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Nature's Bastards: Hybridity, Grafting and Miscegenation in the Renaissance Imagery

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NATURE'S BASTARDS: HYBRIDITY, GRAFTING AND MISCEGENATION IN THE RENAISSANCE IMAGINARY

by
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ABSTRACT

ERIN ELAINE DOCTOR: Nature's Bastards: Hybridity, Grafting and Miscegenation in the Renaissance Imaginary

(UNDER THE DIRECTION OF DR. GREGORY HEYWORTH)

In this thesis I examined the various perceptions and permutations of hybridity in the context of a collective Renaissance imagination. The success of this thesis depends on the adherence to and analysis of a clear definition of hybridity, both real and metaphorical, as established in the introduction. Once this definition was established, I considered the implications of hybridity on a collection of Renaissance bodies, exemplified in the vegetable bodies of the garden and the social group of the gypsies. By using an extensive sample of primary sources, including plays, contemporaneous popular manuals and guidebooks, short stories, laws, edicts, paintings and personal seals and badges, I was able to illustrate my definition of hybridity in its perceptions to a collective Renaissance imaginary. These primary sources worked in conjunction with books and journal articles on my two sub-topics to support my hypothesis that hybridity, in the Renaissance mind, inherently defied control and social categorization and was therefore feared and maligned.

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INTRODUCTION

"There are several things that cause monsters. The first is the glory of God. The second, His wrath. The third, too great a quantity of seed. The fourth, too little a quantity.[1]" Ambroise Paré goes on to list nine more sources of monstrosity in his 1585 treatise, *On Monsters and Marvels*, but it is his fifth rationalization which is the most notable: "the fifth, the imagination." Paré's suggestion that the human mind can body forth its imaginings in the immanent world, that it can bridge the metaphysical divide between the notional and the actual, is a signal moment in the history of psychology. It implies that, unlike the uncontrollable whims of God or the unintended consequences of human action, thoughts themselves have substance. Paré, in other words, defines what I call the Renaissance imaginary.

Paré is not alone in his concept of an imaginary, however. Hamlet's mousetrap, for example, works on the principle that what we see in images, we come to believe, and thence to do, or as he says, "the play's the thing/Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King." This convention that human thoughts had the ability to create monstrosity, to draw out human truths, to dictate the course of society and nature, is of vital importance to any discussion of the Renaissance imaginary. Shakespeare may not go as far down the path of metaphysics as Paré, but he certainly holds that human presentments or figments of the imagination translated into real consequences.

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[1] Ambroise Paré. *On Monsters and Marvels*. Paris, 1585. Translated by Janis L. Pallister. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.

The danger that both Paré and Shakespeare perceived in this newly empowered imaginary is that thoughts, like nature itself, are often formally unstable. Images are plastic; they meld and amalgamate in our minds in a way that, if hypostatized in flesh, would render polymorphous hybrids. The Renaissance imaginary then is also necessarily a source of early modern ideas of hybridity, a concept that despite its lack of a term to describe it was of common usage. Shakespeare, for his notion of the hybrid imaginary, recurs to the more mundane and accessible, but no less fertile world of horticulture and gardening.

What, precisely, hybridity entailed in the Renaissance is a problem as much of biology as of sociology and psychology. At its simplest, hybridity then was about bodies: real bodies, imagined bodies, fruiting bodies, human bodies, political bodies. There were biological hybrids such as dimorphic monsters, conjoined twins, and botanical hybrids such as grafted trees and plant of mixed or manipulated stock. Hybridity was also a socio-sexual category to which belonged hermaphrodites (not physically of both sexes, but rather personifying traits of both genders in a single corporeal form), gypsies who were of civilization yet not truly in it, and the fused offspring which resulted from miscegenation between ethnicities or classes. All categories of hybrids, however, inspired a deep-seeded anxiety in the Renaissance mind. The reason lay in their familiar unfamiliarity, their apparent normalcy which concealed a preternatural otherness. Much more than merely a combination of two distinct bodies, hybridity is a concept that deals in liminalities – it is an idea represented by things neither natural nor unnatural, neither familiar nor entirely unfamiliar.

In his groundbreaking study on the subject of the grotesque, Wolfgang Kayser

described hybridity, inextricably linked to the grotesque,[2] to be a fantastic occurrence, invented in the mind, "which contradicts the very laws which rule over the familiar.[3]" Hybrids of all types inspired myriad reactions in the Renaissance imaginary: they were fascinating yet frightening, intriguing in their bizarreness, alien yet mesmerizing. Thus, not only did the result of hybridization itself have contrasting, unpredictable results but also the ways in which amalgamated bodies were perceived were divergent and capricious. This notion of hybridity permeated all aspects of Renaissance culture, it involved and shaped both immanent and invented bodies, and enacted profound influences on both social and natural hierarchies.

The manifestation of varying opinions of hybridization, regardless of the type of combined body in question, depends wholly on the relation of that blended corpus to the Renaissance concept of order. Order was the anchor of Renaissance society, and its opposite, the disorderly, founded all fear. The fact that hybrids existed in edges, on the periphery of two distinct things, lent them a mobility rarely afforded within the highly structured, deeply stratified Renaissance culture. This motility caused the corruption of typical methods of domination – the hybrid innately defied categorization. This was problematic because everything in the Renaissance world, both natural and man-made, was hierarchically maintained, strictly governed and regulated to ensure the greatest possible level of control. That which deviated from the natural order, which attempted to be both part of yet contradictory to the mandated hierarchy, was viewed as blatantly

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[2] For example, Geoffrey Harpham points out that the term "*grottesche*," from which we get the word "grotesque," described the subterranean grottoes in which frescoes from the ruins of Nero's palace depicting "images of beasts fused with animal bodies and birdlike wings, human forms that fuse with leaflike patterns weaving plant life" etc. were discovered. Images of hybridity, therefore, caused the advent of the modern term grotesque. Geoffrey Galt Harpham. *On the Grotesque: Strategies of Contradiction in Art and Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982, p.27.

[3] Wolfgang Kayser. *The Grotesque in Art and Literature*, trans. Ulrich Weisstein. New York: Columbia University Press, 1981, p. 31.

grotesque.[4] The true issue arose when these deviations encroached on civilization and disrupted the natural social order. In order to properly function, Renaissance society had to tame the disorderly. When this occurred, when the hybrid was reclaimed and subdued, the hierarchical nature of Renaissance culture and thought was justified. It is the submissive, domesticated hybrid which appeals to and fascinates the Renaissance imaginary. In attempts to subjugate hybridity, however, society ran the risk of failing to overcome the mingled nature of the hybrid. When this occurred, the fused body was reviled and abhorred. It was this hegemonic tightrope, the balance between chaos and control, which caused such faceted reactions to hybridity.

With the following chapters, I examine hybrid bodies, both individual and communal, in both imagined and real incarnations. The first chapter introduces the fruiting bodies and intrinsic hierarchy of the vegetable world and relates it to social and political collectives. Gardening was a practice and an art form which symbolized man's triumph over the wilderness of nature, yet the garden itself was a hybrid entity both feral and tamed. This chapter introduces the practice of grafting, of mingling two distinct plants and species together to create hybridized and often unreliable offspring. In definition alone, "graft" is a hybrid concept, on one hand signifying the literal action of inserting the scion of one plant into the stock of another, where it continues to grow and bear fruit; on the other, it means to acquire an advantage through dishonest or illegal means. Interestingly, during the Renaissance the two meanings of the word frequently coincided because cultivation was a means for social transformation and advancement, especially when horticultural marvels and oddities were created – as they often were as a

[4] James Luther Adams and Wilson Yates, eds. *The Grotesque in Art & Literature: Theological Reflections*. Cambridge, UK; Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1997. P.2

result of grafting. I apply the symbolic importance of the garden and grafting to analyze the significance of vegetable imagery in the Tudor court and in contemporaneous literature, notably William Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* and John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*.

In the second chapter, I expound on the secondary definition of grafting, that of self-promotion through deceit, in the context of gypsy migrations into Western Europe. Gypsies were perceived as picaresque characters who advanced themselves through roguery and duplicity, yet their innate foreignness was more than mere fraudulence – they constituted an intrinsically hybrid presence in European society. Simultaneously alluring and repellent, the gypsies acted as grafts onto the preestablished Renaissance hierarchy, able to integrate into society while constantly remaining alien and exotic. Vital to this chapter is the bidirectional influence that gypsies had on their adoptive culture: they were not only able to incorporate themselves into the Western European hierarchy, but were able to attract members of that society and assimilate them into their own culture as well. Essentially, the gypsies were able to be both scion and stock to the Renaissance society, grafting onto it on one hand and fostering grafts from it on the other. Together, these initially disparate embodiments of hybridity unite to illuminate the depth of the Renaissance imaginary. They demonstrate the reaches of societal fear, the strength of the strictly maintained hierarchy, and the innately threatening nature of any entity, any body, which possessed hybrid and therefore motile qualities.

GRAFTED BODIES AND POLITICAL GARDENS IN THE TUDOR AND ELIZABETHAN COURTS

"Tis an unweeded garden/That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature/Possess it merely." Hamlet's famously squinting comment of Act I.II, grafting the imagined adultery of his mother's body onto the more common trope of the Danish body politic, betrays a deep rooted pattern in Shakespearean metaphorics. That the fallenness of human nature is bound, in Shakespeare's mind, to the original garden, that fecund ground where Adam first dallied with Eve stands as a pre-established convention.[5] What interests me, however, is not just the correlation between human corruption and the garden but rather the corporality of this image, its pregnancy. The garden, for Shakespeare, is a twinned place of wildness and control, hierarchy and chaos, dirtiness and power, artifice and nature, where the vegetable rule of hybridity – that bodies of things are conceived within and then grow parasitically out of other bodies – becomes the governing principle of human biology and society.

In this chapter, I intend to trace a cognate garden metaphor from *The Winter's Tale* of grafted, or hybrid vegetable bodies into the bedroom of Henry the VIII and the heart of Tudor identity. Further still, I would like to penetrate to the unconscious of the Renaissance imaginary where pictures of female fertility and hybrid stock represent simultaneously the salvation of societal and political order and the greatest threat to it.

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[5] Compare, for example, Andrew Marvell: "Such was that happy garden-state,/While man there walked without a mate:/After a place so pure and sweet,/What other help could yet be meet!/ But 'twas beyond a mortal's share/To wander solitary there:/Two paradises 'twere in one/To live in Paradise alone."

My point of entry into this issue is a suggestive passage in *The Winter's Tale*. Act IV, Scene IV: King Polixenes meets the would-be shepherdess Perdita and presumed bastard daughter of his friend King Leontes.

> POLIXENES: Shepherdess –
> A fair one are you – well you fit our ages
> With flowers of winter.
>
> PERDITA: Sir, the year growing ancient
> Not yet on summer's death nor on the birth
> Of trembling winter, the fairest flow'rs o'th' season
> Are our carnations and streaked gillyvors,
> Which some call nature's bastards. Of that kind
> Our rustic garden's barren, and I care not
> To get slips of them.
>
> - *The Winter's Tale*, Act IV, Scene IV. ll.76-84.

The passage is framed by a conceit of nature as resistant to a social esthetic of purity. Polixenes' "flowers of winter" are meant to suggest Perdita's youthful apparition in the winter of his life, as well as the unalloyed whiteness of her skin. She, interpreting him literally, however, sees only a seasonal reference. Late summer in the "rustic garden" of the fields, she explains, is a time of natural hybrids, the "streaked gillyvors" she deems to be of mixed stock and, therefore, undesirable. Nature, whose beauty Perdita incarnates, is to her a foreign object inspiring only genetic anxiety. In the garden of her imagination, the flowers, of which she is one, are for her "nature's bastards" whose natural hybridity she scorns, indicating doubt of her own genealogy ("I care not to get slips of them.") The

real garden she intends to create for herself is a supposed noble one, containing only specimens of pure breed, which is to say, more imaginary than real. Perdita imagines an artificial nature of status and genetic purity, an ideology that Polixenes, in his defense of those gillyflowers, will rebut.

What about the idea of the garden, therefore, would justify such divergent judgments as those presented by Perdita and Polixenes? The answers to these questions lie in the inherently hybrid nature of the garden itself. In its most sublime, horticulture was an expression of monarchical stability and peace. At its basest, however, the garden was a place of madness and isolation, where wilderness re-encroached on a carefully maintained society, where royal barrenness – as in Hamlet's or, as we shall see, Henry VIII's imaginings – could ruin the orderly succession of kingship.[6] Gardening was an act through which humanity subdued the organic and imposed his own will upon nature, indicative of man fulfilling the first assignment designated to him by God. Yet always the threat of nature's return to a state of nature, volatile and brutish, loomed in the background. This chapter will examine the role of the vegetable world in various real and imagined permutations, its status as a hybrid entity, and the function of the garden and grafting in relation to the natural and social hierarchies in an attempt to map the Renaissance imaginary.

[6] Roy Strong. *The Renaissance Garden in England.* London, UK: Thames & Hudson, Ltd., 1979. p.15,11.

To those atop the class system, the desire to demonstrate their superiority through the taming of wilderness and the cultivation of "botanical rarities"[7] was a temptation beyond resistance, a venture whose possible gains vastly outweighed the risks it posed should the garden resist man's control. To Renaissance society, gardens were directly symbolic of royal and aristocratic authority – in keeping with their position at the top of the social hierarchy, the nobility maintained the most impressive orchards, flowering plots and arboretums in order to dignify their position as head of both society and nature.[8] Just as houses or material goods indicated an individual's social status, so too did the garden serve as a marker of class. John Parkinson, in his 1629 treatise *Paradisi in Sole* wrote: "Yet I perswade my selfe, that Gentlemen of the better fort and quality will provide such a parcel of ground to be laid out for their Garden, and in such convenient manner, as may be fit and answerable to the degree they hold,[9]" indicating that not only was the common Renaissance Englishman expected to maintain a garden, but that it must also adhere to the standards demanded by his social standing.

The garden's role as a mirror for hierarchical position was obscured, however, when the art of grafting was introduced. Although scrupulously controlled by gardening guilds and tracts on husbandry and cultivation, by offering the opportunity to cultivate botanical rarities by physically blending plants of a variety of classes, grafting could be a tool for social advancement.[10] Although grafting could at times have unpredictable and

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[7] Rebecca Bushnell. *Green Desire: Imagining Early Modern English Gardens.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003. p.146.
[8] Strong, *The Renaissance Garden*, p. 11.
[9] John Parkinson, *Paradisi in Sole: Paradisus Terrestris or A Garden of All Sorts of Pleasant Flowers which our English Ayre will Permitt to be Noursed.* London, UK; 1629, full text obtained on Early English Books Online (EEBO). P.3
[10] Rebecca Bushnell, *Green Desire*, p. 136.

dangerous results, the successful nurturing of a graft into a viable, new offspring was representative of the highest accomplishment in gardening – creation, as opposed to mere cultivation. For this reason as well as the sheer motivation to continually prove themselves as deserving of their position atop the hierarchy, the members of the aristocracy were the most accomplished grafters. Even when grafting was undertaken by lower classes, by ruling in the practice of grafting, the nobility maintained their societal positions. This domination is evident in the case of the English royal gardens under King Henry VIII. For example, his gardens witnessed the successful production of 65 varieties of pears, 35 distinct types of cherries, and 61 different kinds of plums; grafted pippins, apricots and gooseberries were all also successfully produced for the first time under Henry VIII as well.[11]

This tamed green world of the Henrician court was not merely a manifestation of control over nature in its physical instantiation. Rather, the ideal garden expressed an esthetics of form. The symbolic wealth of the garden, as Marvell would later suggest, was just as, if not more, significant to Renaissance society at large and as such was not to be contained to the tangible structuring of cultivated plants alone, but was to appear in the realm of printed art. In the Renaissance mind, the garden represented the monarch's ability to maintain peace and prosperity in the nation, and individual plants embodied physical virtues: the Graces were seen in pansies, twelve Virtues in roses, and the classical Muses in nine separate flowering forms.[12] This symbolic connotation of the garden and the ability of the highest echelons of society to manipulate grafting to their

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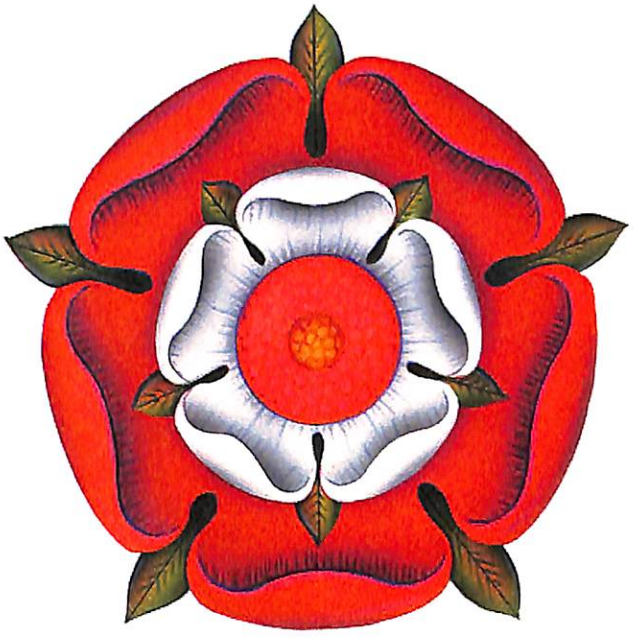
[11] H.P.R. Finberg and Joan Thirsk, eds. *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*. Vol. IV, 1500-1640. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1967. p. 302.
[12] Strong, *The Renaissance Garden*, p. 20; see also Terry Comito. *The Idea of the Garden in the Renaissance*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1978. p. 17.

own benefit was most prominently exemplified in the appearance of stylized floral and vegetable representations in the heraldry and Royal badges of the Tudor dynasty. Behind the propaganda of the garden, however, lay a subliminal anxiety over the tenuousness of political and sexual control which the public symbolism of horticulture was designed to cover up, but which upon closer examination it actually reveals more fully.

The choice of the Tudor rose (figure 1) as the badge for the rulers themselves seems entirely sensible. Because the badge was, more than the crest or coat of arms, the symbol most widely recognized by all social levels[13], the hybrid rose as badge was the Tudors' way of broadcasting to all subjects, regardless of class, the power that royalty exerted over social hybridization. At the conclusion of the War of the Roses, when the houses of Lancaster and York were physically combined by the marriage of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, Henry the VII created this badge to symbolize and celebrate the hybrid nature of his ensuing dynasty. The peaceful and productive continuance of English society depended on this hybridity, real in the case of Henry VII and his descendents, symbolized by his union rose. Significantly, the feuding houses of the War of the Roses also depended on this fusion – where they had been separate white and red roses before, the maintenance of their power and influence now relied wholly on a hybrid entity. The

Figure 1: The Tudor (Union) Rose



[13] Arthur Charles Fox-Davies and Graham Johnston. *A Complete Guide to Heraldry*. London: T.C. & E.C. Jack, 1909.

intermingled blood of the new king represented the only chance his state had at regaining harmony and concord in a nation long plagued by chaos and violence. By the end of his reign, Henry VII had justified his choice in badge: he was a viable, successful cross of the Lancastrian and Yorkist lines who had maintained internal peace throughout his reign and, with his son Henry VIII, provided the nation with an heir who would assume the throne in a peaceful transition of power upon his father's death. To fully consider the symbolic importance of fruiting images as royal badges, however, it is necessary to examine more than just the Union rose. Royal spouses and consorts too were allowed to elect their personal emblems, a symbol which would be nearly as widespread throughout the realm as the ruler itself, adorning persons, property and palaces across the kingdom.

The second Tudor king, Henry VIII, would maintain the hybrid rose badge first elected by his father. Husband to an extensive collection of wives, Henry's consorts too would all have some sort of garden element to their badges – all six would choose at least some aspect of the vegetable world to represent themselves and their queenships to the English people. Their intent with this was to show themselves as the garden, submissive to the will of their husband – their sexuality tamed, their autonomy forfeit – but it ultimately results in an adverse effect. By so obviously declaring their deference to Henry VIII, his wives' badges inadvertently emphasize instead his dependency on their capitulation, his need to have his sexual power publicized. For the scholar of Tudor symbolism, if not for the women themselves, Henry VIII's propensity to frequently obtain new wives is an advantage: his bevy of queens and the badges they chose provide one of the Renaissance's most interesting and varied displays of the use of garden images in royal symbols.

His need to display his sexual capabilities was undeniably partly due to his desire to be viewed as the perfect, ideal, masculine man but it was also an acknowledgment of one of his primary duties as king; that is, providing to his nation an heir. Knowing his acute awareness of this royal duty, therefore, the striking fertility symbolism of his first queen's badge is not surprising in the least. Catherine of Aragon, when selected originally to be Henry's brother's bride, was chosen not only for the political unity she could bring between England and Spain, but more importantly for her "notably fertile" lineage.[14] Despite her first husband's untimely death and relatively late age upon her wedding to Henry (23 years), Catherine initially upheld her family's history of fertility; bearing Henry two children in the first year and a half of their marriage, neither of whom would survive into adolescence.

Figure 2: Catherine of Aragon's pomegranate badge

It is undeniable that she knew her purpose as the English queen. Love and affection towards and returned by her spouse would merely be a pleasant benefit to her relationship; the true reason for her marriage was the production of an heir. She was Henry's first wife, who encountered him long before his reputation for fits of violence and marital changeability and as such, she only needed to use her badge to indicate her innate fertility, unlike some of her successors would need to. Thus, Catherine elected a

[14] Ibid.

crowned pomegranate, complete with a gash on the front which revealed the interior of the fruit, ripe with seeds (figure 2).[15] This badge had a threefold iconic significance: it indicated Catherine's innate foreignness, her exoticism, it suggested abundant fertility, and, due to the violently gaping slash on the front of the pomegranate, also connoted sexual violence and Henry's implicit domination of her in all spheres of life.

The pomegranate signified Catherine's Iberian heritage – it was a foreign fruit which could not be cultivated on English soil, revealing her alien position in Henry's kingdom. Additionally, the seed-filled pomegranate was visually a womb, teeming with potential, which represented the male ownership of the female – like Proserpina's mythological consumption of the pomegranate seeds, Catherine's pomegranate made her body property of Henry. Finally, there is the violent, vaginal gash on Catherine's pomegranate. Such a suggestion of brutality in the fertile context of this productive fruit meant that not only did Catherine's womb belong to Henry, but that she was subjugated to him sexually as well.

The crown resting atop the pomegranate had a dual symbolism. Not only did its presence demonstrate the inherent royalty of the womb in question, but it also demonstrated the domination of this fruit- and the physical body it represented – by the monarch to whom Catherine belonged, her husband.[16] According to her emblem, Catherine was a pure, non-grafted fruit – a foreign queen anxious to bear her king an heir, ready to perpetuate the social hierarchy. When Catherine was unable to fulfill the promise so ripely presented by her badge, however, and her husband's heart was caught by a younger face and her promise of a son, all traces of her pomegranate seal were

[15] Fraser, *The Wives of Henry VIII*. Pgs.50 (image), 58.
[16] Ibid., p.59

painstakingly removed from royal property and replaced with the badge of the new queen, Anne Boleyn.

The second of Henry VIII's wives, Anne Boleyn recognized that she needed to capitalize on her predecessor's inability to keep a son alive past infancy. Simultaneously, aware of the King's volatile moods, Anne cleverly knew that keeping the barrenness of Henry's first wife ever present in his mind would constantly reestablish her claim as his right, naturally intended wife. Where Catherine's badge represented a singularly fruitful, healthy garden, overflowing with the potential for new life, Anne's emblem portrayed a much different plot. Her crowned falcon, perched atop an old tree stump sprouting vines of red and white flowers (figure 3) is directly indicative of her position as the second wife, and contempt for her predecessor. Traditionally, the falcon had been employed as a Boleyn family symbol, and Anne incorporated that motif accordingly. The stump was a symbol used to indicate the sterility of Catherine of Aragon, her inability to continue the Tudor family line. In direct opposition to the exceedingly fruitful body Catherine's pomegranate promised, Anne's emblem shows a withered and dead tree, devoid of any potential to procreate. By having red and white Tudor roses sprouting from this tree, however, Anne overtly asserted her ability to succeed where Catherine failed – healthy, vibrant offspring will come out of the

Figure 3: Anne Boleyn's Falcon Badge

barrenness thanks to Anne's replacement of Catherine as Henry's consort.[17] During his second marriage, the king was growing increasingly desperate for an heir, and such a rich promise from Anne went a great ways in ensuring his affections. It is interesting that this badge of the second queen is the first to suggest vegetable hybridity: from the barren husk of Catherine's reign, Anne promises to produce for her king royal children worthy of being represented by the hybrid Union rose. To Anne Boleyn, an undoubtedly adept social manipulator, the constant reference to her promise to succeed where Catherine's fruitful womb had failed was a sign, not only to the English people but to her husband as well, that she would be able to create flowers from sterility, heirs where there were none.[18] Similarly to the first queen's badge, Anne Boleyn's symbol was also crowned at its apex, signifying again her subservience and willing fruitfulness for the king. Where Catherine's emblem showed the royal dominion over her fertile womb, Anne's flaunted the decay of her predecessor's garden, its return to a fruitless and dead plot, and promised to create her own offspring where Catherine had proved unfruitful. Like Catherine, however, the claims of Anne's badge were not to be met by reality, and the heir-seeking Henry continued to work his way through one wife after another.

After the unpopular and allegedly adulterous Anne Boleyn, King Henry found himself paired up with a "good and virtuous" queen, Jane Seymour.[19] Just as Hamlet had grafted the infidelity of his mother onto the body politic, so too did Henry now find himself surrounded by a faithless garden – the suggested potential of Hamlet's imaginary garden is made real in Henry's court. Engaged to the king a scarce 24 hours after the execution of Anne Boleyn, Jane had been witness to the downfall of two queens before

[17] Fraser, *The Wives of Henry VIII*. Pgs.169-171.
[18] Ibid., pgs. 120-122
[19] Ibid., 263.

her, each for a variety of reasons, but undoubtedly the inability of both Catherine and Anne to bear a son was integral to their respective demises. In contrast to Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour was a pious, composed and modest woman, who fulfilled perfectly contemporaneous expectations of the ideal woman. Additionally, Jane came from an immediate family in which she was the fifth of ten children, six of whom were sons – a male-heavy streak of fertility which was vastly appealing to the still heir-less king.[20] Henry viewed his third marriage as his first "good and lawful" union, and fully expected Jane to echo her mother's fruitfulness and provide stability and order to his nation in the form of a son.[21] Having married Henry only one short day after his commanded execution of Anne Boleyn had been carried out, Queen Jane was sharply aware of the pressure to produce an heir and to keep Henry's fluctuating tempers at bay.

Figure 4: Jane Seymour's phoenix badge

Her choice in emblems indicates her appreciation for the precarious situation in which Henry's queens found themselves, while simultaneously demonstrating her confidence to succeed where her predecessors had disappointed. Like Anne's falcon symbol, the phoenix in Jane's badge indicated her readiness to rise from the failures of Henry's other queens and provide him with a successor – still his outright priority. Similar in appearance to Anne's falcon, Jane's phoenix suggests a mythologized, improved

[20] Fraser, *The Wives of Henry VIII*. p.236.
[21] Ibid., p.259

reincarnation from the treachery and infidelity of Anne. The mythical phoenix, which represented rebirth and renewal, was a bird which, at the end of its life, was consumed by fire only to emerge from ashes rejuvenated and born again. Queen Jane's crowned phoenix stands atop a castle which is sprouting vines of Tudor roses (figure 4), an image notably similar to the roses which blossomed from the trunk in Anne Boleyn's emblem. Whereas Anne's representation of Catherine's barrenness was taunting to the still living and widely popular divorcee, however, Jane's symbol was not arrogant but rather hopeful.

By the time that she was crowned, both her forerunners were deceased – executed in Anne's case – and she was conscious of her position in popular opinion as a metaphorical phoenix, expected to transform from the ashes of the former queens and provide both lord and nation with an heir apparent. To Renaissance society, the castle represented safety and security. Where Anne's badge showed her family's traditional falcon, and therefore her continued loyalty to her family as opposed to her king, Jane adopted this symbol of royalty which, along with her motto "Bound to Obey and Serve," to indicate her complete submission to the king and desire to serve him as queen and wife.[22] With her badge, Queen Jane acknowledged the anticipation of a son and conceded herself fully to Henry. The Union roses in Jane's symbol grow not from a sterile husk of her predecessor's failures, but from the security of a castle, nurtured in a legitimate and celebrated matrimony by a triumphantly maternal phoenix. In the case of Jane's badge, the garden hybridity is purely a product of royalty and is therefore successful, not cultivated from preexisting infertility.

Fulfilling the promise of her marriage and her badge, Jane Seymour did provide

[22] Fraser, *The Wives of Henry VIII*. pgs. 240-244.

Henry with the son he so desperately longed for. She "obeyed" and "served" her duties as queen to their fullest extent, providing continued security for the Tudor dynasty and happiness to the king. Henry's ecstasy, however, was dampened in a cruel twist of fate when she died only a few days after bestowing on the king his most precious possession.

With the most pressing issue, that of a son, resolved, Henry and his advisors were able to turn to other priorities – his next marriage, that to Anne of Cleves, was undertaken in the aim of securing foreign Protestant allies amid the chaos of the Reformation. Anne held no physical attraction to the king, however, and the marriage remained unconsummated and was annulled a short six months after its inception.[23] Anne remained, dignity and honor intact, in England until her death, viewed as an adopted sister by her former husband whose eye quickly roamed onwards.

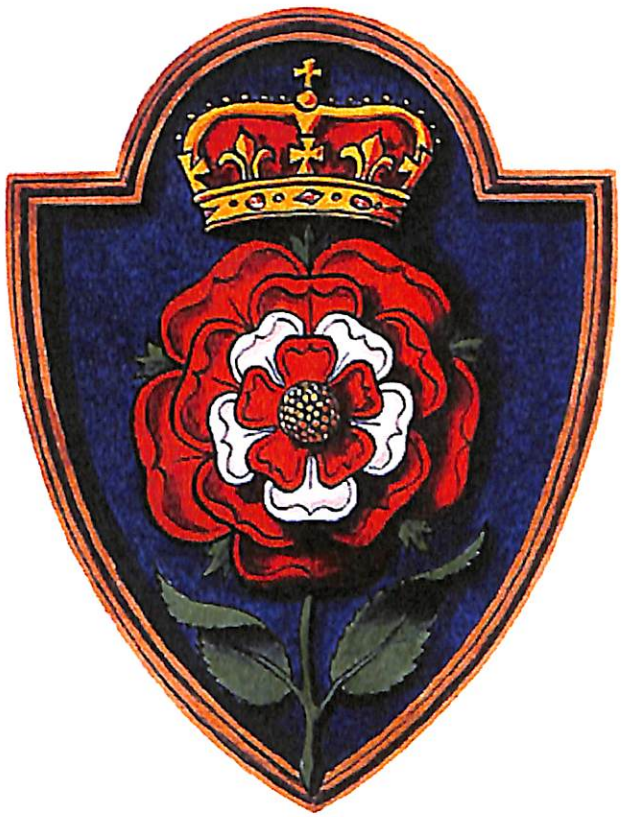


Figure 5: Katherine Howard's thornless rose

It is significant to note that, by the time that young Katherine Howard captured the king's attention, he had been granted his male heir. After his cherished Jane Seymour had borne him the son he so desperately needed and he had been gravely dissatisfied by the physical appearance of his fourth wife, sensuality became the characteristic the king most desired from a spouse. Secure in the fact that his dynasty would not end with his

[23] Fraser, *The Wives of Henry VIII*, p. 326.

death, Henry sought out a "bonair and buxom in bed" girl to help him regain the indomitable spirit of his youth, a "*rutilans rosa sine spina*" (blushing rose without a thorn) whose fertility was not so important as her pleasing figure and youth.[24] A mere nineteen years old to the king's fifty, Katherine came to court from a relatively destitute family; her outstanding characteristics were "considerable prettiness" and overt sexuality, not the modesty, cleverness and dignity of her predecessors. The king was enthralled by her youth and vivaciousness, so much so that he overlooked her poverty and questionable past to make her his fifth queen.[25]

Henry's description of his new wife as a thorn-less rose was no coincidence – her personal emblem displayed the same image (figure 5).[26] Katherine tried to transform herself into an ideal flower – pleasant to look at, to smell, to enjoy, with the added benefit of being harmless and painless to hold; she attempted to become Henry's ideal Tudor rose, yet ultimately these attempts were unsuccessful. It is interesting to note that Katherine Howard chose the thorn-less rose as her badge – the one aspect to plants that gardeners, grafters and botanists had not been able to remove. They could change color, scent, remove seeds from fruit, shift the growing season, yet were unable to change foliage or thorns. Thus, her symbol is an impossible feat of nature, just as her royalty ultimately ended up being an impossible feat of society. Like her cousin, Anne Boleyn, before her, Katherine Howard did not maintain faithful to her husband, nor was she able to produce an heir. Although her crowned Tudor rose and motto which promised obedience to "No Other Will than His" indicated superficially that she was willing to assume the role of queen completely, she did not manage to do so. Just as her emblem

[24] Ibid., pgs.330-331.
[25] Ibid., p.328-329.
[26] Ibid., p.339

was the one case of hybridity which was still an impossible task to contemporaneous gardeners, Katherine's role as queen was too great a stretch. Her infidelity and ultimate execution for adultery and treason demonstrated that at times hybridity was unable to be controlled and made appropriate, even by royalty; just as no artifice of man or nature could remove the thorns from a rose.[27] Katherine's status as a lowly girl made queen was a graft too preposterous to succeed, despite her husband's royal status. She tried, as depicts her emblem, to transform herself into a meek and wifely rose appropriate to Henry's position, yet such attempts were beyond the capacity of nature and society.

The variety in these emblems, Catherine's healthily fertile and prolific pomegranate, Anne's attempts to flower in a barren and fruitless garden, Jane's triumph from the ashes of her predecessors in the security of royalty and Katherine's ill-fated attempts to defy all rules of nature and society demonstrate the sheer variety with which the garden appeared in symbolic representations. Although always subservient to and aware of the king's Tudor rose, Henry's queens used the garden in an attempt to prove themselves worthy of the crown. When reality failed to match up to the promises of their emblems, however, divorce or death followed swiftly. In the case of Catherine of Aragon, the suggestion of fertility employed by her badge was undone by her physical barrenness. For Anne Boleyn, her continued allegiance to her family as well as unnaturally hybrid plants sprouting from an infertile stump prevented her royalty from productivity. In the case of Katherine Howard, she was too far removed from royalty to successfully play the part, just as her emblem was an impossible feat of nature. Only the unassuming Jane Seymour, who based a guarantee of fertility in the security and complete submission to her liege, was able to live up to the promise of her emblem and her potential as Henry

[27] Fraser, *The Wives of Henry VIII*. Pgs. 346-347.

VIII's queen. There was, however, another Tudor woman who was consistently and successfully represented by hybridity: Queen Elizabeth I.

Significantly, Elizabeth was an English royal in blood, not through marriage. Like the five Tudor rulers[28] before her, Elizabeth adopted the Tudor rose as one of her personal badges. Like her predecessors, the mixed blood of both Lancaster and York ran in Elizabeth's veins. Unlike the earlier Tudor rulers, however, Elizabeth embodied another facet of hybridity. Her rallying address to the troops mustered at Tilbury in 1588 to repel the invading Spanish Armada is a piece of rhetoric which reflects both Elizabeth's bodily self-image as well as the one she chose to project (or confirm) publicly:

> Let tyrants fear, I have always so behaved myself that, under God, I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and good-will of my subjects; and therefore I am come amongst you, as you see, at this time, not for my recreation and disport, but being resolved, in the midst and heat of the battle, to live and die amongst you all, to lay down for my God, and for my kingdom, and my people, my honour and my blood, even in the dust. I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king.[29]

At once a woman, head of state, and head of church, hers was a body divided in function and gender.[30] Metaphorically, therefore, Elizabeth was hermaphroditic in

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[28] Henry VII, Henry VIII, Edward VI, Jane Grey, and Mary I, respectively.
[29] BM Harleian MS 6798, article 18 (Collected works of Elizabeth I) from Janet M. Green. ""I My Self": Queen Elizabeth I's Oration at Tilbury Camp." *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (Summer, 1997) p.441.
[30] Philippa Berry. *Of Chastity and Power: Elizabethan Literature and the Unmarried Queen*. London, New York: Routledge, 1989. p.67.

quality: although physically she was entirely female, she was not perceived as an outstanding, empowering example for other women; indeed, she occupied a traditionally male role as head of the body politic and was a difficult person for either sex to relate to. Her masculinity was a matter of legend. After adolescence, she eschewed all physical hints of femininity and the inherent, supposed weakness that denoted, in order to strictly control the way she was perceived by her people.[31]

Instead of allowing her person to appear feminine, Elizabeth utilized floral references to project upon her an aura of femininity without losing the sense strength she cultivated by appearing physically more masculine. A 1590s etching of Elizabeth calls her "*the rosa electa*" (figure 6), linking her physical form to the Tudor symbol. A small central portrait of the queen, whose bright red hair and pale skin matched the colors of the Tudor rose and her dual Lancastrian and Yorkist heritage, is surrounded by a single vine bearing not only Union roses, but a variety of other flowers as well. Visually, the queen is the root from which this grafted vine grows which not only lends her the femininity inherently associated with the garden, but also emphasizes the gendered hybridity she so thoroughly encouraged.

In her Coronation Portrait (figure 7), Elizabeth displays no hint of breasts or female curves, and excluding her face and hands, shows not an inch of skin. She does, however, wear a gown embroidered entirely with Tudor roses – the idea of the *rosa electa* manifests again. Like the emblem of Tudor queens before her, Elizabeth adopted a crowned Tudor rose as her badge.

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[31] David Howarth. *Images of Rule: Art and Politics in the English Renaissance, 1485-1649.* Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997. Pgs. 103-105.

Figure 6: Elizabeth I as *Rosa Electa*, William Rogers (1590-1595)

Figure 7: Coronation portrait of Elizabeth I, artist unknown, copy of a lost original ca.1559.

Unlike the previous queens, however, Elizabeth was using this crowned Union rose to signify not her submission to a king, but rather to declare her natural, divinely ordained right to rule. The crown over the rose in her badge, and her portraiture, emblemizes her fused status as both queen and king – she is compliant to no rule except her own.

Grafting Nature in The Winter's Tale

The variety in vegetable symbolism presented by the Tudor badges forms the anxious backcloth of Shakespeare's horticultural metaphors. More specifically, it reveals what is politically at stake, in *The Winter's Tale*, a play whose crux – an imagined adultery of a queen and the challenge posed by a bastard to royal heredity – is none too distant from the Tudor imaginary. In their conversation about "nature's bastards,[32]" the shepherdess adheres to the strictures of her class by eschewing the art of grafting, yet the king, in disguise at the festival as a commoner, defends them, and in doing so redefines art.

> PERDITA: For I have heard it said
> There is an art which in their piedness shares
> With great creating nature.
> POLIXENES: Say there be;
> Yet nature is made better by no means
> But nature makes that mean; so, over that art,
> Which you say adds to nature, is an art
> That nature makes. You see, sweet maid, we marry

[32] Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*. Act IV, Scene IV, l. 83.

A gentler scion to the wildest stock,

And make conceive bark of a baser kind

By bud of nobler race: this is an art

Which does mend nature, change it rather, but

The art itself is nature.

PERDITA: So it is.

POLIXENES: Then make your garden rich in gillyvors,

And do not call them bastards.

- *The Winter's Tale*, Act IV, Scene III. ll. 84-99

Polixenes' argument that the art of improving on nature is itself a natural act legitimizes the practice of grafting among the nobility, which is to say morganatic marriage. If changing nature is natural, then God intended its occurrence in biological and social intercourse as well as botany. Grafting then becomes an imitation of God, humanity mimicking creation with the garden as the scene of apotheosis.

The claim that I am making here that Shakespeare is using the garden as a testing ground for radical ideas of monarch and social engineering, ideas which challenged strict notions of class and hierarchy as a natural order, is neither as extreme or as innovative as it may seem. Prominent statesmen of the age, foremost of them the Lord Chancellor Sir Francis Bacon and author of, among other works, an *Essay on Gardens (1625)* were studying precisely this phenomenon. In *The Intellectual Globe*, Bacon offers an account of nature's art strikingly similar to that of Polixenes:

I am the rather induced to set down the history of arts as a species of natural history, because it is the fashion to talk as if art were something different from

> nature, so that things artificial should be separated from things natural, as differing totally in kind. [...] Whereas men ought on the contrary to have a settled conviction, that things artificial differ from things natural, not in form or essence but only in the efficient; that man has in truth no power over nature except that of motion [...] the rest is done by nature working within.[33]

Elsewhere, Bacon offers one of the earliest explanations of hybridity or "transmutation of plants:" "The second rule [of transmutation of plants] shall be, to bury some few seeds of the herb you would change amongst the other seeds; and then you shall see whether the juice of the other seeds do not so qualify the earth, as it will alter the seed whereupon you work."[34] The vagueness of Bacon's argument for botanical context combined with the authority of its natural "rule" is what makes his observations of botany so unsettling. If such is the law of vegetable nature, Shakespeare may well have wondered, why not human biology and association as well?

Grafting presents its own social dilemmas. Although ideally, the hierarchical regulations would limit grafting to the nobility alone, the act of hybridizing plants had long been a practice at all social levels. Its prevalence was mainly due to its most practical effect: in an age where only nobility maintained huge, expansive and diverse gardens, grafting enabled common husbandmen to cultivate various types of fruits and plants in a limited vegetable setting.[35] Although it had a clear practical application and a long tradition among European gardeners, grafting remained a scrupulously controlled aspect of organic cultivation due to the social ramifications it could potentially entail. For

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[33] *The Intellectual Globe* in James Spedding, ed., *Works*. London: Longmans, 1869-1901. Vol. V, p.506. For an argument between this passage and *The Winter's Tale*, see Robert Theobald, *Shakespeare Studies in Baconian Light*.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Evelyn Cecil, *A History of Gardening in England*. London, UK: John Murray, 1910. Pgs. 48, 85

example, only gentlemen engaged in collecting and producing "botanical rarities," whereas peasants and farmers grew grains, grasses and herbs for sustenance and medical applications.[36] If one physically created a grafted plant which strayed from his appropriate class-level garden, it could potentially be a means to climb socially – grafting through graft.

In his 1635 book, *The English Husbandman*, Gervase Markham called grafting the "principall art" of the English Husbandman, and stated that of all the forms of gardening and husbandry, grafting was that which required the most caution and most stringent adherence to guidelines.[37] Beyond the cultural impetus for controlling this botanical act, grafting as a practice needed to be controlled also because of the inherent unpredictability that came with mixing two known plants – would the result be edible, or poisonous? Fertile, or barren? Thus, not only could a graft potentially result in a monstrous, poisonous fruit but it could also result in a plant being grown outside of one's proper degree - a hybrid-defined act of mixing two plants could also have a double-edged, dangerous result. The anxiety regarding the danger of grafting was well represented in early English Renaissance gardening books.

Gervase Markham, although well aware of the "not altogether unnecessary" nature of grafting, interspersed the practical methods and advice presented on grafting in *The English Husbandman* with numerous warnings: that incorrect "grafting of the cyon" was both "troublesome" and "incertaine," and that grafting without complete adherence

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[36] Rebecca Bushnell, *Green Desire: Imagining Early Modern English Gardens*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003. P.146.
[37] Gervase Markham, *The English Husbandman*. London, UK: Augustine Matthewes and John Norton, 1635. P.135. Obtained through EEBO.

to gardening guidelines resulted in grafted plants "full of debilitie and danger."[38] Another Renaissance gardening author, Leonard Mascall, wrote a similar treatise entitled *A Book of the Art and Maner, Howe to Plante and Graffe All Sortes of Trees*, in which he stated that "In some places of this Realme (as I have knowne) where as good and well disposed have graffed, so too evill and malicious persones hath soone after destroied [grafting] with many a strange kinde of fruite againe."[39] Both Markham and Mascall recognized a measure of innate value in the practice of grafting, so long as it was done with proper adherence to both social and vegetable guidelines. John Parkinson, royal apothecary to James I and *botanicus regius primarius* to Charles I,[40] abstained from Markham and Mascall's support of grafting in his 1629 book *Paradisi in Sole,* where he took took a vehement stand against such blatant manipulation of nature:

> The wonderfull desire that many have to see faire, double and sweete flowers hath transported them beyond reason and nature, feigning and boasting often of what they would have, as if they had it. And I thinke, from this desire and boasting hath risen all the false tales and reports of making flowers double as they list, and of giving them colour and sent as they please, and to flower likewise at what time they will. [...] And if any man [would] forme plants at his wil and pleasure, he would doe as much as God himself that created them.[41]

Markham, Mascall and Parkinson were not unique among English writers of the time in their treatment of gardening as a topic; at a time when professional gardeners tended upwards of 10,000 acres of land and roughly one-half of all hired laborers were

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[38] Markham, *English Husbandman*. P.133, 138.
[39] Leonard Mascall, *A Book of the Art and Maner, Howe to Plante and Graffe all Sortes of Trees*. London, UK: Henry Bynneman, 1584. From the author's opening epistle.
[40] Bushnell, *Green Desire*. P.26
[41] Parkinson, *Paradisi in Sole*. p.18

servants in husbandry, gardening manuals addressed to everyone from simple country housewives to noble practitioners of husbandry, and even to royalty were published at astounding rates.[42] Yet, as *The Winter's Tale* demonstrates, it was not only in practical literature that gardening and grafting was addressed.

On a superficial level, it appears as though both Perdita and Polixenes are embodying the socially appropriate outlooks on grafting laid out by royal precedent and popular mandate alike. There is, however, a deeper level to their characters and to the play as a whole, which offers further evidence as to the nature of hybridity in the Renaissance imaginary. Throughout the course of this drama, Shakespeare alludes to grafting not only in its physical manifestations, but in a metaphorical sense as well – he illuminates complexities and nuance within society which the straightforward manner of gardening treatises or the leeway afforded to nobility could not indicate.

In calling his play *The Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare gives his first insinuation of actual grafting as a garden practice. According to the Renaissance and religious calendar, winter began on November 11, the day of Martinmas.[43] In *The English Husbandman*, Gervase Markham, in his descriptions on the rules and limits to grafting, stated "And herein you shall understand that the best times for grafting are every month except October and November."[44] Thus Shakespeare's title, *The Winter's Tale*, denotes the time of the year most ill-suited to grafting, yet the principal thread to his plot is, indeed, the grafted qualities of Perdita herself. For indeed, she is not a lowly shepherdess, but rather a princess of Sicilia, abandoned in Bohemia in an Oedipal turn of fortune, adopted by a

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[42] Bushnell. *Green Desire*. P.18, 52.
[43] Martin W. Walsh, "Medieval English Martinmesse: The Archaeology of a Forgotten Festival." *Folklore*, Vol. 111, Issue 2, October 2000. P.238.
[44] Markham, *The English Husbandman*. P.145.

local shepherd and raised as his daughter. From the start, therefore, Perdita is herself a graft, of sorts.

Unbeknownst to Perdita, her description of grafted plants as "nature's bastards," was used as a descriptor for herself during infancy. Her father, King Leontes of Sicilia was a longtime friend of King Polixenes, "they were trained together in their childhoods,/and there rooted betwixt them then such an affection which cannot choose but branch now." (Act I, Scene II, ll.22-24) Thus, Shakespeare starts his play with a reference to the garden and a suggestion of duality therein: the friendship between the two kings must "branch," that is either grow and flourish, like when a tree first grows its limbs, or divide, be driven apart or separated. The latter option is the first to manifest itself – the tree of friendship between these two kings is cleaved, and a graft, that is Perdita, is placed into the incision. Leontes grows convinced during her gestation that his wife and queen, Hermione, had undertaken an affair with Polixenes and that her unborn child was illegitimate.

At the end of a visit by Polixenes to Sicilia, both Leontes and Hermione are entreating with their friend and guest to extend his trip. Although Polixenes refuses his friend Leontes, he later accepts Hermione's offer, a change of mind that triggers in her husband a wave of jealousy and paranoia deep in the Renaissance imaginary. When Hermione takes Polixenes' hand in an innocent gesture of friendship, Leontes assumes and refuses to sway from his conviction that his friend and wife are sexually involved: "Too hot, too hot!/To mingle friendship far is mingling bloods." (Act I, Scene II, ll.108-109) Only further affirming his suspicions, Hermione leads Polixenes to the royal garden, a place of breeding and cultivation, where grafts are grown. Leontes, convinced of his

spouse's infidelity to the point of hysteria, sends out a nobleman to assassinate Polixenes, and jails his pregnant wife as an adulteress and traitor. When Perdita is born, Leontes believes her to be the product of unnatural, "gross familiarity" and declares that his nobleman Antigonus should "carry/This female bastard hence, and [...] bear it/To some remote and desert place quite out/Of our dominons, and that there [...] leave it." (Act II, Scene III, ll.174-177) Thus Perdita is deemed an unnatural bastard, much like the grafted plants she will scorn sixteen years later; she is removed from her homeland and abandoned on the desolate seaside of Bohemia and left for dead.

Through an interlude from the chorus, the character of time, Shakespeare indicates that sixteen years have passed. The audience is made aware that the abandoned infant has survived and been adopted into an impoverished, untitled foreign family, yet retains innately noble qualities. Perdita's legitimacy was verified by an Apollonian oracle shortly after her abandonment, but the repentant Leontes has been unable to find his daughter and presumes her dead. It is on that barren coastline and in her adoptive status thereafter that Perdita's role as a metaphorical graft becomes clear. She is a royal and noble scion, implanted onto foreign soil, joined with a base stock in the form of her new family. Perdita does not have the luxury of being simply a shepherdess or completely a princess, but is a hybrid of the two – her inherently noble qualities will surface despite her low status and just as certainly, her experiences as a peasant cannot be easily erased.

The interaction between king and shepherdess at a festival initially appears odd – individuals from such distinct social levels would rarely be holding such an involved conversation. The king has disguised himself and attended this celebration, however, in order to ascertain whether his son, Prince Florizel, intends to elope with the shepherd girl

– a marriage which outwardly appears to flout all laws of nature and society. Although unaware of her royal standing and less than enthusiastic about his son's marital intent towards her, Polixenes recognizes an inherent nobility in Perdita, stating "Nothing she does or seems/But smacks of something greater than herself,/Too noble for this place."[45] Additionally, he encourages her to cultivate the carnations and gillyflowers (see figure 8) she scoffed, advising "Then make your garden rich in gillyvors,/And do not call them bastards."[46] He notes that it is a privilege of nobility to have the ability and right to "marry/A gentler scion to the wildest stock,/And make conceive a bark of baser kind/By bud of nobler race."[47] To Polixenes' view, the intended marriage between Florizel and Perdita would be precisely such a union of "gentle scion" and "wildest stock". His apparent approval, therefore, only furthers the suggestion of royal power over the art of grafting. Additionally, such statements indicate that Polixenes has noted Perdita's true nature, her status as hybrid of low class and noble character, and function as Shakespeare's way of further hinting at Perdita's royal origins.

Perdita's status as the legitimate daughter of King Leontes is eventually unveiled, therefore making her marriage to Florizel not merely an acceptable match, but one celebrated between the countries of Sicilia and Bohemia. Importantly, the revelation of her royal birth also validates her status as a symbolic graft onto Bohemia. When she was a shepherdess with noble qualities, a seed implanted onto barren foreign soil, grafted in winter and left without a gardener to tend to her, Perdita's position as a graft was both unnatural and uncontrollable – even to the point where she was able to captivate and transform royalty.

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[45] Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*. Act IV, Scene IV, ll. 157-159.
[46] Ibid., ll. 98-99.
[47] Ibid., ll. 92-95.

Upon the disclosure of her royalty, however, her life in Bohemia and status as Florizel's bride becomes a vehicle for renewed relations and fruitful alliances between their two respective nations. Although there are still to "foreign" scions being grafted together, their equivalent rank makes it an appropriate and advisable match. Whereas her position as a hybrid was something unnatural and objectionable while she was merely a shepherdess, Perdita's marriage into the ruling family of Bohemia means that she has transformed from a master-less, lower class graft into one diligently cultivated by royalty – another indication of the propriety of grafting, both real and symbolic, among the upper classes.

Figure 8: Carnations and gillyflowers from *Paradisi in Sole*, John Parkinson (1629)

In the case of Perdita and Florizel, the indelible marks on her character, caused by her time as a shepherdess, are forgiven by the contemporaneous audience thanks to her eventual return to her proper place on the social ladder and hierarchically appropriate marriage. Clearly, so long as the class system and natural order are ultimately maintained, the Renaissance imaginary was able to forgive and even appreciate the practice of grafting and the issue of hybridity within both a real and allegorical garden. Does, however, the opposite stand true? If the social hierarchy or natural order were disrupted, even with justification, was a fortuitous end acceptable?

THE DUCHESS OF MALFI AND GENDERED GRAFTING

Although the social unseemliness of a marriage between a shepherdess and prince was avoided by the revelation of Perdita's royalty in *The Winter's Tale,* there is no such convenient *deus ex machina* in Thomas Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi.* Like the initial hierarchical disconnect between Perdita and Florizel, the Duchess' intended, Antonio, is an unsuitable social match. Widowed before the inception of this drama, the Duchess is bound to only marry the match chosen for her by her two brothers. Marriage was an important social tool, used to cement alliances, provide heirs, supplement wealth – to the Cardinal and Ferdinand, the Duchess' brothers, she was a vital pawn whom they could manipulate to improve their own fortunes.

Like *The Winter's Tale, The Duchess of Malfi* exhibits a restrained yet continuous suggestion of hybridity, frequently manifested in gardening terms. Webster's first indication of the play's subtle theme of hybridity and the green world appears in the description of Ferdinand and the Cardinal provided by Daniel de Bosola, servant to the duchess and "intelligencer" for the brothers: "He [the Cardinal] and his brother are like plum-trees that grow crooked over standing-pools; they are rich and o'er-laden with fruit, but none but crows, pies, and caterpillars feed on them.[48]" From the play's inception, therefore, the brothers are inextricably linked to the image of a poisoned and unhealthy garden. The trees have grown crooked and draw their sustenance from a fetid, still pool; their fruit induces illness in all but insects and pests – the brothers are a garden, ignored by its keeper and thusly returned to its original wild, forbidding state. Shortly thereafter,

[48] Webster, *Duchess of Malfi.* Act I, Scene I, ll.49-52.

Antonio illuminates another facet to the brothers' duality: he calls the brothers twins "in quality," a melancholy twosome of "a most perverse and turbulent nature.[49]"

Twinnedness is echoed textually in the dialog between the brothers – they frequently finish one another's sentences; they share the same thoughts. This unity of minds lends to Ferdinand and the Cardinal a sense of monstrosity, for they are two real heads sharing physically the same thoughts, just as they are two political heads, Ferdinand a secular duke and the Cardinal a religious leader, sharing the same political body, Malfi. This unnatural occurrence, the same body having two heads, was documented well before the publication of *The Duchess of Malfi* in Ambroise Parè's 1585 book, *On Monsters and Marvels.* Parè attributes the causes of teratism to a great variety of sources, however the cause of a dicephalous body is attributed to one alone: an occurrence of "too great a quantity of seed".[50]

> If there is too great an abundance of matter, a monstrous child having superfluous and useless parts will occur. [...] One must note here that Lycosthenes, the great philosopher, writes a miraculous thing about this monster, for leaving aside the duplication of the head, Nature had omitted nothing: these two heads had the same desire to drink, eat, sleep; and they had identical speech, as also their emotions were the same.[51]

Although Parè's reference to the quantity of seed is less botanical than biological, it is nonetheless significant that the two brothers owe their unnatural identicality to an abundance of seed and are simultaneously compared to twin, twisted trees. Not only are they tied to the image of a sickly and barren garden, but they also symbolically represent

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[49] Ibid. ll. 172, 169.
[50] Parè, *On Monsters and Marvels.* P.8
[51] Ibid.

a hybrid, two-headed monster. The fact that this monster, these brothers, occupy a high position in the social hierarchy is innately threatening to the Renaissance mind – poison at the top of the body politic inevitably affects the whole of the state, and these unnaturally twinned, grafted brothers will have a toxic effect on their subjects as well. In *On Monsters and Marvels*, Parè continues to describe that the two-headed human was cast out and made a pariah because it "could spoil the fruit of the pregnant women by the apprehension and ideas which might remain in their imaginative faculty, over the form of this so monstrous a creature."[52] This fear, that the two-headed monster could ruin literal human 'fruit' only further justifies the assumption that their hybridity is a venomous, lethal occurrence – not only to themselves, but to their constituents, and to their family.

In contrast to her inescapable, monstrously amalgamated brothers, the Duchess appears as a beacon of purity. Antonio describes her character, and its opposition to that of her twisted siblings:

> She throws upon a man so sweet a look,
> That it were able to raise one to a galliard
> That lay in a dead palsy. [...]
> Her days are practised in such noble virtue
> That sure her nights, nay, more, her very sleeps,
> Are more in heaven than other ladies' shrifts.[53]

This passage signifies that the brothers are trying to control not only her consciousness, but her very imagination. Oppositional to her poisonous brothers, the Duchess has curative powers. Significantly, this description indicates that the Duchess, by power of

[52] Ibid.
[53] John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*. London: 1623. Act I, Scene I, ll.195-203.

her imagination alone, is more pure and noble than any other women are, even when in conscious penitence.

She does, however, have one flaw, at least in the eyes of her brothers: aware of their corruption and their intent to root her in their sickly garden, she seeks to wed of her own accord, a man of her choosing, regardless of his station. For all their fraud and venom, her brothers are neither ignorant nor naïve. Ferdinand and the Cardinal endeavor to maintain their hierarchically allotted positions of authority over her, and to impress upon her the significance of marriage only if it enhances their social status. At first, these efforts to ensure the Duchess' obedience are strict yet not overtly threatening:

> FERDINAND: You are a widow:
> You know already what man is; and therefore
> Let not youth, high promotion, eloquence -
> CARDINAL: No, nor anything without the addition [of] honor,
> Sway your high blood.[54]

Should the Duchess elect to ignore their wishes, the brothers forgo the semblance of tact to warn her that any disobedience would have ruinous effects:

> CARDINAL: You may flatter yourself,
> And take your own choice; privately be married
> Under the eaves of night –
> FERDINAND: Think'st the best voyage
> That e'er you made; like the irregular crab,
> Which, though't goes backward, thinks that it goes right

[54] Ibid., Act I, Scene II, ll.3-8.

Because it goes its own way; but observe,

Such weddings may more properly be said

To be executed than celebrated.[55]

Instead of meekly submitting to their efforts, however, the Duchess risks her brothers' punishment, and deviates away from the traditionally subservient female role to which she was expected to adhere. In secret, she weds the steward of her household, Antonio, in whom the Duchess recognizes an innate decency and dignity belied by his low social standing. Unlike Perdita, however, Antonio's righteous qualities are not conveniently caused by actual, titled nobility. Soon thereafter, she finds herself to be pregnant – her clandestine affair risks revelation, and her body incubates a socially hybridized infant; a forbidden graft of a gentle scion and common stock.

Just as the garden is nature's green womb, cultivating grafts at its master's urging, so too does the Duchess attempt to grow and nourish the offspring of Antonio, who despite his base rank is, through the social construct of marriage, legitimately her new lord. It is with the Duchess' pregnancy and her emergent state as a garden of sorts, that the layers of vegetable and hybridized allegory, hinted at in the description of her brothers, truly bloom. Suddenly, the brothers' threat to the Duchess about an unapproved marriage resulting in death is an imminent reality. Thus, the monstrous and vegetable references result in the brothers being more than merely an unhealthy, abandoned plot, but also a vehicle for spreading poison and graft to others around them.

Knowing Ferdinand and the Cardinal's destructive potential as well as the malice they held for a secret union undertaken by the Duchess, the brothers' spy, Bosola, endeavors to uncover the truth about the Duchess' secret marriage. He observes that the

[55] Ibid., Act I, Scene II, ll.35-43

duchess "is sick a-days, she pukes, her stomach seethes,/ The fins of her eye-lids look most teeming blue,/ She wanes i'th' cheek, and waxes fat i'th' flank, And, contrary to our Italian fashion,/ Wears a loose-bodied gown: there's somewhat in't,[56]" and decides to test his theory of her pregnancy. Bosola determines to present the Duchess with the year's first apricots, knowing that her reaction to the fruit will either prove or refute his thoughts:

> BOSOLA: I have a present for your grace.
>
> DUCHESS: For me, sir?
>
> BOSOLA: Apricocks, madam.
>
> DUCHESS: O, sir, where are they?
>
> I have heard of none to-year. [...]
>
> Indeed, I thank you: they are wondrous fair ones.
>
> What an unskillful fellow is our gardener!
>
> We shall have none this month.
>
> BOSOLA: [...] I wish your grace had pared 'em.
>
> I forgot to tell you, the knave gardener, only to raise his profit by them the sooner,
>
> Did ripen them in horse-dung.

In accordance with Bosola's predictions, the Duchess sickens from the fruit and prematurely goes into labor. What, however, was the significance of the apricots? How did Bosola know to expect them to engender sickness in the pregnant Duchess? The choice of apricots was of immense significance as to the relationship between the

[56] Webster, *Duchess of Malfi*. Act II, Scene I, ll.129-139.

Duchess and her poisonous brothers. In his 1608 treatise *Floraes Paradise*, Sir Hugh Plat lays out the most appropriate method for grafting an apricot tree:

> Plant an Apricot in the midst of other plumme trees round about it, at a convenient distance; then in an apt season, bore-thorough your plumme trees, and let in to every one of these, one or two of the branches of your Apricot tree, taking away the barke on both sides of your branches which you let in, joyning [them] sap to sap.[57]

I have argued already that grafting as an art is acceptable and good only when practiced in adherence to the social hierarchy and with due respect to the laws of the garden. The social hybridity that the child of the Duchess and Antonio represents most definitely deviates from this rule. In an attempt to make the physical practice of grafting accord to social laws, Plat has described the way to graft an apricot with an acceptably tamed result. The apricot is intended to be grafted gradually into the plum trees which surround it, resulting in an intermingling of sap between the two distinct trees. Important to this process, however, is the health and viability of both trees, as Plat notes, with straight trunks, healthy leaves, and productive roots.[58] In *The Duchess of Malfi*, however, the only plum trees present are Ferdinand and the Cardinal, growing crooked, with a poisonous sap. The apricot, therefore, becomes a symbol of the polluted relationship between the Duchess and her brothers – a graft gone wrong, and growing as a bastardization of nature. The sickness which results from the Duchess' consumption of Bosola's apricots is directly representative of the toxic effect her familial relations have had on her existence,

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[57] Sir Hugh Plat. *Floraes Paradise Beautified and Adorned with Sundry Sorts of Delicate Fruites and Flowers*. London, UK: H. Lownes, 1608. Pgs. 128-129.
[58] Plat, *Floraes Paradise*, p.128.

and that fatal corruption has, like the product of a true vegetable graft, rendered her infertile – indicated by the demise of her hybrid offspring.

Returning again to the information of the early treatises on grafting and gardening, Bosola's understanding of the laws of the garden and his reasoning become clear, and the grafted nature of his apricots emerges. In *Floraes Paradise,* Plat states that "a grafted Apricot is the best; the grafted is more tender then the other," and advises that, to allow grafted trees to prosper well, ox blood mixed with clay must seal the grafts. Additionally, the commonest fertilizer for grafted plants, according to Plat, was a mix of cow and horse manure. He warns, however, that "if you doe this [covering the holes with blood and clay] at the Spring, the smell of the blood will offend you; and therefore this practice is best for the Winter season."[59] There are a few specific textual references which support the assumption that the apricots fed to the Duchess by Bosola are grafted, yet harvested at the wrong time. When vocalizing his intent to test the Duchess' state of pregnancy, Bosola says "I have a trick may chance discover it,/ A pretty one; I have brought some apricocks,/ The first our spring yields."[60]

The first clue as to the apricot's grafted origin is in the specific reference of manure as the fertilizer used to create the fruit – although manure was certainly not a rarity for fertilization, the fact that it was mentioned at all automatically lends it significance. If the apricots were natural and innocent fruit, the manure used on them would be an unnecessary detail, so its inclusion is an intentional effort by Bosola to intimate grafting. Secondly, by noting the precise time of year in which the apricot was harvested, Bosola creates a temporal significance for the fruit which, like the choice of

[59] Plat, *Floraes Paradise.* Pgs. 103, 139.
[60] Webster, *Duchess of Malfi.* Act II, Scene I, ll.133-134.

fertilizer, would be superfluous if it was not included to allude to hybridization. Lastly, the phrase "a pretty one" is repeated by Bosola only one other time over the course of the play, when he states "'Tis a pretty art,/ This grafting," immediately after the Duchess has eaten the apricots, a linguistic connection which indicates the graftedness of the apricot she consumed. Since, as Plat points out, the offspring of a grafted plant is barren, two grafted fruits could never merge and neither can the physically grafted apricot combine in the Duchess' body with her hybrid child without a poisonous effect. Clearly, the well-versed Bosola was both familiar with a variety of gardening practices and aware of the potentially negative results of grafting, both literally and socially. He has taken the advice of practical gardening manuals and applied them to social hybridization and, significantly, the predicted results remain constant. Therefore, just as tangible gardening had specific regulations and constraints to be followed, with disastrous results if they were ignored, so did the cultivation, or corruption, of a social garden.

The Duchess' decision to stray from the acceptable cultural convention and choose her own husband is likened to a gardener abandoning the laws of cultivation. The result of her decision, her hybrid child, acts to her society just as a grafted apricot, grown outside the rules of gardening, acted to her body – a vehicle of poison destroying the body from the inside out. The issue of grafting as intrinsically linked to the social hierarchy, rectified in *The Winter's Tale*'s revelation of Perdita's royalty, remains problematic in *The Duchess of Malfi*. Perdita's status as a graft becomes acceptable when it is recognized that she is of the proper stock to function as a graft without disrupting the class system. In *The Duchess of Malfi*, however, the social hybridizing between the Duchess and Antonio had no happily convenient resolution. The acts of physical grafting

and gardening in *The Duchess of Malfi* were not adapted and modified as they were in *The Winter's Tale*, but rather irrevocably poisoned the individuals it met. The contrast between the portrayals of the green world in these the two plays reemphasizes the dichotomy between the various impressions of the garden in the Renaissance collective.

The issue of the garden has a divided significance: on one hand, it is corporeal, biological hybridization; on the other, it symbolizes the social hierarchy and royal might. The following chapter will examine a more thoroughly metaphorical embodiment of hybridity, one less tangible in reality, yet no less significant in its effect on Renaissance culture and the collective Renaissance imaginary.

OF THE EAST, IN THE WEST: GYPSIES AS A HYBRID 'OTHER'

On August 17th, 1427, a gypsy man styling himself as a European nobleman, along with one hundred followers, appeared on the outskirts of Paris. On that day, the French capital, occupied until 1436 by the English during the Hundred Years War, became the site of the English court's first encounter with the itinerant Roma people. The vanguard of this band of gypsies, Duke Thomas and eleven companions, arrived in Place de La Chapelle in the north of Paris astride horses valued at 20 florins apiece, garbed in formal silken robes cinched with fine silver belts. They bore letters of safe-conduct from both King Sigismund of Hungary, the de facto Holy Roman Emperor, the Holy See himself, Pope Martin V, the Duke of Savoy, Queen Blanche of Navarre and from King Alfonso V of Aragon. Emboldened by such a genial reception from those leaders, the exotic band of gypsies entered English-controlled Paris heralded as nobility yet in actuality, deep in the midst of *o xonxanó baró*,[61] a Romani phrase meaning "the great trick." An ingenious con their appearance in Western Europe certainly was.[62]

The brilliance of the gypsies' deception hinged on the obsessive religiosity of Western Europe at this time. During the thirteenth century, both Christian pilgrimages and almsgiving to wanderers were widely encouraged by the Roman Catholic Church. Duke Thomas and his band roamed across Europe claiming they were on a seven-year

[61] Angus Fraser. *The Gypsies*. Oxford, UK; Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992. P.62
[62] Fraser, *Gypsies*. P.77; Brian Vesey-Fitzgerald. *Gypsies of Britain: An Introduction to their History*. London, UK: Chapman & Hall, 1944. P.17

pilgrimage, a penance laid upon them by their bishops for abandoning and subsequently rediscovering their Christian faith during the Ottoman Invasion of Hungary. Playing on the unquestioning European adherence to papal writ, the gypsy troupe was not only able to travel unhindered across Europe, but were able to fund and feed themselves by cleverly manipulating Christian charity. As Hermann Cornerus recounts in his *Chronica novella usque ad annum 1435*, the original letters obtained by the gypsy delegation from King Sigismund accorded that "they [the gypsies] were to be admitted and kindly treated by states, princes, fortified places, towns, bishops, and prelates to whom they turned;" the Papal dispatch echoed the same sentiments. Because of these letters, the gypsy delegation enjoyed stately treatment in the course of their travels: the group received complimentary lodging at the King's Inn in Bologna, gold, bread and beer at Tournai, lodging, silver pieces and smoked herring in Deventre, and alms and food at numerous other European towns.[63]

Such tremendous success in their ruse engendered confidence among the Roma. The enigmatic assemblage touted their Europeanized titles and names – dukes, counts and earls, Thomases, Michaels and Andrews, professed a profound and true adherence to Christian dogma, and flaunted their copious amounts of silver jewelry as marks of nobility and wealth.[64] Nobles, however, they certainly were not. Cunning tricksters, Duke Thomas and his compatriots devised *o xonxanó baró* as a front for their expedition into Western Europe to determine the prospects for a life of thievery and deceit there. Far from being Christian aristocrats, this band was part of a population calling themselves

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[63] Translated from the Latin of Hermann Cornerus, *Chronica novella usque ad annum 1435*, in J.G. Eccard, *Corpus historicum medii ævi* (Leipzig, 1723), vol. 2, col. 1225.
[64] Fitzgerald, *Gypsies of Britain*. P.18

Roma, a word which derived from the Sanskrit word *dōmba*, signifying not 'princes' or 'nobility' but rather 'men of low caste.'[65] The sheer audacity of their hoax indicated the shrewd, brilliantly calculating nature of these 'men of low caste.' This was not a meek, reserved band of foreigners. At a time when Europe was truly beginning to delve into the world beyond her traditional borders, the gypsies streamed into Western Europe with a flamboyance and élan that captivated the imagination of the native Europeans. Such an overt crowd intrigued the populace, and the pilgrims continued to be welcomed and lauded as nobles.

Who were these people, these itinerant wanderers who so easily duped the head of the Catholic Church, numerous monarchs, and the common people of Europe? Limited knowledge among the gypsies themselves and inadequate 15th century European geographic knowledge clouded the gypsy's origins from the advent of the Roma presence in the west. Sebastian Münster, in *Cosmographia Universalis (1550)* related that the Gypsies claimed to originate from "far beyond the Holy Land and Babylon, and that to get there they would have to pass through the land inhabited by the pygmies."[66] Instead of being 'Egyptian,' therefore, they were of Indian origin. From India, these ethnic Roma fled into Anatolia, where they were documented in Constantinople church records by the late 1100s.[67] From there, the gypsy people progressed to Greece and Hungary, moving closer and closer to Central and Western Europe, the site of their 'great trick' of the early 1400s.[68] By 1505, they had made their way to the British Isles, first documented in the records of the Lord High Treasurer for Scotland, when a gypsy dancer was paid £7 for

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[65] Fraser, *Gypsies*. Pp.25-26
[66] Fraser, *Gypsies*. P.65
[67] Ibid. P.47
[68] Valentina Glajar and Domnica Radulescu, eds. *"'Gypsies' in European Literature and Culture*. New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008. P.5

entertaining King James IV. At this juncture, it seemed as though their brilliant con was going to pay off splendidly – entertaining royals, enjoying free food and drink, living a prosperous, successful life. As knowledge of their duplicity and their manipulation of Christian principles for their own purposes spread, however, the gypsies began to be ostracized from their adopted communities.

As their obscure origin and multifaceted early history in Western Europe indicate, the status of the gypsies as inherent outsiders is clear. The Roma were a group whose innate foreignness was obvious from more than just their dark complexions and strange speech. Every facet of their nomadic lifestyle was alien to the Europeans. At first, this difference was entrancing, captivating. The gypsies' exoticism moved from fascination to fear, from an entertaining, aristocratic curiosity to subversive social menace. Their ability to style themselves, both outwardly and internally, as legitimate nobility, and the initial appeal they represented to the Europeans, however, made them a threat to the strict social hierarchy at the time. To the isolated, homogenous European world, the gypsies grew terrible in their foreignness. Moreover, hybrid aspects of their nature emerged – they were a people who were Eastern yet Western, their leaders were nobles living as wandering commoners, and their population as a whole were pagans acting in a false Christian faith. In this awareness of the fearful duality of their inherent nature, the gypsies became not just foreign but monstrous.

The deepest-reaching root of these fears was the fact that, if the gypsies could so easily metamorphose into European nobility, what was to stop Europeans from themselves transforming into gypsies? It was a fear not entirely unfounded. By 1562, there were such numbers of people "counterfeiting, transforming or disguising

themselves by their Apparel, Speech or other Behaviour[69]" into gypsies that new legal statutes passed, punishing the imposters and gypsies equally. The fact that the Roma were attracting native Europeans in such numbers as to effect legal change signified a deeper threat. More than causing native citizens to turn away from their traditional roles in European life as individuals, the gypsies' appeal was subverting the social structure and hierarchy so vital to the continuation of the European lifestyle. Each individual they incorporated into their existence was one less citizen who could fulfill the roles and obligations demanded of his communal position, one more rent in the fabric of an ideal European society. The emergence of this hybrid sector of society, however small, was of fearful significance – such a monstrous amalgam of Roma and European engendered terror in European minds.

A scarce 25 years after dancing for the King, the first anti-Gypsy legislation passed through the English Parliament, *The Egyptian Act of 1530*:

> Afore this tyme diverse and many outlandyeshe People callynge themselfes Egyptians, using no Crafte nor faicte of Merchaundyce had comen into this Relame and gone from Shire to Shire and Place to Place in greate Company, and used greate subtyll and crafty means to deceive the people, berying them in Hande that they by Palmestre coulde telle Menne and Womens Fortunes and so many tymes by crafte and subtyltie had deceived the People of theyr Money and also had comytted many and haynous Felonyes and Robberies to the great Hurte and

[69] Elizabeth I. *Order for the Avoiding of all Doubts and Ambiguities* (1562), in T.W. Thompson, "Consorting with and Counterfeiting Egyptians," *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, third series, vol. I (1-2) Pp.15-43.

Deceyte of the people that they had comyn amonge. From hensforth no suche Person be suffred to come within this Kynge's Realme.[70]

Subsequent legislation would continue in much the same vein, threatening forfeiture of property and deportation. The year 1554 witnessed the introduction of the death penalty for any person deemed a gypsy. The gypsies retreated to the outskirts of society, maintaining as low a profile as possible, persecuted for mere existence.[71]

This shift in attitudes towards the Roma was not limited to legislation alone. Artistic representations of gypsies progressed from accepting, even deferential to mocking and bitter. Titian's *The Gypsy Madonna (1512)* (figure 9) shows a beautiful and favorable portrait of the Virgin Mary as a gypsy – dark complected, large almond eyes, and the red and white color combination so frequently seen on gypsy women. This painting very clearly shows two distinct figures at once – the pose and attitude of the Virgin is unmistakable, as is the inherent foreignness of her coloring and features. By the mere suggestion of a Roma woman being the mother of Christ, Titian clearly displays the initial European goodwill towards the gypsies. Another contemporaneous painting, Giorgione's *The Tempest (1508)* (figure 10) is more contentious in subject matter – the couple depicted have been labeled variously as Adam, Eve and Cain, Hagar, Ishmael and the Angel, and Bacchus and Semele. Significantly, however, the concept of the couple as gypsies has also gained significant popularity in the debate over the painting's meaning.[72]

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[70] Henry VIII, Act 22, c. 10 (1530), in Fitzgerald, *Gypsies of Britain*. Pp.29-30

[71] Judith Okely. *The Traveller-Gypsies*. Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1983. P.3

[72] Ross S. Kilpatrick, "Hagar and the Angel in Giorgione's *Tempest*," *Artibus et Historiae*. Vol. 18, No. 36 (1997) Pgs. 81-86.

Figure 9 (above): ***The Gypsy Madonna*****, Titian (1512)**
Figure 10 (below): ***The Tempest*****, Giorgione (1508)**

In 1530, Italian art patron Marcantonio Michiel made the first recorded analysis of *The Tempest*, saying that the man is a shepherd and the female figure a gypsy and her child.[73] Although her fair coloring makes the woman appear to be a white European, the fact that she is alone and outside the city walls suggests that she is an outsider in European society. Her fashion and pose combined with her representation as a typical fair Renaissance beauty, however, add significance to her status as a gypsy. While clearly a social marginal of popular, she is still endowed with a beautiful and noble countenance. These two paintings provide evidence that, at the least during the early days of gypsy presence in Western Europe, the gypsies' foreignness separated them from society at large without demonizing them, and the Roma people still held a certain appeal to the Renaissance audience.

As the European populace grew more wary of the gypsy presence in their society, however, the artistic representations of the Roma changed significantly. Rather than being light, romantic and positive representations like those of Titian and Giorgione, the renderings of gypsies took on a dark and bleak tone to match the shift in European perception. Simon Vouet, in his painting *The Fortune Teller (1617)* (figure 11) demonstrates what, exactly, the gypsies were identified with after they lost European favor. The young Roma woman is distracting the gullible young white man with the pretense of a palm-reading while the wizened gypsy woman in shadows behind the younger pair makes a vulgar hand gesture while lifting coins from the gentleman's pocket. In Bartolomeo Manfredi's *The Gypsy Fortune Teller (1616)* (figure 12), the shadowy painting shows a similar scene – a young gypsy woman distracting the subject

[73] Marcantonio Michiel, *Notizia* in Settis, Salvatore. *Giorgione's Tempest: Interpreting the Hidden Subject*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

of the ruse while her older counterpart secretly steals right from his pocket. Importantly, however, the gypsies are themselves being taken advantage of. The young man on the painting's far right is subtly lifting coins out of the palm-reader's pocket, demonstrating that not only has Europe grown aware of the gypsies' conniving ways but has also started to adapt to the Roma's methods when dealing with them, essentially that the common European has become 'gypsified'. This painting demonstrates the upheaval gypsies could potentially bring to the European social hierarchy – not only did they steal and con people out of money, but their presence resulted in native Europeans engaging in the same activities. In his book *Orientalism*, Edward Said notes that in the Western imaginary, the Orient was perpetually embellished, always "something more than what was empirically known about it."[74] These artistic works provide an ideal example of the European tradition to exaggerate the East, whether positively as in Titian's Madonna-like portrayal or negatively as in Vouet's duplicitous and thieving painting.

Ostracized in areas as diverse as law and art, the gypsies moved from a welcome and fascinating addition to European society to cultural outcasts. The English implementation of a death penalty for being a gypsy was undoubtedly a drastic move. Although most of Europe indeed persecuted and detested the gypsy population, the English were especially severe in their treatment of the Roma, and demonstrated a uniquely intense xenophobia at this time. Spain, whose flourishing culture under the Hapsburgs during *el Siglo de Oro (~1500 – 1650)* as well as the rest of the Mediterranean region provided much inspiration for the bourgeoning English Renaissance, had a much longer tradition of cultural amalgamation and less initial aversion to the influx of foreigners.

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[74] Edward Said, *Orientalism*. New York, NY: Random House, Inc., 1978. P. 55.

Figure 11 (top): ***The Fortune Teller, Simon Vouet 1617***

Figure 12 (bottom): ***The Gypsy Fortune Teller, Bartolomeo Manfredi 1616***

King Alfonso V of Aragon, for example, defended the gypsies as "muy honrado e inclito[75]" in the letter of protection he provided Duke Thomas in the early fifteenth century. Rather than just ignorance or naiveté on his part, Alfonso's recommendation was likely born out of tolerance acquired by life in a societal mélange.

Imagining Gypsies in Spain

With significant African and Moorish influence as well as a large and, at times, influential Jewish *converso* community, the Spanish culture had long been recognized as uniquely distinct on the European continent, and exhibited a long history of many forms of hybridity. From the Arabic invasion and conquest in 711 AD until the mid-eleventh century, Spain was solidly under Moorish leadership. Arabic influences in art, architecture, scholarship and religion melded with the preexisting Roman lifestyle, and, combined with the Muslims' remarkable tolerance for other religions, a significantly diverse Spanish people arose. They were diverse not only in their cultural hybridization, but also in the physical blending of races and ethnicities born of the frequent and encouraged interracial marriages of the time.[76] This support for interreligious collaboration was not limited to the Arabic leaders, however. In the mid-thirteenth century the Catholic King of Castile and elected King of the Romans, Alfonso X, brought together a group of scholars from Judaism, Islam and Christianity known as *La Escuela de Traductores de Toledo*. These intellectuals worked together over the course of Alfonso's reign translating the most important works of their three religions into Latin,

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[75] Fraser, *Gypsies*. P.77
[76] Carmen Pereira-Muro. *Culturas de España* p.48

Hebrew and Spanish in order to make various religions' texts more widely available to Spanish scholars and nobility. In one work commissioned by Alfonso X, *Las Cantigas de Santa María*, illuminations depict Moorish and Christian unity (figure 13), even going so far as to depict a white Spaniard and dark Moor singing praises together to the Virgin Mary. Other illuminations in the *Cantigas* show Mary saving Jews from persecution and sickness. Even in a Christian manual of hymns to the mother of Jesus, interracial and interreligious cooperation was emphasized and celebrated.

Figure 13, *Cantigas de Santa María, Codex E 13th*

Long before the rest of Renaissance Europe even thought to fear hybridity, rulers of Spain from assorted societal backgrounds were creating an amalgamation of cultures throughout the Iberian Peninsula. Centuries before the gypsies first appeared to the white,

Catholic Europeans, the Spanish populace was actively becoming a fusion of diverse ideals and tangible physical distinctions.[77] Historically, the Spanish kingdoms had exhibited a great deal of acceptance towards foreignness, and maintained an intrinsically blended culture. With the marriage of Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragón in 1469, however, the tradition of hybridity effected by these non-Christian, non-white citizens became truly problematic to the social hierarchy in Spain. Their marriage grafted together two powerful, wealthy and previously independent kingdoms, and resulted in the first emergence of a unified Spain. Known as *los Reyes Católicos*, Isabella and Ferdinand enacted *el Decreto de la Alhambra* on March 31st, 1492, in an attempt to homogenize Spanish society into a uniformly white, Catholic existence:

> Estamos informados del gran daño que persiste a los cristianos al relacionarse con los judíos, y a su vez estos judíos tratan de todas maneras a subvertir la Santa Fe Católica y están tratando de obstaculizar cristianos creyentes de acercarse a sus creencias. [...] Después de muchísima deliberación, se acordó en dictar que todos los Judíos y Judías deben abandonar nuestros reinados y que no sea permitido regresar. De los llamados judíos si no son convertidos deberán ser expulsados del Reino.[78]

The text of the decree, implying the inclusion of Muslims as well, gave non-Christians a clear, unavoidable choice: convert to Catholicism, or be forced from the country permanently. The ensuing wave of conversion resulted in countless *conversos* and *moriscos* throughout Spain, and created an entirely hybrid subset of society, those

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[77] Pereira-Muro, *Culturas*. P.49

[78] Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragón, Decreto de la Alhambra (31 March 1492), in David Raphael. *Decreto de la Alhambra*. Hollywood, CA: Carmi House Press, 1992.

who played at Christianity while retaining their original faiths in private. Alonso de Cartagena, a *converso* historian in Spain during the fifteenth century, was the first outspoken proponent of the concept of "productive miscegenation" in society, theorizing that cultural hybridity, although discordant with the nation's self-representation as a homogenous and unified entity, could strengthen society as a whole. In his *Defensorium Unitatis Christianae*, Cartagena applied the metaphor of two parents and their offspring to the situation in Spain. He represented the Gothic race, ancestors of the contemporaneous Spanish nobility, as the 'father'; where the Spanish-dwelling outsiders, *conversos*, *moriscos* and the like were the 'mother,' two distinct individuals that, when combined to form a "youthful child of 'mixed' blood" could rejuvenate and unify the nation.[79] This concept directly contradicted the belief of the ruling classes at the time that "'race mixing' was dangerous [...] because it was believed that the product of 'race mixing' resulted in the worst traits of both parents emerging in their offspring.[80]" Thus, despite the fact that Isabella and Ferdinand were doing their utmost to craft a unified society, there was a facet to the Spanish culture which remained determinedly amalgamated and a level of acceptance among the common population of their complex heritage.[81] Although at this time, the upper classes of Spanish society came from a similar cultural mold as the rest of white, Christian Europe, her history of religious and social diversity as well as her position as a crossroads between the Mediterranean and Atlantic Oceans and between Africa and Europe lent Spain a distinctive air of hybridity. To the

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[79] Rosenstock, "Alonso de Cartagena." P.192.
[80] Ian Hancock. "'Gypsy' Stereotype and the Sexualization of Romani Women," *"Gypsies" in European Literature and Culture*. New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008. Pp.184–185.
[81] Bruce Rosenstock. "Alonso de Cartagena: Nation, Miscegenation, and the Jew in Late-Medieval Castile," *Exemplaria*, vol.12, no.1, 2000. Asheville, NC: Pegasus Press, University of North Carolina at Asheville. P.186

English mind in particular, Spain was a nation comprised of trickster characters with a history and culture as inextricably hybrid as a chimera.

Literary Tradition and the Picaresque

Social traditions were not the only hybridized aspect of Spain's culture, and her position on the edge of Africa and the Muslim world resulted in more than just the physical invasion of 711 AD. Literary customs crossed Spain's borders far more subtly than did the Moorish armies yet left just as pervasive an influence on culture and society in Iberia. While the literature of Renaissance England indicated that manipulating, clever and roguish characters all came from the Machiavellian world of the Mediterranean, Spain was privy to and deeply affected by an older genre that traced the trickster's origins back to Hamadan, Iran and the 10th-century māqāmat narratives.

Perfected by Badī al-Zamān Hamadhānī, māqāmat stories had two focal characters: the noble, refined yet ignorant transmitter and the roguish, mendicant yet eloquent rhetor.[82] The presence of these two characters and satirical interactions between them is the sole identifying characteristic of this genre. In a twist on typical social norms, it is the poor, knavish figure who assumes the role of teacher in the māqāmat narratives and the elegant and dignified character who becomes the pupil, and learns through repetition of his educator's speeches. Because of this instructor-apprentice relationship and the contrary social hierarchy, the overarching theme of any māqāmat story is that of

[82] Abdelfattah Kilito, "Māqāmat," in Franco Moretti, ed. *The Novel, Volume 2: Forms and Themes*. Princeton, NJ and Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2006. P.139

constructing and shifting identity and personal metamorphosis.[83] Over the course of the tale, the rhetor and transmitter begin to exchange various internal and external traits, the end result of which are two characters, distinct from their original selves, and who are composed of an inextricably tangled blend of dignity and poverty and articulacy and knavery.[84] There is no predictability to which trait will be exhibited at any given time – at the story's conclusion, both characters are volatile, cleverly resourceful and undeniably hybrid, just as the genre itself was as well.

From its 10th century origins in Iran, therefore, māqāmat progressed across the Middle East and Africa, across the Strait of Gibraltar, and left an indelible mark on the literary customs of Spain. In 1554, with the publication of its first seminal work, *La Vida de Lazarillo de Tormes*, the picaresque genre was born. Like its predecessor māqāmat, the picaresque is a genre difficult to define. Typically, the term picaresque is applied to literary works detailing an autobiographical narrative of a central, roguish character – the *pícaro*. This archetypal *pícaro* is of low birth, frequently a bastard, who has to turn to a life of thievery, deception and duplicitous servitude in order to survive. Distinguished by wit and innate cleverness, the *pícaro* is, of necessity, an individual who depends on his mutability and adaptive skills in order to alter his character time and again. These transformations allow him to play on his master or adversary's failings in order to fulfill his goals of self-advancement, so ultimately, it is through the power of metamorphosis that the *pícaro* thrives.[85]

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[83] Ibid., 140.
[84] Ibid., 144.
[85] Frank Wadleigh Chandler, *Romances of Roguery: An Episode in the History of the Novel*. New York, NY: London, UK: MacMillan & Co. Ltd., 1899. Pgs. 45-46

From that central description, however, picaresque novels abandon all other generic concerns and cover a variety of scenarios in a wide range of settings both real and cultural. For roughly a century, from *Lazarillo de Tormes* in 1554 until *La Vida y Hechos de Estabanillo González, Hombre de Buen Humor* in 1646, the picaresque dominated the Spanish literary scene.[86] The most vital aspect of the picaresque as a whole is, like māqāmat, the shifts which occur in the pícaro's identity over the course of the story. With every individual he encounters, the impoverished and uneducated rogue brings out inherent hypocrisies and dishonesties of the individuals, and demonstrates his own innate cleverness in return. By the end of the pícaro's narrative, his delinquency has become meritorious, almost, in that his quality of live has invariably improved – he has managed to rise, at least economically, above his birth.[87] He is a meld of the deceit and thievery into which he was born and the knowledge and social education his trickery enabled him to experience; a character who has made his way in the world through dishonesty and illegality, gaining all his advancements through graft. In this tradition, therefore, an archetypal and intrinsically hybrid character becomes the hero of popular Spanish literature, that which is shameful becomes estimable and vice versa in the complex, knavish figure.

Thus, by the advent of the Renaissance, Spain had accumulated an extensive history, both tangible and imaginary, of hybridity. She was a mixture of races and religions, a place where thievery and cheating was made admirable in literature, where foreign immigrants and ideas prospered as transplants on European soil. As the

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[86] Peter N. Dunn, *Spanish Picaresque Fiction: A New Literary History*. Ithaca, NY; London, UK: Cornell University Press, 1993. Pgs. 10-11.
[87] Harry Sieber, *The Picaresque*. London, UK: Methuen & Co., 1977. Pgs. 64 – 67.

picaresque tradition grew and various historical and ethnic influences converged, so too did Spain's reputation as a fertile ground for cultural grafting increase. This status as a breeding ground for hybridity spread across Renaissance Europe, visible most clearly in the European adaptations and mimicries of Spanish literary tradition. It was through literature that the concept of Spain and the Mediterranean as fountains of social amalgamation was propagated, and thus literature itself became the instrument through which the irresistible and dangerous ideas of hybridity and cultural contamination were disseminated.

La Gitanilla

Echoes of Spain's profound history of hybridization are apparent in Miguel de Cervantes' *La Gitanilla.* At stake in this story is nothing less than what the rest of Europe so feared about the alluring gypsies: the risk the gypsies posed to the rigidity of social hierarchy and, more alarming, the potential creation of a group of social half-breeds, neither gypsy nor European but a worrisome fusion of the two. Cervantes takes the topic so feared by European society, the bidirectional social transformation caused by the gypsies' presence, and tempers it so that it is not a catastrophic occurrence, but a relatively benign one. At a time when many European countries were enacting anti-Roma legislation and Christians who associated with gypsies were threatened with excommunication, such favorable treatment of the Roma in a story was remarkable on Cervantes' part.[88]

[88] Fitzgerald, *Gypsies of Britain*. P.19.

Cervantes begins *La Gitanilla* with an apt summary of how society at the time viewed the gypsies, that their sole reason for existence is thievery and graft, and that the roguish aspects of their nature are immune to all but death:

> Parece que los gitanos y gitanas solamente nacieron en el mundo para ser ladrones: nacen de padres ladrones, críanse con ladrones, estudian para ladrones y, finalmente, salen con ser ladrones corrientes y molientes a todo ruedo; y la gana del hurtar y el hurtar son en ellos como accidentes inseparables, que no se quitan sino con la muerte.[89]

Published in 1613, *La Gitanilla* appears at a time when the lies of *o xonxanó baró* had been revealed to the European world at large, where anti-gypsy legislation is commonplace, and where the itinerant Roma are ostracized from all civilized society. The statement, therefore, that gypsies would not and could not become any more than common thieves would be not only expected, but taken as truth by the majority of Cervantes' European audience. Obvious from the story's first words, however, is the fact that Cervantes establishes this stereotype with the specific intent to dismantle and complicate it. Not only does it ironize his entire statement about the thievish nature of gypsies, saying they merely *appear* to be innately criminal, but it also indicates an overarching theme of *La Gitanilla*, that is, a metamorphic, gypsy-like ability to confuse what *seems to be* and what *is*.

The first glaring example of this disparity between latency and verity appears in Cervantes' description of the heroine, Preciosa. He first elaborates on Preciosa's

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[89] Miguel de Cervantes, *La Gitanilla, Las Dos Doncellas*. Edición de Rosa Navarro Durán. Madrid, Spain: Alianza Editorial, 2005. P.29

upbringing, detailing how her grandmother taught her "todas sus gitanerías y modos de embelecos y trazas de hurtar.[90]" Immediately following that description, in dialectical opposition to her deceitful nature stands her captivating form as "la más hermosa y discreta que pudiera hallarse, no entre los gitanos, sino entre cuantas hermosas y discretas pudiera pregonar la fama.[91]" From the very first passage of this tale, Cervantes shows Preciosa as a constellation of contraries - thief and beauty, a high-class peasant, a noble gypsy – the hybrid as cultural oxymoron. She is, as Said describes, at once familiar and strange, a paradigm of "mysteriously attractive opposites," a clever and capable cheat who is also adheres perfectly to the European standards of beauty and charm.[92] More than a mere paradox, Preciosa is the embodiment of European apprehension towards the transformative nature of the gypsies. She is an exceedingly polite, well-spoken girl whose grace and gentility is so clear that "poco a poco fue enamorando los ojos de cuantos la miraban,[93]" attractive not just to fellow gypsies, but every individual who gazed upon her. Such overt descriptions of Preciosa's inherent goodness, purity and nobility would not pass unnoticed by the staunchly gypsy-suspicious European audience for whom Cervantes wrote.

The fact that a gypsy girl could so naturally and thoroughly embody such noble characteristics is problematic on its own, but her attractiveness to everyone, especially non-gypsies, is the true point of worry to European society. The threat posed by gypsies to the stability and continuance of their strict hierarchy is encapsulated in the portrayal of

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[90] Ibid., P.29
[91] Ibid., P.30
[92] Said, *Orientalism*. Pgs. 43, 57
[93] Cervantes, *La Gitanilla*. P.31

this gypsy girl, described by the magistrate as "una pieza de reyes[94]" who even by her name is a *precious* object. Preciosa entranced the white, Christian society with which she interacted, melding seamlessly with the ideals of nobleness to which they adhered. More than that, however, she held such appeal to white Christian men in particular that she is the cause of their abandoning family, wealth and country in order to pursue her.

Don Juan de Cárcamo, a fine gentleman who seeks out the gypsy women on foot, "gallardo y ricamente aderezado de camino," appearing in "un ascua de oro" and boasting one of the most well-known and highly regarded insignias of Spanish nobility on his clothing, shows the gypsies signs of his rank and nobility. Simultaneously he tells Preciosa and her grandmother that he comes to them in submission, captivated by the young woman's intelligence and beauty: "Y con ser de la calidad y nobleza que os he referido, y de la que casi se os debe ya de ir trasluciendo, con todo eso, quisiera ser un gran señor para levantar a mi grandeza la humildad de Preciosa, haciéndola mi igual y mi señora."[95] Here is the European anxiety embodied: not only is Preciosa a hybrid of noble qualities in a gypsy form, respected and admired by all but she is so appealing that a wealthy, powerful young nobleman wants to make her his equal, elevate her social rank to match his own. This potential miscegenation, not merely that two individuals could conform with other facets of society but that they could, as husband and wife, give birth to children who were not just hybrids in their situation but actual, viable hybrids of gypsy and noble blood, intermingling in one body, was a terrifying concept. Moreover, upon hearing of Don Juan's love and dedication to her, Preciosa makes a speech that would have been perceived by European society as nightmarish in its demands:

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[94] Ibid., P.52
[95] Cervantes, *La Gitanilla*. Pp.54-55

> Primero, tengo de saber si sois el que decís; luego, hallando esta verdad, habéis de dejar la casa de vuestros padres y la habéis de trocar con nuestros rancho, y tomando el traje de gitano, habéis de cursar dos años en nuestras escuelas, en el cual tiempo me satisfaré yo de vuestra condición, y vos de la mía; al cabo de cual, si vos os contentáredes de mí, y yo de vos, me entregaré por vuestra esposa.[96]

Not content with accepting his love and becoming his wife, the genteel Preciosa asserts that Don Juan needs to transform himself into a gypsy, learn the gypsy ways, and live the gypsy life for two years so she may determine his true character and whether he is worthy of being her husband. The fact that an accomplished, wealthy man must humble himself to such a low status in order to be judged and tested by a mere gypsy must certainly have shocked Cervantes's 17th century audience. The depth of Preciosa's appeal, obvious from the start, becomes undeniably clear with Don Juan's unhesitating response: "Pues es tu gusto que el mío al tuyo se ajuste y acomode, cuéntame por gitano, desde luego, y haz de mí todas las experiencias que más quisieres."[97] In accordance with his agreement, Don Juan arrives at the gypsy camp two days later in order to begin his training as a Roma, and changes his name to Andrés Caballero, thereby renouncing his family. The gypsy community forsook European mandate and adhered to their own laws and customs. They had no fear of losing their honor, nor did they seek to enhance their honor, as Europe's nobles so ardently did. Upon learning this and the other laws of their people, Andrés' only regret was "no haber venido más presto en conocimiento de tan

[96] Ibid., P.57
[97] Ibid., P.58

alegre vida," adding that "desde aquel punto renunciaba la profesión de caballero y la vanagloria de su ilustre linaje."[98]

Such a thorough, immediate transformation would no doubt have appalled European society. Not only was a gallant, titled young man eager to demean his status by joining a troupe of gypsies, but in less than a day with them, he was lamenting the fact that he had not made such a change earlier, and turned his back on his nobility and the prestige of his lineage. Andrés roams Spain along with his adopted family, garnering fame as a dancer, singer, and thief, grafting seamlessly onto the gypsy community. A few months into their travels, yet another young gentleman joined the gypsy ranks, this one not for the love of the noble Preciosa (a motive which could appear at least relatively familiar to Cervantes' audience) but rather to escape justice. Don Sancho, fleeing Madrid as an accomplice to the homicide of another noble, becomes Clemente. As Don Juan's integration into the gypsy lifestyle directly violated the social construct of marriage as a means of obtaining and perpetuating status, Don Sancho's transformation despoiled the sovereignty of the justice system. The Don Juans and the Don Sanchos of the world could so easily change their name and garb and transform into gypsies, fracturing the strict hierarchy and creating in themselves a hybrid sector of society, noble Europeans living and thriving outside of their appropriate roles.[99] To the xenophobic European society at large, and even within relatively tolerant Spain, this corruption of social norms was monstrous.

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[98] Cervantes, *La Gitanilla*. P.78
[99] Ibid., P.96

A beautifully graceful and dignified gypsy on her own would be surprising yet not overly alarming. Demonstrating the pull Preciosa and her companions effected on the nobility around them, and the chaos which occurred in the social hierarchy due to the appeal of the gypsies, however, shocked and repelled contemporaneous Europeans. Thus, Cervantes had to resolve the cultural upheaval in order to prevent the alienation of his audience. He accomplishes this by contriving an ending in which Preciosa's past becomes known. Rather than being of gypsy stock as it appeared, she is actually Constanza de Azevedo, taken as an infant by the gypsy woman she called grandmother, kidnapped from the home of her birth parents, Don Fernando de Azevedo and Doña Guimar de Meneses. The noble characteristics exhibited by Preciosa were not, therefore, acquired qualities of a gypsy, but rather inherent traits expected from a girl of such high birth.[100] Because of her newly discovered social status, and the rank of Don Juan, a marriage between the two was no longer monstrous but rather, fortuitous. Found to be of equal social stature, Constanza de Azevedo and Don Juan de Cárcamo now enjoy sudden approbation in their union, while their children will now fortuitously, arbitrarily, find a proper place in Spanish social hierarchy.[101] Like the love between Perdita and Florizel in *The Winter's Tale*, a chance revelation allows a potential hybrid marriage to occur happily within the confines of the class hierarchy. However, this *deus ex machina*, the near impossible series of coincidences which reunited and revealed Preciosa to her true parents resolves the issue of social hybridity in the case of gypsies and their companions on strictly a superficial level. A closer reading of the text indicates that while on the

[100] Cervantes, *La Gitanilla*. P.109
[101][101] Hancock, "'Gypsy' Stereotype." Pp.184–185

surface, the union between Constanza and Don Juan is a successful resolution to the problem of gypsy and noble intermarriage, certain remaining points indicate otherwise.

The characters of the story clearly feel that revealing Preciosa and Andrés for nobles, putting them in fine houses and changing them into class-appropriate clothing eliminates their gypsy appeal. After all, Cervantes implies from the start of the tale that it is appearances, not reality that matter. Because Constanza and Don Juan's union ultimately adheres to social laws, and they *appear* a legitimately noble couple, their innate hybridity is, ostensibly, eradicated. As Preciosa states, however, "condiciones rompen leyes.[102]" It is undeniable that over the course of their time as gypsies, both Andrés and Preciosa both adapt to and thrive under the conditions of Roma life. Despite that, by birth and according to societal laws, they are both legitimate nobles, their time spent in the tradition of gypsies left an indelible mark on them as individuals, a change which is not undone by a mere change of clothes and living conditions. In fact, legislation passed under Spain's King Carlos (Charles) II, in an attempt to clarify an acceptable, legal definition of "gypsy" stated that any "hombre o mujer que se aprehendiere en el traje, y hábito de que hasta ahora ha usado este género de Gitano, o contra quien se probare haber usado de la lengua que ellos llaman *jerigonza*[103]" would thereby be classified and prosecuted as a gypsy. Both Preciosa and Andés had adopted the dress and speech of the Roma and thus, although noble in blood, they were legally gypsies by association and practice.

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[102] Cervantes. *La Gitanilla*. P.78

[103] Carlos II, Amendment to *La Sanción Pragmática de Medino del Campo (1499)*, 12 June 1695. Found in Sanchez-Ortega, María Helena, "La Minoría Gitana en el Siglo XVII: Represión, Discriminación Legal e Intentos de Asentamiento e Integración," *Anales de Historia Contemporánea*, Vol. 25, Feb. 2009. Pg.84

Cervantes hints that Constanza and Don Juan's life as nobles will be deeply affected by the gypsy customs they experienced. First, there is the matter of Preciosa's name. Upon her reunion with her parents, her father declares that, despite the fact that her given, noble name is Constanza, she will remain known as Preciosa, a name inextricably linked with the fame and renown she acquired as a gypsy. Rather than calling her by the name she received at the hands of landed parents, she will remain to society and everyone Preciosa, *La Gitanilla*. Second, the continued presence of her gypsy 'grandmother' makes a profound statement as to the thoroughness of Preciosa's return to nobility. Rather than having the old gypsy woman return to her people, she is welcomed into Preciosa and her parents' home as a member of the family.

Overall, gypsy identity in *La Gitanilla* is more than a mere change of clothes. When Preciosa and Don Juan return back to their roles as nobility, they still remain gypsy-like in nature, because their internal quality of character is that of a gypsy. Garb and lifestyle aside, both Preciosa and Don Juan have been indelibly changed by their gitano tenure, and they will continue to be gypsies in nature if not name. Of course, hybridity has long been present in the construction of Spanish national identity; in such a deeply blended culture, the external trappings of character were not near as essential marker as lifestyle. Regardless of the fact that Preciosa's marriage is class appropriate, she still dwells in a hybrid home surrounded by both gypsy and noble parent figures, making her a viable fusion of Roma and Spanish tradition. In other adaptations, the conclusion to Preciosa and Andrés' is not so ambiguous.

La Gitanilla was one of the tales used, in common Renaissance tradition, as inspiration for like stories in different nations and by different authors, a literary vehicle carrying hybridity across national borders. In this case, it was Thomas Middleton and William Rowley[104] who looked to Cervantes as motivation for their work. *The Spanish Gipsie*, 1623's English version of Cervantes' account, is remarkable not for the similarities it shares with its predecessor but rather for the key changes Middleton and Rowley made to the narrative. Although the basic plot remains essentially intact, a few discrepancies glare in the text, calling attention to the stark dissimilarities they indicate between English and Spanish cultures at this time.

Just as English anti-gypsy legislation was notably more severe than their Iberian counterparts, so too were social anxieties and xenophobic trends considerably more pronounced in English life. Whereas *La Gitanilla* only demonstrated the transformation of two nobles into gypsies, *The Spanish Gipsie* witnesses the hybridization of ten separate characters: Alvarez, Guyamara/Eugenia, Constanza/Pretiosa, Carlo, Antonio, Cristiana, Don John, Sancho, Soto and Roderigo. In order to transform themselves into gypsies, these noble characters conceal their true nature through simply a change of dress. To the contemporaneous English society, class-appropriate dress was of the utmost importance, and dressing above or below one's station was a despicable offense.

[104] Despite questions of authorship and the likely contribution to *The Spanish Gipsie* by either or both Thomas Decker and John Ford, for the sake of clarity I am attributing *The Spanish Gipsie* to Middleton and Rowley in this essay.

Stringent sumptuary laws maintained visible evidence of adherence to the strict social hierarchy, regulations that the Roma blatantly flouted. In 1574, half a century before the presentation of *The Spanish Gipsie*, Queen Elizabeth I issued a statute intended upon keeping her subjects in their rightful station. Her amendment to her father's and sister's sumptuary laws was exceedingly thorough, stating precisely which materials and colors could be worn by each respective tier on the social ladder. Purple and gold was reserved strictly for royalty, as was sable fur. Silver and metallic trim was limited to barons and viscounts, velvet was forbidden from anyone of degree less than knights, baron's sons, and royal attendants, and silk, satin, damask, camlet and taffeta, scarlet, crimson and blue were reserved for titled gentry and men with a luxury expense exceeding £100 a year. Women's clothing was limited to the extreme example of specifying what type of buttons, material of petticoats, and color of purses was acceptable for every rank. Fines, seizure of assets and jail time were all potential punishments for those who dressed outside their station.[105] Dressed in motley rags, it was a common practice of the gypsies to tear portions of garments off the white Europeans they encountered in order to mend their hodgepodge outfits. As a result of this, the gypsies created clothing that was a patchwork of varying cloths in an array of colors.[106] Such variegation was a visible indication of the cultural fusion that was so threatening to European society, and Middleton and Rowley emphasize their characters' wardrobe changes in order to call attention to tangible evidence of their hybridization. The defiance of this law by the gypsies, and the appallingly hybrid clothes which resulted from their thieving, manipulative actions, was especially threatening to the stability of English

[105] Elizabeth I, Statute 16, given at Greenwich, 15 June 1574. Found in Baldwin, Frances Elizabeth, *Sumptuary Legislation and Personal Regulation in England*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1926.
[106] Fitzgerald, *Gypsies of Britain*. P.16

society. Thus, the transformation by these nobles into gypsies required them to not only dress outside of their station but also to construe an assortment clothing from widely variable social degrees.

In catering to their audience's anxieties, therefore, it is not surprising that Middleton and Rowley afforded such attention to the shifts in clothing. For the characters in *The Spanish Gipsie*, looking a gypsy was being a gypsy. Upon their appearance in gypsy guise, for example, Alvarez states to comments and Antonio, "come, my brave boyes, the taylors sheers has cut us into shapes fitting our trades.[107]" Pretiosa enters on, "See, father, how I am fitted: how do you like this our new stock of cloaths?[108]" Sancho and Soto's transformations, too, are gestured at with reference to their change in clothing: "If the devil were a taylor, he would scarce know us in these gaberdines./If a taylor were the devil, I'de not give a lowse for him, if he should bring up this fashion amongst gentlemen, and make it common.[109]" Unlike the Spanish tradition, where identity is a question of the essential over the ostensible, the creation of self in the English Renaissance was solely a problem of the skin outward. And as will all superficilialities comes a tendency toward the unstable, the changeable, and the ephemeral.

Whereas in *La Gitanilla* the changes of personality were profound and integral, *The Spanish Gipsie* witnesses the creation of a volatile and fickle identity. Every gypsy character is introduced first by reference to his clothing, a fact that not only highlights their disregard for hierarchy, but also demonstrates their subtle monstrosity to the European audience. Not only does *The Spanish Gipsie*, therefore, witness significantly

[107] Thomas Middleton and William Rowley. *The Spanish Gipsie*. Second publication, London, UK: Robert Croftis, 1661; reprinted Boston, MA; London, UK: D.C. Heath & Co. Publishers, 1908. Act II, Scene I, ll.1-2.
[108] Ibid., Act II, Scene I, ll.78-79.
[109] Ibid., Act III, Scene I, ll.36-40.

more transformations from noble into gypsy, but it also demonstrates the depth of gypsy defiance to European mandate. The sheer number of metamorphoses that take place in this play magnify the apprehension hinted at in *La Gitanilla* into full-blown panic. A single, love-struck person may transmute himself, but droves of nobles, we are led to suspect, are being captivated and transformed by the Roma lifestyle.

Significantly, those characters who do undergo their transformation for the sake of a woman, Don John and Roderigo, do so not for love, but rather for lust. This is remarkable because love, even if for someone of an inappropriate social class, could be understood by readers as innately virtuous, and thus somewhat justify the changes. Additionally, true love was an occurrence much rarer in occurrence than lust – all young men experienced lust to some degree, and if such a commonplace emotion could result in such a drastic, chaotic conversion, then significantly more of the gentry were at risk of falling prey to the same inappropriate lure. The male nobles of the play are blatantly clear in what they desire from their potential mates: "A wife! Is she hansome? Is she rich? Is she fair? Is she witty? Is she honest? Hang honesty! Has she a sweet face, cherry-cheek, strawbury-lip, white skin, dainty eye, pretty foot, delicate legs?[110]" Indeed, when faced with an ultimatum of taking a wife who, despite wealth, noble lineage and gracious character, is physically unappealing, or having no wife at all, Roderigo exclaims:

> None then; were all the water in the world one
> Sea, all kingdoms one mountain, I would climbe on
> All four to the top of that hill, and head-long hurle my
> Selfe into that abysse of waves, e're I would touch the

[110] Middleton and Rowley, *Spanish Gipsie*. Act IV, Scene III, ll.91-94.

Skin of such haberdine, for the breath of her picture stinks hither.[111]

Although the young men refuse to accept a socially-appropriate yet unattractive wife, Middleton and Rowley mince no words where the danger of lusting after a young, attractive gypsy is concerned. Roderigo, who succumbs to his lust in the first fifty lines of the play and rapes Clara, is acutely aware that "pleasure and youth like smiling evils wooe us/To taste new follies; tasted, they undoe us,[112]" yet in spite of his awareness, is powerless to stop himself from persevering in his pursuit of Clara. Although she is not herself a gypsy, Roderigo's insatiable longing for Clara drives him to mask himself in order to track her down. He recognizes his own nature to be inherently lustful and ill-suited to one of his social status, and thus rather than reform, opts to disguise himself so that his external trappings mirror his internal self-image. Gypsies were already viewed as barbaric and bestial in their character, so by dressing himself as a gypsy, Roderigo is completing his transformation, using a change of clothing to confirm his already corrupt personality: a gypsy on the outside to match the gypsy he always already is.

The most telling example of love shifted to lust in Middleton and Rowley's interpretation of *La Gitanilla* is indicated in the relationship between Don John and Pretiosa, and in the sexualization of Pretiosa herself. In *La Gitanilla*, Don Juan is enthralled not primarily by Preciosa's sexual appeal, but rather by the courtly graces and inherent goodness she embodies. The Don John of *The Spanish Gipsie*, however, is compelled in his transformation by much baser instincts. It is not coincidence that Don John's first lines, where he swears "I am resolv'd" to make Pretiosa his, find him mistaken for Roderigo, a character distinguished mainly by his violent and shallow lust.

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[111] Ibid., Act IV, Scene III, ll.140-145.
[112] Ibid., Act I, Scene V, ll.122-123.

Where Don Juan doted on Preciosa in *La Gitanilla*, praising her purity and virtue and happily accepting two years of chastity in exchange for such a genteel wife, Don John laments Pretiosa's demands, saying, "Turn gipsie?! For two years!/I must turn; Oh beauty! The suns fires cannot so burn.[113]" Additionally, at the time of his initiation into the gypsy community, Don John does not listen with attentiveness and respect to the elder gypsies as did Don Juan, but rather tries unsuccessfully to kiss Pretiosa at every pause in their tale.[114]

Don John is not alone in the debasement of his virtue in *The Spanish Gipsie.* Cervantes effusively attributed to Preciosa personality traits highly sought after in nobility, lending her character elegance, dignity, intelligence and modesty. While he certainly acknowledges her physical beauty, Preciosa's inherent characteristics are the most valued. Contrarily, Middleton and Rowley's Pretiosa is called a "cherry-lip'd, sweet mouth'd villain,[115]" "a very dainty thing./ A handsome creature," with a dimple that is "a grave to bury lovers in."[116] Mentions of inherent decorum and composure, however, are noticeably rare. Pretiosa, who in *La Gitanilla* was so pure that no one dared "cantar cantares lascivos ni decir palabras no buenas en su presencia,[117]" is made bawdy and lewd by the jokes she shares with the play's two comic figures, Sancho and Soto. In fact, more than simply being juxtaposed with crude humor, Pretiosa partakes in it herself. She desires to encounter a poet whose "pen can sell [her] any smooth queint romances,[118]a statement playing on the dual meanings to the words "pen" and "queint," as both 'writing

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[113] Middleton and Rowley, *Spanish Gipsie.* Act II, Scene II, ll.292-293.
[114] Ibid., Act IV, Scene I, ll.1-88.
[115] Ibid., Act II, Scene I, ll.264-265.
[116] Ibid., Act III, Scene II, ll.113-115.
[117] Cervantes, *La Gitanilla.* P.30
[118] Middleton and Rowley, *Spanish Gipsie.* Act III, Scene I, ll.101-102.

utensil' and 'charming' and as graphic references to male and female genitalia. Rather than desiring appealingly written romances, she is expressing her desirous lust, a yearning to which Sancho and Soto gladly respond. In her first appearance, Pretiosa first makes herself out to be a creature of lust and then immediately, enthusiastically judges a poem that would have shamed her counterpart in *La Gitanilla*:

ALVAREZ: Pray, sir, Read your verses.

SANCHO [sings]: *Oh that I were a bee to sing*

Hum, buz, buz, hum! I first would bring

Home honey to your hive, and there leave my sting.

SOTO [aside to others]: He manders.

SANCHO [sings]*: Oh that I were a goose to feed*

At your barn-door! Such corn I need,

Nor would I bite, but gozlings breed.

SOTO [aside to others]: And ganders. [...]

SANCHO [to Pretiosa]: Do you like 'em?

PRETIOSA: Past all compare;

They shall be writ out when y' have as good or better.

For these and those pray book me down your debtor.

Your paper is long liv'd, having two souls,

Verses and gold.[119]

The Spanish Gipsie's Pretiosa amused by the song, so overt in its references to sex and fertilization, cheapens the good qualities she apparently personifies. By including

[119] Ibid., Act II, Scene I, ll.190-220.

Pretiosa, throughout the play, in the comic interludes between Sancho and Soto, her grace and poise become ludicrous by association.

Another key divergence of *The Spanish Gipsie* from *La Gitanilla* is in the origins of the 'gypsy' characters. *La Gitanilla* portrays a single noble-born girl stolen from her family and raised as a gypsy. *The Spanish Gipsie*, however, amends the story: Pretiosa is raised by Alvarez and Eugenia, both titled nobles who became gypsies in an attempt to disguise themselves from a vengeful Don Lewys. The gypsy band they travel with, Claro, Antonio, Eugenia, and Christiana, are all also concealed nobles styling themselves as Roma. *The Spanish Gipsie* elaborates on their motives for transformation, telling how Don Alvarez murdered Don Lewys' father, De Castor, and as penance for his consuming guilt has "twelve years and more,/Like to a restlesse pilgrim I have runne/From foreign lands to foreign lands to finde out death.[120]" To a profoundly religious European society, degradation into a base, nomadic gypsy would be such a miserable punishment that it was worthy reparation for murder. With the use of Christian terminology to characterize Alvarez and his companions' metamorphosis into gypsies, Middleton and Rowley alight upon the sole justification for such an abhorrent change: a Catholic obligation to atonement. Illuminating Pretiosa's nobility from the start, therefore, also provides validation for Don John's passionate lust for her. By placing both Don John and Pretiosa on an equal social plane from the outset, his immediate attraction to Pretiosa is understandable. At the play's inception, it is clearly understood that the gypsy band make no claims to true gypsy-dom, but rather are merely playing a role necessary to their continued survival and penance.

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[120] Middleton and Rowley, *Spanish Gipsie*. Act V, Scene II, ll.23-25.

To underscore the implication that the gypsies were merely nobles playing a role, Middleton and Rowley craft a metadrama. Penned by Roderigo's father, Don Fernando, who has discovered both the rape and his son's lust-inspired transformation into a gypsy, this metadrama was intended not only to arouse guilt in Roderigo for his transgression, but also to juxtapose the gypsy 'act' which the nobles had maintained for twelve years with the acting of their characters in this "commick passage[121]." By pitting the act of the characters beside their acting for entertainment, the audience must parse a veritable chinese box of nested identities: actors playing nobles playing gypsies playing nobles. Extreme in its convolution, the play within a play makes the sheer number and quality of roles played by the cast farcical and absurd thereby making light of the noble's original transformation. Just as Pretiosa's grace is devalued by her inclusion in the coarse comic interludes, placing the 'gypsies' into the ludicrous metadrama demeans the seriousness of their original transformation.

Significantly, in *The Spanish Gipsie*, the pivotal scene of reconciliation of the play's social upheaval is prefaced not by a genuine or serious exchange but rather a mocking charade, a parody. Making use of the theme of strengthening family through marriage and adoption, Middleton and Rowley resolve any lingering fears of miscegenation and hybridity. Upon hearing Alvarez's penitence and guilt over the murder of De Castor, Don Lewys states "I am o'recome;/Your nobleness hath conquered me; here ends/All strife between our families, and henceforth/Acknowledge me for yours.[122]" By fulfilling his Christian obligation of repentance, Alvarez is not only acknowledged as inherently noble, but also gains a son of like status. Roderigo, wracked with guilt

[121] Ibid., Act IV, Scene II, l.47.
[122] Middleton and Rowley, *Spanish Gipsie*. Act V, Scene III, ll.45-48.

resulting from his rape, begs forgiveness of his father and of Clara and her family, and his violent wrong is righted by the marriage arranged between himself and his victim. Eugenia makes herself known to be Don Fernando's sister Guyamar, entrusted fifteen years past with the care of Don Fernando's daughter, Constanza; whom she reveals to be Pretiosa. Pretiosa and Don John, now known by all to be of equal status, are also wed, bringing social enhancement to both their families.

Unlike *La Gitanilla*, where Constanza continues to be called Preciosa; Pretiosa abandons her gypsy name and, in doing so, sheds all remnants of her gypsy life. The subtle implications left by Cervantes that Preciosa and Don Juan would remain hybridized by their common experience as both gypsy and noble are thoroughly eradicated by Middleton and Rowley to assuage the English audience's amplified fear of Roma assimilation into noble life. The closing lines of the play further emphasize the return to appropriate social order:

> Here now are none but honourable friends.
> Will you to give a farewell to the life
> You ha led as gipsies, these being now found none,
> But noble in their births, alter'd in fortunes,
> Give it a merry shaking by the hand,
> And cry adue to folly?[123]

It is clear that the English audience had to interpret the entire story, especially the metamorphosis into Roma and a lust after the gypsy lifestyle as folly in order to tolerate the play's contents. Had all ten 'gypsy' characters embraced and enjoyed the itinerant

[123] Middleton and Rowley, *Spanish Gipsie*. Act V, Scene III, ll.104-109

life, and had a titled young noble experienced true love for a mere gypsy girl, the story would be unplayable.

Both *La Gitanilla* and *The Spanish Gipsie* are literary embodiments of the bidirectional, transformative nature of the Roma as catalysts for social upheaval. The contrived endings to both stories can only hint at the hazard this metamorphic influence presented to European life. Spanish tolerance and the extreme xenophobia of England aside, the menace of gypsy encroachment into sovereign European ranks provoked fear and antagonism, both literary and real. Intrinsically hybrid, these Indian nomads entered European life as foreign yet entrancing nobles. They were a fascinating graft of Eastern exoticism onto Western homogeneity, cunning thieves and cheats housed in malleable, adaptable and attractive bodies, able to integrate effortlessly into European society and possessing the ability to draw white, Christian gentry into their ranks. As notoriety of their duplicitous nature grew, the threat of their allure to social hierarchy augmented as well. Apprehension of the catastrophic results of miscegenation swelled, and the gypsies became outcasts, scorned for their otherness, and feared for the fascination their lifestyle engendered in the native populations. Forsaking the laws and customs of European culture while still integrating into the fabric of European life, the Roma people are a key example of the dire threat hybridity, in any form, posed to the Western way of life. In conjunction with the image of the blended vegetable world, these two diverse incarnations of hybridity, the true and the social gardens, unite to illuminate the significance of amalgamation and hybridization in the Renaissance imaginary.

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