and Webster's *Sir Thomas Wyatt* (c. 1604):

[...] a Spaniard is a Camocho, a Callimanco, nay, which is worse, a Dondego, and what is a Dondego [...] a Dondego is a desperate Viliago, a very Castilian, God blesse vs. There came but one Dundego into England, and hee made all Paules stinckes agen, what shall a whole army of Dondegos doe my sweete Countrimen?" (IV, ii, vv. 51-58)<sup>27</sup>

We must be quick to add, however, that the characters involved in the above dialogue in *The Maid's Revenge* are a maid servant and a petty courtier. There are further references to these topics that clearly mark the Spaniards with the attribute of affectation and ceremoniousness.

Another commonplace about Spaniards, less amiable than the one we have surveyed and not conveyed by any Spanish character on the stage, but reported by one of the characters, is that of the "political Spaniard," i.e., the secretive, inscrutable Spaniard. As Richard Johnson wrote in his *Essaies*:

The Spaniards are subtle, wrapping their drifts in close secesie, expressing suretie in their words, but keeping their intentions dissembled vnder disguised assurance of amity, betraying the innocency of their friendes, in malice infinite...<sup>28</sup>

Howell in his *Familiar Letters* states several times, though positively, these alleged traits of Spaniards:

Among other Nations the Spaniard is observ'd to have much phlegm, and to be most dilatory in his proceedings; yet those who have pryed narrowly into the sequel and success of his actions, do find that this gravity, reservedness, and tergiversations of his, have turned rather to his prejudice than advantage, take one time with another.<sup>29</sup>

James Shirley much more jocularly makes one of his courtiers, the Italian Volterre in *The Humorous Courtier*, expound the alleged Spanish fashion in dressing

---

<sup>27</sup> Quoted by Cruickshank (205).

<sup>28</sup> Quoted by Dereck Roper in his edition of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1975) 121n.

<sup>29</sup> Howell, *Epistolae Ho-Eliaanae. Familiar Letter...* Vol. II, xvii, 313. There are many more instances of the "saturnine" character of the Spaniards, especially in *Instructions for Forreine Travell*. For more quotes of this sort, see the article of Beagle on *The Instructions* in relation to Carlos García's *La oposición y conjunción de los dos grandes luminares de la tierra o la antipatia de franceses y españoles*, where he convincingly establishes the Spaniard's work as an undetected Spanish influence on received ideas by Howell.

and politics in much the same way as Sir Politic-Would-be does in Ben Jonson's *Volpone* (IV,i) referring to the Venetians:

DEPAZZI. [...] Signiour, I must doe you justice; the Court  
Speakes you most accurate, ith' Spanish garbe.

VOLTERRE. The *Spaniard* (signiour) reserves all passion,  
To express his feeling in occurences  
Of state, when in discourse, his Tooth-picke still  
[*Reaches out a Tooth-picke*].

Is his parinthisis: which he doth manage  
Subtly thus —*Par les santos sennor*—

*Lo conosco por cierto —porque es  
Trabajo (con licenzia di vuestra alteza)*

*Hablas muchas palabras —no puedo en veridad—*

DEP. But why those things Signiour?

VOL. This elevation oth' shoulders is

A polliticke gesture, declares a meaning hid;

Which you may finde out if you can: and is

Often used in triviall circumstances. (Shirley-Morillo, IV,ii,38-53, 152-153)

There are many references to what began to be a reality at about this time, “the grand tour” through Europe which, as is best exemplified by Milton's biography, had become an obligatory part of the educational career of young wealthy heirs. The interesting thing now is that Shirley includes Spain in this grand tour and a new personage appears, the pedant who boasts of his alleged knowledge of the world, Spain included, and of the fashions of the country:

*Freshwater*. I tell you, madam; I took a shipping at Gravesend, and had no sooner pass'd the Cantons, and Grisons, making some stay in the Valtoline, but I came to Paris, a pretty hamlet, and much in the situation like Dunstable; 'tis in the province of Alcantara, some three leagues distant from Civille, from whence we have our oranges.

*Lord Rainbow*. Is the fellow mad? [*Aside*.]

*Rosamond*. I have heard Seville is in Spain.

*Fresh*. You may hear many things. The people are civil that live in Spain, or there may be one town like another; but if Civille be not in France, I was never at Civille in my life. (*The Ball*, v,i, 79)

Another feature commonly attributed to Spaniards, confirmed by John Ford in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* in the figure of Vasques, is that of the extremely faithful and reserved Spanish servant. A character more like the figure of Vasques, though in a comic register, appears in *The Humorous Courtier*. His name is Sancho, and he is the completely trustworthy and discreet servant in charge of keeping the secret seraglio or harem of ten prostitutes of his master Orseollo. The action takes place in Mantua and there is not any evidence that Sancho is Spanish, but his name unmistakably is. Perhaps this is an unconscious manifestation of the proverbial faithfulness of the Spanish servants, especially the Biscayans.



In view of everything stated in this present analysis, one is able to establish that Shirley's Caroline view, while complying with some past commonplaces and mental schemata about the Iberian people, and also responding heavily to genre regulation, responds to a less anxious, more benevolent and sympathetic perspective of Spain and Spanish characters. Of course, political factors were all-important: once the danger of invasion, i.e., of the real physical presence of Spain in England has faded away, and once the Iberian Peninsula was a harmless land, too much involved in its own problems, a possible ally and a manipulable country, it can be seen in a different, neutral, and more sympathetic light. The personal stance of Shirley as a Catholic and as hispanophile must count as well. Provided that the collective imaginary sees Spain as the assimilable other, since it is Christian (though Papist) and white (at least in large layers of the population), the conditions are given for an integration of the Spaniards in the English imagery as the "other us." Shirley's contribution has been to add to this collective imagery by means of his attentive and benevolent pictures of Spanish types, a series of pictures that culminate with a straightforward projection of London manners and themes over a city such as the Madrid of the late Habsburgs and the Ancient Regime in *The Brothers*. This view, present already in Shirley in the second quarter of the seventeenth century, was to develop little by little into the land of romance and dreams, but also into the land of inefficiency and corruption, of pride and poverty, of exoticism and passion which has so attracted the interest of English travellers and scholars and which Hollywood would ultimately recover for the most part of the twentieth century.

## WORKS CITED

- ANDERSON, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso, 1991.
- ARMSTRONG, Ray, ed. "Introduction." *The Poems of James Shirley*. New York: King's Cross, 1941. xiv-xxx.
- BAKHTIN, Mikhail. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Austin: U of Texas P, 1986.
- BARBOUR, Reid. "Thomas Stanley (September 1625-12 April 1678)." *Seventeenth-century British Non-dramatic Poets, Third Series*. Ed. M. Thomas Hester. Detroit: Gale, 1993. 258-71.
- BAS, George. *James Shirley, 1596-1666: dramaturge caroléen*. Diss. Université de Paris, 1973.
- BAUGH, Albert C. "Further Facts about James Shirley." *RES* 7 (1931): 62-66.
- . "Some New Facts about Shirley." *Modern Language Review* 17 (1922): 28-35.
- BEAGLE, Martin. "Hidden Spanish Treasure in a Seventeenth-century Text: The Strange Case of Dr García and Mr Howell." *SEDERI XII: Journal of the Spanish Society for English Renaissance Studies* (2001): 107-121.
- BELLANY, Alastair. "'Raylinge Rimes and Vaunting Verse': Libellous Politics in Early Stuart England." *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*. Ed. Kevin Sharpe & Peter Lake. London: Macmillan, 1994. 285-310.
- BURNER, Sandra A. *James Shirley: A Study of Literary Coterie and Patronage in Seventeenth-century England*. Lanham: UP of America, 1988.



- CARTER, Albert H. ed. "Introduction" and "Notes." *The Maid's Revenge: A Critical Edition*. New York: Garland, 1980.
- CRUICKSHANK, Don W. "Lisping and Wearing Strange Suits: English Characters on the Spanish Stage and Spanish Characters on the English Stage, 1580-168." *Parallel Lives: Spanish and English National Drama 1580-1680*. Ed. Louise Fothergill-Payne & Peter Fothergill-Payne. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 1991. 195-210.
- DIJK, Teun van. "Critical Discourse Analysis." *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. Ed. D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen & H. Hamilton. Oxford: Blackwell. 2001. 352-371.
- DEMETRIOU DEMETRIOU, Eroulla. "The Spanish Match and the Literary Image of Spain and Spaniards in English Pamphlets (1617-1624)." Diss. Universidad de Jaén, 2003.
- FORSYTHE, Robert Stanley. *The Relations of Shirley's Plays to the Elizabethan Drama*. New York: Columbia College, 1914.
- GARCÍA GARCÍA, Luciano. "Presencia textual de España y de la literatura española en la obra dramática de James Shirley (1596-1666)." Diss. Universidad de Jaén, 1999.
- "Towards a Definition of European Tragicomedy and Romantic Comedy of the Seventeenth Century: The Courtly Fashion in England and Spain." *SEDERI X: Journal of the Spanish Society for English Renaissance Studies* (1999): 131-139.
- GARDINER, Samuel Rawson. *Prince Charles and the Spanish Marriage (1617-1623)*. 2 vols. London: Hurst and Blackett, 1869.
- GILLOW, Joseph. *A Literary and Biographical History, or, Bibliographical Dictionary of the English Catholics, from the Breach with Rome, in 1534, to the Present Time by Joseph Gillow*. 1895. New York: Burt Franklin, 1961.
- HAVRAN, Martin J. *The Catholics in Caroline England*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1962.
- HEINEMANN, Margot. *Puritanism and Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980.
- HERRERO GARCÍA, Miguel. *Ideas de los españoles del siglo XVII*. Madrid: Gredos, 1966.
- HOWELL, James. *Epistolae Ho-Eliaanae. Familiar Letter, Domestic and Forren*. London, 1688. <<http://books.google.es/books?vid=LCCN19017449&id=KaLzB3UdCd4C&pg=PP24&lpg=RA1-PA1&dq=Epistolae+Ho>>.
- HUNTINGTON, Samuel P. *Who Are We? The Challenge to America's National Identity*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004.
- HUXLEY, Gervas. *Endymion Porter: The Life of a Courtier. 1587-1649*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1959.
- KING, Desmond. *The Liberty of Strangers: Making the American Nation*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005.
- LAWLESS, Donald S. "A Further Note on Shirley's Religion." *Notes and Queries* 24 (1977): 543.
- LIMON, Jerzy. *Dangerous Matters: English Drama and Politics 1623-24*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986.
- LÓPEZ-PÉLAEZ CASELLAS, Jesús. "The Enemy Within: Otherness in Thomas Dekker's *Lust Dominion*." *SEDERI* 9: (1999): 203-207.
- LUCOW, Ben. *James Shirley*. Boston: Twayne/G.H. Hall, 1977.
- MARIENSTRASS, Richard. *New Perspectives in the Shakespearean World*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985.



- MORILLO, Marvin. "“Frier Shirley”: James Shirley and “Mercurius Britannicus”." *Notes and Queries* 205 (1960): 338-339.
- MUIR, Kenneth. "Elizabethan Hispanists, Lope de Vega and Shakespeare." *Hispanic Studies in Honour of Geoffrey Ribbans*. Ed. Ann L. Mackenzie & Dorothy S. Severin. Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1992. 91-96.
- NASON, Arthur Huntington. *James Shirley, Dramatist: A Biographical and Critical Study*. 1915. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1967.
- ONEGA Jaén, Susana. "Prosa inglesa antiespañola en la segunda mitad del siglo XVI." *Estudios literarios ingleses: Renacimiento y Barroco*. Ed. Susana Onega Jaén. Madrid: Cátedra, 1986. 45-75.
- . "Tipos y tópicos en la literatura inglesa de la segunda mitad del siglo XVI." Diss. Universidad de Zaragoza, 1982.
- RADTKE, Rev. Stephen J. *James Shirley: His Catholic Philosophy of Life*. Washington D.C.: The Catholic U of America, 1929.
- RAYMOND, Joad. *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003.
- RIEMER, Andrew Peter. *A Study of the Life and Works of James Shirley, with a Bibliography*. Diss. College London University, 1963.
- ROELOFFS, Karl Christian. *James Shirleys Beitrag zur Entwicklung der “comedy of manners.”* Diss. Universität Bonn, 1959.
- RUSSELL, P.E. "A Stuart Hispanist: James Mabbe." *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 30 (1953): 75-84.
- SHIRLEY, James. *The Dramatic Works and Poems of James Shirley, Now First Collected; with Notes by William Gifford, Esq. and Additional Notes Account of Shirley and His Writings by the Rev. Alexander Dyce*. 6 vols. 1833. New York: Russell and Russell, 1966.
- . *The Humorous Courtier*. Ed. Marvin Morillo. New York: Garland, 1979.
- . *The Lady of Pleasure*. Ed. Ronald Huebert. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1986.
- . *The Maid's Revenge: A Critical Edition*. Ed. Albert H. Carter. New York: Garland, 1980.
- STIEFEL, Arthur Ludwig. "Die Nachhamung spanischer Komödien in England unter der ersten Stuarts II." *Archiv für das Studium der Neueren Sprachen* 99 (1897): 271-310.
- TAYLOR, Aline Mackenzie. "James Shirley and “Mr Vincent Cane,” the Franciscan." *Notes and Queries* 205 (1960): 31-32.
- UNDERHILL, John Garrett. *Spanish Literature in the England of the Tudors*. New York: Columbia UP, 1899.
- UNGERER, Gustav. *Anglo-Spanish Relations in Tudor Literature*. Bern: Francke, 1956.
- . "The Printing of Spanish Books in Elizabethan England." *The Library* 20.3 (1965): 177-229.
- WOLF, William. "Some New Facts and Conclusions about James Shirley: Residence and Religion." *Notes and Queries* 29 (1982): 133-134.

